

VOL. 90

JUNE 1985

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.

ADVAITA ASHRAMA
MAYAVATI, HIMALAYAS



Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

Editorial Office

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

Publication Office

5 Dehi Entally Road
Calcutta 700 014
Phone : 29-0898



[Rates inclusive of postage]

Annual Subscription

India, Nepal & Bangladesh	Rs. 15.00
U.S.A. & Canada	\$ 10.00
Other Countries	£ 4.00

Life Subscription (30 years)

Rs. 300	\$ 200	£ 60
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Single Copy

Rs. 1.50	\$ 1.00	50 P.
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Information for contributors,
publishers, subscribers, and
advertisers overleaf.

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Prabuddha Bharata

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No. 6

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

अग्नेर्गायत्र्यभवत् सयुग्वो-
ष्णिहया सविता सं बभूव ।
अनुष्टुभा सोम उक्थैर्महस्वान्
बृहस्पतेर्बृहती वाचमावत् ॥

The metre Gāyatrī became the companion of Agni, Savitr became united with Uṣṇik, Soma glorified by hymns as great (*ukthaiḥ mahasvān*) was united with Anuṣṭubh, Bṛhaspati's words were protected by Bṛhatī.

Rg-Veda 10.130.4

विराणिमत्रावरुणयोरभिश्ची-
रिन्द्रस्य त्रिष्टुबिह भागो अह्नः ।
विश्वान् देवाञ्जगत्या विवेश
तेन चाकलूप्र ऋषयो मनुष्याः ॥

The metre Virāj adhered to Mitra and Varuṇa, Triṣṭup was Indra's portion of midday [oblation], Jagatī entered all the gods. Through this sacrifice ṛṣis and men were created (*cāklpre*).

Rg-Veda 10.130.5

चाकलूप्रे तेन ऋषयो मनुष्या
यज्ञे जाते पितरो नः पुराणे ।
पश्यन् मन्ये मनसा चक्षसा
तान्य इमं यज्ञमयजन्त पूर्वे ॥

When the Primordial Sacrifice was performed, through it ṛṣis, men and our ancestors were created. Beholding them with the eye of the mind I glorify those who conducted this sacrifice in bygone days.¹

Rg-Veda 10.130.6

* The creation hymn is concluded here. The hymn refers to the Primordial Sacrifice out of which the universe arose. Stanzas 4 and 5 describe how the metres (*chandās*) arose from the Sacrifice and how each deity was allotted one metre. This concept has a deep mystical significance. Each metre represents a particular rhythm of *sabda brahman* (Logos) which constitutes the power (*sakti*) of the Devata. When a Mantra is recited according to its metre, it awakens the vision of the deity in the mind. It was this Vedic understanding that later on led to the discovery of *bija-mantras* in the Tantras. According to Sāyaṇa, stanzas 4 and 5 answer three of the questions raised in stanza 3 (given last month), whereas the remaining questions have been answered elsewhere. The metres mentioned here are: Gāyatrī, Uṣṇih, Anuṣṭubh, Bṛhatī, Virāj, Triṣṭubh and Jagatī.

1. Here the poet refers to his own mystic experience gained through intuition.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

As a part of an ongoing study on the nature of the Self and Self-realization, this month's EDITORIAL discusses the nature of egocentricity.

In the second and concluding instalment of M'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE DIVINE ANGLER, Dr. M. Sivaramakrishna re-creates, with the skill of an impressionist, the original scene of M's first meeting with his Master, bringing out the significance of several factors seldom noticed by the average reader of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

In VEDIC COSMOLOGY AND MODERN

ASTROPHYSICS Swami Jitatmananda of Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, gives a lucid summary of the modern scientists' views on the origin of the universe and shows how they came close to ancient Indian cosmology. This article represents the seventh chapter of a book on which the author is working.

Prof. Ranjit Kumar Acharjee, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Ramakrishna Mahavidyalaya, Kailashahar, North Tripura, has provided an illuminating study of SANATANA GOSVAMIN: HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT.

EGOCENTRICITY: ITS CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

(EDITORIAL)

Selfishness and egoism

In last month's Editorial it was shown that selfishness is not a sign of love for oneself and that true love for oneself is complementary to love for others. What, then, is the root-cause of selfishness? How can one distinguish true love for oneself from self-love or selfishness?

It is indeed difficult to give a positive definition of selfishness, for selfishness does not always manifest itself in a positive way. We generally identify selfishness with self-interest. A selfish person is believed to be one who seeks only his own interest in life. However, if everyone were interested only in himself and minded his own business, there would have been less problems in the world. But it is commonly seen that many people are more interested in the vices of others than in their own virtues; or are more interested in doing harm to

others than in doing good to themselves.

In a memorable passage in his *Hundred Verses on Virtue* Bhartṛhari divides human beings into four groups. The first group consists of those very virtuous people (*satpuruṣaḥ*) who are always bent on doing good to others, sacrificing self-interest. To the second group belong the common people (*sāmānyāḥ*) who try to do good to others without giving up self-interest. They represent the concept 'enlightened self-interest' which forms the basis of the western ideal of business enterprise. Then there are those whom Bhartṛhari calls 'demonical people' (*mānuṣa rākṣasāḥ*) who do harm to others out of self-interest. These are the people who are usually stigmatized as 'selfish'. But Bhartṛhari goes further. He says there is a fourth class of people who try to destroy the welfare of others even though it is of no earthly benefit to themselves. 'I do not

know what to call them', he says in despair.¹

If one does harm to others out of self-interest, it is understandable. But why do people try to harm others, speak ill of others, or prevent others from going up even though they themselves stand to gain nothing from those misdeeds? Why do people indulge in actions inimical to the welfare of others in spite of being aware that those actions may bring harm to themselves sooner or later? Why do people consciously strive to get themselves 'hoist with their own petard'? Clearly, selfishness is not merely a positive interest in oneself; there are several other factors involved in it. As a matter of fact, selfishness is one of the manifestations of a more comprehensive phenomenon known as 'egoism'.

Egoism is generally understood as egotism (talking about oneself), conceit, pride, vanity, arrogance, etc, each term denoting a different way the ego manifests itself. At first sight selfishness might seem to be different from egoism, for selfish people do not always appear to be conceited or arrogant; they may appear to be quite humble. Nor do egoistic people always appear to be selfish; on the contrary, many of them are found to be generous and capable of spectacular acts of self-sacrifice. In fact, much of the good done in the world is done by egoistic

people, though they often do an equal amount of harm also. This is well known, but it may be interesting to note the observation made on this point by Abraham Maslow, one of the chief exponents of the humanistic or 'Third Force' psychology which is gaining popularity in the West.

When Maslow was studying under the great U.S. social anthropologist Ruth Benedict, he visited a settlement of Northern Blackfoot Indians. There he witnessed the Sun Dance ceremony in which all the tepees of the society gathered in one huge circle. The 'rich men' of the society had brought all that they possessed: 'mounds of blankets, food, bundles of various sorts, and sometimes very pathetic things—cases of Pepsi-Cola'. As many possessions as a man could have accumulated during the previous year were piled up. Then the 'rich men' talked boastfully about their wealth and generosity and gave away everything they had to the 'poor'. Maslow describes the scene as follows:

I am thinking of one man I saw. At one point in the ceremony, in the Plains' Indian tradition, he strutted, and, we would say, boasted, that is, told of his achievements. 'You all know that I have done so and so, you all know that I have done this and that, and you all know how smart I am, how good a stock-man I am, how good a farmer, and how I have therefore accumulated great wealth.' And then, with a very lordly gesture, a gesture of great pride but without being humiliating, he gave this pile of wealth to the widows, to the orphaned children, and to the blind and the diseased. At the end of Sun Dance ceremony he was stripped of all his possessions, owning nothing but the clothes he stood in.²

The attitude of a philanthropist in the modern society differs little from the

1. एते सत्पुरुषाः परार्थघटकाः

स्वार्थं परित्यज्य ये

सामान्यास्तु परार्थमुद्यमभृतः

स्वार्थाविरोधेन ये ।

तेऽमी मानुषराक्षसाः परहितं

स्वार्थाय निघ्नन्ति ये

ये निघ्नन्ति निरर्थकं परहितं

ते के न जानीमहे ॥

Bhartṛhari, *Nītisatakam*, 75

2. Abraham H. Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York; Penguin Books, 1982) p. 195

attitude of those Red Indians except that his culture compels him to be hypocritical and that he retains far, far more than he gives away. Maslow wanted to find out who was the richest man among those Indians. The white secretary of the reserve, a government official, looked into the records and mentioned Jimmy as the one who possessed the most stock, cattle and horses. But when Maslow asked the Indians, they pointed to their chief as the richest man, although he owned nothing. Everything he acquired he gave away to the community, retaining only his ego as the chief. As for Jimmy and his horses, they were referred to only with contempt. In primitive society everybody is encouraged to be unselfish without having to sacrifice egoism.

On the contrary, the civilized society allows everyone to be selfish as much as possible but puts curbs on egoism. The chief concern of the civilized man is to grab as many objects of enjoyment as possible through polite means. The control of egoism is a major part of the processes of education and socialization. Uncontrolled or unsublimated egoism is one of the chief causes of conflict in social life. Egoism obscures clear thinking, and whatever decision is taken under its influence usually turns out to be wrong. One of the first casualties in the exercise of egoism is friendship. Nobody seeks the company of an egoistic person. In the *Mahābhārata* Yakṣa asks Yudhiṣṭhira: 'Who is loved by all?', and the answer given is: 'One who is free from pride'.³

Both selfishness and egoism have a common base, namely, an overstressed

sense of individuality and an anxious need to protect or assert it. A general term for this tendency is 'ego-centricity' which covers both selfishness and egoism. It is necessary to understand how this base of egoism gets overstressed and why people feel the need to protect or assert it.

Two types of egoism

Before proceeding further it is necessary to point out that there are two types of egoism: 'soft skin' and 'hard shell'. The soft-skin variety is found in people who are sensitive and touchy and are usually introverts. They appear to be humble but have in reality a repressed sense of superiority. They harbour feelings of resentment but would prefer to brood over it, often blaming and suffering themselves. They can forbear but cannot forgive. People whom psychologists characterize as masochistic and 'schizo' (schizophrenic) are extreme cases of soft-skin egoism.

The 'hard-shell' variety is found in people who are aggressive and extroverted and can take on a good amount of criticism with apparent nonchalance. They do not allow themselves to suffer but would rather 'take it out on' somebody else. They put on superior airs but beneath it all lies a repressed sense of inferiority. They find it difficult to forbear but are often willing to forgive. People whom psychologists characterize as sadistic and 'para' (paranoid) are extreme cases of hard-shell egoism.

Both the groups display varying degrees of selfishness, though the former, owing to their introverted nature, are popularly and unjustly regarded as more selfish.

Causes of egoism and selfishness

No man acts without a cause. There are at least four main causes which prompt people to behave selfishly or egoistically.

3. The original question and answer, framed in a slightly different way, are:

किं नु हित्वा प्रियो भवति ? . . .

मानं हित्वा प्रियो भवति . . .

Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, 313.75,76

1. *Struggle for existence.* As Darwin showed, there is in all living beings a natural biological urge to struggle for their existence. In animals this struggle is restricted to the physical plane. In human beings social life and advancements in agriculture and technology have to a great extent made physical struggle for existence unnecessary. But the original instinct has not been eliminated; it has only been pushed from the physical plane to the mental plane, where it manifests itself as the urge to compete. In modern society person's worth is judged not by what he is, but by what he has. Therefore people compete with one another in order to possess more and thereby establish their worth. In this competition egoism and selfishness have survival value. A naive simpleton is spoofed everywhere. Those who have read Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* may remember how the boy Moses, sent to the market to sell an old horse, returned with a sack of coloured pieces of glass. Modern society makes people believe that without being selfish and egoistic it is not possible to succeed in life or prevent others from taking undue advantage of their alleged goodness of heart.

2. *Insecurity.* Another cause of selfish and egoistic behaviour is the feeling of insecurity produced by alienation from collective life. The famous Swiss child psychologist Piaget has shown that 'during the early stages the world and the self are one; neither term is distinguished from the other'. The newborn baby has hardly any ego; its self remains embedded in the collective unconscious and so it feels secure. As the child grows, its ego gradually gets separated and takes shape. If there is adequate parental and social support, it remains well integrated with collective life and continues to feel secure. But if this early support is withdrawn owing to

parental neglect, quarrel between the parents or adverse social conditions, the child gets alienated from collective life. It then feels insecure and may take recourse to selfishness and egotism as a means of self-defence. However, what was originally intended to serve as a defence strategy often changes into a mechanism for aggression and self-aggrandizement.

Ruth Benedict has shown that aggressive behaviour is clearly linked to the pattern of social life an individual grows in. She divided communities into two groups under the terms 'high synergy' and 'low synergy'. In a high-synergy society the members live for one another and work in a spirit of cooperation as if they constituted one single organism. In a low-synergy society this integration is very little in evidence. From her extensive study of American-Indian communities she came to the following conclusion:

Is there any sociological condition which correlates with strong aggression and any that correlates with low aggression? ... From all comparative material, the conclusion that emerges is that societies where non-aggression is conspicuous have social orders in which the individual by the same act and at the same time serves his own advantage and that of the group....Non-aggression occurs (in these societies) not because people are unselfish and put social obligations above personal desires, but when social arrangements make these two identical. [By contrast, aggression is found in] cultures with low synergy where the social structure provides for acts which are mutually opposed and counteractive (and)...where the advantage of one individual becomes a victory over another, and the majority who are not victorious must shift as they can.⁴

3. *Immaturity.* Unfavourable external conditions alone cannot, however, explain fully egocentric behaviour. For, as

4. Quoted in *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, p. 194

Abraham Maslow mentions, even in the 'high-synergy' community of Black Foot Indians there are people like Jimmy owning a great number of livestock. Selfish and arrogant people are found even in highly cultured and well-knit families. Egocentricity is essentially a personal defect. It betrays a person's inability to manage himself properly and is therefore a sign of immaturity. It is commonly found to be used as a shield for defence against oneself rather than against other people. An egocentric individual is preoccupied with himself because of his fear of his emotions and drives which threaten to overpower him. In this respect he is not much different from the escapist who is always preoccupied with *other* people and things in order to forget his own worries. Egoism and escapism represent two wrong ways of dealing with oneself.

4. *Ignorance.* Inability to deal with oneself properly is to a great extent caused by ignorance about one's true nature and about the dynamics of the mind. It is a surprising thing that egocentric preoccupation with oneself does not produce true knowledge about oneself. Egoistic and selfish persons are the ones who have the least knowledge of themselves. There are two reasons for this. One is that their present knowledge of themselves is based on a wrong identity. Instead of identifying themselves with their true Self (known as Atman) they identify themselves with a false self. All the brooding on oneself only strengthens this wrong identity. Secondly, normal thinking in most people is dominated by the unconscious. It follows certain instinctive patterns, is unfree and impure, and is therefore incapable of revealing the true Self.

Wrong self-identity gives rise to certain wrong beliefs which serve as the fundamental premises of all wrong behaviour.

Three of these premises play a dominant role in egoistic behaviour.⁵

Three premises of egocentric behaviour

The first premise is that a person's identity and worth stand in need of proof. The primary basis of egocentric behaviour is an acute awareness of deficiency or inferiority in the person. This produces a compelling (although unconscious) urge to establish one's identity and worth. An egocentric person has a low opinion about himself, bordering on self-contempt. The observations of Prof. Stark and Prof. Washburn on this point are worth quoting here.

