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MAY 1986

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

## AWAKENED INDIA



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

ADVAITA ASHRAMA  
MAYAVATI, HIMALAYAS



*Editorial Office*

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

*Publication Office*

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# Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

▲ MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE  
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MAY 1986

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# Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 91

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No. 5

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

## INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS\*

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

इदं यत् परमेष्ठिनं मनो वा ब्रह्मसंशितम् ।  
येनैव ससृजते घोरं तेनैव शान्तिरस्तु नः ॥

That supreme deity of the mind which is inspired<sup>1</sup> by Brahman and by whose [misuse] terrible things happen—may we attain peace through him.

*Atharva Veda 19.9.4*

इमानि यानि पञ्चेन्द्रियाणि मनःषष्ठानि  
मे हृदि ब्रह्मणा संशितानि ।  
यैरेव ससृजे घोरं तैरेव शान्तिरस्तु नः ॥

Those five sense-organs and the mind as the sixth which are inspired<sup>2</sup> by Brahman and by whose [misuse] terrible things happen—may we attain peace through them.

*Atharva Veda 19.9.5*

ब्रह्म प्रजापतिर्धाता लोका वेदा सप्तऋषयोऽग्नेयः ।  
तैर्मै कृतं स्वस्त्ययनमिन्द्रो मे शर्म  
यच्छतु ब्रह्मा मे शर्म यच्छतु ।  
विश्वे मे देवाः शर्म यच्छन्तु  
सर्वे मे देवाः शर्म यच्छन्तु ॥

May the Supreme Brahman, Prajāpati, the Sustainer, the worlds, the Vedas, the Seven Ṛṣis and the sacred Fires help me in the attainment of blessedness.<sup>3</sup> May Indra be gracious to me. May Brahmā be gracious to me. May all gods be gracious to me. May every god be gracious to me.

*Atharva Veda 19.9.12*

\*The *Sānti-mantra*, Peace Hymn, from Atharva Veda is continued here.

1. That is, focused upon objects.

2. That is, impelled towards objects.

3. *Svasti-ayana* in modern times is a rite performed to remove evil influences and assure the welfare of the family.

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL shows how courage is vitally involved in everyday life both as a virtue and as a metaphysical principle.

In the third instalment of his commentary on the SECOND CHAPTER OF THE GITA Swami Sridharanandaji, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Lucknow, deals with those verses in which Śrī Kṛṣṇa has expounded the basic principles of Karma Yoga. Readers will find the author's comments refreshingly original.

In the second and concluding instalment of SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND FRANCIS OF ASSISI AS LOVERS OF GOD Dr. Martin Kämpchen

compares certain traits of character common to both of them.

CONCEPT OF NATURE IN JAINISM brings out certain less-known points in Jain metaphysics which have much relevance in the field of modern science. The author Dr. D. Nirmala Devi is Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Philosophy, University of Calicut, Kerala.

Swami Chetanananda, head of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, U.S.A., gives an engaging account of the life of KALIPADA GHOSH one of the bohemian lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

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## VEDANTA AND THE COURAGE TO BE

(EDITORIAL)

### *Swamiji's message of strength*

One of the most striking aspects of the message of Swami Vivekananda is the great emphasis it lays on strength and fearlessness. Strength or courage is usually considered to be a virtue, that is, an ethical concept. Few people realize that for Swamiji strength or courage was primarily an ontological concept, that is, he regarded it as an essential attribute of Reality. When Swami Vivekananda spoke of strength or courage, his intention was not to give a sort of pep talk; his primary aim was to teach a metaphysical principle having immense practical application in day-to-day life.

Great men like Swami Vivekananda seldom make off-hand or ad hoc statements for some temporary benefit. Everything they say or write invariably springs from their

experience of Reality in the depths of their being, and is therefore rooted in Reality. For Swami Vivekananda strength or fearlessness is a virtue only because it is a manifestation of an essential aspect of the ultimate Reality. Swamiji laid the foundation for an existentialist philosophy of courage. This is one of his enduring contributions to modern thought.

Before Swami Vivekananda came on the scene, strength or courage had not been given a central place either in the scheme of moral values or in the metaphysical approaches to Reality. True, the Upanisads had defined the ultimate Reality as fearlessness—*abhayam vai brahma*<sup>1</sup>—but this concept was not incorporated into any of the philosophical systems that later on rose in India. Commenting on the above passage,

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1. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.25

Śaṅkara merely remarks that it is a well-known fact. The approach to Reality adopted by most philosophers in medieval India was that of an 'essentialist'; they were chiefly concerned with the essential, static nature of Reality as *sat* (Being), *cit* (Awareness) and *ānanda* (Bliss). Swami Vivekananda's outlook was that of an existentialist; his chief concern was the dynamic aspect of Reality revealed in experience, encountered in human existence.

Even as a virtue, courage never figured prominently in the moral codes of Indian lawgivers. The chief virtues stressed by them were truth, Brahmacharya, non-violence, renunciation, and the like. With the rise of Bhakti schools, especially Vaiṣṇava schools, self-surrender to God made courage a needless virtue. Nay, it was even regarded as a sign of hubris or egoism and as an obstacle to self-surrender. In its place weakness, feeling of helplessness, *kārpaṇya*, was raised to the level of a virtue. Thus, Swami Vivekananda's stress on strength or fearlessness appears to be a major departure from the general ethical trends in India. The important point to note here is that for Swamiji strength or courage was not one of the several virtues; rather, it was the basic parent virtue without which the practice of other virtues would be impossible. He said:

It is weakness, says vedanta, which is the cause of all misery in this world. Weakness is the one cause of suffering. We become miserable because we are weak. We lie, steal, kill and commit other crimes, because we are weak. We die because we are weak. Where there is nothing to weaken us, there is no death nor sorrow.<sup>2</sup>

Swami Vivekananda believed that his emphasis on strength as the parent of all virtues had the support of scriptural authority. He considered it the central point in the message of the Upaniṣads. He said:

2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976) Vol. 2, p. 198

Strength, strength is what the Upaniṣads speak to me, from every page ... Ay, it is the only literature in the world where you find the word *abhiḥ*, 'fearless', used again and again.... And the Upaniṣads are a mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world...<sup>3</sup>

Strength is goodness, weakness is sin. If there is one word that you find coming out like a bomb from the Upaniṣads, bursting like a bomb-shell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word 'fearlessness'. And the only religion that ought to be taught is the religion of fearlessness.<sup>4</sup>

The central message of the Gita also is strength, according to Swami Vivekananda. This is only as it should be, for the context of the Gita admits of none else. The scripture begins with Arjuna's complaint that he has been overwhelmed by *kārpaṇya*, weakness, and Kṛṣṇa's first exhortation is: 'Yield not to unmanliness; it does not become you.'<sup>5</sup> Referring to this verse, Swami Vivekananda said, 'If one reads this one *śloka* ... he gets all the merits of reading the entire Gita; for in this one *śloka* lies embedded the whole message of the Gita.'<sup>6</sup> Without the emphasis on strength the message of the Gita would lose all its contextual relevance, and yet none of the more than twenty major commentaries on it has given any importance to strength as a virtue or has made any attempt to find out its ontological basis.

### *The philosophy of courage*

It should be mentioned here that although Swami Vivekananda stressed the importance of strength both as a virtue and as a metaphysical concept, he did not live long enough to work out in detail its ontological basis. Nor was it attempted by his followers. The

3. *Complete Works* (1973) 3.237-238

4. *ibid* p. 160

5. क्लैब्यं मास्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।

Gita 2.3

6. *Complete Works* (1978) 4.110

most systematic and comprehensive attempt to develop a philosophy of strength and courage was made for the first time by the renowned Protestant theologian Paul Tillich. His brilliant work *The Courage to Be*, originally delivered as a series of lectures at Yale University in 1952, looks almost like an exposition of Swamiji's message. Tillich does not mention the name of Swami Vivekananda, but it is clear that he was familiar with Indian thought. There is little in Christian theology that supports the presuppositions of Tillich regarding courage. Swami Vivekananda's concept of strength and Tillich's concept of 'Courage to be' have more or less identical connotations.<sup>7</sup>

The English word 'fortitude', which means courage, is derived from *fortitudo*, the Latin word for strength. So, for all practical purposes, we may take 'strength' and 'courage' to be synonyms. The word 'courage' is derived from *coeur*, the French word for heart. Courage is an expression of will, and heart is the seat of will.

The Greeks had, even before Plato, recognized four virtues as the chief marks of an ideal character: prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice. The first three virtues represent the three faculties of reason, will and desire. Plato divided human society into four classes (almost akin to the four castes of Hinduism) each with one of the four virtues dominant in the character of its members. Christianity was in many ways a striking contrast to Greek culture. Christ in his sermons stressed purity, meekness, renunciation, non-violence and similar virtues. St. Paul spoke of faith, hope and charity as the three fundamental virtues of

a Christian. When Christianity spread to Europe, it accepted the Greek tetrad of virtues as 'Cardinal Virtues', necessary for success in secular life, and the Pauline triad of virtues came to be known as 'Theological Virtues'.

Tillich has made an attempt to unite these two sets of virtues to form a holistic perspective. According to him faith and hope are expressions of courage, while charity (i.e. love) covers all inter-human relationships. Surprisingly, this view comes very close to that of Swami Vivekananda. Almost all the exhortations of Swamiji are centred on two primary qualities: strength and love. He identified strength with faith in oneself. Strength expressed through faith becomes courage.

This, however, is only one of the meanings of courage. There are several other popular conceptions of courage, and it is necessary to examine them before proceeding further.

### *Types of courage*

Spectacular forms of courage are displayed in the circus by trapeze artists, the cyclist on the tight rope, and the animal trainer ordering lions and tigers about. The matador of a Spanish bull fight is another such example. Burglary, acts of terrorism etc. also need a certain amount of courage. These are, however, more properly described as rashness, recklessness or desperation. So also disobedience to one's superiors, back-chat with one's boss or to cock a snook at the leader of one's group is to be regarded as insolence and arrogance rather than as courage. There are of course noble acts of courage such as a policeman's nabbing a hard-core criminal or a person's jumping into the river to save a drowning man or rescuing people trapped in a house on fire. These are, however, specific responses to certain extraordinary situations.

7. Those who want to understand the philosophical implications and existential possibilities of Swami Vivekananda's message of strength may derive much profit from reading Paul Tillich's book *The Courage to Be*, published by Collins (Fontana Library paperback), London; 1970.

Apart from these, courage can take the form of a general response to *all* situations, an overall attitude towards life as a whole. A poor housewife managing her household, a businessman taking risks in investment, a salesman going about meeting customers, a monk leading a life of holiness and peace, a handicapped man trying to be self-reliant, a busdriver taking people through the crowded streets of a city, a scientist conducting research with undivided application—all are courageous people. In every country there are thousands of such people the life of each of whom is a saga of heroism. True courage does not need extraordinary feats, but it needs extraordinary courage to face the day-to-day problems of life, to love and live in harmony with people, to maintain the soul's purity, to practise intense meditation, to forge a bright future out of the encircling gloom. This kind of courage is known as existential courage, that is, courage expressed through one's living, one's very existence as a human being. It is the temper of a person's soul. As a blacksmith tempers steel by heating and beating it, so does a truly courageous man temper his soul on the anvil of life's experiences—suffering and sacrifice and failure and frustration.

### *Existential courage*

What gives people existential courage? How do people develop this kind of inner grit? There are three main sources of existential courage: faith in the power of virtue, dependence on Personal God, and knowledge of the true nature of the soul. Accordingly, existential courage may be divided into three types: moral courage, religious courage and the courage to be.

Since the vast majority of people claim to be virtuous, one would expect moral courage to be quite common. But actually, it is seldom met with. The majority are living, in Philip Wylie's telling phrase, by the law of conceit rather than by the laws of truth. How many people have the real faith

that they can attain success in life by being perfectly virtuous? How many people have the real faith that they can face evil or even change the minds of wicked people simply by the power of virtue? Many people seem to believe that they would not be able to earn more money or succeed in life, should they become 'too good'. Though a large number of them talk about Dharma and Karma, they do not often hesitate to tell lies, to betray their friends or to be dishonest. There are self-righteous people who want to fight evil in society; however, they do it not by increasing their own virtue but by following a tit-for-tat policy or by resorting to various low-down tricks. In other words, what we most frequently meet with is not moral courage but moral cowardice.

It is not widely understood, especially by young people, that there is a kind of beauty which is quite different from that given by a pan-cake make-up or an after-shave lotion, and which remains unaffected by old age and ill health. It is moral beauty. A person who leads a perfectly chaste and virtuous life radiates a rare type of beauty which inspires lasting love and admiration in other people. About this moral beauty Dr. Alexis Carrel, who won the Nobel Prize for medicine and physiology in 1912 wrote:

When we encounter the rare individual whose conduct is inspired by a moral ideal, we cannot help noticing this aspect—one never forgets it. This form of beauty is far more impressive than the beauty of nature. It gives to those who possess its divine gifts a strange, an inexplicable power. It increases the strength of the intellect. It establishes peace among men. Much more than science, art and religious rites, moral beauty is the basis of civilization.<sup>8</sup>

Distinct from moral courage, though usually found coexisting with it, is religious courage produced by total dependence on the Deity, God conceived as a Person. Like

8. Alexis Carrel, *Man the Unknown* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books—Pelican Edn.—1951)

moral courage, true religious courage is also rarely met with. Millions of people seem to believe in God but most of them derive their strength not from God but from their own instincts, desires, fancies and from their dependence on other people or wealth. If they depended wholly on God, they wouldn't be selfish, immoral, jealous and quarrelsome as many of them are, nor would they blame God for all their misfortunes as many of them do. Very often belief in God is seen to coexist with disbelief, and many people seem to have greater faith in stars, planets, ghosts and the Devil than in God. As Swami Vivekananda has said, eighty per cent of those who profess to be religious are hypocrites, fifteen per cent are insane and only five per cent are true.

Real religious courage comes not from mere belief in the existence of God or from reading books but from a pure heart illumined by the wisdom of God. It is the result of the practice of chastity and other virtues and the opening of the heart to divine Light and Power through intense prayer or unceasing worship. Through this opening the individual will unite itself with the divine Will ; it is this union that is known as total dependence on God. Vaiṣṇava scriptures mention six marks of a person who depends on God alone. 'He thinks of only what conduces to spiritual progress ; he gives up all negative ideas, habits and actions ; he has unshakable faith that God will save him under all circumstances ; therefore in all actions he seeks the protection of God alone (not of other people) ; his ego is surrendered to God (and so he is free from pride) ; he is full of compassion for all people.'<sup>9</sup> A person who practises true self-

surrender acquires tremendous inner strength. This frees him from all fear and hatred. He will not act rashly but will wait—pray and wait—until the right way becomes clear.

In the two types of existential courage discussed above courage is derived from a source outside the person. In the third type, known as 'the courage to be', the source of courage lies within the person, in his own self. It is the ability of the self to assert itself, its purity, joy, unity and peace, under all circumstances. Why should the self assert itself ? How does it do it ? To find out the answers it is necessary to enquire the central problem of human existence.

