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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



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

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Prabuddha Bharata

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JULY 1985

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VOL. 90

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No. 7

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

यस्मिन् वृक्षे सुपलाशे देवैः संपिबते यमः ।
अत्रा नो विश्वपतिः पिता पुराणां अनु वेनति ॥

On that leafy tree where Yama drinks with the gods, there our father, master of the house (*viśvapatih*), is inviting (*venati*) us to join our ancestors.¹

R̥g-Veda 10.135.1

* Here begins a rather enigmatic hymn which is, however, famous as the original source for the story of Naciketas's dialogue with death narrated in *Katha Upaniṣad* and *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 3.11.8. Sāyaṇa interprets the hymn in two ways. According to one interpretation, the boy Naciketas was sent by his father Vājasravas to the abode of Yama, the king of death, who received the boy hospitably and allowed him to return to the earth. After reaching the earth, the boy had a talk with his father. As per this interpretation, the hymn consists of three parts. The first two stanzas are spoken by the boy, the next two stanzas (3 and 4) are uttered by the father, and the last three stanzas (5.6.7) are the statements of the seer-poet. According to the second interpretation of Sāyaṇa, the word *kumāra* does not mean 'boy'; rather, it is a proper noun denoting a sage by name *Kumāra*.

(1) According to Sāyaṇa's first interpretation, these words are spoken by Naciketas after his return to the earth. But it is difficult to accept this view. For, clearly, the boy is here referring to his father as one who has already reached the abode of the king of death. The stanza expresses the thoughts of a bereaved boy who fondly imagines that his dead father is calling him.

In the second version Sāyaṇa interprets Yama as the Sun (*yacchatīti yama āditya*), *deva* as 'rays', *sampibate* as 'goes' (*samgacchati*) and *anuvēnati* as 'sends his good wishes' (*anugrāhatvena kāmāyate*). The whole stanza would then mean: 'In that beautiful tree-like abode where the Sun moves with his rays, there he, the protector and progenitor of all beings, blesses us and our ancestors.'

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Continuing last month's theme, this month's EDITORIAL discusses the phenomenon of the awakening of the ego.

In WHEN DID SWAMIJI REALLY TAKE THE NAME VIVEKANANDA? Swami Ekatmananda, President, Vivekananda Ashrama, Shyamala Tal, argues that Swami Vivekananda assumed his name, along with his monastic brethren, at Baranagore monastery itself.

One of the unresolved problems of Advaita epistemology is the exact relation between the *vṛtti* and the object. A strikingly original discussion of this issue from the phenomenological point of view is attempted by Prof. David Appelbaum in A NOTE ON PRATYAKSHA IN ADVAITA VEDANTA. The author is Associate Professor of Philosophy at State University College, New Paltz, New York. Being a continu-

ation of the author's 'A Note on Pratyakṣa in Advaita Vedanta' which appeared in the April 1982 issue of *Philosophy East and West* (Hawaii), the present article may be treated as a 'Second Note'.

Dr. A. Ramamurthy, Reader in the Department of Philosophy and Religion, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, shows in VEDANTA AND MODERN INDIAN UNDERSTANDING how Vedanta influenced modern Indian thought through Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. The article was originally presented as a paper in a seminar.

In BALARAM BOSE Swami Chetanananda, head of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, U.S.A., has provided a lucid account of the life of one of the foremost lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

EGO-AWAKENING

(EDITORIAL)

Encountering oneself

There is a well-known Sufi story about the Muslim divine Nasrudin:

A man saw Nasrudin searching for something on the ground.

'What have you lost, Mulla?' he asked.

'My key', said the Mulla.

So the man went down on his knee too, and they both looked for it. After a time, the other man asked, 'Where actually did you drop it?'

'In my own house.'

'Then why are you looking here?'

'There is more light here than inside my own house.'¹

Once in a while everyone loses something or other—a key, a pen, an important paper or umbrella. This usually happens owing to the person's negligence or absent-mindedness. Apart from these things, if you are a reflective person, you are likely to feel deep within you a sense of personal loss, an existential want. This is caused by the awareness that you have lost yourself! Your self-identity has been lost in the swirling current of events and people. By allowing themselves to be driven by their own instincts, emotions and desires, and by looking upon themselves and their talents and capacities as saleable commodities, many people have reduced themselves to the level of objects with no subjective

1. From Idries Shah, *The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasrudin* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1966) p. 26.

value or meaning. Not only that; they usually seek their lost self-identity in the wrong place—in the more familiar external world, in their parents, friends, film stars, fictitious characters in novels or fantasized self-images whom they follow, imitate or identify themselves with.

A few people, perhaps after struggling for years to acquire wealth, power, fame and love, realize during some moments of clear awareness, or when confronted with an acute crisis, that all their struggle has brought them neither fulfilment nor peace but only suffering and bondage. Then they ask themselves, 'What have I gained from all my struggles? Is what I have gained worth all the suffering that I have undergone for it? What have I made of my life?' In other words, they awaken to themselves. Such an awakening came to Ratnākara, the robber. One day a sage came his way and Ratnākara asked him on pain of death to deliver up his possessions. The sage told him to go home and ask his wife and children if they were ready to share the sin that he had acquired. When, on reaching home, they told him that he alone was responsible for his deeds, Ratnākara suddenly found himself utterly alone confronting an unknown future. Under the guidance of the sage he then started practising spiritual disciplines, attained illumination in due course, and became Vālmīki, the great saint and India's first and greatest epic poet who wrote the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Other than the legitimate daily effort needed for the fulfilment of the needs of the body like food, clothing and shelter, almost everything that a man does is a struggle for the existence of his ego. However, a time comes in the life of a thoughtful person when he asks himself, for whose sake has he undergone all this struggle? He then finds himself alone in the world. Ultimately everyone finds

himself alone. Someday or the other, everyone must confront himself. Even though he is surrounded by people who love him and care for him, he finds that, when it comes to the question of owning moral responsibility for his actions, he is alone. Arthur Schopenhauer said: 'What a human being can be to another is not very great deal; in the end every one stands alone; and the important thing is, who is it that stands alone?.... Since everything which exists or happens for a man exists only in his consciousness, and happens for him alone, the most essential thing for man is the constitution of his consciousness.'²

We feel very happy when we come by the key or purse we had lost. Far greater will be our joy when we encounter our lost selves. Aristotle said, 'To be happy means to be self-sufficient.' Commenting on this, Schopenhauer remarked, 'Other people's heads are a wretched place to be the home of man's true happiness.'³ The discovery of the self becomes possible only when we stop looking for it in wrong places, that is to say, when we cease identifying ourselves with other people and their affairs. When we do this during some saner moments, we are likely to find ourselves strangers. We know very little about ourselves although our knowledge of other people and their affairs may be encyclopedic.

To encounter oneself in the depths of one's consciousness is the first milestone on the path to self-realization and maturity. What am I? Who am I to myself? What is my true nature, being, identity? How can I be truly myself? The rising of such questions in a person's mind is a sign of an awakening. This is not of course the higher spiritual awakening which is a

2. Quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967) p. 333.

3. *ibid* p. 332.

direct realization of the light (*prajñā*) of the Ātman. It is an awakening nevertheless, though of a lower order, the significance of which can be known only by those who have had the experience of this interior self-encounter. When his little son first used the pronoun 'I', the German philosopher Fichte (1762-1814) is said to have given a party to celebrate that event. A little boy hears everyone addressing him as 'Ramu', and so he too refers to himself in that way: 'Ramu wants that', 'Ramu did this', he says. The use of the pronoun 'I' is not merely a more convenient and economical use of language, but indicates the dawn of selfhood in the child, the opening of a door within him to vast psychological resources. How many parents try to learn from the lives of their children the lessons they had missed in their own lives?

After the dawn of selfhood it takes many years for the growing adult to confront his own self and understand it. This self-discovery is not a part of the ordinary process of growth, nor does it take place in the lives of all. Only a few people experience it and in them it usually takes the form of a lower self-awakening. This lower awakening may be called 'ego-awakening', the awakening of the ego from its age-long slumber. Unfortunately, little attention is usually paid to this awakening which can alter a person's entire life and destiny dramatically.

Effects of ego-awakening

How does ego-awakening affect human personality and behaviour? A few of the important effects are mentioned below.

1. *Self-acceptance.* The first change that takes place when the ego awakens is the enlargement of one's capacity to understand oneself. The hidden chambers of the mind open wide, and the forgotten

or repressed events of the past suddenly come into focus. The seeds of present suffering lie buried in the past. As these seeds get exposed, the awakened person understands how the past events, especially the experiences of childhood, shaped his life. He then realizes that he himself forged most of his own suffering and bondage, and nobody else is responsible for his fate. In other words, he accepts himself with all his weaknesses and defects. He does not try to imitate or become like another person, but rebuilds his present life by rediscovering the experiences of his past. This is precisely what a psychiatrist does for the neurotic—to lead him back to his forgotten past. The awakened person becomes his own psychiatrist.

2. *Modesty.* Self-acceptance leads to modesty. What is modesty? To be and to behave as one really is, without pretensions. Modesty is based on a realistic understanding of one's actual worth, one's strong and weak points. It is a more desirable virtue than humility which is often an artificial attempt to be less than what one really is. Paradoxically, ego-awakening makes people less egoistic. It is the unawakened ego that causes arrogance and vanity.

3. *Openness to reality.* We live in a real world but seldom open ourselves to reality. Each person builds his own inner world of concepts and values, and opens himself only to those aspects of the outer world which do not threaten to destroy his private world. But universal life provides what is called the 'reality check'. It does not correspond to the inner world we have conjured up. It breaks our dreams and subjects our ideals and beliefs to severe tests. When our dreams break and when we fail to pass the tests of universal life, we feel frustrated and blame the world for all our sufferings. This situation changes only when the ego wakes up from its

slumber. A person with an awakened ego accepts the world as it is, with all its polarities of goodness and evil, joy and sorrow, love and hate and so on. He does not attempt to change the world but changes himself.

Only an awakened ego can open itself fully to the transcendent Reality. One of the mistakes some spiritual aspirants commit is to try to open themselves to the transcendent Reality, ignoring the realities of empirical life and evading the tests and checks of the outer world. Whatever we gain through our efforts at meditation and prayer must be tested in the outer world; otherwise, spiritual life may become just another extension of the conceptual unreal world we have conjured up. Karma Yoga provides the best means of testing the inner life in the outer.

4. *Inner-directed life.* Acceptance of the world does not mean surrender to the collective, yielding to lower life, following the mob. No doubt, it is necessary to accept the realities of the outer world and adjust our inner life to its demands, but this adjustment should be 'inner-directed', that is, guided by a set of values derived from our own experiences and aspirations. The life of an unawakened person is 'other-directed', that is, guided by a set of values derived from current trends and outer influences. Inner-directed life enables us to follow our own path and at the same time live in harmony with the ever-changing world outside. In this context it is worth noting the words of the American writer Philip Wylie:

An 'adjusted' youth will naturally seek to preserve the one condition to which he knows how to adjust: the safe present state. Actually, his goal should be adjustment to an ever-changing world. Society is in so swift a flux that only a man who deeply knows himself can decide which of the changing ideas he will accept as part of what he believes and feels and is, which ideas he will reject.

One of the difficult tasks in life is to make correct decisions. The fortunes of a company depend upon the decisions its executives take. Even in an individual's life, wrong decisions can create considerable difficulties. Other conditions being equal, inner-directed people are able to make far greater number of correct decisions and are able to face crises by drawing sustenance from his own inner resources without depending upon other people. A busy executive is known to keep his desk nameplate turned towards himself! His explanation: people who call on him know who he is, but sometimes he tends to forget.⁴ Evidently, the man knew that his understanding of himself was more important than other people's opinions about him.

5. *Moral stability.* The morality of a person who has no self-knowledge can never be depended upon. Deep in his unconscious he may harbour repressed drives of lust, anger, greed and vanity which may burst out under certain conditions. A person who has experienced ego-awakening gains the insight to discover his hidden motives and repressed impulses and, even if he is not able to eliminate them fully, he takes all precautions to see that they do not go out of control.

6. *Enrichment of personality.* Unawakened people regard the accumulation of material wealth—money and luxury goods—and sense enjoyment as the desirable ends of man. In modern times the number of material goods and ways of enjoyment have multiplied enormously and the competition to grab them has also been intensified proportionately. This has led to the impoverishment of personality. An increasing number of people are finding their lives empty and meaningless. When

4. Mentioned in *Reader's Digest*, June 1964, p. 148.

man's significance as a person is lost, the only value that he retains is as a commodity. As Eric Fromm remarks, 'Man does not only sell commodities, he sells himself and feels himself to be a commodity.'⁵ Arthur Miller in his book *Death of a Salesman* brings out the dehumanizing effects of this attitude through the character Willie Loman who had been taught, and in turn taught his sons, that to become rich by getting ahead of the next fellow was the goal of life. Competitive success leaves life empty and meaningless and the tragic truth finally dawns upon Loman that 'He never knew who he was'.⁶

Ego-awakening shifts the tenor of a person's life from what the existentialists describe as the 'being' mode of existence to the 'having' mode of existence;⁷ 'marketing-orientation' gets replaced by the struggle for self-realization. Instead of wasting his energy in accumulating things more than is necessary, the awakened person strives to purify, enrich and enlighten his soul. He understands that all the power, joy and beauty that he has been seeking outside reside in his soul, that the accomplishments of his soul alone are his, and what he has acquired in the outer world really belong to the society of which he is a part.

7. *Deepening of love.* In spite of all that poets have written about love, more than half the evil and suffering in the world is caused by impure and misdirected love. One needs self-knowledge to separate pure love from lower instincts, self-interest, moral imperatives, etc with which it is

found compounded. In personal life one of the main causes of failure in love is that people seek love at lower and superficial levels of existence. A man of self-knowledge establishes contacts with people at a deeper inner level and thus makes his love pure and abiding.

Furthermore, his attitude towards others is based on 'empathy', which should be distinguished from 'sympathy'. Sympathy is a rather uncultivated feeling often based on attachment or hidden motives, whereas empathy is the ability to place oneself in another's place and feel as he does. Our sympathy for a person vanishes when he speaks ill of us, but empathy enables us to understand why he does so and to keep our sympathy for him unchanged. It is empathy that the Gita means when it speaks of *ātmaupamya*.⁸

Ego-awakening and spiritual life

We have seen some of the effects of ego-awakening on secular life. Its effects on spiritual life are none the less important. True spiritual life begins only when the Spirit, the inmost Self known as *pratyag-ātman*, awakens. An important problem is how to attain this spiritual awakening. A powerful Guru can bring this about in his disciple by an exercise of will. But such powerful souls are rare and they will not intervene unless the disciples have prepared themselves for the awakening. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, unless the chick inside the egg is ready to emerge and starts pecking at the shell, the mother bird will not break open the egg. Another way is through intense longing which Sri Ramakrishna called *vyākulatā*. Unfortunately, this soul hunger cannot be artificially created, and the number of

5. Eric Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Avon Books, 1941) p. 140.

6. Cited in Rollo May, *Psychology and the Human Dilemma* (New York: D. Van Nostrand & Co., 1967) p. 25.

7. These two modes of life have been thoroughly discussed by Eric Fromm in his book *To Have or To Be?* (New York: Harper Row, 1976).

