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OR

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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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Editorial Office

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

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Prabuddha Bharata

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AUGUST 1985

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Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 90

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No. 8

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

यं कुमार नवं रथमचक्रं मनसाकृणोः ।
एकेषं विश्वतः प्रांचमपश्यन्नधि तिष्ठसि ॥

My child, you have mounted, though you do not see it, a new wheel-less chariot, which you mentally created,¹ and which is one-poled but turning in all directions.

Rg-Veda 10.135.4

यं कुमार प्रावर्तयो रथं विप्रेभ्यस्परि ।
तं सामानु प्रावर्तत समितो नाव्याहितम् ॥

My child, the chariot, which you have driven here from the sages above, is followed by Sāman chants sent from here on a boat.²

Rg-Veda 10.135.5

कः कुमारमजनयद्रथं को निरवर्तयत् ।
कः स्वित्तदद्य नो ब्रूयादनुदेयी यथाभवत् ॥

Who is the parent of the child ?³ Who drove the chariot ?⁴ Who can say now how the funeral gift (*anudeyī*) was made ?⁵

Rg-Veda 10.135.6

* The enigmatic hymn, believed to be the source of the story of the boy Naciketā mentioned in *Katha Upaniṣad*, is concluded here. As mentioned last month, the hymn has been interpreted by Sāyaṇa in two different ways, but the alternative interpretation is omitted here as it appears to be far-fetched. According to Sāyaṇa, in these verses Yama, the King of death, addresses Naciketā who has reached his abode. Others take the first two verses as the father's talk to the departed spirit of his son, and the third verse as the poet's own.

1. The mental chariot is the subtle body which rises, after death, like a chariot without wheels, to the abode of death.

2. As suggested by Griffith, 'boat' may stand for the funeral pyre. The idea is that the prayers of the relatives accompany the departed soul.

3. Only the physical body is derived from parents; otherwise, every soul is its own ancestor.

4. The question is about the mystery of the soul's mode of ascent.

5. The inevitability of death suggests that the human soul is a debt or compulsory gift to be paid to the gods.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Continuing last month's theme, this month's EDITORIAL shows the importance of self-knowledge in solving the problems of selfishness and egoism.

In NISHKAMA KARMA Swami Amritananda shows the significance of selfless work both as a spiritual discipline and as a means to the attainment of material prosperity. The author is Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Madras, and the article was originally presented by him as a paper at a U.G.C.-sponsored seminar in Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati.

In the thought-provoking essay ASPECTS AND DIMENSIONS OF DESIRE Hans Elmstedt asks, 'Is there a relationship or connection between this desire that we all know and the ultimate nature of things and being?' and provides a stimulating set of answers. The

author teaches at a school in Lancaster, California.

Dr. Sri Prakash Dubey M.A., M.A., Ph. D., who has been associated with *Prabuddha Bharata* for more than twenty years both as a contributor and reviewer, is at present a Reader at the Department of Post-graduate Studies in Philosophy, Rani Durgavati University, Jabalpur, and also a Joint Secretary of the Indian Philosophical Congress. His present paper ADVAITIC CONCEPT OF TRUTH was originally presented at a national seminar on Truth held in Karnataka University, Dharwad.

Swami Chetanananda, spiritual head of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, U.S.A., has provided an interesting account of the life of one of the not-so-well-known devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, SHAMBHU CHARAN MALLIK.

THE EGO AND THE SELF

(EDITORIAL)

The two selves

The *Gītā* makes a rather paradoxical statement in the following verses:

One should uplift oneself by oneself; one should not lower oneself. For oneself is verily one's own friend; oneself is verily one's own enemy.

To a self-possessed person, by whom the self has been conquered by the self, the self is a friend. But in a self-alienated person the self remains in a state of enmity, as if it were an (external) enemy.¹

These verses have been interpreted in

1. *Bhagavad Gītā* 6. 5,6

different ways² which, however, converge upon three main points: 1. there are

2. Traditional commentators are neither unanimous nor unambiguous in their interpretation of these verses. Ananda Giri, following Samkara, assumes the existence of a lower self and a higher self. The lower self is *kārya-kāraṇa samghata*, 'aggregate of cause and effect', that is, the ego-system consisting of the body, mind and senses. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī understands the first 'Atman' as the *manas* or mind, and the second 'Atman' as *jīva*, the embodied self. According to his interpretation, 'the embodied self should be uplifted by the discriminating mind (*viveka-yuktena manasā*). Ramanuja too takes the first 'Atman' to mean *manas* but takes the second 'Atman' to mean the inner Self (*pratyagātman*). According to him, 'one should

apparently two selves: a lower self or the ego and a higher Self, the *pratyagātman* or inmost Self; 2. one should not create inner conflicts by alienating the two selves from each other; 3. when properly integrated, these two selves help each other and in the attainment of the ultimate goal of life.

Self-alienation, selfishness and unselfishness

The problem of the two selves is directly connected to the problem of egoism and selfishness discussed in the editorials of the last three months (May, June and July). It was shown that selfishness need not be a sign of self-love, nor the selflessness of unawakened people be a sign of love for others. There is not so much difference between the selfishness and unselfishness of unawakened people as is popularly believed to be. Both are nothing but mental habits acquired in the course of one's growing up by following two different attitudes towards oneself.

Our attitude towards objects is of two kinds: 'towards' or 'away from'. We tend to move towards friendly people and pleasant things, and tend to move away from unfriendly people and unpleasant things. This is true of our attitude towards ourselves also. Movement 'towards' one's lower self or ego is selfishness, movement 'away from' the ego is unselfishness. A person moves 'towards' his ego when the existence of the ego is threatened and he feels insecure. When this urge becomes a permanent habit, he appears to be selfish to other people. Similarly, a person moves 'away from' his ego when he feels ashamed of it or afraid of it. (In a few spiritual

people this 'away from' movement may be caused by the attraction for the higher Self or God.) When this urge becomes habitual, the person appears to be unselfish to others.

In both these movements a certain degree of self-alienation takes place. The selfish person gets alienated from the higher Self, whereas the unselfish person gets alienated from his lower self. Self-alienation produces deep inner conflicts of which many people are not aware. A personality torn by conflicts cannot enjoy peace and fulfilment. This is the reason why many people, both selfish and unselfish, are seldom found to be happy. An unselfish person may be more popular and socially acceptable than a selfish person, but if he feels self-alienation and disquiet, he is not inwardly better off than the selfish person. The selfish person, being self-centred, has at least a 'centre' to hold on to, whereas the unselfish person may not have any such centre within him, and may thus become dependent on other people. That is why the 'go-getter' is usually found to succeed in life while the 'do-gooder' is often found to be shiftless or drifting in life which he finds meaningless. The condition of the do-gooder may even become worse when he turns to spiritual life, for there he is asked to shun his lower self and seek a higher Self which he does not know, or love God whom he does not see.

As long as self-alienation persists, as long as one part of the personality remains estranged from the other part, neither selfishness nor unselfishness can solve man's problems. This statement is not intended to discourage selfless work or social service. It has been made only to emphasize the need for self-integration and awakening. Unselfishness and humility should not be based on self-alienation or ignorance of one's own self. Love and selflessness are sacred attitudes; as such,

uplift the inner Self with the help of the purified mind (*viśayānanusaktena manasā*). Swami Swarupananda's interpretation, that it is the higher Self that should uplift the lower self, is in accord with the teaching of his master Swami Vivekananda who regarded the higher Self as the source of all power and perfection.

they should not be left to blind urges and impulses. Well-meaning but unawakened people through their impulsive selflessness and humility often create more troubles (for themselves and for others) than selfish and arrogant people do.

Ego and egoism

The point is, there is a good deal of self-deception in our attitudes, motives and actions. Self-deception is caused by ignorance. In Indian scriptures ignorance, *ajñāna* or *avidyā* is generally used to denote ignorance of the higher Self. But there are lower types of ignorance too, especially about the ego. This lower ignorance is as important as the higher ignorance which conceals the Atman. Lower ignorance is of two types: ignorance of the difference between the ego and egoism, and ignorance of the difference between the ego and higher Self or Atman.

The ego is a simple awareness of 'I' as a living entity. It is the detachable core of human personality. Egoism is the attachment of this 'I' to the inner impulses, memories, ideas and external objects. Only an unawakened ego gets attached in this way. The ego in itself is neither good nor bad; it is its behaviour that makes it so. So the real problem regarding egoism is not the ego itself but its unawakened condition. It is no use blaming a person for his selfishness or arrogance, for he is unawakened and is not aware of the causes and consequences of his wrong attitude. Nor do unawakened people deserve all the praise that they get for their selflessness and humility. Both selfish and unselfish people need to be awakened. When they wake up, the conflict between selfishness and unselfishness will disappear, and these attitudes will merge into one total outlook in which oneself and other people have their right place,

Ego-awakening

What is really important is the awakening of the ego. What does ego-awakening mean?³ It means freedom from the two types of lower *ajñāna* or ignorance mentioned above. A person in whom the ego has awakened understands the difference between the ego and egoism and between the ego and the higher Self or Atman. He does not condemn his ego nor try to escape from it. Rather, he tries to detach it from its entanglements and to integrate it with the higher Self.

How does ego-awakening take place? In some people it takes place spontaneously at certain critical moments or through traumatic experiences. The others need the help of a wise guide or perhaps of a professional psychiatrist. In spiritual life one of the functions of the Guru is to bring about ego-awakening in the disciple. Many people who turn to spiritual life have unawakened egos. At least half of their difficulties, conflicts and problems are caused by the unawakened condition of their egos. Before the awakening of the Atman or of the *kuṇḍalinī* becomes possible, these people need to undergo ego-awakening first. In order to understand the real greatness of the Guru and follow his instructions the disciple must have at least an awakened ego. It is indeed difficult for a Guru to guide an unawakened disciple who has built an impregnable wall of egoism around his heart. Very often the Guru has to act as a psychiatrist and make the disciple discover the foundation of his own egoism, selfishness, misdirected charity, carelessness and other defects. This the Guru may do through advice, sometimes through a scolding or studied neglect. Only a person who has

3. Ego-awakening was discussed in the July '85 Editorial.

lived with and faithfully served his Guru or an illumined soul knows how the Guru breaks the wall of egoism within him and liberates his ego. Once the ego of the disciple is liberated, the Guru finds it easy to prepare him for the higher spiritual awakening.

In *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* we find Sri Ramakrishna bringing about the ego-awakening in M. during M.'s second visit to the Master. Through a few pithy and pointed replies the Master shattered M.'s egoism, and the freed ego became receptive to spiritual instructions. In the *Gītā* we find Arjuna undergoing a similar ego-awakening spontaneously (perhaps it was brought about by the will of Kṛṣṇa) and only after this did he become fit to receive spiritual instruction from Kṛṣṇa.

Many—though not all—of the spiritual experiences described in Zen books as *satori* are clearly instances of ego-awakening. Careful writers on Zen, however, make a distinction between this lower awakening and the true higher spiritual awakening by calling the former *kensho* (*chien-hsing* in Chinese) and the latter *satori* (*wu* in Chinese).⁴ The ancient Chinese Zen (Ch'an) master Han Shan spoke of two types of awakening (*wu*): the 'understanding-wu' (*chieh-wu*) and the 'realization-wu' (*cheng-wu*). According to him, the first *wu* is only a pseudo-awakening which, nevertheless, gives a deep insight into the nature of subject-object relations. Evidently, this corresponds to what we have termed 'ego-awakening'. The second *wu* is the true spiritual awakening which corresponds to the awakening of the *pratyagātman* mentioned earlier. Han Shan points out that this

second or 'realization' *wu* 'has different degrees of profundity.'⁵

The ego and the Self

We have seen that ego-awakening produces two kinds of knowledge: knowledge of the difference between the ego and egoism, and knowledge of the difference between the ego and the higher Self. We have already discussed the first type of difference. We now turn to the difference between the ego and the Self.

There are four main views regarding the relation between the ego and the higher Self. According to one view the ego and the Self are one and the same. Another view holds that they are entirely different from each other. Yet another view is that the higher Self alone is real and the ego is only an appearance. The fourth view regards both the ego and the higher Self as equally unreal.

All the four schools are represented in western philosophy, although the problem of the self has never been given a central place in it.⁶ The first view seems to be the one most widely prevalent from ancient times. Plato regarded the soul as one but having three functionally different parts: reason, will and feeling. This image of the tripartite soul has dominated western thought ever since.

Kant (1724-1804) made a radical departure by positing two kinds of self: the empirical and the transcendental. The empirical self exists on the phenomenal level and it knows the world in manifold ways with the help of the a-priori categories possessed by it. The transcendental self is that which subordinates the changing

5. See, Chang Chen-Chi, *The Practice of Zen* (London: Rider and Co., 1960) pp. 94.

6. The different concepts of the soul in western thought were discussed in the November '83 Editorial.

4. See, Roshi Philip Kapleau, *Three Pillars of Zen* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) p. 335.

empirical self. It is permanent and incomprehensible because the categories of knowledge are not applicable to it. It is known as the presupposition of all knowledge, being the ultimate subject of knowledge which cannot be objectified.⁷

The third view of the self may be found in the works of the British philosopher F.H. Bradley (1846-1924). Using non-contradictoriness as the test of reality, Bradley posited the Absolute as the sole reality and everything else, including the self, as unreal. According to him the self is only an appearance; it changes and has only a relative existence—it exists only in relation with and contradistinction to the not-self.⁸ The German philosopher Fichte (1762-1814) developed a solipsistic view by making the ego the ultimate Reality. According to him the essence of the ego consists in will, knowledge and activity, and the world has no independent existence apart from the existence of the ego. Hegel (1770-1831) regarded individual selves as the ever-developing evolutes of one absolute Self.

The fourth view of the self was championed by the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-76), though not as rigorously as the Buddhists did.

7. Though the view of Kant has some similarity to that of Śamkara, there are several differences between them. (a) Kant does not hold that the empirical self is unreal and merges into the transcendental self in the state of liberation, as Śamkara holds. (b) Śamkara regards the transcendental Self as the sole reality, whereas Kant believes in the reality of the phenomenal world, of the empirical self and the thing-in-itself. (c) According to Kant, the thing-in-itself is unknowable, whereas according to Śamkara, the transcendental Absolute can be intuitively experienced as one's innermost Self.

8. As Bosanquet pointed out, Bradley was influenced by several thought currents including, perhaps, Śamkara's philosophy. But, unlike Śamkara, Bradley did not regard the Absolute as the Supreme Self.

Coming to Indian thought, we find the first view held by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers. According to them the Atman or Self is nothing but the ego. It knows itself as the subject of all experiences. The self is a substance (*dravya*) and knowledge (*jñāna*) or consciousness is an attribute (*guṇa*) of it⁹. The self has two more properties: desire (*īcchā*) and volition (*yatna*). These three attributes of the self become manifest only when the Atman is in conjunction with the *manas* (mind).