### *Being and non-being*

There are two basic processes which give life all its dynamism and diversity. One of these is the struggle for existence. All living beings from amoeba to man are constantly struggling for their existence in this world. What causes this struggle ? This question takes us to the second basic characteristic of life : impermanence. Everything in this world is impermanent, and there is nothing more impermanent than life. In philosophical language impermanence is known as 'non-being'. Every living 'being' is threatened with the prospect of non-being. The struggle for existence is not merely a struggle for food, caused by scarcity conditions, as Darwin believed it was. Even when there is abundance of food, every living being has to struggle against change—internal as well as external. Struggle for existence really means the struggle to avoid non-being by asserting being. Every living being is struggling to assert itself, its existence, against change, impermanence, non-being.

In animals and plants this struggle is limited to the physical level. But even at that level their struggle is not with the external world alone but goes on in the internal

9. आनुकूल्यस्य संकल्पः प्रातिकूल्यस्य वर्जनं  
रक्षिष्यतीति विश्वासो गोप्तृत्ववरणं तथा ।  
आत्मनिक्षेपकार्पण्ये षड्विधा शरणागतिः ॥

*Ahīrbudhnyā Samhitā* 37.28

Here the word *kārpānya* should be interpreted as 'compassion'.



world also as the struggle to maintain the equilibrium of physiological activities known as homeostasis. When this struggle for existence fails, the body is overcome by disease or death, that is, by non-being.

In civilized human beings the struggle for existence goes on chiefly at the ego level. Modern social organization and technology have to a great extent eliminated the need to struggle for bare physical survival. Yet people incessantly compete, quarrel and struggle for the existence of the ego. When a person fails to get fame or recognition, or when somebody scolds him or speaks ill of him, he becomes upset because he feels his ego's existence is threatened, and not because his physical existence is threatened.

When the ego is threatened with non-being, there are three courses of action open to it. It can assert itself, its own being—this is 'courage to be'. (This will be discussed in detail in subsequent sections). Or the ego can take refuge in the Deity—this is religious courage already discussed. Instead of taking the refuge in the Deity, the ego may seek refuge in a group or society—this is collectivization of the ego represented by Communism, Nazism, religious fundamentalism, etc. The ego which is unable either to assert itself or to seek refuge in a larger power may yield to non-being. Yielding to non-being can take various forms like yielding to depression, yielding to alcohol and sex, yielding to neuroses of all kinds; its extreme form is suicide.

### *Meaning of 'courage to be'*

'Non-being' is a philosophical term which most people may find difficult to understand. But we can all understand one reaction of the ego to non-being: the reaction of anxiety. We saw above there are three courses of *action* open to the ego against the threat of non-being. But the ego does not generally follow any of these courses immediately. Instead, it *reacts*. The most

common form of reaction is anxiety. If we feel, as indeed most members of the modern society do, a constant feeling of anxiety, we should know that our egos are facing the threat of non-being.

In this context Paul Tillich has introduced two important distinctions. One is the distinction between anxiety and fear. Fear is the organism's response to a particular situation; it has a definite object. We are usually aware of fear and make preparation to meet the threat. By contrast, anxiety has no definite object; it is a general feeling of insecurity which constantly nags us. We usually know neither the real cause of anxiety nor the way to get rid of it. Says Paul Tillich:

Anxiety is the state in which a being is aware of its possible non-being ... Fear, as opposed to anxiety, has a definite object which can be faced, analysed, attacked, endured ... But this is not so with anxiety, because anxiety has no object, or rather ... the only object is the threat itself, but not the source of the threat, because the source of the threat is 'nothingness'.

One might ask whether this threatening 'nothing' is not the unknown, the indefinite possibility of an actual threat ... Anxiety then would be fear of the unknown. But this is an insufficient explanation. For there are innumerable realms of the unknown, different with each subject, and faced without any anxiety. It is the unknown of a special type which it is met with anxiety. It is the unknown which by its very nature cannot be known, because it is non-being.

... Anxiety strives to become fear, because fear can be met by courage.<sup>10</sup>

The second distinction that Tillich makes is that between pathological anxiety and existential anxiety. Pathological anxiety is a response to certain abnormal events like divorce, shameful actions, etc. It is a form of neurosis which, as mentioned above, is a way of yielding to non-being. It is usually nothing but repressed hatred or fear. It belongs to the field of abnormal psychology

10. *Courage to Be* pp. 44-47

and may need psychiatric treatment. Existential anxiety, on the other hand, is a common experience in normal life and can be dealt with by the individual himself; it is what concerns us here.

According to Paul Tillich, modern man has to contend with three main types of existential anxiety. These are : the anxiety of fate and death; the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness; the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. Although these three types of anxiety may all occur together, more often it is found that each type of anxiety dominates a particular stage in the life of the individual. Thus the anxiety of guilt and condemnation is more intensely felt in early youth, the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness appears in a pronounced way during middle-age, and the anxiety of fate and death becomes the most serious problem in old age. Almost everyone has to deal with these anxieties in his life.

Guilt is the negation of the essential purity of the self, meaninglessness is the negation of the inherent perfection of self, death is the negation of the very existence of the self. Thus guilt, meaninglessness and death are all forms of non-being. The ability of the self to assert its being in the face of these forms of non-being is known as the 'courage to be'.

#### *The courage to be in western thought*

The conception of the soul prevalent in the Judeo-Christian tradition does not allow such a positive affirmation of the self. That tradition never developed an advanced conception of the soul. According to the Old Testament, God created the physical body of man first and then, by breathing into it, created the soul; and God told Adam, '...dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'<sup>11</sup> Christ taught, as a part of his new gospel, the divinity and immortality of

the soul but Christian theologians, especially the followers of Luther and Calvin, propagated the worthlessness, impotence and inherent sinfulness of the human soul with fanatical zeal.

The Judeo-Christian tradition is only one of the two streams of western thought. The other stream is the Greco-Roman tradition and it is there that the source of the western man's self-reliance, self-assertion, self-respect and love of freedom is to be sought. Although the Greco-Roman tradition too did not develop an advanced conception of the self, 'the courage to be' as an ethical principle was introduced into it at a very early period by the heroes of Homer and by Socrates. The Stoics, whom Paul Tillich considers 'the only real alternative to Christianity in the western world', gave courage an ontological status. According to the Stoics the soul is a part of cosmic intelligence known as Logos and as such can 'stand alone and naked, but pure and undefiled, in the midst of the chaos and futile activities of the world. They held that the highest virtue was to conquer all lower desires by asserting the higher rational nature of the soul and to endure all physical hardships and mental sufferings calmly without depending on any human or superhuman being. Theirs was indeed a philosophy of the 'courage to be'. It found its best expression in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121-180) which profoundly influenced the western mind during the Renaissance.

Stoic renunciation and courage was totally eclipsed by Christian monasticism and salvation for several centuries. Stoicism reappeared in the 17th century through the great rationalist philosopher Spinoza, the only philosopher whom Bertrand Russel did not attack but admired. Spinoza made courage a universal attribute inseparable from existence. According to him, 'The endeavour, wherewith everything endeavours to persist in its own being, is nothing else but the

11. Genesis 2.7; 3.19

actual essence of the thing in question.’<sup>12</sup> This concept is quite similar to the Hindu concept of *svadharma*. The word Spinoza used for courage is *animositas*; it is derived from *anima* which means soul; so courage means self-affirmation. He wrote: ‘By courage I mean the desire whereby every man strives to preserve his own being in accordance solely with the dictates of reason.’<sup>13</sup>

The most uncompromising and direct advocate of courage as a metaphysical principle was Nietzsche (1844-1900), the forerunner of modern existentialists. Nietzsche looked upon reality as Universal Will (as Schopenhauer had already done) and regarded the basic urge in life as the ‘will-to-power’. Whereas other philosophers held that it was good to be brave, Nietzsche said, ‘To be brave is good.’

A philosophy becomes viable only if it is based on life. Since courage is inseparable from life, true philosophy must be a philosophy of courage. Yet as the present philosophical vacuum and crisis of values in the West indicate, a satisfying, universally applicable philosophy of courage is yet to develop in western thought. The systems of Spinoza and Nietzsche, for all their rationality, are not living forces. There are several reasons for this, chief of which is the failure of western philosophers to understand the true nature of the self.

The notions of the soul prevalent in the West have two drawbacks. In the first place, the soul is not considered a transcendent entity. The terms ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’ mean nothing but the mind. Since the mind is liable to be tainted by sense experiences, and is constantly changing, it cannot provide a stable basis for ‘the courage to be’. Secondly, the dualistic conception of the soul creates an insurmountable gulf between the soul and God. God is the Creator and the soul is a creature; one is the subject, the

other is the object; the two can never be the same. The soul is being and God is the Supreme Being, and between them is a vast gulf of emptiness, that is, non-being. Thus non-being is as permanent and real as being. Therefore non-being can never be overcome or destroyed. Man may exert the courage to be, but he can only temporarily ward off non-being. His whole life is a perpetual struggle against non-being—against guilt, meaninglessness, death. As Sartre said, it is a ‘no exit’ situation.

### *Vedanta and the courage to be*

The Vedantic conception of the self is free from the two drawbacks mentioned above. All the schools of Vedanta regard the Self, Atman, as self-luminous, eternally pure and blissful. It is totally different from and transcendent to the mind. Hence it cannot be tainted by impurities, which can affect only the mind. Everything that is created must have an end. The Self is not a created entity; it is self-existent and coterminous with God, and so it is deathless. Such a conception of the soul makes the exercise of ‘the courage to be’ easy. When confronted by guilt the soul can say, ‘I am pure and blissful and so sin cannot touch me.’ When confronted by emptiness and meaninglessness the soul can say, ‘I am fullness of consciousness and every experience is meaningful to me.’ When confronted by fate the soul can say, ‘I am immortal and death is only an event in my unbroken existence.’

Thus the Vedantic conception of the Atman enables the soul to take on all forms of non-being simply by asserting its real divine nature. It does not need a saviour to save it from non-being; all that it needs is a guide who can teach the soul how to face non-being—guilt, meaninglessness, death. All the power that the soul needs is hidden within it, what it needs is a person who can awaken this power. That is why Swami Vivekananda said, ‘My ideal,

12. Quoted in *Courage to Be* p. 30

13. *ibid* p. 32

indeed, can be put into a few words, and that is to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.<sup>14</sup>

Thus each soul has in it the power to exercise the courage to be and face the threats of non-being. Vedanta, however, goes a step further and denies non-being itself. It is in this denial that it radically differs from all western systems of thought. According to every school of Vedanta, there is no gulf separating the soul from God. It is not an 'I-Thou' relationship; God is not a 'wholly other' object. Both the soul and God belong to the same category of Self—the former is the individual Self (*jīvātman*) whereas the latter is the Supreme Self (*Paramātman*). The relationship between them may be characterized as transcendent 'We'. Since God is the Soul of all souls and the divine Being pervades everything in the universe, where can non-being exist?

Of course, Advaita admits the existence of non-being in the form of Maya which separates the soul from God and the universe. But then, Maya itself is unreal, and so non-being is also unreal. In Vedanta the three existential anxieties of guilt, of meaninglessness and of death are regarded not as forms of non-being but as products of ignorance. Fear arises only when there is an object to be afraid of. As the Upanisads declare; 'Duality is the sole cause of fear'.<sup>15</sup> Here duality means a subject-object separation. But the divine Being, as the eternal subject, fills all space leaving no gap for objects. Hence the fear and anxiety we feel are not real but caused by ignorance.<sup>16</sup>

14. *Complete Works* (1964) 7.498

15. द्वितीयाद् वै भयं भवति ।

*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.2

16. It may be pointed here that what has been said above is true not only with regard to Advaita but also with regard to the other schools

According to this view, the chief struggle in life should be to eliminate ignorance about the true nature of the Self; there is no need to fight against non-being as such. This is what the four *mahāvākyas*, 'great Dicta' imply. 'I am Brahman', 'This Atman is Brahman', 'Brahman is consciousness', 'That thou art'—these four statements aim at eliminating the erroneous notion of non-being as a gap separating the soul from God. When the notion of non-being disappears, its products, anxiety and fear, will cease to haunt us. There is no need to fight with guilt, meaninglessness and fate all through one's life. It is possible to live completely free from these problems by realizing one's true nature as the luminous Self.

A liberated and illumined Self is our greatest wealth and greatest strength. Instead of trying to realize this sacred inner Light why should we run after external things? Material objects can never solve our existential problems; few people are unselfish and dependable; even the pure-hearted spiritual people cannot help us beyond a certain limit. There are situations in which we find ourselves alone and helpless. But everywhere at all times, even when there is nothing but darkness all around, there shines in our hearts the luminous Self. It never leaves us but always protects and guides us and fills our emptiness with its peace and power. To hold on always to

of Vedanta. The word *dvaita* is usually translated as 'dualism'. This is somewhat misleading, for dualism in western thought means a separation between a subject and an object or between two objects. But *dvaita* as used by Vedantic teachers means only a distinction in the subject itself, for both soul and God are 'Self'. Even Madhvācārya holds that there exists nothing but the Supreme Self, and individual selves are only Its reflections (*pratibimba*). The dualism of western thought corresponds to the dualism of Sāṃkhya and the Vaiśeṣika-Nyāya systems of India, and it is noteworthy that these systems are *not* described as *dvaita*.

this inner Light is the most courageous act on earth ; it is what the 'courage to be' really means. The following Śaiva Āgama hymn may inspire us in making it an existential habit : 'Where there is no mother, father, friend or brother, where there is none to sympathize with us, where exists neither day nor night, there shines the lamp of Atman :

and I take refuge in it.<sup>17</sup>

17. यत्रास्ति न माता पिता न बन्धुः  
भ्रातापि यत्र सुहृज्जनश्च ।  
न ज्ञायते यत्र दिनं न रात्रिः  
तत्रात्मदीपं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

## THE SECOND CHAPTER OF THE GITA

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Concluding his exposition of the real nature of the soul, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says (Gita 2.39): 'Till now I have presented to you the attitude of mind known as *sāṅkhya buddhi*<sup>1</sup> or Jñāna Yoga'. The word *sāṅkhya* is derived from the word *saṅkhyā*. *Saṅkhyā* means discriminative knowledge, *saṅkhyā khyāyate (vastu-tattvam) anayā iti saṅkhyā*. That which is attained through such knowledge is *sāṅkhya*, that is, the Atman. 'Till now I have spoken to you about the realization of the Atman by the best use of one's rational faculty. Now hear the teaching according to *yoga-buddhi*. O Pārtha, if you allow your actions to be guided by this *yoga-buddhi*, you will cast off the bondage of karma'. *Yoga-buddhi* is disciplined action performed with detachment and without the desire for any selfish result and with the attention and will completely fixed on the goal of Self-realization.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's aim is to give a complete philosophy of life which caters to the needs of the total human personality. Man has

not only reason but volition, emotion and the urge to work as well. This complex nature of man is involved in his spiritual welfare. After pointing out the way to the highest Reality on the grounds of self-analysis and highest morality, not leaving out the materialist viewpoint as well as the viewpoint of the man of the world, he is now going to teach the method of attaining communion with Atman through Karma Yoga, and thus propound a complete philosophy of life.

