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

ETERNAL VOICE OF INDIA

Vidyayā vindate amṛtam

'Immortality is attained through Self-knowledge'

The (Sage) Yajnavalkya said: 'Verily, not for the sake of the husband, my dear, is the husband loved, but he is loved for the sake of the self* [which, in its true nature, is one with the Supreme Self].

'Verily, not for the sake of the wife, my dear, is the wife loved, but she is loved for the sake of the self.

'Verily, not for the sake of the sons, my dear, are the sons loved, but they are loved for the sake of the self.

'Verily, not for the sake of wealth, my dear, is wealth loved, but it is loved for the sake of the self.

'Verily, not for the sake of the brahmin, my dear, is the brahmin loved, but he is loved for the sake of the self.

'Verily, not for the sake of the kshatriya, my dear, is the kshatriya loved, but he is loved for the sake of the self.

'Verily, not for the sake of worlds, my dear, are the worlds loved, but they are loved for the sake of the self.

'Verily, not for the sake of the gods, my dear, are the gods loved, but they are loved for the sake of the self.

'Verily, not for the sake of the beings, my dear, are the beings loved, but they are loved for the sake of the self.

'Verily, not for the sake of the All, my dear, is the All loved, but it is loved for the sake of the self.

'Verily, my dear Maitreyi, it is the Self that should be realized—should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon. By the realization of the Self, my dear—through hearing, reflection, and meditation—all this is known.'

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.4.5.

* The real attraction of things for a man is the attraction of the Spirit, or Brahman, which is the indwelling essence of all.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL discusses Mother-worship in Indian context and Sri Ramakrishna's unique contribution to it.

In THE WORSHIP OF GOD IN EVERYTHING Robert P. Utter writes on the attitude of respecting the divine in everything which forms the keynote of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings to Narendranath (Swami Vivekananda). The author is a former teacher of English and Philosophy at the City College of San Francisco.

In CAN SILENCE BE ELOQUENT?, Prof.

Samarendra Krishna Bose, a senior lecturer in English, in Vidyasagar College, Calcutta, shows the failure of all words and language to express what is essentially ineffable.

In MALADY OF THE MODERN AGE: ROLE OF MYSTICS, Sri N. C. Ganguly, the former Chief Judge, City Civil and sessions Court, Calcutta, refutes with a clear understanding and reason, the oft-shouted slogan—'Mystics are escapists.'

SATYAKAMA-SATYA-SAMPRADAYA is the third part of the four-scene drama.

MOTHER WORSHIP AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(EDITORIAL)

As a pilgrim of India begins his journey from the Himalayan abode of Shiva down to the vast plains stretching upto the distant seashores, he discovers that India is a *Matribhumi*, a sub-continent surcharged and sustained with the spirit of the Divine Mother. Right from the temple of Sarika Devi or Kshir Bhavani in Kashmir, through the temples of Kashi-Annapurna, Gauhati-Kamakhya, Vindhyachal-Vindhyavasini, upto the temples of Kanchi-Kamakshi, Madurai-Meenakshi, and Kanyakumari, he moves and sees how deeply the entire Indian culture is permeated with the thought of God as Mother. Millions of spiritual seekers still visit these temples for worshipping the Divine Mother where seers and saints in the past had practised intense austerities and realized God as Mother. Yet Mother-worship in India is not a thing of the past. In fact, the greatest regeneration of the Eternal Religion of India has been achieved only the other day at the Kali

temple in Dakshineswar-on-the-Ganges where Sri Ramakrishna had realized God as Mother. And through his historic sadhana there of all forms of Mother worship, he brought a great awakening of the Motherhood of God in modern times. Today Dakshineswar is perhaps one of the fewest pilgrimage centres like Fatima in Spain, or Lourdes in France, where millions throng from all quarters of the globe in order to feel the living presence of the Divine Mother.

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Right from the prehistoric period of Mohenzodaro and Harappa, Indians have been worshipping God as Mother. The worship of Divine Mother as the primeval Power of the universe, is found first in the Vedas. The Devisukta of the *Rig-Veda* is the earliest incantation to the Almighty Mother, the Cosmic Energy or Shakti behind the phenomenal universe. The seer of the Devisukta was Vak, the Brahma-

vadini-daughter of the sage Ambhrina. The *Rig-Veda* also mentions such names of the Divine Mother as Viswadurga, Sindhudurga and Agnidurga. The *Mahānarayana Upanishad* of the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* prays, 'I bow down to Mother Durga, the deliverer from the sufferings of samsara.' The *Yagnika Upanishad* of the same Aranyaka mentions a Goddess named Durgi (10.1.7) who, is, according to Sayanacharya, the same as Durga.¹

Hindus worship the Divine Mother in different names. Of these the ten Mahavidyas are more well known. These are Kali, Tara, Sodashi, Bhubaneswari, Bhairavi, Chinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagala, Matangi and Kamala. All these names are also found in the Tantric scriptures of Buddhism. According to many scholars, the two popular gods of Bengal, Kali and Saraswati, are taken from the Buddhist Tantra. Even the Jaina scriptures prescribe the worship of God as Mother. Goddess Saraswati is, according to Jainism, the Goddess of Knowledge and arts. She is also known by various names as Bharati, Sarada, Vagishvari, Brahmani, Brahma-vadini, and Vratacharini.² In the Puranas also, Mother worship is mentioned. For instance, in the sixth chapter of *Mahabharata* (Virataparva), the Pandavas worshipped Mother Durga for their success during the one year of their living incognito here and there. Sri Ramakrishna said that the Gopis worshipped Mother as Katyayani.

The greatness of God as Mother is, however, most powerfully portrayed in *Sri Sri Chandi*. It is there that the Mother is for the first time addressed as Chamunda and Chandika. The *Chandi* is the basis of the worship of Mother as Durga, the destroyer of foes in the form of evils, and

the protector of her children. The word Chandi comes from Chanda which means the transcendental Absolute or Brahman shadowed by the apparent superimposition of space-time reality of our sense world. The feminine suffix 'e' (in Sanskrit *Eep*) denotes the Divine Mother as the power of Brahman, or *Parabrahmamahishi* of which Shankaracharya speaks in *Anandalahari*: 'Mother's universe is infinitely beautiful, where even the creator Brahma, and the sustainer Vishnu rejoice'. Says Shankara in the same poem, 'She is the consort of Brahman... Her grandeur is appreciated by none except Shiva Himself in His transcendental meditation'.

Shiva, the Eternal and Transcendental Purusha, is supposed to be meditating on the Real Self within. The functioning of the universe depends on Prakriti or the Primeval Energy, the Adi Shakti. Mother is supposed to come to us from Kailasa, the abode of Shiva. Esoterically, Kailasa is Sahasrara, the highest psychic level attained only in Samadhi. The Primal Reality comes down from the highest psychic level to the comparatively lower centres of consciousness, from where we can love and adore God as Mother and in various other forms. No musician can keep one's voice on the seventh pitch of *ni* all the time. He has to play on the other tunes to create various melodies. Similarly, Ramakrishna tells us that the Brahmos who adhere to the formless aspect of God, play on the shruti (*sa*) only in a monotone, while he himself, like a master-musician, plays on different tunes, and creates different forms of melodies. While the Brahmos worship only God without form, the Hindu Pantheon has created the various forms of gods and goddesses, suitable for the particular temperament and liking of the individual seeker.

Sainthood culminates in absolute holiness, desirelessness, purity, and the innocence of

1. *Sri Sri Chandi* (Bengali). Translated and Edited by Swami Jagadiswarananda (Calcutta: Udbodhan, 1371 B. S.) p. 7-9.

2. *Ibid.* p. 10-11.

a child. And to a child, Mother is always the supreme power in life. In Ramakrishna's life of unprecedented purity and childlike surrender, the Supreme Deity is Divine Mother. This idea is perennial in Indian culture. India gives supreme respect to mother. In Indian tradition Radha's name comes before Krishna's; Sita's before Rama's. 'Mother is the first manifestation of Power and is considered a higher idea than father. With the name of Mother comes the idea of Shakti, Divine Energy and omnipotence, just as the baby believes its mother to be all-powerful, able to do anything. The Divine Mother is the Kundalini (coiled up power) sleeping in us; without worshipping Her we can never know ourselves', said Vivekananda³.

* * *

The *Chandi Saptasati* forms the thirteenth chapter of the *Markandeya Purana*. Etymologically Durga means 'one who delivers us out of suffering'. The Chandi describes how the gods and the good people of the world, frightened by the rising power of evil in the form of demons, prayed to the Divine Mother for destroying the demon, and thus save the civilization. According to popular belief in the north, Sri Ramachandra, in order to defeat the demon king Ravana, worshipped the Divine Mother in the season of autumn by uprooting one of his eyes for offering as a lotus at Her feet. The Chandi describes how all the gods and goddesses offered their powers in the Goddess Durga. She appears with all the accumulated powers of Vishnu, Shankara, Agni, and various other gods. She gets different weapons from several gods—the trident from Shiva, the discus from Vishnu, the vajra from Indra. Filling the sky with Her 'terrible

roar', and pervading the three worlds with Her lustre, She appears. And the sea trembles, the earth shakes, the mountains rock. Durga, the Goddess with the ten hands comes for destroying evil, and establishing righteousness or Dharma in life. To Her the gods prayed:

O Devi, You who remove the suffering of Your supplicants, be gracious. Protect the universe. O Devi, You who are the ruler of all that is moving and unmoving. When pleased, you destroy all illness; but when wrathful You frustrate all longed-for desires. No calamity befalls those who have sought You.

In the tradition of northern India, She is accompanied by Her two daughters. One is Saraswati, the goddess of learning, the other is Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Her two sons Kartika, the god of success in war, and Ganesha, the symbol of purity, devotion to mother, and success in all spheres of life, are seen on Her two sides. Lion, the symbol of Mother's power, bursts with a fury on the buffalo-demon or the Mahishasura emerging from the half-cut body of the buffalo. The Divine Mother Durga emerges as Mahishasura Mardini, the destroyer of the most terrible demon Mahishasura. By destroying all the demons, She leads Her worshippers to victory. The semi-circular tablet, at the top of Mother's ceremonial image, shows the faces of many gods and goddesses symbolizing all the great powers of nature and life, who accompany Durga in Her victory over the demons.

According to mythology, with the victory of the Mother Durga, the gods and the good people were again restored to supremacy. The *Kalikapurana* describes how the performance of Devi worship helps worshippers to acquire the four goals of life, *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desires), and *moksha* (liberation from all bondages). The *Devi*

3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972) Vol. 7, pp. 26-27.

Purana and the *Bhavishya Purana* both repeatedly advocate that Divine Mother must be worshipped by one and all, by Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Sudras, and even mlecchas, as also women belonging to all castes and groups.

On the tenth day of the Durga Puja which is known as the Dussera day, devotees ceremoniously take the image of the Goddess for the immersion. On such an occasion the difference of rich and poor, high and low, is just forgotten, as all human beings rejoice as children of the one Divine Mother, Durga. Dussera is celebrated in the South, as a kind of martial celebration, Ayudha Puja, with all the instruments of war. In the North, Dussera is celebrated on the tenth day of Navaratri by burning a huge image of Ravana symbolizing the destruction of the demonic forces in our social and individual life, thereby announcing the regeneration, and the victory of the good over the evil. Houses everywhere are lit with lamps in order to glorify the victory of the Divine Mother. Dussera is the festival of lights. It is, in fact, a celebration of the supremacy of Mother Power both in individual and social life.

In Bengal the Almighty Divine Mother Durga is, however, thoroughly humanized. Durga as Uma, the daughter of the Himalayas, becomes the daughter of the Bengal household. Mother becomes a lovable combination of the Divine and the Human. Invocations to this daughter-Mother of Bengal have been immortalized in *Agamani* songs. In one such song, the seer-poet Kamalakanta asks the mother of Uma, the queen of the Himalayas, not to pine for her daughter in Kailasa where she lives a life of austerities and deprivation, and serves Her husband Shiva eternally meditating there. 'Kamalakanta says, O mother-queen of the Himalayas, do not weep anymore for your daughter Uma. Be at peace. Do not you

know that your Uma Herself is the eternal, all-pervading Reality ?'

The worship of Mother as Durga is basically a human invocation of the Divine Power for *Abhyudaya*, or human excellence and victory in life. The celebrated line which comes in *Chandi* is *rupam dehi, jayam dehi, yaso dehi, dvisho jahi*—Oh Mother, give us beauty, give us victory, give us fame, and defeat our enemies. This struggle for success, glory, and higher evolution through the Mother-worship, has always exerted an intensely purifying and elevating effect on the entire Indian society.

* * *

But Indians have always held Nisreyas, manifestation of one's innate Divine nature, as superior to *Abhyudaya*, material prosperity or success in external life. When we expect *Abhyudaya* from Mother, the *Adi Shakti*, we respect and admire Her. But as our desires for protection, elevation or worldly prosperity get satisfied more and more, we go for Nisreyas, the spiritual perfection. We become a child seeking Divine Mother. 'A true son cannot be away from his mother. The mother knows everything', Ramakrishna used to say. Like the helpless kitten, he only calls on Mother and feels contented wherever mother keeps him, either on the bed or near the hearth. Such a child who has left everything in order to be with his mother, can even force his demand on his mother. Ramakrishna used to speak of the temple steward Trailokya who forced away his mother's properties from the roadside.⁴ A truly surrendered soul is nearest to Mother.

The story goes that Mother Durga asked Her two sons Kartika and Ganesha to make a circle round the earth. Kartika at once sped off riding on his support, the Peacock. Ganesha, the quiet child, only went round

4. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Ramakrishna Math, 1985) p. 634.

his Mother. He knew his Mother is the entire universe. Mother lifted Ganesha up on her lap. Ramakrishna's intense passion for Divine Mother, led him, in the spirit of Ganesha, to a total surrender and devotion to Mother. The spirit of Kartika culminates in that of Ganesha. The spirit of Dhruva culminates in the devotion of Prahlada. 'Mother comes running to a child when it throws away the toys and cries', Ramakrishna taught devotees like Keshab who had still a little desire for these toys, worldly name and fame.⁵ God is infinitely more worthy of love than all His divine manifestations, Ramakrishna would teach them.