In the Vedantic schools of Ramanuja and Madhva also the ego and the self are regarded as one and the same, but the conception of the self in these schools is entirely different from that in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system. According to both Ramanuja and Madhva the Self is the seat of consciousness or knowledge. Ramanuja believes that the soul has two kinds of knowledge: *svarūpa-jñāna* by which it knows itself, and *dharmabhūta-jñāna* by which it knows other objects. Both the teachers hold that the self is also the seat of the will, and is both the agent of action (*kartā*) and enjoyer (*bhoktā*).

The second view, which regards the ego and the higher self as entirely separate, was developed in India mainly by the Sāṃkhya philosophers. According to them the ego belongs not to the true Self called Puruṣa, but to Prakṛti or Nature. The real self is so transcendental that it is untouched by 'I'.¹⁰ In other words, the ego is outside

9. ज्ञानाधिकरणमात्मा । *Tarkasamgraha* 2.8

10. At the same time, the Sāṃkhyas hold that the Puruṣas are innumerable. But, in the absence of an individuating principle like the ego, they are not able to show how one Puruṣa differs from another. Commenting on this, Prof. M. Hiriyanna says: 'In themselves, it is hard to see how the Puruṣas can differ from one another. There is not even a semblance of explanation here as in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, where each self is stated to be inherently

the real nature of man. The ego is *ahamkāra* which literally means the 'I-maker'; it is the individuating principle which separates one thing from another. Everything—the mind, the sense organ, even the atom and the molecule—has its own ego. If there were no ego, the whole universe would be one uniform, homogeneous mass. This is indeed a unique doctrine. In no other school is found such a total separation of the ego from the Self.

The illogicality of the Sāṃkhya theory of the self is avoided in the Advaitic theory of the self—the third of the four theories mentioned above. Advaita Vedānta too keeps the distinction between the ego and the higher Self (known as the Atman), but the two are brought into intimate relationship with each other. The ego is the *granthi* or knot between *cit* or spirit and *jada* or matter. This *cijjada-granthi* is what the Advaitins call *jīva* or empirical self. Vidyāraṇya describes this 'knot' as follows: 'The substratum of pure consciousness, the subtle body, and the reflection of pure consciousness on the subtle body—these three together constitute a Jīva.'¹¹ The ego is thus a compound (*saṃghāta*) consisting of both material and spiritual elements. The spiritual element, the reflection of pure consciousness, is what is known as the *pratyagātman* or inner Self. Behind this reflection lies the infinite, non-dual Supreme Self known as both Atman and Brahman.¹²

characterized by its own *viseṣa*.' *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956) p. 280.

11. चैतन्यं यदधिष्ठानं लिङ्गदेहश्च यः पुनः ।

चिच्छाया लिङ्गदेहस्था तत्संघो जीव उच्यते ॥

Vidyāraṇya, *Pañcadasī* 4.11

12. Vidyāraṇya calls the *pratyagātman* the *kūṭastha*, the unchanging witness which is different from the 'reflection'. According to him, and to the Vivaraṇa school in general, it

Furthermore, Advaita philosophers make a distinction between the ego and egoism. The ego is, as mentioned above, a knot between matter and spirit, whereas egoism (*ahamkāra*) is one of the four faculties of the mind (*antaḥkaraṇa*)—the other three faculties being the *buddhi*, *manas* and *citta*. Egoism is the tendency of the mind to appropriate experiences as one's own. It is egoism that creates the sense of being a *kartā* (agent of action) and *bhoktā* (enjoyer).

The fourth theory of the self was developed by the Buddhists. They too regard the ego (often called *puḍgala*) as a compound (*saṃghāta*) but, unlike the Advaitins, they deny the existence of a transcendent self. There is no such thing as a chariot apart from its component parts like the wheels etc. Similarly, there is no separate entity as the ego other than the assemblage of the five *skandhas*—*rūpa* (form), *vedana* (sensation), *saṃjñā* (perception), *saṃghāta* (volition) and *vijñāna* (consciousness). Thus both the ego and self are illusory.

Integration of the two selves

Of the four views it is the Advaitic theory of two levels of the self that seems to provide the best solution to the existential problems of man. It reconciles the conflict between love for oneself and love for others. According to the Advaitic theory, the lower self or ego is neither an evil nor an external appendage to be got rid of. Being the 'knot' of *cit* and *jada*, it contains the reflection of the light of pure consciousness and is therefore potentially divine. What is bad is egoism (*ahamkāra*) by which is meant the tendency to appreciate things from universal life for the use of the ego and the anxious desire to protect the ego.

is the *kūṭastha*, not the *jīva*, that is identical with Brahman. See *Pañcadasī* 8.46-49.

Only an unawakened ego has this tendency. When the ego awakens, it gives up egoism and, recognizing the divine element in it, seeks to realize its source. This search marks the beginning of true spiritual life.

This spiritual quest leads to the discovery of the source of consciousness in the higher Self, the Atman. This shows that the lower self is not an obstacle to spiritual life; rather, it is a great help. Spiritual life is not an attempt to run away from one's lower self but an attempt to confront it, purify it and transform it. The ego is after all only a 'knot', and spiritual practice is primarily aimed at untying this knot. When the knot of ego is untied, the *jaḍa* or insentient part of it drops off and the *cit* or sentient part alone shines as

prajñā, the light of the *pratyagātman*. The ego has now been divinized and transformed into the inner Self.

When this happens, egoism, selfishness and self-love give place to love for the inner Self. Since this inner Self is one with the Supreme Self, Paramātman or Brahman, love for one's own inner Self necessarily implies love for all beings. Indeed, only a person who takes his stand on the higher Self can have pure unselfish love for others. If we wish to have unselfish and pure love for other people, we must find out its source in the higher Self within us. If we wish to bridge the gulf between us and our fellow-men, we must first bridge the gulf between the ego and higher Self within us.

NISHKAMA KARMA

SWAMI AMRITANANDA

An attempt is made in this paper, originally presented at a seminar, to discuss the philosophy of Niṣkāma Karma as an offshoot of the Indian philosophical and religious tradition and to find out its significance for the material advancement of man. 'The purpose of the symposium is', in the words of its organizers, 'to discuss whether the fundamental tenets of Indian philosophy, ethical, metaphysical, logical and aesthetic, would further the progress of the positive sciences and the material well-being of a man or thwart them'. It is feared by some that 'the Indian philosophical tradition with its emphasis on spiritualism and asceticism might not inspire scientific discoveries and pave the way for the material well-being of man'. Again, it is believed that 'the Indian mind rooted in mystical and religious

tradition, is repugnant to logical and analytical outlook which is required for the progress of positive sciences.' It is also believed by some others that 'there is no conflict between philosophy and science and philosophy and material well-being of man in India.' We shall try to discuss the philosophy of Niṣkāma Karma vis-a-vis these different beliefs.

At the outset, it should be recognized that we have a very rich philosophical tradition which has encouraged and enriched logical and analytic outlook. We have also a glorious heritage of the development of the positive sciences, considering the advances made in such sciences as Āyurveda, mathematics, metallurgy and chemistry, to name only a few. In fact, our culture grew mostly around temples and spiritual centres.

Construction of big temples required a good knowledge of, and skill in, various arts and sciences such as engineering, architecture, painting, physics and astronomy. The administration of these temples, their maintenance and the observance of the various festivals associated with them required a good management of human and material resources. As a nation, we have our special interest in religion and philosophy; it is the cornerstone of our existence. Knowledge of the sciences and the development of analytical skills were taught in the language of religion. Swami Vivekananda has pointed out that our progress was halted the day we became exclusive. The root of the evil is not in religion but in the social and political system which failed to inspire men to uphold the true ideal of religion and spirituality. We failed miserably when we tried to blindly imitate the West. So, Swami Vivekananda wanted a real man-making education first, capable of generating in man a burning faith in himself. Swamiji did not blame religion for our social evils. Even a modern historian like A. L. Basham observes:

Some 19th century missionaries, armed with passages from Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, often taken out of their context, and with tales of famine, disease, and the evils of the Hindu caste and family system, have helped to propagate the widespread fallacy that India is a land of lethargic gloom. The traveller landing at Bombay has only to watch the rush-hour crowds, and to compare them mentally with those of London, to realize that the Indian character is neither lethargic nor unhappy. This conclusion is borne out by a general acquaintance with the remains of India's past. Our second general impression of ancient India is that her people enjoyed life, passionately delighting both in the things of the senses and the things of the spirit.... India was a cheerful land, whose people, each finding a niche in a complex and slowly evolving social system, reached a higher level of kindness and

gentleness in their mutual relationships than any other nation of antiquity. For this, as well as for her great achievements in religion, literature, art and mathematics, one European student at least would record his admiration of her ancient culture.¹

Again, it is not the analytical skill alone that ensures meaningful material advancement. It is the analytical skill backed by a deep concern for the fellow-man. Today we hear of surplus in food in one region of the world. There are regions where the people do not know what to do with so much of cattle wealth. They could share their surplus with the less advanced sections of humanity. But, no, they would rather solve the problem of surplus dairy products by slaughtering the surplus cattle without showing the least concern for the people suffering from a famine raging in another part of the world. This heart-rending callousness is the price we have to pay for material advancement which is not quite guided by the humanizing influences of religion and philosophy.

Niṣkāma Karma means disinterested action or selfless action. The word Karma comes from the root *kṛ* which means action. Even though the word Karma has other meanings also, for the purpose of our discussion it is enough if we take the meaning as action or duty. It may be of interest to note that Karma or work has been understood by different people in different ways. In the pre-industrial western society it had a status symbol and was hereditary. It is in the industrialized society that an attempt is made to seek a meaning for work. The Greeks and the Romans held the view that work was necessary for salvation. Early Christians did not think that work had any intrinsic value. According to Christian Socialism,

1. A. L. Basham *The Wonder that was India* (London: Fontana Collins, 1975) p. 9

labour is the foundation for all human progress ; profit should not be the motive. Again, accumulation of wealth was legitimized if it was associated with charity. According to Calvinism, man works to glorify God. Thus wealth and profit got a religious sanction. But nowhere do we come across the idea of work for work's sake or duty for duty's sake. Against this background, let us try to understand the meaning of selfless work in the light of the philosophical traditions of this land as exemplified in the lives and teachings of the great ones like Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who in recorded history taught Niṣkāma Karma for the first time, the Buddha who illustrated this idea through his own life and did not require any other motive to work for others ; Śrī Saṅkara, who directed his attention to comment on this philosophy, Śrī Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda who gave us a new insight into and a new interpretation of this idea in contemporary history.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's life is the best commentary on what he taught in the *Gītā*. He worked ceaselessly. He taught by his own life. Work for work's sake is a bold idea. To summarize Śrī Kṛṣṇa's teachings in the words of Swami Vivekananda,

A man can attain to perfection, the highest goal, sitting on a throne, commanding armies, working out big plans for nations. In fact, Krishna's great sermon was preached on the battlefield. 'Work day and night'. Sri Krishna says, 'Behold, I am the Lord of the universe. I have no duty. Every duty is bondage. But I work for work's sake. If I ceased to work for a minute, there would be chaos.'

We must first root out this idea of helping, and then go to worship, says Swamiji, 'God's children are your Master's children. You are His servant... Serve the living God! God comes to you in the blind, in the halt, in the poor, in the weak, in the diabolical. What a glorious chance for you to worship! The moment you think you are 'helping', you undo the whole thing and degrade yourself.

Knowing this, work. 'What follows?' you say. You do not get that heartbreak, that awful misery... Then work is no more slavery. It becomes a play, and joy itself... When we come to that non-attachment, then we can understand the marvellous mystery of the universe ; how it is intense activity and vibration, and at the sametime intensest peace and calm ; how it is work every moment and rest every moment. That is the mystery of the universe—the impersonal and personal in one, the infinite and finite in one. Then we shall find the secret. 'He who finds in the midst of intense activity the greatest rest, and in the midst of the greatest rest intense activity, he has become a Yogi.' He alone is a real worker, none else. We do a little work and break ourselves. Why? We become attached to that work...²

How hard it is to arrive at this sort of non-attachment! Therefore Krishna shows us the lower ways and methods. The easiest way for everyone is to do his or her work and not take the results. It is our desire that binds us. If we take the results of actions, whether good or evil, we will have to bear them. But if we work not for ourselves, but all for the glory of the Lord, the results will take care of themselves. 'To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof.' The soldier works for no results. He does his duty. If defeat comes, it belongs to the general, not to the soldier. We do our duty for love's sake—love for the general, love for the Lord...³

If you are strong, take up the Vedanta philosophy and be independent. If you cannot do that, worship God ; if not, worship some image. If you lack strength even to do that, do some good works without the idea of gain. Offer everything you have unto the service of the Lord. Fight on! 'Leaves and water and one flower—whosoever lays anything on my altar, I receive it with equal delights.' If you cannot do anything, not a single good work, then take refuge in the Lord. 'The Lord resides within the heart of the beings, making them turn upon His wheel. Do thou with all thy soul and heart take refuge in Him...'⁴

2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977) Vol. 1, pp. 441-42

3. *Ibid* p. 443

4. *Ibid*

It is this teaching as well as the all-round life and wonderful activity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that has influenced millions and millions of people. So, when the goal of human life is very clear and the concept of duty is well understood, all one has to do is to follow one's own aptitude or *svadharmā* and do the work that comes to him with a detached spirit, or by consecrating the work to God. This teaching, if rightly understood, should infuse in us tremendous altruism and this should be the first step to be taken in trying to work for the material development of man. No work is high or low in itself. That which is done with a purely selfish motive is bad, but otherwise it is meritorious. Now one may ask: 'What about a man who has achieved the highest? Should he work?' Yes, he should set an example for others. Whatever a great man does ordinary people will try to follow. To set an example the Lord Himself works. The wise should even come down to the level of the ignorant and show him how to work. Śrī Kṛṣṇa emphasizes the giving up of the results of work more than the giving up of the work itself.