8. *Gītā* 6.32

people who feel it spontaneously is very small indeed.

A large number of spiritual seekers have, therefore, to remain satisfied with some kind of lower awakening which we have termed ego-awakening. However, if this is properly made use of, it will lead to true spiritual awakening in due course. But the difficulty is that it is seldom made use of. There is nothing that people want to know less about than themselves. There is an unwillingness in most people to know more about themselves because it is not a pleasant task to uncover the defects and weaknesses hidden within. Plato said, 'We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy is when men are afraid of the light.' Many people have an irrational fear of themselves, even though there shines within them the lamp of knowledge. This fear manifests itself in their dread of solitude and silence. Many people find life meaningless unless they do something or create or listen to some noise.

Nowadays several popular books on Advaita are available which give the impression that the non-dual experience of Brahman is quite easy to attain. It is not the ego that merges in Brahman but the inmost Self, *pratyagātman*, which remains eclipsed by the ego. The question of 'merging in' non-dual Brahman arises only after the *pratyagātman* has been realized, and for this it is necessary to transcend the ego first. As stated in the scriptures,⁹ devotees who pray to God attain this transcendence through divine grace. But those who follow the path of knowledge, depending only on self-effort,

have to confront the ego and slash their way through it; this is what *vicāra*, self-enquiry, means. *Vicāra* is not an easy and comfortable wool-gathering exercise. It needs at least as much intensity as any other spiritual practice.

Those who do not feel intense aspiration must at least intensify their awareness. This intensification of awareness comes through what we have termed 'ego-awakening'. This is an important step in the path of knowledge. One reason why many people gain little progress through Jñāna Yoga is that they attempt it without undergoing his lower awakening, leave alone the higher awakening of the *pratyagātman*. What they consider Jñāna Yoga often turns out to be nothing more than reading books and advancing arguments to justify their lack of faith in God and in themselves.

Even in the path of Bhakti self-knowledge is necessary. Even those who have had glimpses of the inner Light have to come down and confront the ego and purify it. The great Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross has termed this second descent the 'Second Dark Night of the Soul'. In the Indian Bhakti tradition the devotee is advised to adopt one of the five recognized attitudes (*bhāva*) towards God: the attitude of a servant, of a child, of a friend, of a mother, of a sweetheart. The cultivation of these attitudes are really meant for the sublimation of the ego and, before it is taken up, the ego must be thoroughly studied and purified; otherwise, the spiritual attitudes may get mixed up with worldly emotions and drag the mind to a lower level.

Ego-awakening is very much necessary in the practice of Karma Yoga. It is not uncommon to find that work makes people egoistic or behave like a bull in a china shop. This happens only when work is done by an unawakened ego. Further-

9. cf The *Gītā* (10.11) 'Out of compassion for them, I, residing in their hearts, destroy the darkness of ignorance...'

The Gospel according to St. Matthew (7:7) says, 'Knock and it shall be opened unto you.'

more, as pointed out in an earlier context,¹⁰ the attitudes of selfishness and selflessness are often based on a good deal of self-deception. The nature of this self-deception can be unravelled only by an awakened ego. Karma Yoga means not only serving the poor and the sick but also bringing about a transformation of one's awareness through that service. Without the support of an awakened ego this transformation will be very slow.

Transformation of the ego

All yogas are based on two fundamental principles. The first principle is that a change in one ego produces a corresponding change in all the other egos connected to it. That is to say, when you change, your social environment changes too. This change need not merely be a subjective experience of your seeing the world in a different light. The microcosm and the macrocosm are built on the same plan, and so a change in your consciousness affects the consciousness of others also.

The second principle is that spiritual life is not merely an attempt to escape from the suffering and evils of life, but also a positive attempt to develop the intrinsic powers and potentialities of the soul. The term 'soul' includes both the Ātman and its shadow, the ego. The Ātman is the same in all people; it is the ego that differs from person to person. It is the ego that produces all the variety in human temperament and behaviour. The ego, like a dome of many-coloured glass, converts the white radiance of the Ātman into all the splendours of life.

The ego should be looked upon not as an obstacle but as a door to higher life. In worldly life this door remains closed; yoga opens it. The proximate aim of yoga is not to eliminate the ego but to

transform it. In deep sleep the ego disappears but, on waking up, it reappears with all its defects and problems. This shows that the transformation of the ego is far more important than its elimination.

Functions of the ego

The above discussion makes it clear that the ego is not an unnecessary or vestigial organ, like the vermiform appendix, and can be removed through psychological surgery. It is the fundamental essence of humanness, and has several vital functions to perform at all stages of one's life. It is worth-while to know some of these functions.

1. *Self-identity.* The word 'identity' has two meanings. One of these is the ability to distinguish oneself from the surrounding objects. The newborn infant seems to have no idea where his own body leaves off and where the environment begins. It takes several months for him to discover the boundary lines of his own body and distinguish himself from his mummy, daddy and the increasing number of people with whom he comes into contact.

The second meaning is the capacity to identify oneself with other people. The growing boy has to identify himself with his changing circles of friends, teachers, team-mates and, later on, with his wife, children, in-laws and colleagues. Not only that; he has also to identify himself with his caste, religion, culture, social trends, political creed and various other ideas. This identification is so important that a person is often judged by what he identifies himself with.

Thus identity involves two mutually contradictory strivings: to separate oneself from the group and also to become one with the group. The distinctiveness gained in childhood is lost in adolescence. As a

10. See, the Editorial of May, 1985.

result, many young people face an 'identity crisis'.

It is the ego that provides a centre for unifying all experiences. True identity lies in the integrity of the ego, that is, its ability to integrate experiences into its body without losing its own uniqueness. This shows how important it is to have a well-defined ego-profile.

2. *Role and responsibility.* Unlike animal societies like those of ants and bees, which are based mainly on the division of labour, the human society is an extremely complex one. It consists of a web of relationships, and every member has to play a variety of roles. To borrow an example used by Sri Ramakrishna, the same Brahmin is called a priest, cook, son, husband and father according to the role he plays. Even in the same role he may have to behave in different ways towards different people. This 'playing the role' is no play at all; every role entails obligation and responsibility. Who plays all these roles and takes up the responsibilities? The ego. Only a mature ego can function well in the complex web of social life.

3. *Self-control and self-defence.* Without our being aware of it, the ego is always actively engaged in guarding us from all external and internal dangers that threaten our existence. Even a word of criticism is enough for the ego to react strongly. In fact, excessive egoism is invariably an expression of a person's deep feelings of insecurity. The internal danger is the possibility of one's lower impulses and emotions going out of control thereby making the person an object of social ridicule. According to Freud, it is the ego that keeps the libidinous instincts in check. His view is not wholly correct; for, to a great extent, bad instincts are kept in check by good instincts. But the ego exercises an overall control. When this control is threatened, it manifests itself as

'anxiety' and, when the control is lost, the person will either behave like a brute or become neurotic.

4. *Evaluation and finding meaning.* Our senses and mind receive innumerable impressions. There must be an agent in us who coordinates these experiences and evaluates them. This agent is again the ego. The same type of experience is evaluated by different people in different ways depending upon the nature of their egos. A second-class pass may be a humiliating experience for a bright student, whereas it may be an uplifting experience for a mediocre student. Another form of evaluation concerns morality. A highly ethical person may feel upset over an inadvertent fib, whereas a scoundrel may reel off any number of lies without batting an eyelid. More important is evaluation of oneself. A great scholar or technical expert may have feelings of inferiority but a dilettante or a quack may be convinced of his superior knowledge or skill.

Much of the knowledge that comes to us is symbolic and has to be interpreted. Who does the interpretation? The ego. Any knowledge or experience that is not related to the ego loses its meaning. Says the eminent psychologist Carl Rogers: 'As experiences occur in the life of the individual, they are either (a) symbolized, perceived and organized into some relationship to the self, (b) ignored because there is no perceived relationship to the self-structure, (c) denied symbolization, or given a distorted symbolization because the experience is inconsistent with the structure of the self.'¹¹ As a consequence of this screening process by which incoming information is selected, organized and possibly distorted, each individual experiences events and environmental conditions in a somewhat different way. When a

¹¹. Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961) p. 503

person says that life appears meaningless to him, what he means it that he is unable to relate his ego meaningfully to life.

5. *I-Thou relationship.* Man alone is capable of entering into a direct, 'I-Thou' relationship with his fellow-beings. Who establishes this relationship? The ego. Without the ego, human relationships would change into 'it-it' relationships. It is the 'I-Thou' relationship that is called *love*. Where this relationship does not exist there love too does not exist.

Need for a strong and mature ego

Thus we see that the ego performs several important functions in everyone's life. In fact, it is the real performer, doer, *kartā*, in us. It gives to every man his uniqueness, relates him to his fellowmen and makes social life rich, variegated and meaningful. The ego is the ever-vigilant sentinel in us guarding us from all external and internal dangers. It is our 'internal auditor', judge and critic. It is the dreamer, visionary, seeker in us. It is our interpreter and mediator—mediating between the Ātman and the world.

Such a vital and inseparable part of our personality cannot be so easily eliminated from our lives. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'It is true that one or two can get rid of the "I" through Samādhi, but these cases are very rare. You may indulge in thousands of reasonings, but still the "I" comes back. You may cut the peepul-tree to the very root today, but you will notice a sprout springing up tomorrow.'¹²

Nor is there any immediate necessity to eliminate the ego from our lives. The ego in itself is not a problem. The real problem is its immaturity, ignorance and wrong behaviour. Most of our failures,

blunders and sufferings are caused by the weakness and immaturity of the ego. Life bristles with unfavourable conditions, uncertainties and temptations. What is needed most to face them is a strong and mature ego. A person with a weak ego easily breaks down under stress or yields to the temptations of the flesh. It is the weak ego that prompts people to take recourse to cheating, lying, scandal-mongering and underhand dealings. That is why Nietzsche said, 'The world has to fear nothing from the strong but only from the weak'.

We often find that the cock of the walk and the swashbuckler succeed in gaining wealth, power and fame, wicked people thrive like weeds, whereas virtuous and humble people seem to fail in their undertakings or go to the wall. What is the cause of this? Life consists of two streams of power: the power of goodness (*dharma*) and the power of evil (*adharma*). Wicked people open themselves freely to the stream of evil and acquire its power. If virtuous people also opened themselves fully to the stream of goodness, they too would get its power, the power of *dharma*. But this they seldom do because of the weakness of the ego. Instead of opening themselves to the cosmic stream of goodness, the goody-goody people are often found to spend a lot of time worrying about the vices of other people, feeling jealous of those who have gone up by hook or by crook, or else desperately trying to prevent themselves from sliding into the stream of evil. Had all good people been as strong as wicked people, virtue would always have triumphed over evil. To fight evil one must first of all open oneself fully to the power of goodness. A top police official in an erstwhile princely State of India became famous as a Vedanta teacher and spiritual guide with some following in India and Europe. He was frequently asked how he

12. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974) p. 103

could reconcile his spiritual life with the unpleasant task of dealing with criminals and murderers. His answer was that the police department provided the best opportunity to practise virtue and fight vice.

Only a strong and pure ego can open itself fully to the cosmic stream of *dharma*. This is one of the reasons why Swami Vivekananda stressed so much the importance of strength. We need strength, not to do harm to or quarrel with other people, but to forbear and forgive, to lead a holy life and, above all, to seek God. It is good to keep in mind that the elimination of the ego takes place only at the highest level of mystic experience. At the lower levels of spiritual life a strong and holy ego is necessary to withstand the strain of prolonged meditation, to persevere on the path and to resist temptations.

We should be able to distinguish between the fundamental existential problems common to all mankind and the psychological problems of individuals. These two sets of problems often get mixed up especially in the lives of spiritual seekers. The basic existential problems like those regarding happiness, suffering, fear, love and death can be solved only at the highest level of Ātman-Brahman, and for this it is necessary to transcend the ego. But apart from these, there are the problems of day-to-day life, which vary from one individual to another, caused by wrong attitudes, thinking, actions and social conditions. It is to solve these psychological problems that we need a strong and awakened ego. In this connection it should be noted that when modern psychologists like Jung, Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow speak of 'integration', 'open self' and 'self-actualization', and when even Karl Marx speaks of 'self-realization', what they all refer to is the ego, and not the transcendent Ātman of which

most western psychologists know next to nothing.

Egoism and selfishness

If the ego is important in life, how are we to account for egoism and selfishness which are considered the bane of human life? The answer is that the terms 'ego' and 'egoism' do not mean the same. 'Ego' refers to the feeling of 'I', while 'egoism' refers to the feeling of 'me'. The ego is the core of personality structure, the doer or agent. To be simply aware of oneself as 'I am what I am' or 'I did this' is not harmful. It becomes harmful only when the ego identifies itself with the roles it plays in life and refers to itself as 'me'. Egoism is thus a wrong type of self-objectification. If a policeman, a government officer, a doctor or a businessman thinks of himself simply as a human being, it is not egoism; we may call it egoity or selfhood. But it becomes egoism when the person, forgetting his basic humanity, regards himself as a policeman, doctor or businessman. These social roles are *upādhis* (limiting adjuncts) and it is the identification of the ego with the *upādhis* that is egoism.

The *Gītā* has carefully and clearly distinguished between ego and egoism. In one verse the ego is included as one among the eight categories of lower Prakṛti;¹³ in another verse it is included as one among the twenty-four categories of Sāṃkhya philosophy.¹⁴ In both these contexts the ego, *ahamkārah*, is regarded either as a mental faculty or as an essential ingredient of Nature. On the other hand, egoism is

13. अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ।

Gītā 7.4

14. महाभूतान्यहंकारो . . .