* * *

With the passionate love of a child, Ramakrishna one day stormed the citadel of Mother in the Kali temple of Dakshineswar. The anguish in Ramakrishna's heart for the vision of Mother in the early days of sadhana has no parallel in history. One by one, he shed all obstacles to God-vision. He renounced the pride of sacred thread of the brahmin. He renounced the secret pride of a higher caste by cleaning the leaf-plates of the poor people, sweeping and cleaning like a pariah the dining place of beggars. On the bank of the Ganga he renounced money considering it no better than mud. Finally he began to cry desparately to Mother Kali for Her vision. 'Thou did'st show Thyself to Ramprasad, Mother. Why then should Thou not reveal Thyself to me? I do not want wealth, friends, relatives, enjoyment of pleasure and the like. Do reveal Thyself unto me.' When all prayers failed, he one day decided to put an end to his life by cutting his throat with the sword of the temple. At this pennultimate moment came the wonderful vision of Mother. 'He saw that everything inside and outside the Kali temple vanished

all together', and in their place rolled from all sides the waves from a 'boundless infinite conscious sea of light', engulfing and sinking him in 'the abysmal depths of Infinity'. He lost all external consciousness, and got drowned in the 'luminous sea of Consciousness'. The salt doll was drowned in the depth of the ocean, its own mother. When Ramakrishna regained consciousness his voice was choked with emotion. He only cried out, 'Mother'.⁶

Thenceforward it was a new beginning. Now a new agony of the soul tormented the child of Mother. He could not stand the least separation from the Mother. He would cry, wail, and throw himself on the ground until Mother returned to him through the same vision. It was a terrible struggle. He could hardly breathe without this vision. But the moment the vision returned, he beamed with joy. Slowly the vision became almost continuous. It was a 'constant vision of Divine Mother inside and outside.'

Divine visions now began to storm him, and this continued for the next six years. Sometimes during meditation he would feel as if some unseen power was locking the joints of his body to fix him in his posture, and again unlocking the joints when meditation was over. Sometimes he would see the universe filled with sparks like fireflies, or glittering with light as if it was a 'lake of mercury.' Sometimes he would see the world lit up with the light of Roman candles. Sometimes the world would appear to him absolutely homogeneous, as if everything in it was made of wax. 'It was revealed to me further', he said, 'that God Himself has become the universe and all its living beings, and the twenty-four cosmic principles'. The terrible impact of these

5. Ibid. p. 149.

6. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master* (Madras: Ramakrishna Math. 1987) p. 162-63.

uninterrupted visions would have destroyed to pieces the body and mind of an ordinary mortal. Only incarnations of God could stand such overwhelming tides of spiritual visions, Ramakrishna used to say in later days.

The Kali temple of Dakshineswar was now filled with an awe-striking presence of the Divine Mother. Entering the temple, Ramakrishna saw no more a stone image, but 'the living Mother Herself, all-Consciousness, with hands that offered boons and freedom from fear.' The stone image did *really* breathe. The cotton kept under the nostril of the image trembled. From his room Ramakrishna could hear the jingling sounds of the Mother's anklets as She went up like a merry little girl. He would come out running, and could see Mother 'actually standing on the Verandah of the first floor of the temple with her black flowing hair, and viewing now Calcutta and next the Ganga'. He could now see 'the full figure of the effulgent Mother, smiling and speaking, guiding and accompanying him, and saying, "Do this, don't do that"'.⁷ He could see the inside of the temple 'soaked as it were, in bliss—the bliss of Satchidananda.' In the wicked man standing in front of the temple he saw 'the Divine Mother vibrating'. He saw Mother in a cat and fed it with the food to be offered to Mother, saying "Will you take it, Mother?"⁸ He saw Mother everywhere. Mother now entered his life in a tempestuous fury. It blew out all the earthly passions from Ramakrishna's heart, even the least remnant of an earthly ego. When the tempest was over what remained was only a child of Mother, totally dependent on Her for everything.

'Mother had come', wrote a western devotee of Ramakrishna, 'Not a vision, seen with closed eyes; a living mother with gentle smile and protecting arms; a shining effulgent Presence, yet tender and enfolding. Doubt was gone. Peace had come in Ramakrishna's heart, but no word of triumphant attainment burst from his lips. He spoke to the radiant form before him as simply as a nestling little one might speak to its earthly mother. 'I am only a little child', he said.⁹

Like a new-born child he turned to Mother for everything. 'I am thy child, easily worried and frightened', he used to speak to Mother who now led him at every step.¹⁰ Ramakrishna entered for ever into the divine life. The world ceased to exist for him thenceforward. Whatever he saw was only Mother in myriad forms. Ramakrishna became a God-man.

* * *

Dante wrote in the Divine Comedy, *La sua voluntad e nostra pace*—'in His will is our peace'. Ramakrishna lost his will in the will of the Almighty Mother who is Herself the 'totality of all wills'. 'This totality of wills, none can resist', said Vivekananda. Ramakrishna's simple words now became prophetic. His prayers were answered forthwith sometimes unbelievably. One day when he prayed to the Divine Mother for a little fencing for the meditation-spot, the next tide in the Ganga brought, as if from nowhere, all the materials. Mother now supplied everything Her son needed. She used to show him in visions who are the persons who would come to him and for what divine purpose. That is how Ramakrishna had exact knowledge of the coming of sadhakas, devotees or siddhas even before they actually came to him. Total surrender to the Divine will brought not only peace, but also bliss which now

7. Ibid. p. 166.

8. Swami Yogeshananda, *Visions of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Ramakrishna Math,) p. 16.

9. Sister Devamata, *Sri Ramakrishna* (California: Ananda Ashrama, 1928) p. 22.

10. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, op. cit., p. 357.

began to pour out in every movement of his life, his visits to devotees' houses, his teachings, prayers, smiles, conversations, laughters, dancings, and hundreds of ecstatic songs that fill the pages of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. 'Devotees of Kali, free while living, are full of eternal bliss', he would sing.

Mother now filled her virtually illiterate child with all the profundity of knowledge. 'Can a man blessed with the grace of God ever lack any knowledge?... Mother supplies Her devotees with heap of knowledge that never ends', Ramakrishna would remind the devotees. And this knowledge arising out of the Knowledge Absolute, would come out in spontaneous outpourings of strangely powerful similes and parables that would strike even the most scholarly listener with awe. Mere scholarship would prove foolishness in his presence. 'After attaining God, one looks on at Pundits as mere straw and dust', Ramakrishna used to say.¹¹

He told his disciples how he used to pray to Mother in his early days of God-intoxication; 'Opening my mouth, and as if touching heaven and the nether-world with my jaws, I uttered "Ma" and felt I had seized the Mother of the universe. I drew Her to me like a fisherman drags fish in his net'.¹² After the vision of Mother, this primal love deepened. He now saw his Mother as Truth standing above all dualities: To Her now he surrendered everything except Truth.

I prayed to Her taking flower in my hands: 'Mother, here is thy knowledge and here is thy ignorance. Take them both, and give me only pure love. Here is Thy holiness, and here Thine unholiness. Take them both Mother, and give me pure love. Here is Thy good and here is Thine evil. Take them both, Mother, and give me pure love. Here is Thy righteousness, and

here is Thine unrighteousness. Take them both Mother, and give me pure love.' I mentioned all these, but I could not say. 'Mother here is Thy truth and here is Thine falsehood. Take them both'.

With this pure love he used to speak of Kali, 'Who says my Mother Kali is black? The ocean looks black from a distance. Go near. You will find the sea-water has no colour'. 'Kali and Brahman are one', he would say. His love had frozen the formless water of the ocean of the Transcendent Reality, the Brahman, into tangible ice, the form of his Mother Kali. To him Kali represented all the powers in the universe. 'Kali moves even the immutable', Ramakrishna would say. 'Kala, Shiva is Brahman. That which sports with Kala is Kali, the Primal Energy'.¹³

* * *

Ramakrishna's Kali has countless dimensions of the Absolute. She is Mother, daughter, friend, beloved, protector, teacher, guide, support, sustainer, destroyer, creator and again Mother. She is the means and She is the goal, too. To Ramakrishna, She is the most adored and the most beloved in his life. 'Kali, the embodiment of destruction! No, Nitya Kali, my Eternal Divine Mother', Ramakrishna would say.¹⁴ In Kali he found all the gods and goddesses, and the formless Absolute whom he had realized by various paths. In Her he found the totality of human experience. She is in death; She is in life; She is in Knowledge as well as in ignorance. She is in light; She is darkness. She is in Satan; She is in angel. She is in love; She is in despair. She is in creation; She is in destruction. She is Mahamaya, the world-bewitching power. Again, She is the Liberator, the giver of freedom. She is 'nothingness'; and again, She is the

11. *Ibid.*, p. 376.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 382.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 380.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 751.

Queen of the three universes. She is the most beautiful, and at the same time the most dreadful—*Rudre Madhura*. Ramakrishna's final vision of Kali the Mother is an Advaitic vision born of absolute selflessness and pure love. In Kali he found the consummation of all forms of Divine Mother he himself loved and experienced. In the terrible face of Kali, Ramakrishna saw the smile of the most providential Mother.

* * *

Providential or not, Mother is Mother. 'When God is worshipped as "Mother", as Love, the Hindus call it the "right-handed way" and it leads to spirituality but never to material prosperity. When God is worshipped on His terrible side, that is, in the "left-handed way", it leads usually to great material prosperity, but rarely to spirituality; and eventually it leads to degeneration and obliteration of the race that practises it', said Vivekananda.¹⁵ Ramakrishna's Mother-worship is this right-handed way of pure love, leading Her sons to spiritual illumination and immortality, and not to mere worldly prosperity which ends in spiritual degeneration. Through the worship of this right-handed Mother, Ramakrishna brought a flood of spirituality and a great awakening of the Divine in all his disciples and devotees, whether lay or monastic, in the way of purity and renunciation of worldly pleasures.

Yet Ramakrishna's Kali-worship can never be equated with poverty, squalor or callous indifference to worldly needs. Himself bereft of all desires, even of body-consciousness, Ramakrishna could often not know when his clothes dropped off. Yet none was more conscious of the needs of others as he was. For Narendra's

family suffering, he cried, and even begged for a job for Narendra, from a thoroughly worldly man. He asked Pratap Hazra to go home and serve his mother. He himself refused to stay in Vrindaban lest his own mother Chandra should suffer. 'All my devotion will take wings if my mother suffers', he said. For his wife Sarada's comfort, Ramakrishna would take all possible care. 'Ramakrishna Paramahansa was perfectly alive to the depth of his being, and yet on the outer level who was more conscious than he?'¹⁶ said Vivekananda. Many of his devotees like Keshab Sen, Mathur, Sambhu Mallik, Ram Dutta and Balaram Bose, were highly rich and prosperous people of the then Calcutta. Yet Ramakrishna's fiery devotion and stunning renunciation turned their minds to God. Their wealth and prosperity could not bind their souls down to sensate enjoyments, or wanton pleasures of the worldly life. Ramakrishna's sacred touch had transfigured all of them into custodians of Mother's property. Mother is the only giver. She is Rajarajeswari, the Queen of the universe. Ramakrishna turned the richest into the humblest servants of the poor. He inspired his wealthy steward Mathur to spend his fortune for the draught-stricken people at Deoghar. He assigned to rich devotees like Ram Dutta, Balaram Bose and Suresh Mitra, the duty of serving the devotees of the Lord. Through this devoted service to humanity they all turned slowly into ardent devotees of Mother. Shambhu Mallik the rich westernized devotee, spent his last days with a strange Divine assurance of Mother's grace. 'I have bundled my things' he used to say. Keshab Sen, the great Brahmo leader, used to cry for Mother like a child,

¹⁵. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. (1972) Vol. 7, p. 26-27.

¹⁶. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* (Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1967) Vol. 1, p. 354.

at the end of his life. Girish, the drunkard-dramatist, became the very symbol of purity during his last days. Nag Mahasaya turned into a burning example of renunciation, and fiery devotion to God.

* * *

The Greeks say, 'Sophocles saw life, and saw it whole'. That is why he could create the entire spectrum of life through his great tragedies. The final picture of life that emerges in the Greek tragedies is that of 'mutability', a vast vale of tears dominated by fate or inscrutable forces of life. To the Buddhists the spectrum of life appeared as a bundle of 'nothingness', where everything is changing. This vision ended in a nihilistic despair with life. But in India people believe that Shiva only knows what true vision of life is. And 'Kali', Sister Nivedita wrote, 'is the vision of Shiva'¹⁷ Vivekananda always spoke of Kali as 'the book of experience' in which the soul turns page after page, only to find there is nothing in it, after all'.¹⁸ Shiva looks calmly at this dream, the vast changing spectrum of life with all its joys and sufferings. Like the eternal witness, the sakshi, he looks at Kali who stands on his chest in all bare nakedness of life with her blood-red tongue protruding out, which symbolizes our eternal struggle with suffering, evil, and death which are essential chapters in the 'book of experience'. She wears a necklace of human skulls, symbolizing total conquest over evil or Satan. With one hand She holds a bleeding sword reminding the seeker that nothing short of total sacrifice brings the vision of God. With the other, She assures protection and perfection to children who are not afraid to love Her.

The fearless child looks unshrinking at its own mother, even if She is dark and

angry, and calls Her the most beloved. The individual soul, thus, is united with the Ultimate Reality through a complete conquest of fear and selfishness. To such a passionate seeker, the Ultimate Reality or Brahman, comes often in the form of Mother whom we call Kali. Vivekananda, whom his master offered at the feet of Kali, said, 'I cannot but believe that there is somewhere a great Power that thinks of Herself as feminine, and called Kali, and Mother'.¹⁹ 'Fools!', he exclaimed 'they put a garland of skulls round Thy neck and then start back in terror, and call Thee "The Merciful!"'. It is nothing but "egoism" and "shopkeeping"', declared Vivekananda. One must have the infinitely greater boldness to realize that 'God manifests through evil *as well as* through good'. One must have the courage to stand with absolute calmness, and 'to seek death, not life; to hurl oneself upon the sword's point, to become one with the terrible for ever more'.²⁰ This was the spirit behind Vivekananda's statement: 'Sannyasa is, in short, the love of death'. This was the spirit behind his repeated declaration that the message of the Upanishads is centred round one single word, 'Fearlessness' or 'Abhiih'. It is the word which bursts like a bombshell upon the mass of ignorance that covers the mind of the seeker with an underlying selfishness for personal gains. 'Let all the fond desires for name, fame, and affection be crushed to nothingness. Let the heart turn into a cremation ground, and then only Mother Shyama will come to dance in that heart', wrote Swamiji in the unforgettable lines of his poem 'Let Mother Shyama dance there'.

* * *

'It is in India', wrote Nivedita 'that this thought of Mother has been realized in its

¹⁷. Ibid., p. 118.

¹⁸. Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁹. Ibid., p. 120.

