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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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MAYAVATI, HIMALAYAS



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Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

APRIL 1985

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No. 4

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

MAHĀSAMĀDHI OF SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

It is with profound sorrow that we announce that Swami Vireswarananda, Tenth President of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission, entered Mahāsamādhi on Wednesday, 13 March 1985, at 3.17 p.m., at the Belur Math. The Swami had been ailing for the last few days. He was 93.

The Swami, known in his pre-monastic life as Panduranga Prabhu, hailed from Gurupur, South Kanara (Karnataka), and was born in Madras on 31 October 1892. He joined the Ramakrishna Order at its Madras Centre in the year 1916, after graduation from the Presidency College, Madras. He had the good fortune of being initiated by Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, at her native village, Jayrambati. He had his *sannyāsa* in 1920 from Swami Brahmananda. He had also the rare privilege of intimate contact with most of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, thus enabling him to absorb the authentic traditions of the Order, handed down through these direct disciples.

The Swami had an outstanding record of service to the Organization. After serving for some years at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, he became a member of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, the home of *Prabuddha Bharata*, in the Himalayas, and later on the Manager of its Calcutta Branch, a major Publication Centre of the Order. He was the President of the Advaita Ashrama from 1927 to 1937. In 1929, he was elected a Trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and a member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission. In 1938, he became one of the Assistant Secretaries of the Organization and looked after its various activities. He was in charge of the relief operation during the Bengal famine of 1943-45, and also supervised other relief and rehabilitation programmes of the Organization over a long period. Between 1949 and 1951, when Swami Madhavananda, the then General Secretary, took leave on health grounds, Swami Vireswarananda assumed this office, which he held again from 1961 till he was elected the Tenth President of the Organization in February 1966, in which capacity he served the Order till his last day.

During his stewardship, the Organization saw much expansion and consolidation. He was deeply interested in the rural development work of the Organization and showed a keen concern for the all-round development of the

weaker sections of society. Till the end, he was counselling and guiding such activities.

The Swami was an erudite scholar, and has to his credit many publications. His abridged translations of the commentaries of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja on the *Brahma-Sūtras* have the stamp of scholarship. Other books by him are: An English translation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* with Śrīdhara's gloss, *Spiritual Ideals for the Modern Age, Our Duty Towards the Motherland, The Holy Mother — Ideal of Womanhood, Path to God-realization*.

In his passing away the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission have sustained an irreparable loss, because with him ends an eventful career of dedication and service to the Organization and the country at large. He leaves behind thousands of disciples throughout India and abroad to mourn his passing away.

May his soul rest in eternal peace!

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

यो यज्ञो विश्वतस्तंतुभिस्तत
 एकाशतं देवकर्मभिरायतः ।
 इमे वयंति पितरो य आययुः
 प्र वयाप वयेत्यासते तते ॥ ॥

That *yajna*¹ [like a loom] is extended on all sides by threads² for a hundred and one years³ for the work of the gods.⁴ [That loom] is operated by our ancestors⁵ who sit⁶ by it and cry, 'Weave forward, weave backward'.⁷

Rg-Veda 10.130.1

* Yet another creation hymn is begun here. As in other such hymns, two ideas figure prominently here: the mystery of creation and its ongoing dynamism. The whole universe is in a state of flux and this dynamism is a continuation of the original creative act. Things come into existence, remain for some time and return to their original state. The fire ritual *yajna* is the human act that comes closest to this cosmic phenomenon and is widely used as a symbol. Another symbol is that of the loom. The back and forth movement of the shuttle and the intricate patterns of innumerable threads form an appropriate symbol of cosmic creation. The present hymn combines the symbolism of both the fire ritual and of the loom.

1. *Sargātmako yajñah*—creation in the form of the fire ritual (Sāyana).

2. The threads here stand for all created beings.

3. A man's lifespan is believed to be 100 years, cf *satāyurvai puruṣh*.

4. *Devakarma*—work for the gods: every human activity is meant to be an act of service to God.

5. *Pitarah* (fathers) is interpreted by Sāyana as *pālakāh*, 'protectors', the gods born of Prajāpati.

6. *Asate* (sit) Sāyana interprets this as *upāsate*, 'worship'.

7. *Pra-vaya* ('weave forth') *apa-vaya* ('weave back') is a command given by the gods to man to continue the creative act. Sāyana omits the particle *iti* and interprets *pra-vaya* as *pravāṇam*, 'creation of living beings', and *apa-vaya* as *apavāṇam*, 'creation of non-living things'.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL, dealing with the Vedantic concept of sin, continues the theme begun in the February editorial.

In THE CALL OF VOCATION Dr. Margaret Bedrosian analyses, with the help of literary sources, the psychological processes set in motion in the mind when the soul awakens to a higher ideal, and shows how a person who follows the ideal not only completes his destiny but leaves behind a shining track for others to follow. The author is a lecturer in English and comparative literature at the University of California, Davis.

To remain as a witness is often simplistically explained as a process of disconnecting the senses from the mind. In THE OBSERVATION OF SELF SACRIFICE Prof. David Appelbaum offers a more comprehensive view of the witness as the agent of internal sacrifice. The author is Associate Professor

of Philosophy in State University College at New Paltz, New York.

MYTH, FAITH AND HERMENEUTICS is an extract from the book *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics* published by the Paulist Press, New Jersey, U.S.A. and reprinted in India by the Asian Trading Corporation, Brigade Road, Bangalore. The author Dr. Raimundo Panikkar who is associated with the Department of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, now lives at Barcelona, Spain.

In THE MIRACLE OF SEEING Dr. Sehdev Kumar shows in a delightful way that spiritual perception is essentially a process of 'dis-covering' or 're-membering'. The author who holds an M.Sc. in radiation physics and a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Toronto, is Professor of Man-Environment Studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada.

SIN AGAINST ONESELF

(EDITORIAL)

Atman-centred ethics

One evening Ralph Waldo Emerson was trying to take a call to the cowshed. But the young animal planted its four feet on the ground and refused to budge. The more Emerson pulled, the more stubborn the calf became. Then the maid came, gave the calf a mild whacking, and it frisked away to the cowshed. This incident taught the great American philosopher that every person he met was superior to him in some respect or other.

When we look at people we seldom see the wholeness that is in them. We usually

notice only certain aspects of their personality, mostly their defects, rarely their virtues. And yet, every person has in him or her an unrepeatable uniqueness. Everyone has grown up by passing through countless experiences and overcoming innumerable obstacles. In every bosom is a heart that beats to the rhythms of desires, hopes, love and fear. Everyone has a future filled with infinite possibilities. Every person has in him or her a life principle trying to express itself in myriad ways.

What is this life principle? The Upanisadic sages called it the Atman, the true Self. It is the centre of consciousness in

man. The body and mind appear to be conscious only because of their association with the Atman. It is through the Self that we know. The Self reveals itself through every experience, and the ultimate purpose of all experiences is to know the Knower. Consciously or unconsciously, all beings are struggling for Self-realization.

Furthermore, the Upaniṣadic sages discovered that this individual Atman is a part of the Supreme Self, Paramātman, of the universe known as Brahman. This means that every man has in him a centre of divinity though he may not be always conscious of it. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'Each soul is potentially divine and the goal is to manifest this divinity within'.

It is the divine Self within that gives dignity to the individual and sacredness to life. Every person is to be treated with respect because he is potentially divine. Every person you meet is superior to you because he manifests his inner divinity in some different, and better way than you do. The artist who paints the sunset, the farmer who raises rice for your food or cotton for your clothes, the busdriver who takes hundreds of passengers every day safely to their places of work, a research worker who discovers new truths—every one is superior to you in some little or big way.

Every life is sacred because of the divine centre within. A person has no right to take another's life, not even his own. Should he attempt to commit suicide, he would be arrested by the police. He did not create his life, nor anybody else's. His life is not his ; it belongs to the universal Self. Once the divine centre is withdrawn from a body, it loses all value: it was dust and unto dust it now returns.

The whole of Indian ethics is centred on this doctrine of the potential divinity of the human soul. Man as he is may not be divine ; but he holds in himself the poten-

tiality to attain divinity. The purpose of ethical and religious life is to enable him to actualize, unfold, manifest this potentiality. That is why Swami Vivekananda has defined religion as 'the manifestation of the divinity already in man'. Religion in India means a way of life that favours Self-realization. It does not necessarily involve faith in a personal God ; the Sāṃkhya philosophers do not accept a personal God and the Mīmāṃsakas regard all gods and goddesses as mere verbal symbols, still they are 'pukka' Hindus. Everything that helps spiritual unfolding is religion, *dharma* ; everything that obstructs it is irreligion, *adharma*. Virtue fosters spiritual unfolding and so it is *dharma*, where as vice hinders spiritual unfolding and so it is *adharma*.

This intimate connection between virtue and spirituality was the foundation of ethical life in India during the Vedic period. Everywhere in the Upaniṣads, and even in the Gītā, virtue is praised chiefly as an indispensable help to Self-realization. The practice of virtue produces purity of mind (*citta-suddhi*), calmness of the senses and clarity of the intellect (*jñāna-prasāda*), and the clear and calm mind reflects the light of the Atman without distortion, resulting in Self-realization.

Gradually, as the Law of Karma gained in importance, a more mundane and pragmatic view of ethics developed. According to this view the present is determined by the past, and virtuous actions done in the past produce favourable circumstances in the present life whereas evil actions produce unfavourable circumstances. Manu says: 'The preponderance of vice brings suffering to embodied beings, and the preponderance of virtue brings unbroken happiness.'¹ Man has

1. अधर्मप्रभवञ्चैव दुःखयोगं शरीरिणाम् ।

धर्मार्थप्रभवञ्चैव सुखसंयोगमक्षयम् ॥

Manu-Samhita 6.64

no control over the past but he can create a happier future through his virtuous actions of the present. So the goal of virtuous actions is future happiness—the 'future' here meaning both life after death in heaven and rebirth on the earth.

These two views—that the goal of ethical life is purification of mind for Self-realization, and that it is one's own future happiness—represent the two great divisions of the Hindu way of life known respectively as *nivṛtti-mārga* (way of withdrawal) and *pravṛtti-mārga* (way of involvement). These two ways were traditionally regarded as distinct and meant for two different classes of people. This division was given legitimacy by the Advaita system with its theory of two levels of reality and of the self: the *paramārthika* (absolute) and the *vyāvahārika* (relative). This view may be metaphysically valid but, translated into common life, it became a justification for perpetuating all kinds of social inequities. One of the efforts of Swami Vivekananda was to provide a unitary view of reality which would integrate the two ways of life into one. Regarding this Swamiji said, 'And what Ramakrishna Paramahansa and I have added to this is that the Many and the One are the same Reality, perceived by the same mind at different times and in different attitudes'.² As Sister Nivedita has pointed out, the practical significance of Swamiji's integral view is that it removes the distinction between the sacred and the secular.³ Every action becomes a means to Self-realization.

All this may give the impression that Indian ethics is self-centred, being concerned

2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977) Vol. 8, p. 260.

3. Sister Nivedita, 'Introduction' in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol 1, p. xv. It may be noted here that a similar idea forms the cardinal principal of Zen Buddhism which holds that *nirvana* is not different from *samsara*.

only with the individual and not with the society. But such an impression would be wrong, for the true self of man is not the limited, body-bound ego but the transcendent Atman. The great law-giver Manu lays down the rule, 'One should consciously endeavour to perform that action by which one's inmost Self is satisfied; its opposite (i.e., that action which dissatisfies the Self) should be given up'.⁴ This transcendental Self being an inseparable part of the infinite Supreme Self, all actions prompted by or done for it would be for the welfare of all. It is the lower self or ego that tries to hold back things from universal life; and every school and teacher of Indian ethics has insisted upon giving up this lower self. Hindu ethics is Atman-centred and Brahman-oriented.

The disadvantages of this system of ethics are clear enough. For one thing, it calls for the realization of the Supreme Self which is too high an ideal for ordinary people. The stratification of social and individual life on the basis of *varṇa* (caste) and *āśrama* (stage in life), was originally meant to remedy this defect by providing a graded series of working ideals for all people who are incapable of realizing the highest ideal. But owing to various reasons, this scheme was never worked out to its logical conclusion. It was not the ethical theory that went wrong but its practical application. India does not need a new ethical theory, either in the form of a political ideology or in the form of a new religion. All that it needs is the reorganization of society on a humanistic basis, and the revitalization of the ennobling principles of its ancient religion in the hearts of the people.

On the other hand, the Atman-centred Brahman-oriented ethics has several

4. यत् कर्म कुर्वतोऽस्य स्यात् परितोषोऽन्तरात्मनः ।
तत् प्रयत्नेन कुर्वीत विपरीतन्तु वर्जयेत् ॥

superior features which outweighs its drawbacks. Three of these deserve our special attention here. These are: 1. it makes one take upon oneself the moral responsibility of one's actions; 2. it is based not on fear and compulsion but on existential freedom; 3. it provides a transcendental common ground for love of oneself, love for fellow-men and love for God.

Ātmāparādha

On a previous occasion the difference between Judeo-Christian and Indian systems of ethics was pointed out in these columns.⁵ Judeo-Christian ethics is based on the two major covenants that God made with man. Morality is obeying the divine Commandments; whereas sin is the violation of the Covenant and disobedience to God. The sinner is punished by God here or hereafter. The Indian concept of morality is that to be moral is to live in harmony with the natural moral order (*ṛtam* or *dharma*) of the universe and to discharge the duties of one's station in life. *Pāpa* or *adharma* is not 'sin' in the sense of disobedience; it is simply wrong action that violates universal harmony, and the suffering that results from it is not God's punishment but the effect of the operation of the law of Karma. God is the impartial dispenser of the fruits of man's actions and remains unaffected by the good and evil done by man.⁶

There is a well-known verse which states: 'People want the fruit of virtue but do not do virtuous actions; they do not want the fruit of sin and yet commit sin with great effort.'⁷ Everyday life provides us plenty

of opportunities to be good and to do good, yet we seldom make use of these golden opportunities. Everyone knows that evil actions will bring him nothing but sorrow today or someday in future, still he does wrong things.

There are several reasons for this. One is our lack of faith in the power of goodness and our faith in the power of evil. Everyone has faith; the only question is, in what? Many people have greater faith in the power of evil than in God Himself. And, as the *Gītā* says: 'Man is conditioned by faith; as a man's faith is, so he is.'⁸ Another reason is that the *samskāras*, or impressions left in the mind by our past actions, prompt us to repeat those actions, even against our faith and wish. This tendency is popularly known as *vāsanā*. The *Yoga-vāsistha* defines it as follows: '*Vāsanā* is the sudden grasping of an object, forgetting the past and the future, owing to a strong fancy.'⁹ A person may know that a certain habit is bad for him, that it brought him suffering in the past and will bring only sorrow again and yet, at the critical moment, he yields to it. The ultimate cause of all wrong tendencies is ignorance. That is why Swami Vivekananda wanted to see the word 'sin' replaced by the word 'ignorance'.

