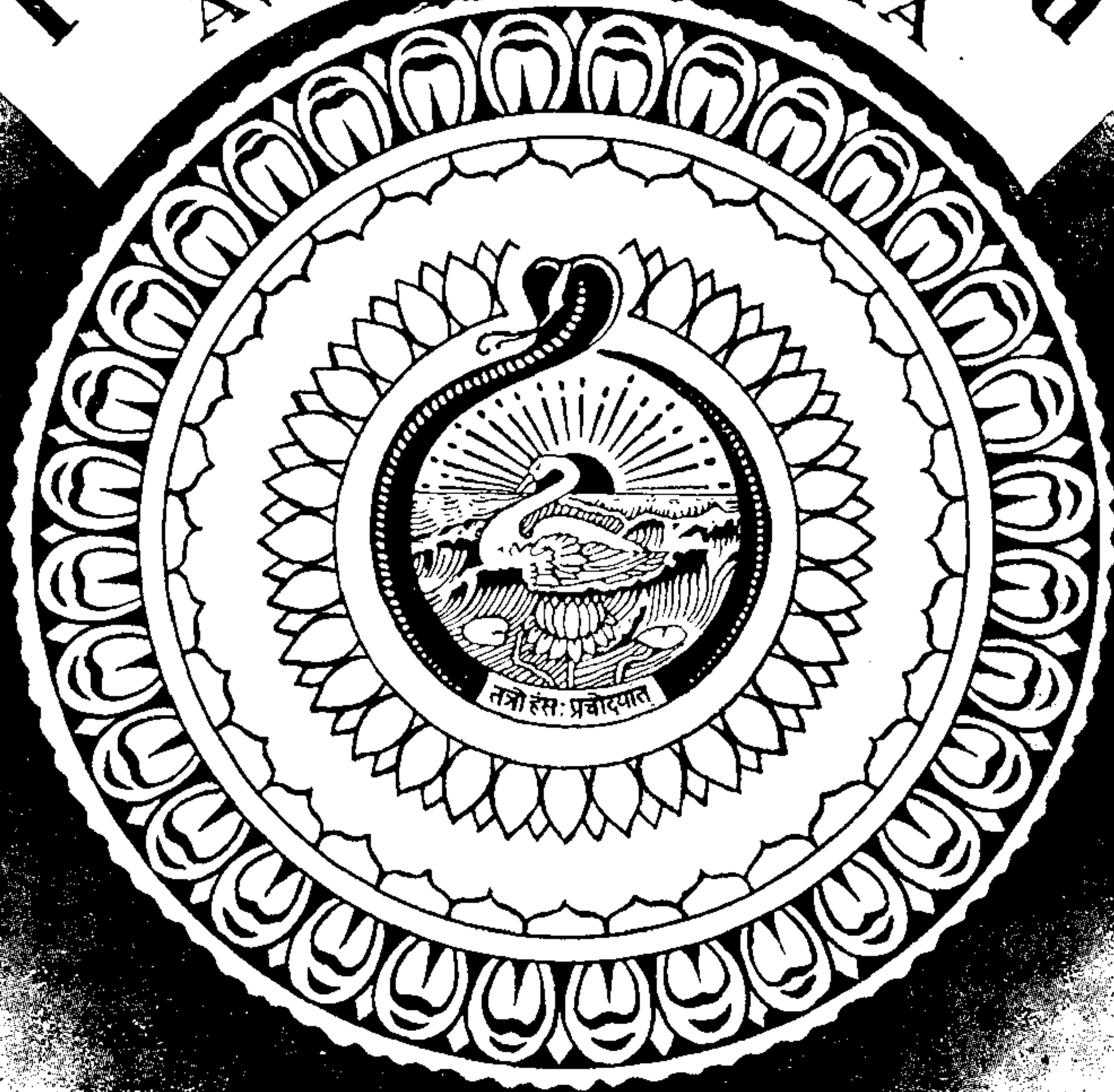


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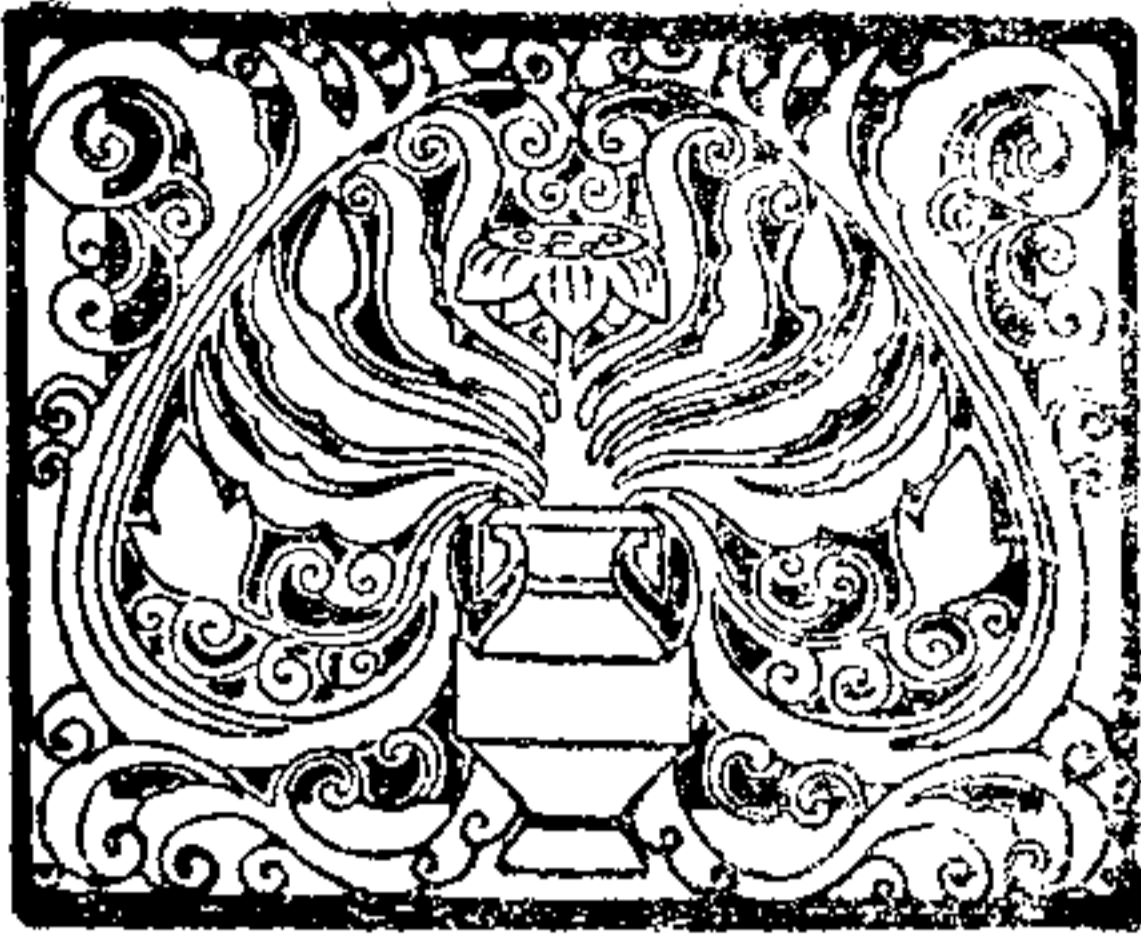
MAY 1987

Prabuddha Bharata

OR
AWAKENED INDIA



Belur Math



Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

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Prabuddha Bharata

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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'

Know that one Atman only, by whom the heaven, the earth and the sky, and the mind with all the *prāṇas* are interpenetrated. Give up all other (vain) talks. This is the bridge to Immortality.

Fools, wise in their own conceit, dwelling in the midst of ignorance, (yet) puffed up with vain knowledge, suffering again and again, wander about like the blind led by the blind.

The knots of his heart are cut, all doubts disappear and the effects of his karma are destroyed, when is realized that One who is both the transcendent and the immanent.

Verily the truthful alone succeed, not the untruthful. By truthfulness is spread the path of Devayāna by which repair the Ṛṣis, having all their desires satisfied, to that place where exists the supreme abode of the True.

This Atman is never attained by the weak, nor by the inattentive, nor even by improper austerity. The wise one who strives with all these means—his Atman enters into the world of Brahman.

Having attained It, the Ṛṣis become satisfied with the Knowledge, self-realized, tranquil and free from all desires.

Whatever world the man of purified mind wishes for in his mind, whatever desirable objects he desires, he wins all those worlds and all those desirable objects. Therefore those who want material prosperity should worship these men of Self-realization.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

(2.2.5, 1.2.5, 2.2.8, 3.1.6, 3.2.4, 3.2.5, 3.1.10)

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL seeks to establish the ancient Indian view—the reality outside is only a projection of our mind—from the standpoint of latest developments in modern physics.

ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF THE DHAMMAPADA is by Dr. Yoga Dhyan Ahuja, of the Metropolitan State College, Colorado, U.S.A. The article was originally presented as a paper at the American Academy of religion, Midwestern Regional Meeting at Chicago in 1972.

THE WAY OF THE HOLY MOTHER is a scholarly analysis on the life and teachings of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, especially her teaching on the need of abstaining from fault-finding in others. Its author Dr. M. Sivaramakrishna is a well-known writer and

scholar in English literature and a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. He is now the professor of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

Srimati Manjula M.A. (English) of the Ramakrishna Samiti, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, writes in her article SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: REFLECTIONS ON LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE on Swami Vivekananda's views on literature and language in a very scholarly and penetrating way.

Swami Tathagatananda, head of the Vedanta Centre, New York, dwells in the short article BARANAGORE MATH AND ITS IDEALISM on the historic importance of the earliest brotherhood of the mendicant Ramakrishnites which began exactly a century ago in 1886 in the dilapidated, ghost-ridden house at Baranagore, Calcutta.

WE MAKE OUR OWN WORLD

(EDITORIAL)

Diogenes of Sinope, the Greek ascetic, lived on one single idea that the world is a dream. Plato called him 'Socrates gone mad'.¹ In the bright Sunlight of noon the dreamer would move with a lantern in order to find an honest man in a 'conventional' society. Story goes that during moments of extreme physical pain someone asked him, 'Diogenes, do you still call the world a dream?' With a biting repartee he was reported to have replied, 'Yes, it is a painful dream.' Poets, philosophers and saints in various civilizations and cultures have sometimes experienced this truth. Shakespeare's

celebrated lines at the end of *Tempest*, may be remembered, 'We are such staff/As dreams are made on and our little life/Is rounded with a sleep.' The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* tells us that both the waking state and dream state of our life are ultimately illusory. These two states are mere creations of two levels of our ordinary consciousness. The highest level of our consciousness is the stage of *turiya*, when we cease to see the world of matter. We feel only one consciousness everywhere. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell a story. A farmer went to sleep and then began to dream. In dream he became a king and a father of seven beautiful princes. In the same dream all these sons died one after

1. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1967) p. 409.

the another. With a pain in his heart he finally woke up from this dream, only to find that his only son in real life was just dead. Puzzled, he sat motionless and still. When his wife remonstrated with him that he had no tears for this terrible loss, the farmer replied that he could not decide whom to mourn for, the seven princes of the dream or the one son of real life? Ramakrishna tells us that the farmer was a man of knowledge. He understood well that the waking state is ultimately as unreal as the dream.

The new world view of quantum physics

The so-called men of science obviously refused to accept such strange philosophical ideas. From 17th century onwards the philosophy of Descartes, Newton and others had developed in the West the new scientific rationalism which accepted the world of matter as the final and an independently existing reality. Dr. Johnson, the father of the Age of Reason in England once kicked out a large stone in order to refute Berkley's idea that the world is composed not of matter but of ideas only. Ernst Mach, the teacher of Einstein, told the young disciple 'Science may be regarded as a minimal problem consisting of the completest presentation of facts with the least possible expenditure of thought.'² Arthur Eddington was one of those eminent physicists who welcomed the changing world view of modern physics. He wrote that Dr. Johnson 'ought to be aware that what Rutherford (the celebrated English physicist) has left us of the large stone is worth kicking.'³ Today after the revolutionary discoveries by Einstein,

2. Quoted in Edward O. Wilson, *On Human Nature* (Harvard University Press, 1978) p. 12.

3. Ken Wilber, *Spectrum of Consciousness* (Wheaton, Illinois: Third Quest Book Printing, Theosophical Publishing House, 1982) p. 38.

Bohr, Heisenberg, Schrodinger and others, the quest for the ultimate material staff of the universe has turned into a wild goose chase. As one physicist puts it:

Our conception of substance is only vivid so long as we do not face it. It begins to fade when we analyze it... the solid substance of things is another illusion... We have chased the solid substance from the continuous liquid to the atom, from the atom to the electron, and there we have lost it.⁴

Einstein, in fact, is the beginner of this new outlook in science. He established the relativity of all our knowledge. All things are in space. They have got three dimensions, length, breadth and height. Einstein added the new dimension of Time. Both time and space, according to Einstein, is fused into one continuum. And whatever is in space-time gives us only a 'relative' knowledge of the thing. Absolute knowledge is beyond all relative perceptions. And this relativity of all knowledge is based on the variations between observations. Bronowski writes: 'Relativity derives essentially from the philosophical analysis which insists that there is not a fact and an observer, but a joining of the two in an observation... that event and observer are not separable.'⁵

These new ideas surfaced more powerfully with Quantum physics. Quantum physics is that branch of physics which deals with sub-atomic particles like electrons and protons. Since these particles are emitted discontinuously in discrete packages (quantum) of energy, they are known as Quantum Particles. Heisenberg, in fact, was the beginner of this new trend of thought in Quantum physics. In the year 1927 Heisenberg discovered his Uncertainty Principle. According to this Uncertainty

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 39.