²⁰. Ibid., p. 117.

completeness'.²¹ In Ramakrishna we see this completeness of the realization of Mother-worship. He became identified with Mother, who is also the Absolute, the Impersonal. Jesus said like a Yogi, 'I and My Father are one'. Ramakrishna spoke like a child, 'I and My Mother are one'. This total identification with the Cosmic Power revealed superhuman dimensions of the Divine Mother in the life of Her child, Ramakrishna. People used to see strange visions of Mother through the body of Sri Ramakrishna. His devotee, Mathur, the rich steward of the Kali-temple, had one day a vision of Mother Kali and Shiva walking through the body of the Master. The young disciple Rakhal had a strange vision of a girl-like Mother Kali coming out of the body of Sri Ramakrishna and dancing around the room. Bhairavi Brahmani used to say: 'I mistook him very often for Sri Radharani when I saw him plucking flowers in that manner'.²² The ladies of Mathur's household used to consider Ramakrishna as one of them. 'As they looked upon me as a woman-friend of theirs, they did not feel uneasy at all', said the Master.²³ The Mother-aspect became so prominent in him that his disciples wondered what he really was. Once Ramakrishna's disciple Girish Ghosh asked him, 'Sir, are you a man or woman?' The Master laughed, and said in reply, 'I do not know'.²⁴ His disciples felt that their Master was totally identified with the Self within, which transcends both the female and the male aspects.

Ramakrishna himself had the vision of 'the holy form of Radha, devoid of the slightest tinge of lust'. Radha 'who renounced her all for the love of Krishna'

appeared before him with a 'bright yellow' splendour.²⁵ In Panchavati he had the vision of Mother Sita whose divine radiance illumined the entire temple-garden with a divine light, and in whose ineffable smile there was the accumulated pathos of a life-long human suffering. This figure merged into Ramakrishna. Thenceforward Ramakrishna's beatific smile of samadhi had always a touch of Sita's pathos, as he himself admitted. During the Tantric Sadhana Ramakrishna had visions of the various other forms of the Mother. Once when he had a desire to see the deluding power of Mother, he saw a pregnant woman 'of extraordinary beauty', rising from the Ganga and approaching towards the great Banyan of Dakshineswar. Soon She gave birth to a beautiful baby and suckled the baby very affectionately. But the next moment she had a 'very cruel and frightful appearance', took the baby into her mouth, masticated it and finally swallowed it.²⁶ Ramakrishna also saw Mother in seamless ochre cloth, and again as a seven-year-old muslim girl.²⁷ He had also visions of two-armed, ten-armed, and other various forms of Mother depicted in the Hindu scriptures. But the most resplendent form of the Mother he had seen was that of Sri Rajarajeswari, or Sodashi, Mother in the form of a sixteen-year-old girl. He saw in a vision 'the beauty of the Person of Sodashi which melted and spread all around illumining the quarters'.²⁸

His devotees, too, had felt Sri Ramakrishna's oneness with various forms of Divine Mother. Once when his disciple Surendranath was worshipping Durga, he

21. Ibid., p. 471.

22. *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master.*, op. cit., p. 271.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., p. 397.

25. Ibid., p. 274.

26. Ibid., p. 232.

27. 'Ma', *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* (Bengali). (Calcutta: Sri Sri Ma's Thakurbari, B. S. 1388) Vol. 4, p. 2.

28. *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master.*, op. cit., pp. 232-33.

expected earnestly that the Master would be present at the holy puja ceremony. Ramakrishna fell suddenly ill. But at the auspicious hour of the Sandhi Puja when Suren began to cry for the Master in front of the Durga image, the Mother in Ramakrishna responded. In the 'psychic path' Ramakrishna did go to Suren's house. This is how he described it. 'I saw that there opened a luminous path from "here" (meaning Sri Ramakrishna's own body) to Surendra's house. I saw, further, that attracted by Surendra's devotion, the Mother had appeared in the image and that rays of light were coming from Her third eye'.²⁹ Everybody present on the occasion felt a sudden overwhelming presence of the Divine Mother, although none could explain the phenomenon. Ramakrishna's spiritual presence brought also the 'living presence' of the Divine Mother. Hriday, Ramakrishna's nephew, had a similar experience when he saw the luminous figure of his uncle beside the image of Durga during the auspicious moments of Durga Puja in his village home. Even staying at Dakshineswar, Ramakrishna went there spiritually, to awaken the spirit of the Mother in Hriday's house.

Vivekananda said to his disciple Nivedita: 'The future, you say, will call Ramakrishna Paramahansa an incarnation of Kali. Yes, I think so. There is no doubt that She worked up the body of Sri Ramakrishna for Her own ends'.³⁰ At the height of his realization when Ramakrishna was about to merge himself in the All-pervading Reality, writes his biographer Swami Saradananda, 'by Her command, he forcibly covered his mind with the veil of vidyamaya, the force tending Godward,

²⁹. Ibid., p. 199.

³⁰. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 120.

and engaged himself in carrying out Her behests... She always kept his mind keyed to a lofty pitch, a high state of Oneness, from which ideas rising in the infinite universal mind were always felt to be his own'.³¹ Through a complete identification with the Cosmic Mother, Ramakrishna himself became the Cosmic mind, a repository of all knowledge. His own disciples wondered at the immeasurable immensity and variety of divine ideas flowing out from this absolutely egoless child of Mother. Saradananda wrote, 'The identification was so intimate and natural that whoever saw him felt that the Mother was the son and son, the Mother; both were Consciousness'.³² Sri Krishna was Chidatman, and Sri Radha was Chitsakti, Ramakrishna used to say. He himself represented both these aspects of the Absolute Consciousness. During the moments of Nirvikalpa Samadhi Ramakrishna was all transcendence, the human embodiment of chit-atman.. Samadhi over, he would turn into a veritable playground of Mother's infinite moods, ideas, actions and powers, and would emerge as the symbol of chit-shakti. 'Incarnations of God are the only great manifestations of Shakti, the Cosmic Energy' Ramakrishna used to say. 'A bit of Mother, a drop, was Krishna, another was Buddha, another was Christ', said Vivekananda,³³ who saw in his master the manifestations of the same Incarnation-Power, only in a much deeper and broader way.

* * *

Through Mother-worship Sri Ramakrishna raised, as Vivekananda said, the 'Brahma-Kundalini' in the modern times. By this

³¹. *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, op. cit., p. 399.

³². Ibid.

³³. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (1972) Vol. 7, p. 27.

Swamiji meant that the great flood of Divinity and purity which the Master brought in his own life, influenced the entire humanity at deeper psychic levels, bringing a general awakening of the Divine in man and woman all over the globe. Ramakrishna's Mother-worship brought him out of the barriers of the Hindu temples, and showed him the living presence of Mother everywhere. At Jadu Mallick's garden house he had the vision of Jesus, not on the Cross, but as the Christ-child on the lap of Mother Mary. In the presence of the fallen women of Calcutta, Ramakrishna went into samadhi, seeing the visible presence of Mother in them. About Sri Ganesha's vision of his Mother Parvati in all women, Ramakrishna said, 'My attitude is also the same. That is why I had the vision of the maternal form of the universal cause in my wedded wife and worshipped her, and bowed down at her feet.'³⁴ Mother-worship, in its practical aspect, was manifested in his life as respect to all women as one's own mother. 'Mother-worship is the last word in spirituality', he would say. His refrain was, 'You are the Mother, I am Your son',³⁵ This was the final vision of Sri Ramakrishna. 'I regard all women as my Mother. How can I have a son?', he would say.³⁶ He would see the same Divine Mother in the Kali-temple, in his mother Chandradevi, in his wife Saradamani, and in all women, everywhere. Even the most degraded person like Vilvamangal, Ramakrishna used to say, addressed a fallen woman as his mother, and attained sainthood. To the intellectual Brahma wor-

shippers like Keshab and others, Ramakrishna opened the flood-gate of divine bliss and purity, through the path of Mother-worship. His disciple recorded, 'The idea that occupied the whole of his mind was how he could see the Divine Mother in all beings at all times.'³⁷ Superhuman struggle in the domain of the spirit fulfilled this dream. 'Mother has become everything', Ramakrishna used to say. He made the Divine Mother more real and more closer to humanity than ever before. Of Ramakrishna's Kali, Nivedita wrote, 'Kali comes closer to us... other we admire; others we love; to Her we belong. Whether we know it or not we are Her children playing round Her kness.'³⁸ She again wrote 'Kali the Mother is to be the worship of the Indian future. In Her name will Her sons find it possible to sound many experiences to their depths'.³⁹ The words of Nivedita only echoed the thoughts of her master Vivekananda regarding the far-reaching impact of Ramakrishna's Mother worship.

The son of Mother became one with the Mother. Mother is all-love. Her son became 'L-O-V-E' personified. Mother is all purity. The son became 'holiness itself'. Mother is all bliss—Anandamayee. The infinite bliss of Mother engulfed the son and conflagrated even those who came near him. Today Ramakrishna's worship of God as Mother, is inspiring millions to steer the same path to Godhead, as the easiest way to Divine life. The very name of Ramakrishna inspires devotion for Mother-worship. In his life, Mother, Mother-worship, and the son of the Mother have become one.

34. *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master.*, op. cit. p. 229.

35. *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* (Bengali) op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 141.

36. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.*, op. cit., p. 916.

37. *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master.*, op. cit., p. 207.

38. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita.*, op. cit., Vol. 1., p. 472.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

THE WORSHIP OF GOD IN EVERYTHING—I

ROBERT P. UTTER

1

The ideal of the worship of God in everything is probably the most sublime ideal possible for mankind, and the most difficult of attainment. It is the perfect combination of the four paths of knowledge, love, unattached action, and meditation. It is to live the everyday life without attachment; it is to be in the world and yet not of it; it is to see and know and love God directly in all sense objects; it is to perform one's duties and yet not seek the results of one's actions; it is to love every finite being as the Infinite Godhead; it is to concentrate all one's energies on God by seeing Him and serving Him in every being. This ideal was taught of old in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, and has been revived, renewed, and re-emphasized in modern times by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. It is known as monism or non-dualism, yet it is not pure monism, for there is an element of multiplicity about it. We see many, yet we see them as one, just as from a height we see the many waves of the ocean as one ocean. Yet no metaphor can adequately express this vision. Therefore we may think of it as an *ideal* rather than as an *idea*, for it transcends all finite images and ideas and is the goal which all of us must one day attain. On the other hand it is an actual concrete experience capable of being achieved by anyone who cultivates it. In that experience everything appears as usual, yet everything appears entirely different. It is thus both an ideal and an experience, but it is not an abstract, intellectual idea nor an ordinary sense experience. It is the concrete worship and the concrete experience of many-in-One.

It is concrete in the sense that we worship

everything we see as God. When this worship has flowered into actual spiritual realization, we actually see God in every least thing as well as in the greatest. We see God in every man, woman, and child, every ant and worm, every grasshopper, bee, butterfly, and bird, every dog, cat, cow, deer, lizard, leaf, and stone. We see the stars overhead as God's eyes looking down upon us from infinite space; we feel the earth under our footsoles as God's tender and living flesh; we feel the air we breathe as God's breath of eternal life; we see the sunlight as God's vision; we see all human beings as clear pools of God's consciousness looking at us out of ineffable depths of wisdom and love, with whom we can converse and interact in divine communion. The follies and errors of finite human minds no more impede our vision of God's ageless love and wisdom than a few specks of dust on the window-pane impede our view of the Grand Canyon or the Himalayas.

This ideal would appear, then, to contradict all our accustomed beliefs. We would ask, how can worldly objects be regarded as spiritual? How can sinners be worshipped as saints? How can ignorant people be worshipped as sages? How can everyday household objects be considered as holy as the sacred vessels in the temple? How can such attitudes and behavior lead to anything but delusion? The worship of God in everything would seem to obliterate all the traditional distinctions between the sacred and the profane, the holy and the unholy, the virtuous and the sinful, that which is to be worshipped and that which is to be abjured. If we do not hold fast to the distinction between what is divine and what is worldly, how can religion have any

meaning whatsoever? If we do not hold fast to the distinction between good and evil, how can morality have any meaning? If we do not hold fast to the distinction between knowledge and ignorance, how can wisdom have any meaning? These are questions that are not lightly asked and cannot be lightly answered. But answered they must be in some way if we are to undertake successfully the worship of God in everything.

It may be, however, that we shall find that the answers to these questions are not quite the kind of answers we expect. These are not just intellectual problems to be solved by logically calculated answers. The worship of God in everything requires us to leave behind all known landmarks and ordinary attitudes and modes of behaviour, and to leap into an experience that transcends all intellectual analysis and accustomed value judgments. Just consider this: to worship God in everything we are required to look upon a grain of sand and the highest mountain as equal; we are required to see the sinner and the saint as equal; we are required to see good and evil as equal; we are required to see joy and suffering, health and disease, life and death as equal. These requirements are too much for most of us, and we often either reject the ideal outright as being illogical and false, or only pay lip service to it. But if we persist we will ultimately gain it, for it is, after all, our birthright.

When we reach the goal of actually seeing God in everything, all our questions will be answered and all our doubts will be swept away. But until we actually achieve the experience we will be plagued with questions and doubts. The experience is transcendental and immanent at the same time: transcendental because we see God, immanent because we see Him in and through everything. It is thus an extremely

paradoxical experience, at least to the lower or ordinary mind. But to the mind illumined by the light of the divine, it contains not the slightest speck of contradiction within it, being a completely unitive experience of seeing nothing but God in all sense objects. The apparent diversity of sense objects as experienced through the divisive lower mind is completely overcome by the unitive vision of God, which, while not altering the sense content of the experience, yet completely melts away all sense of diversity, difference, and otherness in the oceanic vision of the undifferentiated Godhead appearing in and shining through all forms, as the ocean appears one in the seeming multiplicity of the waves. Thus only the experience itself can resolve our doubts for us. This Sri Ramakrishna knew, and this is the way he taught.

2

Sri Ramakrishna trained Naren, the future Swami Vivekananda, not by long lectures on abstract philosophy but by awakening immediate inner spiritual experiences within him. The Master did express to Naren in words the idea of God as the inner soul of everything, but even Naren, the future World Teacher, like all of us, at first rejected the idea, saying, "How can this be? This jug is God, this cup is God, and we too are God: nothing can be more preposterous!" The Master, however, was not in the least perturbed, but simply touched Naren and thus awakened in him the vision of God in everything. For several days the vision never left him, and his whole life was changed, for with this vision, the first of many, began Naren's spiritual development under the guidance of the Master. He later described the experience as follows:

"The magic touch of the Master that day immediately wrought a wonderful change over

my mind. I was stupefied to find that really there was nothing in the universe but God! I saw it quite clearly but kept silent to see if the idea would last. But the impression did not abate in the course of the day. I returned home, but there too everything I saw appeared to be Brahman. I sat down to take my meal, but found that everything—the food, the plate, the person who served and even myself—was nothing but that.... While walking the streets, I noticed the cabs plying, but I did not feel inclined to move out the way. I felt the cabs and myself were of one stuff.... When the state altered a little, the world began to appear to me as a dream. When walking in Cornwallis Square, I would strike my head against the railings to see if they were real or only a dream. This state of things continued for some days. When I became normal again I realized that I must have had a glimpse of the Advaita state.... Thenceforth I could not deny the conclusions of the Advaita philosophy”¹

Thus did Swamiji become an advaitist, not by philosophical arguments but by direct experience. All his doubts were swept away by the experience awakened at the touch of the Master. That this was Swamiji's first spiritual experience under the guiding hand of the Master is of utmost significance, for it means that Sri Ramakrishna considered the vision of God in everything to be the foundation of all spiritual experience. And of even more importance for us is the fact that Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji by their own experiences brought this wonderful experience to mankind, thus making it more readily available to us than it otherwise would be, like someone who brings water to a thirsty village.

