



Prabuddha Bharata

or

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Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896.

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CONTENTS

Visions of Divinity	1
To our Readers	2
About this Issue	2
12 January: National Youth Day (Editorial)	3
Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and Neo Vedanta in Europe: Early Days —Swami Amarananda	...	...	...	10
The Tao of Physics Revisited II —Dr. Fritjof Capra	...	...	...	18
India's Vision of Samanvaya II —Swami Ranganathanandaji	...	...	...	28
Reviews and Notices	36
Practical Hints on Spiritual Life	39
Prabuddha Bharata: 90 Years ago	40



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No. 1

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

VISIONS OF DIVINITY

Sri Ramakrishna

It was on a Sunday in spring, a few days after Sri Ramakrishna's birthday, that M. met him the first time. Sri Ramakrishna lived at the Kalibari, the temple garden of Mother Kali, on the bank of the Ganges at Dakshineswar.

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M. stood there speechless and looked on. It was as if he were standing where all the holy places met and as if Sukadeva himself were speaking the word of God, or as if Sri Chaitanya were singing the name of glories of the Lord in Puri with Ramananda, Swarup, and the other devotees.

* * * * *

Sri Ramakrishna was standing still, surrounded by a few devotees, and Narendra was singing. M. had never heard anyone except the Master sing so sweetly. When he looked at Sri Ramakrishna he was struck with wonder; for the Master stood motionless, with eyes transfixed. He seemed not even to breathe. A devotee told M. that the Master was in Samadhi. M. had never before seen or heard of such a thing. Silent with wonder, he thought: 'Is it possible for a man to be so oblivious of the outer world in the consciousness of God? How deep his faith and devotion must be to bring about such a state!'

Narendra was singing :

Meditate, O my mind, on the Lord Hari,
The Stainless One, Pure Spirit through and through.
How peerless is the Light that in Him shines!
How soul-bewitching is His wondrous form!
How dear is He to all His devotees!
Ever more beautiful in fresh-blossoming love
That shames the splendour of a million moons,
Like lightning gleams the glory of His form
Rising erect the hair for very joy.

The master shuddered when this last line was sung. His hair stood on end, and tears of joy streamed down his cheeks. Now and then his lips parted in a smile. Was he seeing the peerless beauty of God, 'that shames the splendour of a million moons'? Was this the vision of God, the Essence of Spirit? How much austerity and discipline, how much faith and devotion, must be necessary for such a vision!

TO OUR READERS

With this issue *Prabuddha Bharata* or *Awakened India* enters the ninety-third year of its publication. On this happy occasion we send our greetings and good wishes to our subscribers, readers, contributors, reviewers, publishers of books, friends and sympathizers for their continued support. May the new year bring them peace, prosperity and joy!

Prabuddha Bharata brings through its pages the message of Eternal India to the modern world. With the advent of the superindustrial civilization with its technetronic revolution, and an increasing number of racial or national conflicts, the hunger for the message of man's essential divinity, and unity of religions, has increased all the more. There is a prophecy in the Old Testa-

ment that a time will come when there will be a famine, not for water or bread, but for hearing the words of God. That time has come. *Prabuddha Bharata*, the oldest running journal of India, is the dreamchild of Swami Vivekananda who prophesied that a time will come when humanity, tired of materialism, will turn to the message of the Upanishads in order to discover the Kingdom of God within. From the Himalayan home of *Prabuddha Bharata* this message goes every month to different parts of the world. The need is vast, the means is meagre, and the service is modest. We only hope that our readers will help us by their co-operation and a sympathetic effort to make more subscribers in order to carry the message of *Prabuddha Bharata* to many more homes of both the East and the West.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL 12 January: National Youth Day is an attempt to show what a great void in our national life has been fulfilled by the historic circular declaring Swami Vivekananda's birthday as the National Youth Day of India.

IN RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA AND NEOVEDANTA IN EUROPE: THE EARLY DAYS Swami Amarananda, the Assistant minister in Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna, Gretz, Paris, writes with relevant facts and details about the genesis and the present progress of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement in the continent of Europe.

IN THE CONCLUDING PORTION OF THE TAO OF PHYSICS REVISITED Dr. Fritjof Capra writes about the genesis of the book, the six different aspects of the new paradigm of

science, and his answers to various criticisms to his epoch-making book, *The Tao of Physics*. The author besides being engaged in doing research in theoretical high-energy physics is the founder of the Elmwood Institute which is a greenhouse for new ecological visions.

IN THE CONCLUDING PORTION OF INDIA'S VISION OF SAMANVAYA Swami Ranganathananda, senior trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, and celebrated preacher of Vedanta tells us how deeply this idea of Samanvaya has influenced the socio-political, cultural and religious aspects of Indian life in general. The article is reproduced from the tape-recorded talk of the First Kaka Kalelkar Memorial Lecture on the same subject.

12 JANUARY : THE NATIONAL YOUTH DAY

(EDITORIAL)

A small boy got acquainted with Vivekananda's ideas while studying in a Ramakrishna Mission school. Years afterwards as a student of I.I.T., he read in the paper the news of a devastating flood in Bengal. Vivekananda's voice rang in his ears. Quietly he went alone from departments to dormitories and raised a small sum of Rs, 20,000/- and sent it to Belur Math.

A young woman scientist returned from Russia with a high degree and heard the call of Vivekananda. Soon she left the life of ease and comfort, and came out to bring a new life to thousands through a great institution in the name of Vivekananda.

A young I.A.S. officer caught the fire of Vivekananda by coming in contact with some fiery Vivekanandist monks. Brushing aside all the snobbery of a high class society, he stood out, despite all opposition and sufferings, as an ideal servant of the people, especially the poor.

A distinguished minister got inflamed with Vivekananda's writings. Soon he became a servant of the poor, and later on a leader in Indian thought.

With a high first class in B.Sc., a girl failed to get a seat in the post-graduate course. Deeply worried she thought, 'Future is dark'. But her teacher said, 'Why do you not try any other subject, literature, for instance?' 'Impossible, I never read any literature. Out of 500 literature students competing, I cannot get even the last of the 60 seats.' 'You can. You certainly have the capacity. Nothing is impossible. The power is within you. Have faith', said the teacher, a Vivekanandist. With a little help she got the seat. Thenceforward the fiery words of Vivekananda became her only source of strength. The Atman-power, an indomitable faith in herself, was aroused.

It refused to submit to any obstacle, internal or external. With the all-conquering power of the Self, finally she came out with a very high first class. Vivekananda's words had imperceptibly brought in her an inner transformation. Finally, she decided to live a holy life of spiritual practice and bring the same grace of Vivekananda to thousands groping in darkness.

Vivekananda's words ring in our ears : 'The history of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves. That faith calls out the divinity within. You can do anything. You fail only when you do not strive sufficiently to manifest infinite power. As soon as a man or a nation loses faith, death comes.'¹

Hundreds of young men and women, coming in contact with the fire of Vivekananda's ideas, are emerging into a better, broader, and more dynamic life. Many of them, in various stations of life, have come up with a life-long determination to save the poor, the masses, and the have-nots in slums, hills, and jungles. The more fortunate of them, holding high university degrees and lucrative jobs, are sacrificing their whole lives in order to awaken divinity in themselves through hard *tapas* and service. They dream of helping thousands in the days to come through a pure life and the divine spark ignited in their own lives. 'There is a glow about everyone who is in any way associated with the name of Vivekananda', wrote an American journalist who met the western disciples of the Swami.

With a hope of bringing out this infinite power of goodness and divinity in the Indian youth, Srimati Indira Gandhi, the

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1971), Vol. 8, p. 228.

late prime minister of India, released, only fourteen days before her death, the historic circular holding up Swami Vivekananda as the ideal before the youth of India. The year 1985, the International Youth Year, has become a landmark in the history of modern India, as the historic circular (D.O. No. F.6-1/84-IYY, Department of Sports, dated 17.10.1984) declared 12 January, the birthday of Swami Vivekananda (according to the English calendar) as the National Youth Day of India and urged the various institutions of India to celebrate this Youth Day every year and inspire the youth of the country with the life-giving message of Swami Vivekananda. The circular says: 'You would kindly notice that the Birthday of Swami Vivekananda (12 January) is to be observed as the National Youth Day every year from 1985 onwards, as it was felt that the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and the ideals for which he lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian Youth.'

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Religion, according to Vivekananda, was the core of education. By religion he always meant true spirituality, the manifestation of the dormant divinity. 'Mere reason or technical training without a spiritual base is self-defeating. It does not solve our problems. The UNESCO report of 1962 on education all over the world was named 'Learning to do'. Technological advance or applied science was upheld as the be-all and end-all of education. After 20 years the same UNESCO report of 1982 was renamed as 'Learning to be'. This report quoted Sir Julian Huxley who said that man's role 'is to be the leader of the evolutionary process on the earth'. The report admitted that the end of education is to make 'the complete man'. It said, 'the physical, the intellectual, emotional, and ethical integration of the individual into a complete man is a broad definition of the fundamental aim

of education'. The report regretted that 'the malaise of the young' is due mainly to their own elders, who are daily flouting 'the ethical values' the young cherish in their hearts.² But it failed to define the philosophy behind the ethical education. All ethics is based upon unity, the Advaita, the fundamental solidarity of life, said Vivekananda. The report unfortunately did not mention the celebrated idea of Sir Julian Huxley, who said what we need is 'a science of human possibilities'. That brings us to Vivekananda's well-known definition of Education: 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' If, some one asks, 'Learning to be *what*?' The answer will be 'Learning to be the perfect man—perfect physically, intellectually, and, above all, spiritually'.

Vivekananda's clarion call at Lahore is a thundering rejoinder to the brilliant but indifferent intellectuals of India. 'I am one of the proudest men ever born, but let me tell you frankly it is not for myself but on account of my ancestry.'³ His dream was that India will conquer the whole world with her spiritual message. 'India must conquer the whole world, nothing less than that is my ideal', he said. 'My watchword is construction, not destruction. Out of the existing rituals new ones will have to be evolved', he said to his compatriots. 'Why should you give up the *sandhyavandanam*, the rich and tested traditions of thousands of seers?' was his reply to a young Indian who, in search of modernity, wanted to give up the daily rituals.⁴ Yet he categorically told Indians at the Rameswaram Shiva

2. *Challenge of Education—A Policy Perspective* (New Delhi: Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1985), pp. 10,45,47,55,69 & 75.

3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (1973), Vol. 3, p. 368.

4. Shankari Prasad Basu, *Vivekananda O Samakalin Bharatvarsha* (Calcutta: Mandal Book House, B.S. 1389) Vol. 1, pp. 113-14.

temple in the South that Shiva is more pleased with him who worships Shiva in the living and suffering human beings. 'I worship that god who by the ignorant is called Man', he said. Out of the old, he did, indeed, evolve the new religion of Practical Vedanta, which inspires millions today to worship god in schools, colleges, slums, villages, hospitals, and in drought and flood.

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Since the spiritual aspect of education was ignored, a child born in the West today, says British psychologist R.D. Laing, 'stands ten times greater chance of being admitted to a mental hospital than to a university. ... Perhaps it is our way of educating them that is driving them mad'.⁵ This misdirection of education is found everywhere today, including India, a country where spiritual values are ten times more deeply embedded in the soil than in West. Secularism is not negation of spiritual values. It is the equal acceptance of the universal and eternal values in all religions. It is these eternal values which Vivekananda wanted to make practical in the lives of the youth of our nation through a 'character-building' education.

India will produce a new generation of 'spiritual humanity',⁶ he wrote to his Madras friends. His idea was that educated young men and women inspired by 'religious enthusiasm' and fired with the zeal of service, would go, like Mohammed going to the mountain, to the doors of the masses in the evening hours in their own villages, with globes, charts, maps and cameras. Nearly ninety years have passed. Today villages have schools; universities have been multiplied by scores. Even non-formal

5. Quoted in *The Turning Point* by Fritjof Capra (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 389.

6. *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, op. cit., p. 151.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

education has started. But true education is yet to come.

What kind of educators did Vivekananda dream of? 'Can you become', Swamiji wrote to his Madras disciples, 'an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy and, at the same time, a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and *we will do it*. You are all *born to do it*.' Like a prophetic dreamer, he told the westerners in London in his speech, 'Unity in Diversity': 'I have seen some scientists who were equally practical, both as scientists and spiritual men, and it is my great hope that in course of time the whole of humanity will be efficient in this manner.'⁸ In the 1970's, Alvin Toffler worked on *Learning for Tomorrow* for the super-industrial or Third Wave Civilization which is coming with tremendous scientific development, but a spiritual vacuum. Vivekananda gave us an education where science and spirituality will supplement each other, and western science and India's Vedanta will successfully combine. India, if guided by Vivekananda's ideas, will create this education for tomorrow.⁹

* * * * *

Are the youths of India much different from the youths of the modern West? Probably not. The recent dizzy rise in drug addiction and terrorism and other vices shows they are going to suffer the same 'spreading plague of loneliness', as Alvin Toffler calls it, or the same 'sense of alienation', as the youth of Japan or USA, if the tide of sensate culture is not controlled now itself by a flood of spirituality as Vivekananda suggested. Modern sensate culture has brought lots of entertainment through the super-industrial revolution of T.V. and

8. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (1968), Vol. 2, p. 187.

9. *PHP (Japan)*: PHP Institute International Inc., April 1974, pp. 4-21.

computers. Entertainment has led to excitement and consequently to exhaustion and frustration leading to loss of faith and despair in life. The temporary pleasures of the senses bring no lasting bliss. Man lives for some kind of bliss and fulfilment in life. This bliss and a sense of fulfilment can come to youth through a life of self-control, *brahmacharya*, and a creative and constructive direction of their psycho-physical energies. Since that right path of moral life and higher strivings was not opened up to them, millions today have been hungry for drugs which give them at least an instant sensation of bliss. The result is catastrophic, giving birth to the 'black angel of AIDS'.