Principle, a sub-atomic particle has no distinctive, objective reality. It is, as Talbot put it, 'Omnijective'—an inseparable combination of the subject of the scientist and the object observed. The dualism between mind and matter, the partition between the scientist and the object of experiment was demolished for ever after this discovery of Heisenberg. He declared that 'the common division of the world into subject and object, inner world and outer world, body and soul is no longer adequate and leads us into difficulties.'⁶

But now a more important question came to forefront. If reality is 'omnijective', which of the two components, subject and object, is primary? Does the object bring awareness in the subject or does the subjective consciousness lend reality to the external world? The doubting Thomas had the vision of a resurrected Christ. The question is, 'Did the resurrected Christ physically appear before him, or did Thomas' own consciousness see a resurrected Christ?' Austrian Nobel physicist Erwin Schrodinger's wave equation has answered this question once for all and has virtually pushed the world of science to accept the idea that Swami Vivekananda had given to the world nearly a century before, 'We make our own world.'

Schrodinger's wave equation

How did the new physicists suddenly stumble on this truth? Until 1914 light was known to move only as waves. In 1914 Einstein proved that light moves also as a particle. He called this light particle 'photon'. Electron which moves round the nucleus was already known as a particle. Suddenly another nobel-physicist Louis de Broglie, in a surprisingly new way, proved that electrons also behave as waves. Erwin

Schrodinger worked on this wave nature of electron and discovered the celebrated Schrodinger's Wave Equation. This equation brought the correlation between electron as wave and electron as particle.

But the greatest surprise was in store. Schrodinger's wave equation, most unexpectedly, led to something strange that pushed the real world of the scientists to the verge of a dream. It is now a fascinating story, no less stranger than *Alice in Wonderland*.

In his book *Mysticism and New Physics*, Michael Talbot writes of this new findings which emerged out of Schrodinger's wave equation.

In certain circumstances Schrodinger's wave function predicted the behaviour of a given particle upto a point and then described two equally probably outcomes of the same particle. On paper as well as in observation *no reason* could be found for the particle's varying behaviour. The equation therefore seemed to have entered a schizophrenic state in which it could not decide which outcome to choose.⁷

Schrodinger's wave equation emerged as Ramakrishna's farmer who could not decide which sons to mourn for. But the strange behaviour of Schrodinger's particle did not stop there. Talbot explains this strange phenomenon:

Under certain circumstances the wave function will predict an infinite number of schizophrenia in which case its path (or Vector) in configuration space branches into four possible outcomes, eight possible outcomes, sixteen possible outcomes, ad infinitum.⁸

We have, by now, entered into a magic world of modern physics. In 1927, the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum physics advocated by Niels Bohr others, established that some type of detection by

6. Ibid.

7. Michael Talbot, *Mysticism and New Physics* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980) p. 28.

8. Ibid., p. 31.

an observing system is required in order to allow the particle emerge into a physical reality. Otherwise the 'observed system' or the objective reality does not physically exist. But Schrodinger's wave equation suggests 'an endlessly proliferating number of possibilities for the observed system whether it is observed or not'. The strange nature of the Schrodinger's wave equation has been found true in many experiments. One of them is the strange phenomenon in physics, known as diagonally polarized light.⁹ An experiment on this phenomenon again shows how Schrodinger's wave functions lead to the 'weird' conclusion that the external world is created by our mind. Light, as we have seen, moves both as waves and particles. Let us accept that in this experiment on the diagonally polarized light, light is moving only as waves. It may be remembered that light waves can move both horizontally and vertically.

Polarizers are a special kind of light filter. If a polarizer is kept vertically aligned in front of a light source, only vertical light waves can pass through it. Similarly horizontal light waves can pass through the polarizer only when we keep the polarizer horizontally inclined. Light with vertical waves gets arrested when there stands a horizontal polarizer in front of it. Similarly light with horizontal waves gets arrested where there is vertical polarizer in front of it. Now let us send a beam of light with horizontal waves through a horizontal polarizer. What happens? The light clearly passes through it. Next let us keep another polarizer in front of this horizontally inclined polarizer. This time the polarizer is vertically inclined. What happens? The light with horizontal wave

which passed through the horizontal polarizer, now gets arrested by the presence of the second vertical polarizer which stands now as a barrier to passage of this light.

Now let us take a third step. And this is the strangest step we are going to take! Let us now keep a third diagonal polarizer in between the vertical and the horizontal polarizer. And here comes the strange experience!! Light now passes through all these polarizers unhindered. A horizontally polarized light is essentially different from the diagonally polarized light or the vertically polarized light. How could the horizontal light now pass through the second and third barriers, when it failed earlier to pass through the second barrier? We may also put the question more simply. How could the horizontal light suddenly change itself into a diagonally polarized light and immediately after that again into a vertically polarized light? How can the same actor act as Othello and Iago in the same scene on the same stage? Yes, it is possible. Schrodinger's wave function already proved how the same wave can branch into different realities at the same time. Ramakrishna's farmer was simultaneously aware of the two experiences, one of the dream and the other of the waking state.

Schrodinger's wave equation, according to many physicists today, suggests something completely new. It represents a world of 'multi-dimensional reality'. Different particles, in Schrodinger's wave equation, acquire absolutely different dimensions. It is very difficult to conceive of such a situation. But at least mathematically this is what stands before us. Gary Zukav explains this phenomenon in his celebrated book, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*.

If the wave function represents possibilities associated with two different particles, then that

9. Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters (An Overview of the New Physics)* (Flamingo edition) (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1984) pp. 279-284. ,

wave function exists in six dimensions, three for each particle. If the wave function represents the possibilities associated with twelve particles, then that wave function exists in thirty-six dimensions!¹⁰

It is impossible to visualize such a situation. Our experience of matter is limited to three dimensions. How is it possible for us to conceive of a particle which could be felt in many dimensions? None the less this is the mathematics of the situation. 'In short, the fact is that when we try to observe any subatomic particle or event, we reduce a multi-dimensional reality (and make it) compatible with our experience,' says Zukav.¹¹

'Most physicists' writes Zukav, 'dismiss the wave functions of Schrodinger as purely mathematical constructions', as 'street fictions which represent nothing in the world of reality'. Unfortunately, this explanation leaves forever unanswered the question, 'How then, can the functions predict so accurately probabilities which can be verified through actual experience?' Gary Zukav brings out this philosophical aspect of this experiment on Polarizers in a very forceful and convincing words, 'Whenever we insert a diagonal polarizer between a horizontal polarizer and a vertical polarizer we see light where there was none before. Our eyes are ignorant of the fact that what they are seeing is "impossible". That is because experience does not follow the rules of classical logic. It follows the rules of Quantum logic.'¹² Zukav wonders, 'In fact how can functions predict *anything* when they are unrelated to physical reality?'¹³ Yet, it is all true. Quantum physics helps us understand how

Hamlet saw the ghost of his father, while his mother or uncle failed to see it.

Schrodinger's cat

This strange multi-dimensional nature of all subatomic phenomena (or particles) was explained by Schrodinger himself by means of the celebrated thought experiment known as *Schrodinger's cat*. Schrodinger suggested that we imagine a cat sealed in a box along with a special mechanical device. This device consists of a weak radioactive source and a detector of radioactive particles. The detector is connected with a bulb of poisoned gas. And the arrangement is such that if the particles emitted from the weak radioactive source is detected (by the detector), then the bulb will burst, the gas will come out and the cat will die. If the particle is not emitted (and therefore not detected) the bulb will not burst, the gas will not come out, and the cat will be alive. The detector is turned on only once for one minute; let us suppose that the probability that the radioactive source will emit a detectable particle during this minute is one out of two= $\frac{1}{2}$. Quantum theory does not predict the exact detection of this radioactive event; it only gives the probability as $\frac{1}{2}$. Now let us send this well-sealed box with the cat far out in the space on an earth satellite. And the mechanical device inside the sealed box is now set to action, while the box is in space.

Next comes the big question. What has happened to the cat after the mechanical device starts operating? Has the particle been emitted from the weak radioactive source? In that case the cat is dead. If the particle is not emitted (the probability is 50:50) then the cat is alive. But what has really happened to the cat now? The answer, according to physics today, is threefold.

10. Ibid., p. 99.

11. Ibid., p. 100.

12. Ibid., p. 284.

13. Ibid., p. 274.

(A) According to classical physics, the cat is either dead or it is not dead. All that we have to do is to open the box and see which is the case.

(B) According to Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, the situation is not so simple. According to this interpretation reality springs into being only when we observe it. Otherwise it exists in what modern physics calls 'a superposition state' or a world of uncertainty. The microscopic world does not emerge as an objective reality until we observe it.

Schrodinger's wave function contains the possibility that the cat is dead and also the possibility that the cat is alive. When we look into the box, and not before, one of these possibilities actualizes and the other possibility collapses. This is popularly known as the 'Copenhagen collapse' of the wave function. It is therefore absolutely necessary to look into the box before we see that any of the possibilities has occurred. Until the observation is made, there is only a wave function, and the question whether the cat is dead or alive has no meaning. In other words, unless a man is awake from deep sleep what is happening around his bed has no meaning for him. Ramakrishna's farmer, while in deep sleep, was absolutely unaware of the death of his only son of real life.

Einstein and De Broglie did not like this Copenhagen interpretation. They contented that a rigid, deterministic world was more acceptable than a world of uncertainty. Einstein intensely believed that some 'hidden variable' must be responsible for the unpredictable and uncertain behaviour of quantum particles. But until today no such 'hidden variable' has been found. Nobel prize winning physicist Eugene Wigner in 1961 propounded a second solution. To put it in the words of Michael Talbot, 'If Schrodinger's equation does represent a reality, perhaps the

consciousness itself is the hidden variable that decides which outcome of an event actually occurs.'¹⁴ Wigner points out that 'the paradox of Schrodinger's cat occurs only after the entry of the measurement signal into the human consciousness'. He asserted that 'it is impossible to give description of Quantum mechanical principle without explicit reference to consciousness'.¹⁵

(C) Following this line of thinking in 1957 physicists Hugh Everette, John A. Wheeler and Niel Graham examined the issues. They subsequently created the third interpretation known as the Everette-Wheeler interpretation of quantum mechanics, which requires no changes in the basic mathematics of the Schrodinger's equation. This interpretation accepts that none of the branches of the Schrodinger's equation collapses. In fact this interpretation, as Talbot puts it, 'denies the existence of a physical reality'.¹⁶

The theory proposed by Hugh Everette and John Wheeler, solves this problem in the simplest and the most philosophical way. It claims that the wave function is a real thing. All of the possibilities that it represents are real, and they all happen. The orthodox interpretation of quantum mechanics is that only one of the possibilities contained in the wave function of an observed system actualizes, and the rest vanish. The Everette-Wheeler theory says that they all actualize, but in different worlds that coexist with one another.

According to the Everette-Wheeler theory, at the moment the wave function 'collapses', the universe splits into two worlds. When the dream broke, Ramakrishna's farmer's mind, at least for some time, was at once split into two worlds,

14. *Mysticism and New Physics*, op. cit., p. 33.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

the dream life and the waking life—both full of painful memory. Gary Zukav writes:

In other words, according to the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics, the development of the Schrodinger wave equation generates an endlessly proliferating number of possibilities. According to the Everette-Wheeler-Graham theory the development of the Schrodinger's wave equation generates an endlessly proliferating number of different branches of reality!¹⁷

This theory is called, appropriately, the Many Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics.

Many Worlds Interpretation and Vedanta

The Many-Worlds interpretation of Quantum Theory reminds us at once of the well-known idea of the snake-rope illusion according to Vedanta philosophy. When a man in a dimly moonlit night mistakes a rope for a snake, he really sees a snake. His nerves react with fear. He feels imminent danger. Probably his heart beat goes faster. A feeling of insecurity and fear instantly creeps into his mind. He at once rushes aside for a stick. But soon when somebody lights a lamp and he sees not the snake, but the rope, he feels instant relief. He even laughs at his own illusion and thanks God for his own mistake.

Now so long he saw 'snake' he was never aware of the presence of the rope. And when he became aware of the rope, the snake disappeared. Two persons who look at the snake-rope may react differently. One who already knows from past experiences that this is a rope, remains unperturbed. The other gets stricken with fear. A still better example, we find illustrated in the lives of saints. The same person who is looked down upon by the society as a fallen, or a sinner, is loved by the saints as the very image of God in flesh and blood. On the other hand,

saints are appreciated according to the mental level of the observers. Sri Ramakrishna was known as 'mad-priest' to some persons, as 'epileptic' to others, as sincere sadhaka to some few, and as the latest incarnation of God on earth to the fewest. And yet it was the same Sri Ramakrishna. According to the mental elevation or *the altered states of consciousness* (as modern psychology puts it) of the observers, Sri Ramakrishna, the observed, appeared differently to different observers during the same period of observation. And each observer was holding fast to his own view of Sri Ramakrishna. Each one was either indifferent to or unconscious of the other person's views. According to the Everette-Wheeler interpretation Ramakrishna's image proliferated into many branches of reality. Each one of these interpretations or each of 'these branches of reality' is true to the particular observer. This is how Schrodinger's wave function decomposes the one reality into many versions of the same reality.

Vivekananda sums up this Vedantic idea behind all our observations. 'This external world is only the world of suggestion. All that we see, we project out of our own minds... The wicked man sees this world as a perfect hell, the good as a perfect heaven and the perfect man sees nothing but God.' Vedanta philosophy believes that it is our own consciousness which creates the world outside. *Dr̥g-Dr̥ṣya-Viveka* writes: *dr̥ṣyāḥ dhi bṛttayāḥ sākṣi dr̥g eva na tu dr̥ṣyate*. 'All the scenes before us are projections of our intellect (activated by the presence of our consciousness). The only seer is the Self (the pure Consciousness) inside us. This Self cannot be seen because it is Itself the seer.'¹⁸

Modern physics and especially Schrodinger

17. *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, op. cit., p. 106.