Whatever be the reason for our wrong actions, through them we harm only ourselves. *Pāpa* or *adharma* is a sin against oneself, *ātmāparādha*. Few people realize how much harm they are doing to themselves through their impure thoughts, words and actions. There are several ways by which *ātmāparādha* may be committed. One is

5. See the Editorial in *Prabuddha Bharata*, February, 1985.

6. Cf *Gītā* 5.15

7. पुण्यस्य फलमिच्छन्ति पुण्यं न कुर्वन्ति मानवाः ।
न पापफलमिच्छन्ति पापं कुर्वन्ति यत्नतः ॥

8. श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥

Gīta 17.3

9. दृढभावनया त्यक्तपूर्वापरविचारणम् ।

यदादानं पदार्थस्य वासना सा प्रकीर्तिता ॥

Yoga-Vāsistha

the gross and direct way. This includes all forms of overindulgence, self-abuse, and neglect of health and hygiene. The result of those in the form of suffering is immediate. There are other kinds of *ātmāparādha* which are more subtle and insidious and the effects of which are neither obvious nor immediate.

Karma affects us in two subtle ways. One is the cosmic effect known as *apūrva* or *adr̥ṣṭa* which returns to us may be in the next birth, as *karmaphala*. According to the Indian belief all our present sufferings are the *karmaphala* of our past actions. As a popular verse states: 'Disease, sorrow, suffering, bondage, alienation—all these are the fruits of the tree of *ātmāparādha* reaped by embodied souls.'¹⁰ Blinded by the passions of lust, greed, hatred and envy, we live an impulsive life seldom pausing to think how much harm we are doing to *ourselves* by our own thoughtless actions.

Karma includes not only physical action but also thoughts. About the power of thoughts to do harm to ourselves, Swami Vivekananda says in his commentary on the Aphorisms of Patañjali:

Every vicious thought will rebound, every thought of hatred which you may have thought, in a cave even, is stored up, and will one day come back to you with the tremendous power in the form of some misery here. If you project hatred and jealousy, they will rebound on you with compound interest. No power can avert them; when once you have put them in motion, you will have to bear them.¹¹

Our actions and thoughts affect us in another unseen way. Each of them leaves behind in the mind a trace or impression called *samskāra*. As already

stated, these *samskāras* create in us the tendency to repeat the same action or thought. This is how habits and thinking patterns are formed. Some of these habits are good and necessary inasmuch as they free the mind from routine life and allow it to think about higher things. But there are bad habits and thinking patterns which bind the soul and curtail its freedom. Every soul is endowed with great possibilities. Every person has in him the inherent capacity to attain excellence in some field or other. To neglect the development of the soul's potential powers is a sin against oneself. What prevents most people from attaining excellence and self-development is not lack of talent or wealth or opportunities, but lack of faith, discipline and diligence.

All individual selves being parts of the Supreme Self, the Paramātman, to be insensitive to the sufferings of others, to be unresponsive to love, to be jealous of others, to speak ill of others, to try to prevent others from going up—all these are sins against the Self. It is of course true that in the society we live there may be people who feel jealous of us, speak ill of us or even try to harm us without any apparent benefit to themselves. But cherishing ideas of revenge and hatred towards them obstructs the expansion of the Self and reduces our share of universal life. According to an old verse, 'Virtuous men who are always bent on doing good to others never allow their souls to be contorted even when harm is done to them. The sandalwood tree only imparts fragrance to the edge of the axe that cuts it down'.¹²

10. रोगशोकपरितापबन्धनव्यसनानि च ।

आत्मापराधवृक्षाणां फलान्येतानि देहिनाम् ॥

Hitopadesa

11. *Complete Works*, Vol 1, Yoga-aphorism 2.34

12. सुजनो न याति विकृतिं परहितनिरतो

विनाशकालेऽपि ।

छेदेऽपि चन्दनतरुः सुरभयति मुखं कुठारस्य ॥

Subhāṣita

To remain sunk in depression and helplessness is to surrender the glory and power of the Atman to the dark forces of *tamas*, and is therefore a sin against the Self. Sorrow, disappointment and loss are unavoidable in life. But one should not live in a habitual state of dejection. Worse still is to condemn oneself relentlessly. In a depressed mind creative energy gets dammed up and the soul, unable to express itself at higher planes, may seek expression at lower planes. The Upaniṣads teach: 'Through the Atman one attains strength and zeal.'¹³ Swami Vivekananda based his whole philosophy of life on this *vīrya-mantra*. According to him all misery and depression come from our dependence on matter. By arousing faith in the power and glory of the Atman we should overcome dejection and face the problems of life with confidence. To rouse this faith in the Spirit was Swamiji's most important mission in life. His message of strength is condensed in a verse which he wrote. Its meaning is: 'What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature, O mighty one, and this whole universe will be at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates, and not matter.'¹⁴

Blindly imitating the mannerisms, ways of life and ideals of other people, day-dreaming and other similar habits which lower the dignity of the Self are also a kind of *ātmāparādha*. It is the three aspects of the Self, *sat*, *cit* and *ananda*, that appear in the phenomenal world as the

13. आत्मना विन्दते वीर्यम् ।

Kena Upaniṣad 2.4

14. किं नाम रोदिषि सखे त्ययि सर्वशक्ति-

रामन्त्रयस्व भगवन् भगदं स्वरूपम् ।

त्रैलोक्यमेतदखिलं तव पादमूले

आत्मैव हि प्रभवते न जडः कदाचित् ॥

Complete Works 6:274

higher values of Goodness, Truth and Beauty. This means that the ideals we are seeking outside are really within us. Every man has his own unique way of realizing these ideals. Hence, as Swami Vivekananda said, 'Your Self is your own highest ideal'. Following the ideals and ways of others retards the course of one's own spiritual evolution. That is why the Gita says, 'The dharma of others is fraught with danger'.¹⁵

However, the greatest sin against oneself is to remain in ignorance about the Atman without struggling to realize it. What do we get from the external world? As far as experience is concerned, we get nothing more than knowledge and happiness. And Atman is the source of both. All that we find outside are only shadows cast by the inner Light, little joys mixed with greater amounts of sorrow and suffering. To pursue constantly these shadows, which can never bring us lasting fulfilment, without struggling to realize the Atman, the source of all human glory, happiness, knowledge and strength—what could be a greater sin than this! Those who commit this sin have been described as *ātmahanah*, killers of the Self, in the Upaniṣads.

Moral life is not considered an end in itself in India; it has a higher purpose—the realization of the Atman. This leads us to the next section.

Prajñāparādha

The Atman is the only thing that is absolutely free—free from ignorance, from sorrow, from bondage to instincts and the senses, from change, from the laws of the universe. Everything else—body, mind, objects of the universe, is governed by laws. By realizing the Self one attains total free-

15. परधर्मो भयावहः ।

Gītā 3.35

dom and goes beyond ignorance and sorrow. All the Upanisads testify to this truth. This transcendental freedom has remained the ultimate goal of ethics. Ethics as such binds a person with rules and customs but it also teaches him how to break his bonds and become free.

However, only a few people in any age succeed in breaking their bonds. The rest of the people were expected to accommodate themselves to the rigid social and religious codes of conduct. This converted Hindu society into a closed structure with little internal mobility and external motility. It was unable to move with the changing times until it encountered the highly dynamic and powerful Western society. This encounter made it clear that unless the social and ethical attitudes of the people underwent a drastic change, it wouldn't be possible for the Indian society to survive in a rapidly advancing competitive world. What India needed was a system of ethics rooted in its own culture but would give full freedom to the individual. Swami Vivekananda found such a system could be developed on the basis of the doctrine of the Atman. He found a pragmatic social application for the transcendental truths of the Upanisads. He preached to the common people about the Atman not as something to be realized by a few sages in a remote forest at some future time, but as a fundamental category of experience in everybody's life everywhere.

It is possible to understand the presence of the Atman within us and attune our lives to it, even without realizing its transcendental nature. Śrī Śamkara gives an apt illustration of this fact. In a royal procession the king, surrounded as he is by his retinue, ceremonial umbrellas and flags, may not be visible, yet the spectators cry out, 'There goes the king'.¹⁶ Likewise, the Atman,

though encased in the successive sheaths of the intellect, mind, prāṇa, etc. can be felt as the centre of one's consciousness. Everyone feels himself as the 'I', as a distinct entity entirely different from the external objects and even from his thoughts. This means everyone experiences existential freedom in a limited way. Somewhere deep down or behind this 'I' there is a reservoir of power, knowledge and bliss. By the practice of one of the four yogas—that is, through self-analysis, selfless work, devotion or meditation—it is possible to draw from the inner reservoir and gradually increase one's freedom from ignorance and suffering. The more free a person is, the more moral he is. The whole of human life is a struggle for existential freedom. Let everyone try to be as free as possible by taking his stand on the Atman. This, in essence, was what Swami Vivekananda propounded through his system of 'Practical Vedanta'.

The Upanisadic sages made the Atman doctrine the rationale of spiritual striving. Swami Vivekananda made it the basis of social and moral life.¹⁷ It has found application even in other spheres of human life including that of physical and mental health.

When we study our lives we find that almost all our sufferings come from our wrong actions ; we act wrongly because we are unable to take correct decisions ; and we are unable to decide correctly because we are not free. We are constantly driven by our thoughts, emotions and instincts. The only real freedom we have got is to remain as the witness of our thoughts and actions, a freedom which we owe to the Atman. This witnessing consciousness in us is known as

¹⁷. The Teacher of the Gita had earlier done it, but this scripture was mostly interpreted by the ancient commentators as a *moksa-sastra* and its principles were seldom regarded as applicable to the social and ethical problems of the common man's life.

¹⁶. See Samkara, Commentary on *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.1.3

prajña. The *Aitareya upaniṣad*, through its famous dictum *prajñānam brahma*, identifies the witnessing consciousness with the infinite known as Brahman. Normally, in the rush and hurry of day-to-day life, we seldom succeed in retaining this *prajña*. We hardly ever remain free as the witnessing agent and guide our thoughts and actions consciously. Most of the time our lives are dominated by the unconscious. Our true consciousness, *prajña*, gets almost always drowned in the surging waves of the unconscious. This loss of self-awareness is known as *prajñāparādha*, 'fault of *prajñā*'.

This *prajñāparādha* is the main cause of our physical and mental sufferings. Freud is generally credited with the discovery of the unconscious and the psychosomatic nature of several human diseases. But more than two thousand years ago these facts had been very clearly recognized by Indian sages. It is sufficiently well known that Yoga embodies the principles of the unconscious and the techniques of controlling it. But it is not so widely known that the Indian system of medicine, known as Ayurveda, too does it. Physicians in ancient India traced the cause of most of the human diseases to the dominance of the unconscious and the consequent eclipse of self-awareness—*prajñāparādha*.

Suśruta (6th century B.C.), one of the three founders of Ayurveda, defined disease (*vyādhi*) as 'union with suffering' (*duhkha-samyoga*) thereby including all physical and mental illnesses under a single category. How does this union take place? Caraka, another ancient authority, in his *Caraka-samhita*¹⁸ states three causes for this: 1. *prajñāparādha* (caused by the failure of *dhī*, *dhṛti* or *smṛti*), 2. maturation of time (*kāla*) and Karma, 3. *asātmya* or dishar-

mony between the senses and their objects.¹⁹ Of these the most important is the 'fault of *prajñā*'.

The primary cause of disease is the wrong way the various organs are brought into contact with the object of the world. For instance, in the case of the stomach this imbalance may take the form of overeating, starvation, inadequate nourishment, eating harmful food etc.²⁰ This *asātmya* is in turn caused by what Caraka calls *prajñāparādha*. By *prajñā* he means all the faculties connected with self-awareness, namely, the intellect (*dhi* or *buddhi*), will (*dhṛti*) and memory (*smṛti*). Almost all our sufferings are caused by the faulty use of these faculties. Instead of remaining as the witness, we identify ourselves with our thoughts, emotions and sense objects. This delusion or *buddhi-bhramśa* is the first mistake we commit. The deluded mind is drawn away by the objects of enjoyment. Though this tendency can be checked by an exercise of the will, we fail to do it; this is *dhṛti-bhramśa*. This failure of the will is caused by the failure of memory, *smṛti-bhramśa*. Owing to restlessness or inertia, the mind does not remember its past sufferings or the instructions of wise men.²¹ All these three types of failures together constitute what Caraka calls the 'fault of *prajñā*'.²²

The nature and course of our entire life depend upon the way we maintain our *prajña*. Physical and mental troubles and sufferings are mostly caused by *prajñā-*

19. धीधृतिस्मृतिविभ्रंशः संप्राप्ति कालकर्मणाम् ।
असात्म्यार्थागमश्चेति ज्ञातव्या दुःखहेतवः ॥

Caraka-Samhita, Śārīrasthāna. 98

20. Ibid 1.127,128

21. Ibid 1.99,100,101

22. धीधृतिस्मृतिविभ्रष्टः कर्म यत् कुरुतेऽशुभम् ।
प्रज्ञापराधं तं विद्यात् सर्वदोषप्रकोपणम् ॥

Ibid 1.102

18. This work of 1st century A.D. is believed to be the revised version of an earlier work by Agnivesa who lived in the 5th century B.C.

parādha. In other words, they are the results of the sin against oneself.

Love for the Self and self-love

We have discussed two of the three practical aspects of Atman-oriented ethics which are primarily concerned with the individual self. The third aspect concerns the relationship between the individual self and other selves. Social life is not mere gregariousness but is based on love. Love has two

poles: the subject and the object. The primary instinct in every person is that of self-preservation or self-love. But religion and social traditions condemn selfishness as a sin or vice, and glorify 'selfless' love for others as the highest virtue. This creates a paradoxical situation in human life and is a major cause of mental conflicts. It is therefore necessary to examine the nature of self-love and selfless love for others. This will be attempted in next month's editorial.

THE CALL OF VOCATION

DR. MARGARET BEDROSIAN

"Many are called, but few are chosen."

—Jesus

"Who cares to seek
For that perfect freedom?
One man, perhaps,
In many thousands.
Then tell me how many
Of those who seek freedom
Shall know the total
Truth of my being?
Perhaps one only."

—Krishna

Deep in the heart of night, the man whose life had unfolded like a fairy tale come true—nobly born and gifted, free to become or have whatever the world could offer materially or socially—rejected all with a snip of the scissors. As his hair fell away, the Prince cast aside his outworn persona and accepted the begging bowl that would feed his new one. In this, one of the most profound of universal myths, worldly expectation is thwarted, relentlessly and persistently, until the erstwhile Prince penetrates the cosmic shell and becomes the Buddha. His story is perhaps the ultimate paradigm of the Call, for it points toward a Path that

beckons still after 25 centuries. Even now, in the midst of this computerized, galaxy-probing age, the call to solve the mystery of life by an intuitive grasp of its essence remains constant. And just as Siddhartha finally abandoned external teachers and methods after exhausting their resources, plunging alone into the uncharted depths of his psyche, for us too, the Path remains unpaved, with only signposts to guide us along.

Though the winds of Being beckon constantly, most people will never wake to hear the Call that impelled the Prince, at least not in his lifetime. Whatever it is that holds together the cosmic play, called *līlā* in Hinduism, its grip on life—through habit and temptation—is almost total. To defy nature by entertaining the thought of self-transcendence sooner or later alerts every demon in existence—understandably: threatening to crack the world mirror that reflects the savage illusion of 'mortality', the hero wreaks havoc with stability, thumbs his nose at convention, and dares a costly independence.