Furthermore, I feel sure that Sri Ramakrishna also meant that this worship of God in everything is a spiritual practice which all can undertake without any special implements, situations, external aids, or inward talents. All of us perceive sense

objects ; if we can be continuously telling ourselves the truth about what we perceive every waking moment, that the sense objects are in reality nothing but God, then we will gradually bring our thoughts closer to the truth, and finally the direct vision of the truth will flash within us, not as a mental idea but as an immediate vision of the Divine Reality. We will then leap from the physico-mental way of seeing to the spiritual way of seeing.

We can see from Swamiji's account of his experience that if we gain a glimpse of this vision our lives will be beatified and changed permanently, and we will never lose faith in the truth of the philosophy of non-dualism but will be able to advance to higher and higher stages of direct God-vision. With even the briefest glimpse of this vision one is never the same again. It is a seed that has sprouted and will one day grow into an immense tree.

We can also see from Swamiji's experience that the vision of God in everything is far more than just a vaguely poetic or pious sentiment ; it is an actual spiritual vision, yet a vision without any fundamental alteration of the senses. We see everything we usually see, yet nothing seems the same ; all is seen as divine. Sri Ramakrishna lived in this state of seeing God in everything most of his life when he was not in samadhi. Thus whether he was in samadhi or not in samadhi he was continually seeing the all-pervasiveness of God. He once said, recalling his early days at Dakshineswar,

“I used to worship the Deity in the Kali temple. It was suddenly revealed to me that everything is Pure Spirit. The utensils, the altar, the door-frame—all Pure Spirit. Men, animals, and other living beings—all Pure Spirit. Then, like a madman, I began to shower flowers in all directions. Whatever I saw I worshipped.... I look upon man in just the same way. When I see a man I see that it is God himself who walks

1. His Eastern and Western disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1960) pp. 65-6.

the earth, as it were, rocking to and fro like a pillow floating on the waves.... The body has, indeed, a momentary existence. God alone is real."²

Sri Ramakrishna always emphasized the great importance of seeing God in everything. He said,

"God alone is the Master, and again, He is the Servant. This attitude indicates Perfect Knowledge. At first one discriminates, 'Not this, not this,' and feels that God alone is real and all else is illusory. Afterwards the same person finds that it is God Himself who has become all this.... A vilva fruit, for instance, includes flesh, seeds, and shell. You get the flesh by discarding the shell and seeds. But if you want to know the weight of the fruit, you cannot find it if you discard the shell and the seeds. Just so, one should attain Satchidananda by negating the universe and its living beings. But after the attainment of Satchidananda one finds that Satchidananda Itself has become the universe and the living beings. It is of one substance that the flesh and the shell and the seeds are made, just like butter and buttermilk."³

Here we have a new light shed on the whole problem of seeing and worshipping God in everything. Sri Ramakrishna is here saying that the first step or the first part of spiritual practice should consist in negation, "Not this, not this," but that after spiritual realization by that method, an even higher realization should be sought, namely, the seeing of God in every object and person in the universe. But some interpretation here is necessary. The path of "not this" does not mean an absolute rejection of sense objects and the created universe and individual souls as totally worthless and unreal, but rather it is our accustomed attitudes towards sense objects that should be rejected. Ordinarily

we feel desire or aversion for sense objects because we see them as objects of either personal satisfactions or personal dislikes and fears. It is these desires and aversions that we should root out first before we can see God at all. At this stage of spiritual practice God appears to be opposed in value and truth to the objects of the sense world. But once we have seen God, then desires for sensuous enjoyments are rooted out, and we then can strive for the highest non-dual vision of God in everything. When we no longer feel desire and aversion, then we are ready to see God in everything. And conversely, by seeking to see God in everything, we can thereby root out desires and aversions. The state of fearlessness and desirelessness is the true advaita state. This is the state of total freedom, a state in which a person walks fearless like a lion, undaunted by anything. To one who has attained this state there are no pairs of opposites such as holy and unholy, good and bad, sacred and profane, and the like; to him all is one undivided ocean of bliss which is his own real Self. This is a very high state to attain. Before one attains it, all apparent oppositions appear very real. After one has attained it, they disappear. Even the wicked and the lowly then appear as divine. Sri Ramakrishna said of this state,

"The Divine Mother revealed to me in the Kali temple that it was She who had become everything. She showed me that everything was full of Consciousness.... I found everything inside the room soaked, as it were, in Bliss—the Bliss of Satchidananda. I saw a wicked man in front of the Kali temple; but in him also I saw the Power of the Divine Mother vibrating. That was why I fed a cat with the food that was to be offered to the Divine Mother. I clearly perceived that the Divine Mother had become everything—even the cat."⁴

2. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Trans., Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, 1942) p. 396.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 395.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 345-6.

Note that this was not a mere sentiment or an abstract philosophical conclusion. Sri Ramakrishna "clearly perceived" the Divine Mother in the wicked man and the cat as well as in everything else. Note also that this vision made conventional ritualistic worship superfluous, for he did what a conventional worshipper would consider sacrilegious: he offered the food intended for the Deity to the cat. But his worship of God in everything, even in the wicked man and the cat, took spiritual precedence over the conventional worship of the Deity in the temple image; the Divine Mother Herself so flooded his consciousness with Her universal presence that he could do no other than offer the food to the cat and his worship to the wicked man. Thus does the vision of God in everything make ordinary ritualistic spiritual practice superfluous. But for those who have not yet realized the vision of God in everything, adherence to these practices of external worship may be necessary. We are here speaking of the vision of God in everything as a permanent state, not just as a brief experience. A brief experience of God in everything does not guarantee that one has permanently gone beyond the pairs of opposites and is established in God-vision.

The permanent state of seeing God in everything is the highest state possible for one who wishes to benefit mankind with his spiritual wisdom and love. It is the state in which all incarnations, saviors, world teachers, and lesser spiritual teachers have lived while they taught and illumined mankind. It is the state of living continuously in the consciousness of the presence of God everywhere, and awakening that consciousness in everyone. It is the tenth and highest stage of spiritual unfoldment described in the ancient Zen Buddhist scripture "The Ten Bulls" as follows:

"Inside my gate, a thousand sages do not know me. The beauty of my garden is invisible.

Why should one search for the footsteps of the patriarchs? I go to the market place with my wine bottle and return home with my staff. I visit the wineshop and the market, and everyone I look upon becomes enlightened."⁵

In this state there is no break in the vision of God, for whatever one sees is revealed immediately in the very act of seeing as the Infinite Divine. There are thus two modes of seeing combined as one: the physical sense and the spiritual vision. What appear in thought as two are experienced as merged indissolubly and indescribably as one. Sri Ramakrishna held out this state as the one he wanted Swami Vivekananda to remain in while he did the work of illuminating the world as the Master wished him to. When Swamiji begged the Master to give him samadhi, the Master rebuked him, saying, "You are a fool. There is a state higher than that even. Do you not sing, 'Thou art all that there is'?...You shall realize a state even higher than samadhi."⁶ After Swamiji had attained nirvikalpa samadhi, the Master said,

"Now the Mother has shown you everything. Just as a treasure is locked up in a box, so will this realization you have just had be locked up and the key shall remain with me. You have work to do. When you have finished the work, the treasure box will be unlocked again."⁷

What Sri Ramakrishna meant was that Swamiji would not withdraw from the world but would become a World Teacher and would move throughout the whole world untouched by any corruption, like Buddha and Jesus, seeing God in everyone

5. Paul Reys, ed., *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* (New York: Garden City, Doubleday & Co., Anchor Books, 1961) p. 154.

6. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, op. cit. p. 131.

7. *Ibid.* p. 145.

and everything. Of course this literally came to pass.

Sri Ramakrishna refers to this state when he says,

“In the state of a paramahansa, like Sukadeva, all karmas [i.e., traditional ritualistic methods of worship]... drop away. In this state a man communes with God through his own

mind alone. Sometimes he may be pleased to perform outward activities for the welfare of mankind. But his recollection and contemplation of God remain uninterrupted.”⁸

(To be continued)

⁸. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, op. cit. p. 388.

CAN SILENCE BE ELOQUENT ?

PROF. SAMARENDRA KRISHNA BOSE

‘Silence is more eloquent than speech’—so runs the popular proverb. In these days of the despotism of sound, when sound-pollution has become the headache of the ecologists, probably we need the eloquence of a soothing and profound silence more than ever.

Shakespeare, the greatest wizard of words, knew the utter futility of mere words. We remember a scene from ‘Hamlet’. Hamlet enters *reading*, and Polonius asks him: ‘What do you read, my lord?’ The reply of Hamlet is brief but full of significance. It is: ‘Words, Words, Words’. (Shakespeare’s ‘Hamlet’ Act-II, scene-II, lines 190-91). Being himself the consummate artist of words the world has ever produced, Shakespeare knew the incompetence and inadequacy of words to reveal the innermost depth of the human mind. Hamlet’s feeling of disgust and disappointment of the inherent poverty and emptiness of words, is a truth which all genuine souls know from their experience.

There are moments when we become painfully aware of the inadequacy of words to express our emotions and sentiments. They really lie too deep for words. That’s why Shakespeare made his Hamlet

utter, just before closing his eyes for ever, the most profound piece of wisdom: ‘The rest is silence’.

It is all true. We can give expression only to comparatively superficial ideas, feelings, and sentiments of the mind by means of words. But the rest is, ever and everywhere, silence. The mother who has lost her only child becomes mute; lovers in the moment of perfect union remain silent; the sage in the hour of losing his identity in the Ultimate Reality is in a speechless trance. Words will only spoil the profundity of such feelings. Such deep emotions and ecstasies can only be experienced, not expressed. When the heart is full, the lips are sealed. Of all times, it is at such moments that we feel the futility of words most.

Great thinkers of all ages and climes have realized the limitation of words. They relied more upon symbols and suggestions than on verbosity. Gardiner exposes this idea nicely in one of his famous essays: ‘It is the art of the great teacher who with a line reveals infinity. It is the art of the great dramatist who with a significant word shakes the soul. Schiller, said Coleridge, burns a city to create his effect of terror; Shakespeare

drops a handkerchief and freezes our blood.' (A.G. Gardiner, 'The Jam Sahib of Nawannagar' from his *Pillars of Society*—Messrs. Dent and Sons, 1913).

Even Shakespeare, the greatest verbal artist of the world, realized that words can never do justice to the deep and profound feelings of the mind. Such realizations may be better communicated, if communicated at all, by silence. So whenever there is need for expressing the inexpressible, there is nothing but silence to fall back upon.

There are moments of vibrant silence which are more eloquent than speech. The story goes about Shankaracharya, the greatest exponent of Advaita Vedanta, that he had the mysterious power of satisfying all queries of his disciples by silence. The sixteen-year-old preceptor sat under a banyan tree at 'Joshi Math' (monastery), encircled by his aged disciples. Only the proximity of the Guru solved all problems and quieted all doubts and misgivings that arose and disturbed the minds of those disciples, far more satisfactorily than could be done by words. *Gurostu mauna vyakhyanam, sisyaustu chhinna samsayah*—By the silent interpretation of the Guru are dispelled all doubts of the disciples (Shankaracharya's 'Dakshinamurti-stotra').

In this connection we are reminded of a significant observation of Sri Ramakrishna to Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, when he called on him at his Badurbagan residence on 5 August 1882. Sri Ramakrishna said that all the inspired and holy scriptures have been defiled, because they have passed through human mouths in course of pronunciation. But one thing alone has not been so defiled, as it has never been uttered by the tongue and the lips. It is Brahman, the formless Absolute. It has ever remained immaculate, as it has never been possible to describe in words what

Brahman really is. He then elaborated his point, as was his wont, by means of a parable. A certain father sent his two sons to a preceptor for learning Advaita Vedanta or Absolute monism that deals with the true conception of Brahman, the one Reality permanently pervading the whole universe. After completing their course of study the sons came back home. The father then wanted to test their proficiency in the subject. He first asked his elder son to give his conception of Brahman. The son waxed eloquent on the subject and began to quote various *slokas* (verses) from the scriptures in support of his description of the character of Brahman. The father listened patiently. When the discourse was finished, he asked his younger son the same question. The son remained significantly silent with a bowed head. The father became pleased with him and approvingly said that it was he who had really comprehended Brahman. Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, surpasses the logical means of being described by words. It is the last word of 'Realization'. Hence, a definition of Brahman runs: 'Silence is Brahman'.

Sri Ramakrishna proved, time and again, by his own conduct, the validity of his assertion. A single instance may be cited by way of illustration. Naren's (Vivekananda) mind had been nurtured on western philosophy of Pure Reason and rationality. He turned virtually an atheist and a free-thinker. He could not accept Sri Ramakrishna's assertion that everything that exists, whether animate or inanimate, is manifestation of Brahman, the Ultimate Reality. He rejected the idea as a fantasy. One day Naren and another disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, Pratap Hazra, gave vent to their incredulity in jeering remarks, such as 'This jug is Brahman! These flies are Brahman! etc., etc.' They then burst into side-splitting laughter. From the adjoining

room Sri Ramakrishna heard it. He came to them in a trance, and touched Naren. At once a tremendous transformation took place within Naren. Everything was changed in his eyes. He realized with amazement that nothing existed save God or Brahman. That Supreme Being is immanent. The idea could never have been instilled into Naren's mind by words! The incommunicable was communicated, as it can alone be, by silence!

Sometimes, from amongst his disciples, Sri Ramakrishna gave to the elect few a foretaste of the highest spiritual state by a mere look! Tarak (Swami Shivananda) once sat opposite the Master, silent. The Master's look fell upon him, and at once Tarak was overwhelmed with a spiritual realization that made him dissolve in tears. He trembled, under its impact, throughout his members. Thus Sri Ramakrishna used to communicate by silence what is too deep for words.

Poets and philosophers have always felt the limitation of words because it is they that have ever been confronted with the problem of expressing the inexpressible. Of all men, therefore, they have pined for words most. Chesterton observed, in his usual epigrammatic manner, that men starve for words more than for food. There may be exaggeration in the remark, but certainly such men do exist; or, to be more precise, such moments do come in the life of men when hunger for words prove stronger than hunger for food. When the imagination is excited, the mind feels an urge to give expression to images and emotions seen and felt by it. The mind under the sway of imagination grows extremely restless and comes near madness. Even ordinary persons turn poets in some degree when such mood comes on them.