Why do the youths go to drugs? 'Heroin addiction', writes American psychologist Rollo May, 'gives a way of life to the young person.' Alvin Toffler tells us how young men are going to drug addiction 'having suffered under perpetual purposelessness', in order to find 'a new web of energy in place of his previous structureless world'. The robust energy of youth today suffers from want of a proper purpose in life. Lacking an upward, creative, and spiritual direction, they go to new, life-risking adventures like drunken driving, bank robbery, and drug addiction. In Japan the death-rate among youth (10-24 years) is 16% due to suicide and 30% due to drunken driving. In USA it is 10% and 54%, respectively. And this new epidemic has become, according to WHO, 'the most serious epidemic in industrialized countries and a major problem in all countries.'¹⁰

The materialistic philosophies have denied today's youth the great purpose of life—the manifestation of our innate Buddha-nature and Christ-nature without which, say the Upanishads, life is a great wastage, and

human beings are destined to live and die in a sunless life of agony.

As a youth, Vivekananda, too, plunged into life-risking adventures, but it was not 'self-destructive' as of today's youths. It was a passionate struggle to realize his 'innate divinity' as Buddha and Christ did in their youth, and to help the entire humanity attain the same 'infinite power of the Spirit within'. He was fortunate to have a spiritual hero as his leader—Sri Ramakrishna.

Vivekananda's words came out of his own direct experiences. To the Harvard philosophers, he said, 'Civilization is the manifestation of divinity in man'. In London, he reminded that the 'rise of a nation' comes along with the rise of spiritual giants, and 'the death of the race' begins the day spiritual values begin to disappear and materialism gains ground. In America, he declared like a prophet of the East: 'If your idea is matter, matter thou shalt be. Behold! Our ideal is Spirit. That alone exists, nothing else exists and like Him we live for ever.'¹¹

Today, we find the truth of this prophecy. On 27 October 1967, a mammoth gathering of fifty thousand Americans, mostly young, staged an anti-war demonstration before the Pentagon. Their demand was not war, but spiritual revolution. They failed to stop war, but brought a new way of thinking of which Theodore Roszak wrote in his book *The Making of a Counter Culture*: 'The cry is not for a revolution, but an apocalypse, a descent of divine fire.'¹² What Roszak called the 'descent of divine fire', Vedanta calls the ascent of the dormant divinity, the awakening of the Christ-power, the Buddha-power, the divine Self lying unawakened and yet potent in all of us.'

10. Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (London: Pan Books, 1981), pp. 384-86. And also in *Social Welfare* (New Delhi: Govt. of India), May 1985, p. 17.

11. Marie Louis Burke, *Swami Vivekananda: His Second Visit to the West* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1973), pp. 240-41.

12. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture*, p. 233.

'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within', said Vivekananda. This is the only anodyne to the 'perpetual purposelessness', to the rising drug addiction, the juvenile delinquency, crime, despair, and increasing rate of suicide in every materialistic society in the world today. Vivekananda dreamt of a time when the Indian youth will solve their own problems with this gospel of Vedanta and will preach the same abroad in order to bring a new direction of life for modern man.

* * * * *

Many of the twentieth-century youths were inspired by the dream of a revolution. The political messiahs of all types promised them a heaven for the masses through the path of a destructive revolution. There were great ideas of socialistic millennia, with utopian promises and 'manifestoes' which each time promised the public, 'peace and prosperity', 'more jobs', 'lower prices', 'law and order', 'more opportunities for the have-nots', etc. All these ultimately resulted, as Raymond Williams put it in his recent book *Towards 2,000*, in 'systematic dystopia', 'organized hell or vacuity' 'a more repressive, a more arbitrary, a more standardized and inhuman order'.¹³ Why did it happen like this? Each time the leaders of 'isms' asked the public to accept the present as a turbulent period and wait patiently for a calm and assured future, which unfortunately never came.

Cultural revolution in communist China simply exterminated thousands and thousands in the name of mass-regeneration. But disillusionment came soon to the leaders. *People's Daily*, China's official party paper, declared in December 1984: 'There are many things that Marx, Engels, and Lenin never experienced or had any contact with. We cannot depend on the works of Marx

and Lenin to solve our modern-day questions.'¹⁴ 'What is most deficient in the strictly utopian mode', writes Raymond Williams, 'is that this wholeness is essentially *projected* to another place or time.' And the promised 'there and then' was never realized into 'here and now'. The result is 'a damaging loss of belief in the practicability of thinking and shaping the future'. Prof. Williams writes, 'The manifestoes are still produced, but fewer and fewer people take them seriously'. A Russian youth confided to a foreign writer, 'If Lenin returned, we would greet him in the way, the Bible says, Jesus was received: "then he came unto his own but his own received him not." We would say to him what Dosteyvski's Grand Inquisitor told Christ: "Go away and never come back!"'¹⁵

The youth leader who led the leftist Sorbonne University students' revolution in 1968 today stands disillusioned. He saw how the leaders have 'sold out' themselves. 'It is time surely to cast off the soiled shirts', he said.¹⁶ The recent widespread interest in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda among Soviet academicians is an eye-opener. The statement on Vivekananda by Chinese Communist thinker Huan Chuan is startling: 'Vivekananda stands out as the most renowned philosopher and social figure of modern China.'¹⁷ While India's youths seeking revolution stand under the portrait of Marx or Mao, Russia and China are in search of Vivekananda as their own ideal.

What is the way out? Religion? The

14. *The Hindu* (Madras Daily), 10 and 12 December 1984, p. 10.

15. *The Challenge of Youth*, Ed. by Drik H. Erikson (New York: A Double Day Anchor Book, 1965), p. 330.

16. *Illustrated Weekly of India* (Bombay), 5.2.1984, 'Coverstory of Tarique Ali'.

17. *World Thinkers on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda*, Ed. by Swami Lokeshwarananda (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1983), p. 55.

13. Raymond William, *Towards 2,000*. London, p. 8.

very word 'Religion' again, unsettles us today. It has been synonymous with fatal fundamentalism, which inspires the youth in some parts of the world to start a bloody, sectarian revolution. But 'Religion', said Vivekananda, 'is the manifestation of the divinity within'. Books, rituals, dogmas, churches, mosques, or temples are only secondary details, which only help the individual attain the primary goal. When the secondary aspects of religion gain ascendancy over the primary, we see religion degenerating into a destructive power. 'Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries', he wrote to Nivedita. Vedanta as preached and practised in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda tradition inspires humanity to respect all religions as only various paths to the same Godhead, and all human beings, irrespective of caste, creed, and nationality, as embodiments of the same infinite Divinity.

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Today's youths stand at the crossroads. Many of their gurus promising 'instant solution', the so-called 'super simplifiers', have today been exposed in sordid nakedness. Political messiahs have either been falsified or rejected. The desire to have a national hero led the Indian youth since 1947 to the world of film-stars, capitalists, socialists, revolutionaries, politicians, industrialists, writers, players, musicians, artists, philosophers, or saints of various shape. But the search ended either in incomplete satisfaction or total frustration. What they need is the 'authenticity of a great soul', 'the white-hot experience' that might transform their lives. They want a man of pure character, burning realization, and prophetic unerring vision of the shape of things to come. The declaration of Swami Vivekananda's birthday as the National Youth Day will put to rest this long search for a credible national hero.

'Our heroes must be spiritual', said

Vivekananda. We are at once reminded of the young spiritual colossus, Shankaracharya, whose intrepid dynamism and stupendous knowledge had once unified India under the banner of Advaita. We remember Buddha, under whose power India, during Ashoka's time, developed the biggest political boundary. We remember the galaxy of spiritual luminaries like Ramanuja, Madhva, Sri Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, and others, who brought lasting social changes and development in India, through the power of spiritual life. And now this power, Vivekananda found, was revealed once again through Sri Ramakrishna. 'If this nation wants to rise ... it will have to rally enthusiastically round this name', reminded Vivekananda.¹⁸ In Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda found the gigantic spiritual wave 'which sweeps over society with irresistible force'.¹⁹

Vivekananda was oblivious that he himself stood out as the alter-ego of his Master, the very embodiment of that tidal wave. He, indeed, stands out as the most powerful ideal before the Indian youth, combining western dynamism with eastern spirituality.

Vivekananda was a man of prophetic dimension, a messenger of God. He gave his unerring message with a passion for humanity, in stirring rhythms like those of Handel or Beethoven, as Rolland said. 'He has lit the fire', Sri Ramakrishna said one day after young Narendra sang a song with the ecstasy of devotion. It is the fire of divinity that his words kindle in others' hearts. 'Out of purity and silence comes the word of power', Vivekananda used to say. Like Prometheus, as Nivedita saw him, he stood before his listeners with the radiant fire of divinity, with 'the wonderful voice of

18. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (1973), Vol. 3, p. 350.

19. *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, op. cit., p. 247.

God, the Vedanta'. 'I am a voice without a form', he said.

Vivekananda's words are gospels which 'grows and deepens in us with repetition', said his Irish disciple Nivedita.²⁰ 'Swamiji knew', she wrote, 'how to light a fire. Where others gave directions, he would show the thing itself.'²¹ His words could instil new life into the bones, like Christ's words to dead Lazarus. 'Ye have heard', Vivekananda said to Californians, 'that Christ said, "My words are Spirit and they are life"; so are my words—spirit and life. They will burn their way into your brain and you will never get away from them'.²²

Netaji Subhas found in Vivekananda's personality his own guru, the ideal pathfinder for India's youth. 'So far as character-building is concerned', he wrote, 'I cannot think of any better literature other than Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature.'²³ Nehru categorically said that, if he had to name one single personality as the ideal of Indian youth, he would mention no other name than that of Vivekananda. Prof. William James, the celebrated psychologist-philosopher of the nineteenth-century America, said, 'Vivekananda is an honour to humanity'. Tolstoy found in Vivekananda a personality who is at the level of Christ, Buddha, and Lao Tse.

Vivekananda lived and died young. But humanity sees in him a world-teacher. The burning purity and renunciation of his character would compel obedience from kings and commoners. 'It was his character to which I had thus done obedience', wrote

Nivedita.²⁴ The majesty of a man who conquered his self lent him a natural kingliness. 'I consider Narendra as the very embodiment of the Atman', said his Master Sri Ramakrishna. 'He was a born king. Nobody ever came near him without paying homage to his majesty', wrote Rolland. 'His walk was that of a god, a man accustomed to ruling', wrote an American disciple. Yet he never ruled. He was egolessness personified. He served God in man. The World-shaking power and dynamism dormant in his human frame would overwhelm anyone in his presence. It was the power of perfect purity and intensest renunciation. Some found in him a personification of love, and others a personification of power. His Master Sri Ramakrishna found in him the purity of Shuka, and a born hero destined to teach the world in the days to come. He was the personification of youthful beauty and freedom.

In him, all the four kinds of human energy—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual—were fully manifested and made a splendid symphony of knowledge and devotion, of action and contemplation. People saw in him a 'cyclonic monk', a 'warrior prophet'; yet he eternally longed for meditation in the Himalayan caves. Advaita philosophy inspired him to banish all rituals from the Advaita Ashrama in the Himalayas, and live in the presence of the One All-pervading Unity; yet he would be an impassioned devotee in temples or churches. His knowledge was stupendous. His reasoning would silence opponents with awe and reverence. His patriotism was burning. Yet his humanism would always transcend boundaries of nations, races, or religions.

India was to him the 'Punyabhumi'. She was the 'Queen of his adoration'. When he arrived in Madras after his triumph in the

20. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* (Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1972), Vol. 1, p. 121.

21. Sister Nivedita, *The Master as I Saw Him* (Calcutta: Udbodhan, 1983), p. 82.

22. Marie Louis Burke, *Swami Vivekananda: His Second Visit to the West*. op. cit., p. 451.

23. *Viswa Vivek* (Bengali), Ed. by Asit K. Banerjee, Shankari Prasad Basu, and Shankar (Calcutta: Vak Sahitya, 1973), pp. 191-92.

24. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* (1972), op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 22.

West, in 1897, the tumultuous sea of Indians saw in him 'India incarnate'; yet a wanderer on the face of earth, he knew that Truth was his god and universe his country. The westerners did not fail to see their beloved Christ in him. In the midst of intense action and struggle, he would radiate peace, serenity, and the bliss of Atman. Today, the world considers him as one of those saviours who come occasionally to save the disintegrating societies and lead mankind to fulfilment. Vivekananda's message is for both the East and the West. He is both a nation-builder and a world-mover.

His passion was for the youth of India. In them, he had an unusual faith and trust. From them, he expected gigantic characters. 'Upon ages of struggle one character is built. Truth is indestructible, virtue is indestructible. Purity is indestructible. Give me one genuine man, I do not want masses of converts', he sought from them. And those genuine souls came responding to his irresistible call. During the days of freedom

struggle, many died of bullets, chanting 'vande-mataram'; many went to the gallows with a smiling face; many suffered long years in prison, sometime solitary imprisonment. Most of them were inspired by the gospel of Vivekananda. In their eyes the prophet never died, but was a living presence lifting them up to great heights of *renunciation and service*—the twin ideals he set before them. Where are those days gone?

Shall India forget Vivekananda and walk blindly to extinction? This historic circular is epoch-making. It heralds the resurrection of the soul of India. The youth of India can today rejoice with the words of Sister Christine, a western-disciple of Vivekananda, who gave her life for India: 'Blessed is the country in which he was born. Blessed are they who lived on this earth at the same time, and blessed, thrice blessed are the few who sat at his feet.'²⁵

²⁵. *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, op. cit., p. 153.

RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA AND NEO-VEDANTA IN EUROPE: THE EARLY DAYS

SWAMI AMARANANDA

Right up to the end of the eighteenth century, Europe was not much aware of the fact that there was such a thing as the ancient wisdom of India. Very little of this wisdom percolated to European scholars through the sporadic descriptions of such authors as Lucena (1600) and Couto (1612) of Portugal, Rogerius (1651) and Baldaeus (1672) of Holland, Bernier (1668) of France, Holwell (1771) of Denmark, and Colebrook (1805) of England. Such a vast, multi-dimensional and deeply spiritual a country like India cannot be defined by a single

description. She casts a spell, a fascination on her lovers, which is almost mystical. 'Far from us in dream and in time, India belongs to the ancient East of our soul', said Andre Malraux.