18. *Dr̥g Dr̥ṣya Viveka*, verse no. 1.

wave equation is only a confirmation of this age-old truth—One Consciousness creates many realities. 'Consciousness is numerically one', said Schrodinger. Max Plank, the father of modern physics, gave paramount importance to consciousness. Mr. I.W.N. Sullivan from the *Observer*, asked him in an interview (published in January 25, 1931, in the *Observer*) 'Do you think that consciousness can be explained in terms of matter and its law?' Max Plank answered that he did not. 'Consciousness', Max Plank continued, 'I regard as fundamental. I regard matter as derived from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing postulates consciousness.'¹⁹ 'Quantum Physics' as Ken Wilber puts it, 'had taken another dualism, that of mental vs material, to the annihilating edge and there it had vanished.'²⁰

Modern science which began with a strict division of mind and matter, today faces serious difficulties when the new findings of quantum physics have demolished the barrier between the two. Schrodinger wrote his celebrated book *Mind and Matter* in order to establish the new outlook which is an outlook of non-dualism, the Advaita. 'These shortcomings can hardly be avoided except by abandoning dualism', wrote Schrodinger. Wolfgang Pauli, the Nobel-physicist famous for his exclusion principle, writes in words which are, in fact, interchangeable with the just quoted words of *Dr̥g-Dr̥ṣya-Viveka*: 'From an inner centre the psyche seems to move outward in the sense of an extraversion, into the physical world.'²¹

19. C.E.M. Joad, *The Philosophical Aspects of Modern Science* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1932) p. 12.

20. *Spectrum of Consciousness*, op. cit., p. 38.

21. Quoted in *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, op. cit., p. 56.

Swami Vivekananda, the greatest exponent of Advaita Vedanta in modern times interprets this idea in his own way:

The internal universe, the real, is infinitely greater than the external, which is only a shadowy projection of the true one. This world is neither true nor untrue, it is the shadow of truth. 'Imagination is the gilded shadow of truth', says the poet.²²

Matter is only externalised thought.²³

On the subject, the object has been superimposed; the subject is the only reality, the other a mere appearance. The opposite view is untenable. Matter and the external world are but the soul in a certain state; in reality there is only one.²⁴

We have seen that it is the subjective world that rules the objective. Change the subject, and the object is bound to change; purify yourself, and the world is bound to be purified.²⁵

That which we have inside, we see outside. The boy has no thief inside and sees no thief outside. So with all knowledge.²⁶

Transcendence: mind's evolutionary advance

Why is it that the new outlook of 'observer-created Reality' is not accepted by most scientists? The simple answer is that most of them are unaware of the new philosophical implications brought about by quantum physics. C. J. Herrick wrote in 1949, nearly eight years before the Everette-Wheeler theory was propounded, 'The generally accepted idea of what natural science is and what it is for, are out of date and need radical revision.'²⁷

Nearly forty years passed since Herrick spoke of the need of this radical revision.

22. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1979) vol. 2, p. 11. (Hereafter referred to as *Complete Works*)

23. *Complete Works* (1979) vol. 7, p. 17.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

25. *Complete Works* (1977) vol. 1, p. 426.

26. *Complete Works* (1976) vol. 2, p. 87.

27. *The Nature of Human Consciousness*, Edited by Robert E. Ornstein, (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1973) p. 13.

Today the Vedantic ideas are being increasingly accepted by both scientists and psychologists. In a series of articles published in the *Journal of Philosophy*, John Dewey, and A. F. Bentley, gave a new epistemology for modern science. They called it 'transactional approach', which meant that the

observations of this general type sees man-in-action not as something radically set over against an environing world, nor yet as merely action 'in' a world, but as action *of* and *by* the world in which the man belongs as an integral constituent.

Abraham Maslow, Stanislov Grof and others speak of this new psychology of holistic vision as 'transpersonal psychology'. The introduction of the new psychology will be the beginning of a 'higher understanding,' as nobel-physicist Eugene Wigner thinks. 'At any rate it should be the next decisive breakthrough toward a more integrated understanding of the world...', he says.²⁸

Vedanta knew of this 'integrated understanding of life' ages ago. According to Vedanta the observer creates realities both in the dream and the waking state. How does the consciousness create things in dream? Says the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad* (4.3.10): 'In that (dream) state there are neither chariots, nor animals to be hitched to them, nor roads, yet It (the Self) creates the chariots, animals and roads'. How does the individual *see* things in dream, although he sleeps with eyes closed inside a dark room? Says the same Upaniṣad (4.3.11): 'The effulgent entity (the Self) that travels alone makes the body inert through the dream and itself awake and taking a luminous bit of the organs it witnesses things that are dormant'. According to Vedanta the waking state is no more real

than the dream state. The above Upaniṣad says again (4.3.14): 'Others say that the waking itself is its (of the Self) the dream state, for one sees in dream only those objects that he sees in the waking state'. It is Knower, the Self, the Pure Consciousness which is the witness of all these fleeting phenomena both in the dream and the waking state.

'How to know the Knower?' ask Upaniṣads. Unless we know the knower we cannot also know that the known is only the projection of the Knower. This Knower is our Pure Consciousness, which is the only seer, the one all-pervading Existence, the one all-inclusive Knowledge. This Pure Consciousness projects the entire universe just as a spider projects its web. The external and a separate universe is, therefore, only a superimposition, due to our desires and will, on the Pure Consciousness which knows everything as One. Why cannot we think like this? At the lower levels of our consciousness, our mind brings the idea of duality—I am the 'observer' and *that* is the thing 'observed'. Says the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad* (1.5.9): 'Whatever is to be known is a form of the mind; because the mind is what is to be known'. As our mind gets purified of all dualistic desires and wills, the lower mind ceases to exist. It is then slowly transformed into the higher mind and feels the basic oneness of all existence. Sri Ramakrishna says that after the realization of the superconsciousness, the 'I of ignorance' is changed into the 'I of knowledge'. Then the seer sees everything as one. While western psychology speaks of only two layers of consciousness, the Vedanta speaks of a still superior level of consciousness known as the 'superconscious'. It is at this superconscious level that we see a holistic universe, and realize the Self as the *eternal* witness of the *temporal* and the external world.

28. *Handbook of Parapsychology*, Edited by Benjamin B. Wolman, (New York: Nostrand Reinolt Co. 1977) p. 741.

In 1977, in a seminar on *Mind: Approaches to its Understanding*, the celebrated Indian scientist Dr. E. C. G. Sudarshan dealt on the higher levels of our mind. He says, 'In contrast to a standard computer through which information flows passively, the mind is far from equilibrium. New order of the laws of nature suggest themselves to the mind. The mind gains knowledge and insight'. Dr. Sudarshan speaks, in the Vedantic tradition, of *mano-nasa* (the dissolution of the lower mind), 'transcendence' or 'the quiet state of alertness'. He quotes the Gita in order to illustrate this holistic or 'transcendent' awareness. 'O Arjuna, I am the essence of all entities and reside in every entity, at their beginning, middle and end.' Dr. Sudarshan's comments on these lines are worth quoting again: 'The vision of the cosmos as God, and the individual mind as an aspect of it, is the viswarupa vouchsafed to Arjuna and to Yasoda. In this cosmic awareness all conflicts cease and supreme peace reigns.' Says the Bṛhadaranyaka Upanisad (4.3.30): 'That the knower does not (apparently) know in that state is because, although (really) knowing in that state it does not know, for there cannot be any absence of knowing on the part of the Knower, since the latter is imperishable, but there is no second entity differentiated from it, which it can know.'²⁹

²⁹. *Mind: Approaches to its Understanding*, published by the Director, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bangalore (India). (1977). pp. 74,56,76,76,75,69.

The final message

What is the lesson we get from Schrodinger's wave equation? It is the same message of Vedanta—the message of self-transformation. Let us purify and elevate ourselves through holy thoughts, holy company, sublime ideals, prayers, meditation, worship of saints, compassion for others and service without attachment. Then the world appears as full of divinity. At the altered level of higher consciousness, the doubting Thomas saw the vision not of a ghost, but of a resurrected Christ. Vivekananda explains 'When we have given up desires, then alone shall we be able to read and enjoy this universe of God. Then everything will become deified. Nooks and corners, by-ways and shady places, which we thought dark and unholy, will be all deified...' *Dṛg Dṛṣya Viveka* writes: 'When a man has been freed from the body consciousness (i.e., when he no more identifies himself as the tiny body-mind complex) and when he has known the paramatman (the Self, the eternal witness within) wherever he sees, he sees only the presence of One Reality everywhere.' Vivekananda gives us the final message in our quest for Truth through Schrodinger's wave equation:

This is the line of thought. All will be metamorphosed as soon as you begin to see things in that light. If you put God in your every movement, in your conversation, in your form, in every thing, the whole scene changes, and the world instead of appearing as one of woe and misery will become a heaven.³⁰

³⁰. *Complete Works* (1976) vol. 2, pp. 148-49.

ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF THE DHAMMAPADA

DR. YOGA DHYAN AHUJA

The Dhammapada... 'The whole work combines literary beauty, depth of thought and human feeling in a rare degree. Not only is it irradiated with the calm light of peace, faith and happiness but it glows with sympathy, with the desire to do good and help those who are struggling in the mire of passion and delusion.'¹

The Dhammapada, which forms a part of the Sutta Pitaka, the second of the three 'Baskets' of the Pali Canon, consists of 423 verses classified into twenty-six chapters. The contents of this prominent Buddhist scripture are believed to be the utterances of Gautama Buddha or his disciples. However, many of these have been actually culled from different other Buddhist texts, for example, the Thera Gāthā and the Therī Gāthā as well as from some pre-Buddhist religious works such as the *Mahābhārata* and the *Manu Smṛti*.

This small book forms one of the most popular religious texts of Asia. Dr. T.W. Rhys Davids, one of the pioneer western scholars of Buddhism, gave thought to the marked similarity of the early Christian hymns with the chants gathered and grouped in the Dhammapada. Speaking of the very strong appeal of some of the verses of the Dhammapada to the 'western sense of religious beauty', he adds that if the hymns sung by the early Christians could ever be regained and the contents sorted out and placed under different headings such as Faith, Love, Hope, The Converted Man, The Saviours, The Angels and so on (just as had been done in the case of the Dhammapada) 'we should have a Christian

Dhammapada; and very precious such a collection would be.'²

Ethics is central in the Buddhist tenets. The Middle Path of the Buddha which avoids both the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification stresses the paramount importance of the right conduct of life. Buddhism has a psychological bias. The whole approach of the Buddha in his ethical teaching is humanistic and existential and is aimed at bringing about a right awareness of the misery of existence and thereby awaken man to the need of enlightenment and salvation.

The Dhammapada is a short compendium of the Buddhist teachings. Some outlines of the religious concern, the social significance and no less importantly, the place of the individual self-discipline in the teachings of this work made a rewarding and purposeful study.

Religious emphasis

Among the paths, the eight-fold path is the best.
Among the truths, the four-fold is the best.
Among the Dhammas—virtues—detachment is the best.

Among the bipeds, one with sight is the best.

(Dhammapada: 273)

The Four Aryan or noble truths are (i) suffering (ii) the arising of suffering (iii) the cessation of suffering and (iv) the noble eight-fold path for the cessation of suffering.³ The noble path, mentioned though not detailed in the Dhammapada, consists of the following eight 'limbs' and

1. Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism: An Historical Sketch* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.) Vol. 1, p. 296.

2. T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism: Its History and Literature* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896) p. 68.

3. *The Dhammapada*, verse 191.

is again divided into three groups of Prajna or wisdom, Shīla or ethics and Samādhi or concentration:

WISDOM:	i. Right Views
	ii. Right Resolve
ETHICS:	iii. Right Speech
	iv. Right Conduct
	v. Right Livelihood
SAMADHI:	vi. Right Endeavour
	vii. Right Mindfulness
	viii. Right Concentration (Samadhi)

A Buddhist vows to take refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma—the Buddhist Doctrine, and the Sangha—the Buddhist Order.⁴ The Dhammapada all through, contains many high praises of the Doctrine. It asserts that he who loves the Dhamma lives a happy life. The Dhamma leads to calmness. The gift of the Dhamma surpasses all gifts. Homage is paid to the Buddhas, that is, the enlightened ones, and those who follow their instructions. The virtues of obeying the Doctrine are greatly extolled. There is a positive emphasis on the teachings having been realized through understanding and experience on the part of the teacher, that is, the Buddha. 'Glory comes to one' the Dhammapada asserts, 'who is earnest, mindful, virtuous in his actions and thoughtful in his deeds, is restrained and, who lives according to the Dhamma and is discerning.'⁵

Acquiring of Prajna or wisdom is commended. One should awaken oneself before it is too late to be wise. A single day's life of the wise is better than a hundred years' living of the unwise.

Tanha or craving is the root of sorrow, grief and fear. Tanha is hard to uproot. It is full of poison. It grows like a creeper. It spells destruction. End of craving is

the end of suffering. There is no fire like passion; no spectre like malice; no snare like folly and no torrent like Tanha—craving.'

Sages have a place of esteem in the Dhammapada. The Bhikkhu and the Arhat, the Pandit and the Brahmana have been amply and repeatedly admired and their virtues have been adequately defined. A Bhikkhu (or Bhiksu)—the Buddhist mendicant—is urged to develop such qualities as calmness, restraint, chastity, and harmlessness towards all living beings. He should shun all vices such as envy, passion, and hatred. He should free himself from Tanha or craving and practise complete restraint of senses. He should get rid of ignorance. He should take to solitude. He should be free from attachment, and the destructive taints, and rise above the concepts of 'good and evil'. The attributes of a Thera or the Elder in Buddhism include truthfulness, adherence to the Doctrine, harmlessness, restraint and freedom from impurity. In the same way an Arhat is one who develops the merits of sense control, freedom from sorrow and lives a homeless life.

Similarly a Brahmana stems craving. He purges himself of impurities, anger, pride, lust and attachment. He disregards pleasures of life, and is dutiful, virtuous, pure, homeless and heroic. He has reduced his wants and does not take that which is not given to him. He claims nothing as his own and is above vice and virtue, pleasure and pain. And, above all, a Brahmana is not by birth or by appearance but by purity, truth and righteousness.

Likewise the moral excellence of a wise and learned person or a Pandit is in freedom from sloth and sorrow. Such a person is above vice, is calm, forgiving, free from hatred and is fearless. He guards his tongue and remains unmoved by blame or praise. He knows that he

4. Ibid., verse 190.

5. Ibid., verse 24.

does not know. The cardinal quality of a learned person is self-discipline:

Canal-men bend waters
Fletchers bend arrows
Carpenters bend wood
The learned discipline themselves.⁶

Social norms

Disease, old age and death: these are flames and fires. To Goutama Buddha the whole world appeared ablaze—being consumed by this great conflagration. When the house is on fire, there are two ways open: extinguish it or escape. And, the victim deserves help and sympathy. There is no room for fun in a burning house. The Buddha took human predicament very seriously. Consequently, a spirit of solemnity appears to shadow his teachings and preachings.