Yet despite the costs, the potential to receive the Call is with us from the beginning of life. Its first vibrations set creation into motion: God utters the Word and there is light; the sacred syllable Om throbs within Brahman and a universe emanates. At this initial stage of creation, the Word manifests, or calls forth, what has lain in darkness, mining and informing the Fullness. According to many spiritual traditions, once the cosmos is established, the Word does not subside; rather, as expressed in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, it enters into every cell of creation as a seed, the repository of any and all meaning each creature can achieve.¹ This womb of meaning will eventually give birth to enlightenment, but since each human being also carries a distinctive karma—a history of delimiting choices and desires—the gifts, the shape of the path, and the resonance of the call will vary. We see this variation reflected in our differing responses to the personalities of world teachers or mythological deities. Each of them points toward the Highest, yet according to our temperament, we are drawn in varying degrees to Christ's radical mercy, the Buddha's insistence on stoic self-reliance, to the cowherd Krishna's eroticism and Kali's blood-stained grin. No matter what our tastes, though, and no matter how long the seed has lain latent, the Word will eventually stir, set into motion by the desire to manifest at the personal level the divinity that demands expression. Indeed, this desire which we spend so much of our daily lives either indulging, fighting, escaping, or tempering, is the very reason for existence. But normally, desire goes

outward; enslaved to duality, we run after what we do not have, partisans of possessions and pleasures we must have in order to feel whole.

The drastic shift in our life history occurs when desire begins to reorient itself, signalling a literal rebirth of consciousness. The sign that the Word is beginning to vibrate at a new pitch is symbolized in every religious and mythological tradition of the world, as for example in the thrilling sound of Krishna's conchshell at the start of the *Bhagavad Gita* or the Hindu parable of the cobra stinging the heart with a poison that will heal the divisions of life. Describing this rite of passage into a new mode of being, D. T. Suzuki writes:

The Bodhicittopada is...a new spiritual excitement which shifts one's center of energy. It is the becoming conscious of a new religious aspiration which brings about a cataclysm in one's mental organization. A man who has been a stranger to the religious life now cherishes an intense desire for enlightenment... and the whole course of his future life is thereby determined....²

Whatever the impetus for this 'cataclysm'—whether the wearing away of worldly desires by time or a sudden insight into the veneer of existence brought about through crisis or tragedy—after this new vision seeps into our awareness, some bridges are burnt for good. This idea is put forth in the Tarot by the initial play of the Magician, who tells us what we have to hear, who tricks us into consciousness. In the story of the Buddha, the Magician lured the spiritually ripe Prince from the palace to ponder the most ordinary and inescapable facts of life—sickness, old age, and death. For the more stubborn

1. The passage referred to in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* reads: 'Creating all things, he entered into everything.' *The Upanishads*, trans. Swami Prabhavananda and Frederick Manchester (New York: New American Library, 1957), p. 56.

2. D. T. Suzuki, *On Indian Mahayana Buddhism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 210.

sensibility, the Magician may have to use more elaborate means, as in the case of Abu Kasem. In this tale recounted by Heinrich Zimmer in *The King and the Corpse*, a miser's inordinate love of his filthy, threadbare slippers and his naive assumption that he can casually exchange them for new ones he hasn't earned, lead to a series of 'unaccidental' coincidences: the old slippers keep coming back no matter how hard the miser tries to destroy them, at great financial and emotional cost. Zimmer concludes that the shoes are emblems of the ego itself: having denied the imperative to change and having ignored the Magician's nightly warnings, we are manacled to its demands until the knots we have tightened are unravelled one by one. Even when the desire for enlightenment arises, obstacles don't vanish; actually, as the searchlight of the spirit falls more intensely on the inner recesses of our psyche, we are likely to see more hurdles than we care to; the excesses that we haven't tempered, the shadows we haven't acknowledged, the demons we've stowed in our unconscious—all are called forth in the quest for integration. In the face of such arduous demands, the only guarantees are the negatives: there is no formulaic solution to our dilemma and there is no going back.

At the same time, if the Call is from the centre of our life, rather than the periphery, it will lift us with irrepressible energy, enough to sustain the period of self-purification. Again, the promise of such inspiration comes from the very nature of the Word itself: once it begins to vibrate at this new frequency, it doesn't stop until its creative urge is satisfied. We may get sick denying it, but that doesn't stop the process. As Suzuki states, the course of our future is 'thereby determined', and even when we can't regulate our energy at the conscious level, from a more intuitive

level the Word is beeping out signals, searching for resonant relationships to encourage us. This dynamic helps explain why without our looking for him, a spiritual guide or teacher may appear on our path. Such a meeting transforms us further; peering into his face and recognizing our own, we validate the possibility of Self-realization as an objective goal as well as an inner necessity. By his persistent example and elusive personality, the spiritual guide also warns us from relying too heavily on his magnetism: the Call that brought us to him came from the deepest recesses of our own psyche. Treading the Path, which the Upanishads call a 'razor's edge', demands a continual balancing of inner and outer energies, an avoidance of the cult of personality, whether projected onto the person of the Guide or one's arrogant ego. Treading the Path also means that as we pursue the thread of our personality to its source, we weave a custom-made mantle to clothe ourselves. Authentically our own, organically created from the particulars of our life, this mantle is the personal myth that will eventually mirror Being back to itself: luminous and seamless, it clothes all of Creation with its truth. Indeed, this garment may well be the cloak that lets us participate in the wedding feast of Christ's parable.³

As elaborated in the great spiritual traditions of the world, the pattern of the spiritual quest does not waver, nor do the disciplines change: patience, discrimination, compassion, dispassion continue to be our taskmasters. Similarly, the symbols that have inspired spiritual seekers of all times and places still call forth our loyalty.

³. The parable I cite concerns the wedding guest ejected from the feast because he was not wearing festive attire. See Matt. 22:1-14 in *The Jerusalem Bible*, The New Testament, ed. Alexander Jones (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1966). Pp. 33-4.

But given the special circumstances of our own century, the old answers of these powers to our most serious questions are no longer valid. As Zimmer insists, 'the powers have to be consulted directly—again, again, and again. Our primary task is to learn, not so much what they are said to have said, as how to approach them, evoke fresh speech from them, and understand that speech'.⁴ Though the Call—an invitation to become whole—remains constant, the strategy that will achieve this wholeness will vary according to the needs of the time.

What then are the prerogatives of the spiritual quest in this time, a period the humanities refer to as the modern crisis, now running its course under the shadow of atomic holocaust? It is not by chance that the latter literalizes the plight of our age: the ultimate word on fragmentation, the bomb mirrors our collective will to start fresh, to retreat from a karma that has to be worked out atom by atom. In the imageless dawn of nuclear annihilation, no ghostly problems will plague us. Like Abu Kasem grown to planetary proportions, we will have annihilated the old slippers of an entire world. But the delusions that indulge such wishful thinking offer no comfort to the living, who know that 'starting fresh' presupposes death. Although the call evokes a fresh perspective on life, one that enables us to act from a sense of universality, in no way do we abandon or escape from the specific situation where we received the Call. This notion is succinctly expressed in Christopher Isherwood's comment on the warrior Arjuna's task in 'the *Bhagavad-Gita*, to confront the web of causality he has woven out of his previous desires: 'At any given moment in time, we are what we are; and

we have to accept the consequences of being ourselves. Only through this acceptance can we begin to evolve further. We may select the battleground. We cannot avoid the battle'.⁵ And as we face up to this battle, the Call spurs us to a transcendent view of our true nature, which in turn lifts us above the limitations that encouraged escape.

The dynamic relationship between Krishna and Arjuna, at the highest level a metaphor of the tie between the Higher and lower selves, is animated by Krishna's insistence that the Absolute always grounds our daily life. But he reserves his most emphatic arguments for the path of karma yoga, the way of action in which the disciple wholeheartedly enters into the demands of duty, responsibly completing the tasks set forth, yet remaining aloof from any desire for the fruits of the action. In his tour-de-force, Krishna persuades the warrior that the life of the spirit becomes most real as we follow the path of our vocation: 'I am all that a man may desire/Without transgressing/The law of his nature'.⁶ Indeed, after contemplating Krishna's counsel in its entirety, we see the futility of making spiritual progress without acceding to the law of our nature—both as members of the human race and as distinct individuals. As conceived by the author of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the Call does not allow us to run away from the limitations of our life, but inspires us to follow the law of our nature to its very end, to complete our dharmic destiny by attaining the freedom of *samādhi*. Indeed, within the Hindu schema of the four stages of life, our

4. Heinrich Zimmer, *The King and the Corpse*, ed. Joseph Campbell (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1948), p. 4.

5. *The Song of God: Bhagavad-Gita*, trans. Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (New York: New American Library, 1944), p. 139.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

highest *dharma* or vocation is liberation itself.

But considering the demands of our own time, when the meaning and value of work have undergone such a revolution, how do we reaffirm the primacy of vocation? Literature of both the 19th and 20th centuries abounds with examples of work devitalized of meaning, of characters no longer certain that action leads to growth. One of the most indelible portraits of such a person is Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. What makes Raskolnikov such an apt example of our collective sickness is that his disjointed relationship to work is mirrored in his disjointed relationship to everything else in his life: his relationships are sundered through his bad humour, his life as a student has degenerated to solipsistic meditations on the Superman *above* human weakness, and his health reflects the anaemic look of a man cut off from the four elements. That he contemplates and then enacts murder should be no surprise; indeed, as Dostoevsky makes so clear, the murder is the least important event in the novel, a catalyst for the regeneration to follow. Without dwelling on the complexities that finally bring Raskolnikov to justice, we move to the end of the novel to find Sonya's redemptive love bolstered by Raskolnikov's renewed sense of enthusiasm for life: though Dostoevsky does not emphasize it, the backdrop for Raskolnikov's rehabilitation is his connection with real work, the kind that leaves him physically exhausted, deprives him of any energy to entertain theoretical illusions, and gives him the peaceful rest that allows the unconscious to heal his psyche. And though he does not have a vocation by the end of the story, Sonya's call to an 'undreamed-of reality' suggests that he will eventually find one.

Elsewhere, in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*,

Octavio Paz definitively etches the profiles of modern work:

Modern man never surrenders himself to what he is doing. A part of him—the profoundest part—always remains detached and alert. Man spies on himself. Work, the only modern god, is no longer creative. It is endless, infinite work, corresponding to the inconclusive life of modern society. And the solitude it engenders—the random solitude of hotels, offices, shops and movie theaters—is not a test that strengthens the soul, a necessary purgatory. It is utter damnation, mirroring a world without exit.⁷

By nature opposed to organic growth, which proceeds from the inner to the outer, such work denies the role of vocation, imprisoning the soul in the desert of the impersonal rather than the fertile soil of incipient vision. Where indeed is there room for vision when the images that ambush us in the modern labyrinth, symbolized by the corridors of the mindlessly self-replicating highrise, project the hopelessness of flux without escape—except by a suicidal jump through a window? From this perspective, work is mechanical action: a robot, a computer, any non-human agent programmed to perform can do it. What then is the collective self-image of such a working society? Endless consumption to clear space for more work; the literal effacement of the worker; psychological ennui that breeds a radical disengagement from the self and from the world: man spies on himself, trying to detect any signs of 'progress' by scrutinizing the growth charts, restless in the grip of a tension he doesn't understand. Deaf to the call of vocation that does mirror a world with an exit, he is numbed by the clatter of the office, the slick passion of the movie theatre, the sterility of the hotel.

7. Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), p. 204.

Despite the pervasive force of these now-clichéd images, even within our own century magnificent models of alternative ties to work and the Call offer us hope. But as in the great myths, a transforming response to the Call can only come from the individual, not an institution. Further, because of its absolute demands on our attention and loyalty, vocation requires periods of intense solitude, a creative solitude radically different from the desperate alienation Paz writes of. In this solitary space, the individual receives the Call in its purity and devises the forms that will filter divine energy into the world. Musing on this solitude, William Everson writes, 'I have stopped at many oases in my life. Vocation is the force that carries you beyond them, that won't let you rest, that seizes you and possesses you and carries you along. When you have your vocation you have your archetype'.⁸ This statement not only reiterates the Hindu concept of *dharma* but identifies the dynamic that governs this process. Vocation gives us our 'archetype', the raft that delivers us to the Other Shore, the 'interface' that translates personal energy into a transpersonal mode.

Supporting this view of archetype is the definition offered by James Vargiu in his discussion of creativity. After reviewing the transmuting effect of symbols on the human psyche as elaborated by C. G. Jung and Roberto Assagioli, Vargiu notes that archetypes are 'patterns of energy in the creative field,' that they correspond 'to distinct modes of vibration' within this field.⁹ In other words, the archetypes are much like the syllables of the creative

Word, bringing form and coherence to the universe. As such, they can also organize mental elements to reflect their own configuration. By visualizing and contemplating such a symbol and its deeper meaning 'with sufficient mental tension', we are able to absorb energy from the creative field and filter it into the rest of our psyche, enlivening our personal and spiritual transformation. Vargiu's insight into the specific role of the archetype is thus in line with Everson's: both recognize that the archetype connects our finite self to our limitless Source. Furthermore, once we have discovered the archetype best suited to our temperament at any given time and surrendered to its transforming power, it will help 'carry us along' by integrating the scattered energies of the psyche.

Thus the Word that roused the waters of the Unmanifest urges each part of creation to a higher level of self-realization through the vehicle of vocation, the discovery of which enables us to complete our journey. In this sense, we are all 'called' to the feast that celebrates integration. But until we learn to identify oasis from desert in the midst of the plastic and neon overlay of modern life and learn to trust that dense and tactile silence that draws the spirit inward, any response to the deeper calls of life will be miraculous. Yet despite these obstacles to our search for vocation, certain rules-of-thumb help us identify our calling. One, which we are apt to overlook because it seems so obvious, is perhaps our most telling guide: what is that one thing we do that we cannot make a mess of? We may be depressed, in crisis, even in physical pain, but in any context where this gift has space to play, it comes forth naturally. In fact, it's not ours to botch. This gift may be as ordinary as creating a memorable meal from leftovers and imagination, using wit

8. William Everson, *The Birth of a Poet: The Santa Cruz Meditations*, ed. Lee Bartlett (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1982), p. 30.

9. James Vargiu, 'Creativity,' in *Synthesis 3-4: The Realization of the Self* (San Francisco: Psychosynthesis Institute, n.d.), p. 42.

to disperse the blues with laughter, stepping into a classroom impromptu and leading a group of students to insight. Because it offers itself so effortlessly, we may even snicker: it's too easy, it costs me nothing. Yet this very fluidity is what directs us toward our vocation.

Unlike the disengaged activity described by Octavio Paz, such skill is never mechanical; always fresh and truly original because it proceeds from our personal centre we love to do it. Whenever we have found a way to make this gift the core of our life's work—a discovery that thoroughly tests our self-knowledge—we have found our vocation. Vocation itself will not always be effortless: it may ask us to abandon forms of creativity unsuited to our abilities. It may also challenge our ability to interact with the givens of the external world and our personal limitations. But though the teacher may not find it easy to pass out grades, the writer reluctant to receive incisive criticism, the ballerina afraid to step before an audience, these 'growing edges' enforce the discipline that hones the individual into a fit vehicle of service.