The Dutch missionary Rogerius pioneered to portray the soul of India through his '*Open Door to the Hidden Heathendom*'. Sir William Jones translated '*Shakuntala*' into English (1789) and the German rendering of '*Shakuntala*' profoundly influenced Herder, Goethe and others of Germany. That was the real beginning, in modern age,

of the infiltration of the literature of classical India on the soil of Europe. But it was reserved for Anquetil Duperron of France to actually open the door to the 'Hidden Heathendom' through the publication of his retranslation in Latin (1801-1802) of the Upanishads already translated by the mughal prince Dara Shukoh (1656-57) in Persian. Schopenhauer and Schelling of Germany were carried away by the sublimity of the Upanishadic ideas in spite of the imperfection of the Duperronian translations. These Upanishads became a Bible to Schopenhauer who used to read them before going to bed.

Indeed, the achievements of German Indology in the last two centuries are remarkable. The discovery towards the end of the eighteenth century by Jones that Sanskrit is akin to Latin and Greek and other European languages and is older and more refined than any of them, gave rise to comparative philology and modern linguistics of which the founder was Franz Bopp, a German. Friedrich Schlegel, a full-fledged Sanskrit scholar of Germany, writes as early as 1819 about the depth and clarity of concepts in Indian philosophies. Another German called Friedrich Rosen published a portion of the *Rig-Veda* in 1838. The French Indologist Burnouf of Paris used this little material to introduce the *Rig-Veda* to his students; one among them was Max Muller, again a German.

It is, however, to be noted that the interest in Vedic religion created by Duperron and Burnouf, was limited within a very small circle of Indologists in Europe. Almost a century after Duperron's publications, Swami Vivekananda came to Europe. Swamiji addressed the Congress on the History of Religions held in Paris in 1900. That was a public lecture he gave in the Continent besides his another private talk on Vedanta in a Christian missionary college near Constantinople. Swamiji was well aware of the importance of the French language and

culture in the whole of Europe even before he arrived in France. He had already had some knowledge of the French language when he spent good many days on learning the language in Porbandar during his years of wandering in India. It seems that he also tried to learn French while he was in America. In Paris he actually put up in the residence of Jules Bois, a writer, to have a grip over French through a method of passive learning, namely, learning through conversations. On the eve of his final departure from Paris in 1900 he wished that he would return again and learn French in depth to be able to speak publicly. That unfortunately never came to pass, as he died within two years.

The continental Europe at the turn of the last century was different from what it is today. Except perhaps in Holland, a land of traders, in no other country could one manage in those days to get on simply with the knowledge of English. Today, more than forty years after the Second World War, a visitor can easily manage with English in most parts of West Germany and with difficulty even in the French capital. So in spite of Swamiji's seven months' stay in the continent (spread between the years 1895, 1896 and 1900), the immediate effect on the people around was not very much, although a few outstanding thinkers and preachers understood the prophetic dimension of the man. The conservative nature of a predominantly Roman Catholic Europe was also a factor. The picture is in sharp contrast with that on the other side of the English Channel.

Swamiji met, among the few outstanding westerners, a scholar like Geddes in France, a philosopher like Deussen in Germany and an artist like Madame Calve in France. Geddes in later years got more into the core of the Ramakrishna Movement, because of his association with Sister Nivedita. Deussen was an ardent Vedantist. But none of them

can be compared with the grand patriarch of Indology, namely, Max Muller in the ability to create a profound interest in Vedic literature or in Indian savants. In fact it seems that Deussen estimated (or rather under-estimated) Vivekananda merely as a scholar and an orator. He did not have much idea about the height of Swamiji's saintliness.

'The Face of Silence' of Dhana Gopal Mukherjee inspired the idealist and the lover of India, Romain Rolland (1866-1944) who soon became instrumental in creating in the Continent a widespread appreciation of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and the Neo-Vedanta. Max Muller's labour in England had reverberations among the scholars on the other side of the English Channel. But the whole of Europe, till the consolidation of power by the Nazis in Germany, was overshadowed by and large by the French cultural predominance. It was of historic importance that a French genius of the stature of Rolland should endeavour to rouse Europe to the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and Neo-Vedanta. In the last sixty years since Rolland first turned his attention towards the message from the East, the whole of the Occident has not seen another Rolland. His outstanding literary genius coupled with the penchant for the eternal and universal ideas cherished by India, brought about the beginning of the inundation of Indian philosophy in modern Europe.

Around the year 1932 one German named Wolfram Koch read Rolland's books on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda (*Vie de Ramakrishna* was published in 1929 and *Vie de Vivekananda et l'Evangile Universel* was published in two volumes in 1930). Immediately Mr. Koch was seized with a desire to secure a Swami of the Ramakrishna Order for the furtherance of Neo-Vedanta in Germany. The story goes that Swami Yatiswaranandaji, a disciple of Swami

Brahmananda, was on the point of assuming charge of the Kanchipuram centre in South India. One night he saw in a dream his Guru Brahmanandaji asking him : 'What about Thakur's work in Europe?' Next morning the Swami received a letter from Belur Math. The Headquarters wanted to know whether the Swami was ready for an assignment of preaching in Germany, an assignment for which Mr. Koch had been importuning Belur Math. The Swami accepted the offer and arrived in October 1933 in Wiesbaden, a small town in the Rhineland of West Germany.

Yatiswaranandaji began his work with a small group of aspirants in a building thrown open to him by one of his students. He used to explain to them the standard works of Vedanta like the *Gita*, *Panchadashi*, *Drig-Drishya-Viveka*, the major Upanishads and *Jnana-Yoga* of Swami Vivekananda. He used to talk to them about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and teach them also the art of meditation. One fine morning in August 1935 there was an impatient knock at the door of the Vedanta class at Wiesbaden. The door was opened. It was a Gestapo man who entered the room and asked the Swami : 'How do you dare holding conferences regularly here without getting yourselves registered? Moreover there are on the floor a few books which seem to be written in Hebrew. I would like to confiscate all these books.' The man went away with the books. Three days later some other Gestapo officials came to the Vedanta class to return the confiscated books and apologized : 'We are very sorry to have disturbed you. We now discover to our pleasure that these are the Sanskrit books written by our ancient Aryan brothers.' However, after this incident the Swami decided to shift his centre of activity from Wiesbaden to St. Moritz in Switzerland. Ultimately he moved to Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. The Swami used to occasionally visit France,

Belgium and Holland. It was during his participation in the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birth Centenary in Paris in 1936 by a little group at Sorbonne University, that the germ for an Ashrama of the Ramakrishna order in France, was sown. We shall come to the story soon. In 1939 the Swami took the last boat from the port of Bergen sailing for USA just a few days before warlike activities were initiated in Europe by Nazi Germany. By the time the Swami left Europe he had created a deep interest in Neo-Vedanta among a small group and had initiated about twenty persons.

During the above-mentioned Sorbonne Celebration Jean Herbert (an internationally-known interpreter drawn to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda through Miss McLeod's and Rolland's influence) and a few other friends requested Yatiswaranandaji to help them secure a Swami of the Ramakrishna Order for the sake of France. The Swami forwarded their formal invitation to Belur Math with the suggestion to send to Paris one of his younger brother-disciples named Swami Siddheswarananda. Belur Math agreed and Siddheswaranandaji arrived in Paris in July 1937. Very soon Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna came into being in a quarter of Paris called Auteuil.

Siddheswaranandaji began to stay with the Sautons, a French couple who remained loyal to him till their last. By the time France began to be gobbled up by Germany in 1939, the Swami had already begun speaking publicly in French. But the centre of his activities had also been shifted to a commodious building in another quarter of Paris called St. Mandé. Due to the German occupation of Northern France the Swami had to move to Montpellier in the South of France. He lectured there, in the University of Toulouse and also occasionally at Marseille, Nimes and other places. Some of his lectures were held with the sponsorship of Franciscan monks. Unfortunately his friend,

Mr. Marcel Sauton died of cancer in July 1945 and that was a great shock to the Swami.

In 1929 Mercel, then a young man, was sent by a firm called Hutchinson et Co. to the Far East, to search for its commercial prospects. In Saigon, one rainy day, he casually got into a library and came across Rolland's books on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. He bought the books and finished reading them soon. His whole mind had already been metamorphosed. He wrote back to his wife in Paris: 'The commercial voyage which has brought me to this part of the world may or may not be a success; that matters little. But I have found the saving anchor for my soul. I send you herewith the books which have opened a new horizon for both of us.' Eight years after, Marcel became the tutor of French language to Siddheswaranandaji. In return he would learn from his student nuances of Vedanta Philosophy which were intriguing even for the learned professors of Western Universities. Mr. Sauton translated in French many important Vedanta treatises: *Drig-Drisya-Viveka*, *Vivekachudamani*, *Panchadashi*, the eleventh chapter of Bhagavata Purana, *Mandukya Karika* etc. He also translated a biography of the Holy Mother from English to French and many other books. After his passing away Siddheswaranandaji publicly declared that Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna had lost in him a true friend, an energetic collaborator, and above all a saintly man whose last moments of earthly life were blessed with the intuition received directly from the Holy Mother.

The Swami returned to Paris after the passing away of Mr. Sauton. Meanwhile Nazi Germany had fallen to the Allies and France had been liberated. Around 1947 one lady called Mrs. Abreu Gonsalez, originally a Cuban and a disciple of Swami Akhilanandaji, came to the Swami with a

grand proposal. She was a cancer patient and was apprehending her end soon. She proposed to sell her hotel and donate the sale proceeds to Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna so that the Society could buy a big plot of land to be used as an Ashrama on the soil of France. The proposal was accepted and a big plot of land (the Ashrama area was originally much larger than what it is now) with a Chateau on it was purchased in Gretz, a village in the valley of Seine-et-Marne about 29 kilometers south-east of Paris. The Ashrama was actually established in 1948. The founding of this Ashrama is considered a crowning achievement of the Swami. Apart from the three-storeyed Chateau (which required a face-lift in a big way) by 1956 the Swami had two other double-storeyed buildings within the Ashrama campus—one mainly for the dedicated men and the other (called Sarada Mandir) mainly for lady visitors. This shows clearly that the Swami had already an impressive following during his twenty years of spiritual ministrations in France (He passed away on April 2, 1957).

But the Swami undertook an equally important task. He gave a series of lectures in Sorbonne University on Vedanta and Neo-Vedanta and on allied subjects. One point he was never tired of emphasizing was, to use his own words, 'the remarkable concordance between Indian thought and the spiritual thought of Europe, specially that of Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint John of the Cross, two great mystics of Spain, and also that of Meister Eckhart of Germany.' We find the following respectful homage being paid to the Swami in the *Dictionnaire de la Civilisation Indienne* compiled recently: 'The spiritual emanation from him won in favour of Vedanta doctrines a big audience in France and in Europe'.

During the Swami's years of piloting the Ashrama, such scholars and spiritual leaders

as Saint Ramada, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Mr. Suzuki, Dr. Benoit, Jean Herbert etc visited the Ashrama. In 1951 UNESCO organized in New Delhi an international Seminar on 'The Concept of Man and the Philosophy of Education in East and West'. UNESCO prepared a key document for this seminar on the basis of suggestions received from the Swami and Professor Lacombe of the University of Lille. This fact shows the impact of the Swami on the contemporary thinkers of the West.

To put it in brief, the rapid dissemination of Neo-Vedanta in the Continent during the highly productive years immediately after Rolland's books on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda published in 1929-30, was due to a number of factors. There was Rolland's sustained interest in the Ramakrishna Movement. There was a whole series of translations and compositions on India and her saints (fifteen volumes totally) undertaken by Mr. Jean Herbert. The works of Madame Lizelle Reymond and Avishiktananda, a Dominican monk turned Hindu, must also be remembered in this connection. There was the spiritual dynamism and the grace of the Guru working through the life of Siddheswaranandaji. There was also the zeal of Miss McLeod, the fiery Vivekanandist. In addition to all these there was the admiration for Sri Aurobindo whose formative years of spiritual life were influenced by the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. In fact the book entitled *Inde : Hommes, Rites et Dieux* written by Mrs. Indira Gandhi and recast in French by Madame Nicole Menant mentions Sri Aurobindo as an admirer of Ramakrishna.

We must note that a special interest was created in the whole of Europe in respect of Buddhism since the publication (1826) of Burnouf's *Essai sur le pali* and was buttressed by the efforts of Max Muller, Rhys Davids, Suzuki and the present Dalai Lama. They also indirectly helped the

Vedanta movement in Europe. There is a general awareness in the circle of the students of Comparative Religion that the Advaita of Shankara is a kind of modification of the philosophy enunciated by the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna.

The Duperronian translations of the Upanishads kindled the fire of Vedanta in Schopenhauer. That same inspiration was imbibed by Schelling and was later on fructified through the labour and devotion of Max Muller. Swami Yatiswaranandaji's spiritual ministrations for five years in Europe gave a soul and a body to that early intellectual enthusiasm about Vedanta. The little group of devotees in Germany which gathered round Yatiswaranandaji must have felt desolate and forlorn when the Swami sailed for USA. But the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order began now to occasionally visit this group which kept up the group meetings for study without a break. In 1965 Swami Ritajanandaji (the head of the French Centre since 1961) revived this little group of Vedanta in Wiesbaden. A Society called 'Wiesbaden Vedanta-Zentrum' was registered soon. Ritajanandaji used to visit the Vedanta Zentrum more than once in a year. Today this Society is still existing but has no place of its own. It holds its annual seminar in various places of Germany. Mr. Kurt Friedrich, the current chairman of Vedanta-Zentrum, has a big contribution in the dissemination of Vedantic ideas in Germany through extensive translations. Enthused by Ritajanandaji, Mr. Friedrich has been carrying on his silent work for many years. The book on meditation by Siddheswadanandaji, *Katha Upanishad* by Nikhilanandaji, the *Gita* by Prabhavanandaji, *Days in an Indian Monastery* by Sister Devamata, *Drig-Drishya-Viveka*, and *Panchadashi* have been translated in German by Vedanta-Zentrum. A *Dictionary of Eastern Teachings of Wisdom* has been published in 1986 in

German; 1500 Hindu terminologies in this book have been elucidated by Mr. Friedrich.