Shila or ethical merit ranks high in Buddhist doctrine.

Good deeds are extolled. 'Just as there are pretty and colourful flowers but devoid of fragrance so are the words of one who is sweet of speech but lacking in action.'⁷ Bad deeds are easy to perform and good deeds, difficult. Exercise of unusual discrimination is stressed in one's performance of deeds. 'Those who are ashamed where not to be ashamed, because of wrong beliefs, meet evil fate.'⁸

Buddhism, a religion of immense compassion, advocates great reverence for life. Ahimsa, non-injury, is exceedingly admired. No one who harms others can be an Arya or noble. Life is dear to all. Every one of the living beings is like the other living beings. So let one neither kill nor induce killing. All living beings long for happiness. If a person seeking his

own happiness kills another living being, he does not find happiness after his death.

A virtuous man is always happy, here and hereafter. Perhaps the whole multitude of virtues has been enumerated at one place or the other in the contents of the Dhammapada. A life free from sloth is lauded. Sloth is sorrow. Dutiful and active living is commended.

Attachment with the world and the worldly pleasures is denounced. Even the love of family is strongly disapproved. 'Fetters made of iron, wood and hemp are not as strong as those forged by the attachment of wealth and family.'⁹ Worldly love brings grief and fear. Man should cut off all entanglement with woman.

It is important to keep the senses under restraint. And to avoid arrogance, miserliness, falsehood, sin, evil, adultery and even yearnings for that which appears to be delightful. One should give up the habit of slander. It is easier to find faults with others than with one's own self. On the other hand, one is exhorted, time and again, to develop all the moral virtues such as faith, vigilance, thoughtfulness, charity and tolerance.

Enmity never ends by enmity. It ends by love alone. This is the ancient law.

Better alone than in bad company. While travelling, if one does not find congenial companion, let one move alone. A fool is no company. Be in the company of one who tells you of your faults.

Self-discipline

One is the Lord of one's self
One is the refuge of one's self
Therefore should one control
Oneself just as the trader his horse.¹⁰

The Dhammapada tells one to guard oneself like a fortress. The unwary

6. Ibid., verse 80.

7. Ibid., verse 51.

8. Ibid., verse 316.

9. Ibid., verse 345.

10. Ibid., verse 380.

indulgent falls an easy prey to Māra, the tempter. In order to save oneself from his onslaughts one should bridle one's mind. Accordingly restraint of thought, word, and deed is repeatedly advised.

The mind is hard to tame. It is fickle, subtle and capricious. Just as rain penetrates an ill-thatched house, so does passion make its way into an unrestrained mind.

Sense of duty is important. A thoughtless person may not be aware of what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. First of all, let one mind one's own business. It is good to be concerned with one's duty to oneself. Teach yourself before you teach others. Shape your own life before trying to shape others' lives. And that is what the Buddha himself had done.

'Better than conquering all the other people is the conquest of one's self.'¹¹

Just as the rust arising from iron eats away that from which it arises, similarly the fickle evil-doer is led to evil fate by his own deeds. 'Shun all evil, amass virtue, purify your heart.' This is what the Buddhas teach.¹²

11. Ibid., verse 105.

12. Ibid., verse 183.

Sir Charles Eliot observes an important negative aspect in the four noble truths of the Buddha and remarks that there is no trace of human life being 'a service to be rendered to God.'¹³ Evidently God is not the Buddha's concern. He does not teach or preach about God or the soul. He is silent on such topics. Apparently concepts of this nature and their elaboration do not fall in line with his thinking. All his endeavours are man-centred: these are not God-ward but these are inward. He neither accepts life as a service to God nor does he look forward to Him for grace. Even in his last words to his disciples, he exhorted them to work out their salvation diligently. The main emphasis in the Buddha's teachings is on self-discipline. The entire burden is one's own to carry. One is to sink or to swim for oneself. The Buddha perhaps summed up his teachings when addressing his favourite disciple Ānanda, he said:

Ātma dīpo bhava: 'Be a lamp unto yourself'.

13. *Hinduism and Buddhism*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 205.

THE WAY OF THE HOLY MOTHER

DR. M. SIVARAMAKRISHNA

'We could get some inkling at least of the greatness of the Master,' confessed Swami Saradananda, 'but of this lady (the Holy Mother) we cannot understand anything. She has drawn the veil of Maya so thick around Her that no one can see through it and have a glimpse of Her greatness.'¹

1. See Swami Vireswarananda, 'The Holy Mother—The Ideal of Womanhood', *The Vedanta*

This confession is, paradoxically, both baffling and understandable. It is puzzling because Saradananda was not only the most definitive (and divinely designated?) biographer of the Great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, but was, himself, as a direct disciple, a sage of piercing spiritual insight. Indeed, he made the apparently startling

Kesari (Madras: Ramakrishna Math) Vol. XLI, No. 3, July 1954, p. 35.

yet entirely credible statement that 'Nothing beyond my spiritual experience has been recorded in the book, *Sri Ramakrishna Lila-Prasanga*.'² For such a one to express bafflement in understanding the Mother is itself baffling. Yet, in a sense, it is understandable for the answer to this phenomenon is there in the statement itself. In effect, it lies in the thick veil of Maya that the Mother drew around Herself! The implicit significance of this act is the clue to understand the Mother and her message.

II

To begin with, 'Maya' in Swamiji's classic aphorism is 'a statement of fact'.³ The fact being contradiction, if one chooses and acts through 'splitting off' of categories in an attempt to resolve the contradiction, then one is caught in the very spiral of cause and effect. Therefore, in living, moving and having one's being in this world of *maya*, one has to not so much act or react as *enact*. But the enactment—every little bit of it—and its corresponding experience is responded to in such a way that they become contexts for a leap into awareness of the underlying Reality.

Yet such is the complexity of 'Maya' that this awareness is both continual and intermittent, 'total' and 'peak'. Thus when a disciple asked, 'Do you ever remember your real nature?' the Mother's reply is one in tune with the implicit paradox of the life of all mystics and sages: 'Yes, I recall it now and then. At that time I say to myself, what is this that I am doing? What is all this about?'

2. Swami Saradananda: *Sri Ramakrishna: The Great Master*, Swami Jagadananda tr. (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1952), xxiv.

3. cf. Swami Vivekananda: *Jnana Yoga* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1980), pp. 48-49.

Then I remember the house, buildings and children and forget my real self.'⁴ But this remembering, in the case of the Mother, is a willed and willing suspension of awareness *as an indispensable precondition for enactment in the world*. Since it is willed, the suspension can be dissolved instantaneously. When the disciple asks, 'Well, Mother, do you always remember your real nature?' pat came the Mother's reply: 'How could that be? How then could I perform all these duties? But even in the midst of my activities, *whenever I wish I can understand by the slightest effort that all this is the mere play of Mahamaya*.'⁵

Thus *enacting* implies the willing suspension, conversely, of disbelief in Maya i.e., that all that we are doing is illusory and, therefore, pointless. On the contrary, the world is affirmed and not negated as nonexistent through a cold, passionless attitude of a disillusioned cynic. Since *maya* is a fact of experience, the game has to be played, the *lila* has to be gone through. Moreover, like all mimesis, it is a model for emulation: when a disciple protested about her 'strenuous life' and 'hard work', Mother declared 'I have done much more than is necessary to make my life a model,' adding with incredible humility, 'please bless me that I may serve others as long as I live.'⁶

From this perspective, what the Mother said about the Master is applicable to herself with equal, if not more, logic: 'All the acts of Sri Ramakrishna were directed to God alone.... That was the

4. *Teachings of Sri Sarada Devi the Holy Mother* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1983), p. 159. All the quotations from the Holy Mother are from this book. Hereafter referred to as *Teachings*.

5. *Teachings*, p. 160. (emphasis added)

6. *Teachings*, pp. 161-162.

nature of his teaching.⁷ To direct all acts invariably to God is in fact to dramatize in the theatre of existence possibilities for actualizing its wholeness.

III

This wholeness is for the Mother rooted in one principle: a simple but comprehensive clue to the implicate order of life. She pointed out:

I tell you one thing—if you want peace, do not find fault with others. Rather see your own faults. Learn to make the world your own. No one is a stranger, my child; the whole world is your own.⁸

The statement is sutra-like in its terseness and far-ranging *dhvani*. To begin with: 'if you want peace'. The hypothetical (conditional) word 'if' is extraordinarily explosive in its implications: do we *really* want peace? don't we pretend (to others and, worse, to ourselves) that we want it; a pretension exposed by the fact that we actually do everything except that which is conducive to and productive of this peace? For, to many of us peace has correlatives in possessions, addictions, gadgets. When some of these belie our unending quest, we do not give up but substitute the grosser correlatives by the subtler ones: if we give up money, we seek, instead, celebrity, fame etc. The word 'if' is not, therefore, conditional: it is an operative reality for many, nay most, people. The inevitable result is that the sterile stillness of our mental pool choked with the mud of possessions, desires etc.—assuming that some kind of peace is achieved after struggle—is mistaken for the peace that the Mother is pointing to—the peace that passeth understanding.

The fact that people ostensibly desire but do not in reality want peace is an oddity that never ceased to amaze the Holy Mother:

People come to me and say, 'I have no peace in life, I never feel the presence of God, tell me how to find peace,' and so on. Then I look at them and at myself and wonder why they talk in this manner. Is everything about me beyond the common run? I have never known unrest. And as far as the presence of God, it's mine for the taking. I can see Him whenever I like.⁹

Obviously, the fact that people want peace but do not do what is necessary to achieve it is part of delusion. But, interestingly enough, what is to be done to achieve this peace is not something extraordinary: it is not, to use the Mother's words again, 'beyond the common run.' It is there 'for the taking' and the method the Mother points out is invariably psychological and eminently practical: the practice of detecting the Divine in everyone by the transcendence of fragmentation—fragmentation which introduces the chronic disease of judgement through fault-finding.

IV

For attaining peace 'do not,' says the Mother, 'find fault with others.' This phenomenon is a very complex psychological syndrome which needs diagnosis for eventual cure.

To begin with, finding fault is basically a matter of *samskara*. Some are, presumably, by nature inclined to this. The Mother's statement clinches the matter: 'I cannot see others' faults,' she declared categorically and added (by way of explanation we can say), 'I am simply *not made that way*.' If this is unusual, it is not freakish either: 'there are enough people to criticize others.

7. *Teachings*, p. 136.

8. *Teachings*, p. 97.

9. *Teachings*, p. 158.

Surely the world will not come to an end if I refrain from doing so.¹⁰

'Not made that way' is Mother's idiom for the antecedent predispositions which form the cluster we call *samskara*. Some are *made that way* and the result, the Mother rightly notes, is 'there is evil in your mind. That's why you can't find peace.'¹¹ This evil of fault-finding takes, to simplify, two forms: either one finds faults *in* others or finds faults *with* them. The first is an interesting context in which we find faults in others but refuse to see or acknowledge these faults as, in fact, reflections of our own innate shortcomings. We almost automatically, but quite indefensibly, assume that we are—*ourselves*—exempt from the faults we find in others. But, of course, our own exemption from these faults, once achieved, teaches—or ought to teach—tolerance, and therefore, freedom from criticism.

The second context of fault-finding stems not so much from an innate tendency as from the implicit disappointment that they—the others—have not done what you expected of them. In other words, the failure of others to live up to our expectations, to fulfil our demands, makes us find fault with them. If in the first case, it is self-deception (the myopic inability to see the presence of faults in oneself), in the second, it is pure selfishness of an overriding ego insistently demanding satisfaction of its whims through others. In either case, the result is decadence of the mental apparatus. As the Mother puts it:

Man finds faults in others *after bringing down his own mind to that level*. Does anything ever happen to another if you enumerate his faults? It only injures you.¹²

Thus what began as the process examining the faults of others turns out to be the basic step in all meditational therapy: quest for knowledge and experience of the self free from all imbalances.

V

This brings us to the final question: how can we avoid fault-finding which is, we saw, rooted in unawareness of the real nature of the Self? In other words, how do we achieve what the Buddhists describe as 'purifying the mind of negative imprints,' thereby 'accumulating merit, that is, positive energy and insight'?¹³

The Mother makes the process clear and the process is divided into three steps: (a) seeing one's own faults, (b) shedding the feeling of regarding others as aliens, as strangers and (c) learning to make the world, the whole world your own. This is the Mother's diagnosis and cure for the disease of self-delusion and, in keeping with the integral ways of Sacred Living, all these three steps are intricately intertwined. For, seeing one's own faults—along with those of others—releases us from the 'I'-'Thou' split with 'I' as pure and selfless and the 'other' as faulty and selfish. Once this is done, the 'other' ceases to be a stranger and becomes, as it were, an extension of one's own. Finally, once the sense of others as separate beings is transcended, the world is transformed, becoming one's own. The invariable outcome is peace.

But one should not overlook the implications of the word the Mother uses: 'learn'; 'learn to make the world your own.' Thus, the art of achieving oneness with the world—the perception of the wholeness of life—is not (at any rate for many of us) automatic or spontaneous. It

10. *Teachings*, p. 98.

11. *Teachings*, p. 34.

12. *Teachings*, p. 98.

13. Kathleen McDonald: *How to Meditate* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1985), p. 150.

has to be learnt—the hard way, often. The Holy Mother herself constantly refers to her own efforts in this direction (in spite of the fact that as the counterpart of the Great Master, there was, in her case, need for effort). With disarming candour she told once:

Formerly people's faults appeared to my eyes also. Then with tears I prayed to the Master, 'Master, I can no longer bear finding fault.' Then only this defect left me.¹⁴

Later on she identified this with *tapasya* itself, as the *sadhana* of 'learning'.