Pride need not be a bad thing—for example when it takes the form of quiet and unconditional self-affirmation. But this is not the pride of the egocentric, which is neither quiet nor without condition. The egocentric feels affirmed only on the condition that he succeeds and then, rather than remaining quietly content, he needs to extend the scope and significance of the victory, either by seeking the admiration of others or, at least, by engaging in private congratulations.

The satisfaction that the egocentric experiences during victories is most often fleeting and shaky. Since no number of victories is sufficient to establish a sense of worth that is final or absolute, feelings of uncertainty occur even at times of triumph. Past and present victories are never completely convincing.

It may sound paradoxical to say that a person who hates himself is egocentric, as it is more common to think of egocentricity in terms of vanity and pride. Nevertheless, the self-contempt is at least as much a part of the egocentric system as pride because, like pride, it rests upon the premise that identity and worth stand in need of proof...

Self-contempt must be distinguished from humility which has nothing to do with self-

5. For an insightful discussion on this subject see, Michael J. Stark and Michael C. Washburn, 'Ego, egocentricity and self-transcendence: western interpretation of eastern teaching', in *Philosophy East and West* (University of Hawaii) July, 1977.

denigration or feelings of worthlessness. Genuine humility is really the same as genuine (nonegocentric) pride; both reflect quiet and unconditional self-affirmation. The truly humble individual so accepts himself that he feels no need to prove anything. As such, humility reflects a way of being in the world that lies outside the egocentric framework altogether.⁶

The second premise of egocentricity holds that identity and worth are established by winning the recognition and approval of other people. This premise gets incorporated into our belief-system in childhood. The child finds that good behaviour is rewarded with a candy or a pat, whereas bad behaviour invites a spanking or scolding. This reward-punishment system may have its practical benefits but its disadvantages are equally great. For instance, in a cultural centre for boys run by one of our institutions it was found that the boy who won the 'Best boy of the year' award almost invariably turned out to be the worst boy the very next year, so much so that the authorities had to discontinue the custom of giving that award. It was the egoistic desire to win the award that had produced the good behaviour and, once that desire was fulfilled, the good behaviour disappeared leaving behind the original ego now boosted by the award. In the Montessori method of education every child in the school or group is awarded some prize or gift.

Early experiences of this kind lead to the development of two attitudes or tendencies in the adult. One of these is the tendency to judge oneself by the opinions and attitudes of others. 'This can lead to a situation in which a person becomes his own most severe critic', say Stark and Washburn. 'For example, there are many people who function adequately and are well liked, but who nonetheless suffer from

self-condemnation because they perceive themselves as failing to live up to their (internalized) conditions of self-approval.'⁷

The other tendency is to feel always the need for other people's approval. Held within reasonable limits, this tendency regulates an individual's life in conformity with the norms and customs of the society. Many people in the due course learn to develop their own internal self-evaluation system based on self-knowledge and, with its help, lead a peaceful and socially useful life unaffected by vicissitudes. But in the egocentric individual, egoism distorts his perspectives and his need for other people's approval goes beyond normal limits. He finds himself struggling to attain an impossible goal. For it is not possible to get the approval of everybody nor to get the approval of even a few at all times. Worse still, the egoistic individual expects everyone to seek his approval for, since his own ego needs to be constantly bolstered up by the admiration and support of other people, he cannot believe that people can live without him by deriving their strength and inspiration from their own inner resources.

The third premise maintains that happiness and fulfilment belong to the person who succeeds in establishing his identity and worth before other people. What this implies is that the happiest persons are those who are admired and approved of most. This is of course a false premise as is evident from the fact that film stars, sportsmen and dashing local leaders, who are wildly admired, are seldom found to live happy lives, especially after they have passed the 'peak'. But modern society perpetuates this illusion through what Eric Fromm calls the 'marketing orientation'. In earlier times people went to the market to sell or buy commodities:

6. Ibid, pp. 274-75

7. Ibid, p. 268

rice, vegetables, cattle, clothes etc. But in modern times people themselves have become commodities. They sell their knowledge, their music, their talents, their beauty, and those who earn more money by this means are considered to be more successful and happy. Says Eric Fromm

Since modern man experiences himself both as the seller and as the commodity to be sold on the market, his self-esteem depends on conditions beyond his control. If he is 'successful', he is valuable; if he is not he is worthless. The degree of insecurity which results from this orientation can hardly be overestimated. If one feels that one's own value is not constituted primarily by the human qualities one possesses, but by one's success on a competitive market with ever-changing conditions, one's self-esteem is bound to be shaky and in constant need of confirmation by others. Hence one is driven to strive relentlessly for success and any setback is a severe threat to one's self-esteem; helplessness, insecurity and inferiority feelings are the result.⁸

Consequences of egocentricity

There is no need to attempt to punish a selfish or egoistic person, for egocentricity itself is its own punishment. There is none more miserable than the egocentric. What he misses most is peace. Peace depends upon two things: fulfilment and security. Fulfilment is an inner condition, the result of Self-realization. This eludes the selfish individual because he seeks fulfilment by hoarding external objects; it eludes the egoistic individual because he seeks fulfilment in the approval and admiration of other people.

We have seen that insecurity is one of the causes of egoism; paradoxically, it is also one of the effects or consequences of egoism. Egoism isolates the individual from common life and this produces

insecurity. Insecurity is most commonly experienced in the form of anxiety. Paul Tillich has shown in his famous book *Courage To Be* that this existential anxiety is to be distinguished from fear. Fear always has an object; it is a response to a specific threat or danger. Anxiety has seldom a definite object; it is a vague feeling of precariousness, an uneasy attitude towards life in general. Fear vanishes as soon as the object of fear is removed. But anxiety persists always and, even when there are no threats in evidence, the mere fantasy of defeat or loss is sufficient to generate uneasiness. However, unlike the neurotic who seeks psychiatric help, the egocentric may not be aware of the anxiety that is constantly gnawing at his heart, except in certain critical situations or when gastric ulcer, high blood-pressure and other psychosomatic troubles appear. Even if he becomes aware of his anxiety, his attempts to remove it will not succeed as its roots—selfishness and egoism—remain strong in him.

The second thing that the egocentric individual loses is spontaneity. Anyone who has attempted to do something creative knows egoism blocks creativity. One's best creation, be it music, painting, dance, scientific research or a short story or poem, emerges only when one remains free from egoism at least temporarily. A chronically egoistic or selfish person is rarely able to 'let go' and allow his entire being to respond to the creative impulse. Nor can he be spontaneous in his relationships. He wants to be loved, but he cannot love because love is self-giving, and the last thing that the egocentric wishes to give is himself. Egocentricity is the rock that breaks marriages and friendships.

When there is no spontaneity, life becomes repetitive and dull. An egocentric person can take up only those actions that

⁸. Eric Fromm, *Man For Himself* (New York: Fawcett Premier Books, 1975) p. 79

will satisfy his vanity or selfishness. As a result, many of his emotions, talents and potentialities remain unrepresented in action or manifest themselves only in distorted form. His being shrinks in size as the realm of possibilities contracts. Furthermore egoism and selfishness prevent people from adapting themselves to changing conditions and difficult situations. The egocentric individual thus finds himself in a limited world, full of tension and constantly fighting real and imaginary foes.

Egoism and the ego

Our purpose in discussing egocentricity is not to hold a certain class of people up to ridicule. Selfishness and egoism are present in almost all human beings in varying degrees. Egocentricity is a fundamental existential problem and, without coming into grips with it, it is not possible to solve the basic problems of life. Egoism is the root cause of all suffering and bondage.

It may be possible to attain success (in the sense of acquiring wealth and fame) in worldly life by being selfish or egoistic or both, but never in spiritual life. Egocentricity is the greatest obstacle to spiritual progress and, as long as it persists, Self-realization or God realization is not possible. In all religions selfishness and egoism are regarded as major sins or bonds preventing the soul from attaining salvation or liberation. All religions aim at the transformation of ego-centred life into God-centred life. Sri Ramakrishna identified Maya with egoism. He used to say:

Maya is nothing but the egotism of the embodied soul. This egotism has covered everything like a veil. 'All troubles come to an end when the ego dies.' ... This maya, that is to say, the ego, is like a cloud. The sun cannot be seen on account of a thin patch of cloud; when

that disappears one sees the sun. If by the grace of the guru one's ego vanishes, then one sees God.

Rama, who is God himself, was only two and a half cubits ahead of Lakshmana. But Lakshmana couldn't see Him because Sita stood between them. Lakshmana may be compared to the jiva, and Sita to maya. Man cannot see God on account of the barrier of maya.

Just look: I am creating a barrier in front of my face with this towel. Now you can't see me, even though I am so near. Likewise, God is the nearest of all, but we cannot see Him on account of this covering of maya.⁹

Nowadays there is a good deal of talk about selflessness, 'de-egoizing', transcendence, and so on. An advice frequently given is, 'Enjoy the world but give up the ego'. The ego, built up through years of social interaction, cannot be so easily given up, nor is this the immediate need. The primary need is to recover one's true identity and worth. The ego in most people is immature and ignorant; it should, first of all, be helped to attain maturity and to develop its powers fully. Furthermore, the ego, which itself is a false self, puts on several masks and these are to be removed. All this cannot be done in a day, nor through ordinary thinking and reading. Just as the real nature of a machine can be studied only when it is working, so also the real nature of the ego can be known only through interpersonal dealings. A disciplined way of doing this is Karma Yoga. Through Karma Yoga the ego attains maturity, develops its powers to the fullest extent and recovers its true identity and worth. Only a strong, pure, mature ego can transcend itself.

One important point to be kept in mind in the context is the difference between egoism and the ego. Egoism is the gross, usually misdirected, outer manifestation of a subtle psychic principle known as the

⁹. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974) p. 101

ego. Most people are so much entangled in the gross forms of egoism that they are not in a position to understand what the ego really is. The question of transcending the ego does not even arise in such a situation. There is a temporary suspension of egoism and dissolution of the ego spontaneously taking place during deep sleep (*susupti*), but this is not transcendence. The ego is transcended only when the luminous Atman emerges to the surface, and this takes place only at the higher levels of spiritual experience.

Before attempting to transcend the ego it is necessary to understand and practise some important psycho-spiritual processes like the integration of the ego, its matura-

tion and transformation. This topic will be discussed further in the next month's Editorial. Meanwhile, we may conclude our present discussion with a small poem composed by Sister Devamata (a disciple of Swami Paramananda) in which she has expressed the realistic attitude of a non-egoistic person.

I am nor greater nor less by judgement of men,
Neither better nor worse by human decree.
Mightier hands hold the balancing scales
That determine my lack or my merit.

I am what I am

By Divine weight and measure.¹⁰

10. Sister Devamata, *The Habit of Happiness* (La Crescenta: Ananda Ashrama, 1930) p. 12

M.'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE DIVINE 'ANGLER'

DR. M. SIVARAMAKRISHNA

(Continued from the previous issue)

IV

M's great strength—as also his peculiar weakness—was his scholarship, his tidy, logical mind. It is this intellectual background (accustomed to history and tradition but as yet, until his encounter with the Master, unaware of epiphany and revelation) that enables him to, as it were, 'place' Ramakrishna in the religious tradition, even during the first visit: 'It was as if he were standing where all the holy places met and as if Sukadeva himself were speaking the word of God, or as if Sri Chaitanya were singing the name and glories of the Lord in Puri with Ramananda, Swarup, and the other devotees.'¹³

Two points seem significant in this description: first, the transposition of divine personages, a common feature of Hindu religious consciousness. Ramakrishna is Chaitanya, Sukadeva, Ramanand etc. Second, we have also spatial transposition: Dakshineswar is modern Navadwip, Puri, Kāshi etc. In fact, it is a place where 'all the holy places' met, as it were. But the reference to Chaitanya is intriguing. For, he is an almost unique exemplar of both unparalleled scholarship and tenderest, ecstatic devotion. The question, therefore, nags M.'s mind: can such unique expositional powers and acute insights as he himself noticed in Ramakrishna's discourse about rituals exist

13. Ibid, p. 77

14. Ibid

without an antecedent background of extensive scholastics?

This is probably the reason why he puts to Brinde what in retrospect proves to be an extremely naive question: 'Does he read many books?' And pat comes the answer: 'Books? Oh, dear no! They're all on his tongue.' 'It amazed M.'—naturally—'to hear that Sri Ramakrishna read no books.'¹⁵ The real amazement is, however, Brinde's not M.'s. For, her answer has the genuine ring of astonishment that any one can be so naive as to think of books in the context of someone who is the very embodiment of the quintessential wisdom to which they are only pointers!

M.'s legitimate doubt about wisdom sans scholarship is answered by Ramakrishna in the next and, as it were, the terminal point of the first encounter. But this was answered not by *telling* but by *showing* (as a modern sensibility this must have been immensely satisfying to M.). The showing of 'bhāva'—the transcendent experience beyond all distinctions and differences—begins in an innocuous way. M. sees a phenomenon for which he had yet to acquire corresponding terminology, or to put it in another way, this was a phenomenon that all his scholarship had not equipped him to understand.

The Master, even as he begins to hear M.'s answers to his questions, is 'distracted'. M. could see that the Master was not involved in hearing the answers: he *was hearing yet not exactly so*. The Master's consciousness being elsewhere M. could only conclude, at least tentatively, that 'he seemed to become absent-minded.'¹⁶ Baffled by this strange phenomenon of Bhāva M. could fall back only on analogies. He has probably by this time recovered his wits

sufficiently enough to think at least of analogies now. This is because his overall impression of the first encounter was total amazement at the phenomenon of the Master. This is evident in the highly-loaded epithets he uses to describe this experience: he 'stood there speechless,'¹⁷ 'looked around with wonder,'¹⁸ 'it amazed him,'¹⁹ and even on the way back home 'he began to wonder.'²⁰

Admittedly the analogy M. uses to describe the Master's *bhava* is (or could be) a later insertion but what an extraordinarily significant analogy! The Master's ecstasy is, M. tells (us),

...like the state of the angler who has been sitting with his rod; the fish comes and swallows the bait and the float begins to tremble; the angler is on the alert; he grips the rod and watches the float steadily and eagerly; he will not speak to any one. Such was the state of the Master's mind.²¹

The analogy for *bhāva* is extremely apt and it suggests a vast network of meanings, an intricate crystal of motifs which are worth analysing.

'Angling' is an image stemming from and coextensive with the larger nexus of 'hunting' as man's earliest experience of some kind of one pointed meditateness. For sheer physical survival in 'primitive' times, 'hunting' is an indispensable prerequisite and 'hunting' without 'concentrating' can yield no catch. Once this basic mode of focussing consciousness on external objects of 'prey' gets a transcendent aim it ceases to be a *vyavastha* (a mere tool or technique) and becomes an *avastha* (a state of being/consciousness).²²

17. Ibid

18. Ibid, p. 77

19. Ibid

20. Ibid, p. 78

21. Ibid

22. See for an illuminating discussion of these aspects, 'Meditation and Work II,' editorial for July, 1984, *Prabuddha Bharata*, pp. 282-83.

15. Ibid, p. 78

16. Ibid

Eventually, hunting (and allied modes such as angling) becomes dissociated from physical goals and achieves transfiguration as a specific *modus operandi* to achieve levels of heightened consciousness. From being a mere analogy it gets absorbed into the complex of meditative consciousness as a metaphoric extension of one structure of consciousness into another. Appropriately enough, in the maps of consciousness such as the *Upanishads*, the imagery of 'hunting' gets symbolic expression. In the *Mundaka* we read:

Take the Upanishads as the bow, the great weapon, and place upon it the arrow sharpened by meditation. Then, having drawn it back with a mind directed to the thought of Brahman, strike that mark, O my good friend—that which is the imperishable.²³

Again:

Om is the bow; the Atman is the arrow; Brahman is said to be the mark. It is struck by an undistracted mind. Then the Atman becomes one with Brahman, as the arrow with the target.²⁴

In our own day, Gary Snyder, the poet,—reports Willard Johnson,—thought of 'hunting' as the origin of 'meditation':

The poet Gary Snyder started me on this line of questioning when he remarked once that he thought meditation's birth came in the archaic hunter's experience. He went on to explain that these early hunters had no powerful bows with which to fell game, so they had to approach their quarry very closely....²⁵

'To do this,' Johnson elaborates, 'one needs to quiet the mind of all 'human'

23. 'Mundaka Upanishad,' II, ii, 3., *The Upanishads* Volume I, Swami Nikhilananda, tr. (New York: Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, 1977), p. 289.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 290.