There are other groups of Vedanta, some registered, others non-registered, also in Germany today. Like Vedanta Gemeinschaft of Berlin, Vedanta Freund of Dusseldorf, and Mantra Gemeinschaft of Munich. The last mentioned group draws its inspiration from Anandamayee-Ma but has secured the permission of Advaita Ashrama to print the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda in German. There are also little groups of enthusiasts still not much organized in cities like Hamburg, Essen etc. Ritajanandaji and other monastic members of Gretz ashrama, Bhavyanandaji of London, and Ranganathanandaji of Hyderabad, occasionally go to these little groups to help them keep up the flame of Vedanta. In a recent retreat in Germany the present writer found five different books on Sri Ramakrishna, thirteen booklets on Vedantic topics and a few books on Vedanta—all in German, being sold like hot cakes.

Austria is a neutral country, where, ethnically speaking, 98% of the population are Germans. In August 1986 on the occasion of the Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, the Austrian radio held an one-hour programme on Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings. There was demand for repetition of this feature, and another programme was held in February 1987. Needless to mention, the script was in German.

Repeated tours of the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order like Ranganathanandaji, Hiranmayanandaji, Lokeswaranandaji, and others beyond the free and neutral zones of Europe, and their dialogue with the people in Marxist countries like USSR, East Germany, and Bulgaria have created in the post-Kruschchev period a new era so far as Vedanta in Europe is concerned. Today Russian professors talking or writing on Vedanta or on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda

will not be any wonderment. We may remember that Saint Petersburg Dictionary of Sanskrit composed between the years 1852-1875 by two Germans named Bohtlingk and Roth, was financially sponsored by the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences. The Sanskrit Thesaurus is as important as Max Muller's edition of *Rig-Veda*.

Close to the French frontier in the city of Geneva an organization called Centre Vedantique was started by Swami Nityabodhanandaji in 1958. The Swami has headed the French Centre for a period of about one year after the passing away of Siddheswaranandaji. One admirer called Mr. Bowmann helped the Swami in establishing the Centre in Geneva (20 Avenue Peshier). In November 1972 the Centre Vedantique was transferred to its own commodious house by the Geneva Laka (9 Chemin des Grafannes). Swami Nityabodhanandaji's fine grip over the French language and literature has helped him consolidate his centre. Apart from the popular classes given by him at the Geneva Centre he has been giving lectures in various Universities of Western Europe and at Yoga and Vedanta groups. The Swami's books in French and his active contacts with the World Council of Churches and International Centre of Ecumenical Studies in Switzerland have been a big factor in catholicizing the ideas of a section of the leaders of European Christianity. It is well known that in the alpine village of Saas-Fee in Switzerland Swami Vivekananda first conceived of Himalayan Monastery where his Eastern and Western disciples might be united. That was the genesis of what is now known as the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati, Himalayas. Because of Swamiji's association and because of the fact that Jean Herbert held the chair of Oriental Mythology in the Geneva University from 1954 to 1964, we feel that this Centre of the Ramakrishna Order in Switzerland has great potentialities.

To the north of France lie the Benelux countries. In 1963 Queen Elizabeth of Belgium organized the Centenary Celebration of Swami Vivekananda's Birth-anniversary. Mr. Jean Herbert took a prominent part in it. Today there are many souls in this part of the world, turned to the message of neo-Vedanta. Swami Ranganathanandaji has also been visiting this area regularly since 1971. A Dutch society called 'Vereniging Ramakrishna Vedanta Nederland' was actually registered on 12 March 1986. In its first meeting held at Ossendrecht near the Belgium border in June 1986, the Society declared itself as a branch organization of Centre Vedantique Ramakrichna. The inspiration for the founding of the Society came from Ranganathanandaji. The society publishes a quarterly journal in Dutch called Vedanta (following the practice of Gretz Ashrama) and contributes to the publication of Ramakrishna literature in Dutch. By the end of this year the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna is scheduled to be printed in Dutch.

In Spain, a country to the south of France, Swami Ritajanandaji has an appreciable influence over a section of Spaniards. In fact in Spain there is a general admiration for the saints of India. May be this is due to the heritage of St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila. In fact several young Spaniards are living in Gretz Ashrama and Spaniard visitors to Gretz are also very common.

The genesis of Gretz Ashrama has already been mentioned. Not less interesting is the story of its growth. In November 1961 Swami Ritajanandaji came, after seven years of his spiritual ministration in the USA, as a leader of the Gretz Ashrama. During the last twenty-six years he has further consolidated the Ashrama. In a big ceremony like Durga puja etc., one finds today as many as 250 devotees, a thing which was impossible to conceive even ten years ago in France, which is, by and large, extremely conserva-

tive in respect of religion. The Swami's gentle manners and his constant accent on the development of the inner life has created an atmosphere in Gretz very much like that of an Indian Ashrama. The devotees in Europe, both French and non-French, avail themselves of the opportunity of the guest houses of Gretz Ashrama. About forty guests can be accommodated. In August 1986 a commodious, double-storeyed chapel-cum-library wing has been added to the Chateau mentioned earlier. Swami Ritajanandaji has written the following books: *The Life of Swami Turiyananda* (which has since been translated in French also), *La Pratique de la Meditation*, *La Pensee hindoue*, *la Bhagavad Gita*. He is now translating the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* into French according to the original in Bengali. Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna will publish in the foreseeable future a translation of Christopher Isherwood's *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*.

From 1968 to 1975, Swami Ritajanandaji held a series of classes on the Gita in Paris at No. 6, Place des Etats-Unis, hallowed by the stay of Swami Vivekananda in 1900. Though he gives his discourses in French and in English (in non-French territories) his smattering of various other European languages (Spanish, German, Italian, etc.) has been effective in creating a deep bond of spiritual fraternity between the Gretz Ashrama and the visitors' groups that come to it. The Swami visits frequently the Vedanta groups throughout Europe. He is being assisted by Swami Vidyatmanandaji since 1966 in both administration and preaching. Swami Vidyatmanandaji made research in depth in the sixties to unravel the details of the various aspects of Swami Vivekananda's movement in the Continent and of his return to India via Turkey, Greece and Egypt. His writings on these topics has been a mine of information for the recent biographers of Vivekananda.

What form has actually our spiritual ministrations taken in Europe? In a recent retreat held in USA, Swami Vidyatmanandaji said about the service rendered by Gretz Ashrama to the spiritually undernourished:

Not all the underprivileged of this world, the deprived, the hungry, live in Africa. A great many of them reside in American or European high-rise apartment buildings or suburban bungalows, bombarded by lethal doses of TV programming, sensate advertising, and constant assurances that sex and money insure happiness. This diet of intellectual junkfood produces junkfood's predictable result—people satiated and at the same time undernourished and hungry.

The Ashrama provides an alternative to this modern materialistic society.

One can try to understand this by looking at the wide influence the Gretz Ashrama is exerting in respect of the Vedanta Movement in the Continent today. Personal interviews, group discussions, spiritual retreats held in non-French territories (attendance usually varying from 40 to 120), lectures, publication of a quarterly magazine called Vedanta, the sale of Vedanta and Ramakrishna literature, intimate ministrations (*mantra diksha* initiation to the art of puja etc), observance of religious festivals—through all these Ritajanandaji and his assistants try to create and sustain a spiritual atmosphere which opens new spiritual horizons and holds a new spiritual goal in the life of modern Europeans. Siddheswaranandaji, on one of his inspection tours forty years back to the would-be Gretz Ashrama, whispered to a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order while passing through the entrance portal of the Chateau: 'How to make Ramakrishna permeate the pores of every brick of this building?' Was there any remote suggestion of a widespread ministrations of Vedantic ideas in the days to come? Fifty years of the Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna in France (1937-1987) is ample proof of the depth and vastness of the Power whom the Swami called

'Ramakrishna'. Apparently in Europe Ramakrishna monks did not have that instant success which a few yogis and gurus have secured in recent years in the West, specially in USA. Even the immediate gains in favour of Vedanta through the 'seven months' stay of Swami Vivekananda (spread between the years 1895, 1896 and 1900) on the soil of the continent was not apparently impressive. But it is Swami Vivekananda's spirit that has inspired Rolland sixty years back, has sustained the interest of Jean Herbert for more than forty years at a stretch, and will stimulate many other giants in the days to come. Neo-Vedanta, the Vedanta as presented by Swami Vivekananda and his followers, is growing slowly but imperceptibly in the manner of an oak plant to become a giant tree with a tough, hard, and durable trunk.

THE TAO OF PHYSICS REVISITED

DR. FRITJOF CAPRA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Influence of Heisenberg and Chew

I would now like to turn to the new paradigm in science and discuss its main characteristics. I have recently tried to identify a set of criteria for new-paradigm thinking in science, and I would like to present these to you. I have six criteria; the first two refer to our view of nature, the other four to our epistemology. I believe that these six criteria are common characteristics of new-paradigm thinking in all the sciences, but since this is a lecture on *The Tao of Physics* I shall illustrate them with examples from physics, and I shall also briefly mention how they are reflected in Eastern mystical traditions.

Before I discuss the six criteria I would like to acknowledge with deep gratitude my debt to two outstanding physicists who have been my major sources of inspiration and have decisively influenced my scientific thinking: Werner Heisenberg and Geoffrey Chew. Heisenberg's book, *Physics and Philosophy*, his classic account of the history and philosophy of quantum physics, exerted an enormous influence on me when

I first read it as a young student. The book has remained my companion during my studies and my work as a physicist, and today I can see that it was Heisenberg who planted the seed of the *The Tao of Physics*. I was fortunate to meet Heisenberg in the early seventies. I had several long discussions with him, and when I finished *The Tao of Physics* I went through the manuscript with him chapter by chapter. It was Heisenberg's personal support and inspiration that carried me through these difficult years, when I went out on a limb to develop and present a radically new idea.

Geoffrey Chew belongs to a different generation than Heisenberg and the other great quantum physicists, and I have no doubt that future historians of science will judge his contribution to twentieth-century physics as significant as theirs. While Einstein revolutionized scientific thought with his theory of relativity, and Bohr and Heisenberg, with their interpretation of quantum mechanics, introduced changes so radical that even Einstein refused to accept them, Chew has made the third

revolutionary step in twentieth-century physics. His bootstrap theory of particles unifies quantum mechanics and relativity theory into a theory that represents a radical break with the entire Western approach to fundamental science.

I have been fascinated by Chew's theory and philosophy of science ever since I met him about fifteen years ago, and I have had the great privilege of a close association and continual interchange of ideas with him. Our regular discussions have been a source of continuing inspiration for me and have decisively shaped my entire outlook on science. I am, of course, most delighted that Professor Chew is with us today and will participate in this panel discussions.

New-paradigm thinking in science

Let me now turn to my six criteria of new-paradigm thinking in science. The first criterion concerns the relationship between the part and the whole. In the mechanistic, classical scientific paradigm it was believed that in any complete system the dynamics of the whole could be understood from the properties of the parts. Once you knew the parts—their fundamental properties and the mechanisms through which they interacted—you could derive, at least in principle, the dynamics of the whole. Therefore the rule was: in order to understand any complex system, you break it up into its pieces. The pieces themselves cannot be explained any further, except by splitting them into smaller pieces. But as far as you want to go in this procedure, you will always end up, at some stage, with fundamental building blocks—elements, substances, particles, etc—with properties that you can no longer explain. From these fundamental building blocks with their fundamental laws of interaction you would then build up the larger whole and try to explain its dynamics in terms of the

properties of the parts. This started with Democritus in ancient Greece; it was the procedure formalized by Descartes and Newton, and has been the accepted scientific view until the twentieth century.

In the new paradigm, the relationship between the part and the whole is just the opposite. We believe that the properties of the parts can only be understood through the dynamics of the whole. The whole is primary, and once you understand the dynamics of the whole, you can derive, at least in principle, the properties and patterns of interactions of the parts. This reversal of the relationship between the part and the whole occurred in science first in physics, when quantum theory was developed. In those years, physicists found to their great amazement that they could no longer use the notion of a part—such as an atom, or a particle—in the classical sense. Parts could no longer be well defined. They would show different properties, depending on the experimental context.

Gradually, physicists began to realize that nature, at the atomic level, does not appear as a mechanical universe composed of fundamental building blocks, but rather as a network of relations, and that, ultimately, there are no parts at all in this interconnected web. Whatever we call a part is merely a pattern that has some stability and therefore captures our attention. Heisenberg was so impressed by the new relationship between the part and the whole that he used it as the title for his autobiography, *Der Teil und das Ganze*.

The awareness of the unity and mutual interrelation of all things and events, the experience of all phenomena as manifestations of a basic oneness, is also the most important characteristic of the Eastern world view. One could say, it is the very essence of it and of all mystical traditions. All things are seen as interdependent,

inseparable, and transient patterns of the same ultimate reality.

The second criterion of new-paradigm thinking in science concerns a shift from thinking in terms of structure to thinking in terms of process. In the old paradigm it was thought that there were fundamental structures, and then there were forces and mechanisms through which these interacted, which gave rise to processes. In the new paradigm, we think that process is primary, that every structure we observe is a manifestation of an underlying process.

This process-thinking came into physics with Einstein's relativity theory. The recognition that mass is a form of energy eliminated the concept of a material substance from science and with it also that of a fundamental structure. Subatomic particles are not made of any material stuff; they are patterns of energy. Energy, however is associated with activity, with processes, and this implies that the nature of subatomic particles is intrinsically dynamic. When we observe them, we never see any substance, nor any fundamental structure. What we observe are dynamic patterns continually changing into one another—a continuous dance of energy.

Process-thinking is also a main characteristic of Eastern mystical traditions. Most of their concepts, images, and myths contain time and change as essential element. The more one studies the texts of Hindus, Buddhists, and Taoists, the more it becomes apparent that in all of them the world is conceived in terms of movement, flow, and change. Indeed, it was the image of the cosmic dance of Shiva, in which all forms are continually created and dissolved, that opened my eyes to the parallels between modern physics and Eastern mysticism.