Basic to this learning is inner-directed love expressing itself in religious, psychological and social contexts with an awareness that in the ecosystem the self cannot be a separate, independent entity without festering in its self-imposed isolation. It is awareness, to use Ken Wilber's words that, 'a person is neither a thing nor a process, but an opening or a clearing through which the Absolute can manifest.'¹⁵ Or as the physicist David Bohm puts it, is rooted in the faith that 'the ground of all being enfolds a supreme intelligence' which is 'the source of extraordinary order present in the universe,' and, above all, 'the common feeling that this supreme intelligence is penetrated by love and compassion.'¹⁶

For the Holy Mother this supreme intelligence shot through with love and compassion was a self-evident fact of continuous experience. It not only negated the fault-finding but found a place and a

value for every thing and every experience, however trivial they apparently were. The resulting spectrum ranged from giving alms to a beggar not because of charity, but because 'it is not right to deprive a man of his just dues,'¹⁷ through keeping a banana peel securely because 'even this is the cow's due,' and 'one must place it before the cow',¹⁸ to preserving an empty basket—about to be thoughtlessly discarded—for 'some future use.'¹⁹

Concern for the wholeness of the ecosystem thus meant concern and love for all—including aberrant specimens in her own household and devotees eager to get initiation from her but too sluggish to maintain the initial momentum. In fact, subtleties of dharma are cleared in terms of this concern and care for others as extensions of one's self. These extensions are incredibly inclusive: they include every species, including the cat whose 'dharma', the Master declares, 'is to steal,' and, moreover, 'who is there to feed it lovingly?' Above all, love in this regard has a profounder reason and the Mother made it clear in a moment of epiphanic revelation: 'scold the cat but do not beat it. Please feed it regularly...*I dwell inside the cat too.*'²⁰

What the Holy Mother meant when she said, 'make the world your own,' so that through the corresponding knowledge and experience we perceive that 'the whole world is our own,' thus, involves love as the means. But, then, how to love all with a sense of togetherness? The Mother's answer is direct and simple:

Let me tell you how to love all equally. Do not demand anything of those you love. If you make demands, some will give you more and

14. *Teachings*, pp. 97-98.

15. Cited, Frances Vaughan, *The Inward Arc* (London: Shambhala, 1986), p. 39.

16. David Bohm: 'Fragmentation and Wholeness in Religion and in Science', *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* XX, No. 2, June 1985, p. 130. Also, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, 1983).

17. *Teachings*, p. 114.

18. *Teachings*, p. 114.

19. *Teachings*, p. 119.

20. *Teachings*, pp. 102-3.

some less. In that case you will love more those who give you more and less those who give you less. Thus your love will not be the same for all. You will not be able to love all impartially.²¹

What the Mother says is sound psychology which has always been the characteristic feature of the Sacred Way. To demand anything of those we love is obviously a contradiction: for, if someone really loves us—and does not regard us as pegs to hang his own self-love—we need not demand; that love itself will propel him/her to give us what we need. Conversely, if on demand something is given, then it is not given spontaneously (the invariable quality of love) but under duress. If this is true, then the question of somebody giving less and somebody more doesn't arise. Impartial love for all is thus possible, both logically and psychologically, only when no demands are made on another. Love becomes free from fantasies and fears which, regarding it as a possession, always brings into being.

Thus, the Holy Mother's simple recipe of freedom from fault-finding culminates

21. *Teachings*, p. 101.

in the final goal of all striving: transcendent love which radiates from the centre of wholeness and order. Even when the spiritual implications cannot be grasped completely, in the context of our contemporary quest for a harmonious social order, the Mother's instruction is invaluable and indispensable wisdom. As Frances Vaughan has put it:

Self-awareness can no longer be considered an esoteric luxury for a few educated individuals. It has become a social necessity. We are only beginning to understand the possibilities inherent in mastering the mind, but the challenges of our time call for accelerated learning. Humanity is gaining access to vast reservoirs of undeveloped potential, but unless egoic excesses are curbed by discriminating wisdom, we run the risk of destroying ourselves.²²

It is this 'discriminating wisdom' in the Holy Mother's life and teaching, that radiates as intersecting points of a holistic consciousness.

22. Frances Vaughan, *The Inward Arc: Healing and Wholeness in Psychotherapy and Spirituality*, p. 151.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : REFLECTIONS ON LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE

SRIMATI MANJULA

When a prophet of the stature of Vivekananda makes his appearance, he illumines the dormant contours of human consciousness in its infinite variety. He not only revivifies a usable past but also animates its basic impulses which need to be redefined and reintegrated. In the process he gives us inestimable revaluations of extant art, literature and culture. It is

in this context that Vivekananda's views of Indian literary and linguistic heritage become significant areas of assessment.

The essential sublimity and loftiness of Indian poetry was an object of deep adoration and love for Vivekananda, and this is evident in his regard for and appreciation of the two most ancient epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. He

pointed out:

The two most ancient epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata embody the manners and customs, the state of society, civilization, of the ancient Indians. These came down to us in a very beautiful arrangement without equal in the literature of world.¹

It is obvious that Vivekananda regarded epics as the authoritative encyclopaedias of Indian life and wisdom, portraying an ideal civilization, and humanity ought to perpetuate its implicit values. These values made these two epics penetrate into every strata of Indian society and region, right from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari. Analysing the significance of the epic he observed:

The Epic exercises the same authority in India as Homer's poems did over the Greeks...All sorts of tales, legends and myths, philosophical treatises, scraps of history, and various discussions have been added to it from time to time, until it is a vast, gigantic mass of literature, and through it runs the old, original story.²

Vivekananda makes here two seminal observations. He has, first, suggested a comparative perspective by highlighting the analogous authority of Homer's poetry among the Greeks. Second, he has underscored the fact that no epic is static. Its intrinsic dynamism and accommodative, plastic structure make the incorporation of several motifs of its cultural background possible. But this incorporation is done in such a way that the structure of the original story is more or less kept intact. These views of Vivekananda are extremely valuable when we keep in mind the origin and evolution of epic both in its oral and literary genres.

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972) vol. 4, p. 63. (Hereafter referred to as *Complete Works*).

2. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

These pieces of original and archetypal literature emerged first in India and were then translated into other languages over the world, influencing the epics, ballads and fables of other countries. Vivekananda affirms the Indian contribution to world literary traditions thus:

In literature, our epics and poems and dramas rank as high as those of any language. Our 'Shakuntala' was summarized by Germany's greatest poet as 'Heaven and earth united'. India has given to the world the fables of Aesop, which were copied by Aesop from an old Sanskrit book; it has given the Arabian Nights... even the story of Cinderella and the Beanstalks.³

Another significant insight we find in Vivekananda which needs sustained scrutiny is that Indian poetry achieves universality not merely in terms of its secular concerns but also in terms of its pervasive preoccupation with the several areas of perennial philosophy and psychology. In other words, in India the poetic genre was heightened and made sublime by employing it for the exploration of the nature of the spiritual quest for redemption. Moreover, the poetic mode was used not merely for mimetic rendering of reality (a common element of all literary traditions) but more significantly and almost uniquely for expressing universally valid transcendental experiences. This attempt to embody spiritual insights in sublime poetry—as in the *Vedas*, and the *Upanishads*, and the epics—accounts not only for the universality of Indian poetic tradition but also the unique view of literature as acquiring the potency and liberating power of 'mantra'. If *mantra* is, etymologically, that which liberates (*trayate*) us through contemplation (*manana*), then the poetry found in *Upanishads* and other scriptures including epics becomes a mode not of aesthetic decoration

3. *Complete Works* (1976), vol. 2, p. 512.

but eventual liberation. From this point of view what Vivekananda says about the Upanishads is extremely significant.

The entire Upanishadic literature was perfectly impersonal, based on the mystical experiences of hundreds of seers. Therefore, these ideas are universal. The broad humanitarian and universal appeal of the Upanishads influenced Vivekananda most powerfully. No wonder that he set the Upanishads above all theological literature based on the life of any one prophet or Godman. Here, in the Upanishads, was according to him, the accumulated knowledge of Oneness of seers, anonymous, unknown and unnamed anywhere in those books. Thus the names mentioned are not important, but it is the ideas that matter. Vivekananda wrote:

Although we find many names, and many speakers, and many teachers in the Upanishads, not one of them stands as an authority of the Upanishads, not one verse is based upon the life of anyone of them.⁴

As Aristotle has said, history gives us only particulars while poetry gives us the universals. That is the reason why the Oedipus of history had only a limited appeal, while *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles has become an object of universal experience and appeal. The entire Upanishads and the Vedas have got this element of impersonal and universal appeal. They have a sublimity of their own which was not to be seen in Homer, Virgil or Milton.

The Upanishads present before us the spirit of the sublime. Behind the simple verses, we always have glimpses of sublimity. Vivekananda repeatedly quoted the following verse from *Kathopanishad* as the most significant example of the sublime Indian Poetry:

Na tatra soryo bhāti na chandra tārakam
Nemā vidyuto bhānti kutoyam agnih
Tameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvam
Tasya bhāsā sarvam idam vibhāti.⁵

There the sun shines not nor the moon, nor the stars, what to speak of this fire? There dwells the One whose light radiates the whole universe.

According to Vivekananda the journey from the world of the senses to the world of the supersensuous is the essential theme of the Upanishadic poetry. He states:

As we listen to the heart-stirring poetry...we are taken, as it were, off from the world of the senses, off even from the world of intellect, and brought to that world which can never be comprehended, and yet is always with us.⁶

This is obviously the quality which rescues poetry from affording mere sensuous titillation or exquisite but essentially sterile aesthetic pleasure. In other words, Vivekananda holds that poetry such as the one found in the *Upanishads* is a means of awakening the human consciousness to an awareness which transcends all art, indeed, all thought itself—though it makes use of art. Not all poetry can do this, but the very value of poetry as an enduring mode of knowledge lies in this function. It makes us transcend the sensuous, the cerebral and the conceptual, and we realize with its help that eternal self which is the substratum and residue of the senses, intellect and feeling.

Classical Indian poetry, in Vivekananda's view, is, therefore, marked by its God-centred world view. It is spiritually oriented and it is because of this orientation alone that the classical Indian poetry, especially the epics, survived. While the other poems with temporal themes were to a large extent eclipsed, this poetry of the

4. *Complete Works* (1973), vol. 3, p. 332.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 385.

6. *Ibid.*

soul continues to inspire us. In fact Vivekananda declared unambiguously that these religious songs have one central idea, the idea of realization.

Vivekananda's own poems belong to this class of eternal, spiritual poems of India. As we have seen earlier, his famous poem composed originally in English, entitled 'Kali the Mother', stands out as the finest expression in English language of spiritual sublimity ever expressed in modern times. The underlying theme of this poem is the feeling and realization of God in the midst of the terrible sufferings of life:

Who dares misery love,
And hug the form of Death,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
To him the Mother comes.⁷

Vivekananda firmly held that in the description of exalted states of being and evoking an effective picture of our cosmos in all its complexity and variety, Indian poets are incomparable. While poets of other traditions present the mystical through the sensuous, classical Indian poets present even the sensuous through the mystical. For instance, Milton presents the darkness and chaos before the cosmos began but his presentation does not have the depth and density we find, for instance, in the vedic hymn of creation. Vivekananda, clarifying this point, says:

If you read the Samhita portion of the Vedas, you now and then find passages of most marvellous beauty. For instance, the famous sloka which describes chaos—
'When darkness was hidden in darkness'...one reads and feels the wonderful sublimity of the poetry...Mark the description of darkness by three poets. Take our own Kalidasa
'Darkness which can be penetrated with the

point of a needle', then Milton—'No light but rather darkness visible', but come now to the Upanishad, 'Darkness was covering darkness', Darkness was hidden in darkness.⁸

It is highly significant that Vivekananda cites, in this statement, not only religious texts but also that by Kalidasa. In effect, even poetry written by individual poets, as distinct from the anonymous composers of the Vedas, is shot through with an irresistible urge to express the inexpressible.

When we approach western critics such as Coleridge we get theories of poetic creation which are of relevance in understanding Indian poetry too. Coleridge, for instance, stated that imagination is superior to fancy. Imagination idealizes the real object and ultimately universalizes it, while fancy only aggregates and makes a mechanical mixture of the impressions of sensory realities. According to Aristotle, poetry is not a mere imitation of reality, neither it is a photographic reproduction of what existed. But poetry is a product of creative imagination which 'gives to airy nothing—a local habitation and a name'. The midas-touch or the art of creating great beauty out of pure imagination, of turning the common objects into something transcendental, is basic to Indian poetry. Indian aesthetic experts like Ananda-varadhana and Abhinavagupta regarded literature (*Sāhitya*) as 'alaukika' which means transcendental. The entire range of Indian poetry right from the epics of Valmiki to the poems of Rabindranath Tagore has this basic transcendental quality, the feeling of the supersensory perception of the ultimate reality, in the midst of this sense-bound world.

Vivekananda also pointed out that the essential quality of art, whether it was in the realm of music, drama or any other form, is its capacity to bring about salvation. All art eventually leads to liberation. But Vivekananda points out that there is

7. *Complete Works* (1972) vol. 4, p. 384.