25. Willard Johnson, *Riding the Ox Home: A History of Meditation from Shamanism to Science* (London: Rider & Company, 1982), pp. 26-27.

thoughts, in effect entering into an ecstasy in which one 'stands outside' one's ordinary humanness.²⁶ The 'shooting of one's self' with the arrow of meditative calmness is what eventually emerges.

Obviously, this was the phenomenon which M. watched breathlessly in the Master. But he had yet to know that the Master raised this phenomenon to its farthest limits. But what is interesting is that M. himself reports later the Master's use of the same analogy to pinpoint the same issue. The Master observed:

In deep meditation a man is not at all conscious of the outer world. A hunter was aiming at a bird. A bridal procession passed along beside him with the groom's relatives and friends, music, carriages and horses. It took a long time for the procession to pass the hunter, but he was not at all conscious of it. He didn't know that the bridegroom had gone by.²⁷

Along with 'hunting', 'angling' is mentioned by the Master again and again as a process analogous to that of meditation. In the next section of the same passage quoted above, the Master carries the image forward by its extension into angling which suggests 'single mindedness in meditation' in which one 'sees nothing, hears nothing...':²⁸

A man was angling in a lake all by himself. After a long while the float began to move. Now and then its tip touched the water. The angler was holding the rod tight in his hands, ready to pull it up, when a passerby stopped and said: 'Sir, can you tell me where Mr. Banerjee lives?' There was no reply from the angler, who was just on the point of pulling up the rod...The angler was unconscious of everything....²⁹

Only later after he 'landed the fish' does the angler reply to the stranger! Describing

26. *Ibid*

27. *The Gospel*, p. 744.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

the state of his own mind during *sadhana*, it is interesting that the Master uses the same image and says: 'I felt that I had seized the Mother, like a fisherman dragging fish in his net.'³⁰

Related ideas emerge with unmistakable clarity; the image of the set as symbolizing 'the self' is common both in literature and in myth: as from Shakespeare down to our own contemporary riders to the sea, the old man's self-expression linked to the sea, and above all our entire globe regarded as a ship of fools. Camus, the existential writer, as Willard Johnson has noted, uses 'the sea to symbolize his emerging desire for deeper self-knowledge.' This inward odyssey is a symbolic journey: 'the 'pilgrim waits' for 'homebound ships' (home = self, ship = means of transformation), for the 'house' (= self) 'of the waters' (= the primal innocence of his youth, his true inner state). Everything seems superficial—action, accomplishment, fame, and insult. He has but one longing, 'remembers' only one image, that of the 'sea' (= inner self) which holds his soul's true identity.'³¹

Ramakrishna himself was never tired of this image of 'diving deep' for 'self knowledge':

Dive deep, O mind, dive deep in the
Ocean of God's Beauty;
If you descend to the uttermost depths,
There you will find the gem of Love.³²

And, what M. noticed during his first encounter in the Master is exactly the image the Master himself uses to express the experience of *samadhi*: 'sometimes, in *samadhi*, the soul swims joyfully in the ocean of divine ecstasy, like a fish,³³ and, again, 'just as a fish darts about in the water and roams in great happiness, so

also does the Mahāvāyu move upward in the body, and one goes into *samādhi*. One feels the rising of the Great Energy, as though it were the movement of a fish.'³⁴

It is, therefore, no surprise that the Master should extend the implications of the same image, this time, to classify seekers after freedom:

Suppose a net has been cast into a lake to catch fish. Some fish are so clever that they are never caught in the net. They are like the everfree. But most of the fish are entangled in the net. Some of them try to free themselves from it, and they are like those who seek liberation. But not all the fish that struggle succeed. A very few do jump out of the net, making a big splash in the water. Then the fishermen shout, "Look, there goes a big one!" But most of the fish caught in the net cannot escape, nor do they make any effort to get out. On the contrary, they burrow into the mud with the net in their mouths and lie there quietly, thinking, 'We need not fear any more; we are quite safe here.' But the poor things do not know that the fishermen will drag them out with the net. These are like the men bound to the world.³⁵

In these terms, M. obviously was among the ones who got away or rather the one who was rescued from the sea by the divine angler. The way Ramakrishna, the Master Angler waited impatiently with his baits—which he himself described as devotion and ecstatic love³⁶—is, obviously, a re-enactment of an earlier episode in the life of another fisher of men. What Luigi Santucci said of Christ vis-a-vis the 'fishing' of men is applicable to Ramakrishna, too:

Those fishes in that net. There were so many of them that if they could have formed a choir of supplication it would have reechoed over

30. *Ibid.*, p. 564.

31. Willard Johnson, *Op. cit.*, p. 201.

32. *The Gospel*, p. 153.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 829.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 353.

the lake and surrounding hills...Christ was waiting for them on the shore.³⁷

The Master's waiting is, in a sense, explicable, again, through his own extended significances of the imagery of fish: while like a mother (or *the* Mother, if you like) he waited with fish cooked in a variety of ways to suit the different palates,³⁸ only a few came to partake of the life-giving repast. Many, like the woman in the parable, hugged their fishbaskets—their incurable worldliness—to their bosoms even while staying in the vicinity of flower-scented divinity. But, then, those who swallowed the bait and were picked up from the sea were not allowed to get dried up on land: they were put back in the ocean of Satchidananda. In effect, the advent of Ramakrishna was the Great Flood and all those it touched constituted the Survivors, the perennial survivors, 'baiting' others in their own turn. It is entirely appropriate that M. while describing his own 'role' in 'creating' the impact of the ever-widening waters of the Great Swan of Dakshineswar enveloping the entire globe in their sweep should use an extension of the same image: 'I live by the side of an ocean and keep with me a few pitchers of sea-water. When a visitor comes, I entertain him with that. What else can I speak of but His words.'³⁹ 'Angling' in this sense is a continuum of consciousness 'baiting'!

But this was to come; at this stage M. was fascinated yet baffled by the irresistible pull of this 'serene-looking' angler: 'I should like to see him again.'⁴⁰ Yet his

37. Luigi Santucci, *Wrestling With Christ* (London: William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1978), p. 62.

38. *The Gospel*, p. 81. It is highly significant that the image figures in M's second visit to the Master.

39. Sri Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Memorial Volume.

40. *The Gospel*, p. 78.

formality lingered; that is why Ramakrishna's own formality at the terminal point of the first encounter: 'Come again.'⁴¹ For M. this was, at that stage, necessary: 'He himself said,' he later recalls, 'come again,'⁴² and he does not only then but, to the great good fortune of all of us, ever after.

V

In retrospect, what are the 'baits' that the Divine Angler used to catch M.?

First: what M. read in books came alive: he both 'heard and noticed.'⁴³ This closest congruence must have struck M. to his depths—the congruence between the message and the man.

Second: the extraordinary, enveloping sense of harmony, in and around the Master. This was particularly significant in the context of M.'s own felt sense of discord, of despair leading him to the very verge of deliberate self-destruction. In spite of the fact that Ramakrishna controverted many of his own cerebral notions (M. 'had just finished studies in college'⁴⁴), M.'s incipient spiritual nature made him notice this all-pervasive harmony—in the midst of the chaos of Calcutta—in the Master. M. notices this harmony so pervasively that he makes it a point to mention its constituents:

What a beautiful place? What a charming man! How beautiful his words are!⁴⁵

As a student of literature, M. was familiar with the symbolic imagination capable of pattern-making, of deliberately designing a collocation, a creative montage

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

of character, locale and language. But to find them so fused in Dakshineswar probably struck him as *paradoxical but possible*. To remain in paradoxes and yet retain a consciousness of the Unitive Ground in which these are resolved is a possibility which for the first time comes into M.'s ken during his very first encounter with Ramakrishna.

Third, the artless simplicity of the Master strangely at variance, for M., with his stupendous spiritual level. But formality does not leave M. Even when Brinde tells them to go right in and sit in the Master's room, the sense of secular decorum clings to M. Similarly, when he sees the Master in Bhāvā, his instinct is to correlate it with time for formal rituals: 'perhaps, it is time for your evening worship?' And the Master's reply 'it isn't exactly that,'⁴⁶ is extraordinarily truthful: for it isn't *exactly* worship but the *summum bonum* of all worship and ritual for which even the most ardent devotee has to struggle endlessly.

Finally, the perceptible paradox that in spite of not being ostensibly familiar with the sophisticated mazes of learning, Ramakrishna had access to an inexhaustible reservoir of wisdom, wit and above all effortless, spontaneous ability to plunge, with the slightest stimulus, into the depths of the Infinite, a leap, indeed, into

areas M. had yet to grasp let alone traverse.

As for the Master, the coming of M. was an expected part of the vast cosmic design of which he was (the Master) himself the nucleus. But the first encounter was hardly the context to tell M. He had, so to say, developed M.'s delicate spiritual palate for momentous epiphanies. In a later context he unambiguously told M. his assigned role as the divine scribe and as, *inter alia*, an ever-perfect *siddha*:

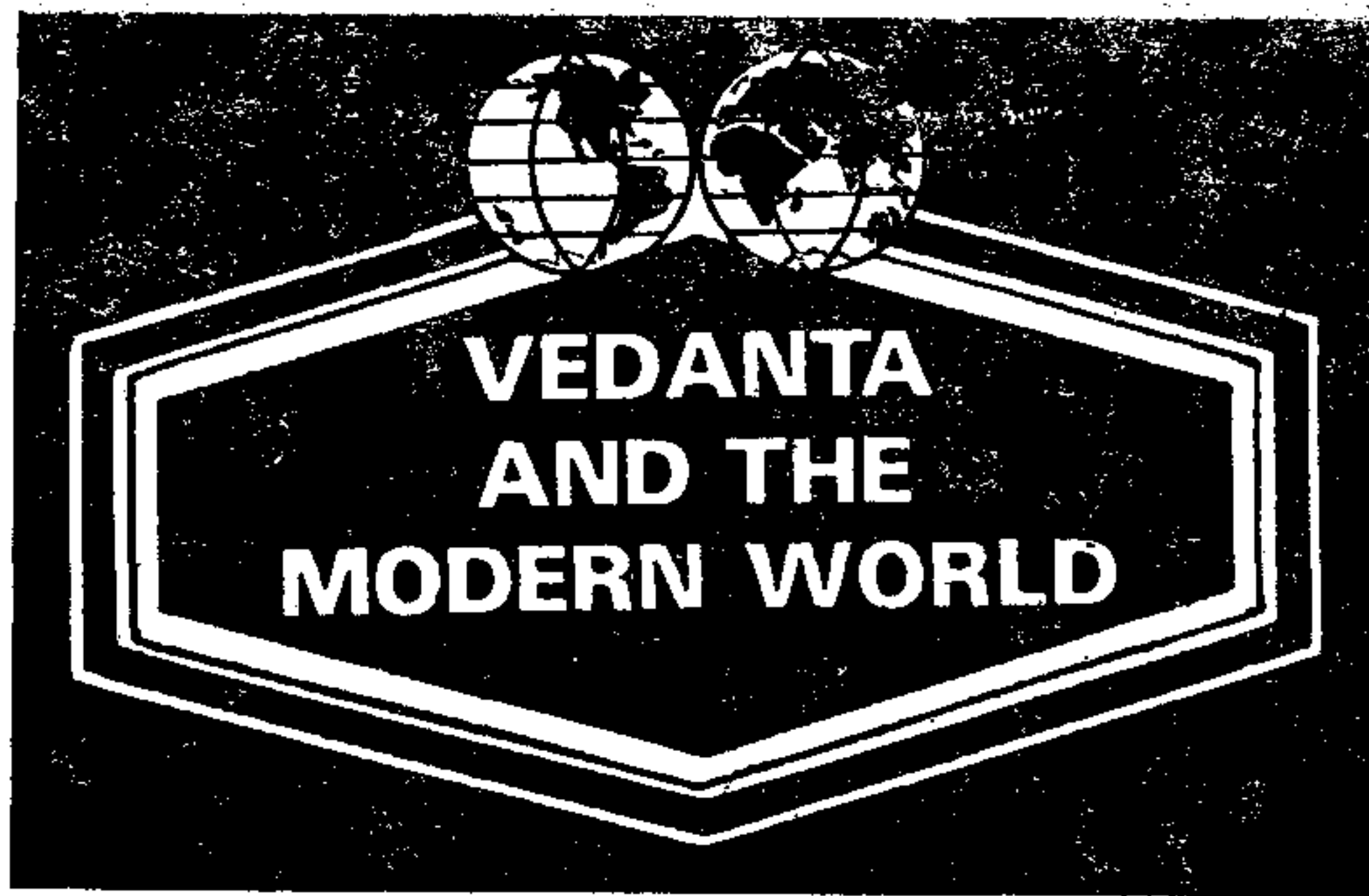
With these very eyes [said the Master], I saw you among the singers of Sri Chaitanya's *sankirtana*...Hearing you read the Chaitanya Bhagavata, I recognized you...you belong to the ever-perfect class...*You are my own* of the same substance as father and son...⁴⁷

Poetry, observed T.S. Eliot, can communicate before it is understood. This is exactly what happened to M. in his incipient encounter with incarnate divinity. The intimations came first; the revelation came initially; the understanding, the unravelling of the mystery of the phenomenon came later, slowly but unmistakably. In any case, there was an integral organicism linking communication and understanding. And that harmony, that holism—the interconnectedness of literally everything in the universe—is what all incarnations, more so Ramakrishna, symbolize, live and transmit.

(Concluded)

46. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 332 and p. 359.



VEDIC COSMOLOGY AND MODERN ASTROPHYSICS

SWAMI JITATMANANDA

The universe had a beginning

Recent developments in astrophysics seem to be moving closer to ancient Indian cosmology. The age-old Vedic conception of the universe as passing through cycles of creation (*sr̥ṣṭi*), maintenance (*sthiti*), and dissolution (*pralaya*) was looked down upon as mythological by modern science until the 1920s. But Swami Vivekananda, even at the end of the nineteenth century, spoke about the cosmological speculations of Orientals: '...you will find how wonderfully they are in accordance with the latest discoveries of modern science; and where there is disharmony, you will find it is modern science which lacks and not they'.¹

During the nineteenth century the West's view of the universe was considerably influenced by dogmatic theology which held that the world was created in 4004 B.C. one Friday afternoon. To Californians Vivekananda rather humorously pointed out, 'Remember, this world is very old; it was not created only two or three thousand years ago. It is taught here in the West that society began eighteen hundred years ago, with the New Testament. Before that there was no society. That may be true with regard to the West, but it is not true

as regards the whole world.'² But by 1900 western science had already started racing past dogmatic theology and rationalists had begun to express their views freely. Had Vivekananda preached the same Vedic ideas in the West only fifty years earlier, he would have been, as Ingersoll said to him, 'hanged...burnt alive or...stoned out of the villages'.³

Even after the immensity of cosmogonic time came to be recognized by western science, the concept of a static and eternal universe persisted in the common thinking of western scientists up to the 1920s. Even Einstein thought of this universe as a 'closed universe'.⁴ With his prodigious intellect Einstein calculated the radius of this static universe—about 35 billion light years.⁵ He even developed the concept of a cosmological constant which would make the universe remain constant.