In modern physics, the image of the universe as a machine has been replaced by that of an interconnected, dynamic whole whose parts are essentially inter-

dependent and have to be understood as patterns of a cosmic process. In order to define an object in this interconnected web of relationships, we cut through some of the interconnections—conceptually as well as physically with our instruments of observation—and in doing so we isolate certain patterns and interpret them as objects. Different observers may do so in different ways. For example, when you identify an electron you may do so by cutting through some of its connections to the rest of the world in different ways, by using different observational techniques. Accordingly, the electron may appear as a particle, or it may appear as a wave. What you see depends on how you look at it.

It was Heisenberg who brought this crucial role of the observer into quantum physics. According to Heisenberg, we can never speak about nature without, at the same time, speaking about ourselves. And this will be my third criterion of new-paradigm thinking in science. I believe that it is valid for all of modern science, and I want to call it the shift from objective science to 'epistemic' science. In the old paradigm, scientific descriptions were believed to be objective, that is, independent of the human observer and the process of knowledge. In the new paradigm, we believe that epistemology—the understanding of the process of knowledge—has to be included explicitly in the description of natural phenomena. At this point, there is no consensus among scientists about what is the proper epistemology, but there is an emerging consensus that epistemology will have to be an integral part of every scientific theory.

The idea of the process of knowledge being an integral part of one's understanding of reality is well known to any student of mysticism. Mystical knowledge can never be obtained by detached, objective observation; it always involves full participation with one's whole being. In fact, mystics

go far beyond Heisenberg's position. In quantum physics the observer and the observed can no longer be separated but they can still be distinguished. Mystics in deep meditation arrive at a point where the distinction between observer and observed breaks down completely where subject and object fuse into a unified, undifferentiated whole.

The fourth criterion of new-paradigm thinking may be the most profound of all and the most difficult to get used to for scientists. It concerns the age-old metaphor of knowledge as a building. Scientists speak about *fundamental* laws, referring to the *fundament* or basis, of the building of knowledge. Knowledge has to be built on sound and firm *foundations*; there are *basic* building blocks of matter; there are fundamental equations, *fundamental* constants, *fundamental principles*. This metaphor of knowledge as a building with solid foundations has been used throughout western science and philosophy for thousands of years.

The foundations of scientific knowledge, however, have not always remained solid. They were shifting repeatedly, and several times they were completely shattered. Whenever major scientific revolutions occurred, it was felt that the foundations of science were moving. Thus Descartes wrote in his celebrated *Discourse on Method* about the science of his time: 'I considered that nothing solid could be built on such shifting foundations'. Descartes then set out to build a new science on firm foundations, but 300 years later Einstein, in his autobiography, wrote the following comment on the development of quantum physics: 'It was as if the ground had been pulled out from under one, with no firm foundation to be seen anywhere, upon which one could have built.'

So again and again, throughout the history of science, there was a feeling that the foundations of knowledge were shifting,

or even that they were crumbling. The current paradigm shift in science again evokes such a feeling, but this time it may be the last time; not because there won't be any more progress or any more changes, but because there won't be any foundations in the future. We may not see it necessary in a future science to build our knowledge on firm foundations, and we may replace the metaphor of the building by the metaphor of the network. Just as we see reality around us as a network of relationships, our descriptions, too—our concepts, models, and theories—will form an interconnected network representing the observed phenomena. In such a network there won't be anything primary and secondary, and there won't be any foundations.

The new metaphor of knowledge as a network with no firm foundations is something that is extremely uncomfortable for scientists. It was stated explicitly for the first time by Geoffrey Chew 25 years ago in the so-called bootstrap theory of particles. According to the bootstrap theory, nature cannot be reduced to any fundamental entities, like fundamental building blocks of matter, but has to be understood entirely through self-consistency. Things exist by virtue of their mutually consistent relationships, and all of physics has to follow uniquely from the requirement that its components be consistent with one another and with themselves.

Over the past 25 years, Chew has used the bootstrap approach, together with his collaborators, to develop a comprehensive theory of subatomic particles, together with a more general philosophy of nature. This bootstrap philosophy not only abandons the idea of fundamental building blocks of matter, but accepts no fundamental entities whatsoever—no fundamental constants, laws, or equations. The material universe is seen as a dynamic web of interrelated events. None of the properties of any part of this web is fundamental; they all follow

from the properties of the other parts, and the overall consistency of their interrelations determines the structure of the entire web.

The fact that the bootstrap philosophy does not accept any fundamental entities makes it, in my opinion, one of the most profound systems of Western thought. At the same time, it is so foreign to our traditional scientific ways of thinking that it is pursued only by a small minority of physicists. However, the refusal to accept any fundamental entities is quite common in Eastern thought, especially in Buddhism. In fact, it can be said that the contrast between 'fundamentalists' and 'bootstrappers' in particle physics is paralleled by the contrast between two prevailing currents in Western and Eastern thought. The reduction of nature to fundamentals is basically a Greek approach, which arose in Greek philosophy together with the dualism between spirit and matter. The view of the universe as a web of relationships without any fundamental entities, on the other hand, is characteristic of Eastern thought. It has found its clearest expression and most far-reaching elaboration in Mahayana Buddhism, and when I wrote *The Tao of Physics* I made the close correspondence between bootstrap physics and Buddhist philosophy, its high point and finale.

The four criteria for new-paradigm thinking I have presented so far are all interdependent. Nature is seen as an interconnected dynamic network of relationships that include the human observer as an integral component. Any parts in this network are merely relatively stable patterns. Natural phenomena are described in terms of a corresponding network of concepts, in which no part is more fundamental than any other part.

This new conceptual framework immediately raises an important question. If everything is connected to everything else, how can you ever hope to understand

anything? Since all natural phenomena are ultimately interconnected, in order to explain any one of them we need to understand all the others, which is obviously impossible. What makes it possible to turn the bootstrap or web philosophy into a scientific theory is the fact that there is such a thing as approximate knowledge. If one is satisfied with an approximate understanding of nature, one can describe selected groups of phenomena in this way, neglecting other phenomena which are less relevant. Thus one can explain many phenomena in terms of a few, and consequently understand different aspects of nature in an approximate way without having to understand everything at once.

This insight is crucial to all of modern science and represents my criterion number five: the shift from truth to approximate descriptions. The Cartesian paradigm was based on the belief in the certainty of scientific knowledge, which had been clearly stated by Descartes. In the new paradigm it is recognized that all scientific concepts and theories are limited and approximate. Science can never provide any complete and definitive understanding. Scientists do not deal with truth (in the sense of a precise correspondence between the description and the described phenomena); they deal with limited and approximate descriptions of reality. The most beautiful expression of this criterion I have found is one by Louis Pasteur: 'Science advances through tentative answers to a series of more and more subtle questions which reach deeper and deeper into the essence of natural phenomena.'

It is interesting, again, to compare this modern scientific attitude to the attitudes of mystics, and here we encounter one of the significant differences between scientists and mystics. Mystics are generally not interested in approximate knowledge. They are concerned with absolute knowledge involving an understanding of the totality

of existence. Being well aware of the essential interrelationship between all aspects of the universe, they realize that to explain something means, ultimately, to show how it is connected to everything else. As this is impossible, the mystics often insist that no single phenomenon can be explained. They are generally non-interested in explaining things but rather in the direct, non-intellectual experience of the unity of all things.

My last criterion, finally, does not express an observation but rather an advocacy. I believe that human survival in the face of the threat of nuclear holocaust and of the devastation of our natural environment will be possible only if we are able to radically change the methods and values underlying our science and technology. As my last criterion I advocate the shift from an attitude of domination and control of nature, including human beings, to one of cooperation and nonviolence.

Our science and technology are based on the belief that an understanding of nature implies domination of nature by man! I use the word 'man' here on purpose, because I am talking about a very important connection between the mechanistic world view in science and the patriarchal value system, the male tendency of wanting to control everything. In the history of Western science and philosophy this connection is personified by Francis Bacon who, in the 17th century, advocated the new empirical method of science in passionate and often outright vicious terms. Nature has to be 'hounded in her wanderings', wrote Bacon, 'bound into service' and made a 'slave'. She is to be 'put in constraint' and the aim of the scientist is to 'torture nature's secrets from her.' These violent images of nature as a female whose secrets have to be tortured from her with the help of mechanical devices is strongly suggestive of the torture of women in witch trials of the 17th-century, which were very familiar

to Bacon, who was attorney general for King James I. So here we have a crucial and frightening connection between mechanistic science and patriarchal values, which had a tremendous impact on the further development of science and technology.

Before the 17th century, the goals of science were wisdom, understanding the natural order, and living in harmony with it. In the 17th century this attitude, which you call an ecological attitude, changed into its opposite. Ever since Bacon the goal of science has been knowledge that can be used to dominate and control nature, and today both science and technology are used predominantly for purposes that are dangerous, harmful, and antiecolological.

The change of world view that is now occurring will have to include a profound change of values; in fact, a complete change of heart—from the intent to dominate and control nature to an attitude of cooperation and nonviolence. Such an attitude is deeply ecological and, not surprisingly, it is the attitude characteristic of spiritual traditions. The old Chinese sages expressed it beautifully: 'Those who follow the natural order flow in the current of the Tao.'

Criticism of the Tao of Physics

I would now like to move on and talk about the criticism *The Tao of Physics* has encountered over the years. One question I am frequently asked is: how did my colleagues in the physics community accept my basic thesis? As you might expect, most physicists were quite suspicious at first and many even felt threatened by the book. Those who were threatened, typically would react with anger. They would make rather insulting and often outright vicious comments, either in reviews or in private conversations, which reflected their own insecurity.

The reason why *The Tao of Physics* could be perceived as a threat lies in a widespread misunderstanding of the nature of mysticism. In the scientific community mysticism has generally been thought of as something very vague, fuzzy, nebulous, and highly unscientific. To see one's cherished theories compared with this vague, fuzzy, and suspect-activity is naturally quite threatening to many physicists.

This erroneous view of mysticism is really very unfortunate, because when you look at the classic texts of mystical traditions, you will find that deep mystical experience is never described as vague or nebulous but, on the contrary, is always associated with clarity. Typical metaphors to describe the experience would be 'lifting the veil of ignorance', 'cutting through delusion', 'cleaning the mirror of the mind', 'perceiving the clear light', 'unexcelled complete awakening'—all of which imply great clarity. Mystical experience does go beyond intellectual analysis, so the clarity is of a different kind, but there is certainly nothing vague or fuzzy about these experiences. In fact, the term 'enlightenment', which we use to describe the era of the new Cartesian, scientific approach in the 18th-century Europe, is one of the oldest and most widely used terms to describe mystical experience.

Fortunately, the erroneous association of mysticism with things vague and unclear is now changing. As Eastern thought has begun to interest a significant number of people and meditation is no longer viewed with ridicule or suspicion, mysticism is being taken more seriously even within the scientific community.

Let me now review some of the most frequent criticisms of *The Tao of Physics*, which I have encountered again and again over the past ten years. First of all, I have to say that I am very pleased that in all the criticism I have had from fellow physicists not one of them has found any

fault in my presentation of the concepts of modern physics. Some would disagree with the emphasis I have placed on certain current developments, but to the best of my knowledge nobody has found any factual errors in *The Tao of Physics*. So that part has held up very well for ten years.

There are two arguments that I have heard more than any others in criticism of my basic thesis. The first asserts that today's scientific facts will be invalidated by tomorrow's research. How, then, these critics ask, can something so transient as a model or theory in modern physics be said to corroborate mystical experience which is supposed to be timeless and eternal? Does this not mean that the truth of mysticism will stand or fall with the theories of modern physics?

This argument sounds very convincing, but it is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of scientific research. The argument is correct in that there is no absolute truth in science. Whatever scientists say is expressed in terms of limited and approximate descriptions, and these approximate descriptions are then improved in subsequent developments in successive steps. Now the crucial point here is that when theories or models are improved in successive steps, the knowledges does not change in an arbitrary way. Each new theory will be related to the preceding one in a well-defined way, although in a scientific revolution this may not be apparent for a long time. The new theory does not invalidate the old one in an absolute way; it merely improves the approximation. For example, quantum mechanics did not show that Newtonian mechanics is wrong; it merely showed that Newtonian physics is limited.

Now it is important to notice that when such an extension of a theory into new domains occurs, when the approximation is improved by the new theory, not all the concepts of the old theory are abandoned. And I believe that it is precisely those

concepts in our current theories that will not be invalidated, but will remain, which are the ones related to ideas in mystical traditions.

I can say that even about Newtonian physics. One of Newton's key discoveries, maybe the key discovery, and certainly one of his most famous, was the discovery that there is a uniform order in the universe. As legend has it, Newton realized in a sudden flash of intuition, when an apple fell from a tree, that the force that pulls the apple toward the earth is the same force that pulls the planets toward the sun. That was the starting point of Newton's theory of gravity, and that insight—that there is a uniform order in the universe—is not invalidated by quantum mechanics or relativity theory. On the contrary, it is confirmed and even enhanced by the new theories.

Similarly, I believe that the fundamental unity and inter-relatedness of the universe and the intrinsically dynamic nature of its natural phenomena—the two grand themes of modern physics will not be invalidated by future research. They will be reformulated, and many concepts we hold today will be replaced by a different set of concepts tomorrow. But this replacement will occur in an orderly way, and the basic themes that I use in my comparison with mystical traditions will be enforced, I believe, rather than invalidated. This belief is already being confirmed, not only by new developments in physics, but also by significant new developments in biology and psychology.

The second criticism, which I have also heard again and again, argues that physicists and mystics talk about two different worlds. Physicists deal with a quantum reality that is almost totally irrelevant to ordinary everyday phenomena, so the argument goes, while mystics deal precisely with those large-scale phenomena, with things in the

ordinary world, that have almost nothing to do with the quantum world.

Well, first of all one should realize that the quantum reality is not at all irrelevant to large-scale phenomena. For example, one of the most important physical phenomena in the ordinary world, the solidity of matter, is a direct consequence of certain quantum effects. So we should rephrase the argument and say that mystics do not deal explicitly with the quantum reality, whereas physicists do.

Now as far as the notion of two different worlds is concerned, my view is that there is only one world—this awesome and mysterious world as Castaneda calls it—but this one reality has multiple aspects, dimensions, and levels. Physicists and mystics deal with different aspects of reality. Physicists explore levels of matter, mystics levels of mind. What their explorations have in common is that these levels, in both cases, lie beyond ordinary sensory perception. And, as Heisenberg has taught us, if the perception is non-ordinary, then the reality is not ordinary.