8. *Complete Works* (1973), vol. 3, pp. 329-30.

one condition: One must put one's whole soul into it. In other words, there must be total dedication. It is this holiness of art in general, and drama and poetry in particular, that Vivekananda highlights when he observed:

The drama, in India, was a very holy thing. Drama and music are themselves held to be religion. Any song—whether it be a love-song or otherwise—if one's whole soul is in that song, one attains salvation, one has nothing else to do. They say it leads to the same goal as meditation.⁹

Another significant aspect of Indian poetry—like poetry almost everywhere—is that in its earliest form it was meant to be sung. Even drama was originally instinct with the element of musicality. In fact, the artistic blending of the dramatic element with that of music is the basic structure of Indian poetic tradition. Even in the abstruse metaphysical explorations of the *Upanishads*, we notice the almost invariable presence of dialogue and the dramatic context. This aspect attained its culmination, for Vivekananda, in the *Bhagavad Gita*. He says:

The greatest incident of the war was the marvellous and immortal poem of the *Gita*, the *Song Celestial*.¹⁰

Vivekananda, with his profound insight into the dynamics of cultural contacts, pointed out an aspect of the Indian scriptures which has been studied by several oriental scholars in the west. This aspect is the global impact of Indian scriptures, specially the *Bhagavad Gita*. Its influence is evident in American writers such as Emerson. He found that the American Transcendentalists like Emerson and Thoreau were greatly influenced by the transcendental poetry of the *Gita* which

Carl T. Jackson has described as 'every Transcendentalist's favourite oriental reading'.¹¹ Without any hesitation, Vivekananda said:

If you want to know the source of Emerson's inspiration, it is this book, the *Gita*. He went to see Carlyle, and Carlyle made him a present of the *Gita*; and that little book is responsible for the Concord movement.¹²

This point is today confirmed by extensive researches into oriental religions carried out by eminent scholars. Carl T. Jackson, the American cultural historian, for instance, observes about Emerson's interest in Indian thought thus:

Obviously Emerson was deeply attracted by Asian thought or more precisely by the religious thought of India; whenever he spoke of Asia, he meant India. Though quite explicit about what he disliked in Indian religion—its 'endless ceremonial nonsense' and caste restrictions—his general attitude was overwhelmingly positive.¹³

Analysing the attraction, Jackson says that Emerson was drawn to Indian thought for three reasons: first, 'its mystical emphasis', which for Emerson 'subsumed the whole message in Hinduism'; second, the monism of Hindu thought; and finally 'the largeness, cosmic sweep and rich speculative powers of the Indian thought'.¹⁴

In the light of this, Vivekananda's views on the debt the thinkers of other nations owe to Indian thought is irrefutably clinched.

II

In addition to commending on the literary heritage of India, Vivekananda

¹¹. Carl T. Jackson, *The Oriental Religions and American Thought* (West Port, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981) p. 70.

¹². *Complete Works* (1972) vol. 4, p. 95.

¹³. *The Oriental Religions and American Thought*, op. cit., p. 53.

¹⁴. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

⁹. *Complete Works* (1972) vol. 4, p. 74.

¹⁰. *Ibid.*

also gave us seminal ideas on the function of language in the changed context of modern India. It is significant that not only was he a master of English prose and poetry but in the light of his familiarity with English he also wanted to bring about a radical transformation in his own mother-tongue and by implication all Indian languages, so that it becomes an effective vehicle for the communication of modern knowledge in diverse fields. Therefore, one side of Swami's significance so far as language is concerned lies in the fact that in the Parliament of Religions he was the most effectively articulate delegate. As Carl Jackson has pointed out:

Language was unquestionably a problem for most Asian delegates, handicapping their effectiveness in the Parliament. In the sizable Japanese delegation apparently Kinza Hirai and Zenshiro Noguchi had full command of English. On the other hand, Swami Vivekananda revealed unusual talents, demonstrating a fluent command of English, impressive stage manner, and gift for the memorable phrase, the Hindu spokesman was a sensation from his first address.¹⁵

The other side of his significance lies in what he thought should be done in Indian languages. About this he pointed out:

Your history, literature, mythology and all other Shastras are simply frightening people....Hence we must explain to men in simple words the highest ideas of the Vedas and the Vedanta.¹⁶

Vivekananda thus wanted language to be simple, direct, vigorous and original. In his opinion, apart from a 'common religion' there should be a 'common language' for uniting the peoples of India. He rightly thought that this common language cannot be thrust upon the people from above but should be a 'mother language' which has its roots in all the

languages of India, and because of its own superiority, suitability, and effectiveness it will become the all-India language. He considered Sanskrit to be the most suitable language for the purpose.

As Vivekananda has pointed out, the Sanskrit of the Vedas was highly terse, technical and scholastic. But the Puranic Sanskrit was simpler, ready for the common man's conversation and understanding. This Sanskrit was the spoken language of the common people in the ancient times. Hence the Puranas and the Epics received impressive popular appreciation. Vivekananda said:

Puranas...were written to popularise the religion of the Vedas...The Puranas were written in the language of the people of that time, what we call modern Sanskrit...The sages made use of these things to illustrate the eternal principles of religion.¹⁷

It is interesting that Vivekananda endorses the use of simple language by using analogues drawn from our own culture and language. Here we can notice an outstanding feature of his basic structure of thinking. All innovation, if it is to be effective, should be derived from and defined in terms of the enduring elements of tradition. Though the initial inspiration for change can come from any source, this change, according to Vivekananda, should be effected only through the logic of indigenous tradition. In this sense we can say that Vivekananda is a prophet comparable to the seers of the Upanishads. He belonged to them and the rishis of the Upanishads who could feel the presence of the Divine in all men high or low, the presence of the Ultimate One in the immanent universe of senses. With prophetic vision he could see essential and infinite power inside all beings. There-

15. Ibid., p. 249.

16. *Complete Works* (1972) vol. 7, p. 171.

17. *Complete Works* (1973) vol. 3, p. 121.

fore, his poems and views on literature and language are positive in tone and as such sources of endless inspiration to all. He said:

We must give the public only positive ideas. Negative ideas weaken men. In language and literature, in poetry and the arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will gradually be able to do these things better.¹⁸

The prophets expressed the highest ideas of God realization in the simplest of languages for common man. Vivekananda found in Ramakrishna, his Master, such a prophet. Explaining the implications of Ramakrishna's advent, for language, Vivekananda says:

Simplicity is the secret. My ideal of language is my Master's language, most colloquial and yet most expressive. It must express the thought which is intended to be conveyed.¹⁹

This is indeed, a very significant idea which needs scrutiny. Normally, we think of the influence of incarnations of God as confined to, or to be located mainly in, areas of ethics and spirituality. But here is Ramakrishna who, almost an unlettered man, is heralding, as it were, a linguistic revolution. The language Sri Ramakrishna spoke is the simplest; yet from the point of view of metaphor and image it is extraordinarily suggestive—instinct with a vast range of meaning. His parables, for instance, which have simplicity but a depth of meaning and a range of metaphor, are easily comparable to the parables of Jesus and Buddha. This is the model which Vivekananda felt should be used in bringing about modernity to language. Like Buddha and Jesus, Ramakrishna, too,

spoke in the rural patois. The eternal truths of religion expressed in simple language became available to all. The implicit democratization of language has found in India wide acceptance in our century—an acceptance which has resulted in the Renaissance of Indian languages.

Sri Ramakrishna's language was homely, picturesquely worded and they always had a 'very real and touching spiritual beauty'. To people all over, they were Gospels, spelling out God. His knowledge came out as Max Muller said 'in spontaneous outbursts of profound wisdom clothed in beautiful language'. And just this simple language of Sri Ramakrishna carried the profoundest of truths. Today the entire world accepts his words as the symbol of highest spiritual message for humanity. Vivekananda's American disciple, Josephine Macleod wrote (on 26.12.39):

The Chicago Swami sent me a card saying the new 'world Bible', just issued of 1400 pages begins with six sentences of Ramakrishna... Isn't it interesting to learn that 50 years after Ramakrishna's death, his great message should lead the world's Bible? Of course, it was Swamiji, who caused this great new prophet's message to come from Bengal—and be known everywhere where English is spoken.²⁰

Vivekananda was not the one to rest content with the formulation of ideas, plans and programmes. His dynamic nature demanded the creation of moulds which concretize these ideas. He wanted to give a local habitation and a name to his ideas. No wonder that to propagate Ramakrishna's liberating ideas and at the same time make Bengali language acquire the contours of modernity he started the Bengali monthly 'Udbodhan' which con-

18. *Complete Works* (1972) vol. 7, p. 170.

19. *Complete Works* (1973) vol. 5, p. 259.

20. Shankari Prasad Basu, *Vivekananda O Samakalin Bharatavarsa* (Bengali) (Calcutta: Mondal Book House, 1976) vol. 2, p. 293.

tinues to do this job with vigour and vitality even to this day. Its aim was and is to make language simple, forceful and yet profound in thought and content. Spelling out the implicit ideas Vivekananda said:

We must mould the ideas, language, and everything...in a new fashion—Not only must we give out Sri Ramakrishna's ideas to all, but we must also introduce a new vigour into the Bengali language. For instance, the frequent use of verbs diminishes the force of a language. We must restrict the use of verbs by the use of adjectives.²¹

Vivekananda's celebrated writing on Bengali language is an eye-opener in this respect. He completely rejected the old classical style of Bengali with bombastic and high sounding adjectives and complex syntaxes. In addition, he wanted to infuse heroism, dynamism, the spirit of upanishadic strength', the deep and sombre cadence of the Dhrupad music instead of the sentimental music of Thumri and light lyrics. The celebrated artist Nandalal Bose, asked to comment on Vivekananda's artistic stature, has pointed out in a letter to Vivekananda's brother, Bhupendranath Datta:

It is my impression that as the Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, etc. by lecturing in colloquial languages of their days gave them a place in contemporary literature, and made the literature, intelligible to the people, likewise Swamiji led the Bengalee language in that direction. Swamiji has made the Bengalee language energetic and full of life. He has strongly criticised the intricacy and mannerism of art. Following his

21. *Complete Works* (1972) vol. 7, p. 168.

message, the art of the future will be again simpler, as well as full of life, and forceful.²²

Regarding Vivekananda's Bengalee book *Prachya O Paschatya*, the eminent poet Rabindranath Tagore has pointed out advising the famous Bengalee historian of literature Dinesh Chandra Sen to read it:

How colloquial Bengalee can appear as a living and forceful language, you will realize after reading it. Such ideas, such language, similarly such penetrating liberal vision, and the ideal of synthesis between the East and the West that this book contains, is surprising to one.²³

This book is now regarded as an outstanding contribution to modern Bengalee language and literature. As Swami Vedananda says:

It has been an unparalleled presentation of Swamiji to Bengalee literature. It will not be an exaggeration to say that it is rare to find another such book in Bengalee literature.²⁴

Language reflects the spirit of the whole race, Vivekananda asserted. And, therefore, a rising India must reflect the spirit of enthusiasm, optimism, action and confidence in all her languages. This was Vivekananda's ideas of the languages of India. Even his own English is extremely modern and according to the contemporary Englishmen of Vivekananda's days, his language was more chastened and powerful than the best English speakers of England.

22. Bhupendranath Datta, *Swami Vivekananda—Patriot Prophet* (Calcutta: Nababharat Publishers, 1954) p. 310.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 293-4.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 293.

BARANAGORE MATH AND ITS IDEALISM

SWAMI TATHAGATANANDA

Sri Ramakrishna was the rarest type of spiritual genius who ever came to the world. He was a God-intoxicated man with manifold spiritual experiences. He was an enigmatic personality—deep as the ocean, wide as the blue sky, forbearing as mother earth, lofty as the mountain, and soothing as the rays of the morning sun. Having direct and authentic experiences of Reality, he said, 'I clearly see that God has become everything.' He looked upon man as God, for a human being is not really a physical being, a body-mind complex only. Really he is a divine being encased in a body. The goal of human life, according to Sri Ramakrishna, is to have freedom, *moksha*. In India, great philosophers, from the Vedic age down to our own age, have interpreted history as the progress of the Spirit toward its goal, which is freedom from bondage.

Sri Ramakrishna was very eager to share his rare spiritual experiences with humanity for its benefit. Having that genuine passion to serve the people through his spiritual wisdom, he used to say, 'I would indeed feel blessed if by assuming a thousand births I can liberate one single soul' (recorded in the Minutes of the R. K. Mission, Aug. 29/1897). Through his intuition he knew about Narendranath's greatness of spiritual personality, and therefore he expressly commissioned Narendranath to be the leader of his young disciples, and commanded him to take care of them. He clearly told him, 'I leave them to your care. See that they practise spiritual disciplines and do not return home' (*Life of Swami Vivekananda*, by Eastern & Western Disciples, p. 132). He also gave them *gerua* cloth and *rudraksha* beads, and asked them to get food through begging.

'Thus it was that the disciples were initiated into monastic order by the Master himself and the foundation of the future Ramakrishna Order was laid' (*Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, Mayavati, p. 493). He had tremendous faith in Narendranath; also he knew that Narendranath would 'remove the miseries of mankind'. Sri Ramakrishna, the Master, also wrote on a piece of paper, 'Naren will teach others.' Upon Narendranath's refusal, the Master said with all his force and authority, 'Your very bones will do it'. He also transmitted his spiritual power to Naren and said, 'By the force of the power transmitted by me great things will be done by you; only after that you will go to whence you came' (*Life of Swami Vivekananda*, op. cit., p. 148). The Master passed away on August 16, 1886.

The young disciples of the Master, numbering sixteen, were homeless. At the initiative of Naren and with the financial help of Surendranath Mitra, a devotee of the Master, a dilapidated house at Baranagore was rented for a monastery in September 1886. The description of the Math was given by Kali Krishna—later Virajananda—who was the first person to join the Math at the age of 18, in 1891. 'The interior of the Math's ground floor, having been unoccupied for a long time, was full of wild plants and shrubs. It had become a haven for jackals and reptiles and no one would go there out of fear. It was said that many years ago numerous murders were committed in the house. The structure was known as the "haunted house" and no one would live in it. That was why the *sadhus* in the Math were able to rent it for only Rs. 10 a month' (*The Story of an Epoch*, p. 19). The Master's love bound them together and their

minds had been opened to a new vista of thought—thought of inner illumination. The Master had firmly planted the living seed of spirituality in their hearts. They became possessed of deep faith about the reality of spiritual bliss and they staked everything for that high purpose of life. Notwithstanding the abject poverty and other inconveniences of life, they struggled hard to enter into the inner sanctuaries of their souls through their sheer strength of character, manliness, and purity of vision.

They were never exclusive; being trained by the Master, they maintained their liberal attitude throughout. The Master used to say, 'One should not think "My religion is the right path and other religions are false"'. As many views, so many paths. God can be realized by following any path provided the seeker is sincere.