But however much poets and thinkers may grope after suitable words to express the feelings aroused in the mind in moments

of inspiration, they soon realize that words are the most imperfect medium for the purpose. They can bring out only a small fraction of the artist's original experience. Justly has Shelley said in his *Defence of Poetry*, '... the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet...' 'Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter', said Keats. 'The unheard flute plays in the depth of my heart', wrote Tagore.

But still we must admit that literary artists, especially poets, possess the skill of expressing things for better than ordinary men. Addressing poets Browning says, 'Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell what we felt only'. According to him, poets have the capacity for expressing what appears inexpressible to those 'Who never have turned a rhyme.' And it is true. Words gain significance when they are charged with 'rhyme. Rightly has Mr. Hudson observed, 'Merely to arrange words in a definitely rhythmical order is to endow them, as by some secret magic, with a new and subtle emotional power—to touch them with a peculiar suggestiveness which in themselves, simply as words conveying such and such meanings, they do not possess.'

Words gain still greater meaning and significance when they are put to tune. Shakespeare, knew this well. Whenever there arose the need for expressing the inexpressible, he took recourse to music. Mr. Wilson Knight has made painstaking research on this subject and has shown how Shakespeare always relied upon music to describe that which is indescribable in language. But even then there are bound to be emotions and intuitions which are too deep and subtle even for the most musical words. Then the only possible course is to resort to silence. Probably this inspired Shakespeare to write the immortal line:

'The rest is silence'. If this be the testimony of the world's supreme verbal artist regarding the limitation of words, how much more helpless others must feel in making articulate emotions and sentiments lying in the core of their hearts!

There is another important factor to be taken into consideration in respect of words. The edge of everything becomes dull by constant use and words are no exceptions in this regard. Words lose their significance and poignancy by long and indiscriminate use. The Irish poet and dramatist, K. B. Yeats, has repented that the language of his verse-dramas is not, like Shakespeare's a natural growth out of contemporary speech. He said, 'People today have no artistic and charming language except light persiflage, and no powerful language at all, and when they are deeply moved they look silently into the fireplace.' We have grown too much sophisticated and our language has lost the exuberance and spontaneity it once possessed. Comparative philology shows how almost every word owes its origin to descriptions of natural things, or to pictures. With the gaining of currency, the pictorial suggestions of words wear away. They gradually degenerate into mere counters for the game of conversation. Thus they become dull and jejune, and lose their strength and effect. H. Caudwell has, in an interesting essay, shown how in a state of excitement men take recourse to metaphors, similes, personifications, and exaggerations for expressing emotions for which the language of everyday life proves inadequate. 'Our ordinary language', he observes, 'is full of familiar, sometimes outworn, figures of speech drawn originally from the everyday life of town or country, office, farm or factory.... They must all once have been spoken for the first time, and when first spoken were vivid and imaginative. "Whispering corn". "biting

wind", "flashing eyes", and "thundering hooves" have sunk by use from the level of poetry to that of popular fiction or speech.' 'To fall in love' has become a commonplace expression today. Yet with Shelley this word love had a mystic dimension, 'The granite frame of the universe is interpenetrated with love'. In the gospel of Jesus this 'love' has attained the connotation of highest selflessness and perfect identification with entire humanity. Jesus' commandment 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' rings in our ear like gospel. But by overuse the word 'Love' has lost much of its charm and power. 'The letter killeth', Said St. Paul. 'Words return failing to express the ineffable Reality' says the *Mundaka Upanishad*.

What a gulf of difference between what is said and what is meant! The louder the profession, the more empty is the emotion. Truly has Alexander Pope said:

Words are like leaves and where they most abound,

Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.

The sound and fury of words, indeed, signify nothing.

Goneril and Regan in Shakespeare's *King Lear* waxed eloquent on their love and respect for their father, Lear, but Cordelia, the youngest daughter, remained reticent. The reason is, 'The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb'.

Silence, especially the fullness of the 'great active silence' as Emerson said, is always golden, while speech is, at best, silver. There are subtle intuitions and mystic intimations that really beggar description. Their only means of communication is silence. There is, as yet, no other medium for the purpose. They are only to be transmitted and received, from one soul to another, through the profundity of a resonant silence.

MALADY OF THE MODERN AGE : ROLE OF MYSTICS

N. C. GANGULY

Modern civilization has taken one particular activity. This may be called the 'intellectual physical' activity. Our age has made it the only recognized form of activity, thus neglecting the spiritual basis of the civilization on which it is founded. Intellect, applied to the solution of material problems, reigns supreme. The so called rational theorists condemn mystics and saints for their apparent inactivity, and indifference to the prevailing style of Life in the society. They declare that rank materialism alone must prevail, and that spiritual values are a myth. In the West this condemnation is connected with an utilitarian philosophy of life which led to Nazism and communism on the one hand, and to self-indulgent, and luxury-worshipping democracies on the other. Man's material position has been raised to the position of a god, and there is no limit to the greed for higher standards of living, even after poverty has been substantially abolished in western countries. There would be one logical conclusion to such a falsely based civilization, and that is self-destruction.

The socialist doctrine is a mere means to an end which is human happiness. Our Vedic scriptures lay stress on attainment of abiding happiness which is to be found in harmony with the motto, 'The entire world is one family'. In the present age, inspite of increasing material prosperity of the western countries, abundant amenities, and plentiful production, we find people of those countries turning to saints of India for solace and real happiness. Socialism is developing totalitarian tendencies, and is striking blow at its very root. Prof. J. H. Hulzinga observes in his book *In the Shadow of Tomorrow*

that the first fundamental of culture is a balance of material and spiritual values, and that this balance permits the emergence of a social condition which affords more lasting and higher values than mere gratification of want and desire for power. These values lie in the domain of the spiritual and moral.

The isolation of the individual from the source of life, and alienation of one individual from another, are responsible for the malady which we know as modern civilization. Its symptoms are fear, animalism, limitless desire, hatred, greed, frustration, insecurity, a general feeling of utter meaninglessness of life, and consequent misery. Threatened with destruction of all that has constituted for him 'life', he has thrown himself into a feverish activity for the gaining of wealth, and power. He seeks in external life a compensation for the inner poverty of his egoistic life. Because he has lost the power of love, he seeks consolation in excitement, sensation, and ostentation. His inner soul is in bondage and therefore he seeks to give a false significance to his life by the vain trappings of power and position. The following weighty observations of the late Dr. C. G. Jung, an astute thinker and doyen of psychologist, deserve consideration, "Once man is set to pursuit of external things, he is never satisfied, as experience shows, with the mere necessities of life but always strives after more and more, which, true to his prejudices, he always seeks in external things.... The inner man raises his claim which cannot be satisfied by any external goods. The externalisation leads to an incurable suffering because nobody can understand how one could suffer because of one's

own nature.... It is this which forms the illness of the westerner and he does not rest till he has infected the whole world with his greedy restlessness. The wisdom and mysticism of the East have, therefore, a very great deal to tell us, provided they speak in their own inimitable speech.... The life and teachings of Sri Ramana are not only important for the Indians, but also for the western. Not only do they form a record of great human interest, but also a warning message to a humanity which threatens to lose itself in the chaos of its unconsciousness and lack of self-control."

A set of theorists who outwardly follow Karl Marx see nothing but class conflict in social life, and declare that rank materialism alone will prevail and that spiritual values are a myth. The teachings of such theorists have wrought incalculable havoc in social life, disrupted happy homes, and are largely responsible for misery of Indians whose forefathers enjoyed happiness in the midst of material poverty. The above-mentioned theorists condemn Indian quietist tradition and point to mystics and saints as inactive escapists who, it is erroneously alleged, do not render any service to the country. It is unfortunate that the above theorists who pose as rationalists do not understand the inner significance of mystics.

An attempt will be made here to unfold the inner meaning of mystics and to refute the false slogan that mystics are escapists with reference to the real meaning of mysticism and also by referring to the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Upanishads and recent mystics like Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramana Maharshi. Mysticism is derived from the Greek word "Mystic" which means silence equivalent to *mauna* which does not mean lack of speech but silence of all the senses, 'the great active

silence', as Emerson calls it. According to Miss Underhill, a distinguished writer and an erudite scholar, "Mystic's final attainment is deification and utter transmutation of self in God". Mystics are saints who achieve the highest heights of purity of love and faith. They love all beings and satisfy the needs of those who approach them. "A mystic who is not of supreme service to the society is not a mystic at all.", Says R. D. Ranade. "Stop not here. Go forward, onward march". This message of inner dynamics was first sounded in the Vedas. In *Aitareya Brahmana*, there is the inspiring call for march—*Charaiveti*. This is the most important message for everybody in the world. This message is a clear refutation of the slogan that mystics are escapists. The Vedanta does not at all support inactivity and escapism. The Upanishadic Mystics present human life as a march to truth and fulfilment. The dynamic spirituality, as taught by the Upanishadic Mystics, stands for strength, fearlessness, efficiency, love, humanism and dedication to service.

The Gita says that all persons engaged in the good of all beings attain Brahma-Nirvana, the state of total freedom in desirelessness. According to the Gita, the highest adept is one who serves everybody with compassion. According to Lokamanya Tilak, "Energism (Karma Yoga) is the true teaching of the Gita." The Gita emphatically supports the ideal of dedication to welfare of all beings. Devotion to the Lord, and duty and service to humanity, make up the *Sadhana* of the Gita. Karma Yoga is the core of the Gita teaching and is its basic message. It is opposed to "Do-nothingism", the giving up of all activity. Karma Yoga is the medicine administered to Arjuna, and through him to humanity.

The first and important thing in the life of a Bodhisattva is *mahamaitri* (great love)

and *mahakaruna* (great compassion). A Bodhisattva (Budha-to-be) wants cessation of suffering not for himself but for others.

Mystics do not withdraw. They attempt the transformation of man. Their very presence radiates peace and joy, they refashion the souls of those who look to them for help, they love all beings, and work for the good of all beings. They pay attention to worldly problems and promote all-round welfare of persons. It is not possible to fully discuss this vast topic in a brief article like this. Attempt will be made to briefly state a few salient points with reference to the humanitarian activities of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, and Sri Ramana Maharshi who were crowned with mystic experiences.

Sri Ramakrishna used to be in Sat-chidananda, the bliss of eternal existence and consciousness, and frequently became absorbed in *Samadhi*. He was a spiritual Guru par excellence. But he was compassion-incarnate. His heart bled for the suffering poor and the down-trodden. On the eve of his passing away, He in his own simple way revealed to Narendra Nath (Swami Vivekananda) his life's mission stating that Narendra was ordained to accomplish Mother's work and enjoined upon him the divine task saying "Give up the low idea of salvation for yourself and be the mighty banyan tree instead, giving shelter to one and all." There are numerous instances to show that Sri Ramakrishna used to feel for the afflicted more deeply than the sufferers themselves. There is so much meaning in Sri Ramakrishna's simple saying "Do your duty with one hand, and with the other hold on to God". If we want all the achievements of human civilization not to go to pieces and if our personal life is not to be "a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing", then there is no other way open than to follow the above teaching of Sri Ramakrishna.

Swami Vivekananda, spiritual heir of Sri Ramakrishna, introduced to the world service to suffering humanity as a form of divine worship.

The following memorable statement of Swami Vivekananda proves beyond any doubt that he was a supreme lover of humanity. "May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls, and above all my God, the wicked my God, the miserable, my God, the poor of all races, of all species is the special object of my worship.... We want the man whose heart feels intensely the miseries and sorrows of the world."

Sri Rajagopalachari observed that but for Swami Vivekananda we would not have gained our freedom, and that we owe everything to him.

The Ramakrishna Mission, founded by Swami Vivekananda has rendered since its birth in 1897, service to millions of suffering people and has created a great tradition and ideal of organized social service. Sri Ramakrishna infused into Swami Vivekananda the spirit of service to mankind. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Jiva is Shiva". Not mercy, but service for man must be regarded as worship of God. Swami Vivekananda was thrilled and deeply stirred by the words of his Master and he decided to put these into practice. It appears from the Rules and Regulations of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, framed by Swami Vivekananda that the Math was established for one's own liberation and to train oneself to do good to the world in every way along the lines laid down by Sri Ramakrishna.

The Ramakrishna Mission is a household word all over India today. Even outside India the Mission is expanding its activities in distant countries, like Europe, America etc. The Mission undertakes

varied humanitarian and philanthropic activities and relief operations during floods, famine and epidemics for alleviation of sufferings of the people. The twin ideals of self-realization and service have been inspiring the Ramakrishna Order and Ramakrishna Math for about one hundred years. They will continue to do so for centuries. "Fifty centuries are looking on you" Swamiji wrote to his followers with confidence. The Ramakrishna Mission typifies a fusion of eastern and western ideals. The unique achievement of Swami Vivekananda in giving a new dimension to the role of a religious man has been aptly pointed out by the eminent sociologist, G.S. Ghorye. The latter writes, "The contact between these highly developed personalities (Ramakrishna and Vivekananda) led to the magnificent result of the flowering of Vivekananda into the most original and outstanding ascetic of modern times".

The view of Sri Aurobindo on the role of mystics is briefly summarised below. The spiritual man has not stood back altogether from the life of humanity; A sense of unity with all beings, a feeling of universal love and compassion, a will to spend the energies for the good of all creatures—these are central to the dynamic overflowing of the spirit. He has turned therefore to help as did the ancient Rishis or the prophets. "To discover the spiritual being in himself is the main business of the spiritual man and to help others towards the same evolution is his real service to the race." Says Sri Aurobindo. Though Sri Aurobindo remained in retirement at Pondicherry in bliss and solitude, deeply absorbed in meditation for welfare of humanity, he was no less interested in how things were developing in the outer world. In 1925 Sri Lajpat Rai met Sri Aurobindo and sought his guidance in dealing with certain pressing problems of Indian politics, and Sri Lajpat Rai felt amazed at

Sri Aurobindo's clear and detailed knowledge of the situation in India and of his luminous understanding. In the first open session of the Congress (1949) at Jaipur, the foreign policy resolution which was adopted was the draft sent by Sri Aurobindo.

Though Sri Ramana Maharshi was a living embodiment of a God-centred life, he was fully alive to worldly problems and his advice regarding worldly problems was sought by eminent persons like Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Rajendra Prasad. The following observation of Prof. B. Richardson, a renowned educationist, deserves careful consideration, "And the thoughts of Shri Bhagwan Ramana Maharshi have in his lifetime guided the world and set men thinking about the real meaning of life. This is his form of service to mankind. Such truly creative activity dwarfs the feverish rush of lesser men who dare to criticise Sri Ramana's inactivity."