But the first blow to this concept of a closed universe came in the early 1920s when Edwin Hubble and Humason, for the first time, discovered that the spectral lines of distant galaxies show a shift towards the red. They theorized that this

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976) vol 2, pp. 432-33

2. *Ibid*, p. 27

3. *Ibid*

4. Nigel Calder, *Einstein's Universe* (New York: The Viking Press, 1979) p. 131

5. Lincoln Barnett, *The Universe and Dr. Einstein* (London: Comet Books/Collins, 1956) p. 101

'red shift' meant that the distant galaxies were receding faster than those galaxies which are nearer to our own system. According to their calculation the galaxy in hydra cluster is moving away with the speed of 61000 kms per second from us. This epoch-making discovery made astrophysicists conceive of the universe as undergoing expansion after a primeval explosion which they called the 'Big Bang'.⁶

In 1932 Russian physicist Alexander Friedman constructed the model of an expanding universe which was different from Einstein's model of a static universe.⁷ Another Nobel physicist George Gamow of George Washington University, working on the Big Bang theory calculated that after the Big Bang the universe will continue to expand for about two billion years.⁸ California physicist R.C. Tolman proceeded further. The cosmic expansion according to him is a temporary phenomenon which will be followed in some distant time by a period of contraction. 'The universe in this picture', says Lincoln Barnett, 'is like a balloon in which cycles of expansion and contraction succeed each other through eternity.'⁹

Apart from these ideas of the Big Bang, the universe, according to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, is progressing towards a 'heat death' when all the galaxies and stars will have given away their energy in the form of heat and radiation and the whole universe will have attained one uniform temperature. What is this heat death? It has some striking resemblance to the Indian concept of 'Pralaya' or

dissolution. Writes Lincoln Barnett of this state with a rare clarity:

... All space will be at the same temperature. No energy can be used because all of it will be uniformly distributed through the cosmos. There will be no light, no life, no warmth—nothing but perpetual and irrevocable stagnation. Time itself will come to an end. For entropy points the direction of time. Entropy is the measure of randomness. When all system and order in the universe have vanished, when randomness is at its maximum, and entropy cannot be increased, when there no longer is any sequence of cause and effect—in short, when the universe has run down, there will be no direction to time, there will be no time. And there is no way of avoiding this destiny....¹⁰

'The important philosophical corollary' and 'the inescapable inference' from this running down of the universe to a state beyond time and energy flow is, writes Lincoln Barnett, 'that everything had a beginning'.¹¹

In the early 1950s George Gamow and his colleagues working on the Big Bang theory predicted that there must be existing some kind of microwave radiation in the whole universe as a relic of the Big Bang. Though several scientists at first doubted the existence of such a radiation, two physicists of Bell Telephone Laboratory, New Jersey, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson, discovered it in 1965 by sheer accident. While working on a big horn-shaped antenna they received a strange kind of residual radiation coming from all directions. In the beginning this seemed to be a cosmic noise which they could not explain. But two other scientists, Robert Dick and Jim Peebles of Princeton University, identified this radiation as the relic of the first Big Bang. Penzias and

6. Dr. J. V. Narlikar, 'The Exploding Universe', *Illustrated Weekly of India*, Nov. 6-12, 1983. p. 8

7. Ibid

8. *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, p. 106

9. Ibid

10. Ibid, p. 107

11. Ibid, p. 110

Wilson found that empty space in the entire universe is not cold to 0° but has got a temperature of 3° kelvin which is the residual effect of the radiation of the original Big Bang. Thirteen years later, during which period their discovery was subjected to thorough scrutiny, they were awarded Nobel Prize for this discovery which established the Big Bang theory almost beyond a doubt.¹²

What is this 3° kelvin radiation? In the Kelvin scale 0° equals minus 273.16° celsius. Scientists have calculated that at the first hundredth of a second after the Big Bang the temperature of the universe was one hundred billion kelvin. After the first tenth of a second, the universe cooled down to ten billion kelvin. After 14 second, it came down to about one billion degree kelvin.¹³ After a billion years eventually the universe cooled sufficiently to allow the particles to come together as atoms of hydrogen and helium—the raw material of the universe. 'A great flash of light occurred as the atoms formed, and that was the possible origin of 3°K radio energy', writes Nigel Calder.¹⁴ The universe today, according to the latest calculations looks indeed like the relics of a huge explosion that took place in the remote past.

That our universe had a beginning in some remote past is today once again established by the startling discovery that protons also decay. Proton which is the more stable particle in the nucleus of an atom, was at first believed to live for ever. In the late 1960s Soviet physicist Andrei Sakharov predicted that protons like other unstable nuclear particles also decay; this proton decay means that the universe is slowly disappearing which obviously presupposes that the universe had a beginning.

The first proton decay experiment to report positive result was made in the Kolar Gold Field mines in India by scientists from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Bombay, and their Japanese colleagues. A proton, according to the latest calculations, is supposed to have a 50-50 chance of decaying in 10^{32} years or, in other words, protons have a half-life of 10^{32} years. Scientists working in a tunnel beneath the Mont Blanc also claim to have obtained evidence of proton decay.

The discoveries leading to the confirmation of the fact that the universe had a beginning in some remote Big Bang, and will have an eventual 'collapse' in a 'Big Crunch' in some remote future, made Einstein withdraw his concept of the 'cosmological constant'. He even bitterly regretted having invented it in order to maintain his theory of a static universe.¹⁵

How was the Beginning?

How was the beginning of the universe? The latest discoveries, writes Nigel Calder, 'permit most theorists to agree upon the course of events during the Big Bang and to describe them with remarkable assurance.'¹⁶ This is what the physicists have traced as the early stages of the universe after the Big Bang:

1. One billion years old—we watch the galaxies being born along with blue-white infant stars.
2. One hundred million years old—A dark sea of hydrogen and helium, a few protogalaxies and a few islands of new born stars.
3. One hundred thousand years old—The temperature of the universe is 4500° kelvin, nearly the temperature of the sun. Darkness is replaced by light.
4. 2 minutes 15 seconds old—The universe

12. 'The Exploding Universe', p. 10

13. Heinz Pagels, *The Cosmic Code* (New York: Bantam Books, 1983) pp. 281-82

14. *Einstein's Universe*, p. 122

15. *Ibid*, pp. 147, 123

16. *Ibid*, p. 121

is dense as rock, in great heat it resembles rock being vaporized in a nuclear explosion. At this stage helium is being forged.

5. Still earlier in time—Atoms cannot be formed. No nucleus can survive. Heavy subatomic particles like protons and neutrons and light ones like electrons and neutrinos are moving about restless and unsettled.

6. Still deeper in time—Even heavier subatomic particles cannot survive: their constituents like quark, leptons and photons, all remain as if in a boiling soup.

7. A still earlier stage—The universe moves slowly back towards the stage of one Force—the electro-weak force is now breaking into electromagnetic and weak-interaction forces. The universe is now a million, million times denser than the nucleus of an atom. And the radius of the universe is smaller than the orbit of the earth around the sun.

8. Far, far deeper in time, 10^{-35} second after the Big Bang—The electronuclear force is breaking into electro-weak and strong interaction forces. The universe is a homogeneous pool of matter or *ākāśa* as Vivekananda put it.

9. Still deeper in time—The universe is now 10^{-43} second old. How short is this time? If 10^{-43} second is one second, then one flash of a camera will take 20 billion years (or 20 thousand million years). It is at this stage that from the Cosmic Force the first two forces in nature, Gravity and Electronuclear forces are being born. This is the stage, though infinitesimally small in duration, after the Big Bang when the Monotheistic Rule ends.¹⁷

The death of stars and blackholes:

The birth of our universe from a highly dense and dark state of existence has been a matter of great interest to scientists for quite a long time. Nearly two centuries ago an English astronomer John Michell pointed out that a heavy star, sufficiently compact, could even compel particles to gravitate into it. In the early part of this century Einstein predicted that light can be deflected by a strong gravitational field. Theoretical physicists have since then

been trying to evolve the idea of a super-dense star capable of swallowing everything around it, even light. In 1968 American physicist John Wheeler applied the term 'blackhole' to such a self-hiding body.¹⁸

Today the study of the gravitational collapse of stars into blackholes is a passion with many physicists. Dr. S. Chandrasekhar, who received Nobel Prize in 1983 for his contribution to the knowledge of the collapse and death of stars, has shown that stars collapse as a result of their own gravitational force. The collapse, in its turn, triggers thermonuclear explosion inside them. In that process hydrogen is converted to helium. In case of heavy stars, even helium is converted into carbon and oxygen and eventually into iron, an element which releases no energy, and the nuclear alchemy stops there.

What happens to a star which has exhausted all its nuclear fuel? Will such a star be able to keep up its equilibrium against the powerfully attracting force of gravity? The existence of the stars called 'white dwarfs', which are visibly faint but highly dense and compact, gives us the answer, 'yes'. But how? 'The answer lies', says astrophysicist Jayant Narlikar, 'in the exclusion principle (of Pauli) which forbids two identical particles like the electrons to be present together. The tendency of a star to attract means more and more of particles in the same small volume. The exclusion principle puts a limit on how closely we can pack the matter together. Out of such restrictions a new pressure emerges which opposes further contraction.'¹⁹ This anti-gravitational force maintains equilibrium in the white dwarf stage of a collapsing star. If the mass of the collapsing star is heavier than 1.44 times the mass of the sun (this is the

17. Adapted from *The New York Times Magazine*, 26 Sept. 1982, p. 68-69

18. Ibid, 23 January, 1983. p. 54

19. 'The Exploding Universe', p. 13

celebrated Chandrasekhar's limit), then it has no defence against gravitational pressure. In that case matter is ultimately squeezed into an infinitely dense mass giving rise to a blackhole. Jayant Narlikar writes, 'Thus all white dwarfs must respect this mass limit in order to survive.' According to Dr. Chandrasekhar's calculations, if the earth were to shrink to a radius of 2.5 kms it would become such a blackhole, permitting no light to escape from it.

If Dr. Chandrasekhar had shown how blackholes could be formed, the celebrated Cambridge physicist Stephen Hawking has made significant theoretical contribution to our knowledge of the mode of working and properties of the blackhole. Hawking's work shows that some blackholes may be theoretically visible as they emit particles from the region around the entrance. One could even see a blackhole exploding and thus learn some thing about the Big Bang.²⁰

Hawking took his cue from the theoretical work of physicist Roger Penrose of Oxford who first showed, contrary to the belief of Newtonian physicists, that the collapse of stars could reach a state of 'infinite density' which could in fact be compared to the 'proverbial head of a pin'. This is what cosmologists call the 'state of singularity' or the 'boundary conditions' and this is what preceded the beginning of the universe in the Big Bang. By 'singularity' physicists mean an infinitely small space of time. In fact this is 'a theoretical edge of "space and time"...' as Michael Harwood writes. 'Towards that edge, that minuscule point, races at unimaginable speed all the matter sucked into the blackhole, all the matter of a star or of a universe, to be crushed into a region of infinite density from which nothing escapes and where none of the known laws of physics apply.'

Penrose's calculations 'guarantee that despite irregularities a singularity can occur.'²¹

According to the law of gravitation, a blackhole will swallow anything that happens to be within its periphery of attraction, and naturally it will grow more in mass and size. But Hawking, again, theoretically discovered something quite to the contrary. By taking the help of Penrose's work and developing on the work of the Russian physicist Yakov B. Zeldovich, Hawking discovered by applying quantum mechanics to the blackholes that blackholes could also shrink. Michael Harwood, writing on Hawking, says, 'The results surprised and dismayed Hawking... In other words, blackholes could lose mass and diminish in size. Eventually they could even evaporate.'²²

Hawking believes that in these two contradictory findings we see only 'two different aspects of a thermodynamic behaviour of blackholes....They were the same thing, in fact, in different regimes.'²³ A Vedic seer would find no contradiction in the growth of blackholes into new creation through Big Bang or the shrinking of blackhole into virtual nothingness. The former one is creation or *sr̥ṣṭi* from *avyakta* or the Undifferentiated, and the latter one is the dissolution or *pralaya* of the universe into the same. Hawking's greatness is that he mostly worked, as the mystic Vedic seers did, through intuition. Harvard physicist William Press writes that Hawking works by 'key overview ideas—great organizational principles'. And these overview ideas come to him, Michael Harwood says, as 'spiritual revelations', and make him 'one of the greatest

20. *The New York Times Magazine*, 23 January, 1983, p. 56

21. *Ibid*, p. 59

22. *Ibid*, p. 64

23. *Ibid*

physicists of our age.’²⁴ The Uncertainty Principle says one can know either the position or the velocity of an electron but never both. The uncertainty Hawking faced in the study of blackholes was even worse. ‘There was no way to predict either the position or the speed of the particles emitted by a blackhole.’ Hawking points to this deeper uncertainty about the knowledge of blackholes by saying ‘that God not only plays dice but also sometimes throws them where they cannot be seen.’²⁵

Vivekananda, however, offers two Vedic theories regarding the creation and dissolution of the Universe. According to the first theory, the whole of the universe comes into creation and goes to dissolution at one and the same time. According to the second theory, while in one part of the universe the act of creation goes on, in the other part the act of dissolution may also go on. This is somewhat like foam bubbles appearing in one part of a gigantic wave and disappearing in another part of it. The second theory which obviously is supported by today’s physics is favoured by Vivekananda.

Some of these philosophers hold that the whole universe quiets down for a period. Others hold that this quieting down applies only to systems; that is to say, that while our system here, this solar system, will quiet down and go back into the undifferentiated state, millions of other systems will go the other way, and will project outwards. I should rather favour the second opinion, that this quieting down is not simultaneous over the whole of the universe, and that in different parts different things go on. But the principle remains the same, that all we see—that is, nature herself—is progressing in successive rises and falls. The one stage, falling down, going back to balance, the perfect equilibrium, is called Pralaya, the end of a cycle. The projection and the Pralaya of the universe have been compared by theistical

writers in India to the outbreathing and inbreathing of God; God, as it were, breathes out the universe, and it comes into Him again...²⁶

Who made the Big Bang?

The concept that this universe did one day spring out of an infinitesimally small volume or zero volume is slowly being accepted. Dr. Hawking says: ‘We are not sure whether it came from absolute zero size but we know that it must have been very small indeed’.²⁷

J. V. Narlikar, who is one of the staunch adherents of the Steady-State theory which is opposed to the Big Bang theory, makes a startling statement regarding his own calculations of the origin of the universe. He writes: ‘The odds that the universe emerged from a state of zero volume turned out to be zero’.²⁸

Aristotle believed in the existence of a static universe. His Christian interpreter Thomas Aquinas disagreed with him and said, though centuries before today’s discoveries, that the world was a *creatio ex-nimilo*, a creation out of nothing. Where did the universe come from? Two American cosmologists Allan H. Guth of MIT and J. Richard Gott of Princeton are trying to offer two models of the creation of the universe both of which show that the universe had in fact originated from nothing. Guth offers what is known as the inflationary model. ‘The inflationary model’, he writes, ‘is an attempt to build the universe from almost nothing.’²⁹ Guth continues: ‘It is often said that there is no such thing as free lunch, it now appears possible that the universe is a free lunch.’