To allay the fear in Arjuna's mind that the second path now going to be expounded may be as difficult as the first one. Kṛṣṇa says (Gita 2.40): In this path of detached action there is no loss of unfinished effort. Nor is there any transgression of religious injunction or the production of contrary result called *pratyavāya* caused by the non-performance of obligatory duties called *nitya karmas* which, when performed, give no reward or earn no merit, *puṇya*, but when not done, create demerit, *pāpa*. Whatever you do as yoga immediately purifies your mind. Furthermore, this dharma or discipline is such that even the briefest practice of it saves you from the

1. Not to be confused with Samkhya darsana, one of the six systems of Hindu Philosophy.

great fear and uncertainty of *samsāra*. *Yoga-buddhi* is the technique by which one discharges one's duties in the world without becoming a creature of circumstances. The *yogi* treats the world as the product of the interactions between material objects and the reactions of the senses to those objects. So he is not attached to the results of works and the world loses its hold on him, it has no power to make him miserable or happy, despondent or elated. This yogic attitude, even if it is maintained only for a short time, is complete in itself and without any gradation. All that is needed is to make it continuous by weeding out the evil *samskāras* which keep cropping up in the mind. Any effort in the yoga way of life, even if not kept up for long, saves you from the fear of bondage or cycle of birth and death, for it helps to rehabilitate you in the awareness of Self during that short period.

Before discussing the nature of *yoga-buddhi*, Kṛṣṇa first distinguishes the *yogi* from the scatter-brain:

O Son of Kuru, those who strive with determination to reach the highest goal have a one-pointed will. But the will of the irresolute is endless and many-branching. That is, they have endless and diverse ambitions (2.41).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is here classifying people into two categories: the *vyavasāyin* who shows strong determination, perseverance and diligence in the pursuit of the goal of Self-realization, and the *avyavasāyin* who in the pursuit of the goal is irresolute with uncertain knowledge and keeps on jumping from idea to idea, path to path, guru to guru.

Arjuna has a hidden fear that he might be ranged alongside the fickle-minded if he cannot continue the discipline of yoga. Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells him that the definition of yoga does not even apply to the scatter-brain, for ignorant people moved by every

passing desire cannot come upto the level of yoga. Only those endowed with one-pointed *buddhi*, and you are one among them, are fit for it. But owing to their *prārabdha-karma* obstacles may arise on their way: for example, they may become ill, or their life may be cut short by death. Such persons should not be denigrated as *avyavasāyins*. If for some reason beyond their control they have to discontinue or fail in this path, their effort is not wasted.

In the next three verses (2.42,43,44) Śrī Kṛṣṇa goes on to describe the character, attitude towards life and the goal of the *avyavasāyins*. O Pārtha, the *avipaścita*, the non-knowers of the Truth or unwise people, utter flowery, pleasing, comforting words. They use catchy phrases, putting things in such a manner as to attract people towards the things of the world. They are well-versed in the letter of the Vedas, but they quote only those sections which deal with special rituals which will enable them to enjoy the world more and more and, thus, to get more bound to it. Having their whole being centred on desire for worldly-objects and desirous of heaven, they argue that there is nothing beyond heaven. And they are involved in innumerable ceremonies, sacrifices and scriptural injunctions which lead to repeated birth for the enjoyment of pleasures and wielding of power. Those people who are attached only to pleasure and power lose their power of discrimination. The discriminative faculty is inherent in the minds of all people but when the mind is carried away by pleasure seeking and wrong knowledge, the faculty will not function properly. As a result, these people can never attain *samādhi*, that is the stillness of mind in meditation.

Since the *avyavasāyins* also quote the Vedas, there is a chance of Arjuna's getting confused. It has been said that the Vedas dealing with rituals and sacrifices

offer material benefits in this world, as well as *adr̥ṣṭa* or store of merit which will help one to enjoy undisturbed tranquillity in heaven. Does the Teacher mean that for the pursuit of the Vedānta, the Vedas have to be thrown away entirely, as they have no bearing on his quest for the ultimate? Anticipating such a doubt, Śrī Kṛṣṇa stresses in the next verse (2.45)<sup>2</sup> the need to develop a balanced perspective. The subject matter of the Vedas (i.e. the Karma Kāṇḍa portion of the Vedas) is Prakṛti constituted by the three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The Karma Kāṇḍa of the Vedas does not go beyond the relative and apparent universe manifest to the five senses. Modern scientists classify the world of matter according to certain categories, for instance, radiant heat, light and electricity are considered to be different types of electro-magnetic energy. Similarly the spiritual scientists of the past, the Ṛṣis, seeing through the secret mysteries of the universe, also classified all phenomena into three *guṇas*. *Sattva* denotes what is manifest, effulgent, enlightened, clean, without the slightest amount of dirt or haziness to veil its reality; it is the principle of equilibrium. *Rajas* denotes activity, dynamism, force, power and energy; it is the principle of attraction. *Tamas* denotes darkness, ignorance, heaviness, immobility; it is the principle of inertia. Thus the Karma Kāṇḍa deals with matter and force, ranging from the most subtle and brilliant to the grossest and the darkest. Arjuna must know it because ignorance of the Vedas is not desirable.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that if you are sincerely desirous of solving the problems you are facing on the battlefield—the metaphysical problem of death and destruction of the

body which you are wrongly equating with destruction of the soul, the ethical problem of whether it is correct to slay for the sake of a kingdom, the psychological problem of losing face and reputation by abstaining from battle—then you must transcend the field of Karma Kāṇḍa. The world including the Vedas is made up of *guṇas*; therefore take the help of the Vedas, although they are in the realm of *maya*, to go beyond the *guṇas* themselves. Sri Ramakrishna once compared *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* to three dacoits who attacked and caught hold of a traveller in the forest. The *tamogunī* wanted to rob, beat and kill him; there was no enlightenment, compunction or compassion in him. The *rajogunī* wanted to thrash him and to deprive him of his goods, but not to kill him, since their purpose was served. The third one watched and waited and when the other two disappeared with their share of the booty, he took the victim to the edge of the forest, pointed out his village and told him to run away. Although he was a party to the act of robbery still he helped the traveller to get out of the forest and danger. Thus the three *guṇas* always work in combination in man and in everything in the world, with a greater preponderance of one or the other. When *rajas* or *tamas* predominates, a person becomes a sinner; when *sattva* predominates, he becomes a saint; but the *guṇas* keep the *jīvātmā* in bondage. So Arjuna's goal must be to become a *nistraiguṇya*, that is, one who is unentangled in the world constituted by the combination of the *guṇas*, and to establish himself in the majesty of his own Self.

In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* the pupil asks the teacher whether there is anything by knowing which the desire to know further will cease, once and for all. The reply is that there are two distinct branches of knowledge: *parāvidyā* or the direct

2. त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥

knowledge of the Self and *aparāvidyā* consisting of all other kinds of knowledge developed by the whole human civilization. In the Jñāna Kāṇḍa part of the Vedas, known as the Upaniṣads, *parāvidyā* is dealt with as the direct experience of Atman or Brahman. By intense mental activity the veil of ignorance is pierced and the Absolute is known as one's own being. The scriptures say, 'The purpose of human birth is to enjoy the bliss of ultimate freedom while one is still alive in the human form'.<sup>3</sup> Introspection shows that the only desirable goal, worthy of all inputs of time, energy and effort, is the knowledge of one's true original nature, and the resulting freedom known as *jīvanmukti*.

The solution of the world's problems is not found by looking at it from the same worldly level, but by attaining to a higher perspective of understanding. *Yoga-buddhi* teaches such a precision of performance that one becomes qualified for *parāvidyā*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that he must discipline himself by developing certain minimum qualifications: the first is the attitude of *nirdvandva*. You must not become subject to the tension of the opposing qualities and feelings of the world. You hear something pleasant or flattering, and you are very happy, in a state of euphoria. Next comes a person to prick your ego bubble and you are totally depressed. This polarity of pleasure and pain, happiness and misery is called *dvandva*. Learn the technique of moving in this world without tilting unduly either to the positive or to the negative side of *dvandva*. Exercise your reason and do not allow yourself to be elated by praise or cast down by criticism. To be free from the pair of opposites is to be a *nirdvandva*.

*Nityasattvastha* or absolute poise in the

midst of pleasure or pain, praise or blame is the resultant of the effort to be *nirdvandva*. There is such a strength within you, such a power of the soul that you can remain unaffected by the ups and downs of fortune, the buffets of life. Your inner being is unruffled, ever-balanced and equanimous. To be *niryogakṣema* means to be free from two other factors which prevent a man from the attainment of inner poise. The *dvandva* mentioned earlier refer to experience, whereas the other two factors refer to volition, willing. He has the desire to attain and acquire things (*aprāptasya prāpti*); this tendency is known as *yoga*. When a thing has been acquired there arises the desire and effort to retain and protect it (*prāptasya rakṣaṇam*), that is, to keep right of possession; this is known as *kṣema*. Psychological analysis shows that his restlessness and loss of balance or equanimity are caused mainly by these two anxieties of acquisition and possession, getting and keeping, be they for non-material things like reputation or for material things like wealth etc. So, Arjuna, get rid of these two desires and the rest will follow naturally.

And be *ātmavān*—be established in the Self. The earlier three methods constitute the negative aspect of discipline, but you should be more concerned with the positive aspect of the quality of your life. This is not something unusual, for even in ordinary life parents often tell their children: 'Don't do this, it will belittle the reputation of our family.' Their aim is to teach children the feeling of self-respect, dignity, pride in their tradition and family. Swami Vivekananda's main exhortation is: 'Each soul is potentially divine and the purpose of religion is to manifest that divinity.' So never think of yourself, as you do now, to be small, petty and weak. Even while disciplining yourself negatively, you must positively assert, 'I am the Atman, I am

3. जीवन्मुक्तिसुखप्राप्तिहेतवे जन्मधारणम् ।



divine, I am not going to belittle myself by doing anything which is below my dignity or will hurt my self-respect.' The development of the attitude of *ātmavān* is an essential condition for progress in spiritual life.

When it is said that one should be *nistraiguṇya* it does not mean that the Karma Kāṇḍa of the Vedas is totally useless. A pond or a small reservoir has a utilitarian purpose, it can be used to wash linen or utensils or for irrigation. But if there is a great flood and unlimited quantity of water all around, does it not meet the purposes of the pond and do more? Similarly, the knower of Atman-Brahman has not only utilized the limited field of the Vedas but has attained something much more than given by the Vedas. The eternal bliss of self-realization wholly transcends the finite and ephemeral pleasures of this world and the next. If you confine yourself to the teachings of the Vedas alone, you are equating yourself with the small pond, but why limit yourself when your possibilities are endless and infinite? This is the purport of Śloka 2.46.<sup>4</sup>

Two pitfalls are to be avoided: the idea that the Karma Kāṇḍa portions of the Vedas are to be thrown out as they deal only with worldly matters; and the idea that they represent the be all and end all of existence and there is no need to go a step beyond them. Both attitudes are wrong, and the correct view is that though this world has a purpose there is no need to confine oneself to material benefits alone. For one who is restless for *jīvanmukti* the goal is Self-realization as taught in the Jñāna Kāṇḍa.

After pointing out the drawbacks of the ancient path of Vedic ritualism which aims

at only worldly enjoyments, Śrī Kṛṣṇa next propounds his unique doctrine of Karma Yoga based on *yoga-buddhi*. In four short phrases he has condensed the gist of the wisdom of Karma Yoga in the next verse (2.47).<sup>5</sup> *Karmaṇyevādhikāraṣte*: Arjuna, you have no control over the situation of action. You have but one right or freedom, though it is a compulsion: to do your duty. Devotion to duty is the guiding principle you ought to adopt in consonance with your station in life and the tendencies of your past and present lives. It is determined by your upbringing, education and awareness of social, moral and human responsibilities. Unlike beasts, you are endowed with the special faculty of discrimination or *viveka*, you know what is good and what is bad, what is proper and what is improper. But then, if you have to perform your duty why perform it like a slave, under the compulsion of many desires? Why not perform it in such a way as to turn it into a wonderful opportunity of attaining spiritual progress?

The next question is, how to do this? The answer is, 'Work for work's sake.' What does this mean? Do all work giving up the desire for the fruit of your actions. *Mā phaleṣu kadācana*: you have no right to ask for the result of your work, which is beyond your control because of several circumstances. If you are attached to the result, you will be dividing your attention and so will not be able to discharge your duty properly by doing your work perfectly. Furthermore, you will be building up an expectation and hope which might be belied and thus make you miserable. Action done with desire keeps one bound in the cycle of birth and death.

*Mā karmaphalaheturbhūh*: let your work

4. यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।  
तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥

5. कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।  
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

of this moment not be the cause of an unrelenting chain of cause and effect to enmesh you. Your actions in past and present lives determine your fate, as the *samskāras* or tendencies generated by those actions lead to further birth in a particular body and particular circumstances. Such an endless chain of future karma and births is to be broken, because your own true original nature of Atman is not subject to it.

*Mā te sangostu akarmaṇi*: if these three conditions of right action make too exacting a demand and you have it in your mind to run away, you are warned that escapism is no solution. Do not develop the tendency to be inactive, to shirk work and responsibilities, which is nothing but a defeatist or *tāmasic* attitude—nor is it possible.

This world is a *karma-srota*, an unending stream of work and duty, which one must follow according to one's knowledge, capacity, requirements and desires. There are three motive forces of work. One is the natural tendency to work produced by the desire for some result. Then there is an innate tendency which gives the choice and inclination towards a certain work, known as *prārabdha* and *samskāra*. For instance, take the case of twins: though born of the same parents and given the same training and opportunities, one may become a saint and the other a sinner. This is so because each adapts himself to different stimulations of society, depending upon his past tendencies, characteristics, habits and impulses. The third motive for work, found especially in well-developed persons, is the higher urge to respond to the call of duty towards one's parents, society, country and, in the case of a very enlightened person, to the call of duty towards humanity as a whole.

In the process of functioning in this world man loses his heart, his temper, and equanimity. He loses even his virtues of truthfulness, straightforwardness and

unselfishness, because under some compulsion he has to tell a lie or to become greedy. That is, instead of qualitatively enriching his personality, he somehow degenerates. The reason is that he is buffeted by the two powerful basic instincts of *rāga* or the feeling of attachment to some things, and *dveṣa* or the feeling of hatred towards other things. These positive and negative attitudes create all subsequent imbalances with the result that he may end up as a cynic, losing his faith in humanity. Karma Yoga teaches a new perspective and process so that the capacity of work to produce *rāga* or *dveṣa* in the heart is counteracted, and these instincts are sublimated into a means of realizing one's true Self. According to Swami Vivekananda, like Bhakti, Jñāna and Rāja yogas, Karma-yoga is also a direct and independent means for the destruction of maya and attainment of Self-realization.

After teaching what Karma Yoga truly is, Kṛṣṇa speaks of the fundamental attitude without developing which it is not possible to perform Karma Yoga. This is the attitude or disposition of yoga. What is yoga? Kṛṣṇa describes it in the next verse (2.48).<sup>6</sup> Yoga is *samattva*: equality as well as equanimity. You must cultivate such a poise and tranquillity that nothing in the world can shake you. You must be on the top of it instead of being trampled and crushed by people, events or the things of the world. Remain a unified personality without allowing yourself to be torn by inner conflicts. How can this be done? *Saṅgam tyaktvā*: O Dhanañjaya, the world comes forward with many promises and temptations, but attachments, expectations and hoping against hope should be given

6. योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय ।  
सिद्धसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥

up in the performance of your duties. *Siddhyasiddyoḥ samo bhūtvā*: develop such an attitude within yourself that success or failure, repute or disrepute, pleasure or pain will mean nothing to you, and you will be absolutely poised in the excellence of your own being.