Now we turn to another great world teacher who was the first missionary in recorded history. Buddha enquired into the nature of misery, identified its root as desire, and discovered the remedy for it. His compassionate heart did not allow him to rest on his oars. He started preaching the Truth he had realized, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many. He was a very bold thinker and he did not require any motivation for doing good. He did good for the sake of doing good. In his eagerness to save people from misery he did not care to discuss metaphysical questions. Even God was not necessary for him. He organized his followers into a monastic community and sent them to different directions with these

words: 'Go forth, O monks! on your journey for the weal and welfare of many, out of compassion for the world, for the weal and welfare of angels and mortals.' All received his grace alike without any distinction of caste, rank, merit or sex. We see in the Buddha Upaniṣadic altruism working, though he did not acknowledge his allegiance to the Vedic religion.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a great teacher of synthesis. The Buddha was a teacher of analysis. Both advocated self-sacrifice and renunciation, though with Śrī Kṛṣṇa the emphasis was more on non-attachment, than on non-possession. Both worked relentlessly for the welfare of the world. History has recorded the influence of these two great lives on the development of art, music, architecture and painting. In their own ways, both of them taught man to be self-reliant. Both decried performing religious sacrifices for selfish gains. Both pointed to a higher good, Śrī Kṛṣṇa in positive terms and Buddha in negative terms. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's teachings, if properly understood, could give a tremendous boost to the creative faculty in man. The Buddha's teaching could revive the emphasis on the ethical and moral life. Śrī Kṛṣṇa harmonized the conflict between work and worship, action and contemplation, peace and intense dynamism, in short, between *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*. The Buddha harmonized the difference between world-negation and loving service of humanity.

Then came Śrī Śaṅkara who recognized in the Vedic religion not only the teaching suited for seekers of wealth and happiness, but also the teaching suited for seekers of the supreme Good. Though he is generally considered a philosopher, his influence has penetrated into all levels of society. Sister Nivedita says that Śrī Śaṅkara was appropriated by the masses. It was he who recognized the greatness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's teaching in the *Bhagavadgītā* and

chose to write a commentary on it, harmonizing the dominant notes of the activism of the *Gītā* with the ideal of knowledge of which he was an uncompromising champion. He accepts the ideal of *lokasamgraha* and does not see any contradiction between it and the ideal of *Jīvanmukti*. He recognizes the value of *Niṣkāma Karma* whether it is done with the spirit of consecration or with the idea of witnessing all Karma with same-sightedness natural to a *Jñānī*. He sets great store by mental purity which is both a *sine qua non* and a *desideratum* for self-realization. And for mental purity selfless work is essential.

Like *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* and the Buddha, *Śrī Śaṅkara* decried Vedic ritualism practised purely for selfish gains. But if practised with an attitude of non-attachment, it could pave way for mental purity leading to Knowledge. He breathed rationalism into his philosophy and elevated it to the status of a universal religion.

To sum up, in the words of Swami Satprakashananda,

By a rational exposition of the three standard works on Vedānta—the Upaniṣads, the Brahma-sūtras, and the Bhagavadgītā—he (Śaṅkara) has held before man a complete perspective of life, in which mysticism, philosophy, religion, psychology, logic, ethics, and aesthetics have their appropriate places.... The absolute unity of Reality as Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss affirmed by Śaṅkara is the ultimate ground of all metaphysical conceptions, of all religious doctrines, of all scientific truths, and of all ethical ideals. There is the culmination of human knowledge.⁵

The distinctive contribution of *Śrī Śaṅkara* to our religious life was to free the religion from all superstitions and diabolical practices. He provided a metaphysical framework to Upaniṣadic

altruism. Another contribution of his, which is not so well known, was to bring the essence of Vedic religion to the common man by encouraging some of the purer forms of tantric practices.

When we come to Sri Ramakrishna, we find that the articulation of the concept of *Niṣkāma Karma* is slightly different. It is Mother's work. Work is worship. He said that religion was not for the empty stomach. He refused to proceed on a pilgrimage until the pious of the place were fed and clothed. It was service or worship, and not compassion, that he taught. Compassion has an undertone of condescension about it. In Sri Ramakrishna we find religion was realization, not speculation. He spoke from his own experience and did not cite any authority. His realizations provided an independent corroboration of scriptural truths. One day while talking about the Vaiṣṇava tenet of practising kindness to living beings, Sri Ramakrishna passed into an ecstatic mood and observed, 'Not kindness to the *jīva* but serving the *jīva* as *Śiva*'. Narendranath (future Swami Vivekananda) who heard this, remarked:

I have found wonderful light in these few words of the Master. It has been the general tendency all these years to practise Vedānta in seclusion. But Vedānta can be practised in work-a-day life as well. The Vedantic knowledge of the divinity of the soul can be harmonized with a man's common duties. Work and worship can go together. If God grants me the opportunity, I will proclaim this message to one and all in course of time.⁶

Swami Satprakashananda observes in his book *Swami Vivekananda's Contribution to the Present Age*,

On another occasion Naren expressed a strong desire to remain immersed in *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*. At this the Master said, 'you are not meant for this. You are to see God in one and all and serve Him in them. To realize God in *nirvikalpa*

5. Swami Satprakashananda *Swami Vivekananda's Contribution to the Present Age* (St. Louis: Vedānta Society of St. Louis) 17.60-61

6. Ibid p. 79

samādhi is knowledge (*jñāna*). A few blessed souls come down from that stage and see God dwelling in all: this is supra-knowledge (*vijñāna*).' It may be noted that this is the state in which Sri Ramakrishna constantly lived. And this he set as an ideal before his monastic disciples. Later on we shall find this level of God-consciousness to be Swami Vivekananda's forte.⁷

Swami Vivekananda spent about six years travelling as an itinerant monk all over India. He came in close touch with all classes of people and his heart bled at the sight of the abject poverty, misery and ignorance of the Indian masses. He concluded that the uplift of the masses was absolutely essential for the regeneration of India. While speaking about the meaning of religion he said,

Religion is realization, not talk, nor doctrines, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes. That is religion.⁸

He wrote in a letter:

To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and intricate mythology and queer startling psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular, and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest minds—is a task only those can understand who have attempted it. The abstract Advaita must become living—poetic—in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical psychology—and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work. The Lord only knows how far I shall succeed. To work we have the right, and not to the fruits thereof.⁹

According to Swami Vivekananda, Advaita twice saved India from materialism, once through the teachings of the Buddha,

and the second time through the teachings of Śaṅkara. 'By Buddha the moral side of the philosophy was laid stress upon and by Śaṅkarācārya, the intellectual side. He worked out, rationalized and placed before men the wonderful coherent system of Advaita.'¹⁰ He held that in the modern age again Advaita Vedanta would save the world from materialism; it alone can satisfy the modern sceptic. The spiritual oneness of all souls taught by Vedanta is the rational basis of ethics; the discoveries of modern science only strengthen the Advaita position. He said,

The salvation of Europe depends on a rationalistic religion, and Advaita—the non-duality, the oneness, the idea of the Impersonal God—is the only religion that can have any hold on any intellectual people. It comes whenever religion seems to disappear, and irreligion seems to prevail, and that is why it has taken ground in Europe and America.¹¹

About his mission Swami Vivekananda wrote to his disciples in Madras:

My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specifically what others are doing now and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady and have faith in the Lord. Set to work, I am coming sooner or later. Keep the motto before you—'Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion'. Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But alas! Nobody ever did anything for them. Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course I am a sympathizer in every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands its widows get, but upon the condition of the masses. Can you

7. Ibid p. 81

8. Ibid p. 85

9. Ibid p. 86

10. Ibid p. 87

11. Ibid

raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature? Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and we will do it.¹²

His practical Vedanta was not merely Niṣkāma Karma but much more. He gave it a positive content. He said,

Look upon every man, woman and everyone as God. You cannot help anyone, you can only serve; serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself, if you have the privilege. If the Lord grants that you can help anyone of His children, blessed you are; do not think too much of yourselves. Blessed you are that that privilege was granted to you, while others had it not. Do it only as a worship. You may invent an image through which to worship God, but a better image already exists, the living man. You may build a temple in which to worship God, and that may be good, but a better one, a much higher one, already exists, the human body.¹³

Swami Vivekananda's interpretation of the same eternal religion preached by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Buddha and Śaṅkara, was all-comprehensive. The ancient teachers stressed only liberation. Even in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's message Niṣkāma Karma is prescribed as a stepping stone to final liberation. But Swami Vivekananda's all-encompassing vision has included both seekers of earthly good as well as the seekers of the supreme Good. He said,

Take man where he stands and from there give him a lift. All the men and women in any society are not of the same mind, capacity, or of the same power to do things; they must have different ideals and we have no right to sneer at any ideal. Our duty is to encourage everyone in his struggle to live up to his own highest ideal and strive at the same time to

make the ideal as near as possible to the truth. Unless a man passes through *rajas* (right activity with desire) can he ever attain to that perfect *sāttvika* state (serenity of mind conducive to self-knowledge)? How can one expect Yoga, or union with God, unless one has previously finished with his thirst for *bhoga* or enjoyment? How can renunciation come where there is no *Vairāgyam* or dispassion for all the charms of enjoyment?¹⁴

He proclaimed the message of the essential divinity of human soul to one and all—to the seekers of temporal value as well as to the seekers of self-knowledge. In his view all duties and deeds can be performed in the spirit of worshipping God in man. No doubt, this is the conclusion of the teachings of the Upaniṣads, and the *Gītā*. But its practical application on a universal scale had not been tried earlier. Swami Vivekananda gave to the twin organizations he founded, the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission, the motto *ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca* 'for the liberation of one's own self and for the welfare of the world'. There is no dichotomy between the two ideals, and each should supplement and complement the other.

Nor is there in Swami Vivekananda's scheme of universal religion any dichotomy between science and religion. He said,

India has to learn from Europe the conquest of external nature.... Then there will be neither Hindus nor Europeans—there will be the ideal humanity which has conquered both the natures, the external and the internal. We have developed one phase of humanity and they another. It is the union of the two that is wanted. The word freedom which is the watch-word of our religion means freedom physically, mentally and spiritually.¹⁵

Now what is the goal of civilization?

12. Ibid p. 89

13. Ibid p. 90

14. Ibid p. 95

15. Ibid p. 142

Can we be intensely selfish and cease to think of others? Swamiji says,

One atom in this universe cannot move without dragging the whole world along with it. There cannot be any progress without the whole world following in the wake, and it is becoming every day clearer that the solution of any problem can never be attained on racial, or national, or narrow grounds. Every idea has to become broad till it covers the whole of this world, every aspiration must go on increasing till it has engulfed the whole of humanity, nay, the whole of life within its scope.

We want today that bright sun of intellectuality joined with the heart of Buddha, the wonderful, infinite heart of love and mercy. This union will give us the highest philosophy. Science and religion will meet and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This will be the religion of the future and if we can work it out, we may be sure that it will be for all times and peoples. Just as a physicist, when he has pushed his knowledge to its limits finds it melting away into metaphysics, so a metaphysician will find what he calls mind and matter are but apparent distinctions, the reality being One. The more advanced a society or a nation is in spirituality the more is that society or nation civilized. No nation can be said to have become civilized, only because it has succeeded in increasing the comforts of material life by bringing into use lots of machinery and things of that sort... In this age as on the one hand people have to be intensely practical, so on the other hand they have to acquire deep spiritual knowledge.¹⁶

Religion and spirituality are essential for human growth. So Swamiji says,

Religion is the greatest motive power for realizing that infinite energy which is the birthright and nature of every man. In building up character, in making for everything that is good and great, in bringing peace to others, and peace to one's own self, religion is the highest motive power, and therefore ought to be studied from that standpoint. Religion must be studied on a broader basis than formerly... The power of religion, broadened and purified, is going to penetrate every part of human life. So long as religion was in the hands of a chosen few, or of a body

of priests, it was in temples, churches, books, dogmas, ceremonials, forms and rituals. But when we come to the real, spiritual, universal concept, then and then alone, religion will become real, and living; it will come into our very nature, live in our every movement, penetrate every pore of our society, and be infinitely more a power for good than it has ever been before.¹⁷

Swamiji clinches the issue of finding the rationale behind Niṣkāma Karma in a letter written in Sanskrit addressed to a disciple. The English translation of the relevant portions is as follows.

Here, by the word renunciation *vairāgya* is referred to. It may be of two kinds, with or without purpose. If the latter, none but worm-eaten brains will try for it. But if the other is referred to, then renunciation would mean the withdrawal of the mind from other things and concentrating it on God or Atman. The Lord of all cannot be any particular individual. He must be the sum total. One possessing Vairāgya does not understand by Atman the individual ego but the All-pervading Lord, residing as the Self and Internal Ruler in all. He is perceivable by all as the sum total. This being so, as Jīva and Īshvara are in essence the same, serving Jīvas and loving God must mean one and the same thing. Here is a peculiarity: when you serve a Jīva with the idea that he is a Jīva, it is Dayā (compassion) and not Prema (love); but when you serve him with the idea that he is the Self, that is Prema. That the Atman is the one objective of love is known from Shruti, Smṛiti, and direct perception. Bhagavān Chaitanya was right, therefore, when he said, 'Love to God and compassion to the Jīvas'. This conclusion of the Bhagavān, intimating differentiation between Jīva and Īshvara, was right, as He was a dualist. But for us, Advaitists, this notion of Jīva as distinct from God is the cause of bondage. Our principle, therefore, should be love, and not compassion. The application of the word compassion even to Jīva seems to me to be rash and vain. For us, it is not to pity but to serve. Ours is not the feeling of compassion but of love, and the feeling of Self in all.¹⁸

We have traced the evolution of the

16. Ibid p. 143, 144

17. Ibid p. 147

18. *The Complete Works* (1973) Vol. 5, p. 133

concept of Niṣkāma Karma and shown how, against the metaphysical ground provided by Swami Vivekananda, it becomes a living idea which could be applied in practical life to bring about the all-round development of man. Ultimately, it is the individual that counts, and no amount of legislative sanction without this spiritual culture will be able to uplift him.

ASPECTS AND DIMENSIONS OF DESIRE

HANS ELMSTEDT

Introduction

A.C. Swinburne, the English poet, once wrote the following:

The delight that consumes the desire,
The desire that outruns the delight.

In this single poetic sentence, Swinburne was able to capture many of the nuances of meaning that are associated with the baffling and often frustrating condition of human existence.

Desires are important and often profound experiences that we all know about because we all have them. We desire outer, material things such as wealth, property, power, or possessions. We also desire inner, non-material things or states of being such as fame, knowledge, health, security, happiness, or pleasure. Further, we have come to understand that desire can not only naturally push and teleologically pull us to activity, but also serve to give that very activity meaning and purpose. Yet, for most individuals, there is a significant absence of real understanding about the source and fundamental nature of desire, beyond the merely empirical, experiential, and phenomenal.

Is there a relationship or connection between this desire that we all know and the ultimate nature of things and being? Since desire appears to be one of the most

basic and meaningful impulses to activity and experience that we can have, it would seem that such a relationship does indeed exist and one that we must not ignore or depreciate if we are to understand what and why we are here in this world as thinking, feeling, acting beings. It is the purpose of this article to examine this relationship with the hope that some light can be brought to this rather dim area of our knowledge about the dynamics and appreciation of life and being.

Desire as a compound

Every experience of desire is a compound, with cognitive and affective elements that combine differentially or variably to give us the many experiences and dimensions of desire. Although desires are experienced phenomenologically as a gestalt or unified whole, and that we must always firstly know that we have a desire or are feeling its effects, we can usefully separate them, for epistemological purposes, into two aspects, the cognitive and the affective.