So we have physicists probing into matter with the help of sophisticated instruments and mystics probing into consciousness with the help of sophisticated techniques of meditation. Both reach non-ordinary level of perception, and at these non-ordinary levels the patterns and principles of organization they observe seem to be very similar. The way in which microscopic patterns are interrelated for physicists, mirrors the way in which microscopic patterns are interrelated for the mystics. Only when we isolate those macroscopic patterns in our ordinary modes of perception, we identify them as ordinary, separate objects.

Another criticism, which has often been raised, argues that physicists and mystics address themselves to different levels of reality. That of mystics, it is said, is a higher, spiritual level that includes the lower

level of physical phenomena, while the physical level does not include the spiritual.

Well, to begin with, I would observe that calling one level higher and the other lower is a remnant of old-paradigm thinking—the metaphor of the building again, rather than that of network. However, I agree that physics has nothing to say about other levels, or dimensions of reality—life, mind, consciousness, spirit, and so on. *Physics* has nothing to say about these levels, but *science* does!

I have come to believe that the new paradigm in science, for which I proposed my six criteria, has found its most appropriate formulation in the new theory of living, self-organizing systems that emerged from cybernetics over the last few decades. Prigogine, Bateson, Maturana, Varela are some of the leading contributors to this theory. It is a theory that applies to individual living organisms, social systems, and ecosystems, and promises to lead to a unified conception of life, mind, matter, and evolution. This systems approach confirms the parallels between physics and mysticism and adds others, which go beyond the level of physics: the concept of free will, the concepts of life and death, the nature of mind, and so on. There is a profound harmony between these concepts, as expressed in the theory of self-organizing systems, and the corresponding concepts in mystical traditions.

Current developments and future possibilities

This brings me to current developments and future possibilities in the formulation of the new scientific paradigm. Since I wrote *The Tao of Physics*, I have had an important change of perception regarding the role of physics in this development. When I began to study the paradigm shift in various sciences, I realized that they were all based on the mechanistic worldview of Newtonian physics, and I saw the

new physics as the ideal model for new concepts and approaches in other disciplines. In the meantime, however, I have come to recognize that such a view implies that the physical level is, somehow, more fundamental than others. Today I see the new physics, and especially the bootstrap theory, as a special case of the systems approach, dealing with non-living systems. Even though the paradigm shift in physics is still of special interest, since it was the first to occur in modern science, physics has lost its role as a model for other sciences.

Accordingly, I see future elaborations of the thesis I presented in *The Tao of Physics* not so much in further explorations of parallels between physics and mysticism, but rather in extending these parallels to the other sciences. In fact, this is already being done, and I would like to just mention some of that work. Regarding similarities between mysticism and biology, the best source I know is Francisco Varela, one of the originators of the theory of self-organizing systems. Varela plans to write a book about parallels between biology and Buddhism, and in the meantime his book, *The Tree of Knowledge* coauthored with Humberto Maturana and to be published by Shambhala Press, would be the best source.

In psychology, a lot of work has been done exploring the spiritual dimensions of psychology and psychotherapy. There is a special branch, transpersonal psychology, dedicated to this task. Stan Grof, Ken Wilber, Frances Vaughan, and many others have published books about this subject, many of them preceding *The Tao of Physics*, beginning way back with Carl Gustav Jung.

In the social sciences, the spiritual dimension emerged with E.F. Schumacher's essay on 'Buddhist Economics', first published in the late sixties, and has since been explored by many groups and alternative networks, both in theory and in practice.

Closely connected with these movements is a new form of ecologically oriented politics, known as Green politics, which I see as the political manifestation of the cultural shift to the new paradigm. Spiritual aspects of this political movement have been discussed by Charlene Spretnak in her 1985 Schumacher Lecture, 'Green Politics: The Spiritual Dimension', to be published in paperback by Bear Press.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about my views on Eastern mysticism, which have also changed somewhat over the past ten years. First of all, it was always clear to me, and I said so in *The Tao of Physics*, that parallels of the kind I drew between physics and Eastern mysticism could also be drawn to Western mystical traditions, and I still wish somebody would do that. Moreover, I no longer believe that we can adopt Eastern spiritual traditions in the West without changing them in many important ways to adapt them to our culture. My belief has been enforced by my encounters with many Eastern spiritual teachers who have been unable to understand some crucial aspects of the new paradigm that is now emerging in the West.

On the other hand, I also believe that our own spiritual traditions will have to undergo some radical changes in order to be in harmony with the values of the new paradigm. The spirituality corresponding to the new vision of reality I have been outlining here is likely to be an ecological, earth-oriented, post-patriarchal spirituality. This kind of new spirituality is now being developed by many groups and movements,

both within and outside the churches. An outstanding example would be the Creation-Centered Spirituality promoted by Matthew Fox and his colleagues at Holy Names College.

These are just some of the developments that are now occurring in this process of emergence of a new paradigm. I am especially excited that many people who have been key figures in these developments will be participating in this afternoon's panel discussions.

My own contribution over the past ten years has been to offer a first synthesis of the emergent new paradigm and its social implications in *The Turning Point*, and to explore its political aspects in *Green Politics*, which I coauthored with Charlene Spretnak.

During those years I have met many extraordinary people to whom I owe a great deal. Many lasting friendships and professional associations have resulted from these encounters. When I decided to write *The Tao of Physics* more than fifteen years ago, I took a step that involved considerable professional, emotional, and economic risks and I was completely alone in taking it. So were many friends and colleagues who took similar steps in their fields. Today we all feel much stronger. We are embedded in the multiple alternative networks of what I have called the 'rising culture'—a multitude of movements representing different facets of the same new vision of reality, gradually coalescing to form a powerful force of social transformation.

(Concluded)

INDIA'S VISION OF SAMANVAYA—II

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

6. A spiritual vision influences socio-political policy

A spiritual and philosophical vision can remain as a vision, producing a few saints and sages ; but India did not do so. She tried to incorporate that vision of *samanvaya* into a great cultural experiment covering a sixth of humanity in this continent of India. That vision slowly percolated into the people and influenced inter-human relationships. She succeeded in this in the cultural and religious fields wonderfully, but did not succeed in the social field. *And that failure is the one big challenge before modern India.*

All our modern teachers and leaders have taken up this social challenge, and our nation has incorporated the vision of, and the struggle for, an egalitarian social order in free India's constitution. The universal spiritual vision of *samanvaya* is the energy behind modern India's progressive socio-economic programmes and policies. When this last step of establishing an egalitarian social order will be climbed, the ancient and continuing Vedic vision of *samanvaya* will become a fully accomplished cultural fact in our country. Swami Vivekananda considered this to be the significance of the emerging modern period of our long history. We have to provide a healthy body-politic, in which freedom, dignity, and equality of all men and women are fully realized, contributing to the ever-healthy soul of our *Amar-Bharat*. This is the challenge before all our educated citizens ; and they can get the strength and inspiration to meet that challenge by studying the strengthening, purifying, and

unifying message of Vivekananda literature available in the eight volumes of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* in English, and their translation in most of our national languages.

The study of how this transformation came about in ancient India, how the universal vision of *samanvaya* got implemented in a religious and political programme and policy, is a fascinating theme. Immediately after the Upanishads, that vision began to get new accessions of strength from Sri Krishna in the pre-historic period and from Buddha, from the historic period. The first teacher, Sri Krishna, was an outstanding personality and a great creator of our history and culture. In fact, the whole of Indian culture, with all its religions, philosophies, literature, art, and other aspects of life, owes much to that one single personality. If you take away the Krishna element from the Indian heritage, it becomes reduced to elementary proportions. He had inspired our philosophers, our poets, our artists, our political thinkers, our women and our children. That is Sri Krishna, a truly universal personality ; and he expressed the universal vision of *samanvaya* in the world of religion, where diversity was recognized and welcomed from the very beginning, by his great teaching in the *Gita*, in which the centrifugal forces of diversity and centripetal forces of unity are harmoniously balanced, with respect to religions.

*Ye yatha mam prapadyante
tam tathaiva bhajamyaham ;
mama vartmanuvartante
manushyah partha sarvashah*

'Through whatever path men come unto Me, I receive them through those very paths; all paths, that men take, O Arjuna, eventually come unto Me only'. (*Gita* 4.11)

The paths are many, but the goal is one—that is how Sri Ramakrishna re-emphasized this truth again in our own time: *yato mat, tato path*—'As many religions so many paths'. What a profound national experience of tolerance and understanding came out of this message! This has not happened anywhere else in the world. Please remember that this is a uniquely Indian historical experience; it is a unique Indian contribution to human culture. We not only tolerate, but we accept all the various paths that men and women take towards spiritual realization. I have earlier quoted the great verse of the *Rig-Veda*, in which this concept of *samanvaya* finds its first expression: 'Truth is One; sages call It by various names'. Vivekananda says that that verse is the *magna carta* of religion—each one is absolutely free to follow one's own path to the goal; who are you to permit another, to tolerate another? Diversity is on the surface, but deep down there is unity.

7. Ashoka's Edicts on political non-aggression and religious harmony

This deep sense of harmony, that has been a hallmark of India's religious life for centuries, and that came from this wonderful spiritual vision, became further strengthened spiritually and philosophically, a few centuries later, through Buddha, in the sixth century before Christ, and translated into social experience and political state policy through the great Mauryan Emperor Ashoka, three centuries after Buddha. The famous British historian H.G. Wells, in his book on the *Outlines of World History*, the first book on World History, refers to Ashoka as the greatest crowned head in human history. He ruled over a wide empire, stretching from Tashkent in Soviet Central Asia upto

Mysore in the south of India. In this vast empire, Ashoka experimented with that wonderful vision of *samanvaya* of Indian culture, in the fields of politics, society, and religion. He combined the message of *samanvaya* of the Vedas, and of universal compassion, or *karuna* of Bhagavan Buddha, and proclaimed that unified message of harmony through his edicts on rocks and pillars which you can see in various parts of his dominions even today, after 2,300 years. That message announced, among other things, political non-aggression, on the one side, and religious harmony, on the other. It announced firstly, the renunciation of all wars and violence as the instrument of state policy, and, secondly, the stressing of harmony and mutual respect and understanding between all religions and sects.

After winning a bloody war fought near Bhubaneshwar in Kalinga, or Orissa, and seeing the colossal destruction and suffering wrought by it, he sat in deep thought on a rock, overlooking the battlefield, and there came to him this wonderful illumination: For my personal glory, I killed so many people, made so many widows and orphans, and spread suffering all round. But from now onwards, I renounce war as a state policy. I shall take to the path of peace and compassion shown by the Buddha and proclaim it throughout my empire.

This is something unique in human history. And today, those who love international peace, look to Ashoka, the great disseminator of *samanvaya*, who translated this spiritual vision into a social and political policy. The language he used in his edict, the Thirteenth Rock Edict, on this subject, is very beautiful; it says in effect: I shall silence the war drums and sound the kettle drums of peace, and I have conveyed the message to many political states, far and near. It is no wonder, therefore, that the rock on which he sat on a tiny hill, five miles from

Bhubaneshwar, has now become a place of pilgrimage, in the context of the current international tensions and humanity's craving for international peace. And the post-second-world-war Japanese Buddhists have built a Peace Pagoda on that hill to commemorate that great event.

The second relates to religion. In his Twelfth Rock Edict near Junagadh in Saurashtra, you can read it on the rock lying on the roadside even today. Its substance is: 'If any one loves his own religion, and disparages another man's religion, he does harm to his own religion, for, in religion, harmony is the right way'. The original Sanskrit is wonderful—brief but full of significance: *samavaya eva sadhuh*—In religion, 'concord alone is right and proper'. The word *samavaya* is used there: it is the same as *samanvaya*. Both are beautiful terms in Sanskrit. Ashoka's wonderful message is *samavaya*, concord. As a result of the assimilation of this message, the political states in India, large and small, for all these thousands of years, have been the upholders of this wonderful concept of *samavaya* and *samanvaya*, concord and harmony. How many religions there have been in India, and how happily and peacefully they have existed together! The same political state will uphold one religion and support and cherish several other religions. They will not come into conflict; there were no religious wars or persecutions. Not only was there no persecution of other religions, but also no persecution of even atheists and agnostics. That is the role and range of the ideal of *samanvaya* in India. Our people today should know this wisdom, this rich heritage of their culture. People can tolerate, with difficulty, another religion, somehow; but to tolerate non-religious persons, atheists, *nastikas*, agnostics, is still more difficult. But India's philosophy has achieved it. It must have been a wonderful period of our history.

Vivekananda refers to it with great satisfaction when he says that, the greatest period of Indian history was when, on the steps of a Hindu temple, a materialist or an atheist will denounce the worship going on in the temple, and nobody will harm the speaker! He was free to express his opinion, and the worshipper was free to carry on his worship. That was a great period of Indian history. What does it mean? It means that they are the people who tried to understand the truth; but they could not come to any definite conclusion about it; and they are also free to communicate their ideas to others.

That broad-mind attitude was upheld by the Vedic sages and by Sri Krishna and Buddha. Buddha was a great teacher of the rational attitude; from their point of view, agnosticism and atheism are all flimsy words. Nobody truly can be an atheist or an agnostic. The agnostic may say: Your belief, I do not accept; I am not able to come to any belief myself. Vedanta sees in many of them honest seekers.

8. *The Sweet Fruits of the Advaitic Vision in Indian History*

This generous attitude is something lofty and wonderful. We welcomed refugees of religions from outside India when they sought shelter in our country. That is a wonderful chapter of our history: the first group Jewish refugees, among all those who dispersed all over Europe and West Asia, when their temple in Jerusalem was shattered by Roman tyranny in 70 A.D., came to India in the Cochin area in Kerala. The king of the region welcomed them, gave them complete freedom to practise their religion, and, much later, renewed that freedom through a charter inscribed on a copper plate, four hundred years ago. Just three or four years ago, our late Prime - Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi had

been to Cochin to celebrate the fourth centenary of that Charter. That charter of freedom, proclaimed: You are free to worship God as you like; we are here to help you. Soon after, the first Christians also came to Kerala a few years after the death of Jesus; and later on came the Zoroastrians, or the Parsis, who and whose grand religion were persecuted in Iran by the invading Muslim Arabs in the seventh century A.D., and many were killed and many others were forcibly converted to Islam. A group of them later came with their ancient religion and culture to take shelter in India in its Gujarat coast as refugees. They were received by the reigning king of the region.