26. *Complete Works*, 2:434

27. *The New York Times Magazine*, 23 January, 1933, p. 54

28. ‘The Exploding Universe’, p. 12

29. *The New York Times Magazine*, 26 September, 1982, p. 69

24. *Ibid*, p. 53

25. *Ibid*, p. 56

We remember Sri Ramakrishna's famous simile about the nature of personality. It is like an onion. Peel it off layer by layer and in the end there is 'nothing' left. 'Pure Being and nothing are the same', said Hegel.³⁰

Einstein believed that 'the grand unified theory' will touch the 'grand aim of science'—which is 'to cover the greatest number of empirical facts by logical deduction from the smallest possible number of hypotheses or axioms.'³¹ The Nobel Prize winning discovery of one electro-weak force from which electromagnetic and weak interaction forces were derived, made by Steven Weinberg, Sheldon Glashaw and Abdus Salam, point to the same direction—the search for the One Force behind many Forces in the universe.

Vivekananda's whole effort of preaching Vedanta philosophy in the West was aimed at establishing the Pure Being, the Sat, as the basis of Cosmic existence.

Through the duality of Sāṅkhya to the One of Vedanta

When Swami Vivekananda went to explain the Vedanta philosophy to the Harvard Graduate Philosophical Society on 25 March 1896, he knew fully well that he was speaking to some of the front-rank intellectuals of America. After telling them about the three principal schools of Vedanta philosophy, namely, the dualistic, the non-dualistic and the qualified non-dualistic, Vivekananda continued: '... these different Vedanta systems have one psychology, and that is the psychology of the Sāṅkhya system'.³² Swamiji then introduced the theory of cycles according to which the universe passes through evolution and

involution alternately. Only the followers of Śaṅkarācārya, the monists, he said, consider the process of creation and dissolution as not real but an 'apparent manifestation' or *vivarta* according to the philosophy of Vivartavāda.

Vivekananda knew only too well that not only the common people but even the majority of the scientists trained in the western tradition were dualists. The Cartesian division of mind and matter, God and universe is too deeply rooted in the western thinking to be overthrown overnight. Even today, nearly 100 years after Vivekananda's preaching of Vedanta, except a few physicists like Schrödinger, most scientists do not accept that monistic Vedanta shows the path to the real Truth and that Cartesian dualism is ultimately untenable. It was for this reason that Swamiji began his lecture on Vedanta philosophy by choosing the path of least resistance—the path of Sāṅkhya which considers the universe to be real and produced by interaction of the fundamental factors called Prāṇa (Force) and Ākāśa (matter). The failure of the American scientist Nicholas Tesla to mathematically prove that mass could be equated to 'potential energy'³³ must have frustrated, at least temporarily, Vivekananda's dream of establishing Advaita Vedanta as the basis of modern science. Had Vivekananda gone to the West after Einstein, who showed the equivalence of mass and energy and the unity of space-time continuum, the establishment of Vedantic monism would have been definitely easier for him. But Vivekananda was unrelenting. He gave the ideas of Advaita Vedanta without fear, and prophetically asserted in 1896 in his celebrated London speech 'The Absolute and the Manifestation' that Advaita Vedanta would be the only rational religion of

30. *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, p. 118

31. *Ibid*, p. 117

32. *Complete Works*, 2:359

33. Cf *Complete Works* (1973) 5:10

western intellectuals in the years to come.³⁴

Comparing Sāṃkhya and Vedānta philosophies, Vivekananda says: 'The idea of the Advaitists is to generalise the whole universe into one...that it is One Being manifesting itself in all these various forms. They admit that what the Sāṃkhya calls Nature exists, but say that nature is God.'³⁵ But Vedānta takes one step further and 'believes that there is the one soul which appears as many; and we build on the Sāṃkhya analysis', says Vivekananda. By 'Sāṃkhya analysis' Swamiji evidently meant the Sāṃkhyān principle of *sat-kārya vāda* according to which 'the effect exists in the cause'. As Swamiji repeatedly showed, what this principle means is that the universe does not require an explanation from outside. God is the self-evolving cause of the universe, which is not different from Him. In western thought this principle is known as 'naturalism' which is the foundation of science and rationalism.

Vivekananda, however, clarifies that the conversion of God into nature is caused by *deśa*, *kāla* and *nimitta*—space, time and causation—and this conversion, according to the monism of Śaṅkara, is not real but apparent, since the immutable one cannot become mutable. According to the Advaitists proper, the followers of Śaṅkarācārya, '...the whole universe is the *apparent* evolution of God. God is the material cause of this universe, but not really, only apparently. The celebrated illustration used is that of the rope and the snake, where the rope appeared to be the snake, but was not really so.'³⁶

Vivekananda did not reject the world. He did not waste his time and energy to prove the illusoriness of the world. Like that of his master Sri Ramakrishna, his

whole effort was directed to the establishment of the truth that whatever exists is only Brahman or God. That is why he referred to the first of the Upaniṣads, Īsopaniṣad by the title 'God in everything'. He could have said *God only is; nothing else is*. He knew through his own mystic experience the truth of non-duality, but for the sake of those who have not reached that mystic height, Vivekananda came down to the dualistic plane accepting this universe as real. Then by showing through analysis that the apparently real universe or Prakṛti of Sāṃkhya ultimately culminates in the all-pervading Brahman of the Vedānta philosophy, he brought home to the people the truth of non-duality. In all this he followed the principle he himself had enunciated: 'man proceeds not from error to truth but from lesser truth to greater truth.'

In this journey from the many to the One Reality, from Sāṃkhya to Vedānta, Swamiji was echoing the voice of his master Sri Ramakrishna:

Yea! My Divine Mother is none other than the Absolute. She is at the same time the One and the Many, and beyond the One and the Many....

...My Divine Mother is the primordial Divine Energy. She is omnipresent. She is both the outside and the inside of visible phenomena. She is the parent of the world, and the world carries Her in its heart. She is the Spider and the world is the web She has spun. The Spider draws the thread out of Herself and then winds it round Herself. My Mother is at the same time the container and the contained. She is the shell, but She is also the Kernel.³⁷

And like his master he 'believes in nothing that he has not first realized through his entire being.' That is why his 'thought has the breath of life'. That is why

34. Ibid, 2:139

35. Ibid, (1977) 1:362

36. Ibid, p. 363

37. Romain Rolland, *The Life of Ramakrishna* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1979), pp. 67-68

these ideas have 'come to fruition', as Romain Rolland says of Ramakrishna, 'in an orchard of "realizations", no longer abstract and isolated, but clearly defined and having a practical bearing on everyday life for the satisfaction of the hunger of men....And he will share the food of immortality in a Lord's Supper, not with twelve apostles, but with all starving souls—with the universe.'³⁸

Ancient Vedic vision of the origin and dissolution of the universe

Swami Vivekananda was very fond of the great Ṛg-Vedic Hymn of Creation known as the *Nāsadīya-sūktam*. He saw in it the ancient sages' vision of the universe as it existed before its creation. He translated the whole hymn, the first three stanzas of which are given below:

Existence was not then, nor non-existence,
The world was not, the sky beyond was neither.
What covered the mist? Of whom was that?
What was in the depths of darkness thick?

Death was not then, nor immortality,
The night was neither separate from day,
But motionless did *That* vibrate
Alone, with Its own glory one—
Beyond *That* nothing did exist.

At first in darkness hidden darkness lay,
Undistinguished as one mass of water,
Then *That* which lay in void thus covered
A glory did put forth by *Tapah!*³⁹

Interpreting these stanzas Vivekananda says:

This Prāṇa existed then, but there was no motion in it; Anidavatam means 'existed without vibration'. Vibration had stopped. Then when the Kalpa begins, after an immense interval, the Anidavatam commences to vibrate, and blow after blow is given by Prāṇa to Akāsha. The

atoms become condensed, and as they are condensed different elements are formed.⁴⁰

We should not forget that Vivekananda was giving these teachings to the western rationalists in the 1890s, nearly a century before the concept of Blackhole and Big Bang were developed by scientists.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that Brahman and Śakti are one. The snake which remains motionless is the same even when it undulates. The sea with or without waves is the same. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says, 'Just as a spider projects its own web and then reabsorbs it into its own body, so also that One reality projects this varied universe and then absorbs it back into itself.'⁴¹ The *Īśa Upaniṣad* says in the same vein: 'The one ultimate Reality is the state of absolute non-vibration. At the same time it covers everything faster than the speed of mind.'⁴² The same Upaniṣad further states: 'It vibrates and it vibrates not.'⁴³ The *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* says: 'Whatever we see in this universe is due to the vibration of the *prāṇa*.'⁴⁴ The *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* says: 'There was nothing whatsoever in the beginning. It was covered only by death.'⁴⁵

One might ask how the Vedic sages could know of the nature of the universe at the time of the origin when they themselves did not exist. They discovered cosmological truths not through empirical observation but through intuitive insight gained in *samādhi*. Samādhi is a process of withdrawing the senses into the mind, the mind into the intellect, and the intellect into pure consciousness. In other

40. Ibid, 2:435

41. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 1.1.7

42. *Īśa Upaniṣad*, 4

43. Ibid, 5

44. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 2.3.2

45. *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.2.1

38. Ibid, pp. 70-71

39. *Complete Works*, (1978) 6:178

words, *samādhi* is the reversal of creation, a return to the primordial uncreated state. In this return journey (conducted in the depths of consciousness) the illumined seer discovers the stages through which the external universe passed during creation. Swami Vivekananda was himself such an illumined sage. In his beautiful 'Hymn of Samadhi' Swamiji gives us a glimpse into the experience of the primordial state of Reality.

Void merged into void—beyond speech and mind!
Whose heart understands, he verily does.

What the Vedic sages discovered through mystic intuition, modern scientists are confirming with the help of sophisticated instruments. Amaury De Reincourt writes, 'The cardinal fact is that contemporary physics finds a remarkable echo in Eastern, and not Western metaphysics; and that one of the prime elements of this conjunction is the monistic, and not monotheistic, vision of underlying reality.'⁴⁶ Reincourt is here alluding to the Judeo-Christian view of the creation of the universe by a personal God. Today's leading astrophysicist Fred Hoyle feels that a 'dynamic evolution would be far more in keeping with the greatness of the universe...than the static picture offered by formal religion'. What orthodox Christian theory offered him, says Fred Hoyle, was an '...eternity of Frustration'.⁴⁷ Arthur Eddington said the 'stuff of the world is mind stuff'. James Jeans claimed, 'The universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine'. Even Einstein who unto the end tried to cling to the physical reality of the universe admitted: 'It seems to me

that science not only purifies the religious impulse of the dross of anthropomorphism but also contributes to a religious spiritualization of our understanding of life.' He became 'at heart an Eastern monist, as most scientists who are religiously inclined.'⁴⁸ 'Great truths are simple because they are of universal application,' said Swamiji.

Physical sciences cannot enter beyond what Hawking calls the 'boundary conditions' or what Roger Penrose calls the 'point of singularity' or 'the event horizon' of a Blackhole. Only mysticism can. A true understanding of the beginning of the universe in the undivided and all-pervading Consciousness, the *akhaṇḍa, cit*, which is the eternal substratum of this universe, can only be gained in the intuitive, mystic and spiritual way and never through the purely physical process of enquiry. Amaury De Reincourt says,

This void is not emptiness; far from it; it is indeed the creative potentiality, one which can presumably be experienced by mystical insight although science cannot penetrate beyond the ultimate barrier. The mystical emphasis is always put on the ultimate non-reality of the material world and on the all-pervading reality of unindividualized consciousness (such as is postulated by the logical mind of Erwin Schrödinger) which underlies all physical appearances—but physical science can only stand on the threshold of this 'otherwise' or 'beyond' of the visible universe.⁴⁹

Reincourt concludes with a parting shot, 'Can the data of mystical insight and that of the sciences of nature converge at some point?' It can. And the basis of that meeting will be Advaita, monistic Vedanta, as interpreted in modern times by Swami Vivekananda.

46. Amaury De Reincourt *The Eye of Shiva* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1981) p. 171

47. Quoted in *ibid.*

48. *Ibid*

49. *Ibid*, pp. 172-73

SANĀTANA GOSVAMIN: HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT

PROF. RANJIT KUMAR ACHARJEE

Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmin, a direct disciple of Śrī Caitanya and one of the six founders of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism (known as Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins), occupies a very important position in the history of Vaiṣṇava movement in India. He not only enriched Vaiṣṇavism with his luminous thoughts but also provided it with an abiding social foundation through his own holy life. Caitanyaism, as it is known today, is principally the creation of Sanātana, Rūpa, Jīva and their disciple Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. Of the two brothers, Sanātana and Rūpa, Sanātana was entrusted by Caitanya himself with the special task of codifying the theology and systematizing the religious practices of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. Like his younger brother Rūpa, Sanātana possessed a trained scholastic mind, and had been well versed in important Hindu religious scriptures, especially its devotional literature, even before he met Caitanya. What Caitanya did was to set ablaze the fire of spirituality which had been smouldering within them. Both the brothers proved themselves worthy of the confidence reposed on them by Caitanya. Dr. S.K. De writes, 'Their authoritative position as the fit and chosen disciples especially instructed and commissioned for the exacting task, their austere and saintly character, their selfless devotion to the cause, and their laborious and life-long scholarship gave them a unique influence as the three authoritative Gosvamins or teachers of the cult.'¹

Life of Sanātana

The ancestors of Sanātana and Rūpa, who were Karnataka Brahmins, settled

down in Bengal permanently at about the end of the 14th century A.D. There Sanātana was born in the year A.D. 1488 (Śaka 1410)² but according to Viśvakośa, a Bengali encyclopaedia, the year of his birth is 1480.³ No detailed information is available about his boyhood. According to some modern literary works, Sanātana's original name was 'Amar'⁴, but this has not been corroborated by the earlier records of the sect. It is presumed that his family traditions favoured the growth of the devotional temperament in him from his boyhood. His father Kumāra died when Sanātana was a child, and he was brought up by his grandfather, Mukundadeva. Sanātana appears to have studied at Navadvīpa some important scholastic works under the able guidance of Vidyāvācaspati, a renowned Naiyāyika (logician) of Navadvīpa whom he reverentially mentions along with five others as his guru in the opening verses of his *Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*. That Sanātana was a very scholarly person is borne out by the fact that Caitanya himself was reported to have said that 'there is not a greater learned man than Sanātana'.⁵

2. *Śrī Śrī Haribhaktivilāsa*, Ed. Sri Haridas Goswami. (Calcutta: Ananda Agency, 1980) p. 9. Also Girija Sankar Roy Choudhury, *Śrī Caitanyadeva o tāhār pārśadgaṇa* (Bengali), (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1957) p. 161

3. *Viśvakosa*, Ed. Nagendra Nath Basu (Calcutta: Baghbazar Viśvakosa Karyalaya, 1317 B.S.) Vol. 21, p. 134

4. Gangesh Ch. Chakravarty, *Bāṅglār Sādhak* (Bengali), (Calcutta: Viśvabani Prakasani, 1385 B.S.) Vol. 2, p. 172

5. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Chaitanya Caritāmṛta* Ed. Harekrishna Mukhopadhyay and Subodh Ch. Majumdar (Calcutta: Dev Sahitya Kutir, 1979) pp. 489. Antyalila 1.200

1. Dr. S. K. De, *Early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal*. (Calcutta: Firma K.L.M., 1961) p. 117

At a comparatively early age he, along with his younger brother Rūpa, entered the service of Sultan Hussain Shah, the ruler of Gauḍa (north Bengal) and settled at Rāmakeli near the capital. By dint of integrity of character and adept handling of administrative matters he soon gained the confidence of the Muslim ruler who appointed him his principal private secretary. In later years, he adorned the court of the ruler of Gauḍa as the chief minister. The Sultan conferred on him the title 'Dabir Khas'.⁶ Or it might be that Sanātana himself adopted this title or Muslim name, but according to the accounts given in some principal works including *Viśvakośa*, Sanātana's Muslim title or name was 'Sakar Mallik' which literally means 'wise and honourable'.⁷ *Caitanya-Bhāgavata* and *Bhaktamāla*, two comparatively old and well-recognized Vaiṣṇava literary works, lend support to this view. A good deal of controversy centres on the issue concerning Sanātana's conversion to Islam. Eminent scholars like Dr. S.N. Dasgupta and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan have opined that both the brothers adopted the Islamic faith. Some of Sanātana's utterances as recorded in *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* give the impression that both Sanātana and Rūpa embraced Islam. Nevertheless, there exists no direct and uncontroversial evidence in support of this contention. On the contrary, *Viśvakośa* and other outstanding works of competent scholars argue persuasively that they retained their original Hindu faith and kept up their inherited social and religious practices all along. It is of course a fact that, owing to their intimate association with the Muslims, they considered themselves impure. This has been stated in the

Bhaktiratnākara and subsequently substantiated by many outstanding scholars.⁸ If we bear in mind the rigid social customs prevailing at that time, and the cultural gulf separating Hindu and Muslim communities, the reason adduced in the *Bhaktiratnākara* for calling themselves impure would seem convincing.