Is not relinquishment of attachment and maintenance of equipoise, in short, getting rid of all expectations from this world a tall order? But what is not a tall order? Every high goal worth attaining is difficult. You say that this goal is very difficult because you are swayed by the fear of defeat or loss or because you are attached to something. But here in Karma Yoga such considerations do not arise. You are given some work to perform as a duty; you start as a sinner and end as a saint. Through the constant practice of work as yoga you reach a level at which this world has no more capacity to trouble and torment you. This *bhava-sāgara*, endless ocean of transmigratory existence, will then appear as small as the water in the hoof-mark of a cow. Freed from the torment of hopes and infatuation, you become the happiest man under the sun.

Another attitude is possible. Śaṅkarācārya says, work may be done with the attitude of worshipping the Lord. (*Īśvarārpaṇa buddhya*)—as if each and every act of yours is an offering to God. When you love, you like to give the best you can to your beloved. If you regard God as your Beloved, then you can give him only the best. Even in ritualistic worship, you never offer bitter fruit, faded flowers, stale sweets or dirty water to God. Similarly when you worship God with your work, you must do it to perfection. Not only that; every work must be done without expecting anything in return—not even a smile of approval from this world, not even a nod of recognition from your friends, not even the boons and blessings

of God. There should be neither the expectation of something good and pleasant nor the rejection of the unpleasant kicks the world gives. The karma-yogi accepts things as they come, but asks nothing in return for the discharge of his duty.

Here another question arises. Arjuna might say that he would like to do his duty, but cannot agree that he should not look for the result, for that will imply that there is no incentive for hard work. And, after all, what is the harm in doing work, with some goal in view? Why should he deny himself the joy of aspiration, hope and fulfilment? The answer is given in the next verse (2.49).<sup>7</sup> Expectation-oriented work is far inferior to Karma Yoga. The first one leads to bondage while the second one leads to freedom. You are unable to understand the difference between these two paths because your *buddhi* is unawakened. Awaken your *buddhi*, and with its help find out the difference between the results of Karma Yoga and ordinary work. Karma Yoga is guided by a awakened *buddhi*; hence it is called 'Buddhi Yoga'.

People who work with the desire for fruit are *kṛpāṇa*:<sup>8</sup> poor and miserable. Because although endowed with the potential capacity to enjoy *jīvanmukti* through the discipline of Karma Yoga, owing to their attachment to work and its fruit they will have to die and migrate from this world without realizing their own spiritual wealth. Being too much concerned with getting the result of their work, they do not even know what they are missing.

One definition of yoga has already been given—'Yoga is equanimity' (*samattvam yogah*). Now another definition of yoga is given in the next verse (2.50)—*yogah*

7. दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद् धनंजय ।

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥

8. Vide Comment on 2.7

*karmasu kauśalam*, 'Yoga is skill in action.'<sup>9</sup> Karma Yoga is a particular technique of doing work which takes away the sting of work and leaves the nectar of selflessness behind. Hence it is called a *kauśala*, skill or trick. Śaṅkarācārya explains the meaning of this term: *Tad hi kauśalam yad bandhanasvabhāvānyapi karmāṇi samatva buddhyā svabhāvāt nivartante*. Just as a magician shows tricks which are known to be optic illusions which delude his spectators but not himself, so also by the *kauśala* or skill of precise understanding and detachment the Karma Yogin does all his work to the satisfaction of others without himself getting bound. Work binds only because of the inborn desire to acquire results and objects, but when detached from this desire, work becomes a means to the knowledge of the Self. This happens when a person becomes *buddhi-yukta*, one who has developed the wisdom of equanimity. Such a person renounces both the good and bad qualities inherent in work. His actions become morally neutral and he frees himself from the effects (*karmaphala* and *saṁskāra*) of virtue and vice. Sri Ramakrishna gives the illustration of the women of the household first dipping their fingers in mustard oil before peeling jack-fruit to prevent the milky juice from sticking to their hands. The skill in peeling jack-fruit lies in the use of oil. In the same way, the development of equanimity is the skill by which one avoids getting stuck to the merit and demerit resulting from work. Therefore, dedicate yourself to this habit, build this discipline within yourself of performing your duties with the yoga of equanimity.

This naturally raises the question: if one renounces the desire for the fruits of all

actions, what will be the final result? We should know why we should invest so much labour in pursuit of a discipline without being sure of the result. The categorical reply (given in the verse 2.51)<sup>10</sup> is that, by performing your duties with detachment and equanimity you will free yourself from the law of cause and effect, this endless cycle of birth and death. Not only that. You will gain the height of spiritual wisdom untainted by the evils of this world. *Jīvanmukti* is the end result of Karma Yoga. Renunciation of fruit is the discipline which makes you absolutely free from the evil of *saṁsāra* or rebirth.

It is not easy for everyone to rise to the level of Brahma jñāna or Atma jñāna right from where he is. People hanker after many things in the world and who would desire to know the impersonal Brahman? It needs a great amount of education, training and practice to realize one's true nature of the Self. But then, there are various interpretations of scriptures and we hear many ideas, some of them contradictory to one another. How then can we find our way out through the maze of delusion? The answer (given in the verse 2.52)<sup>11</sup> is that work done with an awakened *buddhi* is the best means for the majority of the people. An awakened *buddhi*, intellect, is necessary to see through delusion. What is delusion, *moha*? It is nothing but *ajñāna*, primordial ignorance. Śaṅkarācārya says that *ajñāna* is *atasmin tadbuddhi*, 'understanding something as what it is not.' The illusory snake was never there, is not there, will never be there; nevertheless, it appears instead of the

9. बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।

तस्माद् योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥

10. कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।  
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥

11. यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।  
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रावयस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥

rope. Similarly, your *moha*, delusion, makes you see the world as a separate, manifold, concrete object other than God, and you identify your Self with the body or non-Self. In reality it is the Supreme Self, Brahman, existing in diverse forms, and not the world.

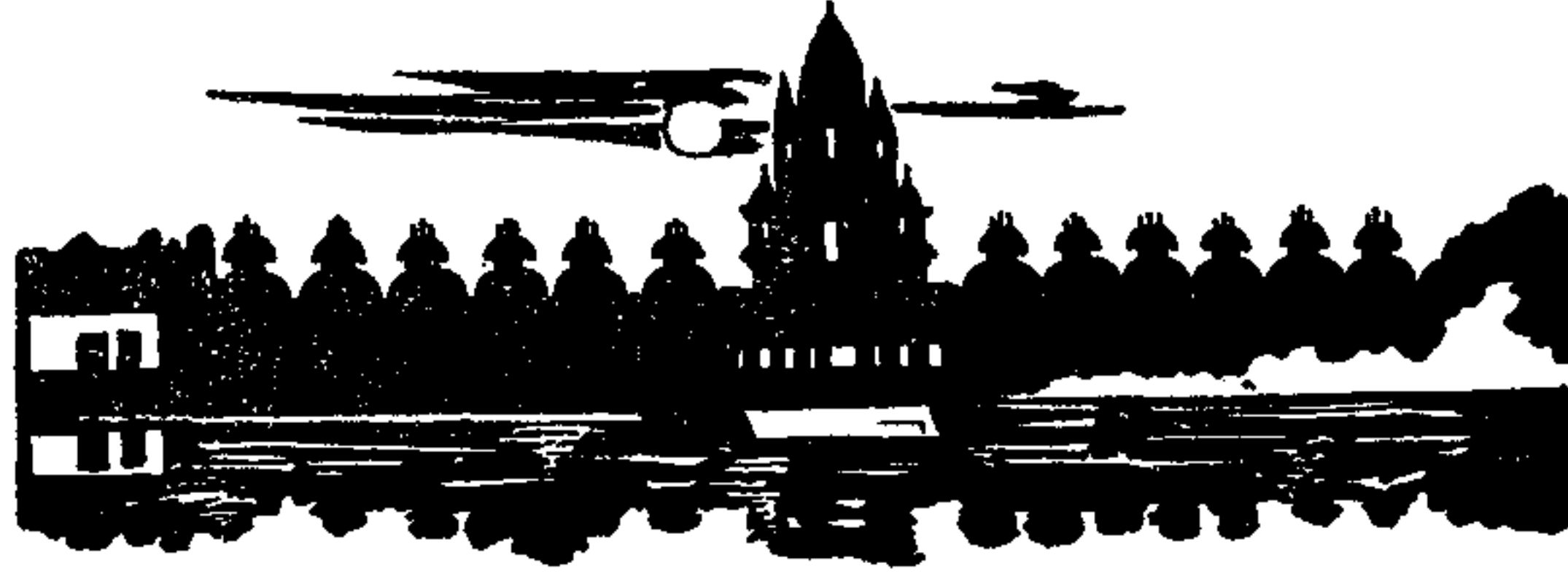
You now feel the necessity of listening to something noble and inspiring because you have the feeling of insufficiency, which is the very nature of a human being. But once you know your original nature of Atman, there will no more be the feeling of incompleteness, and you will grow indifferent to what is heard and what is yet to be heard about this world and the next. An ancient verse explains this process as follows: *Dehābhimāna galite abhede paramātmani, yatra yatra mano yati tatra tatra param padam.* 'When you no longer identify yourself with your body but see your non-difference with the Supreme, then wherever you look you will perceive only the Supreme Being.' When your *buddhi*, intellect or intuition goes beyond delusion, you will become a *Jīvanmukta*.

Two definitions of yoga have already been given—that it is *samattva* and *karmakauśala*. In the next verse (2.53)<sup>12</sup> one more meaning of yoga is given—that it is the total absorption of the mind in the Self. What does this absorption mean?

12. श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।  
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥

When the confusion in your mind caused by hearing many contradictory statements has departed, and your mind has become steadfast and firmly poised in the meditation of the Self, then your personality becomes wholly saturated with this thought. Before that, it is only a process of becoming, of growth and evolution. As we go on dissolving sugar in a glass of water a time comes when it does not absorb any more but becomes a saturated solution of sugar. Similarly, as you go on increasing the thought that you desire nothing from the world because you are really Atman, a time comes when you become totally saturated with this thought. Since this process is a direct and independent means of Self-realization, you might think that the end will be something different from it. But, no. Here the means gradually pervades your whole psychic and spiritual being and, on maturity, the means and the end ultimately merge and you attain union with the Self. This is the highest state of yoga. Swami Turiyanandaji used to give the example of a wild cat losing all its ferocity and purring on one's lap after it is domesticated. That very cat when thrown out of the house into the jungle, becomes once again a ferocious preying creature. Similarly, you who are domesticated in the things of the world and absolutely lost in it, will become independent of it through Karma Yoga practised with an awakened *Buddhi*.

(To be concluded)



## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND FRANCIS OF ASSISI AS LOVERS OF GOD

DR. MARTIN KAMPCHEN

(Continued from the March '86 issue)

### *Love of one's disciples*

Love of one's disciples has been a theme running strongly through the lives of both St. Francis of Assisi and Sri Ramakrishna. Again, in the Hindu context, this love is not Bhakti but perhaps *sneha* (*bhālo bāsā*, in Bengali) although even more typically, a sign of *kṛpā* (grace). Indeed, the typical spiritual and emotional relation of the guru with his disciples is one of grace which the guru has the power and the right to bestow on his disciples according to their receptivity. We see Ramakrishna bestowing grace on his disciples, sometimes through a touch, thereby enabling them to obtain certain spiritual attitudes and visions. Yet, Ramakrishna's love for his disciples went beyond this tradition of bestowing grace. It is recorded in the *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta* (translated into English as the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) that when his young disciple Rakhal was with him, he saw in a vision God (Nārāyaṇa) in Rakhal and treated him with the emotions of a mother to her son (*vātsalya bhāva*), or more precisely, as Yaśoda treated Kṛṣṇa. Characteristically, the author (Mahendranath Gupta) described the scene in these words: 'Drunk with the

love of God (*īśwar-prema*) he looked at him (Rakhal) with the eyes of love (*premer cakṣu*).'<sup>11</sup>

Here Ramakrishna's love of God and love for his disciple merge into one love—both being expressed by the word *prema* which is the culmination of Bhakti. The fact must not be neglected, however, that Ramakrishna's love for Rakhal became *prema* because he saw Nārāyaṇa in him.

Ramakrishna's love of Naren (who later on became Swami Vivekananda) can be cited as a parallel case. Naren himself once chided his guru alleging that Ramakrishna's profuse love for him was spiritually unsound, a product of *maya*. Ramakrishna consulted Mother Kālī in her temple and received from her the reply: 'You regarded him as Nārāyaṇa Himself; that is why you love him. The day you do not see Nārāyaṇa in him, you will not even cast a glance at him.'<sup>12</sup>

In the case of Francis of Assisi, his love for his 'brothers' or 'sons' (as he used to

<sup>11</sup>. *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta* By Sri M. (Calcutta: 1387) vol. I, p. 53

<sup>12</sup>. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1952) p. 757

call his disciples) was a part of his love of fellow-men. As pointed out in the first part of this article, love for man, in the Christian context, is one with love of God. Yet, Francis loved the members of his monastic order in a special way as they followed the religious ideal which he had set before them through example and exhortations. It was the love of a father or elder brother who guides his children or younger brothers. Like Sri Ramakrishna, St. Francis saw God, Christ, in all men, particularly in his disciples.

While Ramakrishna worshipped in a general way the divinity inherent in every person as the Atman, and Mother Kālī in every female person, he also realized God in a more immediate way in Rakhal and Naren, which was an experience of greater spiritual intensity. This second mode of seeing God in man is linked to the doctrine of *avatāra*: Sri Ramakrishna realized, in a vision, that his two disciples were special aspects of divinity reincarnated on earth to help him in his life's mission.

To Francis, only the first mode of seeing Christ in man—in a general way—was open, as the doctrine of *avatārs* has no parallel in Christianity.<sup>13</sup> A passage in Celano's Second Life demonstrates, in one sentence, Francis's love of God, of creation and of fellow-men, it reads: 'Since the strength of Francis's love made him a brother to all other creatures, it is not surprising that the charity [love] of Christ made him more than a brother to those who are stamped with the image of their Creator.'<sup>14</sup>

Since God created man 'in his own likeness' (Genesis 1:26), man is the *imago Dei*,

the 'image of God', and man is to consciously experience God in the shape and person of his fellow-men. This teaching of the Old Testament and the words of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, 'Whatever you have done unto the least of my brethren, that you have done unto me' (Matthew 10:40), form the background for seeing the 'image of Christ' in fellow-men and love them as Christ.

The fine difference between the attitudes of the two saints is, while Sri Ramakrishna worshipped God who revealed himself in the human forms of his disciples, Francis of Assisi loved and served his disciples and other fellow-men as personalities created by God and on whom are imprinted the image of the Creator, or who mirror the Creator in their body, feelings and intelligence.

'Francis abounded in the spirit of charity . . . . For he was filled with love that surpasses all human understanding . . .'<sup>15</sup> Reference to the fervour of Francis of Assisi's love is made in his biographies in many places. Immediately before the death of Francis is narrated, this love for his disciples is emphasized in the words: 'Indeed, that he might show himself to be a true imitator of Christ his God in all things, he loved to the end his brothers and sons whom he had loved from the beginning.'<sup>16</sup>

The love of a true spiritual father or guru is characterized by a pedagogical intuition and discrimination. It may be remembered here with how much care and spiritual insight Sri Ramakrishna guided his disciples, employing individual methods for each of them. Let us compare, for instance, Sri Ramakrishna's sensitive treatment of Surendranath Mitra who found it difficult to renounce his evil habits, with the answer Francis of Assisi gave to a brother of his who had fallen into temptation and had come to his spiritual father for help. Francis

13. (The Christian concept of the Incarnation is different from the Hindu concept of the Avatāra—Ed., P.B.)