And there is a wonderful story. Many historians have written about it. The narration by Pillo Nanavutty in her book: *The Parsis*, makes inspiring reading. I wish all our children study that story of the happy and peaceful confrontation of one cultured people with another cultured people. When the Parsi head priest was asked by the Hindu king, in the midst of a large gathering of the refugees and the local people: 'What do you want us to do for you?', the priest answered: 'We want freedom to worship our God as we like.' 'Granted', said king straightaway. 'What else do you want us to do for you?' 'Give us freedom to bring up our children in our culture.' 'Granted'. 'What else do you want us to do for you?' 'Give us a piece of land which we can cultivate so that we do not become a burden on your people.' 'Granted.' said the king. Whatever was asked was granted without any hesitation. Then the old priest took a bowl of milk and, holding it high before all the people, he put a little sugar into it and said: 'This bowl of milk is India; and we Parsi refugees constitute this little sugar which is invisible now but which sweetens it.' And, to this day the Parsis have been the proud and cherished citizens

of India, sweetening its life by their contributions in various fields, and respected by the motherheart of India and Hinduism.

I wish that every child in our schools study that episode, and imbibe the spirit of *samanvaya* it radiates. Even in this modern post-war period, what do we find? I spoke of unity in diversity; that is the only vision and policy that can bring peace to any society, culture, and religion. But other peoples, other cultures, other religions, have followed another policy—what is called uniformity, which says: We want only one type of people in our country. We shall exterminate all languages, religions, races, other than our own; there shall be only one type in our country. You can see this principle of uniformity operating in the history of many countries outside India, in the past, and even in the present. And that policy has entailed plenty of intolerance, violence, war and genocide. They follow the line of what they say in English: My doxy is orthodoxy, your doxy is heterodoxy; you have no right to exist; I will destroy you! That is the dismal story of the inter-action of human cultures, races, and religions in all parts of the world. There is something unique in the philosophy and socio-political policy of unity in diversity, developed on this continent of India, as against that policy of uniformity. This is not a mere patriotic claim, but a historical truth. That is how India could produce a Ramakrishna in the modern period who could practise various religions, including Christianity and Islam, and reiterate the profound Rig-Vedic truth: *Yato mat tato path*—'as many religions so many pathways to God.'

9. *Matam versus Tattvam in the light of Advaita*

Why should there be a conflict, simply because somebody takes a different way in religion? As, on the dining table, when

you go to eat, you see a lot of food spread there ; you choose what suits you, but you don't say that what you have chosen alone is food and what the other people have chosen to eat is poison! He also eats only nourishing food ; but he chooses what suits his taste and you choose what suits your taste. But, the science of nutrition will tell you or him that, whatever be the food you choose, only see that you are properly nourished. That is the science of nutrition, which is the *tattvam* or truth behind, and is common to, every person's choice of food based on differences of taste. And, in religion, we in India have always applied this principle: See that you get spiritually nourished, whatever be the paths of religion you take. Bring high character out of the religion you choose for yourself. That constitutes the science of religion, the truth or *tattvam* of religion ; your different choices and tastes constitute the *matam* of religion. *Matam* is always a plural, while *tattvam* is a singular.

This distinction between the unity of *tattvam* and the plurality of *matam* is sung in many of our hymns in India. Here is a popular one from the *Shiva-mahimna-stotram* of Pushpadanta :

Trayi samkhyam yogah pashupatimatam
vaishnavamiti
prabhinne prasthanam paramidamadah
pathyamiti cha
ruchinam vaichitryat riju-kutula nana
patha-jusham
nrinameko gamyah tvamasi payasam
arnava iva

'The three Vedas, Samkhya, Yoga, Pashupati (Shiva) path, Vaishnava path—these are different paths ; some people choose some paths, while others choose other paths, according to the wide differences in tastes ; whatever be the paths taken, they all reach Thee alone, O Lord, as water falling on the earth, following straight or crooked courses, all reach the ocean alone.'

We choose different paths because that suit us ; *ruchi* in the verse means appetite or taste. The nutrition, with respect to religion, is what is emphasized in the Science of Religion. Diversities in religious tastes belong to the ethnical dimensions of religion ; here diversities are bound to be there ; approaching these diversities in a scientific attitude, our sages developed a science of Religion, the science behind all religions.

Matam means opinion, what pleases one, what is one's preference. Why do you dress like that ? Because it pleases me to do so. Why do you eat that food ? Because it pleases me to do so ; it is according to my taste and appetite. Therefore *matam* refers to personal preference. This is my *matam*. Wonderful light is thrown when it is applied to religion. Vaishnava-matam, Shaiva-matam, Kristu-matam, Islam-matam, Buddha-matam, Sikh-matam—these various matams are there, and we ask this one question, which any scientist will ask : So many matams are there ; what is the truth behind all these matams ? These matams are only expressions of my opinion, my preference, your preference, but what is the truth behind all these ? That word Truth is conveyed by the Sanskrit word *tattvam*. *Tasya bhavah tattvam*—'the true nature of anything is called *tattvam*' as defined by Shankaracharya. What is the truth behind these diversities of religious preferences ?

This scientific inquiry is the greatest contribution of the Indian mind—this inquiry into the *tattvam* behind the various matams and discovering that One Truth behind all its diversities of expression. By viewing the concepts of matams and *tattvam* in the light of the philosophy and spirituality of the Advaitic vision, India achieved the precious values of *samavaya* and *samanvaya*. Therefore, out of that discovery, India evolved the spirit of concord and harmony. There has been very little of religious conflict in Indian history because

of this discovery. This truth has been expressed in beautiful words, in a later book, the great *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the greatest book of bhakti in India: (1.2.11)

*Vadanti Tat tattva-vidah
tattvam yat jnanamadvayam
Brahmeti paramatmeti
Bhagavan iti sabdyate*

'One and the same Truth of non-dual Pure Consciousness is spoken of as Brahman (the Absolute), by the philosophers, as Paramatman (the Supreme Self), by the mystics, and as Bhagavan (the all-loving Personal God) by the devotees.'

They call It by different names, they approach It in different ways, but the Tattvam is one—the Infinite non-dual Reality, of the nature of Pure Consciousness. When this one truth is kept in view, diversities of approaches will not raise any conflicts at all. *Tattva-vidah*—'Those who know the *tattvam* behind the (matams)'. They have investigated and found the One *Tattvam*, behind all the *matams*. Out of their hearts, therefore, only love and reverence can come, only tolerance and acceptance can come. 'By their fruits ye shall know them', said Jesus. Brahmeti, Parmatmeti, Bhagavan iti shabdyate—Shabda means sound or name—the differences are only in name—like Brahman, Paramatman, Bhagavan, but not in the *vastu* or the Truth conveyed by the Shabdhas or words. That is what made for samanvaya in our great culture. That will do the same service for the rest of the world as well. And today, India has produced a Sri Ramakrishna, who, after experimenting with, and following the teachings of various *matams* including *Christu matam* and *Islam matam*, discovered the *tattvam* behind every *matam*, and proclaimed once again the truth of harmony of all religions, not like a professor through academic study, but from experiment and experience, with all the authenticity coming from experience:

Yato mat tato path—'as many religions, so many pathways to God'. And he gives a beautiful parable to illustrate this truth:

A certain man was sitting under a tree; then another man came running towards him and said: I have seen an animal on that younder tree, reddish in colour; a little later, a second man came and said that he had also seen that animal, but it was yellow; soon a third man came and said that he also had seen the animal, but it was green. And soon a big dispute arose on the subject of the colour of that animal. Then the man told them that they all had better go, along with him, to the tree and find out the truth. So he took them all to that tree and found a man sitting under that tree and told him about the conflicting reports given by the three people. And that man said: Yes, each one of you is correct. It is red, it is sometimes yellow, it is also sometimes green; and I have also seen it sometimes without any colour! It is a chameleon which changes colour!

So, Sri Ramakrishna said: God is experienced differently by different people. He responds to the devotee according to the way he or she approaches Him. He fulfils the desires in the hearts of the devotees. He is with form, *sakara* and *saguna* and also without form *nirakara* and *nirguna*. He cannot be limited by any particular devotee's experience of Him. As we respect and enjoy our experience of Him, we must also respect and appreciate others' experience of Him.

10. *The Indian concept of toleration as acceptance*

This is the language of one who knows the *tattvam*, truth about God, like the man always living under that tree knew the *tattvam* about the chameleon. From that *tattvam* point of view, only harmony, concord, active toleration, can come.

Accordingly, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan defines the Sanatana Dharma concept of toleration thus: 'Toleration is the homage that the finite mind pays to the inexhaustibility of the Infinite'. (*Eastern Religions and Western Thought*: p. 317).

Knowledge of the Truth of the One God of all religions silences all conflicts. India has the blessed privilege to throw up a galaxy of such great minds who, established at the heart of *tattvam* or truth, sent out only waves of love and compassion to followers of all matams around. Based upon this hoary spiritual tradition, and on Ramakrishna's own experience, his disciple, Swami Vivekananda, went to the United States and, in the very opening sentences of his address to the famous Chicago Parliament of Religions, shared this Indian wisdom with the people of the Western world. (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. 1, pp. 3-4):

'I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true.

'I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple (in Jerusalem) was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered, and is still fostering, the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation.

'I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings:

"As the different streams, having their sources in different places, all mingle their water in the sea, so O Lord, the different paths which men take, through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to thee."

'The present Convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration, to the world, of the wonderful doctrine preached in the *Gita*:

"Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me." Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization, and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now.

'But their time is come. And I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this Convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.'

11. *All intolerance issues out of the Procrustean bed of exclusive creeds*

The rest of the world have largely followed the policy of uniformity. They have only one race, one language, one church, one religion. And then they have to twist other religions, other races, and, if possible, kill them all away. This has happened, again and again, in the history of the world, under that policy of uniformity. That policy is like the *procrustean* bed of Greek mythology. All intolerance arises out of the procrustean bed of exclusive creeds and dogmas, religious or political. There was a man called Procrustes. He had a bed in his house on a hill. He will invite any passer-by to come and lie on his bed: and if he finds the man a little longer than the bed, he will cut his legs to the size of the bed; if he finds any one shorter than his bed, he will pull his legs till they become as long as the bed. He firmly held the view that his bed was the standard and that all people must be made to conform to that standard! Truth or *tattvam* of the fundamental unity of all religions has not been understood and appreciated. We have plenty of such procrustean beds of exclusive dogmas and creeds choking the free expression of the human spirit. Our country

never allowed such procrustean beds to develop in our religious life or such regimentation which leads to intolerance, persecution, violence, war and genocide.

The great British historian, late Arnold Toynbee, and the author of *A Study of History* and *A Historian's Approach to Religion*, says that the Indian religions are open-minded and inclusive, accepting everyone, whereas the religions of the Semetic family, namely, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are exclusive-minded. They uphold the view: I am right, you are wrong, as against the Indian view that we can all be right, each in his or her own way, and so we shall all follow the policy of live and let live.

In the *samanvaya* idea, we have the wisdom of India. It has inspired our people for thousands of years. But, since independence, we have lost touch with that wisdom. Our education does not give us an insight into that wisdom. Today it is true to say that we are a small people in a big country. Our minds are small, our hearts are small, our interests are narrow, and we fight with each other over petty issues. Most of our educated people have not been purified by the touch of the wisdom of our *Amar Bharat*, Eternal India. As I often express the idea: our educated people need a re-education today. And they will get it in the Vivekananda literature; also in the writings of Gandhiji, Kaka Kalelkar, Tagore, and others. Tagore has sung about India as *maha-manava-sagara*, 'The ocean of infinite humanity', and welcomed its diversity of human types in such lines as *eso arya eso anarya* etc.

12. Conclusion: India to march forward with the flag of Samanvaya

It is great minds and hearts that make a nation great. That greatness must come to our people through education. When we celebrate the greatness of a person like Kaka

Kalelkar, it is good for us to remember that the true India, the wisdom of India, is yet to influence our people today. When that touch will come to our people, this land of ours will once more become the land of harmony, the land where every religion, every language, every cultural group, can find its own fulfilment. Unity in diversity will not remain a mere Government of India slogan. It should sink into our national consciousness, and inspire our inter-human and inter-group relationships. And I am sure that our people will capture that spirit before the beginning of new century, 15 years ahead. Let us make this period an intense re-education period for the whole nation. Then only shall we see the great humanist and universal vision, embodied in our Constitution, becoming translated into socio-political realities.

We shall have to work hard, in the light of the wisdom of our culture, so as to release our national energies with a view to building up a strong, vigorous, dynamic, awakened India, where millions of our people, of all castes and creeds and regions, now suffering from poverty and backwardness, will be brought forward, and installed on the pedestal of human freedom and dignity. That energy can be released from our people only by positive thinking, and not by negative thinking—faith in oneself, faith in our national destiny, faith in our people. Our politics must become more positive and less negative.