Before his first meeting with Caitanya at Rāmakeli, which occurred probably in the year 1514, Sanātana sent a communication to Caitanya and Rūpa at Puri expressing his spiritual dissatisfaction. In reply Caitanya advised him to attend to his family obligations and other worldly matters with his mind set steadfastly upon God, like a married woman who enjoys in imaginative recollections of the sweetness of the amorous union with her paramour even when engaged in her daily domestic work.⁹ Sanātana was unhappy with the power he enjoyed and the wealth he had amassed. Being tormented by the agony caused by his obligation to a Muslim ruler who was antagonistic to Hindu culture, he longed for solace and peace. Caitanya visited Rāmakeli on his way to Vṛndāvana with the veiled intention to bless the two distressed souls, Sanātana and Rūpa. Both the brothers met Caitanya in the dead of night. Their inherent Vaiṣṇava tendencies blossomed forth as soon as they came in contact with the luminous personality of Śrī Caitanya. They offered themselves unreservedly at his holy feet. He blessed them and gave the elder brother a new name, 'Sanātana', and it is by this name that he is now known. Though younger, Rūpa renounced worldly life first and made necessary arrangements so that

6. *Caitanyadeva o tāhār pārśadgaṇa*, p. 165

7. *Viśvakosa*, Vol. 21, p. 137. Also Dr. S.K. De, *Early History*, p. 148

8. See, R.K. Acharjee, 'Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin: His Life and Thought', *Prabuddha Bharata*, May, 1982.

9. Quoted in *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* (Madhyalīla, Chapter 1).

Sanātana might pursue his spiritual quest with the least difficulty.¹⁰

Sanātana, on account of his refusal to serve under Hussain Shah was imprisoned by the Sultan but, with much difficulty, managed to escape from the prison. He left for Vṛndāvana on foot and, enduring much physical hardship, reached Benaras where he met Caitanya for the second time at the residence of Candrasekhara. This meeting was a sublime spiritual union between two great souls, and has been picturesquely narrated in many Vaiṣṇava literary works including *Caitanya Carit-āmrta*. In Benaras, Caitanya initiated Sanātana into the Vaiṣṇava faith thereby formalizing his conversion and turning him into a Vaiṣṇava mendicant. Caitanya, it is said, imparted to him necessary instructions on Kṛṣṇabhakti and other fundamental principles and practices of the sect. Sanātana's stay with his guru at Benaras lasted two months.

Sanātana sought Caitanya's permission to accompany him to Puri but was advised to proceed to Vṛndāvana first and then come to him at Puri. Caitanya specifically instructed him to make Vṛndāvana the

religious and academic centre of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, to compose authoritative works on Kṛṣṇabhakti and also to reclaim holy spots associated with Kṛṣṇa-līlā. In Vṛndāvana, Sanātana reclaimed many places connected with the sacred memory of Kṛṣṇa, transformed them into places of pilgrimage and established a number of temples dedicated to the Lord. In fact, it was since then that Vṛndāvana turned into a great centre of Hindu religion and culture and a famous place of pilgrimage. After one year or so, Sanātana again met Caitanya at Puri where he stayed for about a year. Śrī Caitanya, the undisputed spiritual leader of the Vaiṣṇava bhakti movement of the 15th century, made all efforts to shape the inner and outer life of Sanātana, who had been entrusted with the great task of consolidating the entire Vaiṣṇava community. After his return from Puri, Sanātana settled down at Vṛndāvana till his death which occurred probably in the year 1558.¹¹ Dr. Radha Govinda Nath, an eminent Vaiṣṇava scholar and devotee, however, is of the opinion that the end came in or about 1591.¹²

His works

Though Sanātana was principally an ascetic devotee, his contribution to the interpretation of scriptures and the formulation of Vaiṣṇava theology is of primary importance. Jīva Gosvāmin, the nephew of Sanātana, at the close of his work *Laghutoṣaṇi* gives an exhaustive list of treatises composed by Sanātana. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has also given a list

10. According to a popular story, when Rūpa found his elder brother continuing in office and leading a comfortable life, he sent a note to him containing the first and last letters of the four lines of a verse. Sanātana could immediately understand what the cryptic message, consisting of only eight letters, *ya-rī, ra-lā, i-ram, na-ya*, meant. It meant:

यदुपतेः क्व गता मथुरापुरी
 रघुपतेः क्व गतोत्तरकोसला ।
 इति विचिन्त्य कुरु स्वमनः स्थिरं
 न सदिदं जगदित्यवधारय ॥

'Where did Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Mathurā kingdom go? Where did Śrī Rāma's Uttara-kosala kingdom go? Pondering thus, and realizing that this world is not real, make up your mind.' Sanātana made up his mind forthwith and renounced the world.

¹¹. *Caitanyadeva o tāhār pārṣadgaṇa*, p. 161. Also Visvakosa, Vol. 2, p. 134

¹². Radha Govinda Nath, 'A Survey of the Caitanya Movement' in the *Cultural Heritage of India*, (Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1975), p. 189

of Sanātana's works which substantially agrees with Jīva's enumeration.¹³

The following works are attributed to Sanātana: (i) *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta*, (ii) *Līlāstava* or *Daśamacarita* (not available at present), (iii) *Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*, a commentary on the tenth *skandha* of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (also called *Daśamaṭippaṇī*)—Jīva's *Laghutoṣaṇī* is an abridged version of this work; (iv) *Śrī Śrī Haribhaktivilāsa*, a massive compilation on *Vaiṣṇava smṛti* and an authoritative source for the rituals and devotional practices of the sect. A great deal of confusion persists regarding the authorship of this work, which some scholars attribute to Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. Kavirāja Gosvāmin endeavoured to show that Caitanya himself had taught Sanātana the rudiments of *Vaiṣṇava Smṛti*, and instructed him to compose an authoritative text within the conceptual framework outlined by him (*Caitanya Caritāmṛta*, *Madhya Līlā*, 24th Chapter). In *Viśvakośa*, *Haribhaktivilāsa* has been included in the list of Sanātana's works.¹⁴ We cannot reasonably set aside these testimonies. Besides, it has been argued that Sanātana, on account of his preoccupation with other compositions, entrusted Gopāla Bhaṭṭa with the responsibility of collecting scriptural authorities in support of the text, which Gopāla Bhaṭṭa did diligently, and thereafter composed *Laghu Haribhaktivilāsa* (which is still available in Sri Govinda Library at Jaipur). Later on, Sanātana modified Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's work considerably and also wrote a commentary on it, and thus we have *Haribhaktivilāsa* in its present form. But in recognition of the very meritorious services rendered by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Sanātana magnanimously recorded Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's name as the

writer at the end of each chapter.¹⁵ This view has also been upheld by *Bhaktiratnākara* (1.197.98).

But in the text of the *Haribhaktivilāsa* itself, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's authorship has been unambiguously declared and there is nothing to show that the opening verses which contain it, are spurious. In the second verse of this book it is expressly stated that the said work has been written by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, a disciple of Prabodhānanda for the satisfaction of the great *Vaiṣṇava* saints, Raghunātha Dāsa, Rūpa and Sanātana. It is also interesting to note that in the *Haribhaktivilāsa*, the worship of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa has been prescribed but no specific mention has been made therein about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship—a cult so earnestly propagated by Bengal *Vaiṣṇavism*. Dr. S. K. De, an eminent modern authority on Bengal *Vaiṣṇavism*, made a deep study of this controversial issue and finally arrived at the following conclusion: 'It seems probable, therefore, that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, as stated in the work itself, was the actual author of the *Haribhaktivilāsa*, but the attribution to Sanātana might have arisen from a kind of close collaboration, which will remain undetermined, between this doyen of *Vaiṣṇava śāstra* and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, in making this voluminous compilation'.¹⁶ Another modern authority on Bengal *Vaiṣṇavism* lends his support to this view, adding that Sanātana wrote a commentary on this work.¹⁷

The Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta

Sanātana was undoubtedly a man of profound scholarship and great literary talents and a spiritually illumined soul

13. *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*, *Madhyalīlā*, 1.35.36

14. *Viśvakosa*, Vol. 21, p. 136

15. *Śrī Śrī Haribhaktivilāsa*, p. 28

16. *Early History*, p. 143

17. Cf *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. 4, p. 189

who, through his life-long labour, enriched Vaiṣṇava devotional literature and laid the theological foundation of the sect. The main theological presuppositions of the school are articulated in Sanātana's *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta* supplemented by Rūpa's *Laghu Bhāgavatāmṛta*. An elaborate commentary on this work entitled *Digdarśanī* has been provided by the author himself. *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta* is a poetical work composed in the *Purāṇic* style with occasional descriptive passages expounding the theology of the sect. The work begins with salutation to Kṛṣṇa, the Gopīs including Rādhā, Caitanya, Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, Yamunā and Govardhana, allotting one verse to each of these objects of reverence. Sanātana gratefully acknowledges Caitanya's inspiration in the beginning of the book. The work is said to contain the nectar churned from the ocean of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* by such great devotees as Śuka and Nārada. Though the narrative is modelled on the *Bhāgavatam*, the author has very often taken recourse to poetical fancy in order to illustrate certain theological concepts of the sect. Sanātana's work has not probably reached the level of excellence attained by the *Bhāgavatam* nor does it have its appeal and popularity.

Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta is divided into two parts. In the first part the nature of Bhakti in all its variety and degrees of intensity is expounded with the help of a colourfully imaginative story. The main story has been conceived very skillfully so as to pin-point the principal characteristics of a Bhakta, to mark the different stages of devotional attainment from the standpoint of the Caitanyaite school of Vaiṣṇavism, and also to establish the supremacy of *madhura* or erotic devotional sentiment as exemplified in the Gopī's attitude towards Kṛṣṇa. The story runs as follows. A Brahmin devotee once went to

entertain the great Ṛṣis, who were meditating on the bank of the river Ganges at Prayāga, by extending to them generous hospitality. On his way back, Nārada, the divine sage—himself a devotee of Hari and an exponent of the doctrine of Bhakti—came on the scene and praised him as the greatest devotee of Kṛṣṇa whereupon the Brahmin humbly replied that he did not deserve this rare honour which in fact should go to the princely devotee of Kṛṣṇa hailing from the South. Nārada became curious and in order to ascertain the fact he moved to the South. He met the princely devotee of Kṛṣṇa who replied in humility that there was no greater Kṛṣṇa-bhakta than Indra, the king of gods. So Nārada went to Indra. From Indra to Brahmā and then to Śiva, Nārada moved undauntedly in search of the true Kṛṣṇa-bhakta, but everyone of them disclaimed that honour. Śiva was, however, kind enough to suggest the name of Prahlāda, living in the nether world, as a greater Bhakta of Kṛṣṇa (Chapter III). Prahlāda represented *śānta* or serene devotion. He directed Nārada to Hanuman who was the perfect embodiment of *dāsya prema* (devotion of the servant for his beloved master). Then Nārada went to the Pāṇḍavas who represented *sakhya prema*, the love of a friend. From the Pāṇḍavas to the Yādavas at Dvārakā who represented the attitude of *prīti*. Then to Uddhava, who was acclaimed to be a great Bhakta of Kṛṣṇa. From Uddhava Nārada learnt that the Gopīs of Vṛndāvana, those illiterate milkmaids, were the paragons of *bhakti* for they had attained *madhura-bhāva*, the supersensuous love for Kṛṣṇa as their beloved. Rādhā was, however, the greatest of all Gopīs and hence there is no greater Bhakta of Kṛṣṇa than his eternal consort, Rādhā.

The doctrinal implications of this part is to establish the superiority of *kānta-*

prema (sweet wifely love) over all other modes of love. By *kānta-prema* is meant a woman's love for her beloved involving a passionate yearning for union with him, regardless of the consequences and without any selfish motive whatsoever. The Caitanyaite regards *kānta-prema* as the highest form of devotion, for it enables the devotee to enjoy the sweetness of the Lord, who is a transcendental *rasika*. Hence *kānta-bhaktas* are superior to all other types of devotees and the Gopīs of Vṛndāvana, the chief of whom is Rādhā, are the most shining examples of divine love which culminates in its fullest extent in the state of highest ecstasy technically known as *mahābhāva*. The Gopīs consecrated their whole being to the beloved Kṛṣṇa without craving for anything, not even anything concerning their own selves but His pleasure. Their devotion was constant, unmixed and unflinching. In the *Bhāgavatam* and *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras*, the Gopīs of Vṛndāvana have been eulogized as perfect examples of supreme divine love.¹⁸

The second part consists of a more elaborate poetical narrative dealing with some of the practical aspects of devotional life. Like the first part, the second part also makes use of a story to expound spiritual concepts. However, this story is more allegorical than the first one. The story begins with a Prāgjyotiṣ-Brahmin's meeting with a young cowherd (Gopakumāra) at Mathurā who narrates his own spiritual experiences. As per his narration, the Gopakumāra once met a pious Mathurā Brahmin named Jayanta, an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, born in Gauḍa and himself earnestly devoted to Kṛṣṇa. This pious Mathurā Brahmin became his guru and initiated him giving the Kṛṣṇa-mantra consisting of ten syllables. The Gopa-

kumāra felt an irresistible desire to see Kṛṣṇa and, being instructed by his guru, the Gopakumāra visited Puri where he devotedly worshipped Lord Jagannātha for some time. Thereafter utilizing the supernatural power of the holy Kṛṣṇa-mantra, the Gopakumāra journeyed to different *lokas* or levels of existence where he had the opportunity of meeting great devotees and pious souls. One of these great Ṛṣis, Pipplāyana instructed him in the most dependable path of Sādhanā. He was told that only through deep loving devotion and profound concentration of mind could the vision of the Deity be obtained. The same sage showed him the different divine forms in which the Deity manifests Himself. On his return to Mathurā, the Gopakumāra met his guru again and resumed his quest. At a higher level of existence, he got the vision of some Mahāsiddhas, Śiva and other *pārśadas* (attendants) of Kṛṣṇa who instructed him about the characteristics of Bhakti. From them he learnt that Vaikuṅṭha could be obtained by devoutly listening to the stories of the divine sports (*līlā*) of the Lord and by reading the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. They also advocated the efficacy of *kīrtana*, chanting the glories of the Lord.

The third chapter of part II of the treatise describes the Gopakumāra's visit to Vaikuṅṭha where a certain deity informed him that his guru was no other than the Deity Himself. Soon after this Nārada appeared and advised the Gopakumāra to visit Vṛndāvana which was in reality the earthly Goloka. Nārada then started narrating the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa, both unmanifest (*aprakāṭa*) and manifest (*prakāṭa*). The massive work ends with an elaborate description of the entire *nitya-līlā* (eternal sport) of Kṛṣṇa including Govardhana-dhāraṇa, Kālīya-damana and Rāsa-līlā.