Desire will be dealt with here in terms of these two aspects, knowing, the cognitive, and feeling, the affective. It will also treat these aspects dimensionally, pointing out the degree or range that each manifests as we attempt to express, and even at times to contain, this impulse to desire and how

we seek to satisfy it. Broadly speaking, these aspects and dimensions can be seen to importantly determine and influence all behaviour, inner and outer, the complete knowledge of which would eventually encompass the entire field of motivation, the study of how and why we act or behave as we do.

Desire as a concept

One indication of the confusion that the concept of desire presents to us is the fact that we use a number of classes of words in order to define what we mean or intend when we try to use the idea in a particular manner or context. We don't quite know if desire is a thing, an act, a quality, or a way of doing things. We really do not know what to make of it. We are apparently thoroughly confused about how to define or think about it. We can also see in this confusion a particularly good example of the inadequacy of our language, and thus concepts, to portray or denote very basic aspects or characteristics of the human condition. It also seems to indicate that our comprehension of the inner origins of our most basic experiences is limited by our currently poorly developed ideas about the sources and dynamics of body-mind relationships and functions.

There is the noun form as seen in the sentence, 'My desire for sweet things is very strong.' As a noun, desire is the name given to something that we know or say that we have, and has been taken to denote the feeling of longing that importantly contains a latent element of purposive activity that seeks to allay or overcome a sense of lack, excess, or disorder. In this sense of desire there are both conscious and subconscious elements which can include the ideas of drive, want, craving, urge, need, or appetite. These are positive in nature where activity is oriented toward an object or event that, it is hoped will or

expected to, fulfil that desire. In this noun form, aversion is the term given to the negative side of desire, where the individual turns away from something because of a dislike or as the result of some inner state or condition that manifests itself as avoidance rather than approach.

The verbal form can be seen as follows, 'I desire that piece of candy.' Used as a verb, desire has a subtle difference in meaning from its use as a noun. Here, desire is something we do, even though it is inwardly done and thus unobservable, and is viewed as an indication that our behaviour is being directed toward an object or event that is longed for and is seen as being able to satisfy, remove, or relieve a need, want, craving, or wish. We can thus, among other things, engage in wishful thinking or long for a lost or unrequited love.

There are also adjectival and adverbial forms as seen in the following sentences, respectively; 'The desired chocolate bonbon was the prize being sought,' and, 'He gazed desiringly at the sweet before he popped it into his mouth.'

The subtle differences in meaning between these uses indicates that we do not have a clear understanding of the basic concepts involved because our minds can't easily separate them logically or rationally so as to objectify the differences. We can't do this, as stated earlier, because we lack a real understanding of what desire is and where it comes from.

The imposing number of synonyms we also use is further evidence of our confusion as each word and the related or underlying concept conveys the various subtle differences we intend to denote according to the context, the type, or the degree of the desire. This list includes; wish, want, crave, lust, urge, hunger, require, prefer, like, yearn, pine, fancy, attract, whim, impulse, and eager.

Then there are the terms used to denote negative desires. These antonyms include ; averse, repulse, indispose, disincline, disapprove, detest, loathe, disgust, abhor, distaste, despise, shrink, and revolt.

An additional and equally important indication of the confusion we have about desire is the fact that we ourselves are not always aware that we can and do project our desires or aversions onto objects so that these become outer manifestations of inner states or conditions. Many compulsions, obsessions, and even addictions can be traced to this aspect of our behaviour. We confuse, by imposition, the inner feeling with the outer object and this can lead to irrational behaviour of the most grievous sort. The projected aversive side of desire is an underlying cause of much of the fanaticism we see that drives people to commit acts of senseless brutality, violence, and destruction in the name of causes that include home, country, and even religion.

Aspects and dual nature of desire

Of the two aspects, the cognitive aspect can be taken as that which provides the content of desire, that area of desire's expression which each individual seeks to fulfil in personally meaningful ways. Specifically, viewed dimensionally, we can discern the multifarious kinds of internal and external objects that serve to satisfy an individual's desires. Dimensionality is usually taken to indicate an attribute or characteristic that is measurable or has magnitude and thus able to be positioned in a quantitative series or scale. Cognition, as we know it, doesn't lend itself to being so positioned, so we can meaningfully view its dimensionality as an array of items located on a designated continuum or spectrum, any one or more of which an individual may select for his

or her purposes. These are the kinds of things that become the objects of our desires. It must be noted here that the cognitive aspect can also have motive power. We not only create content for our desires, an object or event that serves as a focus for the energy involved and its discharge, but the content itself can also arouse a desire. This we are well aware of, or at least we should be, when we are subjected to the constant barrage of seductive advertisements in the media, and the many forms of appealing popular entertainment.

The affective aspect includes the feelings themselves that serve to determine and potentiate the content, the knowing aspect, and which can in turn result from those contents. This aspect can thus also be seen as both a cause and an effect, since we behave in ways that make or cause us to seek out certain feelings as goals which then become the effect, the experience of the sought for feeling. Seen dimensionally, this aspect of desire can yield more or less power or energy to sway us strongly or weakly to believe or act. It can lead to our taking up a selfless higher ideal or a distorted selfish involvement with our own narrow needs. It can lead to life defying, or even denying, self-sacrifice or to careless and ceaseless abandonment to the pursuit of sensory and sensual gratification. Although the opposite ends of the broad spectrum of options or choices are being presented here, we must realize that we are the choosers and must accept the responsibility for our choices, no matter where on the spectrum we do so.

To have a better understanding of this dual nature of desire, where it can be both a cause and an effect for each aspect, we should first understand that it does so by being anticipatory. The individual has learned that a previously experienced effect or feeling can be recaptured and so

acts in such a way or manner that is directed or influenced by expectation of the results. Here the affective aspect serves as the motive power for cognitively oriented seeking. It also provides the means by which the cognitive aspect can manifest its varying degrees of attraction for its chosen objects and events, which for some individuals, can become overwhelming, even of life-dominating importance. As stated previously, compulsions and addictions are of this sort and can be viewed as desires of high energy that are out of control, having a specific orientation or goal that is insatiable because there is nothing in the outer, or normally identifiable inner world, that can really satisfy it, except only occasionally or temporarily. These uncontrolled desires are often those that have become drives, moving down into the physiological arena to become rooted in neurochemical processes and by so doing becoming irrational, where control by the higher centres is lost or diminished, and thus able to powerfully dominate an individual's thoughts and behaviour. Yet, some physical desires associated with the senses are the easiest to satisfy because these are normally subject to bodily conditions which are subject to satiation through habituation, where the senses themselves cease to respond to further stimulation. Not so easily satisfied are the higher mental desires because these are not subject to the same bodily conditions of satiation. Compulsions and addictions can be viewed as higher, although subconscious, desires that one attempts to satisfy through physical means. This will never be successful and will finally lead to suffering and eventual ruin unless it is checked. Desires kept within the range or realm of rational and reasonable control are made manageable and can usefully lead the individual to positive, practical and higher

ends or goals that are necessary, worthwhile, and beneficial.

Desire—East and West

It seems that Western biological and psychological sciences have been able to do little more than recognize the problem that desire presents to our understanding. Many questions and few answers have come from the attempts to cope with this most basic of life's problems or dilemmas. To deal with this problem we must finally turn away from the physical and mental, and directly approach the spiritual side of our being. Although this spiritual side is more meaningful in terms of understanding and explication of life's purposes and its attendant problems, it is often not recognized as such and it is usually the least and last place that we turn for answers and explanation. Many Western philosophers and scientists see this as belonging to the metaphysical realm, of little or no use to explain or clarify physical or biological phenomena. This only reflects or reveals a lack of real understanding about the deeper aspects of human existence and experience.

To the Western mind desire is an enigma, but to the Eastern it is not. Swami Abhedananda, a learned exponent of Vedanta, tells us:

Desire is the creative effort of the mind, and that desire is at the bottom of all other functions. It is called in Sankrit 'vasana', that is the first impulse that is in the living substance or living soul.... So consider very deeply what is at the root of your whole conscious life? Why are you doing all these things that you are doing today, if you did not have the desire for something? It is the desire that guides you, and that desire has various expressions, which you may call by different names; but the motive power, the creative force, that is in you, is in the form of desire.... Desire leads to that thing which produces a pleasant sensation, which

is agreeable; and aversion to those things which are just the opposite. So desire and aversion are like two opposite poles of the same mental state. Desire is the father of all causes.... The fulfilment of desire again, is dependent on the amount of energy available for this purpose. Energy is attracted by desire. Now all desires are not fulfilled of course, not even gratified to our expectation, because we have not had sufficient energy under our control which we could use for our purpose.¹

Here we see that desire forms the foundation of our being and manifests as the impulse of the mind to create. What do we create? Life and experience. Without desire there is no urge to experience and without the urge to experience there is no life. Swami Abhedananda further states:

Everything has its polarity. In the material world we see nothing but motion; but this motion is external in the material world; and when it is in the internal plane, the same motion would appear as emotion. It would be a subjective expression. That is the polarism.... If any emotion be very intense, then there would come into operation another law, the law of action and reaction; and that emotion would bring its result in the reaction. When love is intense it will turn into hatred, or into worry or anxiety.... So love, until it reaches a certain point, will be very agreeable, but as soon as it goes beyond that point, it will begin to produce pain and suffering in the form of anxiety, worry and hatred. Love will turn to hatred, not for the same individual, but for others who are trying to take away your love. It will produce a fear of losing. Love is nothing but an attachment—a strong desire to keep something that produces an agreeable feeling. It is nothing but the expression of a strong attachment, and that strong attachment, or clinging to life, is another expression of our mental life. That is, we do not want to lose it while it is agreeable. That is the nature of desire.²

We can see here that this basic desire

1. Swami Abhedananda *True Psychology* (Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1954) pp. 88-90

2. Ibid pp. 93-94

provides for and is the source of the affective aspect of desire. The contents or cognitive aspect can vary and does, as evidenced by the seemingly infinite variety or multitude of spectrums for individual and cultural orientations. But the affective, the basic driving energy that gives the power, potency, and potentiality to desire is invariable. All living creatures, lower and higher, have it more or less, and share it because it comes from the same source, the Absolute. It is this that powers and spurs all that is living to evolve, to express and to manifest the involved, the higher nature that is already within each living creature.

From desire to desire, from experience to experience, from life to life, all that is living is moving toward a more perfect expression and realization of what and who they are. Swami Satprakashananda, a lucid interpreter of Vedanta for Western minds, writes:

The root cause of the *jīva*'s transmigration is his ignorance of the true nature of the self. Under the spell of this ignorance (*avidyā*) not only does he fail to recognize the self, but even identifies the self with its adjuncts—the body, the organs, and the mind. The self identified with the not-self is the ego, the apparent man.... Being identified with the body, the organs, and the mind an individual becomes attached to them and interested in all that concerns them. Consequently, he feels an urge to secure what is agreeable to them and shun what is disagreeable to them. Thus, from the root cause *ajñāna* (*avidyā*) proceeds man's desire for the diverse objects of the sense world and from this desire (*kāma*) proceeds action with a will.³

For most individuals, one's ego, or sense of identity, is associated with the affective, the feeling aspect of the mind. We do not usually identify with our

3. Swami Satprakashananda *The Goal and the Way* (St. Louis: The Vedanta Society of St. Louis, 1977) p. 130

thoughts and ideas. Instead, we take these to be events in the mind that we 'have'. On the other hand, feelings are taken to be more than just events in the mind. They are taken to be what we 'are'. We identify with our feelings and say, 'I am sad', or 'You are happy'. The body sense is also a powerful determinant of what and who we take ourselves to be. So many of our desires are directed towards the body, and its associated adjuncts, the senses, because that is where and how we mainly define ourselves to be, as separate, acting beings.

Swami Satprakashananda gives the following account of the specific experience we have of the waking state as distinct from the states of dream and dreamless sleep. He says:

In the waking state the self, the experiencer within, associated with the organs and the mind, dwells on the physical body and even becomes identified with the same. As the body is, so he knows himself to be. His ego-consciousness is well defined, being based on the body-idea. He realizes himself as a distinct individual. He knows whether he is young or old, dark or fair, short or tall, male or female. He knows what family, community, nation, and country he belongs to. He knows who are his kinsmen, friends, and foes. He takes care of what he owns. He is aware of his secular interests and strives for them. It is through the medium of the physical body that the experiencer comes in contact with the physical universe.⁴

It must therefore come as no surprise that each individual soul, or *Jiva*, must continue the cycle of birth and death, the continuing round of transmigration, because he ignorantly seeks to fulfil the impulse to experience in terms of desire, directing his search for that which will satisfy it outside himself, not to its real source, within. When we attempt to express, manifest, or fulfil this desire on the physical and mental

planes it would be well for us to recognize that we are doing so and perhaps be willing to accept or be satisfied with its partiality, knowing that it will always be incomplete and eventually frustrating.

Swami Vivekananda, the foremost voice of Vedanta in the West, states:

Desire is infinite. Its fulfilment is very limited. There is no end to our desires; but when we go to fulfil them, the difficulty comes. It has been so with the most primitive minds, when their desires were (few). Even (these) could not be accomplished. Now, with our arts and sciences improved and multiplied, our desires cannot be fulfilled (either). On the other hand, we are struggling to perfect means for the fulfilment of desires, and the desires are increasing...⁵

Swami Vivekananda tells us that desire is endless. It is so because it can't be fulfilled in the manner that we ordinarily attempt to do it. He goes a step further and tells us that there is another problem with desire, it brings pain. He also states:

All happiness which comes from the senses will, eventually, bring pain. All enjoyment will make us thirst for more, and that brings pain as its result. There is no limit to man's desires; he goes on desiring, and when he comes to a point where desire cannot be fulfilled, the result is pain.⁶

Although desire channeled through the senses, seeking fulfilment in the outer world, eventually brings pain, some individuals may seek their pleasure in the mental, in the realm of ideas. Here the pleasures are more subtle but equally expressive of desire. The resulting unavoidable pain may be less detectable or severe, but these desires are just as binding as those of the flesh.

5. Swami Vivekananda *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas: Advaita Ashrama, 1962) Vol 1, p. 489

6. Ibid p. 243

4. Ibid pp. 149-150

Controlling desire

Is there no way out of this circularity, where desire is seen to lead us to seek pleasure, which in turn brings us the experience of pain, then back again to desire, in an unending chain of hopeless search and struggle? Yes, there is, and it surprisingly uses the energy of desire, but changes its direction of application. If we can redirect our desires in two stages we can not only free ourselves from the inevitable painful circularity, but at the same time move toward the Absolute itself. First, we must try to direct the normally outgoing mind to thoughts and objects of a higher nature that manifest and reveal the diverse and essential aspects of the Absolute on and in the physical and mental planes. We can do this by reading the scriptures, hearing inspired spiritual talks, associate with the holy and the moral. We can try to think and act with higher ethical and moral purpose. If we can do these things we will find that we can begin to use the energy of desire to power our efforts away from the pain and waste of the secular and towards the more meaningful bliss and profit of the spiritual.