Gītā 13.5

regarded as a vice, sinful tendency or demoniacal disposition (*āsurīśampat*).¹⁵

Now let us consider selfishness. Here again the distinction between 'self' and 'selfishness' is to be kept in mind. In this context the term 'self' refers to the ego, while 'selfishness' refers to the feeling of 'mine'. Selfishness is the tendency of the ego to appropriate to itself things belonging to universal life. In Hindu scriptures this feeling of mineness towards objects is known as *mamatā*. When this attitude is given up, a person is said to become *nirmamaḥ*, a term which occurs repeatedly in the *Gītā*.¹⁶ In English he is said to have become 'selfless'. The term 'selfless' does not necessarily imply that the person is devoid of the self—for he may still retain the ego—but it means that the ego gives up its grasping, possessing, retaining tendency.

So then, unlike the ego which is a simple feeling of 'I' as the agent, egoism is feeling of 'mine'. Whereas egoism represents the ego's wrong attitude towards itself selfishness represents its wrong attitude towards the world.

15. अहंकारं बलं दपं . . .

Gītā 16.18 ; 18.53

यदहंकारमाश्रित्य . . .

Gītā 18.59

16. cf *Gītā* 2.71 ; 3.30 ; 12.13 ; 18.53

Both egoism and selfishness are expressions of the ego's struggle for its own existence. They are defence mechanisms operating mostly in the unconscious. A person may not therefore be aware that he is egoistic or selfish. This is true, paradoxically, of selflessness also ; it may be an expression of self-defence or of fear or hatred of oneself of which the person may not be aware.¹⁷ The difference between selfishness and selflessness in unawakened people is really not as great as is popularly believed to be. This kind of unconscious struggle for the existence of the ego—which in some people takes the form of selfishness and in others, the form of selflessness—drains the energies of the psyche and makes the ego weak. Such a weak ego becomes unfit to practise spiritual disciplines.

It is only when the ego-awakening takes place that we realize that this struggle is unnecessary and futile. Some struggle is certainly necessary for the maintenance of the physical body, but not for that of the ego. The ego is sustained by the stream of universal life, and is therefore self-existent. When the ego awakens, it gives up egoism and selfishness and remains simply as it really is—the ego. Such a free and strong ego can transcend itself and realize its true nature as the *Ātman*.

17. This point was discussed in detail in the Editorial of May 1985.

WHEN DID SWAMIJI REALLY TAKE THE NAME VIVEKANANDA ?

SWAMI EKATMANANDA

A few months after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna on August 16, 1886, his all-renouncing disciples headed by Narendranath (later Swami Vivekananda) organized themselves into a brotherhood at Baranagore, a northern suburb of Calcutta. The first monastery that they started, known as Baranagore Math, continued to be there for some six years. Their actual ordination into Sannyasa, the ancient monastic order of Hinduism, took place in the early morning of a day in the third week of January, 1887. In the small hours of that day the young men bathed in the Ganga and then assembled in the shrine-room of the Math, where the Master's photograph and relics were regularly worshipped. Shashi did the worship of the Master as usual, and then the *virajā-homa* (purificatory fire ritual) was performed. Narendra asked Kaliprasad to chant the mantras prescribed for the occasion. The brothers offered the oblations one by one to the fire as the mantras were chanted. At first Narendranath, then Rakhal, Baburam, Niranjana, Sharat, Shashi, Saradaprasanna and lastly Kaliprasad repeated the mantras and offered the oblations. Subsequently Narendranath gave to Rakhal, Baburam, Shashi, Sharat, Niranjana, Kaliprasad and Saradaprasanna their respective monastic names: Brahma-ananda, Premananda, Ramakrishnananda, Saradananda, Niranjanananda, Abhed-anand and Trigunatitananda (or Trigunatita). Tarak and Gopal senior went through the rite a few days later and were named Shivananda and Advaitananda. Later still, Latu and Yogen went through the ceremony at different times and were named Adbhutananda and Yogananda. Hari did

so sometime in the same year and was named Turiyananda. Gangadhar performed the rite in the first week of July 1890 and became Akhandananda. Subodh similarly underwent the ritual and was named Subodhananda. According to Swami Abhedananda, Narendranath took for himself the name Vividishananda.¹ However, Narendranath seems to have used that name only for a very short period.

During his days as a wandering monk, Narendranath changed his name twice—first to Vivekananda (February 1891 to October 1892) and then to Sachchidananda (October 1892 to May 1893)—to prevent his brother-disciples from following him. However, according to the official biography, on the eve of his departure for the West in May, 1893, he took back the name Vivekananda for good, 'perhaps at the request of the Maharaja of Khetri.'² Prior to Swamiji's departure from Khetri on May 10, 1893, 'at the Raja's request, the Swami re-assumed the name Vivekananda for good, in place of Sachchidananda, which he had been using in South India.'³

Beni Shankar Sharma, in his book *Swami Vivekananda—A Forgotten Chapter of His Life*, has, on page 56 quoted from Pandit Jhabarmal Sharma's book in Hindi *Khetri Naresh aur Vivekananda* (published in 1927),

Very few people might be knowing that Swamiji's well-known name Vivekananda was given by Rajaji Bahadur (the Maharaja of

1. *Amār Jivankathā* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1964) p. 14

2. His Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1979) Vol. 1, pp. 199-200.

3. *Ibid* p. 387

Khetri). Prior to this, Swamiji used to write his name as Vividishananda. This is also proved from his old letters. In the first journey to Khetri (August 7 to October 2, 1891), Swamiji was sitting one day with Rajaji (the Maharaja). Jokingly he remarked, 'Swamiji, your name is rather difficult. Without a commentator, it is not possible for an ordinary person to understand its meaning or implication. Nor is it easy to pronounce. Besides, your *vividiṣā kāla*, that is to say the period within which one tries to know things, is also over.' On hearing the Raja's logical argument, the Swami enquired, 'Maharaj, what name would you like?' Rajaji said, 'In my opinion, the proper name for you is Vivekananda', and the Swami from that day onward began to use the name Vivekananda for himself.

In 1958, the late Dr. Kshiti Mohan Sen, one of the well-known literati of Bengal and former vice-chancellor of Visvabharati, suggested in an article in the Durgapuja number of the Bengali daily *Anandabazar Patrika*, of Calcutta, under the heading 'Swami Vivekananda and Rabindra Sangeet', that 'Swami Vivekananda was exceptionally good in singing. He, perhaps, got his name 'Vivekananda' from Babu Keshab Chandra. Influenced by the Brahma Samaj, Narendranath was a great favourite of Keshab Chandra Sen, and Bhakta Keshab Chandra used to call Narendranath 'Vivek'.⁴

Swami Gambhirananda, in his Bengali biography, *Yuganāyak Vivekānanda*, quotes from a letter dated January 4, 1890, of Swami Shivananda written in answer to a query raised by Gangadhar (later Swami Akhandananda), a list of the new names and old names of ten of the young disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who had formally embraced Sannyasa, and expresses his surprise at the fact that no mention of Narendranath's name was made in that list.⁵

Two direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, Swamis Abhedananda and Akhandananda, categorically state in their *Āmār Jivankathā* and *Smṛtikathā* respectively that Narendranath, or Naren for short, was in the group which ceremonially renounced the world and took new Sannyasa names, whereas another direct disciple of the Master, Swami Shivananda, who too concurs with the aforesaid two monks, has omitted Naren's name together with his Sannyasa name. This is obviously significant.

As regards the name Vividishananda, contrary to what Beni Shankar Sharma has said in his book, there is not to our knowledge a single letter of Swamiji in that name, although during his visit in 1890 and the beginning of 1891 to Varanasi and Delhi he seems to have given himself out as Vividishananda. However, it is intriguing to see Swamiji's letter dated 24.1.1890 to Babu Pramadas Mitra [included in *Swami Vivekanander Vani O Rachana* (Bengali)], signed as 'Vivekananda'.⁶ Nay, in the same volume we see the signature of Swamiji as 'Vivekananda' in five more of his letters dated February 1890, 6.7.1890, 14.4.1891, 30.4.1891 and Mount Abu 1891, addressed to different persons, all *before* Swamiji met for the first time the Raja of Khetri, Ajit Singh, at the summer palace on Mount Abu on the evening of the 4th June, 1891, and *much earlier* to his stay at Khetri from the 7th August until the 27th October, 1891.⁷ From the foregoing, therefore, it can be safely deducted that Swamiji did have 'Vivekananda' more than a year prior to his first meeting with Ajit Singh, and his later visit accompanied by the Raja to that state in the first week of August. That would automatically annul the claims

4. Quoted by B.S. Sharma.

5. Swami Gambhirananda, *Yuganāyak Vivekānanda* (Calcutta: Udbodhan Karyalaya, 1961) Vol. 1, p. 218

6. *Swami Vivekanander Vani O Rachana*, (Calcutta: Udbodhan Karyalaya, 1963) Vol. 6

7. *Life* Vol. 1, pp. 281-83

by Pandit Jhabarmal Sharma and Beni Shankar Sharma as given in the latter's book, and relied upon by the authors of Swamiji's *Life*.

With respect to the name Sachchidananda, it would appear that Swamiji, on reaching Belgaum from Kolhapur in the first week of October, 1892, made himself known as Sachchidananda, whereas earlier in Gujarat and western India we see from the available original first letter of his to the Dewan of Junagadh, Haridas Viharidas Desai, dated 26.4.1892 that Swamiji had signed as 'Bibekananda'. But it is clear from his letters written after reaching Belgaum till a week before he left for the West that he had given out his name as Sachchidananda. In this connection it is very interesting to note that whereas his letter to Haridas Viharidas Desai from Bombay on 22nd May, 1893 he had signed as 'Vivekananda', his letter dated 24th May, 1893 to Indumati Mitra of Belgaum bears his signature as Sachchidananda. Thus we find at least five of Swamiji's letters with Sachchidananda as his signature.

The present writer would like to record here his firm conviction that Swamiji took the name 'Vivekananda' on the very occasion when, in the third week of January, 1887, he, Rakhal, Baburam, Niranjana, Sharat, Shashi, Sarada and Kali had their names changed, after taking solemnly the sacred vows of renunciation. This thesis is based on the following premises.

Primarily, to the question why Narendranath chose for himself the name Vivekananda it may be replied that for a year prior to his taking formal Sannyasa he had been seized with an intense longing for liberation after reading *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, as we see from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.⁸ Obviously, *viveka* or spiritual

discrimination must have been uppermost in his thoughts in those days of great inner struggle. In the same passage we note Sri Ramakrishna's own remark to M. on that state of Naren's mind: 'When the soul longs and yearns for God like that, then you will know that you do not have long to wait for His vision. The rosy colour on the eastern horizon shows that the sun will soon rise.' In this connection, one aphorism of Patañjali may be recalled: 'To discriminating people (*vivekins*), all is as it were painful on account of everything bringing pain either as a consequence, or as anticipation of loss of happiness, or as fresh craving arising from impressions of happiness, and also as counteraction of qualities.'⁹ We shall also have to remember in this context that when Sri Ramakrishna had sent Narendranath to the Kali temple to seek Her grace for the fulfilment of his pecuniary needs after the death of his father, he ecstatically prayed to the Divine Mother for 'discrimination' (*viveka*). Finally, it is also most likely that the name 'Vivek' by which Keshab Chandra Sen used to address him, as stated by no less a person than the reputed scholar Dr. Kshiti Mohan Sen, must have been very prominent in the mind of Narendranath when the time came for assuming a new name after the Sannyasa ritual, and hence he took for himself quietly the now-famous name of 'Vivekananda'.

Now, there could be at least three reasons for his withholding the announcement of his new name. First, as he himself stated, even when he was engaged, after his father's death, in litigation in order to retrieve the ancestral home of which his family was deprived by selfish and unsympathetic relatives, 'I began secretly to prepare myself to renounce the world like my grandfather.' From Swamis

8. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Ramakrishna Math, 1974) pp. 928-29

9. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtra* 2.15

Shivananda and Akhandananda we learn that although several of their brother-disciples had embraced Sannyasa and assumed new names, they refrained for some period from letting the outside world know of it all. In fact, though they wore the ochre robe within the monastery (Math) at Baranagore, they wore white clothes outdoors for their own reasons.¹⁰ Such a precaution was especially necessary for Narendranath for, as the eldest son of his family, he had to be in Calcutta very often, notwithstanding his stay at Baranagore Math, and attend to the legal necessities of the high court. Moreover, knowing fully well that, by virtue of his formal assumption of the life of renunciation, he would not only forfeit the right to appear on behalf of his family but also would lose the ancestral property for his mother and brothers, Narendranath thought it expedient to conceal his change of life and necessarily, therefore, of the name too.¹¹ On February 21, 1887, when Narendra returned from Calcutta to the Math in the forenoon, Kaliprasad (Abhedananda) asked him 'What about the lawsuit?' he replied sharply, 'Why should you bother about it?'¹² which at once indicates that, in spite of his undergoing great stress caused by litigation and the penury of his people, he did not want anyone, not even his brother-disciples, to discuss his personal matters for obvious reasons. In view of this attitude of Narendranath, it is logical to assume that perhaps he gave his name as Vividishananda when an inquisitive Abhedananda enquired of his new monastic name sometime after taking the formal vows of renunciation. It was only at the middle of 1889 that the legal case was finally decided in favour of Nendra-

nath's family and they secured their rightful share of the property.¹³

Secondly, soon after their ordination, the young monks of the Baranagore Math had a natural tendency to lead an itinerant life, and so several of them went out at different periods to different places of pilgrimage for austerities. As the days passed, Narendranath also became restless for pilgrimage, despite his sense of responsibility for the brotherhood imposed on him by the Master himself. He felt his attachment to the brother-disciples as a chain, a gold one no doubt but still a chain, impeding his progress in the realization of God. Therefore he resolved to venture into the unknown paths of a monk's life. Although he made only short visits to nearby places from January 1887 until the middle of 1888, in July 1890 Narendranath left the Baranagore monastery for an indefinite period. He wanted not only to test his own strength and Self-reliance, but also to force his brother-disciples stand on their own feet. At some places he would occasionally run into one or more of his brother-disciples, but would rebuke them and forbid them to meet him, for he was determined to wander alone. So, in order to mislead them, for fear that they might follow him knowingly or unknowingly, he devised the method of using a name unfamiliar to his brother-disciples. Thus we find him as Vividishananda at Varanasi, and again by the same name at Meerut and Delhi etc. until February 1891. In this connection it may be pertinent to pose a question: Would Narendranath have revealed his name to the outside world as Vividishananda if it was really the name he had first taken for himself at Baranagore after the *Virajā-homa*? From February 1891 to October 1892, Narendranath was

10. *Yuganāyak Vivekānanda* 1:218

11. *Ibid* p. 219

12. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* p. 974

13. *Yuganāyak Vivekānanda* 1:219

known as Vivekananda and then as Sachchidananda from October 1892 to May 1893 according to *Life*.¹⁴ It may not be out of place to state here that Swami Abhedananda, on whose sole authority it has been presumed that Narendranath took for himself the name Vividishananda, wrote his *Āmār Jivankathā (My Life Story)* forty-five years later, some five years only before his passing away at the age of 73 years. Over and above what has been said earlier, Narendranath panted at times for a solitary life, away from 'the Maya (bondage) of the brother-disciples.' So he sternly told them to avoid him, and insisted on their obeying him unquestioningly.¹⁵

Thirdly, Narendranath, though possessed of high academic qualifications, failed to find a job, in spite of his best efforts, in

14. *Life* 1:199-200

15. *Ibid* p. 262

order to support his family after the death of his father. He perceived the extreme misery of his mother in her utter helplessness and absolute inability to maintain in turn her old mother, her sons and daughters. Thus he realized that it would be the height of folly on his part to reveal to her his ceremonial giving up of the worldly life, and wear before her the ochre robe and thereby hurt further her already wounded heart, for to him, 'If there is any being I love in the whole world, it is my mother.' As such, he had necessarily to conceal all visible signs of his Sannyasa including his true monastic name.