Mysticism is the impulsion of the future evolutionary advance of man. Views of a few world renowned scholars and wise men of the West on the relevant subject are briefly stated. Mr. Arnold Toynbee observed that seers are going to have the last word. Mr. Aldous Huxley stated that a totally unmystical world would be totally blind and insane. In his book, *Out of My Later Years*, Albert Einstein made a few observations in regard to silence and religion, which every thoughtful person will find profitable to know. He was convinced that whatever the marvellous achievements that science may have in store, if humanity is to live a meaningful life on this planet, there will never come a time when religion, understood in its essential sense, will be superfluous. What is more, the enjoyment of the boons of science, without its menacing horrors, is impossible unless religion permeates life. Religion alone can give to science that

sanity without which it remains overwhelmingly a problematic achievement of humanity. Religion is not a constitutional necessity for man only, it is so for science, too. As Einstein puts it, 'Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.'

Religion is a psychological necessity of man. This is today fortunately acknowledged by a section of psychologists following the leadership of the late Dr. Jung, who, in his famous book, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, declared, 'Among all my patients in the second half of life, that is to say, over thirty-five years, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life.' Our scriptures say, the psycho-physical organism which we know as man, is only a temporary vesture put on by something undying and infinite in man, called Atman. The very nature of this Atman is Sat-Chit-Ananda, existence-knowledge-bliss absolute. Therefore, from the absolute standpoint, the endless desires of man are natural ones, which are fulfilled only when man realizes the infinite Atman, and finds he is It. Swami Vivekananda said that man, essentially infinite, cannot be satisfied by the finite. Thus it is that man needs God the infinite One. God is man's elemental necessity.

Jalaluddin Rumi, the Persian mystic, observed 'He (the seeker) looks at the gift, but above all goods turn himself to the Giver'. Such examples from the lives of the mystics of East and West, amply prove this one great fact that when one really feels the need for God, one's whole being becomes a single flame leaping Godward.

The need of the day is the vision of the essential divinity of life which enables one to build a social structure on the spiritual foundation laid in his heart. Democracy of spirit and implicit faith in the divinity and unity of life, as taught and practised

by Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramana Maharshi, provide us with a hearty goodwill, fellow-feeling and joy of living in the life of others. Social and international problems in the light of the essential divinity and unity of mankind will have a better solution. The superhuman activities of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramana Maharshi, and their outstanding and yet practical achievements constitute very convincing refutation of the flagrantly false slogan that mystics are escapists. It is high time that all right-thinking persons should feel for themselves these truths and impress upon the people to guide society in the right direction. Then only common man can stand against the mischievous slogan which confuses immature persons, especially young persons, and which is a grave peril to our glorious culture that has earned respect and admiration of different countries of the world. In this arid age of religious nihilism, authoritarian, democracy, and totalitarian socialism, mystics, the sustainers of society, have a significant and indispensable role to play in educating, reforming, enthusing, inspiring, elevating, and transforming persons for enabling them to properly perform their allotted duties in a spirit of dedicated service, and thus attain true happiness. In promoting an all-round welfare of all persons, irrespective of their country and the religion, the mystics like Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Ramana Maharshi, are the 'lights' amidst the surrounding darkness of today's purely sensate society where men kill each other in the name of religion, or political ideologies, where youth suffers from a 'perpetual purposelessness' in life despite all intellectual and material success, and eventually goes for suicide, where the purity of life is bluntly ignored, and where greed for power, position and wealth runs riot in the

name of revolutionary ideologies. Mystics, on the other hand, are 'calm, silent and unknown', as Vivekananda said. They stand with a real concern for human welfare, and an all-conquering love for all, including the sinners and blunderers. They only can create for us 'a Kingdom of Heaven within and a City of God outside'.

"SATYAKAMA-SATYA-SAMPRADEYA"

SWAMI SASTRANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

SCENE III

[Stage II after curtains 1 and 2 are parted, revealing the Gurukula of Haridrumata Gautama. The boy Satyakama enters and bows down to the Acharya with great devotion and humility. The Acharya rises him up.]

Haridrumata Gautama: Rise, my child, rise. Who are you? Why have you come? Tell me what can we do for you. Please say.

B. Satyakama: Sir! Several questions and doubts go on arising in my mind regarding myself and the world. But I get no suitable answers or solutions. I have heard that coming to holy persons like yourself and learning will help in getting those answers. I am very desirous of learning—very, very much! Sir, somehow will you graciously take me and teach me?

Haridrumata Gautama: My child, in order to receive education, to join and study in this Gurukula there are certain traditions and rules to be followed. Yes, there is the tradition. First of all we must know about your lineage—about your family—'Kula' and 'Gotra'. Further Vedic studies start only after 'Upanayana', i.e., wearing of the sacred thread etc., and we accept only boys who are fit for that. Then only can we think of other things. And again, after joining the Gurukula, the student should implicitly obey the instructions of the Guru and carry

out all the duties entrusted to him with meticulous care and devotion. Are you ready for that...?

It seems you are now twelve or thirteen. Have you undergone 'Upanayana'—the sacred thread ceremony?

B. Satyakama: (flustered a little, but recovering): Sir, I have not undergone any such thing. I also do not know anything about my lineage, 'Kula' and 'Gotra'. But I can go home, ask my mother and bring the information needed. However, I am very confident that if only you will accept me, I shall be able to follow faithfully whatever you say, in a way pleasing to you. In fact I give my word that I shall do so!

Haridrumata Gautama: Very well, my child, Good! Go home, obtain all the information and come. Let us consider, thereafter, what could be done, and what should be done.

CURTAIN 2 CLOSES

[Acharya Satyakama comes to middle of Stage I and resumes his conversation with Samasrava and Upakosala].

A. Satyakama: So you see the situation which had arisen in my boyhood or rather early youth... Irresistible enthusiasm on one hand—and inexpressible anxiety

on the other. In such a state I rushed into my mother's presence. Ah! What a mother! She was the one and only person, whom I knew intimately, who was close to me, the one who commanded all the love and respect I was capable of. In fact, she was to me a veritable goddess, worthy of worship. Yes—a goddess truly. I was a semi-orphan who had not even seen my father. But as for herself, even though alone, she had never become disheartened thinking that she was but a helpless woman. Actually, she was a person of remarkable self-reliance and self-respect, simple and upright, fearless and independent. All alone, this heroic woman not only worked her way out in life but also brought me up with love and dignity. Not for a day did I see on her face any expression of lowliness or inferiority, anger or resentment, sorrow or suffering. Nor did a single expression of a like kind issue from her lips. A veritable embodiment of 'Patience' was she. Never did she subject me to harsh words or physical chastisement.

Upakosala: An ideal mother indeed!

A. Satyakama: Young though I was, I could understand and see for myself what life of endless toil she had to live for supporting both of us. Now on one side, there was such an angel of a mother; and on the other an irrepressible, uncontrollable urge within, almost a squeezing of the heart, for learning. Perhaps I was about twelve years of age then. As far as I could, I assisted her fully in the various household tasks—happily and impelled by my reverence for her.

Leaving such a mother—and that too in such circumstances—how could I go to live in the Gurukula? Would she not be left absolutely alone? Was it right, was it fair?... But again—irresistible was that pull of education, of knowledge.

Samasrava: Truly an agonizing situation!

A. Satyakama: With such a state of

mind and the heart beating wildly, I went to her. With an agitated voice, and in excited and rapid words, I burst out, "Mother! what shall I say?... A tremendous desire has arisen within to seek education and knowledge in the Gurukula. I have actually been to the Guru, along with Bhargava. I asked him about it. "My boy, obtain properly the facts relating to your lineage, 'Kula', 'Gotra' etc., get the approval of your parents and come along with them. Then we shall see what is to be done" was his reply. Mother! now you tell me—what am I to do. What shall I say to him? You please tell!"

Upakosala: Your words must have come as a terrible blow to her... A lone lady—and an only son!

Samasrava: Sir, what did mother say then?

A. Satyakama: Agitated and excited as my words were, with a matching steadiness, dignity and calmness, she replied: "My boy! if you have that much desire and keenness to learn, and if you can find the teacher who will take you, go. By all means go! and learn. There is no objection whatsoever, so far as I am concerned. I give my hearty consent. I myself should have arranged for your education but circumstances were adverse."

Samasrava: What a heroic person!

Upakosala: What happened then, Sir?

A. Satyakama: "Mother, I don't know what to say about my lineage, 'Kula', 'Gotra' etc," I said. To that she replied, "Child! I too, cannot tell anything about these things. Your father was with me only for a very short while. In my early youth itself, even before you were born, he was lost. When I was with him, and later on also, I had to be constantly engaged in serving others and it also became necessary for livelihood. There was no occasion to learn the details about his family background. I also did not give thoughts to it.

(Reflectively) True, people looked down upon me as one engaged in a Sudra occupation, of low caste. I was isolated. But I didn't mind. When the Lord is there to protect, what matters if anyone says something wrong or speaks ill of you? That did not take away anything from worth or dignity. Actually all that has in no way affected me adversely!"

Samasrava: Sir! Hearing what you are saying about her, a great feeling of reverence is welling up in my heart for her!

Upakosala: And then Sir, what more did mother say?

A. Satyakama: "Dear Child, I do not know what the 'Kula' and 'Gotra' of your father are. Nor could I adopt a profession befitting the twice-born—circumstances were not favourable: it was not possible. But whatever occupation I have taken up, I have carried that out and lived my life with purity, honesty, self-respect and commitment. You are my son—my beloved son, a son of whom I am proud. Whatever worth is there in your mother, that is in you as well, certainly. So, go—go to the teacher. Say whatever is to be said, yourself. I don't think there is need for me to go with you. And report to him respectfully, what I have told you. Your father was lost even before your birth. I do not know what his gotra is. Serving is my profession. My name is Jabala. So your gotra, my son, is to be 'Jabala'. Whatever is the fact, whatever you know is the truth, report that directly and faithfully. Thereafter, let things take their own course depending on your own worth, your luck and the sense of right and fairness of the guru." That is what she said. That was the way of that magnificent mother!

Upakosala: She must be a rare mother indeed to have sent such a young son, all alone, to the Guru and inspired him to work out his own future himself!

A. Satyakama: True Upakosala, true. She was indeed a very special lady. In that state, I myself began to hesitate. "Mother, I just cannot describe my joy at the way you have given your consent—so readily, so wholeheartedly. But, how can I go away leaving you in a fatherless home, all alone and without any help in your difficulties? Even if I go, would such an education become fruitful?"—I remarked. Do you know what her reaction was?

Upakosala: Please do tell, Sir. I am so eager to know that.

A. Satyakama: "Don't weaken, my child. Know this; my name is 'Jabala' but I am not an 'abala', a helpless creature. I have been strong, in the strength of truth, in the strength of purity, in the strength of the Self, in the strength of Divine Power. I am no weak and feeble girl; I am a woman of courage. Do not fear for me. Even when you go, I can carry on here, unshaken, depending on myself. Don't be worried about me. If at all, be worried about your own future—how you can grow into a worthy person and how you can lead a noble and honoured life. There is no need to be cast down thinking you have no earthly 'father'. Let Truth, 'Satya' be your father. Ever take refuge in Truth. Let Truth itself be the support of your life, your strength, your ideal and your goal. Become the child of Truth. Without entertaining any other desire or longing, set your heart on Truth, dedicate yourself to Truth. Become 'Satya Kama' himself—one whose whole aspiration and quest, yearning and ambition are for Truth. If that is so, then I shall send you with my full consent, with all blessings—and with delight!"

Upakosala: What were those words of blessings, Sir, with which she sent you to the Gurukula?

A. Satyakama: 'Longing for Knowledge is good. It is laudable. And so long as you take complete refuge in Truth and

hold on to it, you will be protected and without doubt come out victorious in your quest. At least I do not have any doubt.... Go! acquire knowledge. Become a wise man. Come back only as an honoured and respected person. Till then, I shall wait for you patiently, confidently and with an eager heart.... Godspeed to you!'—That was her response and her blessing.

Samasrava: Ah! Ah! What a heroic mother! And you are her son! Now I begin to understand your real background.

A. Satyakama: Yes, Yes. It is, therefore, the expression 'Matri Devo Bhava', 'May mother be as a god unto you'—has become to me a living 'mantra', a guiding force for life. To me she is indeed God who has become 'Mother'. It was because of this that immediately after completing my own training and then starting this gurukula, my first action was to bring that mother here with due honour and persuade her to reside here as the Blessed Mother, the presiding goddess of the gurukula!

Upakosala: What a mother—and what a son! And how blessed we are to have the privilege of seeing them both and living under them to receive their grace and blessings!

Holy Sir—Now you must tell us what took place thereafter in the gurukula of Acharya Haridrumata, and about your later life there.

A. Satyakama: Well, that is indeed a marvellous and great episode....That too I shall relate. With care and attention, give your mind to what I say and listen. Visualize in your minds all that you hear and become one with it!

[Curtain 2 parts revealing stage II]

[Discovered Sage Haridrumata Gautama, standing—and boy Satyakama rising after bowing down to him.]

Haridrumata: So my boy, you have come! Welcome! Well, have you got all

the information I asked you to bring? And where are your parents?

B. Satyakama: Sir, Just as you instructed, I asked my mother about it. I shall now report to you exactly what she gave as her reply. Thereafter it is for you to decide:

"Even before you were born, in my early youth itself I lost your father. I am not in a position to give any details about him. But my name is 'Jabala' and so you are 'Jabala'. Let that be your 'gotra'—family name. You are a seeker of Knowledge; your longing or *Kama* is for Truth, 'Satya'. This aspiration and quest for Truth itself is your 'family profession'. So you can say you are 'Satya Kama Jabala!' This was what she said.

Haridrumata: Is it like that... Well... Wait a little. Let me think about it.

[Becomes immersed in deep thought for a while]

(To himself): Ah! ... What a situation! What truthful, honest, natural and guileless souls are this mother and the son! What uprightness which can so directly express even a damaging truth, without the least hesitation!... True, according to the traditional practices of our society I cannot accept this boy for Vedic study, just as other twice-born. Objections are bound to be raised, that this boy is not a twice-born, his parentage is questionable—and so on. By nature, I too am a traditionalist. But my tradition is the tradition of Truth or 'Satya', of what is true and good, 'Sat'. In my tradition Truth has the highest place. Truth is Brahman, and one who is totally true and truthful is a real 'Brahmana'. And this boy, without flinching an iota, bereft of any guile, has spoken truth so directly. What more qualification is needed for being a Brahmana, of being 'Sattvika'?

Even as that gem of a lady, a mother worthy of this son, has indicated, I myself shall give a name to this superior candidate,

will perform his Upanayana and admit him to our gurukula... But one should not be carried away wholly by first impressions, judgements and enthusiasm. They should be confirmed appropriately. Let me subject this boy to some severe tests and if he comes out of them successfully, then his worth will stand proved.