14. *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*, English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis. Ed. Marion A. Habig (London, 1973) p. 500 (Hereafter, *Omnibus*)

15. *Omnibus*, p. 293-297

16. *Omnibus*, p. 535

said : 'Know that the more you are tempted the more will you be loved by me.' And he added, 'I tell you in all truth, no one must consider himself a servant of God until he has undergone temptations and tribulations.' 'Temptations overcome', he said, 'is in a way a ring with which the Lord espouses the soul of his servant to himself.'<sup>17</sup> In another similar situation Francis said to a brother : 'Let no fear disturb you in the future, let no temptation upset you, son ; for you are very dear to me, and among those who are especially dear to me I love you with a special affection. Come to me with confidence whenever it suits you, and feel free to leave me whenever it suits you.'<sup>18</sup>

We mentioned above that the characteristic attitude of the Indian guru-saint to his disciple is that of 'giving of grace'. The background to this spiritual tradition is that the guru, through his *sādhanā* and austerity, has stored up within himself sufficient *śakti*, spiritual power, which he is able to transmit to his disciples as his sign of love, and in order to help them in their struggles on the spiritual path. This giving of grace is absent in the lives of Christian saints, including Francis of Assisi. The Holy Spirit does give each person certain spiritual gifts (charisms) which everyone is to employ to the fullest, but he cannot himself of his own will, transmit his 'spiritual power'. This power of transmission is reserved for God, and if a saint is to perform acts of love, the spiritual power needed is given directly by God. God alone is the giver of grace, while man is, without that grace, entirely impotent, weak. Hence the saints, right from the direct disciples of Jesus Christ, performed miraculous deeds always 'in the name of Christ'. One episode in Francis's life illustrates this difference well ; Francis was approached by the abbot of a monastery who asked the

saint to pray for him. Francis consented and he soon went to a lonely place to pray for the abbot, and 'while the saint was praying to God, the abbot suddenly felt in his soul an unusual warmth and sweetness such as he had never experienced before in his soul, so much so that he seemed to be completely carried out of himself in ecstasy. He paused for a moment and when he came to himself, he recognized the power of St. Francis's prayer.'<sup>19</sup>

So, while Ramakrishna transmits *śakti* to the disciples of his choice, Francis prays to God for the sake of a person on whom God, then, bestows spiritual power. The difference between Francis and a spiritually less elevated Christian is solely in the power of their prayer ; Francis's prayer being more powerful than that of ordinary pious persons. God may respond more totally to it.

The narration of the above-mentioned event in Celano's Second Life is concluded with a reflection which emphasizes the veracity of the point we have made : 'It is becoming that servants of God bestow upon one another little gifts like this ; and it is fitting that there be a partnership between them in the matter of giving and receiving. That holy love, which is at times called spiritual, is content with the fruit of prayer ; charity makes little earthly gifts. To help and to be helped in the spiritual conflict, to commend and to be commended before the tribunal of Christ, this I think is the mark of holy love.'<sup>20</sup>

It is remarkable that although Francis is considered, by the abbot and also by the author (Thomas of Celano), to be the spiritually more elevated person, yet it is a 'partnership' of the abbot and Francis that Celano speaks of—a partnership which fulfils itself in the act 'to help and to be helped in the spiritual conflict' to reach God. Ultimately, every man is equal in the

17. *Omnibus*, p. 460

18. *Omnibus*, p. 402

19. *Omnibus*, p. 445

20. *Omnibus*, p. 445f



eyes of God ; there is no spiritual father and no disciple, no person with more spiritual power and another person with less power.

*Love as social action*

The emotional, spontaneous, 'seraphic' love characteristic of Francis—as well as of Sri Ramakrishna—cannot easily be channelled into a love expressing itself in collective, 'organized' charitable action. Also, the intentionally poor and itinerant life which is the charism of Francis and his monastic order, would not allow organized charity. To Francis, spontaneous love of fellow-men accompanied by charitable acts was natural, flowing from his inborn generosity. Already before his conversion, Francis had been prone to giving alms liberally, including even his own clothes, to the poor, as Celano states: 'He now resolved not to turn his face away from any poor man, who in begging asked for the love of God.'<sup>21</sup> It is characteristic of the Franciscan spirit that immediately after his act of renunciation, stripping himself naked publicly and returning his clothes to his father, Francis went to render service to the lepers of the locality for some time. Only afterwards did he return to the church of St. Damian to live as a solitary penitent. The results of his conversion-experience became apparent, firstly, in the courage with which he opposed his father and remained firm in his decision against the opposition of his society and, secondly, in the sudden transformation of his attitude to lepers, those poor, disfigured, bad-smelling patients whom he had avoided meeting before his conversion.

In Celano's First Life, Francis's first visit to the lepers after his conversion is described as follows :

He went to the lepers and lived with them, serving them most diligently for God's sake ; and washing all foulness from them, he wiped away also the corruption of the ulcers, just as

he said in his Testament: 'When I was in sins, it seemed extremely bitter to me to look at lepers, and the Lord himself led me among them and I practised mercy with them.' So greatly loathsome was the sight of lepers to him at one time, he used to say, that, in the days of his vanity, he would look at their houses only from a distance of two miles and he would hold his nostrils with his hands... he met a leper one day and, made stronger than himself, he kissed him.<sup>22</sup>

To Francis spontaneous charitable acts were not so much a return to society after achieving spiritual stability, but a necessary spiritual training which he also enjoined upon his brothers. This spontaneous charity is approximately equal to the concept of *dayā* as Sri Ramakrishna understood and advocated it to his disciples. He saw *dayā* as spontaneous and universal mercy without which *sādhanā* would become meaningless. *Dayā*, as well as the parallel Franciscan attitude of charity, may be defined as a constant *readiness* to act immediately upon meeting a person who is in material, physical or spiritual need. And this act should not only be immediate but total, without consideration of personal consequences. So Francis is known to have repeatedly given away his clothes without considering how he would get new ones for himself.

This immediacy and totality of compassion can be seen in Ramakrishna's life, for example, on his pilgrimage in 1868 when he, at Deoghar, came across desperately poor villagers. He demanded from Mathur that each villager be given a meal, hair-oil, and a wearing cloth. When Mathur initially refused, Ramakrishna scornfully resolved to share the plight of these villagers until they were helped, and not to proceed with his pilgrimage. He moved on only after his wishes were fulfilled.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup>. *Omnibus*, p. 242f ; p. 469f

<sup>23</sup>. cf. Isherwood: *Ramakrishna and His Disciples* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1968) p. 132

<sup>21</sup>. *Omnibus*, p. 365

In the lives of our two saints *dayā* and spontaneous charity never developed into organized charitable social action, as it did in the lives of the disciples of both of them. Desiring to remain very close to their original inspirations, Ramakrishna and Francis acted from an overpowering inner urge, to give mercy, but then they moved on, leaving the further care of the people concerned in the hands of God.

The motive for his spontaneous charity which was in the mind of Francis, was 'to follow Christ'. Jesus Christ, too, had not been an organizer of social activities, but was given to spontaneous acts of mercy and love wherever he went during his itinerant life. Francis, in his first monastic Rule (of 1221), commanded: 'All the friars must work hard doing good...',<sup>24</sup> and further, '...those who serve God should be always busy praying or doing good.'<sup>25</sup> To Francis, love was an integration of loving prayer to God and loving service to fellow-men (and through them to God). One is inseparable from the other. Francis, by setting forth this ideal, broke down the traditional Christian separation between active life and contemplative life. For his brothers, 'doing good' included universal hospitality; Francis, in his Rule demanded from his brothers: 'Everyone who comes to them, friend or foe, rogue or robber, must be made welcome.'<sup>26</sup> But Francis, knowing the demands of 'doing good' on the strength of the spirit, made a provision that his brothers be able to retire to a hermitage from time to time where they could live in complete solitude and even be dispensed of the need to beg their daily food (which would be supplied to them by fellow-brothers).<sup>27</sup> The motive for this integrated life of prayer and action,

solitude and involvement with society which Francis and his first disciples chose consciously at the beginning of the formation of their monastic order, was again 'to follow Christ'. Christ, too, lived alternating between periods of solitary prayer and the pursuit of his preaching and healing ministry.<sup>28</sup>

Integration of the contemplative and the active life was certainly an aim which Sri Ramakrishna too practised himself and preached to his devotees. Yet, the emphases are somewhat different from Francis's. It may be said that, firstly, 'doing good' to others had for Francis an intrinsic spiritual value worthy of spiritual merit; and secondly, it was in his estimate a method of purification, of *sādhana* (at any stage in man's spiritual development). Sri Ramakrishna praised, as we have seen, spontaneous and universal love (*dayā*), which he thought to be possible and considered unharmed at any stage of an aspirant's spiritual development. He did not, however, like Francis, advocate generally that man should be active 'doing good' to others. He allowed this only after a devotee had 'reached God', that is, after he had the experience of *samādhi*, and was thus established in his spiritual attainments and was sufficiently detached (selfless). Ramakrishna's prevailing fear was that selfish motives may enter into charitable social action; this would not only render them spiritually useless, but in fact make them harmful. Ramakrishna admitted that, after having 'reached God', charitable social service was commendable—provided the person had received a call from God to do so. Like 'giving lectures' and 'teaching mankind', the acts of doing good require a special call from God; thus it is made sure that the devotee has surrendered himself to God considering himself an 'instrument' in God's hands.

On the other hand, Ramakrishna also

24. The Rule of 1221. cf. *Omnibus*, p. 37

25. The Rule of 1221. cf. *Omnibus*, p. 38

26. *Ibid.*

27. cf. Religious Life in Hermitages, in *Omnibus*, 72f

28. cf. *Omnibus*, p. 258

confirmed that a person who had become intoxicated, 'mad', with divine love, is relieved from all social obligations including even his duties to his family, and, of course, any charitable social activity. 'God will take care of them', Sri Ramakrishna used to say that God would choose other 'instruments' to look after the dependents of such divinely intoxicated Bhaktas. It is also true that Sri Ramakrishna more than once referred to spiritual men of a very high order, such as Nārada, who, although they had 'reached God', and although they were intoxicated by the love of God, made their minds 'come down' to the place of men's daily affairs. They, however, would not engage in charitable social action, but rather engage in 'teaching mankind', that is, giving spiritual instruction to men on how to 'reach God'; they would perform the religious duties of a guru.

So, while Francis enjoined 'doing good' to his friars and to everybody as a duty which they must be ready to perform at *any* moment, Sri Ramakrishna did not establish such a general rule. He regarded 'doing good' as a preparation for spiritual progress only in a very limited sense; charitable social action was not a necessary stage for a spiritual person. Sri Ramakrishna considered the perform of *niṣkāma karma* (that is, completely selfless acts of service) very difficult and he generally discouraged his devotees from following exclusively that path.

Further, while St. Francis thought of 'doing good' in terms of helping the poor and the sick, that is, of material and physical help given with spiritual love, Sri Ramakrishna encouraged charitable social action on the material and physical level only occasionally, and often with admonitions to engage in it very sagaciously. There may be three reasons for this attitude of caution in Ramakrishna with regard to work. The first reason was Ramakrishna's detachment

from material considerations which is philosophically rooted in the idea of maya and the distinction, resulting from maya, between the unreality of the 'world' and the absolute and only reality of God. The second reason was Ramakrishna's own life-situation which provided him with a protective environment. His every material and physical need was met; he was afflicted neither by the worries of a householder who struggles to maintain his family, nor by the insecurities of a mendicant monk who wanders from place to place begging and seeking shelter. Ramakrishna is the model of a man who, intoxicated by divine love, is relieved of his social duties and is looked after by God himself. The third reason was the prevailing talk by the English colonialists of his time about 'social service' and 'uplift of the poor' which Ramakrishna resented for its spiritual shallowness.

For Sri Ramakrishna the superior help man can receive from another man is spiritual help; material help ranks lower. For Francis, the distinction between material and spiritual help is not clearly drawn; his main preoccupation was, however, to help the poor and the sick; but by helping them, he meant to render spiritual solace as well. However, Francis did not give to his monks a general permission to preach (which is a part of spiritual help), but he reserved this right to those whom he or other superiors of the order had appointed for this task.

Finally, it must be mentioned that Ramakrishna too, from time to time, transcended the scheme we have sketched here. His worry over Hriday when he was away in his village, ill and without money, is one characteristic example. His concern over Naren's welfare when he and his family were desperately poor, is another. On the whole, we find Ramakrishna spontaneously concerned about the material needs of his devotees. This did not, however, stop him from entering into *samādhi* the next moment.

For Sri Ramakrishna, too, this tension of the contemplative *versus* the active, of prayer *versus* charitable social involvement, of inwardness *versus* outwardness—these pulls in opposite directions which are so characteristic of spiritual life—did exist, as they did for Francis of Assisi. The struggle to resolve this tension, to unite the opposite pulls, to find a lasting or at least temporary balance, is an element running strongly

through Christian hagiography, and also, though less, through Hindu hagiography. Swami Vivekananda's life was strongly marked by this struggle. What makes Sri Ramakrishna unique is the stunning interweaving and togetherness of personal concern for individuals and spiritual withdrawal in *samādhi*.

(Concluded)

## CONCEPT OF NATURE IN JAINISM

DR. D. NIRMALA DEVI

The Jaina conception of Nature is both scientific and metaphysical. Its atomic theory, which is one of the earliest in Indian thought, and its conception of empty space (*alokākāśa*) stretching infinitely beyond the filled space (*lokākāśa*) point to its scientific spirit. But its view of nature or, more strictly, matter (*pudgala*) as an obstruction to the soul for the realization of its true destiny, is more metaphysical than scientific. It is the subtle particles of matter (called *karma*) infiltrating the soul that produce its bondage, according to Jainism.

The Jainas hold that there are two basic categories, *jīva* (the conscious) and *ajīva* (the unconscious). *Jīva* is identified with life and its essence is consciousness (*cetana*). It manifests itself through perception and intelligence. The Jainas define *jīva* or *Ātman* as conscious substance. *Ātman* in this world is known as *jīva*. It has vital, physical, mental and sensuous powers. In its pure condition *jīva* has pure knowledge and vision. The degree of consciousness of a *jīva* vary according to karma. The souls are infinite in number and are eternal. 'They in reality occupy innumerable space-points in our mundane world (*lokākāśa*), have a limited size (*madhyamaparimāna*) and are

neither all-pervasive (*vibhu*) nor atomic (*aṇu*); it is on account of this that *jīva* is called *jīvāstikāya*.<sup>1</sup> All souls are identical and they become differentiated by developing different qualities like colour, taste and smell. One of the peculiar features of the Jaina conception of the soul is its variable dimension. The soul of an ant, for instance, is as small as its body and that of the elephant as big as its body. 'The manner in which the soul occupies the body is often explained as being similar to the manner in which a lamp illumines the whole room though remaining in one corner of the room'.<sup>2</sup> The soul is embodied in lifeless matter (*pudgala*) and therefore, it can be known only if examined in its relationship with matter. When a man dies, his soul together with its karmic body (*kārmaṇaśarīra*) goes to the place of its new birth. There it assumes a new body. And it may expand or contract according to the dimensions of the latter.

1. Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922-55) Vol. 1. p. 189.

2. *Ibid*

According to the Jaina, the *aīva* (lifeless or unconscious) aspect of reality does not mean matter only. It consists of five categories, namely, *pudgala* (matter), *ākāśa* (space), *kāla* (time), *dharma* (motion) and *adharma* (rest). Matter or *pudgala* is made up of atoms which are without size and are eternal.