Second, as we feel increasingly able to control the outgoing mind by redirecting it, using the power of desire, we can also begin to change the basic direction of the mind itself, from outgoing to ingoing, from an outward orientation to an inward one. In the West, this idea about the out and ingoing nature of the mind is little understood or appreciated, much less experienced or practised systematically. The mind is capable of being directed outward through the senses into the external physical world, and for most individuals this is the only world they really know and so feel reasonably safe and secure in it. But the mind can also be significantly directed inward, back on

itself, where it reflexively comes to know its own dynamics and processes, and eventually, if pursued properly, its own real nature. Religion, properly understood and practised, is the systematic revelation and explication of the general and specific details of the means by which this pursuit can be followed or carried out.

The correct use of the energy of desire can help us to reorient the direction of the mind. The key to doing this is to change the cognitive aspect or contents of desire. From wanting worldly, temporal, and material objects and events, we change to wanting permanent spiritual objects, events, and values. Not only is this the key, it is the only way. We must give up in order to get, to suffer worldly loss to gain spiritual profit. This can be seen as a kind of balance, where each of us is allotted a certain amount of energy. If we direct this energy outward toward worldly, fleeting interests, we will have little or no energy or interest left for spiritual needs and purposes. If we correctly and enthusiastically direct this energy inward toward spiritual pursuits, we should have very little left over for worldly interests. For many people a conflict can develop where considerable expenditure of energy occurs because of ambivalence, 'knowing that the world offers little permanent happiness, but at the same time being unable to redirect desire toward the more meaningful inner world. This is a struggle that is to be expected, and one which we can triumph over if sincerity and persistence prevail. We are many sided creatures, capable of succumbing to the dictates of the senses, but we are also capable of responding to the higher calls of the spirit. We must choose which we will follow.

In speaking about the preparations required in order to lead us to love, or *bhakti*, where it is given to God, Swami Vivekananda tells us:

The next is called Vimoka, freedom from desires. He who wants to love God must get rid of extreme desires; desire nothing except God. This world is good so far as it helps one to go to the higher world. The objects of the senses are good so far as they help us to attain higher objects. We always forget that this world is a means to an end, and not an end itself.⁷

The world can be an ally or an enemy. It can continue to bewitch and beguile or it can educate and help to free us. Whether we know it or not, and it might be added, whether we like it or not, the body is really a blessing. It is so because it is the only means by which a living being, entangled in the net of the body and thus tricked into living on this lower level or plane of existence, can become self-aware, aware of the reality within, the essence of one's own being and existence.

The end of desire

There is an end to desire and with it comes the realization of the goal, aim, purpose, or conclusion of life and being. As long as we continue to desire, whether for worldly or, paradoxically, spiritual objects, goals, and values, we will be bound by these desires to continue our existence in the relative and the conditioned. To fully transcend our embodied existence, we must finally transcend desire itself, because it too is ultimately a bondage that ties us to the physical and mental worlds. What does it mean to transcend desire? It means that we must desire nothing,

not even heaven or realization. To desire is to be separate from that which we desire. To give up desire, totally and completely, is to become one with our real nature, that Being that is both within and without, because we have then transcended the subject-object barrier which forces us into a false duality that manifests as the knower and the known, sustaining the illusory reality of the phenomenal world.

What is the result of becoming desireless? It is that everything in life and even life itself ceases to be an object of desire. We are at total peace with the world and ourselves. To some, it would seem then that life would no longer be worth living or have any purpose and so we should then do away with the body since we have no need for it. We can achieve the same result, but in a less drastic way, merely by ceasing to cling to life, specifically the body, which is the necessary manifestation of this clinging to life on the physical and mental planes. What we will overcome is our unquestioning sense of body-mind identity with its attendant pleasures and pains, hopes and fears, seeking and suffering. Since we have no more desires we no longer chase after the seemingly positive pleasures of life or seek to escape the apparently negative pains. We accept life as it is, detached, yet filled with the abiding peace of desirelessness. To seek for more is to mistakenly accept the unreality of ourselves and the world, to settle for less is to clearly and mistakenly reject the reality of the Absolute.

7. Ibid Vol. 4, pp. 7-8

ADVAITIC CONCEPT OF TRUTH

DR. S. P. DUBEY

The experience of error can serve as the ground for systematic philosophizing. The analysis of the fact of error provides the occasion for knowing the truth. The problem of truth and error is important not only for the empirical realm but also for the super-sensible region. Conflicts and contradictions are noticed in our day-to-day experiences and they are put to logical scrutiny. Similarly, supra-sensible experiences, which are mainly the subject-matter of religious realms, are also put to rational testing. No amount of physical force can settle the problem of truth and error. Śaṅkara clearly states that reason is the source of knowledge of what is really true or untrue.¹

The Indian tradition has made considerable efforts to reconcile the conflicts between truth and error through the rational method. In order to determine whether the knowledge gained about an object is true or false, several theories have been propounded by the various schools of Indian philosophy. These theories are based on the ontological assumptions of the respective systems and explain the occurrence of erroneous knowledge in accordance with these assumptions. These theories may briefly be grouped under four categories. The first holds that truth and error are inherent in knowledge. This theory is advocated by the Sāṅkhyas who maintain that there cannot be any knowledge without the one or the other. Error is a defect in the nature of knowledge and we have to discriminate between truth and falsity. The second theory, advocated by the Naiyāyikas, holds that

both truth and error are extraneous. The genuine nature of knowledge has to be ascertained from outside. According to the Nyāya system, knowledge is an attribute generated in the self. Its truth or falsity is to be decided later through other methods. The third theory maintains that truth is inherent in knowledge, but error is external. This view is advocated by the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta schools. We shall be concerned with this theory in somewhat greater details in this context. According to this theory there cannot be knowledge without an object being in relation to the subject. Therefore knowledge arises as that of the object, that is, it arises as truth. But this truth may be limited by some adjuncts that interfere in the knowing process. The limitation has to be determined by the presence of factors that come in between the subject and the object. Thus error is brought about by external factors and truth is inherent in the nature of knowledge. If we do not accept such a position, we shall have to admit the incompetence of our mind to understand truth. The fourth theory, advocated by the Buddhists, holds that truth is extraneous to knowledge, but error is inherent. Experience, being momentary, is an error. The knowledge of the Buddha is truth not because it is knowledge, but because it is the knowledge of the Omniscient One.²

For Śaṅkara all empirical knowledge is true until the Ātman is known to be one with Brahman. For him this world, whose reality is attested by all the *pramāṇas*, cannot be negated without the

1. *Buddhirhi nah pramāṇam sadasatory-athātmyāvagamam.* Śaṅkara, Commentary on *Katha Upaniṣad* 6. 12

2. For a good discussion on 'truth and error' see, C. K. Raja, *Some Fundamental Problems in Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: 1960) pp. 95 ff 108

knowledge of the higher reality. A rule reigns supreme unless there is an exception to it.³ Brahman-experience is the highest knowledge in Advaita Vedanta, since there is no other knowledge that contradicts it.⁴

The principle of non-contradiction (*abādha*) appears to be the test of truth in Advaitism. Śaṅkara states that two opposed attributes cannot simultaneously inhere in one and the same ground.⁵ He also says that the contradictory element is not-that.⁶ The *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* also treats the principle of non-contradiction as the test of true knowledge (*abādhitārtha viṣayajñānatvam*).

A distinction is made between *bādha* (sublation) and *virodha* (contradiction) in Advaita Vedanta. *Bādha* is defined as the ascertainment of falsity,⁷ whereas *virodha* is taken to be the incapacity of two things to reside in the same time and place or to be identical.⁸ Professor Devaraja notes that the absence of *bādha* is not altogether the same thing as the absence of *virodha*. Contradictory predicates may inhere simultaneously in different entities, while *bādha* implies sublation and disappearance of an experience or an object of experience. Hence, he holds, *sat* and *asat*, when found together in the act of error, may be treated as 'contraries', rather than 'contradictories'.⁹

In Advaita Vedanta all cognitions are taken to be self-luminous (*sva-prakāśa*). Further, all knowledge is treated as true

knowledge. Knowledge is known to be true or valid directly, that is, by the same instrument by which it is known as knowledge. If it is not taken to be true at the time of occurrence, a state of uncertainty and infinite regress will always prevail. Hence the intrinsic validity of knowledge has to be accepted. Error is the privation of truth caused by various obstacles. This theory is called *svataḥ-prāmāṇya-vāda*. Since the self-evident character of knowledge is hidden by prejudices etc, to assure that the knowledge (at empirical level) is free from flaws, several empirical tests, such as correspondence, practical efficiency and coherence¹⁰ are employed.

The mode of knowledge called 'authority' (*śabda*) is admitted for the facts that cannot be known by other means of knowledge. The two Mīmāṃsās (Pūrva and Uttara) hold that the scripture brings to us the knowledge of what cannot be known through other sources. The Karma-Mīmāṃsā takes *dharma* to be the object of scriptural knowledge. For the Uttara-Mīmāṃsā the knowledge of the Brahman (or the Ātman) is the object of scriptural knowledge. Śaṅkara holds that the authority of the scripture as a valid means of knowledge is to be admitted for things that cannot be perceived.¹¹ For objects knowable through other sources of knowledge the scripture need not be taken as a valid source.

The scriptural texts are intrinsically valid and cannot be falsified by other *pramāṇas* when they refer to non-perceptible objects. Śaṅkara says that the Vedas do not require other *pramāṇas*

3. Śaṅkara on the *Brahmasūtra* 2.2.31

4. Ibid 2.1.14: *badhaka jnanantarabhavat*

5. Ibid 2.2.33: *na hyekasmin dharmiṇi yugapat (sadasatvādī) viruddha dharma samavesah sambhavati.*

6. Ibid 3.2.4: *vaitathyam badhyamanatvat*

7. *Ratnaprabhā* on *Brahmasūtra* 2.1.14: *mithyātva niscayah bādhaḥ.*

8. *Pañcapādikā*, Comm. 53: *sahanavasthanalakṣaṇo ... parasparanatmata lakṣaṇah*

9. N. K. Devaraja, *Introduction to Śaṅkara's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 136

10. Śaṅkara on *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.2: *evambhuta vastu viṣayanam pramanyam vastutantram.*

11. Śaṅkara on the *Gītā* 18.66: *tat pramanyasya adrsta visayatvat*

for validation, as the sun does not require any attestation for luminosity.¹² Scriptural knowledge, of course, is valid only for the removal of ignorance. It does not provide the knowledge of the unknown object.¹³ Ultimately the knowledge of the object has to come from immediate experience. In this sense direct experience of the truth of *śruti* is possible here and now. Thus, for Advaitins, the scriptural truth is doubly certain, negatively as well as positively. First, it cannot be contradicted by other means of knowledge. Secondly, it can be realized by anyone here and now.

As noted above, for Advaitins all the *pramāṇas*, including the scripture, are valid only phenomenally. Ultimately they are all false. The realization of Brahman is accomplished directly in experience.¹⁴ False knowledge is removed as soon as the knowledge of the identity between Brahman and the Self is manifested.¹⁵ To the question as to how the scriptural texts, being false, impart the knowledge of the true nature of Brahman (or the identity between Brahman and the Ātman) Śaṅkara's answer is that falsity can lead us to truth, as the dream experiences have real effect in waking life, or as the lines of the letter give us the knowledge of the imperishable.¹⁶ In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.10), Naciketas is said to have obtained eternal position through impermanent factors. But in the ultimate analysis, it has been admitted by the scripture that the Real cannot be described positively; it

can be described only negatively as 'not this, not this'.¹⁷

In Advaita Vedanta truth (*satya*) has been identified with the Real (*sat*) or Brahman. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* tells us that Brahman is Truth, Knowledge and Infinite.¹⁸ The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.1.20) states that it is the 'truth of truth' (*satyasya satyam*). Śaṅkara, while commenting on the *Īśa Upaniṣad* (15) clearly identifies *satya* with Brahman. Further, he remarks that the truth of the Being is its reality.¹⁹ While commenting on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.1.1) he emphatically tells us that the real is truth (*sadeva satyam*). In his commentary on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.8.16) also he asserts this identity (*tatsatyam*).

Usually the Sanskrit term *sat* stands for the Being, the Real or the Ultimate (in the Advaitic context, for Brahman or the Ātman). It denotes the primordial Being in undifferentiated unity. *Satya*, on the other hand, is used for the same Being immanent in its differentiations. *Sat* is of the nature of pure existence,²⁰ and is defined as that which is not contradicted in all the three times, the past, the present and the future. (*trikālābādhitvam sat*). *Satya* (Truth), for Śaṅkara, is the non-transgression of the determined form of the object.²¹

Falsity (*anṛta*), as different from truth, is therefore defined as the transgression of the determined form of the object.²²

12. Śaṅkara on *Brahmasūtra* 2.1.1: *Vedasya hi nirapekṣam svarthe pramaṇyam raveriva rūpa viṣaye*

13. Śaṅkara on the *Gītā* 2.69

14. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 3.9: *Brahmaveda Brahmaiva bhavati*; Śaṅkara on *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.2: *anubhavavasanatvat ... brahmajñānasya*

15. Śaṅkara on *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.4: *mithyajñānāpayasca Brahmaatmaikya vijñānadbhavati*

16. Ibid 2.1.14

17. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.9: 'neti neti'

18. *Taittirīya Up* 2.1.1: *Satyam Jñānam Anantam Brahma*

19. Śaṅkara on *Taittirīya Up*. 2.1.1: *sanmātratvam ca satyatvam*

20. Śaṅkara on *Chāndogya Up*. 6.2.1: *sadeva sadityastitā mātram vastu*

21. Ibid 6.1.4: *yadrupena yanniscitam tadrupam na vyabharati tat satyam*

22. Ibid *yadrupena yanniscitam tadrupena vyabharadanṛtamityucyate. ato vikaro'nṛtam*

Transgression of the determined form of modification is false and nothing but a name arising from speech. In the clay-pot relation the clay is the only reality; all the modifications being false.²³ Modification has no transcendental reality; clay is the only true object.²⁴ In any modification or illusory experience, one of the two terms is real and that is the substratum.