However, something inside me says that this boy is not just an ordinary student but an exceptional soul, of great quality, who would prove to be a lustrous gem, casting his light on the whole Aryan race ... Well, let us see. Let the course of events bear out whether my feelings in the matter are justified—or not.

(*To Satyakama*): My boy, I shall accept you ; and even as your mother has indicated, since you are a natural aspirant for Truth, you will be 'Satya-Kama' and since you are the son of 'Jabala' you will be 'Jabala'—and your name will be Satyakama Jabala. Hereafter you shall be called by this name itself. You shall be duly invested with the holy thread and I shall assign to you the tending of the holy fires. Thus will start your life in Gurukula.

B. Satyakama: (With great enthusiasm), Sir, when shall my education and my service of you begin ? What is to be done by me in that direction ? What would be the duties for the purpose ?

Haridrumata: Well—Are you ready to act according to whatever direction I may give, ready to follow my instructions whatever they be—and that with a cheerful mind ?

B. Satyakama: Why, Sir, should there be any doubt about it ? You have but to command—that much is enough. What greater blessing is there for me than to obey your commands !

Haridrumata: Come, Satyakama—come this side.... Look there, at the distance. Do you see that moving herd of cattle ? They are the cows of our gurukula. For Ashrama life, they are most precious.

Looking after the cows is one of the most important duties here. Now, out of this vast herd, we shall separate those which are lean and weak—perhaps three to four hundred in number. You have to take them to the forest, look after them carefully, graze them and protect them in such a way that they grow up and multiply properly. This would be the first duty I shall entrust to you. For the present that itself will be your education too ! You may come back after they grow up strong and healthy.... What ?... Are you agreeable ?

B. Satyakama: Sir—Agreeable ? It is my blessed privilege. I shall undertake it with the greatest joy... But ... the students, the Brahmacharins, here carry on their studies in various ways. What should I do—for the purpose—when I am in the forest ?

Haridrumata: My boy, the studentship and studies in the case of the Brahmacharins here consists of chanting the Vedas, learning them by heart, explaining and grasping their meaning. The essence of it all, however, is the knowing, seeing or realizing of Truth or Brahman. And that Truth is ever within you as your own Self. If you can look within, you too shall become aware of it. Try for that. In the forest, let the holy fire which you will be tending, let that Agni himself, become your outer guru ! If only you cultivate a constant and whole-souled longing for Truth, for the vision of Truth, then through the grace of Jataveda, the omniscient Fire God, the education you want may be accomplished within yourself ! That is true study—which is Self—study or Svadhyaya as well.

B. Satyakama: Sir, through your blessings and assurances, my mind has become so light. I am also filled with courage.

Haridrumata: Very good. Even so, I expect of you something more—something

more than I expect of others—a greater endeavour and adventure! You see—the wholehearted care of these cows is essential. But, on that plea, you should not become tired out or distracted, and lose interest and zest for the acquisition of Knowledge. Even in the forest, even while engaged in the task of rearing and caring for the cows, you must have a constant eagerness, and make continual efforts, for the gaining of education, of Knowledge. True education or Knowledge is not some strange thing, divorced from life. And he is the true hero, Dhira, who, in the midst of everyday life, is able to acquire knowledge and fashioning his life in the light of such a knowledge, lives in the world in a worthy way. And my wish is that you should become such a hero, such a Dhira.

B. Satyakama: (Thrilled) If Sir, you are gracious, even that might come to pass! Looking after cows and looking for Knowledge, both will become my great duties. After fulfilling them, making my mind fit thereby, I shall again come to you for your instruction. No doubt about it... Yet...

Haridrumata: Yet... ?

B. Satyakama: Is not the non-availability of the direct presence of the guru, service to him and getting education from him face to face, a big lack and a great drawback ?

Haridrumata: My boy! Don't you become anxious because of that. Truly you need not have any worry on that count. I bless you that you will not feel any lack. I assure you there will be none! At least as far as I am concerned, there is no law that without the guru's direct physical presence, service to him and instruction from him, Knowledge is impossible! The real Guru is within you only, the indwelling Lord Himself, Isvara. It is He who also dwells in the cows and in the fire. Let your service be directed to the Guru in these two forms. Maybe, through this very channel, you will receive the needed instruction and

your heart's cherished desire fulfilled. Keep your eyes, ears, mind and heart open. Who can say from whence, and in what way, the Guru's Upadesha, instruction, will come? The blessed Guru may come to you in various forms, and may inspire you in unforeseen ways. He may bless you with different aspects of Knowledge. The ways of the Divine are indescribable! Have faith—my boy—in my words. And have even more faith in your own worth, in the fact that your life's great purpose will be fulfilled!...If it is needed, before you actually start on your sojourn in the forest, I shall give you some special advice. All right my child, Godspeed to you. Complete all the task entrusted to you loyally and successfully—and come back!

[*B. Satyakama* is overcome with feelings and bows down. *Haridrumata* blesses saying 'Subhamastu'—May all good betide you—and then exits.]

B. Satyakama: (Alone to himself) True I am a boy, young in years. But yet, I am no ignorant baby. Thanks to the care and guidance of that mother of mine and through Divine grace, I have grown up as an intelligent person. In actual life, in the midst of people, I need not hang my head down. Certainly there is self-confidence also... Let me see how this phase of my life will shape itself... The holy guru *Haridrumata* has extended unexpected grace and kindness, and has reposed great faith in me. I must be worthy of this faith of his, and the faith of that heroic, angelic mother of mine, who for my sake is ready to face any hardship and has sent me blessing, "My child—Go thou and come back victorious!" I must be. Else, my life, my birth—all will be in vain... By the Lord's grace, I shall be worthy of it. With dedication I shall take care of these cows till they become even a thousand-strong herd, of healthy and sturdy animals. Side by side, I shall keep my body and senses pure ;

and with a concentrated mind go on seeking knowledge. May Light come! May it come from any quarter! May it come from all quarters! May the instruction and message of the blessed Guru become available to me from many and varied and even unexpected quarters!

Let us see—how my cattle-tending and my quest for Knowledge will take shape—and how all this will culminate.

[Satyakama exits thoughtfully].

[CURTAINS 1 & 2 CLOSE.]

(To be continued)

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

A late News: The Death of a Star

The star collapsed 170,000 years ago. Only the news reached our earth at 2.40 a.m. on 24 February morning of this year. Ian Shelton, 29, a Canadian astronomer was working on a 10-inch telescope at Las Campanas observatory on a 8000 ft mountain top in Chile. Just before going to sleep after a night-long star gazing, he suddenly discovered in the plate a bright spot near the Tarantula Nebulae. Doubting that it might be a flaw on the photographic plate, he came out and saw without a binocular or telescope, but with his own eyes the glowing spot. It was the moment of final combustion of a exploding star, a supernova. Since 1694, it was the brightest supernova seen with naked eyes in our sky. It was a great finding—a much awaited photograph of a very important phenomena. Shelton was showered with warm felicitation from the astronomers all over the world, who now call this Supernova as 1987 A.

What is this death of a star? How do they die?

A glowing star (our sun is only a second rate star) is always balanced between two opposing forces. Its immense gravitational force wants to draw all its matter, including the light particles towards the centre. On the contrary, the intense thermonuclear energy radiating from its enormously heated core pushes all the matter outside in the form of flames and hot gases. The death-signal of the star is given when its nuclear fuel starts getting exhausted, and the fusion reactions (a process where two sub-atomic particles collide against each other, get fused into one body, and emits the extra nuclear energy which comes out of the very little mass ejected outside the fused body) begin to stop. Like a deflating balloon

whose outer pressure is decreased, the star begins to collapse. How much can it collapse? Well, in the beginning the collapse apparently stops when the star gets sufficiently compressed, so compressed that its atoms virtually touch. At this stage the atoms' negatively charged electrons repel one another, according to Pauli's exclusion principle. At this stage the collapsing star is known as white dwarf. White dwarfs can be seen in our terrestrial earth, especially in the Milky Way.

But death is a Reality which spares none. These white dwarfs struggle for survival. Many survive for quite a long time, say several billion years. Then one day comes the fatal moment. The gravity gains ascendancy and overpowers the powerful repulsive force of the electrons. The dwarf trembles in the face of an imminent extinction. If, however, at this crucial stage it can retain its mass more than 1.44 times the mass of the sun (this is the famous Chandrasekhar's limit for which the Indian scientist was awarded Nobel prize in physics in 1984), the dwarf can eventually escape a final collapse. If not, then final extinction is inevitable. Suddenly the collapse becomes incredibly rapid. Violent reactions set in. The inner core of the white dwarf gets heated up so enormously that the entire star suddenly begins to ignite in a nuclear fire. The result is a supernova, an exploding star. This is the late news that reached us from a very very distant Nebula from where light takes only 170,000 years to reach our eye.

What will happen after this explosion? Some white dwarfs go to absolute withering very soon. Others die rather slowly. It contracts in alternative stages. Sometimes in a heat of 180 million

degrees this exploding star burns and fuses helium atoms. In this penultimate stage it remains sometimes for a short span of 600,000 years. By this time all heliums have been fused into carbon and oxygen. Then in a relatively shorter period, the entire thing is fused into silicon, and then to iron. This all-iron star, now a virtually dead star, still collapses until it becomes very small in size. At this stage our earth would have the size of any metropolitan city. Still then it collapses, until by the sheer power of gravity it reaches the stage of 'maximum crunch'. The resulting shock waves then explode the entire star itself like a mammoth explosion. All that remains is a neutron star.

Sometimes instead of this last explosion the star collapses further and further. In the process of this indefinite collapse, the star reaches the stage of a *blackhole*—the enormously condensed mass whose gravity does not allow even the light particles to come out of it. Slowly even this black hole contracts. This is what modern astrophysicists call the 'event horizon', or the 'point of singularity', where even time and space have no meaning. The black hole thus becomes an incredibly small mass. How small? As small as the size of a pinhead, say the physicists. More strangely, it *may*, as some physicists suggest, wither away altogether. It is then darkness hidden within darkness. It is the stage of Pralaya, the stage of total extinction.

Is Pralaya the end? Not so. Stephen Hawking, the celebrated Cambridge astrophysicist, shows that after some billions of years this infinitesimally small dense mass, all dark, may suddenly explode, and begin new creations after a colossal explosion known as 'big bang'. From almost nothing may come something, our universe. The universe, says another physicist, is, thus, a 'free lunch'. Then creation begins, then sustenance of creation, then again Pralaya, as we read in the Hindu scriptures.

Before Edwin Hubble first discovered in 1922 that the furthest galaxies and stars are receding away from the core of the universe, the universe we see from our night sky was thought to be a static universe. Einstein had even calculated a 'cosmological constant', in order to keep this universe constant. But after Arno and Penzias discovered in 1965 the existence of a 3° Kelvin radiation (a residual heat found in all corners of our Universe after a big explosion that happened several billion years before), the theory of Big Bang was finally established. Einstein had to admit that the cosmological constant was his 'biggest blunder'.

Today astrophysicists know that the universe or all the universes run in a cycle of creation, sustenance, and dissolution.

The late news of the death of a star once again proves this ancient truth enshrined in the Vedas.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

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Language usually expresses the experience of human beings. It communicates what cannot be, otherwise, transmitted or recorded so effectively. It conveys the ideas of one person to another. The intention of the individual is communicated either directly (*abhidhā*) or indirectly (*lakṣaṇa*). When the object under reference relates to our normal experience there is hardly any problem in our understanding of the meaning of a word or any sentence. But

when it comes to religious or spiritual affairs, difficulties arise, since the subject-matter cannot be verified in the usual sense. In such cases the authenticity is derived from the source of the statement. If the statement is given by a trustworthy person it is treated to be valid, otherwise not. The scriptures come under the body of valid statements since they are supposed to be the records of divine communications received by inspired persons. The contents of these texts, when concerned with the supernatural realms, can neither be refuted nor confirmed by the ordinary logic of our mind.

The book under review is the English translation of *Pañcaprakriyā*, a short manual of

Advaita philosophy by Sarvajñātman who flourished in the first half of the tenth century. This is the first translation of the work in English, with a thematic analysis of the contents of the text. The author, a Doctor of Philosophy from McMaster University (Canada), takes great pains to provide the translation of the Sanskrit text as found in T. R. Chintamani's edition, published with the commentaries of Anandajana and Purnavidyamuni, University of Madras, 1946 (Bulletin of Sanskrit; no. 4). The original work of Sarvajñātman consists of five chapters or sections, hence the title *Pañcaprakriyā*.

The first chapter of the book discusses the standard usages of words (*sabda-vritti*) such as primary (*mukhya*), quality-oriented (*guṇa*) and secondary (*lakṣaṇa*). It is the latter two modes that are applied for the interpretation of the scriptures. The second chapter concentrates on the great sentences (*Mahā-vākyaṛtha vivaraṇa*) and discusses the secondary meaning as applied to the sentence 'I am Brahman' of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (I. iv. 10). The author includes here the doctrine of *jīvan-mukti* or freedom-while-in-life. When ignorance and its effects are destroyed and after one has lived in the world for a while, teaching one's pupil etc., there is absolute salvation (*ātyantika kaivalya*). The third section relates to the explanation of the 'That' and the 'Thou' (*tattvam-padārtha-vyākhyāna*) as found in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI. viii. 7). It also mentions about the unfoldment of the universe from the Brahman and its subsequent merger into the ultimate Reality. The fourth section examines the nature of subsidiary statements (*avāntara-vākyas*) such as Brahman is Truth etc as found in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II. i. 1). This examination helps one determine the purport of the primary statements. The final chapter deals with bondage and freedom (*bandha-moksha-vicāra*). It comprises one-third of the total length of the text and discusses Sarvajñātman's theory that Brahman is the locus of ignorance and knowledge. Further, it is Brahman who undergoes bondage and experiences release.

The work clearly relates hermeneutics with metaphysics. Sarvajñātman is convinced of the fact that the correct knowledge of the *mahāvākyas* is nothing short of direct experience like the Amalaka fruit in hand and such a person is liberated, as per the foundational passage (*Cira-Śruti*) found in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*

(VI. xiv. 2), namely, 'He who possesses a teacher knows so long will he remain'. Although Shankara also, while commenting on the *Brahma-Sūtras* (I. i. 2), admits that the comprehension of Brahman is effected by the ascertainment, consequent on discussion, of the Vedānta statements. (*vakyartha vicaranadhyavasananirvritta hi brahmavagatih nanumanadi pramanantaranicrittā*), he does not hold that mere linguistic illumination will eradicate ignorance. For him it is the eradication of ignorance about the nature of Reality that constitutes liberation. But the author of the *Pañcaprakriyā* clearly says that the proper understanding of the *mahāvākyas* is the ultimate means of release (*mahāvakyartha-jñānādeva mumukshūṇām moksho bhavati*).