The foregoing account makes it reasonably clear that Swamiji took the name Vivekananda at the Baranagore Math itself after the traditional *Virajā homa*, and sets aside the speculation that he assumed that name only in early 1891, or resumed the same in 1893.

A NOTE ON PRATYAKSHA IN ADVAITA VEDANTA

PROF. DAVID APPELBAUM

How does the Advaitin view sense experience? As yielding the data out of which representational constructs of objects are synthesized? Or, as providing an epistemic mode of direct, immediate access to the non-representational real? Is it a correspondence theory of truth that engages him? Or, truth insofar as it is revealed as a totality which is always and everywhere just what it is?

With regards to *pratyakṣa* (perception), there are two faces of Advaita Vedanta. There is the *savikalpaka* face, which views *pratyakṣa* as an objectifying activity, which reduces sensation to an element constitutive of representational judgement, and which

takes the percept as primary evidence for the truth or falsehood of non-analytic propositions. By contrast, there is the *nirvikalpaka* face. It views *pratyakṣa* as essentially non-objectifying, taking sensation as an activity irreducible to propositional-based perception, impredicable, non-thetic, not even laden with the precursors of perceptual judgement (e.g. proto-symbols), yet nonetheless a legitimate *pramāṇa* (source of knowledge). Which, if either, is the true Advaitin's face? This question can be reformulated in a new way by focussing on the traditional debate between adherents of *prāpyakāri* and those of *aprāpyakāri*. The former hold that all

modes of sense-experience are 'capable of working only on reaching the object.'¹ The latter say sense-experience is 'capable of working without reaching the object.'² The nerve of this controversy has recently been identified with the question of 'projection': is mind projected 'out there', toward the object?³ This rendition is, however, misleading. For the *prāpyakārist*, not all objectifying perception is projected 'out there'. For instance, perceptions of my own body, pains, itches, pricks, spasms, or tingles, while cognitively represented, are not said to arise 'out there'. But it is true that the *prāpyakāri* thesis comprises an important part in the *savikalpaka pratyakṣa*: it offers an account of the distance-making, exteriorizing mechanisms of objectifying perceptions.

According to the *prāpyakārist*, the reason why the locale of the table which I see is 'out there', and not 'in my mind', derives from the role *manas* or *antahkaraṇa* plays. The *Vedānta-Paribhāṣā* puts it as follows:

Here, just as the water of a tank, going out through a hole and entering fields through channels comes to have, even like those (fields) a quadrangular or other figure, similarly, the internal organ too, which is of the nature of light, going out through the sense of sight, etc., and reaching the locality of contents like pot, is transformed into the form of contents like pot. This same modification is called a psychosis. (*vritti*)⁴

Datta summarizes this view:

According to the Vedantins, in the perception of an external object the mind (*manas* or

antahkaraṇa) goes out to the object through the *indriyas*, the senses.⁵

Antahkaraṇa's 'going out' takes place under the reign of the object. It is not meant as a proto-physiology, but as explanatory of how the form of the object is assumed. Datta makes this clear:

The going out of the sense of *antahkaraṇa* is not itself a perceived fact; it is a hypothesis designed to explain the fact of immediacy...⁶

The projective assumption, moreover, is deployed in full strength only with the distance-making senses, viz. sight and hearing. Indeed, the only test cases one finds concern these (e.g. *Prakarāṇa-pañcikā*⁴⁴, *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* #124.) It is in the instrumentality (*karaṇa*), bound up with striving for objectification characterizing *savikalpaka* perception, that the *prāpyakārist* reigns supreme. Without *prāpyakāri*, *antahkaraṇa* would never reach that which it meets in the act of perceiving.

Or would it? What the *a-prāpyakārist* rejects is object-orientation that necessitates the sensorial instrumentalism of his opponent. Instead, the *indriyas*' operation under the demand for representation itself is occasioned by a lapse, a kind of inattentiveness or *avidyā*. Gabriel Marcel describes this aptly:

Whenever there is no direct contact there occurs a construction of a state of consciousness that would correspond to the contact; and that state of consciousness generally condenses itself into a sort of abstract symbol.⁷

Contact with what? The contact the *a-prāpyakārist* has in mind is that between *antahkaraṇa* and the *indriyas*. When the *antahkaraṇa* is constrained from its habitual

1. D.M. Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing* (London: Allen & Urwin, 1932), p. 42.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

3. Stephen Kaplan, 'Mind, maya, and holography: A phenomenology of projection.' *Philosophy East and West*, October 1983, volume 33, number 4, pp. 367-378.

4. Dharmaraja, *Vedāntaparibhāṣa*, ed. & trans. S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri, 'Pratyakṣa', No. 18,

5. *op. cit.*, p. 60.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

7. *Metaphysical Journal*, tr. Bernard Wall (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952), p. 24.

mode of 'going out' to the object, through the *indriyas*, another kind of sense experience is possible. Freed from its striving after objectification, (*vikalpa-vāsanā*) the *antah-karaṇa* is able to relate to the *indriyas*, now not instrumentally encumbered. It engages coenesthesia (Marcel's term), or proprioception. The product of proprioceptive perception is sensing. Its mode of operation is that of directing the attentive pressure of the *antah-karaṇa* to remain within the confines of the body, up to and including the inside surface. Thus concentrated on the *indriyas* in their natural habitat—the body's interior—it is able to interact in a new way. What initially was corporeal density and resistance begins to be permeable. Put another way, when the *antah-karaṇa* remains in contact with the organs of internal perception, proprioception intensifies. Intensified, it becomes a global state throughout the body, opening it to influxes and influences. Thus penetrable, in this state alone, according to the *a-prāpyakārist*, is awareness of existence (*sat*) and the self-luminous consciousness of the Self (*ātman*) possible. Or, more exactly, only through proprioception is one available to that which is, in some sense, always self-manifesting (*svayamprakāśa*).

It is plain that the *a-prāpyakāri* thesis supposes *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*. It is tempting to ask what it is of. The question is valid only insofar as it does not disguise a striving for objectification. Even to regard *nirvikalpaka* perception as a stage preparatory to 'full-fledged' *savikalpaka* perception (as Datta does) is wrong. It rather is important to respect the phenomenological facts surrounding the *antah-karaṇa*'s contact with the body-based *indriyas*. Under the dialectic of touch, a level of transformatory experience is engaged. What had hitherto seemed resistant, subject only to a passive instru-

mentality, becomes active and receptive. The body is no longer an insensitive shell punctured only by the organs of the senses. Rather, it itself is a living sense organ. Since the medium of touch is not transparent, its discernment does not operate representationally, through the Cartesian categories of clarity and distinctness. Instead, it is in touch with presences; it is in sympathy with things, not as mediated by *savikalpaka* representations, but insofar as they are prolongations of the touch which activates it. Inasmuch as the *antah-karaṇa* participates in (and does not 'go out' through) the internal perception, to that extent it participated in the real in an immediate way.

Much more needs to be said about touch. But this suffices to show the cogency of the *prāpyakāri* position extends only to the distance-making, but not the contactile senses. With touch, at least under the reign of *savikalpaka* perception, there is objectification without projection. Or rather, what it shows is that the mind's 'going out' is not, as Datta would have it, an epistemic hypothesis. It is a phenomenological fact. For, in 'going out' to 'assume the form of the object'⁸ the *antah-karaṇa* abandons contact for representation, immediacy for predicability, the opacity of touch for the transparency of vision. This is the meaning of Gauḍapāda's observation:

(The mind) goes out resembling that (i.e., the objects) because of the stored attachments to the non-existent. When it (the mind) comes to know the non-existence of the object, it returns without contact. (The mind) which comes back and does not go forward is then in the condition of being without movement.⁹

Loss of contact brings increased density of the body, the proprioceptive medium,

8. Datta, p. 61.

9. *Māṇḍūkya-Kārika* 4:72; Kaplan's translation.

necessitating the sense organ's function as mere instruments by which to get readings on reality. 'Going out' in this sense presages *avidyā*. It is closure, closure of a participatory perception which provides direct access to the real.

Of course, reading *avidyā* as loss of proprioceptive contact is patently unacceptable to the *prāpyakārist*. Where a correspondence theory of truth remains uppermost, the only epistemic value to sensation is as a constituent of an objective representation. Poles apart, his belief in *avidyā* is coordinate with the very contactile opacity out of which, for the *a-prāpyakārist*, knowledge manifests itself. We seem to have two positions which interact everywhere and touch nowhere. Is there any common argument? Here, the adherent of *nirvikalpaka* perception can offer a criticism of his opponent's 'message theory'. For, *savikalpaka pratyakṣa* jumps over the fact that a modification in my organism (a sensation) means nothing until it is translated into an epistemic datum (a representational element). Unless translation occurs, the sense event is not given, but self-generated, a position neither Advaitin would uphold. Indeed, translation is precisely what the *prāpyakārist* is trying to explain when he says the *antaḥkāraṇa* 'goes out' to take the form of an object.¹⁰ Thus, *savikalpaka* perception must presuppose a non-representational datum, a pure immediate, a sensing. It is just this, the *a-prāpyakārist* would say, which is incapable of predication, that herein contains the perception of existence. Our ignorance of it is measured by the strength of representational striving.

10. Cp. Marcel's argument in 'Existence and Objectivity', reprinted as an appendix to the *Metaphysical Journal*, pp. 327-330.

It might seem that the *nirvikalpaka* position recommends an eradication of mind altogether, and is, therefore, an embrace of irrationalism. But the rejection of an instrumentalist role of the *antaḥkāraṇa* in perception simply means it is to be employed other than in objectifying representations. This alternative has a clear textual basis. (e.g. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 3.3-7). Rather than remaining in a reactive state, under the reign of representational striving, the *antaḥkāraṇa* (or *manas*) need not be drawn along by the *indriyas*, which are subject to chance stimuli. Becoming active, it can 'rein in' the exterior gaze orienting sense experience. The body as a whole then can become responsive to touch, and through its integrity, maintained by mind's participation in sense experience, move in the direction of existence. For only with the *antaḥkāraṇa* active and constrained from habit do I place myself at the disposal of that mysterious chain of command, coming through the intellect, ultimately from the *ātman* itself. When or in what manner direct contact with the real will arise is beyond all representation. But this much is known; the task of the *antaḥkāraṇa* is the continuing investigation of *nirvikalpaka* perception—not to produce that which all Advaitins agree cannot be produced, *caitanya*, self-manifesting consciousness. Rather, the challenge is in readiness, in placing myself continually at the disposal of a moment rendering all preparation null. Or, as Marcel puts it:

I must keep myself at the disposal of the unknown Me, so that one day he can come into my place without meeting any resistance from the Me that I am still, but shall have in that second ceased to be.¹¹

11. *Being and Having* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 52.

VEDANTA AND MODERN INDIAN UNDERSTANDING

DR. A. RAMAMURTY

The renewal of India's faith in itself witnessed during the modern times is due largely to its being re-awakened to the ancient Vedantic thought and tradition. Without the gentle force of inspiration provided by Vedanta, modern Indian renaissance would not have been possible. The dissemination of Vedantic ideas and ideals in an organized way by the Brahma movement, and the translation of the Upaniṣads into English and Indian vernaculars helped the modern Indian mind to re-discover and re-awaken itself to Vedantic thought and heritage. As observed by Swami Vivekananda, Vedantic thought had accomplished such renewals of faith twice in the past Indian history: once through Buddha and, for the second time, through Śaṅkara.¹ And it may not be an exaggeration to say that in the life of modern India the same process of renewal has been accomplished by the life and mission of Vivekananda.

While the role of the Brahma movement in making India alive to its Vedantic

1. The observation of Vivekananda, though it seems to be strange on the face of it, can be justified if we view the basic teachings of the Buddha apart from what they gave rise to later on. If we do not insist so much on the fact that Buddha did not accept the authority of the Upaniṣads, we can realize that his basic approach to the spiritual problems of man is in several vital respects similar to the one pursued in the Upaniṣads. His indifference to speculation, and his acceptance that man is the key to the understanding of man and his spiritual problems, and hence his deep analysis of man's being remind us of the Upaniṣadic approach to the spiritual problems of man. Hence Buddha could accomplish what later on was accomplished by great Vedantins like Śaṅkara. Thus the Buddhism of Buddha is in its basic approach a form of Vedanta without being based on the authority of the Upaniṣads.

tradition was limited to re-kindling its interest in Vedanta, the credit for shaping and developing Vedanta into a spiritualizing force for the socio-political transformation of India goes to Swami Vivekananda and his mission. With his emergence, interest in Vedanta turned into a passion. What was in the beginning of the nineteenth century seen and adopted as a means of healthy defence against a challenging situation posed by Christian missionaries and the western thought, soon developed into a positive force asserting India's identity and exerting its influence upon other cultures. Since then Vedanta has been acting as a leavening factor in India's thought; and almost all the creative thinkers of modern India are by and large inspired and influenced positively by the ideas and ideals of Vedanta so much so that, if we are to identify the characteristic trend of modern Indian thought, we have to name it as some form of Vedanta.

Two factors chiefly helped modern India's renewal of faith in Vedanta. The spiritual experiences of saints like Sri Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi, and the general recognition that the thought of Vedanta in its basic approach and tenor is not opposed to the spirit of modern rationalistic and scientific thought. While the lives of spiritual realization of the former provided experiential basis and living verification for the fundamental truths of Vedanta, the intellectual presentation of the Vedantic doctrines by eminent thinkers like Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan, who in their own ways attempted to reconcile the basic ideas of Vedanta with modern ideas and values, supplied the much needed rationale of Vedanta.