It is not easy to accommodate the full implications of these elaborate allegorical

18. *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras*, Sūtra 21.

narratives within a brief compass. Generally speaking, these narratives highlight some of the basic theological tenets of the Caitanyaite Vaiṣṇavism. One of the most important of these is that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme Reality, Param Brahman, known as Bhagavān and not an incarnation (Avatāra). Other deities like Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā can be worshipped for they are themselves Bhaktas or partial aspects of the Lord. It is said that these deities are but Guṇāvatāras of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, Caitanya is regarded as an *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa and in Sanātana's book he is represented as Jayanta, an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who became the guru or religious guide of Gopakumāra, who is no other than Sanātana himself. In *Vaiṣṇavatosāṇi* on the *Bhāgavatam* Sanātana pays homage to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is full of compassion and who has become an Avatāra in Gauḍa for the purpose of propagating *premā-bhakti*.¹⁹ And a real devotee who cherishes Premā-bhakti for the Lord and feels an intense desire to see Kṛṣṇa can never be distracted from the path of spiritual quest even after obtaining kingdom, Indratva and Brahmanhood.

The doctrine of Bhakti is woven into the texture of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. Broadly speaking, Karma, Yoga, Jñāna and Bhakti are the four means of attainment of liberation or *mukti*. *Mukti* is considered to be the summum bonum (*parama puruṣārtha*) of a spiritual aspirant. However, Bengal Vaiṣṇavism regards Bhakti not as a means but as an end and therefore advocates the supremacy of Bhakti over *Mukti*. Bhakti, which means Divine love or constant loving devotion to the Beloved Lord, is the ultimate end, considered to be

the fifth *puruṣārtha*. Vaiṣṇavism exhorts men not simply to cherish unmotivated love (*ahetukī* or *akaitava prema*) but also to actively participate in the delight of divine dalliance, to join the Lord in His cosmic play. Scriptures speak of five different forms of *Mukti*: *sārṣṭi* (splendour similar to that of the Deity), *sārūpya* (same appearance as that of the Deity), *sālokyā* (living permanently with the Deity in his own abode or plane of consciousness), *sāmīpya* (proximity of the Deity) and *sāyujya* (being merged in the unqualified Brahman). Of these five varieties of *Mukti*, Caitanyaites recognize the first four, for they afford the scope for serving God and hence are not antagonistic to *premābhakti*. There might be a hankering after *Mukti* before a devotee attains the state of *premābhakti*, but once this state is attained, *Mukti* or liberation turns out to be redundant.²⁰ Sanātana Gosvāmin goes to the extent of declaring that even *ātmārāmatva* or the state of *jivanmukti* is not desired by a real Bhakta.²¹ Rūpa Gosvāmin also says, 'Those devotees who are delighted with the service of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, do not desire even Mokṣa'.²²

Another striking feature of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism as advocated by Sanātana in the present work is the joint worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The adherents of Caitanya exalt Rādhā to a very high position and lay stress on *rāsa-līlā* (amorous dalliance of the Lord). Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship symbolizes the conception of the Lord and His Śakti in His *mādhurya-rūpa* in Vṛndāvana as His *dhāma* (abode) where he lives eternally in all his glory and sweetness. This conception of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā as the object of worship has also been expounded

19. *Vande Śrīkṛṣṇacaitanyam bhagavantam kṛpārṇavam prema-bhakti-vitānārtham Gauḍeṣv-evāvatāra yah.*

20. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, 3.2.13

21. *Tathāpi natmaramatvam premavirodhitvāt. Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

22. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.2.13.

by Nimbārka and Vallabha. However, Rāmānuja and Madhvācārya conceive the Lord in the form of Nārāyaṇa with Lakṣmī as His consort (Śakti) and Vaikuṅṭha as His *dhāma* (abode) where His majesty (*aiśvarya*) is most magnificently manifested. In *Siddhānta-ratna*, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, an illustrious Vaiṣṇava scholar, regards *mādhurya-rūpa* as one in which the Lord appears in human form amongst other humans without transcending the limitations of manhood (*nara-rūpam anatikramya*), as distinguished from *aiśvarya-rūpa*. Further, in the text, Japa or *kīrtana*, the recitation of God's holy name repeatedly, is enjoined as the most important means for spiritual advancement.

Mere repeating the name of the Lord is considered to be sufficient for attaining the goal.

Bengal Vaiṣṇavism has many unique features some of which might be considered to be its lasting contributions to the Bhakti movement in India. And Sanātana was one of those founding fathers who made this contribution possible by building the theological foundation of the school and expounding its esoteric doctrines. Nevertheless, Sanātana is highly and universally respected today more for his modesty, austerity and loving devotion to God than for his profound scholarship in the Vaiṣṇava theology and other doctrinal matters.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THAT PATHLESS LAND BY SUSUNAGA WEERAPERUMA. Published by Chetana (P) Ltd., 34 Rampart Row, Bombay 400 023. 1983. Pp. 127. Rs. 40/-

This book seeks to explain 'the beauty and uniqueness' of the teachings of the well-known sage and thinker J. Krishnamurti. Consisting of fifteen chapters (three of which detail information about Krishnamurti's books, his centres and his visit to Sri Lanka) it tries to analyse the implications of the basic idea (for Krishnamurti's followers an axiomatic truth) that 'paths of enlightenment do not possibly exist'. For, all paths are merely projections of our 'conditioned' mind, individual and collective. Therefore, the awareness we seek—or the awareness we simply *are*—is 'that pathless land' beyond all conditioning.

The idea is familiar to all those acquainted with the tenor of Krishnamurti's thought. And, though this is not that radical or unique a view as his 'followers' make it out to be, the specific context of the present book raises several issues in this regard.

To begin with, 'that there are many paths to God,' is for the author, 'one of the most ingenious inventions of the Hindu mind.' Consequently, our sages who followed and propagated these paths were all 'mistaken'—though, with gracious condescension, he makes a slight exception in

the case of Ramana Maharshi who 'may have been enlightened'.

Assuming that the author himself is free from all 'conditioning' so that he can decry, with enviable confidence, the basic tenet of Hindu sages and proclaim the primacy of 'the pathless land', the statement raises one important problem: how far is the very attempt to 'explain' Krishnamurti's teachings compatible with the claim that the uniqueness of Krishnamurti's teaching lies in freeing 'seekers' from all kinds of 'conditioning', including interpretation and explanation, when with transparent sincerity he told an audience, 'I feel that I ought to be sitting on the ground with all the rest of you, instead of up here on this platform'?

This negates not only the need for any guide or interpreter to assist the comprehension of Krishnamurti's thought but also calls into question the very validity of any interpretation when it can only be an extension of the interpreter's conditioned or 'illusory' self. In effect, the emergence of a continuing series of books entitled 'Evaluative Studies of the Teachings of J. Krishnamurti' (in which the present book occupies a distinct place), some of them using traditional interpretative modes such as 'yoga' and 'meditation', shows that Krishnamurti's teachings are slowly but unmistakably crystallizing (or getting 'fossilized'?) into 'a path'.

Obviously any evaluation involves a frame-

work either stated or assumed. And the present author's framework raises further issues which need scrutiny. The author says that all sages, along with others seeking social respectability, are merely fulfilling their 'passion for self-glorification', their desire to 'distinguish' themselves 'in the spiritual hierarchy'. With this as the central impulse behind sainthood, it only follows that related ideas such as 'renunciation' are, for the author, totally mistaken. In fact, renunciation is only a clever mode 'to solve the bread and butter problem'. Therefore, even the Buddha should be reprimanded for his 'parental irresponsibility'. Yet, for the author, the institution of 'marriage is a partnership that is based on mutual exploitation'.

Similar paradoxes—if not blatant contradictions—mark the author's comments on 'the self'. Here he betrays an equivocation which scarcely does justice to the clarity and cogency one finds in Krishnamurti himself. For instance, the author is convinced that 'the self must cease altogether for enlightenment to occur.' However, since enlightenment is concerned with 'self', in one way or the other, he introduces the conception of 'the illusory self, the petty self'. Not only this dichotomy—almost predictable in any discussion on the self—but there are also the postulates of 'mind' and 'spirit' which are mentioned without any attempt at clarification. One can concede that there is the 'I' or the 'self' which would cease but to state that all the 'yogis' were misguided in trying to 'suppress' it, is taking the argument to an unwarranted, if not absurd, conclusion. The author's views on meditation are equally dogmatic.

Above all, the author says, rightly, that we should put our 'psychological house in order', that we should transcend 'all the beastly elements in our nature like hatred, aggression and violence'. There is, in this regard, 'need for immediate action, for sustained hard work'. Yet, while the reader settles down to the acceptance of this idea, the author gives him a jolt and affirms that 'illumination is sudden' and 'if you are lucky' you will get it.

If this is so, 'hard work'—let alone 'a path'—is futile. But, strangely enough, on the author's own admission, Krishnamurti himself (as evident from the available publications) went through two distinct phases in his life: the first, constituting the years of his 'preparation' and the second, constituting the years following his enlightenment. Obviously, there is a stage where search is possible; one does not wait passively

for 'sudden' illumination.

Finally, the author gives rather ambivalent 'advice' for even those seeking Krishnamurti's 'pathlessness' as their path. He says that in 'listening to Krishnamurti' 'we are unconsciously seeking a mere confirmation of our theories, favourite ideas, and established attitudes'. Since Krishnamurti's interpreters themselves are not free from seeking this kind of 'confirmation', in a sense, it is not very surprising that the present author should suggest that before 'seeking' Krishnamurti's aid one should do a lot of 'homework'. But surely any preparatory 'homework' is only a kind of pre-conditioning. Then should we not listen to (or read) him with an awareness exempt from all conditioning including that of prior familiarity with his work through interpreters, however illuminating they are?

The book reflects a familiar feature of Krishnamurti's interpreters: running with the hare of Krishnamurti's uniqueness and hunting with the hounds of conventional rhetoric of religious interpretation with several of its structural and semantic bases. In effect, in trying to prove Krishnamurti unique they only succeed in making him more enigmatic. Surely, the radical, seminal thinker Krishnamurti, noted for his passionless good sense—a needed corrective to rhetoric of all kinds—deserves something better than polemical, highly opinionated, interpretations. Elegance in production, for which the Publisher is well known, makes the book attractive.

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GITA: THE SCIENCE OF LIVING BY JAYANTILAL S. JARIWALLA. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawaharnagar, Delhi 110 007. 1984. Pp. 433. Rs. 175/-

'The present work', is meant, says the author, to 'reach the heart of the masses through a clear statement of the issues involved in day-to-day living and Gita's solution to them with many new easy-to-understand examples from everyday life.' The book consists of four parts. Part I is a lengthy introduction—in effect, the core of the book—consisting of nine chapters analysing the intellectual and spiritual rationale of the Gita in terms of its basic ideas such as evolution, self-control, nature of action, detachment, etc. Part II presents the verses (in translation) 'in a running style with appropriate

groupings.' While Part III consists of a commentary on important verses (supplementing the exposition in Part I), the final Part gives a resume, as it were; of the main tenets of the Gita under 18 heads. Finally, we have the Sanskrit text of the scripture at the end.

The commentary, the author says, is meant to 'bring Gita to the door of the common man.' As such what the Gita propounds is 'the science of living.' While the author has rightly identified the Gita as basically concerned with the dynamics of living, his attempt to relate these dynamics to the current ethos of science does not seem to be always viable. For, some of the statements he makes are ambiguous and tautological. For instance, the author pleads for integrating the rational and religious perspectives—a point which is entirely valid. And he writes in this context: 'It is only as our worldly living gets scientific or spiritualized that we come to realize the spirit that we are. In other words, God is "Scientific Man" and Man is "God become unscientific".' This remark is interesting as an aphorism; but one is tempted to think that by using the word 'science' equivocally, the author is reflecting the present, highly dubious and regrettable, trend of making 'spiritual truths bow down' before scientific hypotheses, postulated mostly by the dualistic, often highly worldly, minds.

But, happily, the author is on surer and more convincing ground when he comes to the analysis of the core of the philosophy of living that the Gita exhorts us to adopt. We have, the author says, three ways of living open to us: (i) to live competitively, (ii) to live cooperatively, (iii) to live sacrificially. While the first is the Law of the Jungle, the second is the Law of the Civilized World. Both these need to be subordinated to—and eventually transcended through—what is called the 'Law of Self-abnegation.'

It is, therefore, entirely appropriate that the author should describe the Gita as 'a manual of self-culture' with self-knowledge as the bedrock of this self-culture. Self-knowledge is eventually awakening to the fact that we are essentially spirit, that 'neither our possessions, nor achievements, nor even our bodily changes add a cubit to our stature as the Spirit, or (by their diminution) take away so much as a fraction of it therefrom.' In effect, true self-conquest is 'all-out victory wherein we are victors without an enemy.'

This pattern of living is dependent on the cultivation of the right kind of detachment

through which we 'educate our senses and mind and use them as media for self-expression.' Only thus is 'karma' transformed into 'Yoga'. But, as the author clarifies, 'to be carefree (unworried) about the result is not to be careless (negligent or irresponsible) in the performance.' What we need, in effect, 'is a voluntary disengagement of the mind from desire, not a forced dislodgement of it therefrom.'

It is only natural that, in these terms, the Gita lays stress for the author, on 'karma' and 'without it, neither Jnana (knowledge), nor Bhakti (Devotion), nor Dhyana (Meditation) would be of any use since it [they?] would remain merely academic or theoretical.' Though one cannot totally agree with statements such as these—and the not always convincing arguments that follow to boost the idea—the author everywhere evidences freshness of perception, unmistakable earnestness of purpose, and, above all, a genuine commitment to 'contemporize' the message of the Gita to activate us so that we get out of our self-inflicted spiritual predicament. (See, for instance, the author's refreshing views on the much maligned system of caste; pp. 345-346).

Disagreement on matters of interpretation does not detract from the value of the book as an erudite and highly pragmatic commentary on the Gita. However, while elegantly printed and produced, it is a pity that the book—meant for the common man—should be priced so prohibitively as to be almost beyond his reach.

DR. M. SIVARAMAKRISHNA

REHABILITATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES. BY DR. S. D. GOKHALE. Published by Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 172, Mumbai Marathi Granthasamgrahalaya Marg, Dadar, Bombay 400 014. 1984. Pp. vi + 128. Rs. 75/-

'To understand disability, one must have it; next best thing is to live and work with people who have it'. Having lived for a number of years among people who were disabled or affected by leprosy, the author can legitimately establish his claim about *understanding* the problem of disability. From him we get not only a very sympathetic understanding of the *problem* but also policy recommendations in terms of plans and programmes for effectively attacking the problem of disability.

The staggering magnitude of the problem becomes clear to one when one notes that about 450 million people—roughly ten per cent of the

world's population—suffer from some form of physical, sensory or mental handicap. Most of these disabled live in developing countries, and a large percentage of them owe their disability to malnutrition. 'The total combination of poverty and disability aggravates each other. In developing countries, a majority of disabilities are preventable and are primarily related to poverty. Malnutrition, low sanitary standards, insufficient resources for medical care and prevention, congested and pestilential slums, result in a high prevalence of infection and disease leading to physical or mental impairment and disability'. (p. 5)

For a disabled person, disability is not just a physical phenomenon; it has a socio-psychological aspect too. His dependency and deprivation make him think that others are taking pity on him. A disabled Japanese poet expresses this feeling beautifully when he writes:

Why, do people stare at me ?
or look away from me ?
Why do they treat me differently ?
...I am 'people' too.

After discussing the various aspects of the problem of disability, the author takes up the problem of rehabilitation. In terms of the United Nations' declaration of the year 1981 as the International year of Disabled Persons, rehabilitation implies:

(a) Helping disabled persons in their physical and psychological adjustment 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 human disabilities.