Matter may exist in two states, gross and subtle. All material things in this universe are produced by the combination of atoms. Atoms (*paramāṇu*) which are indivisible are infinite in number, and being without extension, they are invisible and do not fill up even a single space point of the *lokākāśa*. Each atom has the four material qualities of colour, taste, smell and touch. These qualities, moreover, undergo constant changes of modes along their respective substances. According to Buddhists, there is no actual contact between the atoms; the Jains, on the contrary, regard the contact as essential and as testified by experience. These compounds combine with other compounds and produce new objects.<sup>3</sup> When these gross elements thus produced undergo constant change (*pariṇāma*), they lose some of their old qualities (*guṇas*) and acquire new ones. According to Jacobi, 'The atom may develop a motion of its own, and this motion may become so swift that by means of it an atom may traverse in one moment the whole universe from one end to the other'.<sup>4</sup>

Matter can have definite states of existence and is subject to modification and change. The changes taking place in this world are caused by the aggregation of atoms and their disintegration. The atoms by themselves are not constant. They are subject to *pariṇāma* (development) and therefore they assume new qualities (*guṇas*). Unlike the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* doctrine which maintains

that there are different kinds of atoms corresponding to the four elements, Jainism holds that there is only one kind of atom which in the process of development, assumes different qualities. It is thus that the elements of earth, water, fire and air are formed. From this it is evident that the distinction of the elements is secondary and that their transmutation is possible. According to Jains, the heavier atom moves downwards and the lighter one upwards. They also maintain the view that the mind, breath, voice or sound cannot exist independently of matter. All the gross elements have the four *guṇas* of touch, taste, smell, and colour. These qualities can be seen in the atoms, too. But they cannot exist independent of matter. An object cannot be known without the help of sense organs which are the instruments of the *jīva*. But, sense perception is impossible without contact between a sense organ and an object. Jainism recognizes the correlativity of mind and matter, and also the relation between the knower and the object known.

We have so far dealt with that kind of *aīva* called *pudgala* or matter. Let us now examine the nature and characteristics of another kind of *aīva* known by the name of *ākāśa* or space. It is of two kinds: *lokākāśa* or filled space in which motion is possible and *alokākāśa* or empty space in which it is not possible. At the summit of *lokākāśa* there is a region called *siddhaśila* which is the abode of the liberated souls. *Lokākāśa* itself consists of three divisions, the upper (*ūrdhvaloka*), the middle (*madhyaloka*) and the lower (*adholoka*). In the first division reside celestial beings, in the second human and other living beings, and in the third the denizens of hell. Though space itself is not extension, extension is made possible only by space. It is infinite and imperceptible. Thus space is the subtle entity which pervades the mundane universe

3. *Ibid.* p. 196.

4. Jacobi, *Atomic Theory*, p. 200 Quoted in *Indian Thought—A Critical Survey*, By K. Damodaran (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1953) p. 127.

(*loka*) and the transcendent region of the liberated souls (*aloka*) which allows the subsistence of all other substances such as *dharma*, *adharma*, *jīva* and *puḍgala*. It is in the *lokākāśa* happiness and misery are experienced as a result of virtue and vice. The *lokākāśa* is pervaded by *dharma* which makes all movement possible. Beyond *lokākāśa* there is no *dharma* and therefore no movement is possible. It is nothing but empty space.

In Jainism it is difficult to differentiate the natural from the non-natural. According to Dale Riepe, the following points will help us. '(1) There is no basic division in Jainism between the celestial-nether world and the "natural" world of men and creatures; (2) There is a clearly defined non-natural world perceptible by omniscient men in which nothing resides except *ākāśa*; (3) The final aim of men is not to reach the celestial only but to perceive the eternal and the infinite.'<sup>5</sup>

Let us now elucidate the nature of the two other kinds of *ajīva*: *dharma* and *adharma*. *Dharma* or 'motion' is co-extensive with space (*lokākāśa*). 'Motion' itself does not move; yet is essential to the movement of corporeal things, as water is essential to the movement of fish. 'The Jaina philosophers mean by *dharma* a kind of ether, which is the fulcrum of motion... *Dharma* does not make these move but only assists them in their movement when they begin to move.'<sup>6</sup> Certain scholars have made the reasonable suggestion that these principles are traceable to an ancient notion of fluids flowing through the universe. This idea stands comparison with the Vedic conception of *Ṛta*. *Dharma* and *adharma*

are sometimes compared to the principles of *rajas* and *tamas* of the Sāṅkhya. Comparison can be extended still further. For instance, the insentient and immaterial substances as conceived by the Jainas undergo the sorts of defiled modifications (*vikṛti*) which characterize the Sāṅkhya *prakṛti*.<sup>7</sup> The principle of movement or *dharma* does not itself set the souls and material atoms in motion. It only provides the medium through which movement can occur.

The *jīva* and *puḍgala* are compared to the fish moving through the water of *dharma*. They possess by nature the capacity to move and yet cannot realize this potential unless *dharma-dravya* is present. In the same way *adharma* or the principle of rest is compared to the shade of a tree, which provides a suitable environment for someone to stop and relax.<sup>8</sup>

Like *ākāśa*, *dharma* and *adharma*, *kāla* or time is a kind of efficient or instrumental cause. Some Jaina writers have made a distinction between real (*pāramārthika*) and empirical (*vyāvahārika*) time. The former makes continuity or duration possible and is one and indivisible. It is also infinite and imperceptible. The latter is divisible and is perceived as moments, hours, days, months and years and it is called *samaya*. *Kāla* is thus a substance (*dravya*) and the moments, hours etc. are its *pariyāyās* or modes. *Kāla* helps the process of the emergence of new qualities in things.

*Kāla* or time has cycles in it, each cycle having two eras of equal duration called the ascending era (*utsarpiṇī*) in which virtue is on the increase and the descending era (*avasarpiṇī*) in which it is on the decrease. Our age is said to belong to the descending era.

From this account of the Jaina conception

5. Dale Riepe, *The Naturalistic Tradition in Indian Thought* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964) p. 92.

6. Ghosal, S. C. Nemichandra Siddhanta Chakravarti, *Dravya-Samgraha* (Arrah: Central Jain Publishing House, 1917) p. 17.

7. Padmanabh S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass) p. 99.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

of nature, one thing is clear. The Jaina does not look upon nature as an object of adoration. He does not personify the forces of nature and worship them as deities as the seers of the early Vedic religion did. The Jaina attitude to nature is partly scientific and partly philosophical. Its analysis of matter (*pudgala*) into its ultimate constituents leading to the formulation of the atomic theory is truly remarkable considering its antiquity. It is truly in line with the spirit of modern science. The notion of empty space is nothing new to the modern world. But to entertain such an idea in such distant past

really goes to the credit of Jaina thinkers. The ultimate aim of the Jaina is the realization of the full potentialities of the soul through the acquisition of *kevalajñāna* or absolute knowledge. But matter is an impediment standing in the way of such realization. Subtle particles of matter called *karma* infiltrate the soul and keep it in bondage. Thus nature or that part of nature called matter is, according to the Jains, something to be escaped from. This attitude to nature has led to the practice of severe asceticism without which, it was thought, the soul cannot be emancipated from the bondage of matter.

*They Lived with God*

## KALIPADA GHOSH

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

People cannot understand an *avatār*, or Incarnation of God, because he is different. His birth, life-style, actions and behaviour are divine and therefore impossible to judge from the human standpoint. An *avatār*'s love and compassion for all—the good, the bad, the pious, the sinful, the destitute, and the drunk—bring his mind down from the absolute plane of existence to the relative existence of the world. Without any selfish motive he helps people to cross the turbulent ocean of *maya*. Like those who had preceded him, Sri Ramakrishna, too, helped the drunkards and the fallen of society. Because he did so, some narrow, bigoted religious leaders criticized him for not showing 'sufficient moral abhorrence' towards these people.

Kalipada was one of those wayward souls who were saved by the Master. Like Girish, he was an out and out bohemian, a debanchee, and a drunkard. Swami Adbhutananda related in his reminiscences how Sri Ramakrishna transformed Kalipada's life:

Girish Babu arrived one night with Kalipada Ghosh. Kalipada was a terrible drunkard. He refused to give money to his family, spending it for wine instead. But his wife was very pure. I heard that many years earlier she had come to the Master, seeking some kind of medicine that would change her husband's tendencies. The Master sent her to Holy Mother. Holy Mother sent her back to the Master. He again sent her to Holy Mother, and this exchange went on three times. At last, Holy Mother wrote the Master's name on a bel leaf that had been

offered to the Lord and gave it to Kalipada's wife telling her to chant the Lord's name.

Kalipada's wife chanted the Lord's name for twelve years. When the Master first met Kalipada, he remarked, 'This man has come here after tormenting his wife for twelve years'. Kalipada was startled but said nothing.

Then the Master asked him, 'What do you want?'

Kalipada asked shamelessly, 'Can you give me a little wine?'

The Master smiled. 'Yes, I can. But the wine I have is so intoxicating that you will not be able to bear it.'

Kalipada took him literally and said: 'Is it real British wine? Please give me a little to soak my throat.'

'No, it is not British wine', said the Master, still smiling. 'It is completely homemade. This wine cannot be given to just anyone, for not everyone can stand it. If a person tastes this wine even once, British wine will seem insipid to him ever after. Are you ready to drink my wine instead of the other?'

For a moment Kalipada was thoughtful, and then I heard him say, 'Please give me that wine which will make me intoxicated my entire life'. The Master touched him, and Kalipada started to weep. We tried to calm him, but he went on weeping in spite of our attempts.

Kalipada Ghosh was born in 1849 at Shyampukur, Calcutta. His father, Guruprasad Ghosh, was very religious-minded and devoted to the Divine Mother Kālī. Although Guruprasad owned a small jute business, it apparently did not bring in sufficient money to keep his family out of financial difficulties. Therefore Guruprasad took Kalipada out of school when the boy was in the eighth grade and got him a job with Messrs. John Dickinson & Company, a British stationery firm in Calcutta. Kalipada thus had very little education, but he was intelligent and efficient and was gradually promoted until he held an important position in the company.

Kalipada was tall and husky. He had dark complexion, large eyes, and a bright, cheerful face. He and Girish Ghosh were

close friends and often drank together. It was Girish who first took Kalipada to Sri Ramakrishna in 1884. Some of the Master's devotees called them 'Jagai and Madhai', after the two ruffians whose lives had been transformed by Chaitanya.

After Kalipada's first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna he returned home, overwhelmed by the Master's words and personality. He felt an irresistible attraction to see Sri Ramakrishna again. Shortly thereafter, in November 1884, he went by boat from Calcutta to Dakshineswar. When the Master saw Kalipada he said that he had just been thinking of going to Calcutta. Kalipada told him that his boat was at the landing ghat and that he would be glad to take him there. Sri Ramakrishna immediately got ready and left with Latu (Swami Adbhutananda) and Kalipada. As they got into the boat, however, Kalipada privately instructed the boatman to steer the boat to the middle of the river. Then Kalipada knelt down and clasped the Master's feet, saying: 'Sir, you are a saviour. Please save my life.' 'Oh, no, no!' said Sri Ramakrishna. 'Chant the name of the Lord. You will get liberation.' Kalipada then said: 'Sir, I am a wicked man and a drunkard. I do not even have time to chant the Lord's name. You are an ocean of mercy. Kindly save a ruffian such as I, who is devoid of disciplines and righteousness'.

Meanwhile, Kalipada firmly held on to the Master's feet. Sri Ramakrishna could not find any way out of this predicament, so he asked Kalipada to stick out his tongue and then he wrote a mantra on it. The Master said, 'Henceforth your tongue will automatically repeat this mantra'. But Kalipada was not happy. He said to the Master, 'I don't want this'. 'Then what do you want?' asked Sri Ramakrishna. 'When I leave this world', replied Kalipada, 'I shall see darkness all around, and that



terrible darkness will fill me with horror. My wife, children, and other relatives won't be able to help me then. At that terrible time you will be my only saviour. You will have to take me, holding a light with your left hand and me with your right hand. I shall always be with you then. You will have to fulfil this prayer of mine'. With his heart full of compassion, the Master said: 'All right, all right. Your prayer will be fulfilled. My goodness! You have brought me to the middle of the Ganga and have created such a scene!'

When the boat reached Calcutta, Kalipada asked the Master where he would like to go. To Kalipada's delight, Sri Ramakrishna expressed a wish to visit his home. Kalipada immediately hired a carriage and took the Master there. It is said that there were some oil paintings of gods and goddesses in the room where Sri Ramakrishna sat. Seeing those holy pictures, the Master was very happy and sang some songs in ecstasy, creating a wonderful spiritual atmosphere in the house.

A few months previous to the Master's visit an interesting incident had occurred. One evening Kalipada's sister, Mahamaya, looked out of their second-floor window and saw a horse carriage passing down Shyampukur Street, where their house was located. Inside the carriage was a remarkable looking person. All of a sudden this person stuck his head out of the window and called to the driver: 'Stop! Stop! Please stop the carriage here. It seems this is the place'. Mahamaya was awed when she saw his radiant face. Immediately she called the people of the household to see this divine person, but before they could come he had put his head back inside. The carriage slowly turned down Ramdhan Mitra Lane and disappeared. Mahamaya never forgot that divine sight. When Sri Ramakrishna visited Kalipada's

house, Mahamaya immediately recognized him as the person she had seen that day.

Kalipada began to visit the Master regularly at Dakshineswar and gradually became one of his close devotees. He was a good singer and sometimes sang for the Master. He could also play the violin and flute. One day Sri Ramakrishna heard him playing a flute and went into *samādhi*. Since Kalipada was an expert cook, the devotees sometimes, out of fun, called him 'housewife'.

Once when Kalipada was at Dakshineswar he went to the Kālī temple and started to rebuke the Divine Mother, using abusive words. His chest turned red and tears rolled down his cheeks. Sri Ramakrishna was also there at the time and, hearing Kalipada's scolding, he left the temple. He did not approve of that attitude. To his disciples who were present, the Master said: 'Our attitude towards the Divine Mother should be that of a child towards its mother. The other attitude (the heroic attitude) is extremely difficult'.

When the doctors advised the devotees to move Sri Ramakrishna to Calcutta for his cancer treatment, a house was rented for him in the Baghbazar street. Sri Ramakrishna did not like this house, however, and immediately walked to Balaram's house. He stayed there for a week until another house could be found. Meanwhile, the devotees were happy to have him in Calcutta and flocked to see him. Swami Saradananda has described the following scene in his book *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*.

We came to Balaram's house one afternoon and found the hall on the first floor packed to capacity with people, when Girish and Kalipada commenced singing with great zeal:

O Nitai, hold me!

Today my heart feels an unknown sensation, as

it were.

Hold me, O Nitai!

I am now being carried away by the waves  
That rose in the river of love,  
As Nitai distributes the Name of Hari.

Entering the room with great difficulty, we saw the Master, who was in ecstasy, seated in the western extremity of the room facing the east. We saw his lips adorned with a wonderful smile of bliss and graciousness....