I often compare country with country, and I find one truth, and it is that every country has social maladies. And we also have our own share of maladies. But many countries do not have adequate remedies—very often the remedies offered are worse than the maladies. In this respect, our country is fortunate that it has adequate remedies along with many maladies, and that these remedies are relevant not only for this country but for

the rest of the world as well. It is one aspect of that remedy that you have got in that *samanvaya* concept, developed, first, as a vision and, soon, translated as a socio-political policy and programme, for all these thousands of years. We can see its healthy operation in India in the modern period, when you see the different Islamic sects living freely in India, whereas in Pakistan, the tyranny of the concept of uniformity had first driven away all Hindus and Sikhs, and now threatens some of the Muslim groups, like the Ahmediyas, as well. How we wish that Pakistan also gets the blessing of that vision which their own ancestors have bequeathed to them and to us. Who are they? The Vedic sages are the original ancestors of the present people of Kandahar, Sindh, and the entire Punjab area. If the people of Pakistan develop this attitude, the whole policy will change. They are now persecuting their gifted Ahmediya community, declaring

them non-muslims by an act of their Parliament. The Bahais also live peacefully and honourably here in India, whereas they have no place in Pakistan, or in the country of their origin, namely Iran. That is India, the *maha-manava-sagara*. And modern India is to march forward with this flag of *samanvaya*, inscribed with Unity in diversity. For that, our people need to assimilate the ancient but ever-fresh message coming from the *Mahabharata*, through the words Queen Mother Kunti addressed to her son, Emperor Yudhishtira:

*Dharme te dheeyatam buddhih
manaste mahadastu cha*

'May your reason or understanding be established in *dharma* or justice and righteousness, and may your mind and heart be big!'

That is the type of mind and heart that alone will take our nation to greatness and glory. My thanks to you all.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE INDIAN QUEST FOR SOCIALISM: BY ARUN KUMAR BISWAS. Published by Firma KLM Private Limited, 257 B, B. B. Ganguly Street, Calcutta 700 012. 1986. Pp. xv + 302. Rs. 200.

By *mukti* Swami Vivekananda meant 'total emancipation'—to be free from all the shackles: external nature, social evils, and the limitation of one's own body-mind complex. He invited modern science and socialist ideology to join hands with spirituality; he tried not only for individual liberation, but for the freedom of all. In this sense he was unique. He inherited the great Indian tradition, and also went through the modern western ideas, and himself was inspired by Sri Ramakrishna in whom the past and future of India met. Dr. Biswas starts from the Rig-Vedic age in order to find out the basis of *Samyavada*, the Indian equivalent for 'socialism'. He quotes profusely from the Upanishads, the Gita, the Buddha, and then touches upon

Rammohan Ray, Keshab Sen, Bankimchandra and others in order to show that this idea is not alien to the Indians.

In the chapters II to V he speaks of Swamiji's views on caste, social inequality, and the Vedantic ideas of socio-spiritual struggle for equality. He then outlines how Swamiji's concept of decentralization, self-reliance, eradicating special privileges etc can make the *samyavada* practical in social life.

To find how the later Indian leaders searched for socialism, Dr. Biswas outlines Gandhiji's views and actions, and notes the merits and demerits of these. A chapter is devoted for brief discussions about the political views of Sri Aurobindo, M. N. Roy, Subhas Bose, Nehru and Jayaprakash Narayan. Post-independence socialist thoughts, chiefly coming from Nehru, Lohia, Jayaprakash and Indian experiences, are narrated in a lucid style. At the same time, he writes about his expectations from the Ramakrishna Order. The last chapter deals with the concept of socialism,

its prevalent practices, and international trends in today's socialism.

The author has done a very useful job by tracing the ideas right from ancient India to the modern times. In a nutshell he presents Swamiji, Gandhiji, Nehru, Lohia and Jayaprakash which will be helpful not only for the general readers but for the students of socialism also. He has sought to find out why and where the other leaders agree and disagree with Swamiji, why they fail, and why Swamiji's views are the most important not only for modern India but for the world also.

The question is: What is socialism? Is it just equal distribution of wealth? In a flood or draught-stricken area doles are distributed equally among the sufferers. It is not socialism, but charity. Without considering the question of production and market, the problem of distribution cannot be solved. And so, comes the importance of economics. Dr. Biswas discusses the socio-political ideas of Swamiji, but a question arises: Did Swamiji present any economic theory? Swamiji left many suggestions which should be elaborated to show that his ideas are still relevant. Just to picture India as a capitalist state is not enough, because Indian capitalism is quite different from western capitalism. Now these issues need something more, and that is a sociological methodology by which Swamiji's relevance can be established more rationally. It is interesting to note that it is the Ramakrishna Order journals which have published articles on Swamiji's views on economics. What was the economic theory—containing the issues of production, distribution, market and consumption—that can be formulated from Swamiji's Works? How the Indian economic planning can be done in consonance with Swamiji's ideas? What is the state-character of modern India from Swamiji's viewpoint? How can one implement Swamiji's ideas in economic planning—pertaining to the issues of choice of priority, resource mobilization, strategy and objectives—not only for India but for the third world countries including Africa? Dr. Biswas may kindly note that all these questions were raised and discussed by the monks of the Ramakrishna Order, and many were published in their journals. Vivekananda-scholars, other than these monks, so far as my knowledge goes, have not dived deep into these issues.

The author puts a question: Where are the followers of *Socialist* Vivekananda? The present reviewer has worked for a long time among the tribals and aboriginals, and is still connected with

many groups of young boys and girls who are ceaselessly working for the upliftment of the 'poorest of the poor'. The Ramakrishna Mission is guiding thousands of youngsters who are working in the backward areas. Many of the Mission centres may be in the towns, but town-people are not all rich, especially the slum-dwellers. The charitable dispensaries of the Mission scattered throughout the country, serve the poorest of the poor. The biggest orphanage in Asia is being run at Rahara, West Bengal by the Mission. Though Patna is the capital of Bihar, the Mission's students' Home there gives shelter to the orphans. Many centres of the Mission like Narendrapur, Ranchi, Coimbatore, Raipur, and the three Arunachal centres, are working today in a big, sometimes colossal scale, for the development of tribals, landless peasants, blind and the slum-dwellers. Some centres have invented indigenous tools and machines which are applicable in the work of, and available in cheap price for these villagers. The present reviewer knows persons who, in the line of Swamiji's socialist thoughts, have contested Panchayat elections, formed trade unions, organized teachers' forum to work in the slum areas, and doctors' front, to train up bare-foot doctors for the villages, thus working to bring a change in the political and social spheres. And so we do not think that it is proper to say that the followers of socialist Vivekananda are only a few.

The author opines that the Mission perhaps feels shy of preaching Swamiji's socialist views. In fact, it is just the opposite. Dr. Biswas himself agrees to this point when he speaks high of Swami Akhandananda (p. 231), Swami Vireswarananda (p. 243) and other monks. We are grateful to the author for his friendly suggestions, but at the same time we like to request him to visit some of our centres e.g. the village-centres run by the Narendrapur Ashrama and the Coimbatore Mission Centre, the Santhal villages where the Ranchi Ashrama is working among the Adivasis, the centres for integrated tribal development at Bastar district (MP) run by the Raipur Ashrama, and the educational centres of the Mission in Arunachal Pradesh, to name only a few. Perhaps these will act as an eye-opener.

Dr. Biswas criticizes Nehru for his lack of political will. But we are to keep in mind that he had to struggle against many of his colleagues, and at the same time against the super-powers also. India was newly freed, new aspirations were there among the common people, the intellectuals suffered from ideological vacuum, the leftist did

not come forward, and the communists were yet to understand the Indian ethos. Yet Nehru tried to keep India in the democratic line while almost all the newly freed countries of the southern Asia failed. Lohia was an extraordinary thinker but his arrogance and lack of practical sense could not lead the socialists. Jayaprakash was brilliant but his theory and practice of the 'total revolution' did not get a clear shape to lead the people. The socialistic background in India today is widely varied. It needs a more thorough discussion which cannot be put in this short review.

Now coming to Swamiji's ideas, cultural movement is what is urgently needed. For instance, after the nationalization of the collieries, wages of the workers increased sharply. But go to Dhanbad. You will find that the class IV workers still live in the hutments, spend a lot in drinking, and still are exploited by the trade union leaders. Unless the awareness of one's own innate dignity and divinity is awakened, mere high wages will be of no use. Secondly, the middle class people are in the leadership in almost all the fronts—peasants, labourers etc. Thirdly, even in the third world countries foreign culture has a strong appeal, and influence which give rise to new problems like consumerism, economism etc. for the lower classes.

Unless a cultural movement is started, mere political movements will be of no use. Political changes alone cannot solve the basic problem. And that is mainly because of the absence of any truly spiritual (not just religious or ethnic) revolution or movement. Here Swamiji is still more relevant to us as, according to him, spiritual or cultural movement is a must before any other constructive movement can be started successfully. And for that, a 'think-tank' is needed which can be supplied by the middle class.

The author has mentioned Swamiji's saying 'I am a socialist', time and again, but the full statement of Swamiji, is 'I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but because half a loaf is better than no bread.' Dr. Biswas would have done better if he had explained why, according to Swamiji, socialism was not a perfect system and why it was only half a loaf to him. Actually Swamiji liked to try socialism for its new approach; he wanted not only socialism but something else also. What is that

something else? He described the merits and demerits of both socialism and democracy. He tried to have a synthesis of these two. Though Dr. Biswas did not explain this point, he correctly reached the answer when he spoke of Democratic Socialism.

Another point should have been discussed in the book. Why did Swamiji try to add spirituality to his socialistic ideology? Is it because he was a monk? Or did he foresee something more? Modern science, political ideology, and spirituality—are the three weapons to bring in a new society. Now science, being ethically neutral, should be guided by some higher philosophy which it lacks. Political ideologies speak of the masses, these do not see man as an individual. But from the European Renaissance period, individuality of man is becoming more prominent. It is the cry of the day. The recent students' agitation for freedom in China is an eye-opener. Now-a-days most of the problems are psychosomatic; alienation, loneliness, divorce, generation gap, strain in human relationships etc. are growing more and more in all the countries—capitalist, communist and the rest. Neither and political ideology nor science have yet found any solution to these. Though the doctors have invented anti-anxiety tablets, these are inadequate and cannot solve the basic problem. It is here that spirituality can and does play a great role. But again, one should note the difference between religion and spirituality. Swamiji was lucky in having Sri Ramakrishna as his guru, and that is why he could declare religion as the manifestation of one's essential and innate divinity and not as a bundle of rituals, or belief in dogmas, or holy texts. Sri Ramakrishna, therefore, plays a vital role in Swamiji's concept of socialism.

The author has tried his best to chalk out the trend in the Indian quest for socialism. The book reminds us of Gray's *Socialist Traditions: From Moses to Lenin*. As each and every ideology has got its social background, it would be more appropriate if the author could outline the social atmosphere in which the thoughts appeared. The publishers have priced the book of 317 pages at Rs. 200. Only the rich can afford to it, the class which, according to the author, is not interested in socialism.

SWAMI SOMESWARANANDA

Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Bombay.

PRACTICAL HINTS FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Seeking the Higher Life

As long as one course continues to be attractive and absorbing, it satisfies us, and we do not feel the necessity for another; but the time is sure to come when the lessons of today will lose their charm and will appear dull, insipid, and monotonous. Then we shall seek something higher, something better, and more attractive. This search of the ego for something higher than it has yet possessed is the basis of its spiritual evolution.

—Swami Abhedananda

Sometimes a man may imagine himself to be contented and peaceful, but he mistakes laziness for contentment and peacefulness. Perfect peace and bliss can only be had in God, who is always ready to accept you as his own child when you recognize in him your true Father.

—Swami Ramakrishnananda

In the life of everyone there comes satiety after prolonged enjoyment of sense-objects. If at that time one happens to come in contact with a saint, one advances towards the goal.

When you set a spark of fire to a block of wood, gradually the whole piece of wood (burns and) becomes fire. In the same way, if a drop of divinity falls on a man he becomes transformed into god even in this physical body.

—Swami Turiyananda

Let a few stand out and live for God alone and save religion for the world.

Sacrifice on God's altar earth's purest and best. He who struggles is better than he who never attempts. Even to look on one who has given up has a purifying effect. Stand up for God; let the world go.

Give up, renounce the world. Now we are like dogs strayed into a kitchen and eating a piece of meat, looking round in fear lest at any moment some one may come and drive them out. Instead of that, be a king and know you own the world. This never comes until you give it up and it ceases to bind. Give up mentally, if you do not physically.

'Be still and know that you are God.'

Look only for realisation and choose the best method you can find to suit you.

Learn until 'the glory of the Lord shines through your face', as it shone through the face of Shvetaketu.

Within there is the lion—the eternally pure, illumined, ever-free Atman; and directly one realises It through meditation and concentration, this world of Maya vanishes.

—Swami Vivekananda.

[Compiled from *Precepts for Perfection* by Sabina Thorne, (Madras: Ganesh & Co. Pvt. Ltd. 1961) and *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*]

‘He who knows the Supreme attains the highest.’—Tait. Upa II.1.1

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Once upon a time there was a very kind and charitable woman called Theodora (‘God-given’). She loved everyone and was always striving to help the poor and needy, and to teach little children, and nurse the sick and helpless. One day she felt that all she could do was so little, and that there was so much suffering in the world and so much work to be done that all her efforts seemed of no avail, and she felt discouraged and said to herself, ‘I am of no use in this great sea of human misery, all I can do is of so little avail, I shall never be able to be of much help to these poor people.’ As she sat alone, mournfully thinking these sad thoughts, she fell asleep and dreamed. In her dream she found herself in a vast studio where there were hundreds and thousands of pictures. What appeared strange to her was that not one was finished, but they were all in varying stages of completion. Some stood on easels and were covered from sight by white cloths thrown over them, but the larger number stood on the floor or were ranged around the walls in endless confusion. As Theodora stood there silent and wondering what all these covered canvases could contain, an old man—tall, stately, and beautiful entered the studio. He did not seem to notice Theodora, but went at once to one of the easels and uncovering the picture standing on it, began to paint. He only gave it a few touches however, and then carefully covering it over again, he went to the next easel and repeated the process. After silently watching the old man for some time, Theodora approached him, and encouraged by his kind and benign countenance, she ventured to ask him, ‘What are you doing, sir?’ The old man turned toward her with a bright smile and said in sweet and gentle tones, ‘I am the artist of the King of Kings. All these are portraits of His children, who are made in His likeness. As they grow more and more to resemble their Father in Heaven through love and devotion to Him and through pure and holy living, I gradually paint their portraits, adding here a touch and there a touch, until the likeness is complete. Then the finished picture is taken away from here and hung in the palace of the King of Kings to be with him forever more.’

Then Theodora understood that all her struggles and all her work were but intended to make her grow more and more like the King her Father.... A great peace filled her heart and when she awoke it remained with her.