Coming to the intellectual presentation of Vedanta, or rather making its basic ideas intelligible to modern understanding, we find that while most of the Indian scholars and thinkers have concerned themselves with understanding and expounding some of the individual concepts and problems of Vedanta, only two creative thinkers of modern India, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, endeavoured to comprehend the meaning of Vedanta in its totality, as a complete system of thought. Their approaches to Vedanta were comprehensive, covering all aspects of life. However, their interests and tasks in relation to Vedanta were distinct. Vivekananda concerned himself chiefly with the task of elucidating the meaning of Vedanta with a view to making it intelligible and relevant to modern man. His concern was mostly practical. It was to make the basic ideas and ideals of Vedanta meaningful and relevant to the every-day life of man, besides helping India to re-emerge as a centre of spiritualizing force in the world. He tried to understand the meaning and relevance of Vedanta in relation to the modern situation of man. Above all, he wanted to shape Vedanta into a gentle spiritual force capable of achieving the harmony and unity of mankind. These considerations, however, did not make him completely insensitive to the theoretical side of Vedanta. But his short span of life, and the world-wide mission that he attempted to establish during this short period did not allow him enough time to work out more systematically, in accordance with his own vision, the various doctrines of Vedanta. Nevertheless, his insights into some of the basic problems and key concepts of Vedanta are strikingly original and profound and provide enough scope for further logical development.

Sri Aurobindo's task in relation to

Vedanta was different. It was not simply to elucidate and clarify but to re-interpret and adapt it; and he did it ably. He had a clear perception of the problems, and developed his own distinctive mode of solving them. However, both Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo share a common perspective, and were considerably influenced in their understanding of Vedanta by the Tantric system of thought, the dominant spiritual force of Bengal. With its stress on the dynamic side of Reality, and its conception of the essential divine nature and unity of all power in whatever form and at whatever level it manifests itself, the philosophy of Tantra in its higher form is in reality a type of Vedanta, or Vedanta with a difference. So why not its insights be adopted when they prove themselves significant and helpful in comprehending the meaning of Vedanta, especially that of Advaita? Moreover, Tantra philosophy is as orthodox and authoritative traditionally as Vedanta, and validated equally by the spiritual lives of several saints. Why not we therefore take an integral view of Indian tradition instead of understanding it in a sectarian manner?

In modern times the spiritual life of Sri Ramakrishna has shed much light on certain crucial problems of Vedanta, especially on those connected with the real status of the phenomenal reality, its dynamic change and manifestation, and its ultimate explanation in terms of the Absolute. Starting his life of *sādhana* with the worship of a deity (Mother Kālī), and passing through various stages of dualistic *sādhana* and realization, Sri Ramakrishna finally attained the state of Advaita, the highest point of spiritual experience. However, his Advaitic realization did not make him indifferent to or reject the significance and validity of his dualistic experiences. Instead, it helped him to grasp their real significance in the light of

his Advaitic realization. He did not find any contradiction between Advaitic realization and dualistic experiences. This integral realization is at the back of his interpretation of the fundamental Vedantic concepts of *ajñāna*, *jñāna* and *vijñāna*, which sums up his spiritual life and realization, and is most illuminating in modern times. To remain attached to the phenomenal reality of names and forms, and be satisfied with it, as well as to renounce it in search of its ultimate ground, according to him, are equally the manifestations of *Māyā*. Attachment to the phenomenal reality of names and forms is caused by *ajñāna* or *avidyā māyā*; under its influence one sees manifoldness but not its source, the One. To realize the One by withdrawing oneself from the realm of multiplicity is *jñāna* or *vidyā māyā*; it is to know the One as transcending all, by negating all. But it is only a stage of progress towards spiritual perfection, and is significant in revealing the One. *Vijñāna* is the culmination of *jñāna*, and is the highest state of spiritual perfection. *Ajñāna* is to be overcome with the help of *jñāna*, but to attain *vijñāna* both *ajñāna* and *jñāna* are to be transcended. It is like removing a thorn stuck in one's body with the help of another, and then throwing both of them away. *Vijñāna* is seeing the Absolute in the relative and the relative in the Absolute; the changeless Reality in all change and all change in the Changeless; or the One in all and all in the One. Both are related, according to his metaphor, like a gem and its lustre, or fire and its capacity to burn.

The integral spiritual life and vision of Sri Ramakrishna are crucial in understanding the thought of Vivekananda, and to a large extent that of Sri Aurobindo also. To both of them understanding Vedanta involves more than intellect. We take up for consideration the concept of *Māyā*, a

riddle for human understanding, which has eluded the grasp of many thinkers in the past, and see how it has been treated by Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. The reasons for choosing this particular concept for consideration in this context are: (1) both Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo were fully alive to the problem of *Māyā*, and both in their own ways have shed much light on it, and (2) Sri Aurobindo believed that what he provided in terms of his integral approach was a more satisfactory or adequate explanation of it than that offered by the earlier classical thinkers.

According to Vivekananda, *Māyā* is not a category of rational understanding posited by the philosophers of Vedanta, but a positive fact of human experience; and whenever we become aware of contradictions and paradoxes in our lives we see its play. Contradictions, which we face in all the sphere of our lives, more so within the sphere of morality, forces us to admit the fact of *Māyā* and its play. As later on presented by Sri Aurobindo, among the living beings it is man who is abnormal in the sense that he does not know what constitutes his essential being or his normality. He is not happy with what he is, and yet he does not clearly know what his normal status or his ideal being is. He is engaged in a constant search for it in which several ideas about himself, which at one time seemed to be true and meaningful and also had swayed him, are given up, and new images about himself and new meanings of his existence are entertained. This is the misery of man as well as his greatness. This predicament of man awakens him to the fact of *Māyā*. Thus, according to Vivekananda, *Māyā* stands for the complex situation of man's being within the realm of, and being controlled by, space, time and causation, at the same time feeling an inner urge to free himself from their hold.

Time, space and causation limit man's awareness of himself and of the world, as well as his capacity to express himself fully and freely. Yet in his ideal aspirations he wants to overcome them, and attain something that transcends them. This existential situation of man is the perennial cause of his spiritual discomfort. If man is essentially conditioned and bound by space, time and causation, he cannot hope to free himself from them; but then, how to explain the fact of his higher aspiration in which he wants to conquer them and free himself from them? This attempt to overcome them is the cause of his progress and achievements. Man's higher aspirations prove that his life of limitations and conditioning is not absolutely true and meaningful ultimately, and that is the reason why man is not reconciled to his existence as conditioned by space, time and causation. And to the extent he realizes his freedom from these, he sees their unreality, and then they do not have the same hold on him. How to explain a situation in which values and meanings and even perceptions, which once seemed completely real in one's life, are later on realized to be not so? This is the drama of man's life of attachments to various things in life including ideas and ideals. Vivekananda does not attempt to explain further in a systematic manner these factors in terms of non-dual reality, as for him the solution of overcoming *Māyā* does not consist in conquering it but in transcending it. Just as in Tantra, the bonds of phenomenal existence are to be used as means of liberating oneself from them, and finally see in them the manifestation of the Divine, so also according to Vivekananda, Advaita means 'deification' in our experience of all that is there, and to be free.

The problem of *Māyā* attracted the attention of Sri Aurobindo also, and in his

thought it received a new light. How to reconcile ultimately the fact of universal dynamism with the unchanging character of the Absolute? How to explain the process of becoming and its status without explaining it away? Is it possible to explain becoming positively in terms of Advaitic concept of Being? Can we take away from the concept of *Māyā* its enigmatic character and make it really intelligible to human understanding? If the idea of the Absolute as conceived in traditional Advaitic terms is accepted, the problem of explaining all change and dynamism in positive terms becomes insurmountable. Instead, why not we understand the nature of Brahman differently, and view it in the light of the philosophy of Tantra that consciousness is force or power (*citśakti*), and the process of world creation or the process of becoming is a creative play of it (*cidvilāsa*) spontaneously outflowing from the nature of Brahman? If consciousness is viewed as a dynamic and creative power constituting the essential nature of Brahman, the problem of becoming or the dynamic self-manifestation of Brahman, resulting in the existence of the world, is not difficult to explain. Do we then deny the immutable character of Brahman? No, says Aurobindo. According to him, both being and becoming, dynamism and immutability constitute the integral nature of Brahman, which in itself is at the same time more than and beyond them. This position of Sri Aurobindo, however, gives rise to certain logical difficulties.

We now present some of the problems that arise from this position. If being and becoming constitute the essence of Brahman, what will be the relation between these two aspects or statuses of Brahman, and how are they both integrally related in the nature of Brahman? If we admit dynamism as integral to the nature

of the Absolute, then the process of change or becoming is to be conceived as incessant or co-eternal with the Absolute. On the other hand, if we think of Brahman in terms of its essential immutable character, we have to deny reality to change. But how to think of both as constituting the integral nature of Brahman, and explain their mutual relationship? How to understand their simultaneous co-existence within the same reality and their operation? Do they not cancel each other? To avoid such a state, can we say that Brahman alternates its natures, that is to say, one nature manifests itself at a time? If Brahman is to alternate its being from change to changelessness and then to change and so on, what is the logic of such alternation? Even then they cannot operate together or manifest themselves simultaneously, for it is logically impossible to conceive such a state. It may be argued that we cannot in terms of our logical understanding comprehend the mystery or the logic of Brahman. Then in what sense would this be a better explanation than the traditional one, except that it may justify our attachment and concern for the world? To avoid this difficulty if we say that the Absolute in itself is both being and becoming and yet transcends them both, it would be tantamount to admitting the failure of our rational understanding to come to grips with the problem intelligibly. Supposing that we can form a new meaning or alter the existing meaning of the Absolute according to the demands of our logical understanding, and go on changing our conceptions of the Absolute till we are able to find the one which can explain the world process positively, then such conceptions have to face the fate of all speculative systems of thought which have no foundation in experience. If, on the other hand, we admit finally the failure or incapacity of our rational understanding to

explain the process of becoming positively in terms of the Absolute, and come to realize the sense of mystery associated with the process of becoming, then we have to accept the classical understanding of *Māyā*, which in reality stands to signify such failure.

All our categories of understanding and conceptual framework can meaningfully operate only within the world of becoming. And if we are to say anything about that which is not within the world, and of the world, these categories and concepts lose their intelligibility and validity. They lose their power of explanation in relation to that which is not bound or conditioned by these categories and concepts. What is valid about things within a system may not be so when applied to the system as a whole. It is meaningful to say that the world is moving within space, developing within time and is bound by the law of causation. But if we try to understand in what all that is, or the totality of existence, moves and develops, we will have to face an absurd situation. The world movement is meaningful, but to think of the movement of the Absolute is not so. Thus what may be meaningful and valid about the phenomenal world may not be so about the Absolute. If thus the Absolute has its own logic and our phenomenal world another, what is the meeting point between the two, and what is the point of transition between the two logics? If the logic of one is not the same as that of the other, and we are within the system of one logic how can we make the other system intelligible in terms of our system of logic? This leads to all types of fallacies. The problem of transition from the logic of the Absolute to that of ours has baffled many in the past, and will continue to baffle in future also. The way out of it is not to appeal to a higher logic of which we are not clear. Even the higher logic or the logic of higher minds

is still human and hence falls within the phenomenal sphere only. To comprehend the nature of the Absolute is to give up our logic born of the phenomenal reality and move beyond it. Spiritual things are not meaningful and intelligible in terms of our empirical understanding. Unless one is given up the other is not realized. The highest or the Absolute when realized can render meaning to the lower or the phenomenal reality, but not vice versa.

Of course a system of philosophy or a system of interpretation will have its meaning and appeal in a particular period of time or rather in a particular intellectual climate, not necessarily because of its

absolute rational intelligibility, but mainly because of its appeal to the general sensibilities of the age. Our present age is such that anything that is not intelligible to our rational and positive understanding is not acceptable to us, but who knows whether this situation will continue for ever. We accept certain ideas not because they are themselves valid and rationally intelligible but because of their appeal to our general temperament, and because they fit well into our world-view or conform to our basic attitudes, which are shaped and developed by various factors among which rational intelligibility or logical soundness is just one.

They Lived with God

BALARAM BOSE

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

Usually Sri Ramakrishna would see his devotees and disciples in a vision or in ecstasy before they came to him. One day he had a vision of Caitanya and his followers singing and dancing near the Pancavati, between the banyan tree and the bakul tree. As soon as the Master met Balaram Bose for the first time, he received him affectionately, as if he was already familiar with him. He later said: 'He [Balaram] was a devotee of the inner circle of Caitanya. He belongs to this place [meaning himself]. I saw in ecstasy how Caitanya along with his main disciples, Advaita and Nityananda, brought about a flood of divine love in the country and inspired the masses

through their enchanting kirtan. In that party I saw him [Balaram].'

Balaram was born in December 1842, in a wealthy Vaiṣṇava family of North Calcutta. His grandfather Guruprasad Bose had established a Radha-Shyam temple in his home, and because of this that section of the city came to be known as Shyambazar. He also built a Shyam-sundar temple on the bank of the Jamuna in Vrindaban, at a cost of one hundred thousand rupees. It is called 'Kālā Bābu's kuñja [grove].' Balaram's father, Radhamohan, and uncle, Bindumadhav, together bought a large estate in the Baleswar district of Orissa and established an office for its management at Kother.

Bindumadhav had three sons: Nimaicharan supervised the estate, Harivallabh was a lawyer in Cuttack, and Achyutananda lived in their house in Calcutta. Radhamohan also had three sons, Jagannath, Balaram, and Sadhuprasad, and two daughters, Vishnupriya and Hemalata.

Radhamohan entrusted the management of their joint estate in Orissa to his brother and nephews, and stayed mainly in Vrindaban. There in that solitary holy place he would look after the temple management while practising spiritual disciplines. Following a family custom, he would repeat his *mantra* standing in the courtyard in front of the temple and then meditate there. The rest of the day he would study devotional scriptures and arrange for the feeding of the devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

Balaram imbibed from his father a devotional nature and an indifference towards the world. Like Radhamohan, Balaram spent several hours every morning in *japa* and meditation. He also entrusted the management of the estate to his cousins and remained satisfied with what they gave him as a monthly allowance. Balaram was married to Krishnabhavini, a sister of Baburam (Swami Premananda), and they had two daughters and one son.

Balaram suffered very much from digestive troubles, and for twelve years he had to live on milk and gruel. In order to regain his health, he lived most of this period in Puri, the holy place of Jagannath on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. There he became acquainted with many Vaiṣṇava monks, and this stirred his interest in spiritual life even more. His father and cousins began to worry lest Balaram renounces his family and becomes a mendicant. When Balaram came to Calcutta to attend his elder daughter's marriage, his cousins urged him to stay. In order to further persuade him, Harivallabh

even bought a house at 57 Ramkanta Bose Street, which he offered to Balaram. Balaram did not want to accept it. If he lived in Calcutta, he would not be able to make his daily visit to Lord Jagannath and have the company of holy people. But to satisfy his cousins, he decided to remain in Calcutta for a while, and then return to Puri.