In a word, the disabled persons have to be integrated into the society by making all possible efforts towards making them *equally participating* members of the society. As the author perceptively observes: 'Unless we are able to create a society which has no social barriers and unless we are able to provide equal status and social

justice to the disabled, can we call ourselves a cultured society?' (p. 23).

The book, while it encourages the social worker, reminds the general public of their responsibility to their disabled brethren.

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MARATHI-ENGLISH

AMRUTANUBHAV: BY SRI DNYANESHWAR.
Translated by Madhav 1981. Pp. 84. Rs. 16/-.

CHANGDEO PASASTI (*The Mystic Letter to Sri Changdeo*): BY SRI DNYANESHWAR.
English rendering and Commentary by Madhav.
1981. Pp. 26 + 51. Rs. 12/-. Both published
by Ajay Prakashan, 24 Kalanagar, Pune 411 009.

Jñānesvar, the 13th century Maharashtrian saint is known chiefly for his immortal work, *Jñānesvarī*—a commentary on Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā. *Amṛtānubhav* is Jñānesvar's later work wherein he narrates the sublime and almost indescribable experiences of higher spiritual illumination. The book is a short composition of 805 *ovis* (as against 9,037 *ovis* of Jñānesvarī), but has almost as high a spiritual value. Jñānesvar attained realization through yoga under the loving guidance of his elder brother Nivṛttināth. It was at his behest that Jñānesvar composed this unique book of 'spiritual experience and mystical existence.' (P. 3).

The purpose of human existence is to know one's own true Self. This purpose, though so simple, is hard to achieve. But one may succeed through incessant efforts and the grace of the Guru. When one's own real Self is realized one finds oneself one with the universe. The life of such a person is compared with the vernal breeze which opens buds into flowers, unasked. The grace of such a Guru is bountiful.

The book describes the nature of mystic experience in ten chapters. After praising Śiva, Śakti and the Guru, Jñānesvar discounts the debt of speech in 33 stanzas. 'The four kinds of speech (i.e. Parā, Pasyanti, Madhyamā and Vaikharī) are helpful to free the soul from the bondage of ignorance. But they can help further salvation if they also sacrifice their own existence.' (P. 17). The fourth chapter is on 'Knowledge and illusion' and the seventh on 'Illusion: Its Rebuttal' deserve special mention. A number of beautiful metaphors are strewn throughout the narrative and they elucidate the nature of Illusion and Knowledge.

The English translation does not in any way detract from the charm of the original work. The translator has given in running prose a gist of each chapter. This helps the reader to grasp the abstract thought easily. The author should have given the original text either at the end of the book or before each stanza. It would have helped the diligent reader in understanding the text correctly and in verifying the authenticity of the translation. The author may consider the suggestion for the next edition (may it come soon!).

The book has a foreward by Sri D.B. Kerur, Principal, Sir Parashurambhau College, Pune. The translator deserves praise for venturing such a difficult task of presenting the 700-year-old Marathi text to the English knowing public.

Changdeo Pasasti, as the title indicates, is a short philosophical treatise addressed by the great saint Sri Jñānesvar to Sri Changdev, a hathayogī who was his contemporary. It comprises 65 stanzas in chaste and beautiful Marathi of the 13th century A. D. The treatise presupposes that 'The Soul pervades all things and is the same in all creatures.' It further states that the world is not caused by ignorance and is no mere illusion. It is the manifestation

of the highest consciousness. This consciousness is the very stuff, the 'causa materialis' of the universe. The unity of the knower, the known and the knowing are, therefore, not restricted to the transcendent Absolute but the universe is also included in it. This is the essence of this book.

Although this is a personal letter to the hathayogī, it contains the universal message of unity and love. As assured by Jñānesvar (P. 49) 'whoever will go through these *ovis* and understand the meaning, will benefit with the Self-realization.' The mystical philosophy of Advaita is nowhere else taught so lucidly and so effectively as here.

The original stanzas have been translated in easy English and the author has elaborated on them with commendable restraint. It would, however, have been better if the original text had been given before English translation. Even as it is, the book carries the message of the great saint of Maharashtra beyond her regional borders, and the author deserves praise for this work. More such books from the author are welcome.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SARADAPITHA

REPORT FOR THE THREE YEAR PERIOD ENDING MARCH 1983

Founded in 1941 by the side of the Belur Math, Saradapitha conducted the following activities during the period under report.

Vidyamandira, a residential degree college with 387 students on its rolls in 1980-81, and 429 and 420 in the two subsequent years, offered honours courses in nine subjects. Affiliated to the University of Calcutta (C.U.), the college started the higher secondary course (classes 11 & 12) in 1978 and as a result there is now an acute need to add a new hostel to the existing four and to move the library to a more commodious place. For want of necessary funds the projects could not be undertaken.

Sikshanamandira, a government sponsored residential teachers' training college affiliated to C.U., had respectively 120, 117 and 125 students in the three years under report.

Shilpamandira, a government sponsored poly-technic, offered 3-year diploma courses in civil, electrical and mechanical engineering. It had respectively 548, 514 and 557 students in the years under report.

Shilpayatana, in its junior technical school offered 3-year junior courses in engineering and prepared the students for the final examination conducted by the State Council for Engineering and Technical Education. Its Higher Secondary Vocational department (classes 11 & 12) offered courses in electrical and mechanical engineering. The roll strengths of the J. T. School were 116, 118 and 99 in the three years under report and the corresponding figures for the H.S. Vocational department were 94, 89 and 89.

Shilpavidyalaya had to discontinue some of the trades for want of students and begin new ones for giving free training. The roll strengths in the years under report were 94, 105 and 69. The trades offered were electrical fitting and wiring, auto-mechanics, carpentry and elementary printing.

Janasikshamandira, working in the field of mass education and public service, ran six night schools. In the three year period under report, respectively 148, 132 and 154 films were shown in rural areas by its mobile audiovisual unit. The free public library through the central lending section, the book-kit system and the bicycle-squad issued respectively 19,410, 19,645 and

20,300 books. Some 160 children were served with nutritious tiffin six days a week. Various study-circles, games and sports, teaching of various crafts etc. were arranged for them. Bulgar wheat and salad oil received through the Health Directorate, West Bengal, as gift from CARE were distributed among children below six years of age and among expecting and nursing mothers, the figures for the three years under report being 13,000, 9,200 and 9,200. Under the Rural Development programme 53 families in 5 villages were helped to become economically stable using ways and means suggested by the families. 30 adult education centres were started in 30 villages in Howrah district.

Tattwamandira conducted regular scriptural classes for monastics and weekly religious classes for the public. Ramanama Sankirtana was conducted on newmoon and fullmoon evenings. The Production and Publication department produced photographs and anodized frames etc. and sold them through the Showroom-cum-Sales counter in the campus from where books of the Ramakrishna Order were also sold. The Permanent Exhibition (Museum) depicting the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna is expected to be ready in another year.

Present needs: The secretary appeals to the public for donations to: 1. Poor students' fund: Rs. 1 lakh; 2. Non-formal education fund: Rs. 2 lakhs; 3. Vidyamandira vikash fund: Rs. 3 lakhs.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION GOVERNING BODY'S REPORT FOR 1983-84

*Issued by the General Secretary,
Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math*

Under the chairmanship of Swami Vireswarananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission, the 75th annual general meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at the Belur Math premises on Sunday the 30th December 1984 at 3.30 p.m.

A synopsis of the governing body's report for 1983-84, placed before the meeting, is given below.

Notwithstanding several difficulties and problems which cropped up in some of the Mission's institutions, its dedicated workers remained true to their ideals and steadfastly carried on the selfless service activities of the Mission including strenuous relief and rehabilitation programmes in places devastated by flood, cyclone, drought and other calamities.

In the period under report a sum of Rs. 48,82,089 was spent by the Mission towards (a) flood relief in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tripura; (b) drought relief in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal; (c) refugee relief in Tamil Nadu; (d) disturbances relief in Assam and West Bengal; (e) tornado relief in West Bengal; (f) winter relief in West Bengal; and also rehabilitation in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and West Bengal. Besides, different kinds of gifts valued at Rs. 9,20,558 were received and distributed.

During the year the following Pallimangal (Integrated Rural Development) Programmes were implemented for the economic self-reliance of the villagers involving an expenditure of Rs. 7,43,513: agro-economic service, cottage industry, pisciculture, dairy-farming (A.I. Centre), credit for small business, conducting non-formal schools, and several mobile dispensaries. A voluntary group of about fifty young men have constituted themselves into the 'Vivekananda Palli Samstha' for conducting integrated rural development programmes.

Some of the important developments that took place in the Ramakrishna Mission during the period are given below: a building for housing the monastery and the office at Chingalpatty, a school building at Coimbatore, the first floor and a part of the ground floor of the school building at Dhaka, the upper storey and extension of the science building at Manasadwip, the shrine room and the connected extension at the Institute of Culture, Calcutta, were inaugurated.

The following important developments took place in the Ramakrishna Math. A marble statue of Sri Ramakrishna was installed at Ootacamund. A new centre was started at Barisha, West Bengal. The third floor or the annexe to the hospital at Trivandrum was declared open.

In addition to the above, the Mission conducted 8 hospitals and 61 dispensaries which treated 40,732 and 38,00,703 patients respectively; and its 11 mobile dispensaries treated 4,16,568 cases.

The 5 hospitals and 18 dispensaries of the Ramakrishna Math served 13,896 and 6,61,833 patients respectively, while the 3 mobile dispensaries treated 21,879 cases. These figures include 3 hospitals, 38 dispensaries and 14 mobile dispensaries conducted in rural and tribal areas, where a number of economic programmes were also implemented.

The educational institutions of the Rama-

krishna Mission numbering 730 had on their rolls 1,02,836 students. The corresponding figures for the Math were 63 and 9,153. Out of these educational institutions run by the Math and the Mission 699 were in rural and tribal areas, where a large number of libraries were also maintained.

Our educational institutions have been producing brilliant results year after year. In the year under report our students secured the first and second positions in the Secondary School Examination of West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh and in the Higher Secondary School Examinations of West Bengal. Besides, several other students of our institutions secured ranks of distinction in these and other exams.

Under the direction of the 'Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Bhava Prachar Committee' a number of youth conventions were held in different states. 'The Committee for Comprehensive Study of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement' is making efforts to organize regional and national seminars and conferences.

The Math and Mission foreign centres are engaged in conducting educational, medical, cultural and spiritual activities including worship, seminars etc.

Excluding the headquarters at Belur, the Mission and the Math had 74 and 67 branch centres respectively, spread throughout the world.

SRI SRI MATRI MANDIR AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SARADA SEVASHRAMA, JAYRAMBATI

REPORT FOR APRIL 1983 TO MARCH 1984

Sri Sri Matri Mandir: The little village of Jayrambati remains much as it was when Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi was born here in December 1853. It is now an important centre for pilgrimage well known among the seekers of truth in India and abroad. On the ground where Mother was born a temple enshrining her marble image has come up, and the two old cottages which served as her places of residence from 1863 to 1915 and from 1916 to 1920, and where numerous devotees were received by her and given initiation, are being maintained. All the year round thousands of devotees from all over the world come here to take back their share of holiness and inspiration. Some fifty thousand of such devotees were served with cooked prasad during the year. The small library had 2,500 books.

The sub-centre, Ramakrishna Yogashrama at Koalpara, 8 kms from Jayrambati, where Mother stayed on several occasions and installed the photographs of Sri Ramakrishna and herself in the shrine for daily worship, is being maintained as a place for retreat, as also is the Jagadamba Ashrama nearby, where also Mother lived occasionally.

Pallimangal: The integrated rural development project known as Pallimangal was started in June 1980. Fertilizers worth Rs. 12,934 were supplied to 22 farmers for growing rice, wheat, potatoes and mustard in 45.10 acres of land. Under the self-employment scheme, respectively 12 and 5 persons were trained in the manufacture of hobby-loom products and genjis. The dhoop (incense) manufacturing and bakery units were handed over to the trainees as they had become self-reliant. The mobile medical service provided medical relief to 14,836 people, and under the child welfare scheme 6 litres of cow's milk were distributed among some 30 children every day. 59 persons were operated upon for eye troubles in a free eye-camp and were given spectacles free of cost after proper refraction test.

Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Sevashrama: The Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Charitable Dispensary, started at the instance of the Mother in 1916 as a humble homoeopathic dispensary, treated 31,580 patients during the year. A branch of this dispensary opened at Ramakrishna Yogashrama in Koalpara in November 1983 treated 4,400 patients during the year. The Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Vidyapitha—begun as a night school during Mother's lifetime—now consists of a junior high school, two junior basic schools and two pre-basic nursery schools providing education to 675 students including girls, with a 25-member staff. Aid from the State Government being meagre, the Sevashrama has to depend on the public in order to make these schools worthy of the Holy Mother's name. The library had 4,000 books.

Present needs: 1. Construction of a boundary wall around the Matri Mandir campus: Rs. 3 lakhs, 2. construction of a boundary wall around the school campus: Rs. 3 lakhs, 3. Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Sevashrama School Development Fund: Rs. 2 lakhs. The remittances may kindly be made in the name either of Sri Sri Matri Mandir or of Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Sevashrama under P.O. Jayrambati, district Bankura, West Bengal, PIN 722 161.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Shift in Industrial Policy

The Central Government's budget presented to the Parliament in March by the Union finance minister Sri V. P. Singh has been welcomed by the majority of economists and industrialists. The eminent jurist Sri Nani A. Palkhivala has hailed it as 'epoch-making. It is the most significant among the budgets of the last 30 years. It will probably provide the biggest economic story of Asia for the current year.' (*The Times of India*, 24 March 1985). A budget does not purport to be a statement of government policy; nevertheless, it does give sufficient hints on it. The current Union budget seems to indicate a major shift in the economic policy of the new government. According to Sri Palkhivala, it 'represents a silent and unheralded revolution in economic policy and fiscal thinking. The monumental task of redesigning India has begun.'

Though the government has not announced any radical change in its ideology or political philosophy, it is clear that the new budget reveals an awareness of the changing scenario of free world economy. The viability of Keynesian economics, advocating government restraints on and interference in private enterprise, is being questioned by economists like Milton Friedman. In the U.S. the Reagan administration has achieved significant success in overcoming industrial stagnation by departing from the conventional economic approach rather aggressively. The experts who gave shape to the government of India's current budget too seem to have sensed the wind of change and to have decided to unfurl the sails.

Two noteworthy features of the new budget are the extensive reduction in taxes and the liberalization of restrictions on industrial production in the private sector. Here we are concerned only with the latter. In 1970 the government enacted the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act which placed a number of restrictions on big units with a total capital of 20 crores or over, in regard to appointment of directors, expansion of business and amalgamations. In the same year the Dutt committee recommendation of the concept of a 'joint sector' in industry was confirmed. As a first step towards the implementation of this concept, all public lending institutions were required to convert their loans to private companies into equity shares (of the borrowing companies) so as to enable the government to have an effective voice in their management.

The intention of the government in imposing these restrictions was good—to couple economic growth with social justice, and to encourage medium and small investors. But it has had a stifling effect on productivity and industrial growth. The expansion of the public sector, in which efficiency and utilization of materials and personnel are relatively low, has also had an adverse effect on the private sector. Many Indian companies find that the only way to grow is to seek contracts and turn-key projects in foreign countries.

Since the restrictions imposed on the private sector have not solved the problem of equitable distribution of wealth and abolition of poverty, it may be wiser to loosen the grip so that there may at least be an increase in production and in the overall wealth of the country. The new budget indicates the dawn of this awareness in the minds of the nation's policy makers.