No wonder that in the *Bhagavad-Gita*,

Krishna declares such work holy, an honourable way of reaching the highest Truth by performing those tasks uniquely ours. And no wonder that in the last moments of his life, the Buddha counselled his disciples to 'work out' their salvation with diligence. He knew that enlightenment is our ultimate vocation, that all others are preparatory. Yet as we've seen, the Call that sparked his quest for nirvana sprang from the same compulsion that drives an individual to find and serve his archetype: both journeys lead through a psychological terrain shaped by our distinctive karma and desires. Both call for the sacrifice of every wayward impulse to leave the Path, whether these desires are conventionally sanctioned or not. Both demand that we discriminate between false voices—inner and outer—and the genuine command of the Call. Due to these rigours, many are indeed called, but few are chosen. But the one who follows the Call all the way not only completes his personal destiny, but brings the world into focus for the rest of us. Enriched by this vision, we can more courageously follow the thread of meaning in our own lives—even when it leads out of an oasis into the flowering desert of vocation.

THE OBSERVATION OF SELF SACRIFICE

PROF. DAVID APPELBAUM

Abstract

[The *ātmayāji*, he who attends to the sacrifice of self, is incorrectly drawn in the figure of 'reining in' the activity of sense perception (*pratayakṣa*). His activity then begins apparently with the elimination of sensory input to the sensorium, or *manas*. This position is rejected by a careful analysis of British empiricism, which implicitly conveys the notion of the conscious enrichment of sense impressions. A fully embodied impression derives from the progressive opening of the sense organs. It alone supplies the conditions necessary to the appearance of genuine intelligence, or *bodhi* mind, and eventually to the stilling of the mind altogether (*amanībhāva*).]

How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts
the airy way
Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by
your senses five?
Blake, The Marriage of Heaven & Hell

'I yoke myself, like an understanding horse (*hayo na vidvān ayuji svayam*)' (RV V.46.1), says he who has mastered the inner sacrifice. He is a self-sacrificer (*ātmayājī*), 'one who himself officiates as his own sacrificial priest.' (MU VI. 10) He knows sacrifice to be a state of consciousness who can 'offer up all the workings of the senses and the breaths in the Fire of the yoga of self-control, kindled by gnosis.' (BG IV. 27) Exterior conditions are contingent and secondary; they are as supports to the essentially self-referring interior act. Knowing that 'by knowledge (*vidyayā*) they ascend to where desires have migrated; it is not by merit nor by ignorant ardour ... but only to Comprehensors that the world belongs,' (SB X.5.4.16) the master of *ātmayajña* surpasses all that is known in ritual observance.

The nature of the inner act of sacrifice, however, presents an anomaly to investigation. Since sacrifice, when by an *ātmayājī*, is intentional by necessity, it is and remains non-violent. To violate, to brutalize the sacrificial consciousness, is to force an object on it, thereby to cause it to relate by means of domination, a contradiction in terms. Hence the ordinary connotation of yoking (*yuj*), which implies controlled tension combined with an ascetic attitude (*tapas*), is mistakenly applied. The form of yoga belonging to sacrificial consciousness, its knowledge and ontology, is the central concern in this study. The proceedings turn toward modern empirical epistemology for insight into the process of sense perception (*pratyakṣa*), thereby owing a debt not to a single tradition of thought and practice, but to a comparative method. Development of a vocabulary of divided reference is an implied interest, since that which furthers the

analytic hypotheses binding disparate traditions and languages is necessarily comparative.

The paper divides into three sections. Part I, 'Phases of Sacrificial Consciousness', recapitulates the development of the act of sacrifice, beginning with the intentional arrest of normal consciousness, through to a consciousness of the conflict inherent in such a consciousness. Part II, 'The Impression of Empiricism', elaborates the innovative character given the perceptual process by empiricism, together with its historical shortcomings in clarifying the nature of that process. Part III, 'The Release of Manas', brings together the idea of an amplified, deepened, and sensate impression (proprioception) with that of the right employment of *manas* (sense consciousness) in order to further the understanding of the non-violent nature of sacrificial consciousness.¹

I. The Phases of Sacrificial Consciousness

It is correct to think of sacrificial consciousness as volitional and intentional. It is volitional in that, in its initial phases, it concerns the object of desire, that which gives sense awareness its habitual orientation; intentional in that it can actively posit its own object rather than passively appropriating the volitional one. The object can be real (as was Isaac to Abraham), or symbolic, as in the Agnihotram (oblation to Agni, or Fire): 'The Sacrificer casts himself in the form of seed ...

1. Manas is defined as including the linkage between perceptive and motor activity as well as supplying the volitional basis of all impressions. See, Aniruddha, ad *Sāmkhyasūtras* II. 40, 42. As the synthesizer of the five senses, the *sensus communis*, its derivative, the *ahamkāra*, which adds the thought 'I am the doer' to the perceptive information, is the cause of consciousness and (largely) unconscious volitional attitudes extending to otherwise desire-neutral sense perception.

into the household Fire.' (SB VII.2.1.6) Intention is made to stand in opposition to volition in this phase; hence, the mistake or humour over the sacrifice of unwanted possessions. The dichotomizing effect of juxtaposing different objects of will and intentionality does not annul or cancel the former. Sacrifice is in no simple way equated with renunciation (*vairāgya*) or surrender. Rather, the intentional creation (or re-creation) of opposition highlights the mechanics of consciousness of desire and the phenomena in train with it, sense perception and motor activity. The oppositional situation reverts consciousness both to the contingency and the alien nature of the volitional object. One is made to see how it is when engaged in attaining an end of habit, how unillumined desire shows itself. Through such contrast and arrest, clarification of volitional tendencies hitherto unperceived proceeds as a primary result of the onset of sacrifice.

The oppositional situation, moreover, recapitulates in an inverted fashion the movement from a unitary state of consciousness. It contains therein knowledge concerning the resumption of that undivided state beyond the ordinary arising and perishing of desire and sense activity. Of great import is not only selection of the intended object of sacrificial consciousness, but also the strength with which it is made to stand opposed to the volitional object. Not an ascetic principle, the tension of contradiction is precisely what permits arrest or rupture of ordinary volition, a state where consciousness vanishes in its object in a sensory and bodily frame which is habituated.²

2. Cf. Eliade, *Yoga and Immortality* (Princeton University Press, 1959) p. 270: '...immortality cannot be gained except by *arresting manifestation*, and hence the process of disintegration; one must proceed "against the current" (*ujana sadhana*) and once again find the primordial, motionless Unity which existed before rupture.'

The 'stop' provides the further possibility of evolution toward a sense of the whole. Work toward arrest is emphasized in the admonitions against the mechanical performance of sacrifice. The would-be sacrificer 'departs from this world, not having seen his very own world, he unaware of it no more profits than one might from the Vedas unrecited or a deed undone.' (BU I.4.15) As will be seen, the divisiveness of habitual modes of volitional consciousness itself stands as the object of sacrifice; to sacrifice without awareness of it is to miss the mark of the *ātmayāji* altogether.

The first phase of sacrificial consciousness is completed in the arrest of ordinary volition by its intentional contrary. The second phase begins with recognizing the state of submergence of consciousness in its object so characteristic of the first. With the recognition comes the return of the memory of continuity of awareness and of self-identity, the stamp of the middle period of sacrifice. That which initiates acknowledgement of loss is the oppositional situation, with its knowledge of succession, alteration and reversal. The arising and perishing of phenomena, the train of all things passing through all things, awakens with it the vantage point from which discontinuity may be perceived, i.e., self-consciousness. 'He knows, but it is not by means of anything other than himself that he knows.' (BU IV.5.15) With the re-collection of self-consciousness, the possibility of a unitary consciousness first posited with the intended object is actualized, though not perfected. Further reclaim of this possibility rests solely with the persistence of an awareness of loss and its avoidance.

A persisting presence to the object of desire and its sensory complex is achieved in the third and final phase by developing continuity and intensity of awareness. The rupture precipitated by the original display of intention, the creation of opposition, is

made fixed by the sacrificer's seeing the volitional object from the perspective of un-habituated sense consciousness, a consciousness not given to appropriating any historical option. Presence is ensured by the fact that consciousness does not try to possess its object in any way, hence does not expose itself to risk of loss in the first place, what loss of object (rejection) or loss of self (dispersion). The historically learned tendency to secure the object is instead replaced by the sacrificial act of observing it as it is, however it may be. Since this phase of the sacrifice carries with it nothing to furnish grounds for dichotomizing the object volitionally perceived from the way it is, as it is, consciousness remains distinct and self-identical through movement toward or away from it. Observation of desire and its sensory train thereby becomes the activity crowning sacrifice. Since the object normally has an unrestricted range, Manu's *Dharmaśāstra* concludes that 'Seeing the self (*ātman*) impartially in all beings and all beings in the self, the *ātmayājī* obtains autonomy.' (XII.91)

The completion of the sacrifice thereby occurs in the observational mode, which perceives the object desired for what it is, and which finds the object without being inclined towards its immediate attainment. Observation clearly has drifted linguistically from its root meaning, which has to do with keeping things from falling from the opening and light, and has apparently fixated on a shallow reference to sensory perception. The fact of the shift seems to imply contradictory hypotheses. When sensory perception is considered superficially, its place with regard to sacrificial consciousness may be held, according to language, to be minimal. When observation is considered sacrificially, its connection with ordinary sense perception may, in the same way, be regarded as non-existent. Both conclusions are incorrect. It will be the course of the next

section to begin development of a theory of perception opening onto sacrificial consciousness. It will be the theme of the following section to show how the sacrifice of observation belongs to the *ātmayājī*, who offers up volitional sense consciousness, and how the latter's transformation, being non-violent, is self-transformation.

II. *The Impression of Empiricism*

Sacrificial consciousness is correlated with the 'interior burnt-offering', or inner Agnihotram, the sacrifice by Fire to Fire: 'O Agni, sacrifice thine own body.' *Agne yajasva tanvam tava svām* (RV VI.11.2) Without the light of inner combustion, observational transformation cannot proceed against volition, emptying and unifying it; for, 'he is a truly poor man (*sannyāsī*), he is a harnessed man (*yogī*) who does what ought to be done (*kāryam karma karoti*), regardless of consequences; not such is one who kindles no sacred fire and performs no rites.' (BG VI.1) It has been shown how observation consummates the act of sacrifice in lending continuity to that which is conscious of being distinct from its object; and how that continuity results from abiding awareness of the possibility of loss of consciousness. The objective of the present section is to amplify the notion of observation by grounding it in its ordinary context, the sensory perception of objects (*pratyakṣa*). If the interiorization of the Agnihotram is to be understood, sensory activity must be included entirely within the realm of sacrifice. The senses must participate in the self-illumination of the Fire. They too must be self-aware.³

3. Cf. Echo of MU II. 6 ff, describing the procession of Prajapati, the Prime One: 'He, having still unattained ends from within the heart considered, "Let me eat of sense objects (*arthān asnāni*)."' Thereupon breaking through these apertures and going forth with five rays

The usual meaning of observation finds its locus in the taking in of sense impressions, sights, sounds, tastes, touches, smells, that then are constructive elements in the world. To the extent a view utilizes this fact, that view is empiricistic. The residing problem becomes one of constituting consciousness. The empiricist then goes on to explain a selection process whereby only certain impressions are retained in memory (the actual number being incalculable) and that their 'images', as Hume (THN I.I.1) calls them, are residual representations of the object (its name and form, 'nama-rupa'). This representational view of consciousness places certain limits on the operation of the sense-organs that tend to depreciate the value of impressions themselves in favour of the remembered images. Representation is stressed over immediacy.⁴ The change in value, moreover, is obscured by the unavailability of the means of adequately representing the actual difference between the memory and the sensation of the object. Sensation is explicitly non-representational. British empiricism is the best example of this position, since it most clearly developed a language for representing the distinction, though it remained naive in its treatment of sensation. Hume dismisses all sensation to the study of anatomy, as if the only correct scientific study of the body were representational and non-sensate. Locke tersely notes that 'the senses convey into the mind, I

(*rasmibhih*), he eats of sense objects (*viṣayān atti*): these cognitive powers (*buddhīndriyāṇi*) are his rays, the organs of action (*karmendriyāṇi*) are his steeds, the body is his chariot, manas is their governor (*niyantr*), his nature (*prakṛti*) the whip; impelled by him as its only energizer, this body spins like the potter's wheel, impelled by him alone is this body set up on a state of consciousness (*cetanavat*), he only is its mover.'

4. Truth, it follows, belongs solely to ideas as representative, insofar as ideas copy with more or less accuracy the object they represent. See THN III.I.1.

mean, they from external objects convey into the mind what produces there those perceptions.' (ECHU II.1 'Of Ideas in General, and Their Original'.)⁵ The exaggerated bias against recognizing a sensate consciousness makes British empiricism doubly attractive for the present study. Through its representational vocabulary, it can supply a highly articulate picture of the impression. At the same time its innovative views on sense consciousness leave it susceptible to revision in favour of sensation over memory. By its example, a balanced view of the operation of observation is accessible.

The initial question concerns the genesis of impressions. That the taking of the impression proceeds 'from external objects' is troublesome if the externality always lies beyond consciousness. This is the great metaphysical difficulty for Locke, the object being a 'supposed I know not what' (ECHU II.23; cf. THN I.III.5). But the essential passivity implied for all sense consciousness is more worrisome. Then, all constituting modes become habitude, mechanical reactions, as is the wall of a bell to the impact of the clapper. None represent an intentional act of receptivity. Without apprehension of the active mode of sense awareness, nominalism and atomism haunt empiricism. Since all linguistic entities are timeless, sense consciousness is drawn more firmly to naming; the world is the set of atomic descriptions. Atomism leads to isolation of the individual sensory organs and of their impressions. An observation thereby amounts to taking an instantaneous cross-section of the output of a particular organ. It is without ground, a purely mental apprehension.⁶ Conscious-

5. Cf. THN, I.I.2.

6. On the distinction between appropriation of the impression by naming and that by immediacy of sense-contact, Dasgupta quotes Mrs. Rhys Davids: 'The latter is called perception of resistance, or opposition (*patigha-sanna*). This, writes Buddhaghosa, is perception on occasion of sight, hearing, etc., when consciousness

ness, in acquiescing to reactivity, is fragmentary and bound by the relation of before and after. It observes one by one a series of superficial configurations. Observation is thus made to coincide, as a consequence of passive reception, with the submergence of consciousness. It is a mode of identification with the object.⁷

In the passive state of ordinary sense consciousness, the object appears to threaten loss and aggression. Consequently, sense consciousness flees. The experience is of fleeting attention to sensory events, combined with a greater reliance on their remembered occasions. This is the state where objects served by impressions seem 'distinct existences', as Hume describes.⁸ Their apprehension leads him to conclude that there is no self-apprehension of greater duration than the momentary appearance of the object of sense consciousness taken in the impression. Hume's scepticism denies self-consciousness on the grounds that 'no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding.' (THN, Appendix 635) Successive relations between representations of external things are thus exhaustibly the entire supply of relations. A complete system of mechanical associations between representa-

is aware of the impact of impressions; of external things as different, we might say. The latter is called perception of the equivalent word or name (*adhivachana-sanna*), and is exercised by the *sensus communis* (mano) when e.g., "one is seated...and asks another who is thoughtful: 'What are you thinking of? one perceives through his speech.'" *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1922), I, p. 96.