In every epoch a few men have formed into a nucleus of Light; men who can be called the messengers of God. The individual person is something entirely peculiar and mystic, not in the biological or psychological or social sense, but in the spiritual sense. Man in his essence is divine. This invisible, non-physical ingredient in man, the real self of life, is the storehouse of all powers and excellences. Once man is able to tap his divine energy, he will be free from bondage and misery. These disciples of the Master at this Math were to vindicate the glory, majesty and dignity of divine life. The manifestation of inner strength through spiritual practice is the peg on which hangs the entire future of life and civilization. It is not only the most original contribution of this group in recent times, but also very pragmatic and hence of momentous importance. It does help us to reshape our destiny by deepening our spiritual consciousness.. It affords us the greatest consolation in suffering. Hence, we find that the divinity of man and his spiritual development occupies the most

pivotal position, as it alone makes us really happy. Upon this rock of spiritual insight the entire philosophy of the Ramakrishna Order was clearly spelled out by Swamiji: 'First, let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods. Be and make. Let this be our motto' (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 4, p. 297). Swami Vivekananda was never tired of exhorting the glory of divine life. To focus our attention in our inner divinity and to carry the struggle to manifest it is a clarion call of Swamiji to one and all. Every genuine attempt to help humanity in all spheres of life has to accept this most important point of inner growth which makes other growth possible. It is man's idea of man that determines the attitude of life, and it is this attitude of life that shapes his future. Hence, man's idea of man is very vital for the growth of civilization and its continuity. 'The same Greek idea of man, which accounts for Greek civilization's rise and culmination, is also the explanation of its strange and tragic fate. Hellenism was betrayed by what was false within it' (*The Ancient Mediterranean View of Man*, Arnold J. Toynbee, pp. 3-4).

This monastic movement had certain unique features. This group was all educated and came from respectable families. They used to practise various disciplines without becoming narrow and parochial. Religion has to be lived rather than talked about. 'My mission is to show that religion is everything and in everything' (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 5, p. 132). By having this broadest view of religion, this group emancipated religion from distortion and unhealthy associations resulting from primitive superstitions, idolatry, etc. They lived life in tune with the Spirit and through their example they extolled the beauty of religion as a liberating force for man in the highest sense of the term. In their

catholic outlook they encompassed every valid tradition. Having intimate knowledge of the unity of existence, this brotherhood, following Sri Ramakrishna's vision, took upon themselves the privilege of serving the world by looking upon everyone as a manifestation of the Divine. There was no dichotomy between the spiritual and the mundane.

Hence, this brotherhood of monks headed by Swami Vivekananda, gave the human mind a sense of higher direction, which was explained in his motto of the Order in later years as, 'For the liberation of one's self and for the good of the world.' The essence of Vedanta was practised in every-day life. They infused dynamism in every aspect of life. 'Service to man is service to God' became a redemptive gospel for the regeneration of humanity.

'The power of thought,' says Bertrand Russell in his *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, 'in the long run is greater than any other human power.' In all great epochs of history, such great illumined souls who move men, move the world for absolute peace and security. 'The only real revolution is in the enlightenment of the mind and the improvement of character; the only real emancipation is individual and the only real revolutionists are philosophers and saints' (*The Lesson of History*, by Will and Ariel Durant, p. 72). History is mainly 'a collection of crimes, follies and misfortunes' of mankind. This is the view of Saint Augustine, Voltaire, Gibbon and many others. Rightly, Thomas Carlyle says in his *Sartor Resartus*, 'Perhaps the most remarkable incident in modern history is not... the Battle of Austerlitz, Waterloo, Peterloo, or any other battle, but an incident

passed carelessly over by most Historians, and treated with some degree of ridicule by others; namely, George Fox's making to himself a suit of Leather. This man, the first of the Quakers, and by trade a shoemaker, was one of those to whom, under purer or ruder form, the Divine Idea of the Universe is pleased to manifest itself, and... who are therefore rightly accounted prophets, God-possessed.'

Baranagore Math was indeed a spiritual laboratory where they did superhuman struggle to discover their inner divinity. This search for higher values of life was never noted by history. They were unknown till the advent of Swami Vivekananda in the West. A spiritually inspired minority alone is capable of creating a new wave of enthusiasm in the racial consciousness. They act as saviours of the race by projecting the abiding values of the Spirit as opposed to the values of the flesh, which fails to rouse our emotion. Baranagore Math under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda gave the Nation the fruits of their spiritual insight. A comprehensive message of life was given to the people who found his total view of life very inspiring. It was spiritually satisfying, intellectually justifying and emotionally inspiring. The nation was stirred to its very depth and followed him. 'The great man of the age,' says Hegel, 'is one who can put into words the will of his age, tell his age what its will is, and accomplish it. What he does is the heart and essence of his age; he actualizes his age' (*What is History?*, by E. H. Carr, p. 48).

In this Centenary celebration of the Ramakrishna Order, we pay our respectful homage to the heroes of the Spirit who created history at Baranagore Math.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

FLY ONWARD, O BIRD

Recently the *Prabuddha Bharata* editorial office received an invitation card from one of our Centres in U.S.A., the Vedanta Society of Northern California. It is a general invitation to the spiritual sessions for the month of February 1987 and to the celebration of Shivaratri, the night dedicated to the Lord Shiva. There is nothing new in the lecture schedules. But what immediately impressed the reader was the back page of the card where a full poem of Jalal al-Din, Rumi was quoted. The poem is 'Fly Onward'.

Why does the spirit not fly to its home, when the voice of the Divine Majesty is heard, with a fair message to the soul, saying: 'Ascend'?

How should the fish not spring swiftly into the water from the dry land, when it hears the sound of the waves from the limpid sea?

Why should a falcon not leave its prey and fly toward the King, when it hears the call to return, from drum and drumstrap?

Why, like a mote in the sunbeams, should not every Sufi begin to shine forth in the sunshine of immortality that it may snatch him away from mortality?

He gives such grace, beauty, and newness of life, that he who turns aside from Him brings affliction on himself and is in error.

Fly, fly onward, O bird, toward the abode whence thou didst come, for thou hast gone forth from thy cage and thy wings are spread forth: make thy journey from the brackish water to the water of life.

Return toward the spirit's home, from the place to which thou didst enter in. Go on thy way, O soul, for we also are coming from this world of separation to that world of union.

Until when, like children, shall we fill

our skirt with dust, stones, and potsherds, in this earthly world? Let us leave the dust alone and let us fly toward the heavenly places.

—Jalal al-Din Rumi
Sufi mystic, 13th Century

Ramakrishnites, or the followers of Ramakrishna Vedanta could do that. This respect for seers, for mystics, for the realized souls anywhere in the world, is spontaneous with them. They respond to wherever there is a genuine message for the realization of our innate divinity. This small poem is an incantation which they would sing in joy.

The message is the eternal message—'Fly, fly onward, O bird'. This is the message of which the Upanisads repeatedly reminded us—*cara eva iti*—fare forward, O striving soul, this is the only message for you.

This is the same message of Bergsonian dynamism which one scarlet evening Tagore heard in the restless flight of the white cranes over the tall poplars of Jhelum in Kashmir—'Not here, not here, somewhere, somewhere else'. In the same mood he cried out once again to the little bird in us, struggling alone at night to reach the other shore of the ocean. 'Yet dear bird, dear bird of mine, do not close thy wings now, though the way is enveloped in darkness.'

Human beings throughout the ages have struggled to reach the realm of absolute freedom of the Self. 'Freedom, freedom is the song of my soul', used to say Vivekananda. The constant refrain of Buddha was 'wander alone like a rhinoceros, like a lion breaking the fetters of the cage, like the wind unarrested by the leaves'. The

ever-free souls, Sri Ramakrishna used to say, are like those Homa birds which are conceived and born in the sky. The egg gets hatched while falling from the mother's womb, the little bird comes out, and when it sees itself rushing towards an impending death on the hard ground, it flies back to its home, the 'Spirit's home', as Rumi says. It knows how to live in the heaven of perpetual freedom unspoiled by the least touch of the superincumbent world. Such birds are the archetypal symbols of spiritual freedom. There is in all of us, 'the unlimited sea gull', as Jonathan Seagall heard from within. The Skylark, of the English romantic poets, and the *Shaheen* of Sufi poets are such symbols of the ever-free spirit of man, struggling and escaping from the thousand meshes of the body-mind complex. Says the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad* (4.3.18): 'As a hawk or a falcon flying variously in the sky is exhausted and stretching its wings directs itself towards its nest only, even so does this infinite entity hasten to the state where falling asleep it seeks no desire and sees no dream.'

The song of Shelley's Skylark is incomparably sweeter than all the 'chorus hymeneal' or the 'triumphal chant' 'wherein we feel that there is some hidden want'. The Skylark's unfettered flight in the infinity of the sky is a symphony in itself, a reflection of the Absolute Bliss (Ananda) of the Self in us. Standing on the sea-shore of Pisa, Shelley wrote:

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire
The blue deep thou singest
And singing still doest soar and soaring
ever singest.

The falcon's fight in boundless freedom, like the tempestuous movement of the west wind, is also a grim reminder to us of our helpless finitude and iron bondages of life of which Shelley wrote:

I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed
A heavy weight of hours has chained
one, too, like thee...

This fear of bondage lingers in Rumi's mind, too. He entreats the spiritual seeker never to return to the 'dust' and 'stones' of 'this earthly world' 'which may snatch him away from the sunshine of immortality'. We are reminded again, of Sri Ramakrishna's story of the woodcutter and the holy man. The holy man asked the woodcutter to go ahead and never stop. He went ahead and found forests of sandal wood. He became rich. Yet he did not stop. The holy man asked him never to stop even when all the wealth of the world was attained. He never ceased to go ahead until he reached the infinitude of wealth and bliss.

This little invitation card is inspiring. It inflames our drooping spirit with a new hope and dynamism. Why not give a fresh start to our quest. Who knows when the heaven would be at our doorsteps? The poem has got a touch of Ramakrishna's passionate cry to humanity, his dear children—Realize God. Realize God. Nothing else matters. That is the greatest aim of this puny little life of ours in the 'vast vale of tears', this *samsaric* existence, his endless cycle of desires and unfulfilment, birth and death. Move on. Movement is life. He who moves, gets. This heaven-ward flight of the falcon is a foretaste of that Freedom, that final liberation from all slavery, which is the goal of our life.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S DAKSHINESWAR: EDITED BY PRAVRAJKA ATMAPRANA. Published by Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, C-8A, Hauz Khas, New Delhi 110 016. 1986. Pp. x + 79. Rs. 30.

Sri Ramakrishna's Dakshineswar is a literary pilgrimage to the holy precincts of Dakshineswar blessed and deified by the historic life and sadhana of Sri Ramakrishna, the God of this age. It is also a meditation on those spots hallowed by the radiating divinity and spiritual quest of the latest incarnation of God on this earth. As the readers turn the pages and look at the kaleidoscopic series of coloured photographs of the village they take a visionary flight to those halcyon days and live for some time with the simple, child-like God-man inviting you to make the same pilgrimage to Godhead, he himself had made a century ago.

The preface of this beautiful book of 79 pages sets forth the objective, 'Devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, too, would love to follow his footprints as he lived in Dakshineswar for thirty years. Sri Ramakrishna is a vast book; Dakshineswar is only a chapter, but a very important one. So an attempt has been made in this book to capture the rarefied spiritual atmosphere of the Dakshineswar temple garden and the surrounding area as it was in his times.' The book, in fact, is a spiritual quest to Ramakrishna's Dakshineswar. The importance of this quest is brought forth powerfully in the foreword by Pravrajika Mokshaprana, the President Mataji of Sri Sarada Math: 'At Dakshineswar Sri Ramakrishna's sadhana was an all-inclusive endeavour for the emancipation of all beings—an emancipation which did not leave out even a single living creature, however lowly it may be. No person in the history of the world had made such an endeavour. He is the Dakshina-Iswar, a kind-hearted God.'

The Kali temple of Dakshineswar is the fulfilment of a divine dream. The devout Rani Rasmani's mind was all full of enthusiasm and delight at the prospect of the holy pilgrimage she was going to make to Venares. But the night before the journey, Mother Kali intervened. She appeared to the Rani in a dream and said, 'There is no need to go to Kashi. Install my image in a beautiful spot on the bank of the Ganga and arrange for my daily worship and food offering; I shall manifest myself in the

image and accept your worship daily.' (p. 3). The temple's history is fascinating: 'A part of the piece of land selected by the Rani at Dakshineswar belonged to an Englishman. In the other part of the land there was an abandoned Muslim burial ground, associated with the memory of a Mohammedan holy man. The piece of land had the shape of the back of a tortoise.' 'The construction of the temple started in 1847 and was completed in eight years at the expense of nine hundred thousand rupees'. (p. 5).

The name of the deity in the main temple is given as 'Sri Sri Jagadiswari Mahakali', although popularly She is known as 'Bhavatarini' (p. 8). It is here that Sri Ramakrishna one day withdrew himself from the 'conventional society' and plunged into sadhana for the vision of God in the deity. After this vision was obtained by means of a death defying passion, in the same temple compound he made his next journey to the different aspects of God through all the avenues of creeds and religions. Here he did his sufi Islamic sadhana. Here he had the vision of Christ. Here under the Panchavati and in the secluded jungle of the temple garden he had the visions of Sita, Hanuman, Rama, Lakshman, Radha, Krishna, Sri Chaitanya and other divine forms. Again, it is here on the steps of the Ganga that the brass image of Ramalala became living and swam with him. Here his gurus Totapuri and Bhairavi taught him. Here saints, scholars, devotees, seekers, the fallen ones, the aristocrats, and the commoners would throng like bees to drink the nectar of God from him.

The attractive part of the book is its photographs. The visual images help the reader at once in the spiritual pilgrimage. In total there are in this small book 33 plates (30 in colour and 3 in black and white).

The names of different chapters are: 'The Divine Will', 'Within the Holy Courtyard', 'The Kuthi, the Nahabat and the Room', 'The Divine Playground', 'Gurus in Succession', 'My Life in Dakshineswar (in the words of Sri Sarada Devi)', 'In Dakshineswar (in the words of Swami Vivekananda)', 'When the Lotus Blooms Bees Come', 'With Sri Ramakrishna in Dakshineswar', and 'In and Around Dakshineswar'. With, each chapter most of the important incidents associated with the life of Sri Rama-

krishna are put forth along with the running narrative. Most of these incidents are taken from the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master*. About the room of Sri Ramakrishna we are reminded: 'Thus in the room and out on the verandahs Sri Ramakrishna moved about leisurely, making the place a centre of spiritual power to bring enlightenment to many. Speaking about the room he said one day, "There has been much chanting of the Lord's name in the room. That is why the atmosphere has become so intense".'