While he was still living in Puri, Balaram had read about the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in the *Sulabh Samachar*, a journal edited by Keshab Chandra Sen. He had also received a letter from one of his family's priests, Ramdayal, giving a detailed account of Sri Ramakrishna's holy life. Ramdayal had met the Master personally and wrote Balaram to come immediately to see him.

The day after he arrived in Calcutta, Balaram went with Ramdayal to Dakshineswar. It was probably January 1, 1881. They reached there late in the afternoon and found Sri Ramakrishna's room crowded with Brahma devotees, including Keshab. Balaram did not get a chance to introduce himself, but sat down in a corner and listened to the Master. Sri Ramakrishna was saying: 'God cannot be seen without yearning of heart, and this yearning is impossible unless one has finished with the experiences of life. Those who live surrounded by "woman and gold," and have not yet come to the end of their experiences, do not yearn for God.'

As soon as the Brahmos left the room to have some refreshments, Sri Ramakrishna turned to Balaram and said, 'Is there anything you want to ask me?'

'Yes, sir. Does God really exist?'

'Certainly he does.'

'Can a person see him?'

'Yes, he reveals himself to the devotee who thinks of him as his nearest and dearest. Because you do not get any

response by praying to him once, you must not conclude that he does not exist.'

'But why can't I see him when I pray to him so much?'

Sri Ramakrishna then smiled and asked, 'Do you really consider him to be as dear to your heart as your own children?'

'No, sir,' Balaram admitted. 'I never felt that strongly for him.'

The Master then said in a sweet, convincing voice: 'Pray to God, thinking of him as dearer than your own self. Truly I tell you, he is extremely fond of his devotees. He cannot but reveal himself to them. He comes to a person even before he is sought. If a person comes one step towards God, God comes ten steps towards that person. There is none more intimate and more affectionate than God.'

Balaram was very much impressed. Every word of the Master penetrated his heart. He returned home that night, but the next morning he came back to Dakshineswar on foot. This time Sri Ramakrishna was alone in his room. Seeing Balaram, the Master said: 'Oh, you have come! Very good. Sit down and have some rest. I was just thinking of you. Where do you live?' 'At Baghbazar,' replied Balaram. The Master then inquired in detail about the members of his family, about his children, and other matters, and finally said: 'Look here, the Divine Mother has told me that you are my very own. You are one of her suppliers. Many things are stored up for this place [meaning himself] in your house. Buy something and send it here.' Balaram considered this to be his good fortune and gladly obeyed. Often Sri Ramakrishna would advise the devotees, for their own welfare, to bring a small present—even if it was just a pice worth

of something—whenever they visited a temple or a monk.

It seemed to Balaram that the Master was his very own relative. He had never in his life met such a remarkable person. He noticed that there were similarities between the lives of Sri Caitanya and Sri Ramakrishna, and he pondered: Such a sweet nature and repeated *bhāva samādhi* (divine ecstasy) are not found in ordinary human beings. Can it be that Sri Caitanya has incarnated himself again? With these thoughts in mind, Balaram went back to Calcutta and personally selected some food and other things for the Master. He then returned in a carriage to Dakshineswar. Sri Ramakrishna greeted him warmly and asked his nephew Hriday to put the things away. From this time until the Master's death Balaram supplied his requirement of foodstuff, such as rice, sugar-candy, farina, sago, barley, and so forth.

The Master used to say: 'Balaram's food is very pure. The members of his family have for generations been devotees and have been hospitable to monks and beggars. His father is living a retired life at Vrindaban, where he passes his time calling upon the Lord. Not only can I take Balaram's food, but I take it with pleasure.' Again: 'All the members of his family are attuned to the same ideal. From the master and mistress down to the children, all are devoted to God. They never take a drop of water without saying their prayers. They are as hospitable as they are pious.'

Needless to say, Sri Ramakrishna was always welcome at Balaram's home. The Master visited his home a hundred times, and Balaram kept a record of all those visits. Whenever necessary the Master would stay overnight at Balaram's and there partake of the prasād of Jagannath, their family deity, who was worshipped

every day in their home. The Master sometimes jokingly referred to the temple of Dakshineswar as 'Mother Kali's fort.' Balaram's home was thus his Calcutta fort, or, as he sometimes called it, his 'parlour'.

M. wrote in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*:

Balaram's house in Calcutta had been sanctified many times by the Master's presence. There he frequently lost himself in samadhi, dancing, singing, or talking about God. Those of the Master's disciples and devotees who could not go to Dakshineswar visited him there and received his instructions. He often asked Balaram to invite young disciples such as Rakhal, Bhavanath, and Narendra to his house, saying: 'These pure souls are the veritable manifestations of God. To feed them is to feed God himself. They are born with special divine attributes. By serving them you will be serving God.' And so it happened that whenever the Master was at Balaram's house the devotees would gather there. It was the Master's chief vineyard in Calcutta. It was here that the devotees came to know each other intimately.

Every year Balaram would celebrate the Car Festival of Lord Jagannath in his home. The Master's presence greatly enhanced the joy of the occasion. The devotees would decorate Lord Jagannath's small wooden chariot with cloth, flowers, and flags, and then place the image in it. There was a small courtyard in the middle of the house around which overhung the verandahs of the upper floors. After the worship the car would be pulled round and round by devotees on these verandahs while a *kīrtan* party would follow, singing devotional songs. This went on for hours. Swami Saradananda described the Car Festival of 1885:

A kirtan party came. The Master and the devotees joined in their singing as the chariot was drawn. Where else could one experience and witness such a flow of bliss, of exuberant

devotion, of divine ecstasy, and such sweet, graceful dancing of the Master? Pleased with the pure love of the pious family, Lord Jagannath did indeed manifest himself in the image on the chariot and in the body of Sri Ramakrishna. It was a rare sight! Carried away by the current of that overflowing devotion, even the heart of an atheist would melt—what to speak of the devotees! After a few hours of such kirtan, cooked food was offered to Jagannath. The Master would then partake of the prasada, followed by the devotees. That fair of bliss came to an end late at night.

At Balaram's repeated request his father, Radhamohan, came to Calcutta from Vrindaban to meet the Master. Sri Ramakrishna knew that Radhamohan was a steadfast member of the Vaiṣṇava sect, but he wanted to broaden his religious outlook. Thus the Master said to him: 'He is indeed a real man who has harmonized everything. Most people are one-sided. But I find that all opinions point to the One. All views—the Shakta, the Vaishnava, the Vedanta—have that One for their centre. He who is formless is, again, endowed with form. It is he who appears in different forms.' On another occasion the Master said to Balaram's father: 'The whole thing is to love God and taste his sweetness. He is sweetness and the devotee is its enjoyer. The devotee drinks the sweet Bliss of God. Further, God is the lotus and the devotee the bee. The devotee sips the honey of the lotus. As a devotee cannot live without God, so also God cannot live without his devotee. Then the devotee becomes the sweetness, and God its enjoyer. The devotee becomes the lotus, and God the bee. It is the Godhead that has become these two in order to enjoy Its own Bliss. That is the significance of the episode of Radha and Krishna.'

All of his life Balaram, like other Vaiṣṇavas, was a believer in *ahimsā*, noninjury. He had even thought it wrong

to kill the mosquitoes which disturbed his meditation. But after associating with Sri Ramakrishna for a couple of years he realized that the most important thing in spiritual life is to keep the mind in God, and that, therefore, killing a few mosquitoes for the sake of steady meditation should not be considered a sin. His orthodox upbringing, however, made him doubt this reasoning, and he found himself in a real dilemma. He immediately left for Dakshineswar to lay the problem before the Master.

Arriving at Sri Ramakrishna's room, he noticed to his great surprise that the Master was busy killing bedbugs. As Balaram approached him and bowed down, the Master said: 'There are many bedbugs breeding in the pillow. They bite me day and night, create distraction of the mind, and keep me from sleeping, so I am killing them.' Thus Balaram's question was answered by the Master. Furthermore, he understood that though he had been visiting the Master for two or three years and observing him closely day and night, the Master had never done anything which might hurt his feelings or his faith. He had waited to teach Balaram this lesson until he knew that Balaram had enough faith in him to be able to accept it.

One day Balaram decided to test Sri Ramakrishna's power of omniscience. As he carried a tray of sweets to the Master, he mentally selected two of them for the Master to take. Balaram was amazed when the Master smiled at him and took those very two sweets.

As Balaram did not take any active part in the management of the family estate, he was somewhat under the control of his father and cousins, who apportioned to him his monthly share of the income. Because of this he was very careful about his spending, and some people took this to be miserliness. Although he wanted to

serve Sri Ramakrishna lavishly, he could not. But the Master looked more to the heart of his devotee than to the amount he could spend.

Sometimes out of fun, however, the Master would tell jokes at Balaram's expense, turning them into lessons for others. One day Sri Ramakrishna observed that since there were no musical instruments to accompany the singing, no atmosphere could be created. He said: 'Do you know how Balaram manages a festival? He is like a miserly brahmin raising a cow. The cow must eat very little but give milk in torrents. Sing your own songs and beat your own drums. That's Balaram's idea!' And on another day: 'Balaram says to me, "Please come to Calcutta by boat; take a carriage only if you must." You see, he has given us a feast today; so this afternoon he will make us all dance! One day he hired a carriage for me from here to Dakshineswar. He said that the carriage hire was twelve annas. I said to him, "Will the coachman take me to Dakshineswar for twelve annas?" "Oh, that will be plenty," he replied. One side of the carriage broke down before we reached Dakshineswar. Besides, the horse stopped every now and then; it simply would not go. Once in a while the coachman whipped the horse, and then it ran a short distance.'

Mahendranath Datta, one of Swami Vivekananda's brothers, told an interesting story revealing Balaram's miserliness as well as his sense of humour. Balaram had a servant who was not well paid, so from time to time he would steal things. That servant also had a bad temper, and the family members were not happy with him. One day Swami Yogananda tried to persuade Balaram to get rid of that servant. Balaram replied: 'Look, Yogin, servants generally come from poor, uncultured families, and it is taken for

granted that they will steal something. Moreover, if I throw him out, where will he go? Can you tell me where I can find a servant who has renounced "lust and gold" and who will work but not steal? Sri Ramakrishna's disciples later made a joke out of this remark, saying, 'we shall have to find an all-renouncing servant for Balaram.'

Although Balaram belonged to a rich, aristocratic family, one would never know it from his demeanour. He was the embodiment of the Vaisnava attitude: 'Be humbler than a blade of grass and be patient and forbearing like a tree. Take no honour to thyself. Give honour to all. Chant unceasingly the name of the Lord.' M. has given a couple of descriptions of Balaram's self-effacing nature in the *Gospel*. On March 11, 1882, he wrote:

About eight o'clock in the morning Sri Ramakrishna went as planned to Balaram Bose's house in Calcutta. It was the day of the Dola-yatra [a spring festival associated with Krishna].... The devotees and the Master sang and danced in a state of divine fervour. Several of them were in an ecstatic mood.... When the music was over, the devotees sat down for their meal. Balaram stood there humbly, like a servant. Nobody would have taken him for the master of the house.

On August 5, 1882, Sri Ramakrishna went to visit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and he talked with him about God until late in the evening. M. described the following incident:

Sri Ramakrishna then took leave of Vidyasagar, who with his friends escorted the Master to the main gate.... As soon as the Master and the devotees reached the gate, they saw an unexpected sight and stood still. In front of them was a bearded gentleman of fair complexion, aged about thirty-six. He wore his clothes like a Bengali, but on his head was a white turban tied after the fashion of the Sikhs. No sooner did he see the Master than he fell prostrate before him, turban and all.

When he stood up the Master said: 'Who is this? Balaram? Why so late in the evening?' Balaram: 'I have been waiting here a long time, sir.'

Master: 'Why didn't you come in?'

Balaram: 'All were listening to you. I didn't like to disturb you.'

We read about the devotees' love for God in the biographies of the saints, but God's boundless love for the devotees has seldom been recorded, because it is not possible for ordinary human beings to comprehend it. Sri Ramakrishna's niece, Lakshmi Devi, told the following story of the Master's love for Balaram and his family:

Once Balaram Babu came to Dakshineswar by boat with his wife and children. They visited with the Master for a while, and they all left for Calcutta in the afternoon. The Master himself went to the Chandni ghat to see them off. Smiling at them, he said, 'Come back again.'

Their boat pulled out into the river, and the Master stood there watching until they had gone quite a distance. In the meantime a storm began to blow and the sky quickly became dark with clouds. I noticed that the Master was quite worried. He started pacing back and forth like a restless boy, his anxiety increasing as he watched the progress of the violently rocking boat.

Impatiently he was asking everyone: 'What will happen? Will Balaram and his family survive this storm? Alas! What will happen? People will say that Balaram went to see that worthless, unfortunate holy man in Dakshineswar and lost his life coming back. Tell me, what will happen?'

Gradually the boat disappeared from sight. The Master returned to his room, his face gloomy, his mind very much disturbed, and he resumed his restless pacing, lamenting: 'Mother, will you tarnish my face? Won't you hear my prayer? Mother, what will happen?'

Seeing the Master's state of mind, Yogin, without saying anything, set out for Calcutta in the midst of the storm to get what news he

could of Balaram Babu. He took a share-carriage from Alambazar, and within a few hours he was back (by then night had fallen) and was able to report to the Master that Balaram Babu and his family had arrived home safely. The Master was overjoyed.

On another occasion Balaram's wife, Krishnabhavini, was seriously ill. When the news reached the Master in Dakshineswar, he immediately said to Holy Mother, 'Please go and see her.' 'How shall I go? There is no conveyance,' Holy Mother replied. 'What!' said the Master. 'My Balaram's family is on the verge of a disaster, and you will not go to see them because you can't get a vehicle! Walk! Go on foot!' Fortunately a palanquin was found, and Holy Mother went in that to see her.

Krishnabhavini, like her husband, was extremely devoted to the Master. Sri Ramakrishna once said that she was 'one of the eight main companions of Radha.' Ramlal, a nephew of the Master's, told the following story: One afternoon Sri Ramakrishna said: 'Ramlal, I don't get any taste of the milk which comes from the temple kitchen. Could you get some pure, sweet milk for me?' After trying in vain at the market, Ramlal went to a milkman, but he could not get any pure milk. When he returned empty-handed the Master said, 'Well, what can be done?' Meanwhile, Krishnabhavini was boiling milk in her kitchen in Calcutta. Yogin-ma was also there, and Krishnabhavini lamented to her: 'Look, Sister, it is my bad luck that I could not feed the Master with this pure, sweet milk. Only the people of the household will enjoy it. If you could accompany me, then both of us could go to Dakshineswar and feed the Master with it. It is dark now and nobody will know if we leave through the back door.' Both of them then left on foot for Dakshineswar with a small jar of milk.