7. It is this line of thought that eventuates in Hume's declaration that the 'idea of external existence as something specifically distinct from ideas and impressions' is impossible. (I.II.6) Existence that is something represented in memory, but not immediately experienced in sense consciousness.

8. THN, Appendix 636.

tions can be given for Hume, in terms of 'resemblance' and 'contiguity in time and place'.⁹ The conceptualization of successivity gains an effective defence against the engulfing behaviour of the object. It partitions the impact. It is also as effective a barrier against the recognition of simultaneity of impressions as the inert, insensitive, receptivity it signals.

Locke's dumbness about sensation attests to this chain of events. Sensation 'is, as it were the actual entrance of any idea into the understanding by the senses.'¹⁰ The entry itself and the immediacy of sense consciousness are left blank. The question of clarity of sensation, as it is, by contrast wants to know about simultaneous relations: what is happening in the moment of its appearance. For, in the active state of sense consciousness, attention begins to include non-representationally what is in actuality being experienced sensately in the moment it is being experienced. Thus, the impression taken has added dimensions, both in sensation and in memory, though of course not in representational form. Without falling into a representational category, it is experienced as a unique perception, a singular occurrence. Observation, in the partial sense of British empiricism, i.e., classification of an object by use of cases and kinds, is rejected. As soon as simultaneity is recognized to be a part of proprioception,¹¹ observation means more than the remembered

9. *Ibid.*, I.III.2.

10. ECHU II.XIX, 'Of the Modes of Thinking'.

11. 'Proprioception', literally, 'one's own-ception', designates the body's internal perception of its own movement and distribution in space. Physiologically, it is grounded in distinct receptor organs ('proprioceptors') at fixed body locales. Any disturbance in physiological equilibrium is recorded proprioceptively. Hence, proprioception accompanies all sense-perception. The point in the present study is that evolution of proprioceptive awareness provides means for re-unifying consciousness in the light of sacrifice.

image, namely, the non-static, processual movement of sensation. Observation is fluid, particular, and non-discursive. It is also, as opposed to Locke's version, sensitive to the 'actual entrance' of the impression. Indeed, the moment of entry is its proper frame of reference.

It is necessary to return to an empiricism earlier in thought than that of Locke and Hume in order to reject the complex of externality and passive receptivity which belabours observation in their critical and reflective sense.¹² The primordial empiricism begins by locating the error of British empiricism, forced and constricted sense consciousness in the dysfunction which associated particular historical interpretations with sensations, concentrating on the former. To do this, it is necessary to enter more deeply into the impression before knowing more about the transformatory nature of observation. The active function of sense consciousness entails release from this interpretative element and its fixation of the past. Its opening to the current manifestation of sensation, its resensitizing, is the subject of the original empiricism which must now be examined.

III. *The Release of Manas*

When the object is external and observation confined to the external object, consciousness is largely submerged in the representations sensation calls up. The impression resulting may bear no correspondence to the world, if the memory associated with sense consciousness is only partially relevant. And, at best, it corresponds to a segment of the field as a whole. Per-

ception is as a modification of the field of sense consciousness (*vṛtti*).¹³ Moreover, so long as it identifies some segment with the whole, perception involves projection. Some name (*nāma*) or form (*rūpa*) is overlaid on the sensation. In the traditional accounts, this is described as *pratyakṣa*, going out through the sense-organ (*indriya*) and taking on the form of the object. Implicit reference is thus made to the passive role of *manas* as the normal course of sense-perception.

The recovery of consciousness, as has been seen, coincides with *manas*' active use of attention in 'conveying' the sense impression. In itself, *manas* carries no inherent tendency to malfunction. 'Manas is for men a means of bondage or liberation ... of bondage if it clings to objects of perception (*viśayasāngi*) and of liberation if not directed toward these objects (*nirviśayam*).' (MU VI.34) When the attention is no longer impressively spent on projection of a historical interpretation of sensation, and instead turns toward the current field *manas* functions without impedance, proprioceptively. The body 'sees' itself. The impression is grounded, sensate, and internal to the object. It clarifies the identity of consciousness as separate from that which it notices, the field from the segment. In this non-identifying capacity, *manas* is under direction of the impulse toward autonomy, which works to annihilate all historical interpretations linked to sense consciousness. By heeding what is presented (not represented in sensation) consciousness opens to the finely varied meanings which can appear only sensately, at that time relinquishing

12. Hume's aim is correct, to reject the position wherein 'the greatest part of mankind are induced to attribute objects to some impressions, and deny them to others.' (I.IV.2) But his failure to uncover the autonomy of sense consciousness mars his account of an independent, self-supporting state of mind.

13. *Manas* is, properly speaking, the field of sense consciousness itself. Its extent, as well as the distribution of its segments, is normally (but not naturally) determined by volitional inclinations, via the *ahamkāra*. When made object of sacrificial consciousness, the stagnating effect on *manas* of these desires gives way to proprioceptive activity.

its ordinary unresponsiveness and withdrawal.

The recovery is guided by developing *manas'* capacity for recognition of simultaneity. Once consciousness perceives the momentariness of its self-genesis, and its irrefrangible tendency toward loss, then the experience that only in the moment does the perpetual flight of successive atoms of impressions into history cease become sufficiently heightened. The turn toward sensation is thereby necessitated. Attention is utilized to examine the internal relations of the impression, i.e., the amplitude, depth, and duration of sensation and their interrelations, hitherto ignored. Sensation is brought with greater definition to sense consciousness. This can be outlined in an example. For instance, the pressure of the sole of the foot against the floor can be sensed with greater acuity and generally extended throughout the body, eventually deepening the proprioceptive state. With concentration thereby expended on the state of *manas* itself, the inherited tendency to appropriate a remembered impression lessens.¹⁴ Concurrently, since unimpeded sensation loses the identity of its origin without losing its specificity, the initial sensing of the foot no longer prevails but serves the sense of the remainder of the body. The limits of simultaneity, moreover, are the limits of sensation. For the complete standstill of *manas* is not different from an eternally enduring sense consciousness. Both possibilities coincide with the sacrificial climax of sensation, its self-seeing.

The highly fluid state of proprioceptive

14. I.e., the interia of the *samskāra*, whose latent function is the cause of the mechanical association of past sensate states with current proprioceptive ones. *Samskāra* form the deep shadow of ordinary impressions whose shallowness results from the unconscious impedance of sensory processes, and which thereby become the real determinants of sense activity. From their ashes, the sacrificial flame burns.

input, its momentariness and transience, stresses the flexibility required of a sustained self-identical consciousness. Its non-identifying capacities must remain awakened against a continually changing panorama of tensions and slacknesses of the field. To the extent this is possible, volitional consciousness ('correlation with desire', *kāmasamparkāt*) must be seen for what it is, since its impulse is chief cause of the mechanical selection exercised over proprioceptive information.¹⁵ If *manas* is thought contaminated, it is not by will but by impulse of habit that 'wants' a sensation to be described in a way derived from personal history, rather than to attest to it as it is, however that may be. This fact in turn furnishes a valuable clue about the meaning of the spark of the inner Agnihotram, the juxtaposition of volition and intention. Sacrifice proceeds by awakening *manas* to its invisible volitional determinants and their appropriating tendencies, and to its potential for collecting unencumbered sensation. The object sacrificed is finally recognized for what it is, the darkened other to consciousness itself. It has been transubstantiated.

In the moment of proprioception there arises the possibility for an altogether new kind of consciousness, that of the *buddhi*. As *manas'* function proceeds without impedances, the *buddhi* comes as a spontaneous response in the depth of the impression to the simultaneity of sensation. Only when the *ahamkāra*, the volitional mode of consciousness, is finally absent can the *buddhi* consciousness appear. The perception of the self-consciousness of the proprioceptive field,

15. The *ahamkāra* (akin to the transcendental unity of apperception) is that which gives the possibility of an 'I' accompanying any experience. Literally, it is the 'I'-maker. Not yet ego-consciousness, it is rather its possibility that must be rooted out by activating sense consciousness and eradicating the notion that 'I am the doer'.

the recognition that it is illuminated, supported only by itself, through the continual exertion of self-will, is the object of *buddhi* consciousness. In the *buddhi*, the self-constituting quality of proprioception is existentially realized. The experience of *buddhi* consciousness (*bodhicitta*) is of something completely other than that of any specific sense impression: it is ontological. It 'conveys' into existence its object, i.e., itself. Of it is said, 'Thither neither sight nor speech nor intellect can go; we neither "know" it nor can we analyse it, so as to be able to communicate it by instruction.' (Kena Upan. I.3). The *buddhi*, positing its own identity as it unfolds belongs to a dimension of time essentially different from that of successive passage. Hence, it cannot be remembered since memory implies history. Possessing 'knowledge but not such knowledge as has a beginning and varies as it is associated with the things we now call realities, but that has its being in the reality that is,' (Phaedrus 247E f) the *buddhi* knows in the non-representational fullness of proprioception.

The *buddhi* experience, as has been said, announces itself in the midst of full-fledged observation, as the crown of sacrificial awareness. At this point, sense consciousness is made to end its desultory mind, the vagaries of volition and memory, and to see the field as presented. 'That they call the supreme goal, when the five perceptions conjointly with *manas* come to a standstill, and *buddhi* makes no motion.' (KU VI.10)¹⁶ This state of mindlessness (*amanibhāva*) occurs only when sense consciousness contains no extraneous elements and when sufficient gaps in the proprioceptive field have been sensately filled. Though not attained by any means, movement toward

it requires the 'concentrating all one's senses upon one's self (*ātmani sarvendriyāṇi sampratisthāpya*)' (Chandogya Upan. VIII. 15)¹⁷ Literally meant, the practice implies the transformation of the historical impediments to the free experience of the senses 'naturalized'. In letting them 'abide within themselves (*svarūpamātra avasthānam*)' (Bhoja), the *buddhi* is most nearly approached. Seen in this light, the inner sacrifice is distinctly non-violent. It imposes no standards by any means on the life of the senses, intervenes in no way, dictates no rules under which to subsume impressions. Through simultaneity at the sensory level, anticipating no result, sacrificial awareness closes in on spontaneity in its essential uncommunicability. At the point from which all friction of opposition flares, one performs the 'subjective interior burnt-offering (*ādhyātmikam antaram agnihotram*)' (SA X.1.) by 'yoking' the sense consciousness to the inherent fullness of its proper function. The yogi of sacrifice, the *ātmayājī*, practises controlled release on his sense activity. He officiates at the sacrifice of their impeded receptivity through the method of *pratyāhāra*. Participating as an unobtrusive observer in the certainty of sensory knowledge, he alone is master of himself.

Addendum

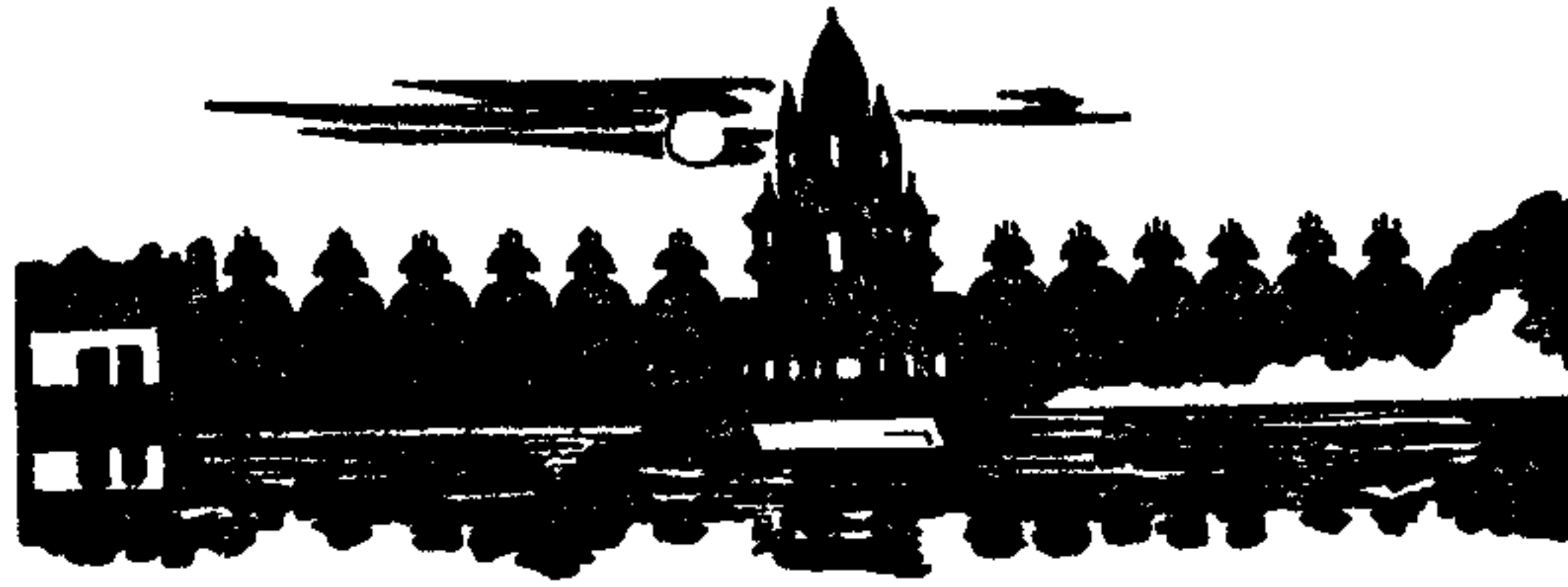
Every metaphysical decision entails a moral one. The empiricist conferring ontic status to the impression is a case in point. With the British variety, the morals of Locke and of Hume perpetuate the properties they attribute to impressions, concerned exclusively with habituating kinds of external relations between isolated, automatized

(Continued on Page 194)

16. The state of *cittavritti nirodhah* (cessation of psychomental activity) is a stated aim for the practice of yoking sense consciousness, i.e., *pratyahara*. Cf. Eliade, id.

17. Mundaka Upan. 3.2.4: 'Atman is not to be obtained by one destitute of fortitude, nor through heedlessness, nor through a false notion of *tapas*; but he who being a Comprehensor by these means (*upāya*) knows into his Brahma-abode Atman enters.'

धर्म समन्वय
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MYTH, FAITH AND HERMENEUTICS

DR. RAIMUNDO PANIKKAR

[Raimundo Panikkar is one of the foremost theologians and religious thinkers of the world today. Like Paul Tillich, Raimundo Panikkar has stood 'on the boundary', not primarily between religion and secular culture, but between diverse cultures themselves in their religious depth. He has stood on the boundary between the East and the West, between Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism—plunging into their experiential ground and mediating across the boundaries that set them apart.

Raimundo Panikkar has laid the groundwork for a comprehensive Christian systematic theology that not only takes into account other religions but is profoundly enriched by them. His theology is simultaneously experiential and speculative. It is rooted in religious experience, tapping the wellsprings of Christian spirituality at a point that can make contact with the depths of Oriental spirituality. This wealth of spiritual experience is then reflected upon with his rare gift for metaphysical speculation that draws both from the mainstream of Western European philosophy and the great philosophical traditions of the East.