After a few days Kalipada found a house in Shyampukur, near his own, for the Master to stay in. He also furnished the house and decorated the Master's room with pictures of gods and goddesses, and he bought kitchen utensils and groceries. Again, when he heard that the Master had expressed a wish to worship Mother Kālī on the night of the Kālī Pūjā, he helped make arrangements for the worship. As an offering to the Divine Mother, Kalipada's wife prepared farina pudding, which Sri Ramakrishna later ate as *prasād*. Sri Ramakrishna was pleased with Kalipada's generous nature and called him 'Manager'. Swami Vivekananda sometimes called him 'Dāna Kali', or 'the generous Kali'. (*Dāna* also means 'demon'.)

On October 24, 1885, while staying at the Shyampukur house, Sri Ramakrishna explained the mystery of *japa* to the devotees: '*Japa* means silently repeating God's name in solitude. When you chant his name with single-minded devotion you can see God's form and realize him. Suppose there is a piece of timber sunk in the water of the Ganges and fastened with a chain to the bank. You proceed link by link, holding to the chain, and you dive into the water and follow the chain. Finally you are able to reach the timber. In the same way, by repeating God's name you become absorbed in him and finally realize him'.

Kalipada listened to the Master, but he had already received the boon that his

tongue would repeat the mantra effortlessly. He smiled and said to the devotees: 'Ours is a grand teacher! We are not asked to practice meditation, austerity, and other disciplines'.

When Sri Ramakrishna went in 1884 to see Girish Ghosh's drama *Caitanya-Līlā*, he had been pleased with Binodini, the actress who had played the part of Chaitanya, and had blessed her. She in turn had become very much devoted to the Master but could not find another opportunity to meet him. Now, hearing of his illness, she longed to see him again. But the Master's disciples were very strict about visitors. They feared that if Sri Ramakrishna talked too much or if he was touched by impure people his disease would be aggravated. In order to see the Master, Binodini sought help from Kalipada, whom she knew through Girish. One evening, acting on his advice, she dressed herself as a European gentleman and went with Kalipada to the Shyampukur house. Introducing her to the disciples as a friend of his, Kalipada took her to the Master, who was alone in his room at that time. Sri Ramakrishna laughed when Kalipada told him who this 'European gentleman' really was. After praising Binodini's faith, devotion, and courage, the Master gave her some spiritual instructions and allowed her to touch his feet with her forehead. When Binodini and Kalipada had left, Sri Ramakrishna told the disciples about the trick that had been played on them. The Master enjoyed it so much that the disciples could not be angry.

Sri Ramakrishna moved from the smoggy Calcutta environment to the garden house at Cossipore on December 11, 1885. On December 23 he touched Kalipada's chest and said, 'May your inner spirit be awakened'. Then, stroking Kalipada's chin, he said with great affection, 'Whoever

has sincerely called on God or performed his daily religious devotions will certainly come here'. The Master's blessing and unrestrained love that day made Kalipada a new person. He gave up his bad drinking habit and lost all interest in worldly things.

After the Master's passing away Girish and Kalipada often sat together silently for long periods of time in front of the Master's picture. With tearful eyes they would pray, 'Master, please reveal yourself to us'. When Navagopal Ghosh celebrated the annual festival of Sri Ramakrishna at his house, Girish and Kalipada sang *kīrtan* and danced. Later, as they sat with closed eyes and motionless bodies, Navagopal garlanded them and they uttered in ecstasy, 'Ramakrishna, Ramakrishna'. The devotees were impressed at the transformation in their lives. After Kalipada's passing away Girish dedicated his drama *Śaṅkarācārya* to him. In the dedication he wrote: 'Brother, we saw the embodiment of Vedanta together many times in Dakshineswar. You are now in the abode of bliss, but I am sorry that you could not see my drama *Śaṅkarācārya* while you were alive. I dedicate this work to you. Please accept it'.

Though Kalipada was not a writer and playwright like Girish, he composed many songs. These were published in 1893 in a booklet entitled *Rāmākṣṇa Sangīt* by the Kankurgachi Yogodyana, a retreat house owned by Ram Chandra Datta. Kalipada visited the Yogodyana quite often, because some relics of Sri Ramakrishna had been installed there and regular worship of the Master was performed. One day Kalipada came with a lot of flowers for the worship. He did not know that if the flowers were carried while wearing shoes they could not be used in ritualistic worship. When Manomohan told Kalipada of this, Kalipada immediately left those

flowers there for use as decoration and went back to the flower market barefooted and bought more flowers for offering.

It has already been mentioned that Kalipada was very successful in his career. It was due primarily to his efforts that John Dickinson Company opened many branch offices in the main cities of India. Although it was a British firm, Kalipada took the liberty of hanging a picture of Sri Ramakrishna in each of the branch offices. He believed utterly that it was the Master's blessings that had transformed his character and brought him prosperity. If there was any vacancy in the office where he worked, he would appoint a devotee of the Master to fill that position. When he moved temporarily to Bombay, Swamis Vivekananda, Brahmananda, Turiyananda, Abhedananda, and Akhandananda each stayed at his house at different times while on pilgrimage. It gave him great pleasure to serve the Master's monastic disciples.

During Kalipada's last illness Swami Adbhutananda went to see him at his Calcutta home. Kalipada had been giving him some money every month for milk and other necessities. Swami Adbhutananda asked him to discontinue that help, but Kalipada replied: 'Brother, by the grace of the Master I have no wants. The Master will be angry with me if you deprive me of serving you with a few rupees'. Since the Swami did not like to hurt Kalipada's feelings, he accepted the gift until Kalipada's passing away on June 28, 1905.

Sri Ramakrishna had promised thrice in Swami Adbhutananda's presence that at the time of Kalipada's death he would take him, holding him by his right hand. Just as Kalipada breathed his last he raised his right hand. Swami Premananda was present then. Hearing the news of Kalipada's death from Swami Premananda, Swami Adbhutananda said to some

devotees: 'Look, the Master came to away. Brother Baburam saw it clearly. Kalipada at his last moment. Holding Whatever the Master said to anyone is Kalipada's hand, the Master guided him bound to be fulfilled'.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**STUDIES IN CH'AN AND HUA-YEN.** EDITED BY ROBERT M. GIMELLO AND PETER N. GREGORY. Published by University of Hawaii Press, 2840 Kolowalu Street, Honolulu 96822. 1983. Pp. 390. \$ 14.95.

The book under review is the first number of the East Asian Buddhist Studies, which grew out of the first conference of the Kuroda Institute held in May 1980. The Institute is designed for the study of Buddhism and human values; and is especially devoted to the study of East Asian Buddhism. It seeks to make available to the scholarly community some of the advanced works currently being done in the field of Buddhism. This work is both rapid and manifold, besides being extremely significant.

It must be noted that East Asian studies have greatly been helped by Japanese scholars who have, in fact, been the forerunners in the field. They were also the pioneers in editing, analyzing and interpreting the well-known manuscripts from the Tun-huang troves. The thousands of manuscripts hidden in the cave libraries of Tun-huang are in Chinese (dating from A.D. 400 to A.D. 1000) and Tibetan (dating from A.D. 750 to A.D. 848). They contain valuable information about the Buddhist practices prevalent in the East Asian region during those times, and provide important links in the history of Buddhism. Their importance to the history of Buddhism has been compared with the relevance of the Dead Sea Scrolls to the history of Christianity.

The major significance of these texts is the light they throw on the background of Zen Buddhism. The Japanese version of this contemplative school which originated in India (Zen is the Japanese word for the Sanskrit *dhyāna* and the Prākṛt *jhāna*) had its earlier career laid out in China (where it is known as Ch'an); and it passed through Korea before it landed up in Japan. Important information is also available from the texts preserved in Korean monastic libraries. A major breakthrough,

however, is the discovery of Tibetan texts relating to the Ch'an school in China. The ideas basic to Zen practices reached Tibet before they reached even Korea. It is of great value, therefore, to study the Tibetan texts alongside their Chinese counterparts.

This is precisely what the present publication has attempted to accomplish. It is a collection of five papers, four of which were originally contributed at the First Conference of the Kuroda Institute. The first three papers deal with Zen in the early Chinese texts and in the Tibetan texts; the other papers deal with the Hua-yen school, better known as the Kegon school. The popular notion that the latter school is purely intellectual ('cerebral') and that it contains little that is relevant to practice is belied by the studies conducted here. A great master of this school, T'ung-hsuean, is quoted (on p. 364) as saying: 'One could work away at these texts, without respite, until one were old and gray, but it is still the practice of contemplation, rather than study, which discloses the true essentials'. The gods which people this school derive their validity only from the human aspirations for unshaken peace. The papers emphasize the practical dimensions of the Kegon school, and relate them to the Zen framework.

It is of interest to note that the Ch'an lineage according to the Tibetan texts starts from an Indian (A-rten-hver), passes through two Chinese masters (Be'u-sing and Mang, the latter being the Tibetan name) and ends up with a Tibetan (Tshig-tsa-nam-ka), who lived in the early part of the ninth century. It is intriguing, however, to be informed that the Indian master migrated to the Kucha region and taught there (p.17), for the Ch'an involvement in Central Asia at this date was till now unknown. A saying ascribed to this Indian master is: 'The mind as it is, level (markless, non-dual), is the real path of yoga.' This is the central idea in the 'sahaja yoga' of the Siddha sects in India. It is well known that the Indian Siddhas made a deep

impact upon the spiritual and ascetic practices in Tibetan Buddhism. It is probable that this Indian was a Siddha of Vajrayāna persuasion.

The papers included here shed light on many a dark corner in the annals of Buddhism in Tibet, China and Korea. In particular, they provide many missing links in the spread of Mahāyāna Buddhism in greater India. The rise of several schools and sects was occasioned by distinctions between 'explicit' and 'implicit' meanings of the Sūtra; between the *neyārtha* and the *nītārtha*, between the principles and the practices. It was to correct the errors of the gradualist approach to enlightenment that the Mahāyāna arose with a strong bias in favour of the 'sudden' approach of No-mind and No-examination, which characterizes the Ch'an schools. The involvement of Tantra in the Kegon school has also been well brought out. Robert Gimello's paper on Li T'ung-Hsuan relating to the practical dimensions of the Kegon school is highly interesting, inasmuch as it unravels the relation that obtains between Ch'an and Hua-yen.

This is a very welcome publication in view of the enormous interest that contemplative schools of Buddhism is evoking in recent years. It is valuable also because several primary sources in Tibetan and Chinese have seen the light of the day for the first time here. And the team of specialists trained under Japanese experts has done a good job in making available to us faithful English versions of these primary sources. The publication marks a new trend in the Western appraisal of Indian Buddhism as it was transplanted in China and Tibet. The accounts presented here help reconstruct the early phase of Buddhism which saw an encounter of the esoteric yogin with the activist missionary.

We look forward to the other volumes in the Series, which not only add to our knowledge of East Asian Buddhism but resolve the riddles that the present volume throws up. One of the riddles is the Tibetan account of the debate between Kamalasila and Ho-shang being at variance with the Chinese version considered in the first paper. Another is the identification of A-rten-hver. Still another is the disparity between Bu-Ston's account of Mo-Ho-Yen's works and the account as evidenced by the Tun-huang manuscripts. A question of practical import is the accuracy of the prescription relating to the abandonment of awareness to be found in the Tibetan fragments translated on page 109. This prescription appears to go against the

accepted Tibetan idea enunciated by Tsong-kha-pa that awareness cannot be abandoned.

The Kuroda Institute is to be congratulated for the excellent volume it has brought out as its very first publication.

PROF. S. K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

*Former Head of the Dept. of Clinical Psychology, National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro-sciences, Bangalore. Professor of Psychology and Indology, Callison College Study Centre, University of the Pacific, U.S.A.*

**SOME POET SAINTS OF INDIA: (ANNUAL 1985):** Published by Swami Vedantananda, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Patna 800 004. 1985. Pp. 144. Rs. 15

This is a collection of essays on the lives and teachings of 17 poet-saints of India. They are Thiruvalluvar, Thirunāvukharasu, Māṇikkavāchakar and the poetess Andal, all from Tamil Nadu, Narsi Mehta from Gujarat, Śankardeva from Assam, Kabīr, Tulsidās and Sūrdās from Uttar Pradesh, Tukārām from Maharashtra, Farid and Nānak from Punjab, Rāmprasād and Raghunāth Goswāmi from Bengal, Basaveshwara from Karnataka, Vidyāpati from Bihar and Mīrābāi from Rajasthan. Though these great saints hail from different parts of India, their thoughts mingle in a single stream of devotion. This stream has nurtured the culture and civilization of this great land, long through the ages. These saints sing in unison the glory of God, and the symphony enchants the universe. It has a universal appeal.

All these essays have been written by dedicated scholars who are also devotees of God. Devotion to truth has, however, given them the courage to examine critically the biographical and literary details of their saintly heroes.

Sri T.S. Avinashilingam has written about the two Tamil poets. Swami Siddhinathananda and Swami Sridananda have written about Ramanuja-Ezhutachan and about the poetess Andal, respectively. Smt. Mehta, Dr. Purkait, Dr. R. K. Verma, Dr. N. B. Patil, Dr. R. P. Singh, Sri B. P. Basu, Sri P. K. Banerjee, Dr. A. L. Shivarudrappa, Dr. B. De, Dr. H. L. Shrivastava, Sri T. Madhavan, Prof. H. P. Chakravarty, Sri Bhagawanandaji, Dr. V. N. Mishra and Dr. K. N. Labh are the other contributors. These are scholars of high repute in their own fields.

Renunciation and service are the common ideals upheld by the saints whose lives are described here. These saints were the messengers

of God and harbingers of peace, goodwill and amity among men. These saints have shown that love of God can bind men into lasting brotherhood.

In an age of strife and mutual distrust, this annual number, brought out so elegantly by Swami Vedantanandaji will go a long way in bringing about national integration and harmony. It will also help men and women in India and abroad to know the rich devotional and poetical heritage of this land.

Swami Vedantanandaji's laborious effort in bringing out such beautiful annual issues during the past few years deserves high praise. Through them he has been rendering a valuable service to this nation.

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

IN LIGHT OF WISDOM: BY SWAMI AMAR JYOTI. Published by Truth Consciousness, Gold Hill, Salina, Star Route, Boulder, Colorado 80302 (U.S.A). Available in India at Jyoti Ashrama, 68 Lulla Nagar, Pune 411040; Maharashtra. 1984. (Second Edition). Pp. 73 \$ 13 (Rs. 60).

This is a small collection of poetic jottings of Swami Amar Jyoti. These are classified under six heads viz. Truth, Ego, Conceptions, Understanding, God, Love and Being. The poems are short, pithy maxims and epigrams. They are not metrical but sound pleasant. Each maxim is a wisdom capsule containing the distilled essence of years of experience, observation and thinking.

About Truth, the Swami says, 'Truth shall make you free. It can survive any argument. Truth can stand any challenge. By its own proven victory Truth shines.' (p. 11)

The truth of one person  
from age to age

can shake the whole earth. (p. 13)

If you want everything to happen as you wish,  
be truthful.

(Unless, by the time you become truthful  
your wishes may change). (p. 14)

This whole universe is God's dream only.  
(p. 17)

In the poem on Understanding the Swami  
says:

Bliss is within us, there is no journey about it.  
You have to realize it. How? Reject the  
things which are barriers and impositions  
upon Bliss

The worries of the past and the plannings  
of the future. (p. 46)

About Love the Swami says, 'Cold hearted people cannot have knowledge nor can wise people stop the love springing from their hearts.' (p. 55)

When we go to the core of the Principle we  
are all One. (p. 66)

These 73 pages, printed on fine quality pastel-coloured paper may not contain more than a couple of thousand words, but they are rich in content. They have a deep mental experience behind them. There is an intimacy of communication in these spontaneous expressions about Ego, God, Love, Being, which we all crave and search for. There is a refreshing message on each page. One must meditate on it and feel it within oneself.

NARENDRANATH B. PATIL M.A. LL. B. PH. D.

THE SPHOTA THEORY OF LANGUAGE  
(*A Philosophical Analysis*): BY HAROLD G. COWARD. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, 41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawaharnagar, Delhi 110 007. 1980. Pp. xxi + 158. Rs. 45/-

Fascinated with the question 'How do we know via language?', and not finding an easy answer to it in Western philosophy, psychology or theology, the author was introduced by Professor T.R.V. Murti to the ancient tradition of Indian thought on the very theme. He then set out on his enquiry with enthusiasm, and discovered that Bhartrhari's Sphota theory not only provided a much satisfactory explanation, but also 'seemed to relate in a creative way both to very ancient western concepts of language, such as Plato's notion of eternally existing ideas and the *logos* conception in the Gospel of John, as well as to some very modern notions, such as Chomsky's theory of innate universal grammatical structures'. The result is the present monograph containing a philosophical analysis of the theory.

What is the fundamental difference between the western and Indian approaches to language? In western thought, especially in the modern linguistic philosophy, language is regarded merely as a carrier of information, whereas in Indian thought language is regarded as being closely related to consciousness. In India the Buddhists believed the relation between a word and its meaning to be a conventional one. As against this naturalistic view, most Hindu schools regard the relation as a transcendental one. The schools which made the greatest contribution to

the study of languages are the school of grammarians and the Mīmāṃsaka school.

One of the most important problems in linguistics is, what constitute the unit of language? Does each letter of a word or each word in a sentence have a separate meaning by itself? This seems to be improbable. Letters by themselves have no meaning; words of course have meanings but, when we speak, the sounds disappear as soon as the words are uttered. The Mīmāṃsakas hold that, though the words die out, their memory lingers in the mind and, by the time the last word of a sentence is uttered, the total meaning of the whole sentence will have become clear. This view does not adequately explain how communication between two people with different mental structures becomes possible. As against this view, the grammarians (*vaiyākaraṇas*) propound the theory that the meaning of a sentence, the idea that a person wants to express, is an indivisible whole and the words of a sentence only manifest this gestalt. When we hear a sentence, the total meaning is revealed by the words. The indivisible and universal meaning of language common to all men is called *sphota*. It is present in the consciousness of all people. It is something more than the mere sum total of the meanings of the individual letters and words of a sentence.

Coward begins his thesis with an introductory chapter which, in spite of its promising title 'Language—its nature and function', is too brief to deserve that title. The book is then divided into two parts. The first part entitled 'Metaphysical background of the Sphota theory' is a survey of the various views on language and revelation found in the different schools of Indian thought. The first chapter of this part is a study of the evolution of language from *vāk* and the role of *śabda* (verbal testimony) in the tradition of the orthodox systems of philosophy. The next chapter deals with the role of language in the Nyaya system and in the heterodox systems of Buddhism and Jainism all of which adopt a naturalistic view of language.

The second part of the book is devoted to the Sphota theory of language as revelation. It is here that the identification of Sphota with the ultimate Reality known as Brahman which is a typical feature of the school of grammarians, is explicated. Like Advaita Vedānta, the Grammar School is committed to two levels of language. The real essence of language is its meaning which is unitary and indivisible whereas the letters and words are its phenomenal, unreal

manifestations. A natural outcome of this division was the identification of Sphota with Brahman resulting in the unique concept of *Śabda-Brahman* (Word-Absolute). The gulf separating the phenomenal variety from the noumenal unity is bridged by the concept of four stages of word manifestation: *Parā*, *Pasyanti*, *madhyama* and *vaikhari*.

The next important question is about the mechanism which converts the unity of Śabda-Brahman into the diversity of speech. According to Bhartṛhari this kind of phenomenalization occurs because the Sphota itself contains an inner energy (*kratu*) which seeks to burst forth (*sphut*) into language. The inner latency Bhartṛhari calls *sakti* (power). What appears to be unitary is thus seen to contain all the potentialities of multiplicity and complexity just as the egg of a pea-hen contains the power of manifesting all the dazzling colours of a peacock. It is *pratibha* or intuition that reveals the unitary meaning of language and the unitary level of Reality.

All these and related topics are discussed with great clarity by Harold Coward. In fact, brevity and clarity are the two features that mark out Coward's book from other works on the same subject. As a fine introduction to the Sphota theory of language, Coward's book is recommended to all students and general readers. Wherever possible he tries to relate Indian concepts with western concepts but his forays into western linguistics are too brief and limited.

The book is rounded off with a lucid summary of the major tenets of the Sphota theory (pp. 134-37). There is an excellent Glossary of Sanskrit terms at the end, and the author's flair for terminological exactness is evident throughout the book (vide pp. 19 n.1, 29 n.1, 69 n.1, 134). There is a beautiful 8-page exposition of the theory in the Foreword to the book given by Prof. T.R.V. Murti.

Two comments are called for on this otherwise excellent work. For one, the study shows many indications of total dependence upon secondary sources, whether in the form of standard translations of Sanskrit texts or in the form of authentic studies on them. While, with extreme care, this mode can even turn out to be an ideal one in respect of accuracy in understanding and presentation, the endeavour gets handicapped from the inability of making original interpretations which becomes possible through *original* access and reference to the texts. Secondly, there are a few minor lapses here and there. Some of them are mentioned below.

(i) References were needed, to the *Vākyapadīya* (Iyer's edn.) 1.74 (on p. 15) and 2.233 (on p. 65), and, for the Vedas being the nihsvasita of God, to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (2.4.10, 4.5.11) and *Maitrāyaṇī* (6.32) *Upaniṣads*.

(ii) For derivation of *ṛṣi* (pp. 6,21), reference could be made to the *Nirukta* (2.11)

(iii) Bhartṛhari's mention of *avidyā* in his book is not 'repeated' (p. 81), but made only at 2.233 and 3.9.62.

(iv) From the compound *sabdaparokṣya*, only *āparokṣya*, and not *aparokṣya* (p. 46: twice), can be extracted.

(v) Use of *naiyāyika*, not of *nyāya* (pp. 46,64), was proper.

Regrettably, there are several printing errors in the book. Lastly, about the very good Bibliography at the end:

(i) 'Primary Sources' should contain two references:

1. *Sphotatattvanirūpaṇa* by Sesakrishna (see p. 103).

2. *Sphotanirnaya* by Kaundabhatta, ed. by S. D. Joshi, 1967, and the necessary reference to 'Samarthāhnikā' at S. D. Joshi's ed. of *Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya*.

(ii) 'Secondary Sources': References were needed to 1. T.R.V. Murti's article (mentioned primarily at p. 7 n.1), 2. the important Reprint in 1977 of K. K. Raja's book, and 3. J. F. Staal, 'Sanskrit Philosophy of Language' (pp. 102-36) in *History of Linguistic Thought and Contemporary Linguistics*, ed. H. Parret, New York, 1976.

These are brought to the notice only to help a better use of the book by readers, and to point out how research publications need to be flawless and need the author's direct supervision during printing.

We would be happy to have in near future the promised (pp. xviii, 136) psychological study of the Theory from the author's pen.

DR. S. D. LADDU

Professor of Sanskrit

Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit  
University of Poona.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MYLAPORE, MADRAS

#### REPORT FOR 1984-85

Started under the inspiration of Swami Ramakrishnananda in 1905 in a modest way with just 5 orphans, this institution has now grown into its present dimension with the capacity to provide free board to 372 students. The Home which follows the Gurukula system of education, runs the following institutions.

*The Hostel at Mylapore:* accommodates a total number of 235 students belonging to following sections: Residential High School boys: 185; Residential Technical Institute boys: 122; boys studying in different colleges: 28. All the inmates of the Home are under the care of monastic wardens and lay wardmasters. Emphasis is laid on character formation through moral and religious instruction. Puja, prayer, observance of religious festivals are some of the activities of the hostel. All the domestic activities of the Home are carried out by the students themselves under the guidance of superiors.

*Residential High School:* (Standards VI to X). Out of a total number of 185 students, 95

belonged to backward communities and 12 belonged to S. C. and S. T. In the 1984 S.S.L.C. examination all the 35 students who appeared passed. School education in the state being free, scholarship is offered to some students for the purchase of the text books and for the payment of examination fees.

*Residential Technical Institute:* offered a three-year diploma course in mechanical engineering with three electives: automobile technology, machinshop technology and agricultural farm equipment technology. There were 39 students in I year, 41 in II year and 42 in III year. In the final D.M.E. examination of April 1984, out of the 39 students who appeared for it, 34 passed—all in first class. While scholarship was offered to all the students, 30 belonging to backward class enjoyed a further benefit of 50 per cent concession in fees and 12 others full freeship. Inplant training for the final year mechanical engineering students was arranged in a number of well-known firms in the city. There were 3,500 books in the institute library and 1,011 books in its Book-bank. In the part-time evening post-diploma course (of 1½ years) in automobile engineering, out of 26



candidates admitted in July 1983, 13 completed the course in February 1985. Classes were conducted for the course of A.M.I.E. Section 'A' (Diploma Stream).

*Ramakrishna Centenary Primary School:* completed 50 years of its service in March 1985. The school is housed in a two storeyed pucca building. It has standards I to V, with a strength of 366 children, of which 262 are boys and 164 girls.

*Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Malliankarani:* The Home runs a Middle school from standard I to VII with a strength of 235 boys and 86 girls, and a hostel for 37 boarders from backward communities, as a part of the village development program in Malliankarani, Dist. Chingleput, where it owns an estate. Since the ground floor of the new school building is nearing completion, it has been decided to construct a first floor, the estimated cost of which is Rs. 19 lakh. Agriculture is taught as a prevocation subject in the school. Under the village development program, the Mission has taken many initiatives such as reclamation of saline soil, cultivation of fruit trees, providing mid-day meals to pre-school children, maintenance of a primary health centre in its premises for the benefit of the villagers and organizing cultural activities for the youth. For these various projects undertaken by the Home, its secretary solicits donation in cash or kind from the public. All donations, exempt from income tax, may be forwarded to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 92, Sir P. S. Shivaswamy Road, Mylapore, Madras 600 004.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, MANGALORE

##### REPORT FOR 1984-85

This branch of the Ramakrishna Order at Mangalore was started in 1947, and was shifted to the present site on Mangaladevi Road in 1951. Besides being an important religious centre, the Mission has a Balakashrama and a Charitable Dispensary.

*Balakashrama—the Boys' Home:* maintains poor and meritorious students, mainly drawn from remote villages, irrespective of caste or creed. It provides free board, lodging, stationery, clothing etc. In all there were 54 boarders of whom 5 were Higher Primary pupils, 39 were High School students and 10 were College students. The boys participate in the daily

routine of the Math such as the morning and evening congregational prayers. They are also taught to chant Vedic Hymns and the Gita and to sing devotional songs. Important festivals and the birthdays of saints are celebrated.

*The Charitable Dispensary:* started in 1955 to meet the medical needs of the poor patients of the locality, it has become an important centre of medical relief in the town. During the period under review the dispensary treated a total number of 15,457 cases of which 1,300 were new.

*An appeal:* For the maintenance of Boys' Home and the Charitable Dispensary the institution needs donation in cash and kind. Persons wishing to perpetuate the memory of their near and dear ones may institute memorial endowments of Rs. 10,000/-, on the interest of which one boy can be maintained every year. The generous public are requested to donate liberally, all donations being exempted from Income Tax. Cheques and drafts may kindly be drawn in favour of the Ramakrishna Mission, Mangalore.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BELUR MATH RELIEF WORK DURING MARCH '86

*Primary Relief:* Sri Lanka Refugee Relief: 528 pcs. banians, 63 kg. puffed rice and 11 kg. sweets were further distributed through our Madras Mission Ashrama, among Sri Lanka refugees sheltered at Mandapam and Tiruchi camps. Moreover, milk and snacks were served to 34,292 and 21,302 persons respectively. A team of doctors is regularly attending to the inmates of Mandapam and Kottapattu camps.

*Saurashtra Draught Relief:* Up to 23.3.86 Rajkot Ashrama has distributed 3,000 kg. wheat, 704 kg. jaggery amongst 176 families of Khirasara, Rataiya and Daungaum villages of Lodhika Taluk of Rajkot District. Everyday 60,000 litres of water is being distributed amongst 1900 families in different areas of Rajkot City which is experiencing unprecedented shortage of water.

*Rehabilitation:* West Bengal Tornado Rehabilitation: This rehabilitation work has been concluded on the 18th last after inauguration of Saradmoni Bhavan, a newly constructed wing of the Thakurnagar Balika Vidyalaya at Gaighata, 24 Parganas, which was severely damaged by the tornado in 1983. Also, 400 saris were distributed among tornado affected girls of the said School.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### *Drug Addiction in India*

Until about ten years ago drug addiction as a social problem was confined mostly to western countries. It was to a great extent related to the Vietnam War and the Hippie movement. But in recent years drug addiction has been making insidious inroads in big cities in India. According to official estimates, there may be three to four lakh addicts in Delhi, and double that number in Bombay and Calcutta.

Drugs like Ganja (Cannabis), Charas and Bhang have been in use in India for centuries, but it was till recently restricted to vagrant pseudo-yogis, fakirs and bums. The situation is different now. Drug addiction is spreading fast not only among slum-dwellers but also among the middle and upper classes in cities. The most disturbing aspect of the problem is that the majority of the addicts are youths including those who are in their early teens. The most dangerous and popular form of narcotic sold in Indian cities is the so-called 'brown sugar' or 'smack', a mixture of several chemicals. Unscrupulous vendors often introduce it to unsuspecting school children through drug-laced ice-cream. A 0.25 gram lacing of smack (currently valued at Rs. 15) taken three days in succession by a healthy teenager can lead to permanent dependence. When the initial pleasant sensations wear off, violent reactions will set in such as loss of appetite, physical pain, convulsions, hysteria and tantrums. Nervous and muscular tissues gradually degenerate, and the victim wastes away to meet premature death.

Until 1980 India was only a transit country for drugs coming from the 'Golden Crescent' (Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan) and the 'Golden Triangle' (Burma-Thailand-Campuchea). Then the drug dealers saw the vast market in the subcontinent. Also, law in India was not very stringent on the possession and sale of drugs as compared to those in the West. It was only in 1985 that the Indian government amended the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, thereby authorizing courts to impose long terms of punishment and heavy fines. In January this year officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence seized near Bombay hashish and heroin valued in the market at Rs. 5,700 million—the biggest narcotics haul in the world to date. In the 6th Plan Rs. 45 lakh was provided to start de-addiction centres, but the fund lapsed. At present only the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and a few other hospitals have special de-addiction wards. Treatment through the outpatient department is not effective as the addict is free to go back to his habit.

Prevention is better than cure. At present the menace of drug addiction in this country is still within containable limits. What is now immediately needed is a mass education program for students, including school-children, and other youths. Very often it is neglect at home and the bad habits of parents that induce youngsters to seek psychedelic 'trips'. Introduction to spiritual life and association with holy people—monastic and lay—can act as a strong preventive and corrective measure. Voluntary agencies have a great responsibility in this field.

The spread of narcotics in India seems to be an organized business venture on the lines of the mafia. The government must crack down on the kingpins and minions of this business relentlessly.

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