Although the theory of secondary meaning is not new to Sarvajñātman, his usage of the *jahadajahallakṣaṇā* has become the stable explanation of the impartite sense of the Great Sentences by the later Advaitins. Further, although the use of the term *mahāvākya* is found in Shankara (cf. *Brahma Sutra Bhashya* I. iii. 33) it occurs only as an opponent's view (*purva-pakṣā*). When Shankara refers to these sentences he describes them as Upanishadic or Vedānta statements only. It is Sarvajñātman who introduces the notion of (*mahāvākya*) and distinguishes the Great Sentences from the Subsidiary Sentences (*avāntara-vākyas*). It may be noted in the context that Draviḍāchārya could be treated as the first Advaitin (in pre-Sankara period) to have distinguished these sentences from others. Anandagiri, in his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II. 1. 9) refers to Draviḍāchārya who used this expression and maintained that statements like 'That Thou art' have unity as their aim whereas statements pertaining to creation are subordinate to them (cf. Pandey S.L. Pre-Sankara Advaita Philosophy, p. 206).

Shankara while commenting on the *Brahma-sūtras* (IV. i. 2) holds that *tattvamasi* expresses the identity between the contents of the words 'That' and 'Thou'. He also states that this statement is neither meditative attribution (*upāsana*) nor metaphor (*upacāra*) nor a praise (*stuti*). The unitary meaning of the sentence comes from our discarding the contradictory portions of the ordinary meaning of the two words, *i.e.*, misery from 'thou' and mediacy from 'That'. Although he was aware of the two distinctions of *lakṣaṇā* (cf. his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra* III. iii. 9) as proximate

(*sannikrishta*) and detached (*viprakrishta*), he does not make use of them in arriving at the *akhaṇḍārtha* (impartite meaning) of the Great Sentences.

Suresvara, who is supposed to be the direct teacher of Sarvajñātman, is the first Advaitin who applied the usage of words to the *mahāvākyas*. He holds that the knowledge of Brahman is possible through sentences like 'That thou art'; (Cf. his celebrated work *Naishkarmayasiddhih*, I.i: *vedantagamavakyadeva samyagjñānam*). Suresvara talks of two movements in the understanding of the meaning of such sentences. First, there appears contradiction as to how the two directly different things could be identical. Next, there is the stage when the unitary meaning of the sentence is apprehended. He posits three relations between the two words (the 'That' and the 'thou') namely, (i) grammatical coordination known as *samanyadhikaranya*, (ii) of qualification and qualified, known as *visheshāna-visheshyata* and (iii) of indirect indication and indirectly indicated or *lakshya-lakshāṇa sambandha* (cf. his *Naishkarmyasiddhih*, III. 3).

The distinction between *guṇa-vritti* and *lakshana* as found in Suresvara and Sarvajñātman, is not available in Sankara, although he uses the words *mukhya-vritti* and *guṇa-vritti* (e.g. *Gita*, 6.1; *Brahma-Sutra.*, I.1.4) Suresvara and Sarvajñātman explain the secondary meaning based on similarity (*guṇa-vritti*) as that usage which occurs when the accepted primary sense is contradicted by other means of valid knowledge, and which indicates a sense different from the primary sense on account of a connection with qualities found in the primary sense. For instance, in the phrase, 'Devadatta is a lion', the use of the word 'lion' is due to the association with the qualities of a lion. In *lakshāṇā* the secondary meaning is connected with the primary meaning. For example, in the sentence 'The hamlet on the Ganges' the use of the expression 'on the Ganges' intends the banks of the river through its connection with the river, which is the primary sense of the word.

The singularity of Sarvajñātman is in his triple distinction of *lakshāṇa-vritti*, namely, (i) *jahallakshāṇā* or the non-inclusive, (ii) *ajahallakshāṇā* or the inclusive and (iii) *jahada-jahallakshāṇā* or the combination of the two. The distinction is made on the ground of retaining or not retaining the primary meaning of the words. Sarvajñātman considers the third

type of interpretation of the sentence as the correct method for revealing the true import of the *mahāvākyas*. Here a portion of the primary sense of the sentence is given up and a portion is retained. This process is, in the opinion of the translator (cf. his Introduction, p. 34), 'a logical way of liberating that portion of their primary sense which does not fall short of the true import of the *mahāvākyas*.'

For Sarvajñātman the primary meaning of the word *tat* is the transcendent Brahman. Its secondary meaning is the non-dual blissful consciousness by abandoning that portion which non-mediate. Likewise, the primary sense of the term *tvam* is inward form and secondarily it signifies inward consciousness by abandoning duality or vital breath and body. In respect of *tat* the qualified or limited portion signified by *pārokshya* is given up and the unlimited portion signified by the word *advaya* (non-dual) is retained. In respect to the term *tvam*, the limited aspect signified by the word *sadvitīya* (duality) is abandoned and the unlimited portion signified by the word *pratyak* (inward) is retained. The retained portions are signified by each word secondarily. It is the complete identity of these two secondary senses which is the result of the whole operation and the true import of the sentence *tattvamasi*. The very Brahman which has entered Viraj (gross) and Hiranyagarbha (subtle) is termed as *jīva* because it sustains the vital breath (*prāṇa*). The *jīva* is the Supreme Brahman as the witness (*pratyag*) of the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. *Pratyagrūpa* is the cementing entity for Sarvajñātman which relates Brahman to the phenomenon. He further says that the person who has achieved absolute conviction up to the point of the holding a burning axe, he knows the meaning of the *mahāvākya* and is indeed liberated.

The translation of *Pañcaprakriyā*, with exhaustive notes, comments and Introduction (and also the Sanskrit text, in the Appendix) makes this publication very significant in the study of the Advaita tradition. It is a commendable enterprise and shall be reckoned as valuable for many decades to come.

S. P. DUBEY M. A. (PHIL.) M. A. (REL.) PH. D
Reader, Dept. of Postgraduate
Studies and Research in Philosophy,
Rani Durgawati University, Jabalpur.
(Joint Secretary, Indian Philosophical Congress)

HUMAN PERSONALITY AND COSMIC-ENERGY-CYCLE: BY SWAMI MUKHYANANDA. Published by Centre for Reshaping our world View, C/o S. R. Banerjee, Post Box No. 7844, Calcutta 700 012. 1986. pp i-xvi, 56 + 50 with four charts. Price: Cloth Rs. 40/- and Board Rs. 30/-.

Indian philosophical and spiritual as also the esoteric tradition is a multifaceted one, having many hues and shades of colours, each fascinating by itself, each adding to the richness of the Indian thinking. There are many strands of thought, which according to some cannot mix into a mosaic as they are not compatible with one another. But, the author of this small volume has proved them wrong by his careful analysis of a few of them, namely the Vedanta System, the Hathayoga system and the Tantric system, and also drawing freely from the modern thinking in science and technology.

Having examined the limitations of the conclusions of the modern science regarding the nature of the world, and the idea of energy, the author, Swami Mukhyananda, has very ably presented the integrated views of these Indian systems to show as to how it would be possible for one to understand the problem of human personality, and the cosmic energy-cycle and their inter-relatedness, which can never be separated.

He has brought together under one integrated approach, such concepts as *Pancha-Kosha viveka* of the Vedanta, the *Shad-chakra* concept of the Hatha-yoga as also its *Kundalini* power concept, the *Tri-Guna* concept of Sankhya system, with its ramifications in terms of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*.

It is interesting to note how the author attempts to draw parallels between the *kosha* concepts and the *chakra* concepts in his analysis of the Cosmic-Energy-Cycle, relating and bringing together the psychological, psycho-physiological, and Physiological as also the physical aspects of human personality as transformers of energy, both step-up and step-down, as used in modern electrical engineering. It is worthwhile to point out the parallels as drawn by the author in his attempt to reconcile the divergent views:

1. Muladhara-chakra cum annamaya-kosha:
Prithivi-Tattva,
(The physical and chemical energy)

2. Svadhisthana cum Pranamaya-kosha:
Akas-Tattva.
(Vital and hydro-oxygenous energy)
3. Manipura-Chakra cum Manomaya-kosha:
Agni-Tattva.
(Mental, and Heat and light energy)
4. Anahata-Chakra cum Manomaya-kosha:
Agni Tejas Tattva.
(Mental Moral, and electrical energy)
5. Vishuddha-Chakra cum Vijnanamaya-kosha:
Vayu Tattva.
(Intellectual-rational and vibratory energy)
6. Ajna-Chakra cum Anandamaya-kosha:
Akasha-Tattva.
(Intellectual-Aesthetic and Mystic energies)
7. Sahasrara-Padma—Sattvamaya-kosha
—Maha-Prakriti Tattvas.
(Divine enlightenment and Spiritual energy).

There is an excellent correspondence among these three sets of concepts even though they are from different frames of reference. Vedanta wants his seeker to transcend the koshas, which are coverings of the True Self, the Hathayoga wants its practitioner to energise each of the chakras, from the bottom upwards, thus growing and expanding spirally and mastering the related principles of the chakras.

The author has very successfully demonstrated in the book the process of structuring of the cosmic organism in order to manifest the highest principle of existence, namely the *Para-Brahman*, and the different levels of its manifestation, which at once provide a model to explain the universe, man and God on the one hand, and the technique of utilising it for the purposes of both worldly welfare (*Abhyudaya*) and other-worldly emancipation (*Nishreyasa*).

The book under review becomes all the more valuable for the research scholars and also to the sadhakas, as it contains a few appendices giving original sources of materials drawn and also contains a few charts which would immediately bring to the understanding of the reader the import of the text.

An observation by the author namely, 'Akasha being inert and all pervasive, acts as

space; prana being active gives rise to time; and Mahat, being the source of mind acts as causation' (p 32) may perhaps provide a new direction to the scholars in understanding the vexing problems of space, time and causation. Further, it would also provide an excellent guide line for those seekers who wish to take an *inward* journey to explore the uncharted vistas of grandeur. It also would provide insights into the problems of energy, especially in the area of parapsychology, when science is trying to produce energy from space.

We endorse the pious hope of the author that this volume would provide the needed inspiration to produce in oneself the *Atmic Balm* against the destructive *Atom Bomb*, which is the greatest danger the whole world is facing at the crucial moment of its history.

The volume is recommended both for the sadhakas and for the scholars in various associated disciplines.

B. S. SATYANARAYANA
Reader in Education
Bangalore University

SRI RAMAKRISHNA: THE SPIRITUAL GLOW: BY KAMALAPADA HATI. Published by Orient Book Company, C 29-31 College Street Market, Calcutta 700 007. 1985. pp. ix + 160. Rs. 20.

A new book on Ramakrishna is bound to rouse the expectations of both the general reader and the devotee: the reader, because Ramakrishna's life is instinct with that sense of wonder the contemplation of which does not depend on precedent devotion; the devotee, because it is a welcome opportunity for deepening and intensi-

fying his dip into the Great Swan's ever-widening waters.

Mr. Hati's book is, from both the perspectives, only marginally satisfying. If the devotee finds the facts familiar and the interpretation almost predictable, for the student of the 'marvellous' the book only occasionally glints with insight into that glow which irradiates Ramakrishna's life.

But, then, the invaluable feature of the book is the information it gives about the growth and development of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta movement in the West, specially in the United States. Mr. Hati has pieced together several interesting details about the Vedanta Centres in the West—details painstakingly gathered through personal visits to these centres. As such, the chapter entitled: 'The Torch Bearers in the West' makes interesting reading. Similar is the case with the chapter on the illustrious Presidents of the Order. Entitled "The Galaxy: The Ten Shining Heads of the Ramakrishna Order", this chapter is quite informative. Finally, we have a brief resume of the contents of Akshay Kumar Sen's celebrated Bengali book *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Punthi* in the chapter entitled "The Ballads of the Glow".

In effect, as Swami Swahanandaji, Head of the Hollywood Vedanta Society has, in his appreciative "Foreword", put it, the book is "a pioneering attempt" and as such "merits the attention" of all those interested in Ramakrishna and the Ramakrishna Order.

M. SIVARAMKRISHNA PH. D.
Professor of English
Osmania University
Hyderabad (A.P)

“He who knows the Supreme attains the highest.”—Tait. Upa II.1.1

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THE IMITATION OF VYASA

Man never alone:

Thou thinkest: I am single and alone,
Perceiving not the great eternal Sage,
Who dwells within thy breast. Whatever wrong
Is done by thee, he sees and notes it all.

The Mahabharata.

Heaven, Earth, and Sea, Sun, Moon, and Wind, and Fire
Day, Night, the Twilights, and the Judge of Souls,
The God of justice and the Heart itself,
All see and note the conduct of a man.

Ibid.

What is the nature of God: A certain philosopher was once asked what the nature of God was. He wanted three days to think over the question. On the fourth day the question was repeated and the sage asked for three days more. After that time the question was again asked and the sage wanted another three days and at last said in reply, “The more I think of Him, the more indescribable He becomes.”

Love God for love's sake: The virtuous King Yudhishtira was driven from his throne by his enemies and had to take shelter in a forest in the Himalayas with his queen; and there, one day Draupadi asked him how it was that he should suffer so much misery and yet love God, and Yudhishtira answered: “Behold, my queen, the Himalayas how beautiful they are; I love them. They do not give me anything, but my nature is to love the grand, the beautiful and therefore I love them. Similarly, I love the Lord. He is the source of all beauty, of all sublimity. He is the only object to be loved; my nature is to love Him, and therefore I love. I do not pray for anything; I do not ask for anything. Let Him place me wherever He likes. I must love Him for love's sake. I cannot trade in love.”

A story of Emerson: One day as Theodore Parker and Ralph Waldo Emerson were walking, in Concord, a man, greatly excited rushed up to them saying: “The world is very near an end.” “Well my friend”, said Emerson, “suppose the world is coming to an end. I suppose I can get along without it.”

How few could say this with confidence, particularly in an age in which “the world is too much with us.”

Where is God: A certain school boy said to another, “Brother, if you tell me where God is, I shall give you a mango.” The latter replied, “I shall give you two mangoes, if you tell me where God is not.”

Transmigration: Muhammad Sharif looking at some large blocks of stone lying about near his house, exclaimed with a sigh, “All these helpless things are only waiting to assume human form.”

A Simile: There are three dolls—the first made of salt the second made of cloth and the third made of stone. If these dolls be immersed in water, the first will get dissolved and lose its form: the second will absorb a large quantity of water and retain its form: while the third will be wholly impervious to the water. The first doll represents the man who merges his self in the universal and all pervading Self and becomes one with it. The second represents a true lover of God, who is full of Divine bliss and knowledge and the third represents a worldly man who will not admit even the least trace of true knowledge.