The term *anṛta* in the Advaita school seems to be used as opposed to *satya* (truth). When we read Śaṅkara's introduction to the commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras* we find him coupling *satyanṛta* (truth and falsity). It is a common and natural practice to mingle the two, although they are opposed to each other like light and darkness or like the subject and the object. *Anṛta* has been stated to be the covering of the genuine desire (for salvation).²⁵ Śaṅkara is of the view that attachment to external objects such as women, food, clothings etc., produces chequered behaviour, and that, because of false knowledge of the real, is called *anṛta*.²⁶ Thus *anṛta* is the covering or the super-imposition (*adhyāsa*). Superimposition is the cognition of something which is not there²⁷; it is treated as ignorance (*avidyā*) by the learned.²⁸ Conversely, the ascertainment of the nature of that which is (the Self) by means of discrimination of that (which is superimposed on the Self) is called knowledge (*vidyā*).

The usage of the term *anṛta*, as different from *satya*, suggests the identity of the

terms *ṛta* and *satya*. Śaṅkara seems to be suggesting this identification when, while commenting on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (1.1.1), he says that 'the same, verily, is truth' (*satyamiti sa eva*). But the *Upaniṣad* seems to have used the two terms distinctly. The disciple, while invoking Brahman in its perceptible form (Vāyu), uses the two expressions as two distinct substantives.²⁹ Śaṅkara also in his comments on the above passage makes a clear distinction between the two. *Ṛta*, for him, stands for the meaning properly established in our intellect according to scriptural texts and according to our duties.³⁰ Truth (*satya*), on the other hand, is the same meaning effected (put into practice) by speech and body.³¹ Incidentally, the *Yoga-sūtras* also suggest a distinction between the two. There the conceptual facts expressed through words are treated as *satya* and the perceptual facts as *ṛta*. Further, truth is said to be the exact conformity of the speech with mind.³² It is also called correct statement (made for the good of others). Śaṅkara also takes truth to be a true statement.³³ In the Yoga-system the analogy of smoke and fire is also often presented to bring out the distinction between the two concepts. The beginning of the continuous smokeline is fire and it symbolizes truth; the knowledge after the realization of fire represents *ṛta*.

Ontologically, the Advaitism of Śaṅkara treats empirical existence as appearance (*mithya*). But epistemologically, this

23. Ibid *vacarambhaṇa vikāro namadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam*

24. Ibid *na vikāro nāma vastvasti paramarthato*

25. Śaṅkara on *Chāndogya Up* 8.3.1: *satāmanṛtamapidhānam*

26. Ibid ... *mīthyajnananimittatvadanṛtamityucyate.*

27. *adhyāso nāma atasmin tadbuddhi,* Śaṅkara's Introduction to the *Brahmasūtra*.

28. Ibid *adhyasam paṇḍita avidya iti manyante*

29. *Taittirīya Up.* 1.1.1: *Ṛtam vadiṣyāmi, satyam vadiṣyāmi*

30. Śaṅkara on *Taittirīya Up.* 1.1: *Ṛtam yathasastram yathakartavyam buddhau supariniscitamartham*

31. Ibid *satyamiti sa eva vakkayabhyam sampadyamanah; satyam ... yatha pramanavagatam vaktavyam* Śaṅkara on *Taittirīya Up.* 1.12.1

32. *Yoga-sūtras* 1.43 and 3.30

33. Śaṅkara on *Taittirīya Up.* 1.9.1: *satyam ca satya vacanam*

system is realistic. Knowledge is taken to be object-oriented.³⁴ It is not a mental activity.³⁵ A mental mode (*vr̥tti*) must have an object (*viṣaya*). The object may be either the mode itself (*svaviṣaya-vr̥tti*) or something else. But the object must be there. Since all knowledge must be having some object or the other, the knowledge of Brahman is also declared to be object-based.³⁶ When Śaṅkara criticizes Buddhist Idealism (*Vijñānavāda*) in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras* (2.2.28) his epistemological realism becomes apparent. He emphatically maintains that what is completely mental cannot even appear *as if* external. He questions the very possibility of the expression 'as if external' (*kasmāt bahirvaditi brūyuh?*). In epistemology a clear distinction has to be made between knowledge and its object. Śaṅkara states that even the *Vijñānavādins* admit the differences between true and false cognitions. True knowledge or cognition has concurrence. Our knowledge of silver is true when it agrees with the knowledge of other persons. Lack of such agreement indicates erroneous character of knowledge.

Error, when analysed, points to an object apart from its cognition. When the knowledge of the snake on the rope is sublated, we make the statement: 'This

34. Śaṅkara on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* 4.1.15: *jñānam tu vastutantratvāt*

35. Śaṅkara on *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.4: *nanu jñānam nama manasī kriya, na*

36. Ibid 1.1.2: *Brahmajñānamapi vastutantra-meva*

is a rope'. We also say that there was no snake at all even when it appeared to be so. Such cognitions are explained in the Vedānta of Śaṅkarite tradition by the theory called *anirvacanīya-khyāti*. The theory asserts that in order to justify the appearance as well as the sublation of the illusory content, the presence of an object belonging to the category of *anirvacanīya* must be admitted in the locus of its presentation. Since the object of appearance can be said to be neither real nor unreal, it has to be assigned a third category, namely, the category of *anirvacanīya*.³⁷ Had this object been real like a post, it would not have been cancelled or sublated. But had it been totally unreal like the sky-flower, it would not have appeared even when it appeared to be so.³⁸

Thus we see that the theory of error leads us to the knowledge of the Real. The sublation of the illusory object gives us the knowledge of that which is not sublated, that is, the Real, the Truth. At the empirical level the illusory object is sublated. But at the transcendental level even the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) level is also sublated. The theory of three Truths (or Reality), namely, the *pāramārthika*, the *vyāvahārika* and the *prātibhāsika*, saves the pragmatic truth of appearances and also establishes the non-duality of true Existence.

37. *sadasadbhyāmanirvacanīya*: cf *Pañcapādikā*, p. 4 Śaṅkara on *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.5

38. *saccenna bādhetā, asaccenna pratibhāseta*

SHAMBHU CHARAN MALLIK

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

It is remarkable that in this present age a person can live in the world without having or even touching money, without building a home or even owning any possessions. Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated through his life the ideal of renunciation to modern man. Once he said: 'A man cannot realize God unless he renounces everything mentally. A sadhu cannot lay things up. "Birds and wandering monks do not make provision for the morrow."' Indeed, those who depend wholly on God are provided with everything they need. This was also verified in Sri Ramakrishna's life: 'The Divine Mother showed me in a vision the five suppliers of my needs: first, Mathur Babu, and second, Shambhu Mallik, whom I had not then met. I had a vision of a fair-skinned man with a cap on his head. Many days later, when I first met Shambhu, I recalled that vision; I realized that it was he whom I had seen in that ecstatic state.'

Very little is known about Shambhu Charan Mallik. His father's name was Sanatan Mallik, and their home was in the Sinduriapati section of Calcutta. Shambhu also had a garden house in Dakshineswar, just a few hundred yards south of the Kali temple. Shambhu was married to a devout woman. They had no children. As an agent of a British firm, he earned a good salary, which he used wisely. In fact, he was well known for his generosity and noble character. Because of his philanthropic activities, Kamalnayan Street, where Shambhu's parental home was located, was later renamed Shambhu Mallik's Lane.

Shambhu's interest in God brought him to the Brahmo Samaj, where he developed a close friendship with Keshab Chandra Sen. Once he took Keshab to Sri Ramakrishna for a visit. Shambhu's faith in God was extraordinary. Although he was wealthy and could well afford a carriage, he used to walk from Calcutta to his garden house in Dakshineswar. Once a friend said to him: 'It is risky to walk such a long distance. Why don't you come in a carriage?' Hearing this, Shambhu's face became red and he exclaimed: 'I set out repeating the name of God! What danger can befall me?'

After Mathur's passing away in 1871, Manimohan Sen of Panihati served the Master for a short while. Shambhu then took the responsibility of being Sri Ramakrishna's supplier. Because he lived close to the Kali temple, he came to know the Master very well. The Master would often go for a walk towards Shambhu's house and meet him in his garden, where they would talk about God. Since the Master came to him on his own, Shambhu considered himself very special. One day he proudly said to the Master: 'You come here frequently. Yes, you come because you feel happy talking with me.' As Shambhu's love and devotion for Sri Ramakrishna increased, he started to call him 'Guruji'. But Sri Ramakrishna could not bear to be addressed as 'Guru', 'Father', or 'Master',¹ because these terms generally

1. In the Bengali language there are several words meaning 'Master'. The word Sri Ramakrishna was referring to is *karta*, which literally means 'doer' or 'agent'. Many people called him *Thākur*, which also means 'Master'.

inflate a person's ego and bind him. He said to Shambhu: 'Who is the guru and who is the disciple? You are my guru.' Nevertheless, Shambhu continued to address Sri Ramakrishna that way.

Shambhu's wife was also very devoted to Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother. Whenever Holy Mother was in Dakshineswar, Shambhu's wife would invite her to their garden house every Tuesday (an auspicious day for the worship of the Divine Mother) to worship her as a goddess.

Holy Mother came to Dakshineswar for the second time, probably in the middle of 1874. There she lived in a tiny room of the *nahabat*, where the Master's mother also stayed. Wanting to see her more comfortable, Shambhu bought a piece of land near the temple garden and had a small cottage built for her. Captain Vishvanath Upadhyaya, an officer of the Nepal government, was also a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna's. When he heard from Shambhu about the building project, he offered to supply all of the timber for the cottage. Holy Mother stayed there for a year. She cooked for the Master in that cottage and from there carried the food to him at the temple garden. A woman was appointed to help her with the house work. Sometimes the Master visited the cottage to keep her from feeling too lonely. When Holy Mother fell sick with dysentery, Shambhu engaged Dr. Prasad to treat her. In order to convalesce, she was sent to her village home in Jayrambati, probably in 1876.

Shambhu had a charitable dispensary in his garden house. One day while the Master was at his garden house Shambhu found out that Sri Ramakrishna often suffered from stomach trouble, caused by the irregular food and impure water at the

temple garden. Shambhu advised him to take small doses of opium as an antidote and offered to give him a package from the dispensary before he left. In the course of conversation, however, both forgot about it. After taking his leave the Master started down the road, and then remembered about the opium. He returned and found out that Shambhu was busy in the inner apartment, so without disturbing him, the Master went to the dispensary supervisor and got some opium from him. But as soon as he left Shambhu's garden, he could not find his way back to the temple garden. He felt as if someone was pulling his legs in the opposite direction. Yet when he turned around he could clearly see Shambhu's place. Then he realized that Shambhu had asked him to take the opium from him—not from the supervisor, who had no right to give it without Shambhu's permission. Thus, Sri Ramakrishna's action had been a wrong one on two counts—falsehood and theft. Therefore the Divine Mother deterred him. The Master immediately returned to the dispensary, but by now the supervisor had also left. He then threw the package through a window, calling loudly, 'Hello, here I am returning your opium.' Setting out again for the temple garden, he could see the way clearly, and he reached there without further difficulty.²

2. There is another version of this incident mentioned in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*: 'Master (to the doctor): "... It is impossible for me to lay up anything. One day I visited Shambhu Mallik's garden house. At that time I had been suffering badly from stomach trouble. Shambhu said to me: "Take a grain of opium now and then. It will help you." He tied a grain of opium in a corner of my cloth. As I was returning to the Kali temple, I began to wander about near the gate as if unable to find the way. Then I threw the opium away and at once regained my normal state. I returned to the temple garden.''

On another day when Sri Ramakrishna was visiting Shambhu's garden house, Shambhu found out that the Master was not feeling well. Thinking that some sweet pomegranates would be good for him, Shambhu bought some and offered them to the Master before he left for the temple garden. Sri Ramakrishna accepted the gift to fulfil the desire of the devotee, but as he turned to leave he could not find the gate. He began roaming around Shambhu's garden like a drunkard. Shambhu noticed it and could not understand what was wrong. Finally he came out of his house and brought the Master inside. Sri Ramakrishna then returned the pomegranates to Shambhu and became normal again. Explaining to Shambhu, the Master said that if he carried anything with him or hoarded anything, his mind became confused and his nervous system recoiled. Shambhu was amazed to hear of the Master's renunciation.

Once Sri Ramakrishna went with Girija, a disciple of Bhairavi Brahmani, to visit Shambhu in his garden house. The three of them became absorbed in conversation about God, and did not notice the passing of time until the sun had set. Bidding good-night to Shambhu, the Master and Girija went to the road. It was pitch dark, and neither of them could find the way back to the Kali temple. Girija had a supernatural power, however, and he told the Master to wait. After a moment's pause, Girija illumined the whole road with a long stream of light emanating from his own body. He then escorted the Master back to the temple garden.

Shambhu had a catholic view of religions. He used to read the Bible to Sri Ramakrishna, and in this way the Master learned about Christ and Christianity. Although the Master did not care for the Christian emphasis on sin, the desire came to him to realize God through the Christian path.

One day he went to Jadu Mallik's garden house, which was adjacent to the temple garden. In the parlour of this house there were many pictures of holy persons, including one of Virgin Mary with the child Jesus sitting on her lap. While the Master was looking at it, he felt that the figures of the Mother and Child were awakened, and that rays of light emanated from them and entered his heart. He returned to the temple garden in an entirely new mood and for three days was permeated by the ideal and personality of Christ. During this period he did not even go to the temple to salute the Divine Mother. Near the end of the third day, while he was walking in the Panchavati, he saw a tall foreign-looking man walking towards him. The man had a beautiful face with large, brilliant eyes, while the tip of his nose was a little flat. At first the Master wondered who this person could be. Then a voice from within told him, 'This is Jesus Christ, the great yogi, the loving son of God, one with his Father, who shed his heart's blood and suffered tortures for the salvation of mankind.' Jesus then embraced Sri Ramakrishna and merged into his body. This vision convinced the Master that Jesus was a Divine Incarnation.

Although Sri Ramakrishna had very little formal education and did not read books, still, educated people would come to listen to his words. He demonstrated to the modern world that without reading books and studying scriptures one can have the knowledge of God. The Divine Mother herself revealed to him what was in the scriptures. From his keen observation and his own experiences, he fashioned tales and parables to illustrate his teachings, and these teachings were so practical and full of wisdom that many scholars were deeply impressed. One day Shambhu said to someone, pointing to the Master: 'Here is Shaktiram Singh, a great hero, quite able

to beat anyone without a sword or shield.'

Shambhu was a good devotee as well as a karma yogi, and Sri Ramakrishna's influence made him even more unattached and unselfish. One day Shambhu expressed a desire to the Master: 'Please bless me, sir, that I may spend all my money for good purposes, such as building hospitals and dispensaries, making roads, and digging wells.' We find this wonderful philanthropic idea of Shambhu's mentioned a number of times by the Master in the Gospel. But Sri Ramakrishna never fully approved of it. He said to Shambhu: 'It will be good if you can do all these things in a spirit of detachment. But that is very difficult. Whatever you may do, you must always remember that the aim of this life of yours is the attainment of God and not the building of hospitals and dispensaries. Suppose God appeared before you and said to you, "Accept a boon from me." Would you then ask him, "O God, build me some hospitals and dispensaries?" Or would you not rather pray to him: "O God, may I have pure love at your Lotus Feet! May I have your uninterrupted vision?" Hospitals, dispensaries, and all such things are unreal. Furthermore, after realizing God one feels that he alone is the doer and we are but his instruments. Then why should we forget him and destroy ourselves by being involved in too many activities? After realizing him, one may, through his grace, become his instrument in building many hospitals and dispensaries.'