Dr. Panikkar has published some 30 books and over 300 major academic articles on the history of religions, theology, and hermeneutics, most of which are in Spanish, French and German. His achievement in these areas is in large measure supported by his earlier work in metaphysics and science. In the history of religions, he has taken up the task of making available for cross-cultural understanding the philosophical and religious traditions of India. His magnificent work *The Vedic Experience* is a stupendous attempt to give organic unity and validity to the bewilderingly diverse concepts and images of the Vedas. Given below is an extract from the introduction of a recently published book of his: *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*. Ed. P. B.]

The first part of the title centres on a fundamental area of human experience. This field demands a peculiar attitude: You cannot look directly at the source of light; you turn your back to it so that you may see—not the light, but the illuminated things. Light is invisible. So too with the myth—myth here is not the object of discourse, but the expression of a *sui generis* form of consciousness. Myth and wisdom go together, as Aristotle had already seen when he affirmed, at the beginning of his *Metaphysics*, that the lover

of myth is a sort of philosopher, a lover of wisdom: *o philomythos philosophos pos estin*. Is this not also the central experience of Taoism, which invites us to regain the uncarved block, or of Shinto, which emphasizes an unthought communion, an ontic solidarity with the whole of reality?

A living myth does not allow for interpretation because it needs no intermediary. The hermeneutic of a myth is no longer the myth, but it is *logos*. Myth is precisely the horizon over against which any hermeneutic is possible. Myth is that which we take

for granted, that which we do not question; and it is unquestioned because, de facto, it is not seen as questionable. The myth is transparent like the light, and the mythical story—mythologoumenon—is only the form, the garment in which the myth happens to be expressed, enwrapped, illumined.

Myth is not the object of thought, nor does it give food for thought. Rather it purifies thought, it bypasses thought, so that the unthought may emerge and the intermediary disappear. Myth is the salutary fasting of thinking; it liberates us from the burden of having to think through everything and thus it opens up the realm of freedom: not the mere liberty of choice, but the freedom of being. When the thinking has not yet landed on the thought so that it cannot yet know what is being thought in the thinking, we are still in the domain of the myth.

This does not at all mean that we should neglect, let alone despise, the value of thought and ignore the realm and the inviolable rights of the *logos*. It only means that Man cannot get reduced to *logos*, nor awareness to reflexive consciousness.

Faith is understood as that dimension in Man that corresponds to myth. Man is open to an ever-growing horizon of awareness, a horizon provided in the myth. Belief is taken to be the vehicle by which human consciousness passes from *mythos* to *logos*. Belief articulates the myth in which we believe without 'believing' that we believe in it. To believe is not to hold a belief as one holds an object of knowledge; it is simply the act of believing—which may express itself in different formulations but which does not believe in them: the *fides qua* of the scholastics. Human reflection on belief can fall either on the fact that we believe, or on the contents of our belief. The former case makes discourse about belief possible and gives us an awareness of the results of believing. The latter one either destroys itself as thinking reflection, because it does

not understand its contents, or if it does, it destroys belief, for it converts belief into knowledge. This is what the Latin Middle Ages called the incompatibility between the *cognitum* and the *creditum*, that which is known and that which is believed. We know *that* we believe (former case) but we do not know *what* we believe (latter case), which is why we believe and do not know. In other words, faith that expresses itself in belief has no object, it is not an *ob-jectum* of our mind. Thomas Aquinas, in the second part of his *Summa*, formulating a common Christian conviction, could say: *actus autem credentis non terminatur ad enuntiabile sed ad rem* 'the act of the believer does not end at the formulation, but in the thing itself'—in the reality itself. Reality is here the ever-inexhaustible mystery, beyond the reach of objective knowledge.

'I believe in God', for instance, is a cognitive statement when it stands for the expression of the act of believing (former case) and is a real belief only when I do not know *what* God is, i.e., when I do not know God as the object of my belief (latter case). If you ask me if I believe in God I cannot properly respond, except when giving a rhetorical answer to a rhetorical question. Otherwise, I simply do not know what you are asking: I do not know what you mean by 'God' and so cannot answer whether I believe in this 'God'. The question about God either destroys itself because it does not know *what* it is asking for or dissolve the God we are asking about into something that is no longer God, but a sheer idol. The God of belief is symbol but not a concept. In a way we believe only (what we 'believe' to be) the questionable.

The fact that the believed is not the known does not subordinate the one to the other, but it relates knowledge and belief as different forms of consciousness without allowing the reduction of awareness to mere knowing (of objects) or to sheer believing

(in myths). This fact opens up an image of Man irreducible to mere *logos* or to sheer *mythos*.

What expresses belief, what carries the dynamism of belief—the conscious passage from *mythos* to *logos*—is not the concept but the symbol. Symbol here does not mean an epistemic sign, but an *ontomythical* reality that *is* precisely in the symbolizing. A symbol is not a symbol of another ('thing'), but of itself, in the sense of the subjective genitive. A symbol is the symbol of that which *is* precisely (symbolized) in the symbol, and which, thus, does not exist without its symbol. A symbol *is* nothing but the symbol of that which appears in and as the symbol. Yet must beware of identifying the symbol with the symbolized. To overlook the *symbolic difference*, i.e., to mistake the symbol for the symbolized, is precisely *avidyā*, ignorance, confusing the appearance with the reality. But reality is reality precisely because it 'appears' real.

By reality I mean not only the *res* over against the *idea*, but all that there *is*, in one way or another, i.e., the entire realm of being, according to another nomenclature. Now all-that-there-is, is 'there' precisely because it appears 'there' (as what-there-is). This real appearance is the symbol. Or, in other terms, the symbol is that appearance of the real which also includes the subject to whom it appears. Appearance is always for somebody, some consciousness.

Error is not the appearance as such, but the forgetfulness that the appearance is appearance. And this applies to every being, even to Being itself: Being is also the appearance of Being. This appearance is precisely the Truth of Being. Truth and Being are not the subjective and the objective sides of the 'real'. The 'real' as such is *satya*, i.e., truth and being all in one ('ideality' as well as 'reality'). The Real is also the trusty, trusted, truthful, faithful, loyal. The Truth is also the realization,

real, thing, matter. Yet several Upanisads will remind us that *hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasya apihitam mukham* 'the face of the truth (the nature of being) is hidden with (concealed by) a golden jar'. And it is the function of the sacrifice to break the vessel with which the light is covered. Revelation is this uncovering of the symbol.

The symbol is neither a merely objective entity in the world (the thing 'over there'), nor is it a purely subjective entity in the mind (in us 'over here'). There is no symbol that is not in and for a subject, and there is equally no symbol without a specific content claiming objectivity. The symbol encompasses and constitutively links the two poles of the real: the object and the subject, *Pātra*, the word for jar, vessel, recipient, also means *persona*, *prosopon* and person: 'The symbol of the truth is concealed by a shining person.'

This is why a symbol that requires interpretation is no longer a living symbol. It has become a mere sign. That with the aid of which we would ultimately interpret the alleged 'symbol', that would be the real symbol.

To say it in the words of that genial master and monk of the 12 century Alanus de Insulis, in his *De Incarnatione Christi: omnis mundi creatura quasi liber et pictura nobis est et speculum*. 'Every creature of the world is for us book, picture and mirror'. The crisis begins when people forget how to read, look and understand.

And yet there are many things, that demand interpretation. Man does not live by symbols alone. Thus, the third part of the title. Hermeneutics is the art and science of interpretation, of bringing forth significance, of conveying meaning, of restoring symbols of life and eventually of letting new symbols emerge. Hermeneutics is the method of overcoming the distance between a knowing subject and an object to be known, once the two have been estranged.

Hermes is the messenger of the Gods but only outside of Olympus.

Now one could distinguish a threefold hermeneutics, or rather three kairological moments in the hermeneutical enterprise, three intertwined ways of overcoming the epistemological distance and thus the human estrangement. *Morphological* hermeneutics entails the explanation or deciphering done by, say, parents, teachers, elders, the more intelligent, etc., for those who have not yet had full access to the treasure house of meaning in a particular culture. It is the reading of the text. Morphological hermeneutics is the homogeneous unfolding of implicit or de facto unknown elements. Here logic is the great method. It moves from past (which was once present in the elders) to present. It proceeds by way of comparison—and all the other rules of correct thinking.

Diachronical hermeneutics refers to the knowledge of the context necessary in order to understand a text, because the temporal gap between the understander and that which is to be understood has obscured or even changed the meaning of the original datum. Diachronical hermeneutics also implies the problems of ideology and time. It takes the temporal factor as an intrinsic element in the process of understanding. Its method is fundamentally historical. Action and involvement are its basic constituents. It implies going out from my own 'stand' in order to understand another world view. This is the proper place for dialectics: The movement here is from present to past in order to incorporate, subsume or delete it. Diachronical hermeneutics is not the youngster learning about the past from contemporaries. It is the adult firmly based in his present degree of awareness trying to enrich himself by understanding the past.

There is however a third moment in any complete hermeneutical process and the fact that it has often been neglected or overlooked

has been a major cause of misunderstandings among the different cultures of the world. I call it *diatopical* hermeneutics because the distance to be overcome is not merely temporal, within one broad tradition, but the gap existing between two human *topoi*, 'places' of understanding and self-understanding, between two—or more—cultures that have not developed their patterns of intelligibility or their basic assumptions out of a common historical tradition or through mutual influence. To cross the boundaries of one's own culture without realizing that another culture may have a radically different approach is today no longer admissible. If still consciously done, it would be philosophically naive, politically outrageous and religiously sinful. Diatopical hermeneutics stands for the thematic consideration of understanding the other without assuming that the other has the same basic self-understanding and understanding as I have. The ultimate human horizon, and not only differing contexts, is at stake here. The method in this third moment is a peculiar *dialogical dialogue*, the *dia-logos* piercing the *logos* in order to reach that dialogical, translogical realm of the heart (according to most traditions), allowing for the emergence of a myth in which we may commune, and which will ultimately allow understanding (standing under the same horizon of intelligibility).

Diatopical hermeneutics is not objectifiable, because it considers the other an equally original source of understanding. In other words, Man's self-understanding belongs not only to what Man thinks of himself, but to what Man is. In order to understand what Man is we need a fundamentally different method than a 'scientific' approach, because what Man understands himself to be is also part of his being. Indeed, how to understand Man's different self-understandings is a central problem of diatopical hermeneutics. Here we shall put

diatopical hermeneutics to work without a systematic study of its theory.

I have already indicated the importance and also the limits of hermeneutics. Neither by bread alone nor by word alone does Man live. Myth and faith defy hermeneutics, but without hermeneutics myth and faith would perish the moment that the innocence of the ecstatic attitude passes away. Yet it remains true not only that Man alone can interpret, but also that interpretation is inbuilt in Man's very nature. Not only does Man's self-interpretation belong to what Man is, but Man's interpretation of the world also belongs, in a way, to what the world is. This is why our search here is constitutively open, unachieved, not finished, not finite, infinite.

The title has still two more signs : a

comma and a conjunction. These two signs would like to express what we said earlier concerning the urgent and important need to bring together heart and mind, myth and *logos*, personal involvement and critical reflection. This cosmotheandric insight, as we have called it, realizes that myth, faith and hermeneutics belong to the cosmic, divine and human dimensions of reality, respectively. But we ought to stress again that these three are one, like 'the spirit and the water and the blood', in Christian Scripture and many others as well.

Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics, then, might represent the threefold—cosmotheandric—unity of the universe, that unity which neither destroys diversity nor forgets that the world is inhabited, that God is not alone and that knowledge is based on love.

(Continued from Page 189)

subjects. Pleasure and avoidance of painful impressions become the sole measure of ethical conduct. The inner meaning of the choice is, by contrast, a sacrificial one, concerning the unity of the *ātmayāji*. The blind habit and dark habitude surrounding the use of the senses which causes their unending hunger for the sensation of their own depth is focus of his knowledge. The sense 'greed' after the object is only the secondary offering of him who practises self-sacrifice. His primary task is to work against the inertness and dispersion of the senses, their stupor. He recognizes at the same time that deepening the impression carries with it the sense of responsibility and of moral obligation he seeks. Metaphysically, the *ātmayāji* is called to witness the manifestations of the senses, which means, morally speaking, to attain to an objective and impartial attitude toward their objects. By embodying the power to witness (*sākṣin*) sense impressions as they manifest, the *ātmayāji* has the power of moral vision, which is conscience, that which frees the Comprehensor from the biases of an existence grounded in predetermined

sense-activity.

Abbreviations

BG *The Bhagavad Gītā*, Swami Nikhilananda, ed., New York, 1944.

BHOJA *The Yoga-Darsana. The Sutras of Patanjali, with the Bhasya of Vyasa, with Notes from Vacaspati Misra's Tattvavaisaradi, Vijnana Bhiksu's Yogavartika and Bhoja's Rajamartanda*, G. Jha, ed., Madras, 1934.

BU (*Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, R. E. Hume, ed., New York, 1931.

CU (*Chandogya Upanishad*) In Hume, *op. cit.*

ECHU (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*), John Locke, M. Crandston, ed., New York, Collier Books, 1965.

Kena Up (*Kena Upanishad*) In Hume, *op. cit.*

KU (*Katha Upanishad*) In Hume, *op. cit.*

MU (*Maitri Upanishad*) In Hume, *op. cit.*

Phaedrus Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Hamilton and Cairns, ed., Princeton, 1961) tr. R. Hackforth.

RV *The Hymns of the Rg Veda*, Griffith, ed., Benares, 1963.

SA (*Sankhayana Aranyaka*) Keith, ed., London, 1908.

SB (*Satapatha Brahmana*) Eggeling, ed., Oxford, 1882-1900.

THN (*A Treatise on Human Nature*) D. Hume, Selby-Bigge, ed., Oxford, 1888.

THE MIRACLE OF SEEING

DR. SEHDEV KUMAR

Once in a Shinto shrine in a remote village in Japan, I saw a large empty space at the entrance of which, supported on two wooden poles, was hung a semi-transparent silk curtain touching the ground. The worshippers came and knelt before the curtain. They lit candles and prayed, I believe, for the removal of the curtain. A vast empty space on the other side was shielded symbolically by a thin translucent 'veil'; they hoped to see what was there once the veil was lifted.¹

Lifting of the 'veil', in one way or the other, has been the central theme of all true spiritual search in all ages and in all lands. St. Kabir in the 15th century said it so romantically :

Remove thy veil
O hesitant bride,
You would see
Your Lover
Standing before you!²

And William Blake, 19th century poet-sage, wrote : If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through narrow chinks in his cavern.³

A cataract is a thin opaque film that is sometimes formed on the lense of the eye,

obstructing entry of light ; it makes one partially or totally blind.

The term for cataract in Hindi is *motiya*. Motiya is also a fragrant beautiful flower that is often used as an offering in a Hindu temple. The root-word for *motiya* is *moti*, which means 'pearl'. Cataract may thus be considered a pearl-like flower offered to the gods.

Once at a Eye Camp in the state of Rajasthan, hundreds of men and women had gathered for cataract operation done free of charge. Many of those gathered had been blind in one eye or both for years. But now, assisted by their children or grandchildren, and a host of volunteers, these people had come to receive the most precious gift—the gift of sight from the 'men in white coats'. I observed this massive work with much admiration and stayed on at the Camp to be of some assistance myself. On the occasion I even observed an old man being operated upon. On a makeshift table his blind eyes peeped out of a small circular in a sheet that covered his face. The surgeon wielded his instruments—the blade, the pair of scissors, and the like—with skill and confidence. But the seemingly dangerous juxtaposition of a blade and an eyeball made me feel very dizzy ; I rushed out of the tent for a breath of fresh air.