Even minor details and anecdotes associated with places in and around Dakshineswar are respectfully portrayed. Some of the information regarding the historical evolution of the village are quite new. Even those who are born and brought up in the village may not know about them.

Memories of countless incidents during the period of sadhana, years of divine ecstasy, of the blissful gathering of devotees in the presence of the Master, and especially memories of silent but intense tapas of Holy Mother inside the small Nahabat crowd our minds as we go through the pages. When the circumambulation round the holy village is over through the pages of this small book, we feel like M., 'Each particle of dust in Dakshineswar is holy, animate and living, because of the touch of Bhagavan's holy feet. The trees, the creepers, *devarshis* and *bhaktas* of this place are all standing to witness and enjoy the nectar of the play of Sri Bhagavan. They are all a witness to the play of the Avatar.'

The cover invites you to step down from the boat of your pilgrimage on the holy steps of Dakshineswar temple. The various photographs take you round the village. As you go on reading, you live in Dakshineswar and live with Ramakrishna, the kind-hearted God—the Dakshina Iswar, whose touch had transformed every brick of the temple garden into gold. When we close the book we feel closer to the dear God as he liked to live in his much-beloved temple precincts.

Dakshineswar is the Sakti-pitha of this age, where Ramakrishna had aroused the 'Brahma-Kundalini' of the universe, as Swami Vivekananda said. It is here that Ramakrishna had worshipped Mother Kali in the temple, and in his own wife, the eternally pure Holy Mother Sarada Devi, as the visible manifestation of the same Cosmic Mother Power of the Universe. Here the same Mother Power, the great,

purifying and spiritual power of this age was manifested in its fullness through the body of Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Sarada Math's publication of this book is significant. It will help establish the glory and power of Dakshineswar-on-the-Ganga in the world map and inspire the veneration which the Christians feel for Jerusalem-on-the-Jordan and Muslims feel for Mecca and Medina or the Buddhists for Bodh-Gaya and Saranath.

S.J.

GITA ENLIGHTENED: BY YOGI MAHAJAN. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, 41 U.A., Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007. 1986. Pp. 117. Cloth Rs. 75 and paper Rs. 50.

Scholars and specialists may study the Vedas and Upanishads but Gita and Ramayana are scriptures for the common millions. Gita has been translated into 75 languages of the world and there are over 2000 translations of it (apart from local versions by many Gurus and Sadhus for their own coterie). It is the most translated book in the world, second only to the Bible (chiefly due to the power of their world-wide Empire). There is a Persian translation by Dara Shikoh (brother of Aurangzeb) and another by Abul Fazal.

The present work authored by Yogi Mahajan is the exposition of the ideas on the subject by his spiritual preceptor, Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi.

Pandits and priests preach lofty ideals, he says, but their personal lives often reveal contrary to what they preach. Shri Mataji is a realized soul, whose preachings are her personal practices over the long year. (Gandhiji said that his translation or interpretation of Gita was based on his and his Ashramites' practice for 40 years).

Gita is the gospel of full-blooded action, desireless action, action without attachment or personal ego. The writer translates the famous Shloka epitomizing the central idea of the Gita in these words:

'Do thy work but let there be no attachment to the fruits of action. Let the reward not be the motive. Nor fall into the state of inaction.'

Work is life, work is joy. Happiness is a by-product of over-busyness. Nature fills one's empty time with disease, worry and fears. An over-worked person has no time to whine, to fall

ill, even to die. One who is busy in any work however pointless is happy; he who does work for his own betterment or welfare is happier; while he who is working for the good of others feels the happiest. Happiness means self-forgetfulness, that comes through total absorption in some worthwhile activity. That work is best done, when the whole care is about the work, with no thought of the result or fruit to disturb efficient performance. As Gandhiji says he who has an eye on the fruit loses the nerve to perform the task. The writer gives the example of a woman doing the cooking. If all the time, she is thinking of how her cookeries would or would not please whom, she diffuses her attention on the cooking job and the quality suffers. Or take another example: Cricketers on the score of 90 plus often get out, for the thought of the coming century diffuses their concentration on the present ball. Or take another example: the hare runs faster than the hounds; but they always catch it. Why? It again and again looks back to see the outcome—the fruit. Nor is a person doing his best with no thought for the outcome or fruit a loser. As Gandhiji says, he reaps ten times more (the exception is the pretender who uses this pose to gain ten times more).

One merit of this work is that the writer is refreshingly frank, no inhibition in the interest of Mahatmaship. Says he, the author of Gita was Veda Vyasa, who was an illegitimate child of a fisherwoman (a Shudra). Orthodoxy would slur over such a matter. Or again, Janak was a man of action, (ruling over a kingdom, sitting on a golden throne). His example negates the practices of ascetic orders, who seek enlightenment through renunciation of work. 'Escapism is not renunciation. Retiring to a mountain cave or changing the colour of clothes does not bring realisation. For the egoless one there is nothing to renounce.'

The writer (or Great She beyond) is no kill-joy, out of tune with life and laughter. Says he:

'A realised person is bubbling with laughter. He does not know how to control his laughter or how to hide his joy. Meditation is the art of rejoicing in life; it is for life, not anti-life (no mourning philosopher this).

Again there is no touch of fanaticism or exclusiveness.

All want to reach the top. There are many routes to it. All Prophets illuminated one or the other aspects of the divine. No single

Prophet revealed everything. Hence to come to terms with reality, a Hindu must know the message of Muhammad, of Christ, of Buddha—and vice versa'. This is cosmopolitan religion, suited to the space age.

There are hordes of bogus Gurus around, some exported too (Mataji is a genuine realized soul). 'To ensure clientele, fake Gurus say exotic things about meditation'. Their sayings are so obscure (and confused) that the ignorant think they must be very profound.

Or again, 'Somebody has the power to produce ash out of hand, or Swiss watches from the air and you are enchanted—sold. These enchantments lead you astray.'

Reference to a rival Guru is too transparent; perhaps there is professional competition even at the top.

Ego is the cause of all our trouble. Even Radha is jealous of the flute (Bansuri), as it is in touch with Krishna's lips. It has no ego; it lets the Master play on it any tune that He pleases. So that egoless man is happy, who bows his head to the will of God, whatever destiny, He sends.

The author laments, 'Even today, the fanatic devils are, in the Name of God, working out their Satanic plans to destroy the peace—of the world. Either they are on the ego trip to destroy others, or on a super ego nonsense to destroy themselves'.

'God', says the Gita, 'lives in the heart of all beings', Life's goal is self-realization or realizing that God within. A separated drop (soul) dries up and is miserable; if remerged in the ocean (Cosmic Force of God), it has the feel of Eternity. That is all Bliss. Ignorant man (and that's nearly the whole humanity) is like the blind philosopher, searching in the dark room for the black cat, that is not there.

Freud, according to the author, is a half-baked intellectual, who reduced all humans to sex points. Western world has accepted his thesis as gospel 'as if he were greater than Christ, because he supported human failings and human weaknesses.'

Arjuna said, 'O Lord Supreme, I yearn to see Thy Divine Form'. Krishna gave him the Divine Eye to see and told him that countless heads, arms, chests etc. were the image of God; meaning humanity is God and that the service of human beings is the true service of God.

This work is not the dry-as-dust treatise, as

a religion-based book is expected to be. Rather it makes pleasurable reading. Some of its pointed sentences can be Quotable Quotes; for instance:

'Nothing comes from nothing, it never can. You have to lose something to gain everything'.

'After every five days, the donkey puts on the wings of a bird' (referring to weekend holidaying in the west)

'Look at flowers, they are dying tomorrow, but every minute they live they are emitting fragrance to you'.

'The current of life flows. It never looks back.'

P. D. SHASTRI, M.A. (double) M.O.L (Sanskrit)
Emeritus Professor of Divinity and Retd. Vice-Principal of Government College, Chandigarh.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA VRINDABAN

REPORT FOR APRIL 1985 TO MARCH 1986

Begun in 1907 as a small homoeopathic dispensary the Sevashrama has now grown into a 121-bed allopathic hospital and an important monastic centre. The hospital has departments of general surgery, ophthalmology, general medicine and a homoeopathic outpatient clinic. The general surgery department performs a wide variety of operations, having a neurosurgeon also among its staff. Facilities exist for conducting electrocardiography, radiography, physiotherapy and laboratory tests. An 8-bed ward is provided for cancer patients. The emergency department is a boon to the public, conducting medical and surgical service round the clock. A well-equipped eye department is a special feature of this hospital. The Pallimangal (Integrated Rural Development) scheme has been rendering free service to the poor people of 150 villages in Mathura district. The nursing school, which has been functioning since 1980 offers a 3-year course in nursing and admits 10 students every year. As a part of the training in the nursing school and also for the benefit of the people of the area the maternity service has been started since 14.1.86.

During the period under report, the Sevashrama treated 2,12,844 outpatients (new: 43,276) all of whom received free consultation and medicines. The number of inpatients treated was 3,188 of whom 31% received free treatment which was subsidized to the extent of 75% for the rest of them. The number of surgical operations conducted in the hospital was 581. A total number of 50,329 patients (new 30,621) were treated under the Pallimangal (integrated rural

development scheme) all of whom received consultation and medicines free.

Besides medical service the Sevashrama has made permanent arrangements for supplying drinking water through taps fixed on the Sevashrama boundary wall on the main road side to the people and also from a big trough to the cattle. The Sevashrama provides shelter on temporary basis to sadhus and Vaishnavas in its old buildings. It provided free stationery to 416 poor students, helped the poor through financial assistance, and by providing clothings etc.

Immediate needs: It should be noted that the Sevashrama does not ask for or receive any financial help from the government for the maintenance of the hospital and depends solely on the help received from the benevolent public. A donation of Rs. 50,000 towards the maintenance of a hospital-bed may be made as an endowment in memory of someone. Donations may also be made for any of the items mentioned under *Future Plans* given below. The immediate need is to buy certain essential equipment and to wipe out the accumulated deficit of Rs. 2,49,186.87 (as on 31.3.86).

Future Plans:

A. *Construction:*

1. Intensive care unit with attached laboratory etc. : Rs. 2,75,000
2. Modifications in operating room complex and wards : Rs. 1,00,000
3. Completion of hospital roof : Rs. 1,50,000
4. Staff quarters : Rs. 3,00,000
5. Maternity Block : Rs. 10,00,000

B. Equipment:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Ceiling operation lamp | : Rs. 40,000 |
| 2. Some essential instruments for general, orthopedic, ENT, ophthalmology and neuro surgery departments | : Rs. 1,94,000 |
| 3. Operating microscopes | : Rs. 2,00,000 |
| 4. Spectrophotoflurometer, automatic slide-staining machine, refractometer, blood gas analyser, electronic cell counter, electrophoresis unit, slide counter | : Rs. 3,12,000 |
| 5. Angiomat 3000 Viamonte-Hobbs injector | : Rs. 3,00,000 |
| 6. Florobrite Tri Mode cesium iodide image-intensifier with TV | : Rs. 5,00,000 |
| 7. For Maternity Department | : Rs. 5,00,000 |
| 8. For Intensive Care Unit: central monitoring cardio-scope, defibrillator, pace-makers etc. for 8 beds | : Rs. 6,00,000 |

9. For Laundry : Rs. 2,70,000

C. Endowments

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|--|-----------------|
| Endowments for maintenance, purchasing of medicines and other requisites for Pallimangal (Integrated Rural Development) work | : Rs. 5,00,000 |
| For 39 beds | : Rs. 19,50,000 |
| For hospital maintenance fund | : Rs. 42,30,692 |
| For building maintenance | : Rs. 1,99,250 |
| For Goseva fund (dairy) | : Rs. 1,64,228 |
| For land development fund | : Rs. 1,00,000 |
| For hospital development fund | : Rs. 4,77,800 |
| For School of nursing | : Rs. 3,02,800 |
| For maternity department | : Rs. 11,00,000 |
| For hospital movable properties fund | : Rs. 10,00,000 |
| For general relief and welfare fund | : Rs. 1,00,000 |
| For Mission workers' fund | : Rs. 5,00,000 |
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JNANA YOGA

(Class lectures delivered in America)

By

Swami Vivekananda

No. 1, Sadhanas or Preparations

(Concluded)

A pure heart sees beyond the intellect; it gets inspired; it knows things that reason can never know, and whenever there is conflict between the pure heart and the intellect always side with the pure heart, even if you think what your heart is doing is unreasonable. Reasoning will come later on. Even though it may be every instant desiring to do good to the poor, and your brain may tell you that it is not politic to help these poor men, yet follow your heart, and you will find that you make less error than by following your intellect. The pure heart is the best mirror for the reflection of truth, so all these disciplines are purifying the heart, and as soon as it is pure all truths flash upon it in a minute; all truth in the universe will be there in your heart if you are sufficiently pure.

* * * * *

HARIH, OM

(The Skandopanishad of the Yajur Veda)
The Peace Chant

Om! May He protect us both; may He be pleased with us; may we develop strength; illumined may our studies be. May there be no dispute.

Om! Peace, Peace, Peace! Harih, Om

Om! O Mahadev! Through a small fraction of Thy (boundless) grace, I am immortal; I am Vijnana ghana (all-wisdom, the Universal consciousness, boundless and pure); I am blissful. What is there higher than this!

Truth shone not as truth, because the mind was not pure. By the death of the (impure) mind, Hari is all-wisdom. As my nature also is all-wisdom, I am birthless. What is there higher than this!

All non-atmic, non-real things (*jada*) vanish like dream. He who sees the real and the non-real, that immortal One (Achyuta) is by nature all-wisdom. He, verily, he is the Great God (Mahadev). He, verily, he is the Great Hari. He, verily, he is the Light of all lights. He, verily, he is the Great Lord (Parameswara). He, verily, he is the Brahman. I am that Brahman. There is no doubt (about this).