Shambhu thought that the main purpose of human life was to offer everything one had to God and to help the poor. One day he said to Sri Ramakrishna, 'Please bless me, that I may die leaving my riches at

the Lotus Feet of God.' The Master replied: 'These are riches only to you. What riches can you offer God? To him these are mere dust and straw.'

Although Shambhu was generous, he was also careful about his charity. The Master's nephew Hriday one day asked Shambhu for some money. Shambhu told him: 'Why should I give you money? You can earn your livelihood by working. Even now you are earning something. The case of a very poor person is different. The purpose of charity is fulfilled if one gives money to the blind or the lame.' Hriday then said: 'Sir, please don't say that. I don't need your money. May God help me not to become blind or deaf or extremely poor! I don't want you to give, and I don't want to receive.'

Shambhu served Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother for four years, but he gradually became bedridden with diabetes. The Master went with Hriday to see him while he was ill and found that he was quite cheerful and had no fear of death. Shambhu said to Hriday, 'Hridu, I have packed my things and am ready for the journey.' When the Master told him not to say such ominous words, Shambhu replied, 'No, please bless me that I may cast aside all these possessions and go to God.' While returning to Dakshineswar the Master told Hriday, 'The oil in Shambhu's lamp has run out.' Shambhu died in 1877.

One day several years later, while talking about Shambhu, Sri Ramakrishna said to the devotees: 'God's devotees have nothing to fear. They are His own. He always stands by them.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SELECTIONS FROM RAMANA GITA:
BY A. R. NATARAJAN. Published by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 40/41, II Cross, Lower Palace Orchards, Bangalore 560 003. Pp. 52. Rs. 5.00

Consisting of 300 verses, running into eighteen chapters, the *Ramana Gita* is a record of the sage's answers to several questions raised before him during the years 1916-17. The original conversations took place in Tamil but they were rendered in Sanskrit verse by his illustrious poet-disciple, Vasishtha Ganapati Muni. This work, along with a classic commentary upon it—*prabha*—by Sri Kapali Sastekar, was published first in 1946 during the life-time of the Maharshi. A full English translation of the work has been a desideratum ever since; the present work—though slender—is a welcome attempt in this direction. The author, Sri Natarajan, dynamic founder of the Centre for Learning (Bangalore), makes a selection of a few verses (42 in all) bearing on the practice of the quest of the Self, and adds a helpful commentary on them. The Sanskrit originals and English translations are printed side by side, followed by his comments including citations from the other works of the sage.

Under the heading, *Science of the Heart*, the verse reads: "The "I" thought is the root of all thoughts. The source from which the "I" thought rises is the Heart. This heart is different from the blood circulating organ. If the word is split as *hṛt* and *ayam* the "centre" and "this", it stands for the Self." Explaining the verse, Sri Natarajan writes: "The Heart referred to as the source of the individuality, the source of the "I" thought is not the physical heart to the left but is the spiritual Heart on the right side, two digits from the Centre."

What is the *upāsana* in this path. 'Ramana equates it with intermittent abidance in one's natural state during spiritual practice. When such abidance becomes steady and unswerving it is termed knowledge. The means and the end are not different.'

On the importance of direct experience, the sage is forthright: "The understanding is one's identity with the Self, based on the scriptures, even if it is correct and free from doubt, does not by itself confer experience. Experience of the natural state during spiritual practice is termed *upāsana*. When this becomes permanent it is "Knowledge".'

How is one to recognize a Knower? 'By his mark of equality to all creation.' (P. 47) The Maharshi's remarks on occult powers and their irrelevance to the central quest, on the 'knot' of which the Upanishad speaks, on the means to bring about mind control, are of inestimable value to the spiritual aspirant of whatever persuasion.

This book of selections should draw the reader to the original *Ramana Gita* where abstruse concepts are explained in simple language, intricate questions are answered in direct terms, and possible conflicts between spiritual life and family life are resolved.

SRI M.P. PANDIT

Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry

STATICS AND DYNAMICS OF PROGRESS: THE VIVEKANANDA CONCEPT.
BY ANANDA. Published by the Author, C/o. Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan, 99 Sarat Bose Road, Calcutta 700 026. 1983. Pp. 179. Price not mentioned.

This is an elaborate essay on Swami Vivekananda's views on man and the progress of civilization. The task is difficult. Swami Vivekananda never delivered lectures specifically on this topic. His views in this regard are found scattered throughout the volumes of his *Complete Works*. It is to the credit of the author to have collected and collated these pieces and to have woven them into a rich tapestry.

The author has presented Swamiji's thoughts against the background of the various social theories of progress evolved by philosophers and sociologists like Empedocles, Bradley, Bergson, Eckhart, Margaret Mead, E.B. Tylor, Kroeber, Kropotkin, Leslie A. White, Paul Tillich, and a host of others. About civilization, E.B. Tylor says: 'Civilization being a process of long and complex culture can only thoroughly be understood when studied through its entire range; that past is continually needed to explain the present.' (P. 14) Compare this with Swamiji's 'Everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. So long as they forgot the past, the Hindu nation remained in a state of stupor and as soon as they have begun to look into the past, there is in everyside a fresh manifestation of life.' (P. 15) At another place

Eckhart states 'To get at the core of God at his greatest, one must first get into the core of himself.' (P. 45) Swamiji propounds nothing different when he says: *ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca*. To infuse some more spirit and life into the individual and the community. According to Kropotkin, property is theft. Swamiji says that property is bondage and renunciation is freedom. Swamiji believes that character and purity are the sine qua non for all types of progress (p. 45).

Many more similar passages could be cited. The book leads us on into the depth of Swamiji's thought through a world full of the ideas of great thinkers. The experience of reading this book is very refreshing. By this exercise, we not only understand Swamiji better, but we get a comprehensive view of the theories of the philosophers and sociologists who have contributed to the growth of civilization and culture. However, the book is a monolith. A terse book of this type needs to be cut into sizable chapters so that the reader can gulp it in measured doses. It is hoped that the author would suitably divide the material chapterwise in the next edition and would add an index of names and subjects. This will facilitate reading and will enable the reader to retain the thoughts longer for assimilation. It would also add to the research value of the book. Many more such books from the author are welcome. They are the need of the day.

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

GLIMPSES FROM OUR GLORIOUS PAST:
BY SWAMI SAKHYANANDA. Published by
International Society for the Investigation of
Ancient Civilization, 31, Poes Garden, Madras
600 086. 1981. Pp. 74. Rs. 10.

Swami Sakhyananda, a monk of Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trichur, Kerala, and versatile scholar in Sanskrit, Yoga-Vedanta and ancient Indian history and culture, has contributed a great deal in these fields in his mother tongue, Malayalam. The present book is a collection of eight articles wherein he has given cogent arguments in favour of adopting a national method of historical research as envisaged by Swami Vivekananda. If India wants to build up a glorious future, she must study her past.

The learned author takes Itihasas and Puranas (regarded as the Fifth Veda) as the only valid

source for the study of our ancient history and culture. Many of the modern scholars follow only an anti-national and biased line of historical research based mainly on the contemporary records of foreign travellers, who had scanty knowledge of the country, and on archaeological investigations introduced by Europeans. Their Christian and Western prejudices prompted most of them to attempt to establish that India was civilized only after her contact with the West. Consequently our children are taught only the Oxford and Cambridge histories of India which are based on two hypotheses. One is the myth of Aryan invasion concocted by British scholars for political reasons to show that Indians had always been a race of slaves ruled by invaders. Aborigines, Dravidians, Aryans, Muslims and the Europeans came here one after the other to rule and thereafter to be ruled. As such, the British had every right to rule and no Indian should try to be free, for freedom would only invite fresh invasions. The second fallacy invented was that Alexander was a contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya in the 4th century B.C. But the truth is that Chandragupta, the Maurya emperor, died in 1,502 B.C. and Samudragupta, the Gupta monarch, drove Alexander away, married the daughter of his commander-in-chief, and received Megasthenes in his court in the 4th century B.C.

The learned Swami puts the coronation of Manu in B.C. 8,576 on the basis of traditional chronology and Vedic astronomical calendar. He applies the hitherto neglected astronomical data, an important tool for historical research in his calculations. His *Kālacakram* diagram traces the historical period from Umā-Mahesvara in B.C. 15,000 to 1979 A.D. on the basis of four yugas, 12 Rāsis, and 27 Nakṣatras. Well versed in Indian astronomy and astrology, he further strengthens his theses with his references to another reputed scholar, K. Srinivasa Raghavan. Swamiji has given two fine maps of the western India as it was in B.C. 4,500 before the advent of Kaliyuga in 3,101 B.C., and of the excavated modern sites of Sumeru culture. The date of birth of Śankaracarya is proved beyond a doubt; he was born on Vaisākha Śukla 5 in Kali Era 2,593 = 508 B.C.

The solar and lunar dynasties, in course of time, spread over the whole earth. In that process they spread all over the world Indian culture as gentle dew falls unseen and unheard. This cultural diffusion revolutionized world thought silently and unperceived.

The history of a nation must be written and judged by its own scholars. Books written by biased Western scholars must be put in cold storage, the author argues. The author's approach is sound, scientific and succinct. A perusal of his learned treatise will compel any unbiased scholar to think of rewriting our past on the basis of India's ancient heritage.

N. Mahalingam, chairman of the Society which has published the book, has added a learned foreword to it. The book deserves wide circulation and publicity amongst scholars in all parts of the world. The results would be as startling as the task is challenging. The book explains methodically ancient hidden lore from the astronomical point of view. The printing and get-up of the book are fine. An index would have added to its value.

DR. D.S. TRIVEDA

Research Professor, Prakrit Vidyapith, Vaisali

THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS LECTURES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: CONDENSED AND RETOLD BY SWAMI TAPASYANANDA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 600 004. 1985. Pp. 216 + XV. Rs. 10.

This is the second volume in the series *Studies in Swami Vivekananda* issued by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras. It presents an abridgement of the Swami Vivekananda's lectures on philosophy and religion to about 'one third of the size of the originals' with a view to providing a compact and handy digest for the reader. While the first volume includes *The Four Yogas of Swami Vivekananda*, the second centres on the Vedanta philosophy and allied subjects.

In India philosophy and religion have through the ages intermingled with each other in their quest for the Ultimate Reality. While western philosophers have built their systems by sounding the death-dirge of theological beliefs, Indian thinkers have always regarded *dharma* and *darshan* as the two sides of the same coin. This is evident in the philosophical discourses of Swami Vivekananda which contain 'the universal spiritual values' along with their 'rational justification'.

Swamiji's view of religion is comprehensive; it is both universal and synthetic. At times he equated science with religion by arguing that while the former discovered the laws of the physical world, the latter explained the truths of

the metaphysical world. Both satisfied man's inner urge for knowledge. According to Swami Vivekananda religion is not a matter of rituals or dogmas but the path to Self-realization. It is not merely the concern of arm-chair philosophers or recluses 'interested only in the life hereafter', but has immense practical use in solving the day-to-day problems of ordinary people. Vedanta which is the epitome of the best in all religions, asserts the divinity of man as embodied in the cryptic saying: 'Thou art That'. The God of Vedanta is identical with the Self 'and therefore the nearest of the near'. 'It is better that we know we are God and give up the fool's search after him', admonished Swami Vivekananda.

The book begins with Swami Vivekananda's four lectures on Practical Vedanta, and goes on to discuss the ideal of a Universal religion, the relation between reason and religion, the steps to self-realization, the hidden powers of the mind, the *raison d'être* of Sannyasa, the quintessence of Hinduism, and the philosophy of Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Sankhya.

Swami Tapasyanandaji has done the abridgement in such a way that all the essential points and power of the original have been not only retained but also brought out in bold relief in simpler diction and more lucid style. The author deserves congratulations for first conceiving and then conscientiously working on this difficult project. It is hoped that he would bring out the third volume in this series at the earliest.

DR. SATISH K. KAPOOR PH. D

*Postgraduate Department of History
Lyalpur Khalsa College, Jalandhar City.*

THE VOICE OF VALMIKI (RAMA): BY VIDYAVACHASPATI V. PANOLY. Published by Smt. Soudamini Panoly, 'Ram Vihar', P.O. Kozhikode-4 (South India). 1982. Pp. 95. Rs. 6.

This is a small book which attempts to interpret the central message of the great epic in the light of Rama's character. The earlier publication in the same series was about Sita. Both the books, taken together provide a glimpse of the cultural ideas of this great land. The present book opens with a chapter on reincarnation and the author presents here his views and those of others with regard to the theory of incarnation.

In the third chapter, the author refers to the birth of Rama and the mysteries surrounding that event. He discusses the impact of Buddhism

and some other non-Hindu cults on the story of Ramayana. The author further justifies the killing of Tataka and narrates the Ahalya episode, suggesting that Rama brought about the reconciliation of Gautama and his wife. The author finds traces of the Upanisadic philosophy in Sumitra's words of consolation to Kausalya on the eve of Rama's departure to forest. The author has successfully analysed the human and divine qualities of Rama. Rama's advice to Bharata goes a long way in driving out fears and anxieties from a common man.

The author has presented quotations from Ramayana in support of his elucidation of Rama's character. The interpretation, though new, does not go against the spirit of the original epic. The study of the great epic on the lines indicated by Sri Panoly will enrich our cultural treasure.

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

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON GURU GOBIND SINGH: BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA. Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Bombay 400 007. 1984 P. 7+VII Re. 1.

Guru Gobind Singh was one of those great religious leaders who sacrificed their lives at the altar of truth, justice and freedom. He organized and infused a tremendous martial spirit into sikhs who originally constituted a religious sect. The aim of the present booklet is to reveal the national dimension of the impact of Guru Gobind Singh on Indian thought. 'Himself a hero of a rare type whose intellect and character and vision have powerfully influenced the shaping of modern India, Swami Vivekananda saw in Guru Gobind Singh, a powerful nation builder', says the learned author of this booklet. 'His character, dedication, intellect, courage, and above all compassion mark him out as a born leader and saviour; in his life as well as in his defeat and death, he has been a beacon of light and hope to millions of his countrymen.'