As they entered the Master's room, he said: 'Oh, you have brought milk for me? Ever since this afternoon I have been thinking of having some pure, sweet milk.' Krishnabhavini and Yogin-ma were surprised and delighted to be able to fulfil the Master's wish in this way. Sri Ramakrishna then sent them back to Calcutta by a carriage. He also asked Ramlal to accompany them and explain to Balaram that they went to see the Master. He did not want Balaram to misunderstand them.

Obstacles in spiritual life make a devotee strong. For those who surrender themselves to God, God removes all obstacles and makes everything favourable. Balaram was happy to be able to serve the Master. In the later part of 1885, however, about the same time that Sri Ramakrishna was transferred from Dakshineswar to Shyampukur for treatment of his cancer, Balaram's cousin Harivallabh came to Calcutta. Harivallabh was disturbed over the news he was getting about Balaram. He had heard from different people that Balaram was very much involved with Sri Ramakrishna, that Sri Ramakrishna visited their home quite often, and that the women of their family even took the dust of the Master's feet, a custom considered beneath the dignity of their family. Balaram continued to visit Sri Ramakrishna every day, but he was worried that this cousin might make trouble and force him to move away at this crucial time of the Master's life.

It was hard to hide anything from Sri Ramakrishna's eyes. Seeing Balaram's worried and gloomy face, the Master asked him some questions and found out that his cousin was the cause of his anxiety. Then the Master asked: 'What sort of man is he [Harivallabh]? Can you bring him here some day?' Balaram said: 'Sir, as a man he is good, learned, intelligent, magnanimous, and charitable, but he

has misunderstood me on the basis of the report of others. He is displeased with me only because I come here. Therefore I doubt if he would come here at my request.' The Master then said: 'You need not ask him then. Please call Girish here.' Girish came and gladly agreed to bring Harivallabh to the Master, as they had been class-mates at school.

The next afternoon Harivallabh came with Girish. The Master greeted him warmly and touching him said, 'You seem to be my very own.' Then Sri Ramakrishna talked about faith in God, devotion, and self-surrender. One of the Master's disciples began to sing a song, and Sri Ramakrishna gradually went into *samādhi*. Seeing the loving form and hearing the inspiring words of the Master, Harivallabh was so moved that tears welled up in his eyes. At dusk he reverently took the dust of the feet of the Master and left. Thus Sri Ramakrishna changed Harivallabh's mind and relieved Balaram from further worry and anxiety.

Before Sri Ramakrishna went to live at the Shyampukur house, in North Calcutta, he stayed for a week at Balaram's house. During the Master's illness Balaram continued to provide all of his food, since the Master did not care for the food which was bought with the subscription money. After the Master's passing away on August 16, 1886, Holy Mother moved to Balaram's house, and Balaram then arranged her pilgrimage to Varanasi, Vrindaban, and other holy places. His home was always open to Holy Mother and the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

The monastic disciples eventually established a monastery at Baranagore, and Balaram visited them regularly. One day he noticed that the monks were eating only rice and spinach. After returning home he told his wife that he would have only

rice and spinach for his meal. She at first thought that he was asking for such plain food because of his weak stomach, but when she later heard the whole story she immediately sent food and other articles to the monastery. Thenceforth Balaram would give one rupee every day for the food offering to the Master, and moreover he would keep track of the food situation in the monastery through his brother-in-law Swami Premananda and through the cook.

Swami Adbhutananda mentioned the following incidents in his memoirs about Balaram:

Balaram Babu would save money from his household budget and use it to serve the monks. His relatives thought he was a miser. I never knew how rich he was! One day, seeing him lying on a narrow bed, I said: 'Why don't you find yourself a larger bed? This one is too narrow for you.' Do you know what he said? 'This earthly body will one day return to the earth. Why should money be spent for my bed when it can be much better spent in service to holy people?'

The wedding banquet for Balaram Babu's younger daughter, Krishnamayi, was held on a grand scale. [It had been arranged by Balaram's brothers.] Balaram Babu had not been in favour of spending so much money, however. He used to say, 'A feast for relatives is equal to a feast for ghosts.' At last he got some satisfaction when Swami Yogananda by coincidence visited his home that day. Balaram Babu said to him, 'I know that monks do not participate in marriage festivals, but if you eat at least a sweet I shall consider this huge spending worthwhile.' Swami Yogananda ate a little on his request.

Swami Vivekananda had tremendous love and regard for Balaram. Swamiji once said to him: 'Our relationship with you is different. If you push us out of the front door, we shall enter again through the back door.' Balaram always stood beside the disciples of the Master and served them wholeheartedly. One day, however, Balaram lamented to Swamiji:

'You and I both went to the Master, but now you have renounced your home and become a monk. You are practising japam and meditation and making tremendous progress in a short time, whereas I remain the same bound soul. I have achieved nothing.' 'Look, Balaram,' answered Swamiji, 'three generations of your family have given service to holy people. Do you think such a thing could be fruitless? As the result of such virtuous actions you have had a chance to serve a great soul like Sri Ramakrishna. This will glorify your dynasty. You don't need to practise renunciation or hard austerities. It is the result of your virtuous deeds that you met and served the Master. And you know how much the Master liked to visit your home and was fond of your offerings. What will you do with heaven or liberation? Is it [the Master's love] not enough?' Balaram was happy to hear that. He realized that his service to the Master was equal to meditation and austerity.

In 1890 there was an epidemic of influenza in Calcutta, which took the lives of many people. Balaram also became a victim of that epidemic and died on April 13, 1890. Swami Shivananda told

the following story of Balaram's death:

The passing away of each of the devotees of the Master is a wonderful event in itself. The departure of Balaram Babu was equally wonderful. His disease had taken a serious turn, and all were anxious. One day he went on repeating, 'Well, where are my brothers?' When this news reached us we hurried to his house at Baghbazar [in Calcutta]. We ourselves stayed by him and nursed him. For about two or three days before his passing away he would not allow any of his relatives to come near him; he wanted only us to be near at hand. The little that he talked was about the Master alone. One day, before the final departure, the doctor came in and declared that he was beyond cure.

At the last moment we were seated around him, while his wife, stricken with unspeakable grief, was in the inner apartment with Golap-ma, Yogin-ma, and others. Just then she noticed something like a piece of black cloud in the sky, which became denser by stages and began to descend. Soon it assumed the shape of a chariot and alighted on the roof of Balaram Babu's house. The Master came out of that chariot and proceeded towards the room where Balaram Babu lay. Soon after, he issued forth, taking Balaram Babu by the hand, and entered the chariot again, which then ascended and vanished in the sky. This vision raised her mind to a very high plane where there could be no touch of grief or sorrow. When she returned to normal she related this to Golap-ma, who came to apprise us of the fact. Balaram Babu had passed away just a little while before.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ASPARSA-YOGA: BY COLIN A. COLE. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007. 1982. Pp. xiii + 158. Price not mentioned.

From the historical, philosophical and religious points of view Gauḍapāda's *Māṇḍūkya-kārika* has been considered a very important work. Its historical importance lies in the fact that it is the only surviving record of pre-Samkara Advaita as a system of philosophy. Philosophically, it deals with several unique concepts like *ajātivāda*. Its religious or practical importance

lies in the fact that it expounds a special technique of spiritual discipline known as *asparsa yoga*.

The *Māṇḍūkya-kārika* has been translated, annotated and commented upon by several competent scholars. But most of these works have for their aim only the philosophical (chiefly ontological) aspect of the treatise. Colin A. Cole's study is, however, a striking departure from the conventional approach. As the author points out in his Introduction, so far little interest has been shown in the practical spiritual

discipline of Advaita Vedanta, nor has it been comprehensively and conclusively argued that philosophy and religion are one and the same in it. Colin Cole's study, done with meticulous care, fills up this lacuna in the field of Advaita to a great extent. He has chosen for his study a treatise which has seldom been approached from this standpoint. He investigates the soteriological implications of *Māṇḍūkya-kārika* fully at both its theoretical and practical levels. He is justified in extending the term 'soteriology' from its meaning of 'salvation' in western faith to cover the goal of *mokṣa* or liberation, in Indian religions as well as the means to achieve it. Instead of presenting the text 'as a religious philosophy documented from its metaphysical speculation' the author regards it here 'as a religious or spiritual pursuit wherein the philosophy is presented as a relational attempt to understand and explain the experimental dimension' of liberation and emphasizes the pragmatic religious material as against the purely philosophical aspect of the text.

The first four chapters introduce the reader to the personality of Gauḍapāda and some of the general features of his treatise—based on previous research but from the new perspective of the author. He depicts Gauḍapāda as a religious preceptor and not merely as a logician or metaphysician. In examining the form, content and purpose of the *Kārikā* also the author adopts both the religious and the philosophical perspectives. The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* synthesizes the very essence of the entire Vedanta with yogic, mystical and cosmological elements, and therefore, the *Kārikā* is referred to as an *Upadesa-sastra* or didactic scripture. Its two-fold purpose is to teach the essentials of Advaita philosophy and to give practical guidance to the aspirant on the path of Self-realization.

We next get an outline of the metaphysics of Gauḍapāda—his concept of non-duality (*advaita*) as non-origination (*ajātivāda*), the nature of the world as *māyā* and the real nature of the soul as the ever-liberated Self (Atman). But here the author has adopted a tantalizing brevity—the reader is left with the wish that there had been a more thorough exposition and analysis of Gauḍapāda's ideas on these major problems of philosophy.

Chapter five constitutes the real proximate background to the thesis of the author. Here

Gauḍapāda's phenomenology and 'meta-psychology' are presented as forming the foundation of his practical discipline. It is shown how, for the first time in the history of Vedanta, a systematic analysis of man as a body-mind complex and of the nature of experience in terms of its three factors (experiencer—object of experience—experience) and the three states (waking, dreaming, deep sleep) was undertaken by Gauḍapāda with the aim of showing the non-dual nature of the Self (Atman) at the two levels of truth: the *pāramārthika* and the *vyavahārika*. Examination of the phenomenology of consciousness naturally leads on to a working psychology of Advaita. Analysis of the five sheaths (*kosas*) covering the Self shows man to be a psycho-physical being whose nature is spiritual. The author's discussion on *manas* (mind) is illuminating. The metaphysical side of this psychology is explicated by the author in the light of Gauḍapāda's theory of the illusory process of world-creation by the mind called *māyāvada* in later tradition which Gauḍapāda frequently refers to as 'spiritual sleep'.

Chapter six expounds the central thesis of the author, namely, Gauḍapāda's soteriology. Here the author first discusses briefly the existential situation of man—his state of bondage and suffering known as *samsāra*, and the state of liberation known as *mokṣa* which means partaking of 'the peace and bliss of meaningful existence in perfect integration with the higher aspects of his being which are at one with the nature of plenary reality', a restoring of authentic existence. The second aspect of Gauḍapāda's soteriology is his actual religio-spiritual practice or *sādhana* which according to Colin Cole has two dimensions: an outer one (*bahiranga*) and an inner one (*antaranga*). The 'outer limb' consists of the attitudes of Sannyāsa (renunciation) combined with practices of *abhyāsa* (fixing the mind), *vairāgya* (dispassion), *viveka* (discrimination) and *vicāra* (self-enquiry). The 'Inner aspect' of *Sādhana* here is the main technique of *Upāsana* or meditation on the sacred syllable Om, leading up to the turning inward towards the Self. This is the highest *jñāna sadhana* which Gauḍapāda calls *Asparsa-yoga*; it is 'Advaita Darsana Yoga' having no touch or relationship with anything and is of the very nature of non-dual Brahman. The goal of this practice is the achievement of *nirvikalpa samādhi* wherein the mind attains *amanībhāva*, the state of 'non-mind', which is

what *turiya*, the 'fourth state of consciousness' means.

Gauḍapāda is shown to differentiate between the *asamprajñāta samādhi* of Pātañjala-yoga which is a state of lack of consciousness and that of *Asparsa-yoga* which is experience of the ever-present pure consciousness. True *samādhi* is not that attained through Patañjali's *citta-vṛtti nirodhah* i.e. suppression of mind-forms, but that attained through Advaitic *nididhyāsana* i.e. sublimation or transformation of empirical mind-modes by sublation of the mind-forms and continual immersion in the pure awareness of non-dual consciousness. The author's discussions on the difference between *upāsana* and *vicara* and on the nature of obstacles and Self-realization are insightful and reveal a thorough grasp of the practical side of spiritual life. The author deserves to be congratulated on his success in expounding with great clarity a difficult aspect of Advaita, namely its *Sādhanā*. [Though Colin Cole's discussion is clear and thorough, his description of *asparsa yoga* as a 'familiar kind of yoga' (p. 107) and his identification of it with *upāsana* (pp. 94-101) go against the traditional view. The very term *asparsa* precludes the possibility of any objective meditation. Samkara has at innumerable places pointed out the distinction between *upāsana* and the Advaitic technique, holding, on the authority of scriptures, that they lead to two different results. 'Asparsa Yoga' is a unique spiritual technique directly related to Gauḍapāda's *ajātivāda* but Colin Cole has not shown what its uniqueness consists in.—Ed. P.B.]

The concluding chapter reiterates the integral unity of the *Kārikā* brought about by its liberation-orientation and sums up the entire preceding discussion. The author deserves high praise for his ability to enter into the spirit of Advaita without any prejudice and with such transparent faith and reverence. He does not distract the attention of the reader by making comparisons with western concepts.

Asparsa Yoga being an academic work (originally written as a dissertation for Master's degree) uses philosophical language, but the technical terms of Indian philosophy are everywhere clarified, so that philosophy students who are unfamiliar with Indian thought or lay readers who have no knowledge of philosophy can follow the trend of thought of the author and his discussion of abstruse ideas of Vedanta. The lengthy bibliography and detailed footnotes are of much help in follow-up work by research

scholars, and will enable those who merely wish to study Gauḍapāda's text in depth to grasp its profound meaning. Another useful feature of the book is the addition of two appendices in which the author has sequentially arranged the relevant stanzas dealing with the central theme.

Asparsa Yoga is highly recommended for students of Indian thought in general and Advaita Vedanta in particular.