The image of the peeping eye and the surgeon in a white coat somehow stayed with me ; it even came to haunt me as a spiritual symbol, a metaphor.

Some days later, I found myself present at that special moment when the bandage from the eyes was removed. On its removal, the eyelids of an old woman began to flutter. Hesitantly, unbelievably, she waved her frail arms in the air to touch someone,

1. Some of the anecdotes mentioned in this article are taken from: Sehdev Kumar, *The Lotus in the Stone: An Allegory for Explorations in Dreams & Consciousness* (Concord, Canada: Alpha & Omega Books, 1984) p. 23

2. Sehdev Kumar, *The Vision of Kabir*, (Concord, Canada: Alpha & Omega Books, 1984) *sakhi* v. 1, translated by the author.

3. William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975) Pl. 14

to make sure that what she was seeing, for the first time in a decade or so, was true. She called for Guddu, she reached out to touch Kamla, she wanted to hold Balu; she was ecstatic, for now she could see what she had only touched or heard before. In this state, from her toothless mouth, some fragmented words just escaped, as a tear or two came to her eyes: 'I can see! ... I can see!' Seeing the old lady so happy, everyone in her large family was moved to tears. And I too found tears rushing to my eyes. 'What has happened here?' I wondered. Surely everything was as it was before: the same eye, the same light, the same face. Everything was as it was before, it had only been discovered, *discovered* by the old woman:

For there is nothing hid,
except to be made manifest.
Nor is anything secret,
except to come to light.⁴

Between self-delusion and self-discovery, the plane of demarcation is very thin, almost as thin as the cataract, the film that defines the loss or gain of sight. A small patch of dark cloud can shield the brilliant radiance of the sun. When we look 'through a glass darkly', our human view too can be clouded shielding us from the sun that radiates inside of us. Anyone or anything that stands at the threshold of this darkness and light, and mediates between the two, speaks *sandhyā-bhāṣā*—'twilight language'. Such a mediator is the man in a 'white coat', the surgeon who wields the knife on the blind eye so it can see what has always been there, eternally, irrefutably. The grand purpose of all human life must be to remove the cataract from one's eyes, so one can see what is. All else—science or art, poetry or philosophy, temples or theatres, metaphors or prayers—can only serve as tools in the

hands of a surgeon. They are not the surgeon, nor the eye, nor what is finally seen.

There is a Zen saying: 'The finger that points at the moon, is not the moon.' Yet how often all our debate ends up being about the finger, about its length and thickness, without quite raising our eyes to see the moon. We are in fact our own vessels, we give our own shape to the universe that pours into us. 'God reveals Himself to us all,' St. Kabir sang, 'Not as He is, But as we are.'⁵ The Russians on their first explorations of space proclaimed loudly that they saw no signs of God or heaven in the far reaches of the universe. The Americans in their turn could only say: 'Oh boy, what a ride!' as their senator boasted on earth: 'We are the master of the universe. We can go anywhere we choose.'

Three hundred years after the Scientific Revolution in the West, it is now apparent that in our compilation of data and information, in the intricacies of our theories, something has been amiss: 'the mythopoeic reference which underlies the fact', which gives way to awe, to an obscure sense of the sacred. So often *information* has been used for power, for control, but rarely for 'inner formation', for transformation. How pertinaciously we refuse to move from a common sense view of things, as Henry David Thoreau suggests, 'to an infinitely expanded and liberating one, from seeing things as men describe them, to seeing them as men cannot describe them.'⁶

The great physicist Albert Einstein wrote once:

The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as

⁵. Kabir, *sakhi* viii. 4

⁶. *The Journal of Henry David Thoreau*, eds. B. Torrey and F.H. Allen, 14 vol (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949) p. 54

⁴. Gospel of St. Mark 4:22

dead. To know what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in the most primitive form—this knowledge, this feeling is at the centre of true religiousness.⁷

To see the visible and the invisible through an Awakened Eye is to see through a transformed sensibility. Says Kabir :

In one drop of water
The ocean sparkles,
In one grain of sand
A million suns and moons
Are shining.
O dear friend
Your eyes are veiled
If you see it not!⁸

How does one see then, have the *darshan* of the universe rather than merely an 'objective' observation of it? Also what is it that one expects to see? For, as Plotinus puts it :

It is first of all necessary to make the organ of vision analogous and similar to the object to be contemplated. Never would the eye have perceived the sun if it had not first taken the form of the sun; likewise the soul cannot see beauty unless it first becomes beautiful itself, and everyman must make himself beautiful and divine in order to attain the sight of beauty and divinity.⁹

For science—for modern science no less—this is a fundamentally radical idea that man himself—man changed, evolved, transformed—is the most subtle, and the most vital instrument of observation. Indeed not the lens of the microscope but the 'doors of perception' need to be cleansed before one can hope to see the infinite. The 'Ocean of

Truth' as Isaac Newton called it, is no nearer to us today than it was in the times of Plotinus or Sankara or Lao Tzu or the Upaniṣadic sages. The pilgrimage to this ocean remains forever the same.

It is not a new path that one trails, it is an eternal path. To be 'original' is to go back to the origins, to understand *philosophia perennis*, the *sanātana dharma*, what St. Augustine called the 'wisdom that was not made but is at this present, as it hath ever been and so shall ever be.'

When we don't see and we don't know that we are blind, we believe that there is no Sun and the Rainbow is a mere fantasy. Whether we see it or not, however, the sun continues to radiate. It may rain or snow, it may be a day of sorrow or unhappiness, whether we live or die, the sun continues to radiate. To give out light is in the very nature of the sun. In turn, whether we like it or not, whether we deny or acknowledge, whether we are ignorant or aware, our eyes ceaselessly flutter to receive the light of the sun.

To prepare ourselves to receive this light so that when it comes we can recognize it as light, is a stupendous task. For as The Gospel of Philip puts it :

When a blind man and the one who sees are both together in darkness, they are no different from one another. But when the light comes then the one who sees will see the light, and he who is blind will remain in darkness.¹⁰

That there are deep, unexplored areas of our consciousness—we call the subconscious, or the unconscious—is now well recognized by thinkers all over the world. Although nobody quite knows what is the mode of perception or the 'organ' of observation of the subconscious, it is nevertheless quite

7. Albert Einstein, *Essays in Science* (New York, Philosophical Library, 1934) p. 176

8. Kabir, *sakhi* xi. 6

9. J.M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967) p. 23.

10. See, The Nag Hammadi Library, ed. J. Robinson, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981) p. 138

certain that the subconscious is often far more 'conscious' than our ordinary, sensory consciousness. Also what is stored in our consciousness and why, still remain open questions. Is the subconscious of each person private and individualized—like the brain—or is it that faculty in us that *re-minds* us of the Great Mind, 'One Face behind all faces', as Thomas Hardy called it?

The reservoirs of the subconscious remain ordinarily unavailable to us, to our consciousness. And those parts of the subconscious that should really be thought of as 'Higher or Super Consciousness', have not even been touched by modern psychology. But to raise our consciousness so that we are in touch with all its manifestations, its lower depths and its higher reaches, is the true evolutionary challenge to man.

Once at a concert present by a very distinguished flute-player I watched the musician closely. He blew into the bamboo-flute ever so subtly and created music of enchanting beauty. In this state of enchantment, a

thought came to me: Does this hollow piece of bamboo—some 20 inches in length, with two holes at the top and six at the bottom—'know' what fine music is being created through it? Is it 'conscious' that it is an instrument of music?

I feel something of the same is true of man; each one of us is a flute in the hands of Kṛṣṇa. At every moment of our lives, a special breath blows through us transforming us from a piece of bamboo into a flute. Yet we don't remember; we remain asleep.

Besides all the knowledge and information that we have gathered—about matter and energy, space and time, social systems and philosophical constructs, history and architecture—what is true knowledge is learning to *dis-cover* what is hidden, to remember what is forgotten; it is to *re-member* the *dis-membered*. It is only when we *remember* that we *become*! When we remember the piece of bamboo to the lips of the musician and let his subtle breath blow through it, we see it becomes a flute!

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

DISABLED IN INDIA: EDITED BY S. N. GAJENDRAGADKAR. Published by Somaiya Publications Private Limited, 172 Mumbai Marathi Granthasangrahalaya Marg, Dadar, Bombay 400 014. 1983. Pp. xii + 127. Rs. 55.

The United Nations General Assembly declared 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons. The Research and Documentation Centre, a voluntary organization dedicated to social work in the areas of research and documentation, laid this declaration to heart and brought together a number of thinkers, professionals and practitioners to focus attention on some aspects of disability in India. The monograph under review is a result of this enterprise on the part of the RDC and represents its contribution to IYDP.

The book comprises nine articles touching upon various aspects of disabilities in India, like

the visually handicapped, those affected by leprosy and cancer, the orthopaedically handicapped and the deaf and mute. These articles focus on the complexity of the problems relating to the handicapped, detail the efforts made to cope with the problems, and give some policy suggestions for improved handling of these problems in future.

The magnitude of the problem presented by the handicapped in India can be seen from the sheer number of them given in the following table:

Orthopaedically handicapped	4.2 million
Deaf and mute	2.5 million
Leprosy affected	3.2 million
Mentally retarded	13 to 18 million
Blind	9.5 million

As far as the government is concerned, the area of mental retardation vis-a-vis other types of disability seems to have received the lowest

priority. This is indicated by the fact that a meagre 28 government (Central and State)-supported institutions exist at present for the mentally retarded. The attitude of the public towards the mentally retarded is characterized at one end by pity and at the other end by apathy and ignorance. The voluntary agencies have rendered some service in the field of mental retardation, but the ultimate responsibility for looking after the mentally retarded child remains with the family. Voluntary and governmental agencies have a role to play here. They can reduce the stress generated on the families by providing diagnostic and parent counselling services and institutional facilities such as day-care. A vital step is to evolve a national plan, in a total perspective, by the joint endeavours of the administrative units of all the concerned ministries as well as the voluntary agencies, professional groups and parental bodies.

The article on the visually handicapped tells us how sightless saints like Surdas overcame their handicap by their own heroic efforts and made themselves household names in India. While the intended message, i.e. self-help is the best help, comes through very clearly from this account, the writer is careful to point out the duty society and its legal representative, the government, owe to the blind in terms of imparting education, training and employment. Above all, he calls for a change of attitude on the part of the sighted: abandon your age-old traditional attitude of viewing blindness with compassion, pity and charity and help the blind people realize their best selves.

Leprosy is the most stigmatized disease in human society. It has traditionally been looked upon as God's penalty for sins. The colony approach to the leprosy problem—i.e., isolating the leprosy patients away from society in colonies—hardly constitutes a solution to the leprosy problem. The prejudicial attitude of society drives leprosy patients to beggary. Law strengthens social stigma by enumerating leprosy as a ground for the dissolution of marriage in both Hindu and Muslim communities. The public is to be taught that all leprosy cases are not infectious. As a matter of fact, out of the estimated 3.2 million cases of leprosy in India, only about 20% of the cases are infectious. The law-givers are to come up with protective legislation treating leprosy on par with other communicable diseases. The leprosy patients are to be made useful, productive members of the society. That is the goal. Obviously the means lie not in driving them away from the society

but in rehabilitating them. This requires education of the community, early case detection and regularity of treatment and continuous research by medical and social scientists into all aspects of leprosy.

The burden of the essay on the problems of the deaf and mute is that they need to be integrated into the society. Society has the ultimate responsibility for their socio-economic rehabilitation and there is urgent need of suitable legislation to that effect.

The essay on the problems of the cancer-disabled emphasizes the need for defeating the defeatist attitude with regard to cancer. Unfortunately, because of the theory of *Karma* wrongly understood, most Indians resign themselves to their fate rather than change their lot with personal effort. Cancer can be cured if it is detected early and treated in time. It is absolutely important for government to give priority to preventive programme by educating the public as to the seven danger signals of cancer.

The essay on 'Arthritis' is revealing as to the scarcity of facilities for treatment and the rehabilitation of arthritic patients with disabilities.

Of the other two essays, one highlights the problems of old age and pleads for according maximum possible medical facilities and social security to elderly people, while the other focuses on the role of voluntary organizations in alleviating the sufferings of the handicapped. Voluntary organizations are prone to taking charitable attitude towards the handicapped. Their tendency is one of *doing* things for the handicapped, rather than encouraging them to *achieve* on their own. The aim should be to make them independent as far as practicable. Secondly, greater attention should be paid to the problems of the handicapped in rural areas. Whatever little training facilities are there in India for the handicapped tend to be concentrated in urban areas. Since the majority of the handicapped reside in rural areas, voluntary organizations need to direct their efforts to these areas.

In declaring the year 1981 as the International Year for Disabled Persons, the United Nations decided to achieve the following objectives during this year.

- (a) Helping disabled persons in their physical and psychological adjustments to society;
- (b) Promoting all national and international efforts to provide disabled persons with proper assistance, training, care and guidance, to make

available opportunities for suitable work and to ensure their full integration in society ;-

(c) Encouraging study and research projects designed to facilitate the *practical* participation of disabled persons to daily life, for example, by improving their access to public 'buildings and transportation systems ;

(d) Educating and informing the public of the rights of disabled persons to participate in and contribute to various aspects of economic, social and political life ;

(e) Promoting effective measures for the prevention of disability.

The essays included in the volume under review seek to make an assessment of the extent to which these objectives have been realized in India. The needs being enormous and the resources being scarce, the achievement of India in the realization of these objectives has not been spectacular. Much remains to be done. The essays, ably edited by Dr. S. N. Gajendra-gadkar, perform a useful task by directing the spotlight upon *what is to be done* to make the handicapped *equally participating* members of the society. Not that all of the essays are equally sound in scholarship, but a beginning has been made. Researching on the problems of the handicapped, as the United Nations declaration itself states, is no less important than the actual service rendered to the handicapped. The publishers have done a praiseworthy service by bringing out this book, though its price is a bit too high for the common reader.

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RAMAKRISHNA'S NAREN AND NAREN'S
RAMAKRISHNA: BY SWAMI BUDHANANDA.
Published by Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi
110 055. 1982. Pp. 94. Rs. 3.25.

Swami Budhananda quotes that unique disciple of the Great Master, Girish Chandra Ghosh, as declaring unequivocally: 'One who thinks of Ramakrishna as apart from Vivekananda is ignorant.' This tacit spiritual identity between these two great figures and its far-reaching implications form the theme of this thought-provoking study.

Describing what he calls 'the developing spiritual rendezvous' between Ramakrishna and his 'beloved' Naren, the Swami says that Ramakrishna's unique mission, as an *incarnation*, is 'to convey to men the all-powerful, curative and creative feel of God's love for man.'

'Devoured' completely by love of God, Ramakrishna 'discovered himself as the very object of worship, as being the Lord incarnate on earth.' He realized that his incarnation symbolized 'the self-giving of God to man in a special way—a supremely needed way.'

This 'self-giving of God to man' needed, Ramakrishna knew, a versatile counterpart who dwelt with equal ease on the realms of both, the Absolute and the Relative. This counterpart was Naren, 'the luminous spirit immersed in samadhi', brought down by the Master through the power of love and made 'the symbol, the proof positive, power positive of God's love for man.'