In his lecture at Lahore in 1897, Swami Vivekananda exhorted his audience to cultivate the great qualities of the Guru. 'Mark me, everyone of you will have to be a Guru Gobind Singh, if you want to do good to your country'. And again, 'You may see thousands of defects in your countrymen, but mark their Hindu blood.

They are the first gods you will have to worship, even if they do everything to hurt you...If they drive you out, return to die in silence like that mighty lion, Gobind Singh. Such a man is worthy of the name of Hindu; such an ideal ought to be before us always.'

To avoid any confusion in the mind of the reader, Swami Ranganathananda clarifies that the word Hindu 'originally represented the common national stock'. Even Sir Mohammed Iqbal once proclaimed that we were all 'Hindis' and 'Hindustan' was our country.

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan deserves to be congratulated for producing this small but valuable booklet at a minimal price.

DR. SATISH K. KAPOOR PH. D
*Postgraduate Department of History
Lyalpur Khalsa College, Jalandhar City*

KANNADA

RAMANA MAHARSHI MATTU AVARA SANDESA: BY PAUL BRUNTON. Translated by A.S. Venugopala Rao, Pp. 70. Rs. 10.

SAT-DARSANA: Translated by Dr. M.A. Rangachar. Pp. 17. Rs. 1.

RAMANASRAMADA PATRAGALU: BY SURI NAGAMMA. Translated by K.A. Narayanan. Pp. 163. Rs. 15.

Published by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 40/41, II Cross, Lower Palace Orchard, Bangalore 560 003.

Of these three excellent translations into Kannada, the first is the translation of *Maharshi and his Message*, which originally formed three chapters in Paul Brunton's famous book *Search into Secret India*. It will be recalled that it was this writing of Brunton that served to bring the name of the sage of Arunachala to the attention of the world abroad. In these pages the journalist-cum-author describes the circumstances that dragged him into the presence of the Maharshi much against his own professional impatience and the subsequent turn of events leading to a revolution in his being. There is something delectable in this work which keeps it fresh even after fifty years of its first appearance. The Kannada translation keeps close to the original and captures its verve.

Sat-Darsana 'Truth-perception' is a seminal work of 44 Sanskrit verses giving the quintessence of the teaching of the Maharshi. It is a rendering into Sanskrit by Vasishtha Ganapati Muni of

the original in Tamil, *Ulladu nārpadu*, by the Seer himself. It is notable for the reconciliation it effects between the path of knowledge and the path of devotion, the duality in the world and the non-duality of the Reality, the Nirguna and the Saguna concepts of Brahman. The translation is faithful and communicative.

The last publication is a rendering of the well-known and highly evocative *Letters from Ramanashramam* by Suri Nagamma (Part 1). Nagamma, as an inmate of the Ashramam, had great opportunities to observe, record, and even participate in the day-to-day happenings there. These letters, written during the period 1945-50 give an informal account of the visits of celebrities, questions put by visitors, Bhagavan's responses, asides, special occasions, Maharshi's sense of humour, his compassion and grace. Her writings centre on the lovable personality of the Sage and breathe the atmosphere of the Ashrama during those glorious days. The Kannada public will be grateful to the translator for bringing this treasure to its doors.

SRI M.P. PANDIT

Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry

SRI SARADA DEVI SANDESA MANDARA:
BY SWAMI PURUSHOTTAMANANDA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bull Temple Road, Bangalore 560 019. 1983. Pp. 108. Rs. 7.00.

The Holy Mother, Sarada Devi, is known for her direct teachings and sympathetic understanding of the difficulties of sādhakas treading the spiritual path. The present book is a selection (in Kannada) from her conversations and offers guidance to aspirants in the perplexities that are likely to baffle them. Arranged subjectwise, the discussion proceeds in a homely style and gains over the reader.

How to find peace, is the first question. Not to find fault in others, to make the world your own, is the sovereign way. The writer explains the rationale of this instruction in his own words, drawing upon her other observations helpful for a fuller understanding.

Then there is the age-old question: Which is important, effort or Grace? Both are, in their respective domains, necessary. The effort too is initiated by an act of Grace. Similarly there is the question of Divine Will and human freedom. The Holy Mother points out that the higher Will works out through the individual will and the two are not entirely separate. Her

guidance on matters of celibacy, marriage, self-control is of practical help. Why is there so much evil in the world? so much suffering? With the help of stories from scriptures she explains how this creation is at its very root a mixture of good and bad elements; it is the mission of man to separate the one from the other and discard the latter as he grows in consciousness.

The presentation is done in a light style but the topics covered are, indeed, very profound.

SRI M.P. PANDIT

DHYANAJIVANA DIPIKE: BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bull Temple Road, Bangalore 560 019. 1983. Pp. 97. Rs. 8.00

A very helpful manual for spiritual aspirants. This is a simple rendering into Kannada of the chapters dealing with meditation in Swamiji's monumental volume *Meditation and Spiritual Life*. The first two chapters are translations of 'Essentials of Meditative Life' and 'Concentration and Meditation'. The third chapter is a presentation based upon Swamiji's chapter on 'Some Practical Hints on Meditative Life'.

What commonly passes for meditation, it is pointed out, is really *pratyāhāra*, collection of thought-energies from their dispersed condition. This is followed by *dharana*, concentration which in turn develops into *dhyāna*, flow of thought on the chosen theme. Swamiji gives much importance to the content of meditation. The sādhaka is warned not to create a void in the mind. An appealing Form or a Concept must be the focus of the attention. Purity of mind and feeling is an indispensable condition. Meditation on the heart centre is recommended as that is the seat of the Inhabitant. Where is that Heart, you will ask. Listen to a story told by Swamiji:

There was once a discussion between two doctors. The American doctor said, 'According to our physiologists, the heart is on the left side.' 'No', said the Chinese doctor, 'our books say the heart is on the right side.' This led to a quarrel which was resolved by an old Chinese wise man who came along, enquired and said: 'My boys, what does it matter if the heart is to the right or to the left? Let the heart be at the right place.'

Regularity, inner solitude, control of food and sleep, rhythmic breathing, vigilance, adaptation

to circumstances, reliance upon God—these are the supporting conditions for success in Meditation as the Pathway to God.

A fine selection, faithfully translated, elegantly presented.

SRI M.P. PANDIT

MALAYALAM

SUDARSANAM: BY SWAMI SIDDHINATHANANDA. Published by Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kallai, Calicut 673 018. 1983. Pp. 6+256. Rs. 15.

Swami Siddhinathananda has through his more than two dozen books—which include original works, translations and travel accounts—earned for himself a significant place in modern Malayalam literature. He has already written two other books on his travels in India, and the present book is the third in that series. When a distinguished scholar and devout monk endowed with keen powers of observation, love for this ancient land and its culture, detached vision and, above all, a refined sense of humour, undertakes a journey, it assumes quite a different nature from that undertaken by common people or tourists. His travels are pilgrimages, but pilgrimages with a difference. As the reader travels with the author, very often time comes to a standstill and past events and timeless truths become alive. The author has a remarkable capacity to sense and vivify the spiritual and cultural significance of the places he visited. Like his earlier two books the present one too is enriched with many quotations from Hindu scriptures and his expositions of them.

The four-month travel of the author in 1978 took him to Delhi, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Chandigarh, Kurukshetra, Vrindaban, Mathura, Agra, Jaipur, Khetri, Ajmer, Chittorgarh (Chitrakut), Gujerat, Bombay, Bihar and Hyderabad. The major part of the book is devoted to these pilgrimages. Its last section gives an account of his visit to Sri Lanka for two weeks where he had gone to attend an inter-religious conference organized by the Benedictine Order of Catholic monks.

While the printing is satisfactory and the get-up modest, the price appears to be a bit too high.

SWAMI EKATMANANDA
Ramakrishna Mission

KODIYETTU: BY SWAMI SIDDHINATHANANDA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Puranattukara, Trichur. 1979. Pp. 258 + vi. Rs. 7.50.

Kodiyettu ('Flag-hoisting') by Swami Siddhinathananda, who is a distinguished scholar and prolific writer, is a collection of twenty essays on varied subjects, but their central theme, their passionate invocation is God and Dharma.

The first essay, which gives this book its significant title, narrates in an inspiring way how Swami Vivekananda, impelled by the prophetic mission unfolding itself in his soul, went to America as an anonymous monk, and took it by storm, as it were, by hoisting high the saffron flag of ancient Vedanta at the historic Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. Swamiji's inspired exposition of the perennial philosophy of Vedanta, coming as it did from his own direct spiritual experience, was a revelation at once strange and irresistible to the sophisticated West. The essay on 'The Cosmic Form of Swami Vivekananda' etches out the great Swamiji in bold relief, his unique personality and the myriad gifts of that versatile genius. In another essay entitled 'For one's own liberation and the welfare of the world' the author aptly observes that Swami Vivekananda transplanted the heart of Buddha into the body of Hinduism whose head is Sankara. The two essays on Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother touch upon some aspects of their unique lives. 'The Devi Pooja' explains the rationale of the Mother concept which is so natural to man, and its sublimating and liberating influence. Of all the essays the two on the *Bhāgavata* are the most brilliant. They are aglow with the emotional warmth and ecstasy of a great devotee. The setting of that great scripture, its purpose and message are delineated with a wealth of facts and insightful comments.

Swami Siddhinathananda wields a facile pen, and his limpid prose runs like a summer stream. The book provides a sumptuous spiritual repast. The Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trichur, has brought out the book in excellent format.

PROF. MURALIDHARA MENON M.A.
Department of English, S. D. College, Alleppy

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

REPORT FOR APRIL 1984 TO MARCH 1985

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

The hospital has 25 beds in the Indoor Department, but sometimes arrangements have to be made for more. There is also a small operation theatre. A dental chair and a pathological laboratory provide additional help in the treatment of the patients. The total number of patients treated during the year in the Indoor Department was 341, of which 264 were cured and discharged, 44 were relieved, 28 were discharged otherwise or left, and 5 died. In the Outdoor Department, the total number of patients treated was 30,136, of which 7,536 were new cases.

The resources of the hospital are meagre. A well-established human-service institution requires constant help and co-operation from charitably disposed and philanthropic institutions, year after year. As the public are aware, the cost of medicines is mounting higher and higher as days pass by, rendering it difficult for the Ashrama to maintain the same standard of treatment of patients, both qualitatively and quantitatively. As such, there is a great need to build up a large Permanent Fund for the purchase of genuine quality medicines, which can be invested in Long Term Fixed Deposits in the State Bank of India, Lohaghat, yielding an eleven per cent interest annually to be used for the purpose. *Immediate needs of the hospital:* 1. Providing fresh hospital lockers to all the 25 beds in the Indoor Department: Rs. 6,000; 2. Providing

new hospital cots, mattresses, bed sheets, bed covers, pillows with covers, and woollen blankets for all the beds: Rs. 80,000. The existing cots, lockers, etc. are very old and need replacement as early as possible.

Crossed Account Payee cheques and drafts may be drawn in favour of *Mayavati Charitable Hospital* and sent by Registered Post to the President, Advaita Ashrama, P.O. Mayavati, via Lohaghat, Pithoragarh District, Uttar Pradesh, PIN: 262 524, India. Donors in India can claim Income-tax exemption under Section 80G of the Income-tax Act, 1961.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BELUR MATH RELIEF AND REHABILITATION REPORT FOR MAY 1985

Primary Relief: Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, T. Nagar, Madras continued to provide relief to the refugees from Sri Lanka, sheltered in the Mandapam camp. The school-going children were provided with morning and evening tiffin as well as free tuition. 10 mats, 48 dozen pencils, 500 notebooks, 800 slates, 192 dozen slate-pencils and 3 bags of puffed rice were distributed during the month. Summer classes for 1,150 students were conducted in Mandapam and Tiruchi where 44 teachers and the necessary teaching aids were provided. Teaching aids were also supplied to the refugee centre at Tuticorin.

Belur Math authorities have decided to make a gift of a hundred-mS X-ray equipment which is to be installed at Bhopal for the diagnostic treatment of the victims of the December '84 gas-leakage.

Rehabilitation: 17 houses were constructed under the 'Build Your Own House' scheme by the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Shillong, for the victims of the fire disaster at Shella Bazar in the Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya. This project has since been closed after providing the 16 of the worst-affected families with a foot-operated sewing machine, necessary clothing, groceries and other household equipment. Arrangements were being made to start the work of constructing a new block (Saradamani Bhavan) at the Thakurnagar Girls' School which had been razed to the ground by a tornado in Gaighata, in the 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Transfer of Technology from MNCs

The role of multi-national corporations (MNCs) in world economy was briefly discussed in these columns last month. One of the reasons why developing nations like India allow MNCs to operate within their territories is the hope that this will introduce new technology and lead to the gradual transfer of technology from MNCs to the indigenous industrial sector. *The Times of India* of 7-4-85 reported the research work conducted by Ms. Omita Paul, on behalf of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, to study the realities of this transfer in India. According to Ms. Paul's study, the transfer of technology through MNCs has not been achieved, but the transfer of skills through a large number of Indians employed in these companies has taken place. It shows that about one-third of the personnel in multinationals have transferred their allegiance, with expertise, to Indian companies.

The study covered 821 Indian organizations, 257 MNCs and a total of 38,000 highly paid executives. The study has found that 37.63 per cent of highly paid employees of MNCs move over to Indian companies. They constitute 14.25 per cent of the high-income employees of Indian companies. On the other hand, Indian companies lose only about 6 per cent of its highly paid personnel to MNCs where they make for 17.75 per cent of the category. The study shows that a large number of personnel who leave MNCs to join Indian companies come from administration discipline (13.59 per cent) followed by production (7.42 per cent) and research and development (6.86 per cent).

The data derived also disagree with the popular notion that, since salary structure and perks are high in the MNCs, there is a low turnover from one sector to another. The study has found that the exodus from MNCs was in the age-group of 30 to 50 years and, correspondingly, there is a high intake of personnel in the MNCs in this age-group. The reason for this lies not in the economic rewards or working conditions but in other areas—promotional opportunities becoming rare owing to the appointment of foreigners or insiders in MNCs at higher positions; and also in the narrowing down of the opportunities because of the size of the industry. Data on the length of service in the two sectors reveal that a larger percentage of younger people in the Indian corporate sector, with lesser length of service, are earning more than Rs. 36,000 per year.

Analysis shows that the ratio of migrants was highest in production (1:2) followed by administration (1:2.5) and R and D (1:3.3). The high rate of migration in the discipline of production shows that transfer of technology is taking place, though not in the intended way. Paul's study finally recommends that for the future development in Third World countries it is necessary to make optimum and planned use of such unintended transfers.

The findings of the above study should serve as a confidence booster to Rajiv Gandhi ministry's cautious attempts at liberalizing the Government's attitude towards foreign investment and at creating a 'buyers' market'. It cannot be denied that though the policy of protectionism has helped the development of indigenous industry, it has had a stifling effect on productivity and the improvement of quality.