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ENTRY INTO THE INCONCEIVABLE
(AN INTRODUCTION TO HUA-YEN
BUDDHISM): BY THOMAS CLEARY. Published
by University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1983.
Pages 222. Price \$ 16.95

There is a growing interest in Chinese Hua-Yen Buddhism which was one of the basic sources for the development of later Zen philosophy. Hua-Yen presents non-dualism in a rather unique way. It conceives reality as an interrelated whole which makes it an attractive philosophical view for modern science which is now tending towards a new paradigm of holism.

Hua-Yen and T'ien-t'ai are to be considered the metaphysical basis for Chinese Buddhism. It also influenced extensively Neo-Confucianism. Hua-Yen (Flower Ornament) is based on the *Avatamsaka-sutra* which was translated into Chinese several times. The central concept of this philosophy is Universal Causation. Emptiness and Form interact, interpenetrate and—the main point—are mutually inclusive. All things are interrelated and thus form a great harmony. This is the basic teaching of the Ten Mysterious Gates which has been philosophically systematized and applied for a graded path of spiritual practice by the great scholars Tu Shun (557-640) and Fa-tsang (643-712).

The book begins with a comprehensive introduction (1-42) relating Hua-Yen literature to the other Chinese traditions and introducing the reader to the main philosophical ideas. The author restrains sensibly from labelling according to Western philosophical categories.

The major portion of the book consists of four texts, translated and introduced by the author: 1. Cessation and Contemplation in the Five Teachings of the Hua-Yen by Tu Shun; 2. Mirror of the Mysteries of the Universe of the Hua-Yen by Tu Shun and Cheng-Kuan; 3. Ten Mysterious Gates of the Unitary Vehicle

of the Hua-Yen by Chih-yen and 4. Cultivation of Contemplation of the Inner Meaning of the Hua-Yen: The Ending of Delusion and Return to the Source by Fa-tsang. The translation is clear and consistent. Helpful are the brief introductory notes attached to each text bringing out the main points with precision. The Chinese way of teaching and arguing comes out beautifully in some portions.

The central teaching is the Ten Mysterious Gates which is explained by the author: 'Multiplicity within unity and unity within multiplicity are represented in this treatise not only in terms of the interdependence or mutual definition of numbers but also in terms of a holistic view in which every part includes the whole by virtue of being inextricably related.' (125)

The problem of form and emptiness is the main subject in all the texts. Tu Shun states that precisely because of emptiness, contemplation and realization are possible, for insight into emptiness cures from clinging to form (55-56). Fa-tsang continues to maintain the polarity of emptiness and form, since 'seeing that form is empty produces great wisdom and not dwelling in birth-and-death; seeing that emptiness is form produces great compassion and not dwelling in nirvana. When form and emptiness are non-dual, compassion and wisdom are not different; only this is true seeing.' (156).

Emptiness and form are non-dual; they merge into each other. Thus, the two views disappear, yet they are there. Tu Shun states: 'It is like the metaphor of water and waves: the shapes, which are high and low, are waves; the witness, which is equal, is water. The waves are waves which are none other than water—the waves themselves show the water. The water is water which is no different from waves—the water makes the waves. Waves and water are one, yet that does not hinder their difference. Water and waves are different, yet that does not hinder their unity. Because of their unhindered unity, being in the water is being in the waves; because of their unhindered difference, dwelling in the waves is not dwelling in the water. Why? Because water and waves are different yet not different.' (58) Both aspects remain as what they are, but they totally imply each other. This is Hua-Yen non-dualism.

Tu Shun's inquiry into the tetralemma in terms of identity and non-identity (63ff) is a masterpiece of Chinese dialectical skill. Hua-Yen thought comes to a climax in Fa-tsang's teaching of the Six Contemplations which lead the mind to its own mirror-like enlightenment. Of these,

the fifth one is the contemplation of images of many bodies in the mirror signifying reality as noninterference among each and every phenomenon (167ff). The sixth stage in contemplation is called Indra's net, where the principal and the satellites reflect one another, i.e. self as principal conceives of others as satellites or companions. Things are manifested reflections of the One in a multiplicity of form, but each form is what it is because of its reflection of all the other forms as well.

The book concludes with an appendix surveying the whole body of Hua-Yen scripture. The analysis is based on the eighty-scroll version (translation by Sikṣānanda, 652-710) with references to the sixty-scroll version (translation by Buddhahadra, 359-429). It is a short introduction to the literature but gives by no means an impression of the subtlety of the contents.

It is a pity that the author does not include an index of the Chinese characters with their corresponding Sanskrit terms in order to enable the reader who does not know Chinese to undertake comparison with earlier philosophical developments in India. We hope that there will be an Indian edition of the book, which should be enlarged in this regard.

The book is highly recommended not only to the scholar but to all philosophically interested spiritual seekers.

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CORPUS OF SARADA INSCRIPTIONS OF KASHMIR: BY DR. B.K. KAUL DEAMBI. Published by Agam Kala Prakashan, 34 Community Centre, Ashok Vihar Phase I, Delhi 110 052. 1982. Pp. xv + 184 + paleographic tables 10 and Plates 15. Rs. 150.

The value of paleography in the proper decipherment and study of ancient Indian texts on stone, copper and paper can hardly be over emphasized, and it is heartening to note that the subject has of late received renewed treatment at the hands of some noted specialists in the field. Again, in the absence of genuine ancient historical works dealing with the history of ancient India, the importance of epigraphic records as a vital source of knowledge of the history of our glorious past has long been recognized. As a matter of fact, epigraphy has provided ninety per cent of the source material for the reconstruction of the past history and culture of India.

Dr. B. K. Kaul Deambi's work makes a significant contribution to both the fields of paleography and epigraphy. The book is divided into two sections. Section I deals with the origin and development of the Śāradā alphabet. The Śāradā script, the basis of Kashmiri alphabet and used extensively for several centuries in the entire north-western part of the country from Kabul to Delhi, has received scholarly treatment for the first time in the present volume, which is a valuable contribution to Indian paleographic studies. The discussion is based on the alphabet used in the epigraphic records and manuscripts of north-western India from the 3rd century B.C. to the 8th century A.D. when Śāradā first made its appearance. The inclusion of well-prepared and neatly printed paleographic tables facilitates considerably the study of the origin of the Śāradā alphabet from the Brāhmī of north-western India. As regards the development of the Śāradā script, the author has, with the aid of the forms of characters used in the Śāradā inscriptions and manuscripts and illustrated in the accompanying tables, tried to demonstrate that the Śāradā is not a conservative alphabet as believed by earlier epigraphists like Kielhorn and Hoernle but shows three successive stages of development. Contrary to the opinion of Hoernle that 'the Śāradā characters are no guide as to age' the author has authoritatively shown that the forms of some Śāradā texts used in the inscriptions and manuscripts, if studied in depth and their development followed closely, can provide a dependable base for determining the approximate century, if not the exact date, of a particular inscription of manuscript written in that script.

Ancient Kashmir made significant contribution to Sanskrit literature in almost all fields like religion and philosophy, language and literature,

grammar and rhetoric, history and geography, erotics and lexicography, astrology and astronomy, medicine and ritual, etc. Much of the literature has been lost but whatever is preserved is in the form of manuscripts (partly published) and written almost exclusively in the Śāradā script. Thus for the reading and study of these manuscripts preserved in several manuscripts libraries and archives in India and abroad, Dr. Deambi's work will be immensely useful.

It is well known that Kalhana, the celebrated historian and chronicler of Kashmir, used, as stated by himself, inscriptions of all types for writing his account of the rulers of Kashmir. With the destruction and fall of almost all temples, images and idols of ancient Kashmir, the vast epigraphic wealth of ancient Kashmir was lost. Whatever has survived lie scattered here and there.

The author has done a commendable job in collecting the surviving inscriptions and publishing them in the form of a corpus. The texts of the inscriptions have been carefully deciphered and edited. A note on the purport and importance of the inscription has been given in the introductory part of each edited record. The author does not claim infallibility in the reading of the texts of the inscriptions, and has taken pains to give excellent facsimiles of the inscriptions to facilitate independent study and interpretations by specialists.

The get-up of the book is excellent. Some printing mistakes have crept in but these have been diligently corrected in the errata given at the end. This book is the only comprehensive work on the subject and is bound to be extremely useful to paleographers, epigraphists, researchers and historians.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA VRINDABAN

Report for April 1983—March 1984

Begun in 1907 as a small homoeopathic dispensary, the Sevashrama has now grown into a 121-bed allopathic hospital and an important monastic centre. The hospital has departments of general surgery, ophthalmology, dentistry, general medicine, and a homoeopathic outpatient

clinic. The general surgery department performs a wide variety of operations, having a neurosurgeon also among its staff. Facilities exist for conducting electrocardiography, radiography, physiotherapy and laboratory tests. An 8-bed ward is provided for cancer patients. The emergency department is a boon to the public, conducting medical and surgical service round the clock. A well-equipped eye department is a special feature of this hospital. The

Pallimangal (Integrated Rural Development) scheme started about a year ago has been rendering free service to the poor people of 150 villages in Mathura district. The nursing school, which has been functioning since 1980, offers a 3-year course in nursing and admits 10 students every year.

During the period under report, the Sevashrama treated 2,19,829 outpatients (new: 47,527), all of whom received free consultation and medicines. The number of inpatients treated was 3,174, of whom 51% received free treatment which was subsidized to the extent of 49% for the rest of them. The number of surgical operations conducted in the hospital was 418. The homoeopathic clinic treated 5,876 cases.

Immediate needs: It should be noted that the Sevashrama does not ask for or receive any financial help from the government for the maintenance of the hospital and depends solely on the help received from the benevolent public. A donation of Rs. 50,000 towards the maintenance of a hospital-bed may be made as an endowment in memory of someone. Donations may also be made for any of the items mentioned under *Future Plans* given below. The immediate need is to buy certain essential equipment and to wipe out the accumulated deficit of Rs. 3,26,856 (as on 31-3-84).

Future Plans

A. Construction:

1. Intensive care unit with attached laboratory etc. : Rs. 2,75,000
2. Modification in ophthalmology and neurosurgery wards : Rs. 1,00,000
3. Completion of hospital roof : Rs. 1,50,000
4. Staff quarters : Rs. 3,00,000

B. Equipment:

1. Ceiling operation lamp : Rs. 40,000
2. Some essential instruments for general, orthopedic, ENT, ophthalmology and neurosurgery depts. : Rs. 1,94,000
3. Operating microscopes : Rs. 2,00,000
4. Spectrophotofluorometer, automatic slide-staining machine, refractometer, blood gas analyser, electronic cell counter, electrophoresis unit, slide counter : Rs.3,13,000

5. Angiomat 3000 Viamonte-Hobbs injector : Rs. 3,00,000

6. Florobrite trimode cesium iodide image-intensifier with TV : Rs. 5,00,000

C. *Pallimangal* (Integrated Rural Development) work : Rs. 5,00,000

D. Intensive Care unit:

Central monitoring cardioscope, defibrillator, pacemakers etc. for 8 beds

: Rs. 6,00,000

E. *Laundry* : Rs. 2,70,000

F. Endowments:

For 45 beds : Rs. 22,50,000

For building maintenance fund : Rs. 2,00,000

For hospital maintenance fund : Rs. 50,00,000

For Goseva fund (dairy) : Rs. 1,95,000

For land development fund : Rs. 1,00,000

For hospital development fund : Rs. 4,85,000

For School of Nursing : Rs. 4,30,000

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

REPORT ON RELIEF WORK FOR APRIL '85

Primary relief: Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, T. Nagar, Madras continued the primary relief work among the Sri Lanka refugees sheltered in the Mandapam camp.

Rehabilitation: Under the 'Build Your Own House' scheme 55 houses were constructed and 8 repaired for the flood-victims at Charki village in the district of Burdwan in West Bengal. Two cylinder-type tube-wells were sunk in the new colony. 55 lanterns, 2,608 pieces of childrens' garments and 10 lungis were distributed among 352 families of Charki and Baranda villages affected by flood. The West Bengal Flood Relief and Rehabilitation work which commenced on 26 June, 1984 has since been closed with the completion of this rehabilitation project.

As already reported, the construction of houses under the 'Build Your Own House' scheme, as also the schemes for economic rehabilitation for the worst-affected victims of the fire disaster at Shella Bazar in the East Khasi district of Meghalaya, through the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Shillong, were in progress.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Role of Multinational Corporations in World Economy

The tragedy that struck Bhopal in December 1984 has served to focus the attention of the people on multinational corporations (MNCs). The poisonous gas that leaked from the fertilizer plant of the Union Carbide company caused the death of nearly three thousand people. The Union Carbide is only one of the several MNCs most of which are operated by U.S.A., Japan and European countries. MNCs operate in almost all fields including agriculture, but in certain fields like electronics, computers, oil exploration and refining, automobiles, drugs etc, they have a virtual monopoly. This raises questions about the role of MNCs in world economy.

A multinational corporation is a company that produces and markets goods and services in more than one country. It regards the entire world as its market, produces goods wherever they can be economically produced and combs all possible areas for raw materials, talented people and new technology. Direct investment by MNCs has reached a level of over \$ 350,000 million, half of which is by U.S. companies. These companies turn out \$ 1,250 thousand million worth of goods and services, about one-third of the world's gross product (GNP).

Much of the technology, management talent and private capital needed to solve the world's economic problems are controlled by MNCs. Furthermore, they have the capacity to move quickly resources, capital and management skills as a 'package', custom-tailored to the requirements of a project, anywhere in the world. It is this package approach that makes multinational companies highly competitive. Apart from maintaining an army of experienced technicians and experts, the MNCs invest heavily on research and development.

Since the end of World War II, the world has moved a long way from protectionism towards universalism and an open world for trade and investment. When Britain occupied India it never allowed American companies to operate in India. Now MNCs operate freely in the Third World and the so-called Fourth World countries. Though the prime motive of MNCs is profit, and though they have often exploited the poor and the ignorant, they have undoubtedly contributed much to the development of these countries at first through capital investment and training of personnel and, later on, through technology transfer. Small countries like South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore have benefited considerably from the work of MNCs. The prime minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew declared in 1978: 'Singapore's development would not have been possible if it had not been able to plug into the world grid of industrial powerhouses in the United States, Europe and Japan.'

Conditions in India, with its emphasis on labour-intensive, small-scale and medium-scale industries, have not been quite favourable for the operation of MNCs. Meanwhile, some private Indian companies have already become mini-multinationals with their branches or affiliated concerns in Africa, the Middle East and ASEAN countries. The public sector of the Government of India itself is emerging as a big MNC. As more and more countries become 'developed', the field of operation of MNCs will shrink and their role in world economy will undergo a drastic alteration.