Thus began the momentous emergence of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta which, as the Swami puts it in his inimitable way, 'soaked' 'the Vedanta of the forest in the elixir of divine love', and brought 'the new religion of man back to the plane of benefaction.' This new religion needed the moulding of Ramakrishna's Naren by tacit approval of the latter's turbulent, revolutionary spirit with its ruthless empiricism, its uncompromising quest for Truth and, above all, its burning passion for and commitment to 'Jīva-Sevā'.

But Naren, as he blossomed into the 'wakeful wanderer' Vivekananda, realized the paradox that his own revolutionary and radical spirit was already gloriously, though unobtrusively, embodied in the unusual rhythms of the Master's own life. The Master's *sanātana dharma* was a veneer masking several motifs of the *yuga-dharma* reflecting fierce radicalism: evident, among other things, in his acceptance of *bhikshā* from a blacksmith woman, his refusal to go in for that holy cow of modernity, secular education, the practice and affirmation of the truths of allegedly alien faiths, the worship of the Divine Mother in his own wife and, above all, the fiery 'Jīva-Sevā mantra'.

Naren absorbed the invaluable truth which is in effect the seed of the national resurgence: 'without being revolutionary religion cannot become the conduit of God's love for man'. Therefore, Naren's Ramakrishna is 'not a nice happy deity to be constantly adored with flowery panegyric, but warring Kālī engaged in ground-fighting with the problems of man for the good of the individual and the many'. Naren's Ramakrishna is in fact 'Sanghasakti'.

Ramakrishna's Naren and Naren's Ramakrishna is, in effect, a penetrating study of the Master and the Disciple. Its brevity is deceptive,

for, its basic insights, range of associative ideas and its chiselled, highly evocative style demand sustained contemplative reading.

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THE DIVINE DANCE: BY DR. S.V. CHAMU. Published by Ashtanga Yoga Vijnana Mandiram, Seshadri Road, Mysore 570 004. 1983. Pp. xii + 196. Rs. 15.

It was in 1950 that Sri Ranga Guru, a revered teacher of yoga, 'saw in a moment the nature of the truth that is embodied in the image (of Nataraja). He not only saw the divine truth that lies at the core of the image, but also the manner in which the objects and ornaments that are there on the image on the one hand and the emotions and gestures displayed by the organs of the Deity on the other signify and point to that high beatific state of spiritual knowledge and bliss in which that truth is seen and known.' Thereafter he conducted several researches into the subject and found them corroborating his own yogic experiences. The present treatise is a product of these studies by the Guru and his worthy disciple, Dr. Chamu.

It is well known that there are several aspects to the truth that is figured in the image of Nataraja: music, dance, grammar, yoga, and more. The central truth, says the author, is the yogic realization of the Atman consciousness. He traces the development of the concept of God Shiva from its beginnings in the Veda (and earlier) through the Upaniṣads—notably the *Svetāsvatara*—the Epics, the Agamas and then the tradition of yoga. Shiva dancing as Nataraja is a symbolic representation of His creative Movement; this universe is a product of His *tāṇḍava* of which the author lists seven varieties: Ananda Tāṇḍava (blissful); Sandhyā (evening dance); Umā (dance with Umā); Gaurī (dance with Gaurī); Kālikā (dance with Kālī); Tripura (dance of the destruction of three cities); Samhāra (dance of destruction). It is the first one, Ananda Tāṇḍava, that is the theme of this work.

Dr. Chamu takes note of the possible objection on the part of some devotees that the Image 'is meant for contemplation and worship and not for analysis and interpretation.' (p. 81). His object in interpretation, however, is not to dissect the concept but to reveal the truth or truths embodied in the Murti which might otherwise remain unnoticed.

Drawing attention to the close correspondence between the postures of the various limbs of Nataraja and the authentic movements in yoga, he writes: 'The left leg has been raised in a graceful dancing posture. It is the effect of the upward movement of the Apana which is its master-impulse. The Apana has moved towards the Muladhara Chakra and has passed beyond it. The very fact that the left leg is held in a state of poise indicates the emergence of the Mulabandha in the Deity. That is followed by the next Bandha namely the Uddiyana Bandha above the Manipura at the navel, indicated by the flowing hand. The effect of both these Bandhas is to keep the Apana in its upward course and prevent it from coming down. Consequently Apana has moved towards the Anahata where it has merged with the other confluent of life namely Prana...the unification of Prana and Apana is indicative of the emergence of the state of yoga. It is a thing that takes place in the yogi's heart and when it does, it brings about the complete cessation of all the activities of the mind. Nataraja indicates silently the mystery and transcendence of that harmonious state by the left arm which passes in front of the heart in a most graceful dancing posture...' (p. 88). Or again, 'When we see the eyes of Nataraja we are reminded of the Shambhavi Mudra in which the eyes are open but the vision is turned inward.'

It is a fascinating exercise to follow the author in his exposition of this line of interpretation. He has added a chapter on Sri Chakra at the end as the worship of the Chakra enters into the higher stage of worship of Nataraja. A valuable book to understand the mystery of Nataraja as far as the human mind is able to do.

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SAI BABA—THE SAINT OF SHIRDI: BY MANI SAHUKAR. Published by Somaiya Publications Private Limited, 172 Mumbai Marathi Granthasangrahalaya Marg, Dadar, Bombay 400 014. Third Edition, 1983. Pp. 98. Rs. 15.

In the villages and towns of Maharashtra, Karnataka and neighbouring areas we often notice a small temple-like structure under a shady peepal or banyan tree beside a busy street. A small idol or picture of Sai Baba in a niche looks benevolently on the passers-by. Though a majority of pedestrians may ignore the temple, there are quite a few, who would stop and offer

prayers to the Saint of Shirdi. Baba assures everybody: 'If you look at me I shall look at you (your needs).' Hundreds of people are ready to vouch for the authenticity of this assurance. Blessed are those who have unflinching faith in the saving power of a saint.

The author of the present book is such a blessed soul. One day during the meditative hour, 'a sudden and compelling thought emerged into (her) consciousness—the thought of writing the life of the master.' Like the great medieval saint Kabir, Sai Baba of Shirdi too is claimed and worshipped by both Hindus and Muslims. When he was alive he spent much of his time in an old mosque.

In the present book the author studies the life of Sai Baba against the cultural background of this great land of ours. According to her 'the theory of avatar-hood is an eloquent expression of Bharat's spiritual philosophy. If God is looked upon as the saviour of humanity, then God must manifest himself'. (p. 4). The author further says that 'no yogi dies in the ordinary sense of the word. His mission is self-allotted and springs from the source of his free and redeemed spirit.' (p. 22)

The life of Sai Baba is replete with miracles. The author however, cautions the readers and says that it would be more profitable to view them (miracles) calmly and in their proper perspective. For when the miracles of Sai Baba assumes a sensational value in the minds of the devotees, they are apt to confuse these persons and make them forget the great doer of miracles.

The author takes us far beyond the conventional quietistic image of Baba and ushers us into the very presence of the ever-living Guru who is deeply involved in the sufferings of humanity. The reading of this small biography is likely to dispel doubts of the devotees and would enable them to understand the grains of truth scattered in the lives of all great men.

Chapter XI of the book gives some injunctions and sayings of Sai Baba, which are useful to every *sādhaka*. The book is supplemented with chapters on Upasani Baba, Sati Godawari Mata of Sakuri and on Satya Sai Baba.

The language of the book is simple and beautiful; the printing, excellent.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA, COIMBATORE

REPORT FOR 1982-83

This centre, situated in Perianaickenpalayam in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, is one of the largest educational institutions of its kind in the country. The activities during the year under review were as follows:

Religious: In commemoration of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, the Ramakrishna Festival was organized as in the previous years on the first Sunday of the new year, as a part of which an essay and speech competition and a scientific and cultural exhibition were organized.

Educational: College of Education: The college, offering courses for B Ed, M Ed (regular), M Ed (Integrated education for the visually handicapped), M Phil and Ph D degrees, was granted the autonomous status by the University of Madras in August 1981. The roll strength during the year was: B Ed (100), M Ed (14), M. Phil (5) and Ph D (11).

Maruthi College of Physical Education: Offering B P Ed (roll strength 58), M P Ed (48)

degree courses and a higher-grade certificate course (7), the college is one of the ten such colleges in the country offering postgraduate degree courses of study with 100% result. A Play Festival involving 3,000 village children was organized. The Sports School under the College had 90 students.

Arts College: 285 of the total 537 students of the college were resident. The College, granted the autonomous status in August 1981, offered courses for BA, MA, M Phil and Ph D.

The Polytechnic: 236 (150 resident) scholars were pursuing three-year diploma courses in civil and rural engineering and mechanical and rural engineering. Engineering extension work, social work in the villages, intensive practical training, workshop in summer holidays, project work related to rural problems in civil and mechanical engineering etc. are the distinguishing features of this polytechnic. Hand-operated concrete mixer, mobile load lifter and such other mechanical aids were manufactured under the Rural Technology Development project.

Community Polytechnic: A wing of the Vidyalaya Polytechnic; this polytechnic has six

subcentres supported by local agencies. Three industrial training institutes were started to run National Council of Vocational Training (NCVT) courses and other non-formal courses suitable for the area.

Gandhi Basic Teacher Training Institute: Had 26 trainees. Assisted by the UNICEF, the institute is participating in the Comprehensive Access to Primary Education (CAPE) project for school drop-outs and unschooled children in the 6 to 14 age-group. 8 schools were benefited from the mobile laboratory of the institute.

School of Agriculture: 60 students were doing one year certificate course in the school the name of which is being changed to 'Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development' with the introduction of a diploma course next year. Under a social forestry scheme on lakh seedlings were distributed among farmers who were helped also by providing soil-testing and other facilities.

Industrial Institute: 56 students were under training in the three workshop trades as: (1) Fitting (2 year course), (2) Turning (2 year) and (3) hand-composing and proofreading (1 year).

Residential High School: Out of the 160 students in the school 25 passed the SSLC examinations with 93% marks. 4 of the students were visually handicapped.

Swami Shivananda Higher Secondary School: Out of the 444 boys and 25 girls in the school 106 appeared for the SSLC and 60 for the higher secondary examinations including 39 Sports School boys and 2 visually handicapped students. A new school building was declared open by Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

TAT Kalamilayam Middle School: 485 boys and 187 girls were studying in the various grades from prebasic to the eighth standard. 380 of them were served under the nutritious noon-meal programme.

Balwadi: 35 children of poor parents, 3 to 5 years in age, were looked after by a nurse-maid, a teacher and an attendant under the supervision and guidance of experts in the field. Short educational trips were arranged for the children and their parents.

Medical: Vidyalaya Dispensary: caters to the medical needs of the campus and also of the surrounding villages. 34,784 persons were given treatment during the year.

Mini Health Centre in Vivekanandapuram: Serving 13 villages, the centre has three outposts in the interior villages where the women have

been given training in firstaid and each of which is visited by the doctor twice every week. The centre has a full-time MBBS doctor, a male health worker, an auxiliary nurse and midwife, a medical van etc to give regular clinical service to the people including expectant mothers. 8,863 cases were treated during the year.

Physiotherapy Centre: The Maruthi College of Physical Education has introduced an integrated educational programme for the orthopaedically handicapped youth who are admitted for their academic training to any of the other regular institutions while they get treatment outside of the school-hours. This benefited 405 youths.

Industrial Section: Apart from giving intensive training to the students of the campus, the Vidyalaya Industrial Section is also manufacturing engineering products including 3-phase electric motors from 1 to 10 HP, single-phase electric motors (1/8 HP to 1.5 HP), domestic pumps, centrifugal pumps for use in farms, highspeed monobloc pumpsets etc. In addition to doing job work for a number of engineering workshops, this section helps Vidyalaya agriculturists in repairing their electric motors, pumpsets etc. through its service section.

The Vivekanandapuram Rural Centre: Situated at 45 kms from Coimbatore, the centre has in its campus a Krishi Vigyan Kendra (ICAR), a dairy farm of pedigree cattle to help upgrade the milch cattle in the area, a mini-health centre, ten Balwadis run under the Nutrition Research Programme, a 'Lab to Land' programme for 100 farmers (ICAR), and a branch of a nationalized bank for giving institutional support to farmers. The centre provided all-round training in agronomy to 1,136 persons, in horticulture to 236 persons, in animal science to 375 persons, in agricultural engineering to equip farmers with adequate technical knowledge in maintenance of their motors, pumps etc. to 18 persons, in homescience to 1,371 persons and in the tailoring craft to 10 persons.

Demonstration Units: The pure bred exotic cattle farm of Friesian cows, the crossbred demonstration unit with 4 crossbred dairy cows, the poultry unit and the demonstration bull station in three villages served as demonstration units for trainees and for the villages in need of help.

Library: The library had 53,226 books and received 250 periodicals the attendance on the average being 125.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

'Earn While You Learn'

'Real education is that which enables one to stand on his own feet', said Swami Vivekananda. Evidently, what Swamiji meant was not merely some kind of vocational training as an essential component of education, but also the development of an attitude of self-reliance. One of the chief characteristics of youths in India is their attitude of dependence. The feeling of helplessness is writ large on the faces of many of the educated youngsters. With the exception of those who secure scholarships and higher ranks in examination, those who have succeeded in getting admission to medical and engineering colleges, and those who have wealth and influence, most of the young people are unable to decide their own future. In a rapidly developing country like India there is great potential for self-employment, but much of this remains unactualized for want of enough number of self-reliant young entrepreneurs.

During the early years after independence some attempts were made on Gandhian lines to integrate vocational training into curricula. The Zakir Hussain Committee, the Kothari Commission, the Ishwarbhai Patel Committee, the Shriman Narayan Committee and other educational bodies, all stressed the need for work experience in education. But their recommendations have never been implemented in the proper way or to the required extent. Vocationalization is supposed to be the soul of the present ten-plus-two pattern of school education but few states have taken proper steps in this direction.

It is therefore a welcome news that the Madhya Pradesh government has launched a 'Earn While You Learn' scheme for students. It has been in operation for five years and its remarkable success has attracted the attention of educationists and government bodies. An eight-member Vietnamese delegation headed by the Minister of Education, Vietnam, visited Madhya Pradesh a few months ago to study the working of the scheme, and they were much impressed with the success already achieved. The scheme today has 367 centres covering 14,000 students who produced goods worth nearly Rs. one crore (10 million) of which 10 lakh went to the students as their earnings.

The scheme in brief is as follows. The Khadi and Village Industries Board will finance the purchase of raw materials. The students will make only those articles that are needed and readily purchased by the Education Department, like chalk sticks, *tat patti* (jute mats), sealing wax and school furniture. Efforts are to be made to include tailoring (for school uniforms) and doll-making. The Education Department purchases these articles: a share of the payment goes to the students as their earning, a share to the instructors, and the rest towards repayment of the capital which goes on rolling. The success of the scheme undoubtedly owes much to the vision and dedication of the Director of Public Instruction and the Deputy Director in charge of the scheme.

Apart from the economic benefits to the students, the scheme has produced several other beneficial effects like reducing the number of drop-outs and infusing the sense of dignity of labour in young minds. We hope the Madhya Pradesh example will be emulated by all the other States in India.



SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA