

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

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## The Divine Message

Calmness is a steady flow of the mind  
toward God.

Self-restraint is control of the organs of sense.

Patience is bearing the burden of life  
cheerfully.

Steadiness is overcoming the palate and the  
impulse of sex.

The highest charity is refraining from  
violence.

Austerity is the giving up of desire.

Valour is the conquest of one's own self.

To know the truth is to see the oneness of  
the Self with God.

Truthfulness is true and agreeable speech as  
exemplified by the sages.

Purity is nonattachment to work.

Renunciation is overcoming the world.

Virtue is the treasure which men covet.

I, the supreme Lord, am the sacrifice.

The greatest gift is the gift of knowledge.

The greatest strength is the control of prāṇa.

Fortunate is he who meditates on my divine  
powers.

The highest profit is in devotion to me.

Wisdom is removing false ideas of multiplicity  
and realizing the unity of the Self.

Modesty is abhorrence of evil deeds.

Excellence of character arises from disregard  
of worldly considerations.

Happiness is the transcending of both  
pleasure and pain.

Misery is hankering after pleasures of sense.

Learned is he who discriminates between  
bondage and freedom.

Ignorant is he who identifies himself with  
the body.

The right path is that which leads to me.

The wrong path is that which causes  
restlessness of the mind.

Hell is the predominance of tamas.

The teacher who has realized his oneness  
with me is the true friend.

He indeed is rich who is rich in virtues.

Poor is he who is discontented.

Mean is he who is not master of his senses.

Godly is he who is not attached to objects  
of sense.

Divine is he who has overcome both good  
and evil.

(from *Srīmad Bhāgavatam*, Sri Krishna to  
Uddhava)

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

□ This month's EDITORIAL, THE WONDER OF BEING CHEERFUL, echoes the plea of neurobiologists and the medical community to people, not to allow themselves to be swamped by debilitating self-pity, but to fill the mind with happy emotions. It is not only good for one's own well-being, but for society too.

□ THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA MOVEMENT is based on a talk delivered by Revered Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The Swami delivered the talk at Pune in Maharashtra. It depicts the early formative period of the Ramakrishna Order, and how Sri Ramakrishna himself laid the foundation for the world-wide Movement, nurtured and spread by Swami Vivekananda, the brother disciples and other monks. The growth of private centres in India and abroad is an affirmation that the ideals of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda are attracting the hearts of people.

□ Swami Prabhanandaji portrays in his engrossing and well-researched paper, SRI RAMAKRISHNA TOUCHED THEM: RAJINDER NARAIN DUTT, the touching story of the homeopathic physician, R. N. Dutt, who treated Sri Ramakrishna's throat ailment, and how in course of time his life was changed by the Master. This is the first of a series of articles to come, focusing on personalities who received the unbounded grace of Sri Ramakrishna but who passed their lives in comparative obscurity. *Prabuddha Bharata* expresses its gratitude to Sri Haradhan Dutta, grandson of Sri Kalidas Dutta, for his generous help in providing valuable materials to the author.

□ Prof. Bhupendra Nath, in his scholarly and insightful writing, INDIAN SECULARISM AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, tells us in this trying period of India, when communalists and some opportunist politicians are being lured by disintegrative and separatist forces, we must turn to the true spirit of Indian secularism bequeathed to us by Swami Vivekananda to tide over the crisis. The author is a professor of Philosophy at Magadha University, Bodh-Gaya in Bihar.

□ BEYOND THE HORIZON OF THE VISIBLE is an engaging article by Swami Jagadatmananda. What is visible on the periphery is little, but what lies beyond is an immense world of subtle existence. Parapsychology explores this field very seriously. The author is a monk of the Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math.

□ Dr. Kamala S. Jaya Rao, M.D., of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, in her essay THE RAINBOW OF CONSCIOUSNESS, insightfully looks into the realm of consciousness. With beautiful metaphors she tells how the colour bands in the rainbow are different, but have their unity in one source—light. That light is cosmic Consciousness or Oneness which appears to us as many in manifestation.

## The Wonder Of Being Cheerful

The common spectacle that unfailingly moves to sorrow a keen observer of people is their forlorn countenances. These faces reflect hidden anxiety, restlessness, anguish and depression. People on the roads move like humanoid robots with bowed heads, downcast eyes, seemingly unable to carry anymore the burden of their sorrows. Whether in cities or in villages, the sight of sagging shoulders and melancholic appearance seems the same. Only children are an exception. Their boisterous nature enlivens the whole atmosphere. But when they grow old, that spontaneous mirth will disappear in the sands of life's sorrow and they too will share the burden. A person wrapped day after day in modern day frustrations, fears and tensions does not suspect the deleterious effects those emotions have on health. Such negative feelings endured over the years cause illness. It is becoming more and more accepted by psychologists that the shock of anger, depression, jealousy and other violent thoughts, absorbed without much thought in youth, and accepted as 'part of the play of life', affect the whole psychophysical mechanism over the years and finally lead to physical and mental illness. A spate of books and magazine articles have thus appeared in recent years on the subject of happiness and the destructive nature of negative emotions. Quite a good number of psychiatrists and therapists have appeared also to give sane advice and help to sufferers.

'A healthy mind in a healthy body' has been the old dictum. But how stress and emotions play substantial roles in both in-

viting and curing diseases has for decades attracted the attention of researchers all over the world. Contemporary neurobiologists and medical researchers have brought to light many startling truths, previously unverified. There is a complex interdependence between mind and body, both in healthy states and in illness. The positive results gathered from a number of experiments in psychology and physiology, group therapies, relaxation sessions, guided imagery and biofeedback techniques, have left scientists with little doubt about the effects of mental activity on body and health. A pioneer in research, Dr. Robert Ader, a professor at the University of Rochester Medical School, contends: "There is little question that we can alter the cause of disease by manipulating psychological factors." Another statement by Cavin and Ojeman adds: "There is indeed a relation between emotion and 'butterflies in the stomach'. This overlap of brain sites for emotion and visceral function suggests an anatomic basis for psychosomatic diseases."<sup>1</sup>

When 'Donald' arrived for his first group-therapy session at UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute and Hospital in West Los Angeles, he was in a wheel chair, suffering from malignant melanoma and severely depressed. But after he spent six months sharing stories and good times with other cancer patients and learning relaxation techniques, his mood improved considerably, and so had his physical condition. As his attitude brightened, an important change took place inside his body: "there was an increase in the activity of his 'natural killer cells', a crucial link in the body's immune system. By year's end, though he still had cancer, Donald was able

1. Dr. William H. Cavin & Dr. George A. Ojeman, *Inside the Brain* (New York: Mentor, 1980) p. 153.

to dance a jig for his group."<sup>2</sup> Even while undergoing conventional medical treatment, people are reaping miraculous benefits from mind-body therapies. The new discoveries in this vital field, though at present popular only in advanced countries, indicate exciting possibilities. Many leading medical schools, like Harvard and UCLA have included psychobiology research in their course offerings. Within a few years further explorations will unravel many more facts about people's moods and their definite influence on body and behavioural patterns.

In the laboratory of Yale University's Center for Behavioural Medicine, Gary Schwartz and others are conducting experiments to know the interrelationship between the brain and muscle patterns of the face. Desirable or undesirable inner emotions produce outward signs of muscle tension on the face. In a laboratory experiment, a person sits quietly and four recording electrodes (to measure the body's natural electricity) are placed on his face. According to the experimenter's suggestion, the subject grits his teeth and two of the electrodes on the lower face become active. The emotion of anger and wrinkled forehead activates the two upper electrodes.

The muscles of the face, explains Dr. Richard Restak, are responsible for the outer expression of our inner emotions. When we feel sad, for instance, our eyebrows wrinkle into a state of sustained muscle tension, and the corners of our mouth droop. When we are happy, other muscular patterns evolve. Instead of drooping, the muscles around our mouth tighten while the outer corners turn upward into the beginnings of a smile. In general, these muscular contractions are outward signs of an inner mental state. But which comes first?<sup>3</sup>

If mind can exert benevolent or malevolent influences on the body, then, by changing

bodily postures and facial muscle pattern, emotions can also be altered—say neuroscientists. If one thinks of happy thoughts or angry or sad thoughts those surely reflect on the face. By feeding back to the mind the muscle patterns characteristic of joy, the mind generates or sustains inner feelings of exhilaration. To put on a happy or smiling face is an effective way to counter the inner harmful and depressing thoughts. Therefore the Bible proverb says: 'A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance'. "Faking laughter," psychotherapist Goodheart says, "triggers the diaphragm. The diaphragm interprets this as a real one, and in a flash, a genuine laugh follows. Negative emotions are poisonous. They slowly incapacitate the organism, rather imperceptibly at first. Cheerfulness, on the other hand, alters the whole metabolism of a cell, and triggers certain *neuropeptides* which reinforce the immune system. During stress, the body releases large amounts of a steroid called cortisol. Commenting on the staggering sum of money spent every year on health care programmes all over the world, a noted biologist, Dr. Lewis Thomas, remarked, "Meanwhile we are paying too little attention, and respect to the built-in durability and sheer power of the human organism. Its surest tendency is toward stability and balance."<sup>4</sup>

It was believed a few years ago that blood pressure and cardiovascular patients could not control their heart muscle or blood pressure. Such diseases were treated only with medications. The patients themselves were denied participation and responsibility for the healing process. But the modern discovery of the biofeedback mechanisms have entirely changed things. Biofeedback can be compared to the action of a common thermostat which controls our room temperature.

2. *Time*, March 12, 1990.

3. Richard M. Restak, M.D., *The Brain, the Last Frontier* (New York: Warner Books, 1979).

4. Lewis Thomas, *The Lives of a Cell* (New York: Bantam Books, 1984) p. 98.

The thermostat is set at the desired temperature. When there is a drop in the temperature, the thermostat 'feeds back' the information and the furnace starts working. Again, when the temperature begins to rise high, the thermostat shuts off the furnace. Thus room temperature is maintained at a steady level. Our body has its own thermostat-like mechanisms, all coordinated and regulated by the brain so the natural tendency of the body's systems is always towards stability and balance. Walter B. Cannon calls this *homeostasis* in his famous book, *Wisdom of the Body*. When an organism becomes destabilized due to some environmental fluctuation, or due to some internal disorder, the central nervous system receives the information, adjusts and compensates the body's mechanisms in the required measure. Scientists held the view until recently that the mind's or brain's control over the visceral organs was involuntary and that internal *homeostatic* adjustments could not be brought within the reach of one's conscious control. By recent experiments, however, it has been shown that some of these can come under voluntary control.

In a normal course, the outer peripheral organs send warning signals of pain or some irregularity to the mind, indicating that something is wrong in the system and should immediately be set right. But the mind, wrapped in its own morbid emotions like anger, hatred, stress and anxieties, or intoxicated by ruthless ambition, pursuit of pleasures or under the influence of heavy medicaments, is rendered insensitive and unable to respond. For the majority of diseases, the internal environment of excitement, agitation, misplaced values or distorted views, play more pivotal roles in the patient's road to recovery than the external treatments. In such cases, changes in mental outlook or attitude have produced marvellous results.

The sophisticated electronic instruments have not only brought about an advance in knowledge of the workings of neurophysiology, but have been able to translate subtle body symptoms into easily discernible visual and sound media. The EEG and EKG instruments, able to measure nervous electricity, characteristics of heart beat and even the tiny electrical currents involved in sensory perception and brain activity, can show up many types of disorders. With use of these the landmark discovery of the biofeedback mechanisms in the body have become very important in medical treatment. With psychological support from physicians, patients can watch their own body conditions and try voluntarily to bring back the body's lost equilibrium, and very often can contribute greatly to restoring their own mental and physical health. The Department of Neurobiology at Bellevue Hospital in New York treats victims of stroke or cerebral injuries by involving the patients consciously in biofeedback techniques. A majority of patients have achieved control over their paralyzed limbs and have returned to their usual occupations. A seventeen year old girl who had lost control over her right hand, and remained in that condition since her childhood, regained total control of the limb and she could finally ride horseback, controlling the horse with the hand.<sup>5</sup>

Through 'visceral learning', patients suffering from hypertension, frequent headaches, ulcers, asthma, and cardiovascular disorders, have in some cases almost got rid of these disorders. Visceral learning requires the patient's active participation in the curing process. Excessive medication and the habit of 'pill-popping' at the slightest indication of discomfort are harmful, say the psychobiologists. Due to desensitizing effects, the medicines often inhibit or prevent the message of disorders reaching the brain centres and

5. *The Brain, the Last Frontier*, p. 330.

the body's natural mechanisms are impeded. The brain centres regulating the nervous system are disrupted and ultimately lose control permanently over the body. The increasing use of medications alters the biochemistry of body and brain in such a way that the system becomes dependent upon the drug for its normal functioning. Commenting on this widespread habit of pill-grabbing Prof. Steven Rose says: "With drugs to sleep and to wake, to sedate and alert, to ease pain and to generate joy, we have already arrived at one form of Brave New World."<sup>6</sup>

Heart trouble may develop as a result of prolonged living in a stressful situation or environment, or due to unrealistic or high ambitions. Consuming capsules indiscriminately dulls the brain's intelligence and judgement. Otherwise it would have warned to bring a halt to dangerous consumption or other behaviour taxing the body's limit of endurance. If some are hypochondriacs, over anxious to take medicine to help the body, others are maniacs who drive their minds and bodies recklessly to an irreversible state of illness. In the majority of cases where an early changing of internal or external environment is made, or slowing down the fast pace of life, the risk of severe damage to the visceral organs has been reduced.

Positive or negative visualization of oneself as happy or sad triggers mood changes in the mind. Mental imagery markedly affects neurochemical and endocrine hormone production. As mentioned earlier, physiologists have discovered that mental states have their reflection in the facial expressions. They produce their corresponding changes in facial muscle patterns of tension. Psychobiologists are convinced that the process is also reversible and making voluntary changes

in facial muscles can also bring about changes in the mind. Smiling, laughing and cheerful expressions set in motion 'happy waves' in the mindstuff and can free an individual from the stressful psychic atmosphere. The body generates *neuropeptides* which revitalize the immunologic system to prevent and fight disease. Therefore a smiling and beaming face is not only a matter of being socially convivial, but immensely good for one's health and well-being. Associating with a person of radiant energy and good cheer is an effective therapy in itself, while a morose and irritable face repels and casts gloom all round. Society is a mirror and in it a person sees his own reflection. An easy-going person with joyful heart is less annoyed by trivial disturbances, and possessing the rare quality of laughter, is sought after and loved by all. "Laugh your way to health!", "Laugh a good belly-laugh and call me tomorrow.", "Laughter may be hazardous to your illness!" These are the new prescriptions of many modern physicians. Cheerfulness is the wonderful drug. For this, one of nature's gifts, one does not have to foot heavy medical bills, or endure prolonged hospitalization to learn.

Exercises such as jogging, aerobics, even marathon races and others of vigorous nature, are becoming popular. T.V., magazines and newspapers have contributed largely to highlighting their beneficial effects on health. But an experiment conducted at Yale tends to discredit this idea. Exercises do produce harmful stress on the body too. It has been found that one's mental state is a very important factor to be taken into account before physical exercise. The Yale experiment involved a group of several professional actors who were divided into two groups. One group was instructed to work themselves up into an angry state by imagining themselves in disagreeable, frustrating situations. The second group concentrated on thinking thoughts that put them in calm,

6. Steven Rose, *The Conscious Brain* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976) p. 373.

quiet and peaceful moods. After this preparation, the experimenters recorded each person's heart rate, blood pressure and respiration. Then both groups were put through a moderate course of physical exercise, such as ascending and descending stairs several times. At the end of the exercise period, an important discovery came to light. "In the 'angry group' heart rate and blood pressure were sustained at undesirable levels. In the 'placid group' the exercise was truly beneficial, since heart rate and blood pressure remained well within normal bounds. Despite the fact that both groups were doing the same thing, only one group received benefit; in fact, the group that generated the energy and feelings of anger were actually harming themselves!"<sup>7</sup>

In the light of the above experiment, neurophysiologists caution people to pay greater attention to mental preparedness. Physical exercise can be harmful if it leads to deregulation, experts contend.

Health is really a multidimensional phenomenon," observes Dr. Capra, "involving interdependent physical, psychological and social aspects. The common representation of health and illness as opposite ends of a one dimensional continuum is quite misleading. Physical disease may be balanced by a positive mental attitude and social support, so that the overall state is one of well-being. On the other hand, emotional problems or social isolation can make a person feel sick in spite of physical fitness. ...What is unhealthy for the individual is generally also unhealthy for the society and for the embedding ecosystem."<sup>8</sup>

The word cancer conjures up in the mind the dreadful image of a sick person and an incurable disease. Till the turn of the twentieth century, T.B., plague and leprosy were similarly dread diseases. Cancer has become an emotionally loaded word for most

of us, practically synonymous with suffering and death. It is generally thought by people that it is a powerful enemy that invades the body from outside. Current research in cellular biology, however, indicates that cancer is actually an internal breakdown. Astonishingly, it has been found that cancer cells are not strong and powerful, but are on the contrary, weak, sluggish and abnormal. The cancer cell is an imperfect or damaged cell, either produced earlier by the body itself, or one which has been damaged by toxic biochemicals or stressful life events. Scientists do not know why a normal cell turns a traitor. But it seems that under the influence of incorrect genetic information, these renegade cells function abnormally and with alarming celerity reproduce other imperfect cells like themselves but larger in size. Healthy cells have correct genetic information and grow up to an optimal size, reproduce and function normally. When imperfect mutinous cells multiply in the system, however, the result will be a tumour composed of a mass of the malignant cells. The disease being systemic, it spreads throughout the body and is not localized. Malignant cells, after reckless reproduction and metastatic rapid spread to other parts of the organism, pose the major threat and problem. The unpleasant treatments a patient sometimes undergoes are chemotherapy, radiation or surgical removal of the tumour. Physicians are aware that these treatments shatter and injure the body. But such remedies will have to be used until medical science achieves a much needed breakthrough. Research is going on throughout the world, and hopes are bright to clear the present darkness.

What really causes cancer? Is it due to the intrusion of carcinogenic substances, or weakening of the immune system, or to mental states and environmental factors? Neurobiologists and medical researchers have abandoned the reductionist approach

7. *The Brain, the Last Frontier*, p. 332.

8. Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point* (London: Flamingo edition, 1982) p. 355-54.

and do not now expect ever to find that cancer has a single cause. It is neither a completely biological phenomenon, nor does it arise due to purely psychological causes. The cause of cancer is a complex network of factors. In a healthy body, the immune system is ordinarily strong and immediately able to detect, tackle and destroy malignant cells. A large number of people have been able to arrest cancer naturally without medicine. The body is normally tough and buoyant and has the defence arsenal to fight with external invaders. But when the immune system weakens, it becomes defenceless and the organism is besieged and destroyed by slow death. What has been puzzling the scientists is this breakdown in the immune system. They are grappling with the problem and trying to unravel the mystery, in the meanwhile trying to find ways to reinforce it. Recent studies have shown that in a cancer-prone individual, symptoms of acute strain in interpersonal relationships, feelings of despair, neglect, insecurity and hopelessness are noticed six to eighteen months before cancer is diagnosed. For a patient reaching a state of emotional impasse, where all escape routes are walled, the deathwish may become a final resort. This extreme negativism is undoubtedly due to faulty personality development or adjustment. When one's zest for life is lost, the inevitable weakening of the immune system also occurs. It is widely accepted in the medical community that along with conventional treatment a patient also needs to unburden conscious and unconscious emotions that can inhibit recovery.

Notably in this field Dr. Carl Simonton, an oncologist, and his wife Stephanie, a psychotherapist, along with others are doing wonderful work. The Simontons have their cancer centre at Pacific Palisades in California. The couple make innovative use of visualization techniques, form intimate personal relationship with patients, encourage

patients' willful participation in treatment, and administer ample doses of humour and laughter to help recovery. Their cancer centre has shown that if attitudes change from despair to robust positive hope, if fatalistic broodings change to positive anticipation, and if moods are enlivened, an important job is done in strengthening the body's defences. The Simontons' approach to cancer cure is holistic in the sense that their therapy regards cancer not merely as biological, but as a problem of the whole person, linked with his entire psyche. Without the dynamic interplay of mind and body, there is little hope of a cure. It is from a lack of interplay that the disease was allowed to grow. Now, say the experts, by skillful manipulation of biofeedback and by training the patient's willpower, the body's immune system can be strengthened to its maximum. With the Simontons this is not merely a theoretical concept. They have taken up cases considered medically hopeless and their techniques have proven extremely successful. Their holistic method is similar to the Indian Ayurveda and Chinese systems of medicine which consider all physical disorders the result of unbalanced energy patterns of prāna.<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Karl Simonton says that the role of illness acts as a problem solver in the lives of some patients. Because of social and cultural conditioning, many have found it impossible to resolve stressful problems in a healthy way and therefore *chosen*—consciously or unconsciously, to get sick as a way out of distress. This may be cancer or

9. Ayurveda, in recent times, has attracted world-wide attention for its thus taking into account mental states, habits and the natural and social environments of patients. The major part of physical therapy aims at revitalizing and activating the natural healing powers of the organism. It also lays much emphasis on diet and pure moral life. Diet and other factors vary according to the nature of the diseases in question.



catatonic schizophrenia, hysteria or insanity, or a 'copping out' like that of drug abusers or alcoholics. In the opinion of Dr. Simonton, antisocial behaviour too is a social illness, and a reaction to stressful life situations. Like cancer, heart disease too, has an emotional component. According to him, the medical community is reluctant to accept the idea that the mental state and personality factors of a patient play a major role in the onset and development of disease, because many of them are not equipped to address the psyche of a patient. Therefore, cancer management is today fragmented and confused.

It is an astonishing revelation when the specialist says patients may often be using cancer as a crutch to live out their lives! When a tumour disappears, they need another crutch to replace it. Even if medical research finds an effective drug for curing cancer, it will not solve the human problem. Swami Vivekananda, who was a master of the power of positive thinking, said:

...the weak have no place here, in this life or in any other life. Weakness leads to slavery. Weakness leads to all kinds of misery, physical and mental. Weakness is death. There are hundreds of thousands of microbes surrounding us, but they cannot harm us unless we become weak, until the body is ready and predisposed to

receive them. There may be a million microbes of misery, floating about us. Never mind! They dare not approach us, they have no power to get a hold on us, until the mind is weakened. This is the great fact.<sup>10</sup>

But when a turn-about is made... "He who falters at first will get stronger and stronger, and the voice (of strength) will increase in volume until the truth takes possession of our hearts, and courses through our veins, and permeates our bodies."<sup>11</sup> Otherwise, as Dr. Simonton says, "The psyche would replace cancer with some other disease. If we look at the history of disease patterns, we see that we have done that throughout our history. Whether it was the plague, or T.B., or polio—whatever the illness was, as soon as it was handled we moved on to something else."<sup>12</sup> The human mind, unable to unburden itself of stressful emotions will find another disease in place of cancer. Like Swami Vivekananda, Dr. Simonton suggests that the only solution is a change in human consciousness and in man's materialistic approach to life and world.

10. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989) Vol. II, p. 3.

11. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 202.

12. Fritjof Capra, *Uncommon Wisdom* (London: Flamingo edition, 1989) p. 214.

This is the world my brother—this illusion of *māyā*—the Lord alone is true. The forms are evanescent; but the spirit, being in the Lord, is immortal and omnipresent. All that we ever had are round us this minute, for the spirit can neither come nor go, it only changes its plane of manifestation.

—Swami Vivekananda

# Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement

SWAMI BHUTESHANANDA\*

The word *movement* is somewhat ambiguous because we understand a movement nowadays to be some sort of agitation. Very often the word movement is used in that sense. And here the word is used in a very different sense. Movement here means the movement towards the ideals, the spreading of the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

Sri Ramakrishna did not like lectures which are delivered with the egoism of the speaker who says, "I preach and you follow me; I preach and you are to listen." Sri Ramakrishna never had this sort of ego. He said: "Whatever I speak or whatever words flow from this mouth are not mine. It is the Divine Mother, the Mother of the Universe who puts those ideas through me as an instrument, and an instrument does not take the credit of authorship." Sri Ramakrishna was against any sort of egoism. The more the ego is in us, the further we are away from the truth. The more our ego is eliminated, the more we become an instrument in the hands of God. So, preaching was not in his veins, it was not in his blood. He never thought he was a preacher, though he talked incessantly to the devotees, never sparing himself in order to help them. He met them under all conditions whenever they came, never thinking of his own name, physical rest or comforts, nothing of the kind. He was ever ready to give the last drop of his blood, his last breath, for the sake of others. Yet he had no ego that he was speaking or teaching.

Now, that being the case, how can we say that he started a movement—the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement? The joint-

word, having both the names, Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, is used for the obvious reason that though Ramakrishna was the source, his spokesman was Vivekananda. That is why the Movement is called the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement. The origin of the Movement, or the spreading of the ideas was very much with Sri Ramakrishna himself, though he was not aware that he was going to start a Movement. It was out of curiosity that he met all the great men of the time in Calcutta or in places around Calcutta. He went to see Keshab Chandra Sen, the founder-exponent of the reformed Brahmo Samaj. He went to see Devendra Nath Tagore, one of the Brahmo Samaj founders. He went to meet Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, who was considered to be one of the great souls of the time, whose heart bled for people always, people who were in misery. He met other famous and important leaders of the day. He met Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Ārya Samāj. He met Bhagavan Das, one of the leading figures among the Vaiṣṇavas. He met Bankim Chandra Chatterjee who was a leader in the regeneration of Bengali culture in those days. There were many whom he had a desire to meet, and some he met accidentally when they came to Dakshineswar. Not only that, we also know from the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* that he was familiar with practically all the religious cults that were in vogue in those days. Some of the cults were secret societies whose ideas were not preached openly, but still Sri Ramakrishna did not ignore them. There were others of the Tantriks whose religious practices were considered anti-social and were harmful for people. That is why they did everything secretly. Their practices were always kept

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\*Based on a talk delivered by Rev. Maharaj in Pune on 15-12-88.

away from exposure to public life, fallacious, mysterious! Now, Sri Ramakrishna did not leave out any such society, any thought or any school of his time. First of all he went out of curiosity to know what they preached. If there was anything good in their teachings he would accept it. If there was anything which he did not approve of, he would caution people who were unaware of the dangers of following that particular path. Though Sri Ramakrishna was a very self-denying person and though he was never possessed with the idea of taking the role of a teacher, he yet became familiar with all the dominant religious ideas of his time. He was curious to know of the teachings of the Bible from them, as he was curious to know of the practices of the Ārya Samāj and other Hindu denominations. There was a preparation being made about which he was unaware at the time, which enabled him later to speak to the hearts of all the people. He was not at all sceptical about people who practised religion sincerely. He was never critical of them. He would admire and praise what was good in them. But at the same time he would not always accept things in total that were being preached. For instance, he was strongly against the open practice of *vāmācāra* in Tantra. He guarded his disciples against it so that they would never fall victim of those crude ideas. In this unique way, Sri Ramakrishna's background was prepared. His heart was all-embracing and sympathetic, but at the same time rational and he could judge every idea, every movement of his time. He made brief references to them so that the people could understand his views on them. With Keshab Chandra Sen, Sri Ramakrishna had a very intimate association and he was very sympathetic towards Keshab's organization and followers. But at the same time he wanted from the bottom of his heart that Keshab's devotion and work might be properly utilized for the good of mankind without the crea-

tion of another sect in opposition to other organizations, religious or otherwise. That is what he was very careful about. Through his influence, when Keshab gradually became more and more liberal, he was so happy. Particularly when Keshab accepted Mother worship he became extremely happy. But at the same time he wanted Keshab to move forward more and more, intensifying his renunciation and devotion to God. At one step, Keshab had to tell Sri Ramakrishna: "Sir, if I go further, people will disown me as a leader. I shall not be able to keep the organization together!" Sri Ramakrishna laughed and said: "All right, go on step by step." Sri Ramakrishna knew that his ideas would gradually be accepted in spite of the slow cautious steps which Keshab was taking.

When he met Swami Dayananda of the Ārya Samāj, Sri Ramakrishna found that there was a great awakening of power in the Swami. But at the same time Sri Ramakrishna recognized that those ideas were not fully suited to the modern age. When there are people of the Ārya Samāj, I tell them that this is not a reflection to the Samāj, but that religious practices have to be adapted to the circumstances, the environment and the spirit of the times. Sri Ramakrishna was full of catholicity, full of liberal views. He never wanted any kind of restriction of ideas, any kind of teaching that would not be for the good of all mankind. That was his only restriction. That is why he was against forming any kind of sect or society. When I say 'Sri Ramakrishna movement', I particularly caution the audience to understand that it is not the kind of movement which forms a sect. If it is called a sect, it must be in another sense. As Swami Vivekananda put it, 'A norm will tell your sect, a sect that does not have any kind of sectarianism. Sectarianism is exclusive, and Sri Ramakrishna's and Swamiji's ideas were all inclusive. There lies the main difference.

Sri Ramakrishna believed in a religion which would be appealing to everybody, which would be helpful to everybody, and which would remove all barriers between man and man, between society and society and between country and country. This was an essential feature of Sri Ramakrishna for which he was called the Prophet of harmony. This harmony means that we can all go together towards the goal without interfering with one another's way of life or background of philosophical thinking. That was his idea. He believed that the whole world with all its different sects and ideas can exist together without hostility. Not only that, he believed that we should all have feelings of appreciation towards others, though that does not mean that we shall all be merged into one society or one sect or one religion. Sri Ramakrishna believed in the multiplicity of religions, and that God Himself created all the different approaches we call different *religions* for our convenience of reference.

According to Sri Ramakrishna, all paths practised sincerely lead to the same goal. Among the goals there appear to be differences, we know. But Sri Ramakrishna says that as we go nearer the goal, our differences become fewer and fewer, and ultimately at the last we reach God, which cannot be described by words. So God remains something indescribable, an Entity which has not been explained fully, but which can be realized by stages. What the last stage is, is not clear to us now. But as we proceed, our vision will gradually become clearer and clearer. Let us wait for our arrival at the goal where we shall see that all of us have reached the same One God. As Sri Ramakrishna personally practised all the different paths of religion and realized that there was One Truth all are proceeding towards, and therefore, as he loved and respected these religions and encouraged all their followers to move forward without harbouring any animosity towards others, so let us try to

live together in that spirit. With that, our path will be smooth and without quarrel or antagonism, and we shall proceed towards the goal, though that goal may be differently understood by us in the beginning. That was the gist of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching.

It is needless to say that such ideas are of the utmost importance to us in the present time. As the whole world is coming together, different cultures are just coming together. If they remain antagonistic to one another there will be chaos and every cult, every faith, every religion will suffer. So, Sri Ramakrishna wanted this great breadth of vision and this universal sympathy to become a prominent characteristic of modern man. If that is present, then there will be a safe journey through this chaos to ultimate realization of the Truth. Otherwise, it will create a hell for everybody. Not only he wanted this teaching to be carried to the door of everybody without any kind of antagonism, but people should not feel that they are coming to an alien ideal, to an ideal that is not their own. That is why Ramakrishna and Vivekananda always spoke of God and religion, but never degraded anybody. Every religion has a place. Even the religion that is hated, the religion that is called undeveloped, crude—even such religion has a place for some people. It may not be suitable for me, but it may be suitable for others. That is why they are there. The justification for their existence is that some people may be helped by that religion.

Now that is the main view, that was the outstanding feature of Sri Ramakrishna, and therefore of Swami Vivekananda, who was entrusted by Sri Ramakrishna specially to deliver his message without any kind of distortion. Sri Ramakrishna was very conscious about the spreading of the ideas without distortion. That was his object. Now that is what we call the Movement. Sri Ramakrishna did not believe merely in

feeling for oneself and ending it there. With most of us it's: "I feel, yes, God is everywhere, and then I do not know anything to do with others." Others are there who have a different vision, who feel that God may be in an image, may be limited to a particular place—a temple, or mosque, church or other place. Sri Ramakrishna showed reverence and sympathy to all sacred places. Even some forms of worship that are considered crude are not to be hated. That was Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. One may have to avoid them for obvious reasons, but one should not hate them.

Sri Ramakrishna himself created a band of disciples who could absorb these ideas which were dear to him without any kind of adulteration or 'watering down'. Through them he envisaged those ideas would travel far and wide. That was imagined and predicted by Sri Ramakrishna himself. Now, his work was taken up by his most spiritually endowed disciple, Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji preached far and wide but never distorted the teaching of his Master. He always said: "If I hurt anybody's feeling, it is not because of my Master's teaching, but because of my own weakness. So judge my words in that respect. Sri Ramakrishna lived for the well being of the whole world. He did not hurt anybody, he did not hate anybody. He was helpful to everybody and if I have digressed from that, if I have deviated from that path, it is because of my failure." That was the teaching of Swamiji. Of course, all of Swamiji's teachings can be traced to the Master, to Sri Ramakrishna.

The Master spoke a different language, as it were, from his disciples. Swami Vivekananda presented the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in a modern way that people could understand. Swamiji was a great student of history and a great student of science also. So his teachings were set against the background of history and always were consistent with the findings of science.

There was no controversy. As you know, a great controversy existed between the Christian believers and the scientific thinkers. The result was that many men for the sake of their scientific beliefs had to lose their lives. Some were burnt at the stake because they had disbelief in a dogma which was supported by the Church. Now that sort of thing has happened not only in the Christian world, but almost everywhere, though India is a peaceful land which tolerated every idea. Everybody was free to do and think as he believed. That is why India developed great philosophical truths, while they remained in crude form in the western world. But in the western world science became very developed and people swore by the name of science. Sri Ramakrishna did not discredit that sort of reliance on reason and the scientific attitude. He was himself very scientific in his outlook and if anybody said anything which did not correspond with his own view, he would not ridicule that idea. He would say, "Do not accept anything because I say so. Any teaching must stand to reasons, and must be tested by your own experience. That is the outlook of Sri Ramakrishna which his disciple, Swami Vivekananda always emphasized. Religion also should be scientific in that sense, that one must be prepared to accept things only on the basis of one's own experience. Sri Ramakrishna, though without any educational background, was a keen observer. He saw society, he experienced the world and he talked to great and intellectual people. But always he kept that rational outlook, as for instance, when people sometimes talked loosely, even Swamiji talked loosely when he spoke to Sri Ramakrishna about 'blind faith': At once Sri Ramakrishna questioned: "What do you mean by blind faith? Are there two kinds of faith, one blind and another with eyes?" Swamiji understood that his own utterance was without any meaning. Sri Ramakrishna said there are two things

—one is faith, another is knowledge. When you have that Knowledge, of course that does not depend or bend upon your faith. But faith you will continue to have until you reach the highest knowledge. A man of science continues to have faith in a theory and in his power of observation till through a discovery he finds out the scientific truth. A man who has no faith in anything is no man at all. He has no progress, no life, no future. That was Sri Ramakrishna's view. 'M', the great teacher, the professor of logic, who knew several languages, ideas and different subjects, once was explaining an example of inductive logic to Sri Ramakrishna saying: "I see a crow is black, this is a black crow, that is a black crow; in this manner I say that all crows are black. Therefore, I come to the conclusion that crows are black." Then Sri Ramakrishna pointed out, "Suppose there is a white crow then?" He understood the limitation of such generalizations. No perfect generalizations of this type is possible. Sri Ramakrishna, without any training in logic, at once pointed it out. That is how Sri Ramakrishna, according to Swamiji, had great intellectual acumen. Educated by his own experience, he was a keen observer with such a sharp intellect, he tested everything, and preached his all-embracing truth. Swamiji took the active role of spreading the ideas without hostility towards anybody. If we have any kind of ill-feeling towards anybody, any kind of disrespect towards anybody, we shall not be loyal to the views of Sri Ramakrishna. So be very careful about such ideals.

The Movement started with the band of young disciples living together at the feet of the Master when he was seriously ill. They came together just to nurse him. In that way the Ramakrishna Movement had its origin. The disciples continued their life together after the passing away of the Master. The Movement took shape from

those early days, first at Dakshineswar, then more distinctly at Cossipore when they left their hearths and homes to join together in the Master's service. They were not yet formally men of renunciation but they renounced thereafter. Their guardians, their parents thought that it was just for the time being they were like that. After a time they began to try to discourage them, but they would not be dissuaded from what they had been doing. So they were allowed to go on in their own way as long as Sri Ramakrishna lived in the physical body. After that, a transition period came when the boys had not yet got any shelter, anywhere to live together. So mostly they went back to their houses for a short time. But Swamiji was restless thinking that the ideal Sri Ramakrishna had given, particularly to him, would remain unfulfilled if the boys did not come together and band themselves into one identity with one aim. So he went to the brother disciples and called them to live together. They rented a small haunted house and they started their life there. Their life was a great austerity. It was not only because of their ideal, but also due to their circumstances. There were no wealthy patrons, so they had to beg their food and then spend their time in meditation and spiritual study. In that way the organization began, and then the later history is known to everyone. We all know how the organization grew, how the disciples scattered and how they wandered about in India. Swami Vivekananda was foremost among them as their leader. With his guidance, the experiences that they gained from their travels and with the teachings they had received from the Master and their life of intense contemplation, they gradually became fit instruments to spread the ideas. That way the centres were started gradually, step by step, and the ideals began to be appreciated by the people who in the beginning had been somewhat hostile. In course of time

they came to understand the beauty of the Master's ideals, and appreciations started to come. People in society needed not only physical nurture, but also food for mental and spiritual growth. Help was needed in all these areas at the same time. Religion does not mean neglecting the material condition and simply resorting to hills and forests for the life of contemplation only. So Swamiji gradually evolved these ideas of work and worship together. Work and worship, both were enjoined, not just for one's own salvation but for the good of the world. The early centres were started with these two ideas—work and worship. Swamiji trained the disciples not only to serve people in distress but also to preach religious ideals among them. The Sannyāsins started relief work when there were catastrophes and natural calamities. They immediately proceeded to help the affected people. That is how the Ramakrishna Mission has come to be known more by the people as an emergency relief organization. Now, that is how the ideas went on gradually growing. But the Ramakrishna Mission is not merely a social service organization. That will be very different from the ideal of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. They serve people in every field. Though they believe that service in the field of religion is the highest, that is not to be in isolation from service in other fields. As Sri Ramakrishna said, religion cannot be preached to hungry people. So, the service began to be diverted into various sections and was diversified. All-round services were started not only in India but abroad also. In the western countries, schools or educational centres or hospitals are not needed, so we do not start those activities in the western countries. Where they are required we provide them, otherwise we are content to preach the ideals in a way that will be understood by people. That is why Swamiji called those centres by the name Vedānta Society, societies or

groups that teach Vedānta, so there would be no smack of sectarianism there. Sectarianism may be helpful for some people but it will antagonize more people. According to the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, we should not antagonize anybody. So with this idea the Mission tried to work everywhere, spreading the ideas everywhere to bring about a change in people's outlook.

If anyone asks me whether actually people have accepted the ideal of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda everywhere, well I cannot say it has been accepted everywhere. But there is an appreciation, and a great undercurrent is there throughout the world of the idea that religion cannot be lived in isolation from the rest of life. It has to be all-embracing and those who are antagonistic are gradually coming round to accept the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna. Many people may not know the name of Sri Ramakrishna yet. But they are eager to accept the ideals because they believe that they are helpful for everyone. So the ideal is spreading, and then the ideal can spread only through an organization. Sri Ramakrishna started the Organization, which is non-sectarian and it is expanding. Not only the Swamis are starting centres, but there are many places where Ramakrishna Ashramas or Societies are being opened by people who may not have come in close contact with the monastic workers of the Belur Math or Ramakrishna Mission. But on their own accord they are starting sub-centres everywhere throughout the world. Even in the western world, there are many groups who are filled with that ideal and they invite our Swamis to go to them and explain the views of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji, and they are showing keen interest. You may be aware that even in Russia, a place which was supposed to be atheistic, people have changed their views and they are changing them further. They have thrown open their churches now and people are enjoying religious freedom.

# Sri Ramakrishna Touched Them: Rajinder Narain Dutt

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

It was a spring morning. Himself a spring of joy, Sri Ramakrishna was lying seriously ill in the rented garden house at Cossipore, a suburb of Calcutta. Dr. Rajinder Narain Dutt had come to pay him a visit. Though Dr. Mahendralal Sarcar was treating Sri Ramakrishna, Dr. Dutt in consultation came to try a hopeful medicine of homeopathy on the patient. For a few weeks Sri Ramakrishna's response to the medicine was encouraging. Meanwhile, the doctor, observing him closely, was touched with admiration for the Master's composure and stoic fortitude in battling the painful disease. Sri Ramakrishna's love and concern for others moved the doctor deeply. Rajinder had not been able to visit him for several days due to a bout of fever. Now, when he came again to Cossipore, taking his seat beside the Master's bed, Sri Ramakrishna tenderly enquired, "Did you have fever?" Promptly came the doctor's reply, "What of that? I have come to you, what do I bother about fever?" A soft smile spread over Sri Ramakrishna's lips. Rajinder felt himself being drawn under the spell of the Master. It was 31 March 1886. Evidently Dr. Rajinder had already found shelter at the feet of the saint of Dakshineswar.

Rajinder Narain Dutt was born in 1818, son of Parvati Charan Dutt, the second grandson of Akrur Dutt, one of the famous post-Plassey millionaire merchants of Calcutta. Born in affluence and brought up in ease, the boy never saw the dark face of poverty. When as a child he lost his father, his uncle Durga Charan took him in charge and sent him to Drumond's Academy, located in Dharmatala (now Lenin Sarani). Rajinder's boyhood was thus passed in the



*Rajinder Narain Dutt*

company of other boys of comparatively wealthy European and Anglo-Indian families. A short time before Rajinder, the famous young radical thinker, H. V. Derozio, had passed out from the Academy and was now appointed assistant headmaster at the Calcutta Hindu College. Rajinder joined just as many of the old students went on to the Hindu College, joining their hero



Derozio in the enthusiasm generated by India's first contacts with the effervescing Western literature, science and philosophy. They formed a group to become known later as 'Young Bengal' and became impetuous radicals in the sense that they demanded loosening of the grip of the old Hindu orthodoxy over Bengal society. Though younger than most, Rajinder Dutt was one of their number and was deeply influenced by their spirit. Derozio died in the cholera epidemic of 1831, and when Rajinder himself came to the Hindu College, he came under the influence of the other popular figure, David Hare. When Hare died in 1842, Rajinder was one of his pall bearers, and afterward participated in the annual memorial services honouring the great educationist.<sup>1</sup> When Rajinder found the English instruction in the Hindu College was not up to the mark of his expectations, he joined an institution meant exclusively for English boys. Besides English, little by little, he acquired knowledge of French, Italian, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

Although Rajinder entered medical college, after about two years of study he gave up his studies to join in the family business managed by his granduncle, Ram Narain Dutt, Akrur Dutt's youngest son.<sup>2</sup> Soon he felt that for an enlightened young man like himself, the working situation was not wholly congenial. But, typical progressive young man of the day that he was, he quickly introduced modern furniture and appliances in the establishment. This change was tolerated by his granduncle, but when it was

1. Manomohan Gangopadhyaya, *Sruti-Smriti* (Bengali), Vol. I, pp. 56-57.

Rajinder went to Gaya and performed the obsequial rites in honour of David Hare.

2. During this period he started a charitable allopathic dispensary in his home to serve the local poor people. Dr. Durga Charan Banerjee, father of Surendranath Banerjee, patronized the project.

found that the young Rajinder had waived the debts of several creditors on the plea that they were too poor to pay, he was immediately packed off and replaced by an abler hand.

Rajinder was a proud member of a joint family of the old Hindu tradition. When Charles Eliot Norton, the celebrated Indo-American trader of the nineteenth century, and man of letters, visited the family in the 1850s he found that the Dutt family comprised about two hundred persons. From silver haired elders to babes in arms, they lived together contentedly as they had been doing for seven generations without a division.

It is interesting to note that the Dutt family kept itself completely aloof from involvement in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. The Dutt family did not favour wresting national freedom from British rule, but were content to try to keep up their independence within the existing colonial structure. Nevertheless, in the *Who's Who* on the freedom movement in Bengal, 1818-1904, mention is made that Rajinder was one of the sponsors of the British Indian Association and later of the Indian National Congress, though he never came into the limelight of Indian politics.

According to the custom of the day, Rajinder married Kailaskamini when he was only thirteen. In time the couple had two sons, Devendra and Upendra and three daughters. A champion of women's education, widow remarriage and other reforms, Rajinder had to suffer terribly from the strictures imposed by Hindu orthodoxy. One of his daughters became a widow at twelve and the compassionate and liberal Rajinder smarted under the old ostracism. Mr. Norton visited the family soon after this and wrote home: "The fountains of sorrow, though checked, were not dry and burst out again." Rajinder himself, a pacifist reformer, believed that social reforms would come only through the gradual improvement of

the social milieu. But as an optimist he was hopeful, seeing the increasing numbers of English-educated Indians. Oppressive religious orthodoxy seemed to be losing ground. With such a resilient attitude he was able to adjust to misfortunes and gradually his views began to crystallize on the burning social issues of the day.

Though Rajinder abandoned his studies in the medical college, he later took up interest in the homeopathic system. The doctors Tonnerre and Berigny were two well-known Europeans in Calcutta who had won some reputation in homeopathy. Rajinder helped Dr. Tonnerre in founding a homeopathic hospital, for which he spent about four lakhs of rupees, but the hospital did not survive long. However, Rajinder made his mark as a homeopathic physician and his treatment was popular even among the aristocratic families. The Tagores of Jorasanko,<sup>3</sup> Radhakanta Dev's family at Shobabazar, and Maharaja Ram Singh's family of Jeypore were some of them. This generous practitioner used to give free medicines and diet to all the poor folk who came to him. Interestingly, in his zeal as a practitioner he had to face stiff opposition from many quarters, particularly from allopaths. One of his chief adversaries professionally was the brilliant Dr. Mahendralal Sarcar, the second holder of the MD degree from Calcutta University. Dr. Sarcar, however, later was converted to the practice of homeopathy in 1871.<sup>4</sup> With the cooperation of Dr. Berigny, 'Raja Babu', as Rajinder was popularly called, dedicated the later part of his colourful life to treating suffering people with homeopathic remedies. He was hailed by Robert Knight, editor of *The Statesman*,

as the 'Father of Homeopathy in India'. Shivanath Shastri, another notable writer, observed: "Rajinder's eagerness to save a life, his sincere concern with family members of patients is something not to be seen elsewhere."<sup>5</sup> In 1847, in recognition of his services in medicine, Dr. Rajinder was nominated for an honorary degree at Harvard University. However, the degree was not finally awarded.<sup>6</sup> To have an appraisal of Rajinder's charitable nature, we may refer to a piece of conversation Sri Ramakrishna had with Girish Chandra Ghosh. Sri Ramakrishna one day said, "I cannot eat anything offered by physicians. I mean those who traffic in human suffering. Their money is blood and pus." The Master mentioned the names of two physicians. Girish then quipped, "Dr. Rajindra Dutt is a generous person. He doesn't accept a penny from anybody. He gives away money in charity." Sri Ramakrishna was pleased to hear this.<sup>7</sup>

A life-size clay statue of Rajinder Dutt, presented by Captain T. A. Neal in 1849, adorns the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, in recognition of Rajinder's pioneering role in developing Indo-U. S. trade in the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> During his visit to India, C. E. Norton struck up a friendship with Rajinder Dutt and Kalidas Dutt, his uncle of the same age. They were the two favourites of the New England traders. Of the two, Rajinder's calm and masterful manner won the confidence and

5. Shivanath Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkalin Bangasamaj* (Bengali), 1957, Chapter VIII, p. 185.

6. *Span*, (New Delhi, U.S. Information service) April 1987, p. 37.

7. Sri 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda, (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1984) p. 958.

8. India had direct trade with the U.S.A. between the 1780s and 1860s. Asin Dasgupta, *Family of Akur Dutta* (Bengali), *Desh*, Binodan Number, 1989.

3. Satyendranath Tagore's letter dated 7 June 1868.

4. Dr. Rajinder and Dr. Sarcar became so friendly that Rajinder used to call on the latter frequently. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* corroborates this.

admiration of his American friends. Like many a person straddling the period, he combined knowledge of both Western and Indian culture with equal depth and breadth of understanding. Norton wrote about him, "I have seen but one native, whether Hindu, Mussalman, Parsee or professed Christian, that I respect. That one is my Calcutta friend, Rajinder Dutt."

During the annual Durga Puja festival held in the Dutt's ancestral home, the lane leading to the house used to be decorated with life-size clay statues. Modelled by local artists, they included many characters from English literature like Shakespeare, Scott, Hamlet, Macbeth and others. Rajinder added a fifth evening to the festival so that his European friends could join when there were no Hindu rituals performed as the Christian ministers disapproved of their parishoner's exposure to Hindu rituals. The regular correspondence that Charles Norton had with Rajinder Dutt shows that the latter was open to western ideals and customs, while the former was impervious to those of the East. Though desirous of visiting the West, Rajinder did not dare to transgress the Hindu prohibition on travel abroad.<sup>9</sup> Yet he was proud of India's rich heritage and culture. He generously gifted to the East Indian Marine Society of Salem the group that later became the Peabody Museum.

After Durgacharan's passing away in 1852, Rajinder and Kalidas supervised the family business. As well-established traders they exported tobacco, indigo, linseed, hides, saltpetre, jute and other raw material to America and Europe, and brought back machines for manufacturing clothes of jute and cotton fibres, clocks, etc. But when Mr. Lintzy, a partner of Dutta, Lintzy & Co., cheated the firm of eighty-two lakh

worth of linseed, the Dutt family's trade received a severe jolt. The setback did not deter the Dutt family from organizing another four commercial firms—the Ganges Pilot & Co., the Hooghly Tug & Co., Serampore Spinning & Weaving Co., and Rishra Yarn Co. Rajinder was also one of the promoters of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce established on 19 April 1834.<sup>10</sup> Besides these, the dauntless spirit of Rajinder led him to explore various other fronts of trade and commerce. *Samvād Prabhākar*, dated October 1853, reported that Rajinder had imported six machines from America which could in a short time make shirts, coats, trousers, and other garments, even down to gunny bags. People crowded to see the working of these wonderful machines.

Rajinder's contribution to the growth of English education in Bengal deserves special mention. The Hindu aristocracy of Calcutta established in 1817 the Hindu College, admission to which was restricted to Hindu boys. Around 1852 there arose a great furore over the college administration in general and over admissions in particular. Under the leadership of Rajinder, the organizers established the Hindu Metropolitan College, with Captain D. L. Richardson as its first Principal. Soon afterward a preparatory school unit of the College was started at Shobabazar with the provision that on successfully completing their lower school education the students should join the College free of charge. Lack of financial support from elites of Hindu society and depletion of wealth of the Dutt family, however, forced the founders to close it down after six years. Rajinder patronized female education too, and served as one of the eleven distinguished members, with Sir Cecil Beadon as Chairman, of the Managing Committee of the girl's school founded by

9. Susan S. Bean, "Merchant of Calcutta," *Span*, New Delhi, April 1987, p. 38.

10. Nishit Ranjan Ray & Ashoke Bando-padhyay, *Prāchin Kalikata* (Bengali), 1930, p. 187.

Mr. Bethune, now renamed Bethune School. Rajinder also helped Devendranath Tagore establish the Tattwabodhini Sabha in 1839, also for female education.

The versatile Rajinder was also a well-known bibliophile. In writing Rajinder's obituary *The Englishman* remarked that Rajinder was the founder of the 'Dutt family library' which was in no way inferior to the Calcutta Public Library (later turned into the Imperial Library). Orientalist, Dr. Fitzward Hall, who had come in close contact with Rajinder, published in the *New York Nation*: "Even before he was thirty, his library was by far the largest the most valuable of any private person in Calcutta, and it went on growing to the last. And he added nothing to it merely for display. Every volume that he purchased he dipped into for at least an hour or two before consigning it to his shelves." No less interesting is the remark of F. H. Skrine. He wrote that Rajinder's name was "a synonym for culture and hearty recognition of literary merit".<sup>11</sup>

Thus we find in Rajinder Dutt, a merchant, a physician, a bibliophile, an educationist, a social reformer and a religionist—all in one. The shining facets of his personality were held together by a string of three traits—his inborn hankering for spiritual refinement, broad-hearted catholicity and his gregarious nature. He was always found resilient, spirited, intelligent and creative. More than these, he was dedicated to the cause of serving the suffering people. A pen-picture of his character was depicted in the *New York Nation*. It wrote:

In every fibre of his soul he was a philanthropist. Creed or social position was to him indifferent; it was enough that he knew of the existence of suffering, and he was ready with brain and purse. And his helpfulness, in countless instances, was manifested not only by his personal attendance in the character of a physician, but by his relieving

need of every kind. His bearing, in doing good, was not so much that of one conferring, as that of one receiving an obligation. The thought of any sort of return for his benefactions seemed never to enter his mind. That his boundless generosity impaired his fortune most materially was inevitable; but it caused him no disquiet to be no longer wealthy. His single aim was, at whatever self-sacrifice, to be of service to his fellowmen. In fact, he was an *avatar* of altruism.<sup>12</sup>

But the altruistic Rajinder had to pass sixty-seven years of life before meeting Sri Ramakrishna. Though his contact with the Master was only for a period of nine months or so, he then achieved great personal good and the seed of his spirituality germinated and began to sprout.

Keshab Chandra Sen, the great orator, writer, religious leader and social reformer, had met Sri Ramakrishna in 1875. Ever since his writing in the *Indian Mirror* about Sri Ramakrishna on 28 March 1875, enlightened young men of Calcutta, graduates of the University, began visiting him. Sri Ramakrishna's spirituality, universality and joyful personality attracted them again and again to Dakshineswar. The youngmen reveled in the delight of listening to his conversation on Godvision, and in seeing his deep spiritual moods accompanied with ecstatic singing and dancing in the name of God. There was yet something intangible they felt in his presence also which attracted and charmed those who came to see. Irresistibly he seemed to awaken an inner understanding, calmness and strength in the young men who came. No one could explain that wonderful attraction of his. Yet he was utterly simple in his style of life and innocent of bookish education. As one of Keshab's colleagues, Pratap Chandra, wrote of him: "His spotless holiness, his deep unspeakable blessedness, his unstudied endless wisdom, his childlike peacefulness and affection towards all men...

11. F. H. Skrine, ICS, *An Indian Journalist (Life of Dr. Sambhu Ch. Mookherjee)* 1895, p. 264.

12. Quoted in *The Statesman*, 24 September 1989, Calcutta.

are his...reward." No less a man than the former Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, C. H. Tawney, wrote a paper on the character, genius, catholicity and inspiring power of Sri Ramakrishna.

In youth and manhood, though almost wholly possessed of the Western outlook, Rajinder in his advancing years felt more and more drawn by the Hindu religious ethos. He naturally became curious about the saint of Dakshineswar. Strangely enough, he took about a decade to meet Sri Ramakrishna after once hearing of him. The occasion presented itself as people of Calcutta were learning that the Master was suffering from the fatal throat-cancer.

Several tragedies had befallen Rajinder in this period of his life. His wife Kailaskamini passed away at thirty-five, and his dear son Upendra left the world at twenty-two.<sup>13</sup> His daughter became a widow at the age of twelve. As death was taking his near and dear ones, Rajinder's fortunes in business sharply declined, though his philanthropies continued to be heavy. Things came to such a pass, however, that it was difficult to make ends meet. Rajinder resigned himself to his partner Kalidas's decision to dissolve their business relationship, but Kalidas's demise in 1871 was almost unbearable to him. Again whispers in the family that Rajinder had squandered the family's wealth made him sad. To crown it all, a new crop of failures in business forced Rajinder to declare himself insolvent and his cousin Jogesh (fifth son of Durga Charan) was appointed to administer the family estate. Almost a wreck in his ambitious life, Rajinder, however, gradually reconciled himself to the harsh realities. All his family members continued to hold him in high esteem and he found he was always provided with a double horse carriage. Yet he always felt a twinge inside; he began

groping for some support to hold to.<sup>14</sup>

We learn from *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master* that Rajinder was acquainted with Girish Chandra Ghosh and his younger brother, Atul Chandra, a legal practitioner. It transpired that Rajinder met Atul Chandra somewhere and asked about Sri Ramakrishna's illness. He felt he could help Sri Ramakrishna. He told Atul Chandra, "Please inform Mahendra that I have selected a medicine after much thinking. I hope to get good results with it. I shall like to try it if he is agreeable." Atul reported this to the devotees as well as to Dr. Mahendralal Sarcar. As none had any objection, Rajinder called on Sri Ramakrishna soon afterward. He made his examination and looked into the Master's medical history. In his opinion the disease was something other than cancer.<sup>15</sup> He administered the homeopathic medicine, *Lycopodium-200*. The medicine seemed to work wonders. The Master felt great relief for more than a fortnight. At this, the devotees were fairly hopeful that Sri Ramakrishna would be freed from the fatal illness in no time.

Sri Ramakrishna was certainly feeling better on 1st January 1886.<sup>16</sup> He had come to Cossipore garden on 11th December. It can be presumed that Rajinder's first meeting with him took place sometime in the third week of December 1885. The details of the first visit are not known, but it is certain that Rajinder developed a liking for Sri Ramakrishna and began to visit him frequently. Heretofore Rajinder had been

14. Information furnished by Haradhan Dutt, grandson of Kalidas Dutt.

15. Swami Prabhananda, *Sri Ramakrishner Antyalilā* (Bengali), 1987, Vol. II, p. 214.

16. This information based on *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master* does not agree with Dr. Mahendralal Sarcar's diary. His diary dated 21 March 1886 reads: "They had brought Babu Rajendra a few days ago. He has prescribed Lyco-200, but they said that they have not yet administered it."

13. He was a classmate of Mahendranath Gupta, Sri 'M'.

critical of excessive devotion or faith in a Godman and used to defend his position with a story: "The owner of a garden had two servants. One of them used always to praise his master saying, 'Oh how grand you are! etc.' but the plot of land under his care was neglected, overgrown with weeds. The other gardener never did eulogize his master, but kept his garden trim." Rajinder used to ask, "Of the two, who do you think was the favourite of the master?"<sup>17</sup> No doubt, Rajinder thought the second servant was favoured and likened himself to him. He was proud of his philanthropies and shared the views of other 'modern skeptics'. Despite such attitude of Rajinder's, the following few visits vouchsafed to him to witness the miracle of so radiant an existence as Sri Ramakrishna's. Wounded by the series of misfortunes mentioned before, Rajinder was pining for solace and peace. Sri Ramakrishna's compassion healed up the wounds of his dejected mind and spirit. When he was with the Master, Rajinder used to sit with close-riveted attention, enthralled and full of wonder as the other devotees used to do.

Imperceptible to others, as days passed Sri Ramakrishna's influence wrought changes in Rajinder for the better, as the monuments to which he had looked up all these years with hope and veneration began cracking and crumbling. The bright image of the Master shone clearly and sharply through the fog of his confusions and worries. Though extremely ill, Sri Ramakrishna gave of himself unstintingly, removing the doubts of the devotees and instructing all who came to him. Like a crescent moon that goes on expanding, gradually the Master's life filled and radiated the mental horizon of Dr. Rajinder.

From records we know that Dr. Rajinder

came to Cossipore garden house on 6th April also. Sri 'M', Mahendra Gupta, was also proceeding that way on foot and saw Rajinder's carriage coming towards him. He accompanied the doctor the remaining distance. There, Dr. Rajinder inquired about Sri Ramakrishna's condition and felt satisfied to notice some improvement. In order to elicit more information he asked about the Master's childhood. He learned that Sri Ramakrishna had contracted scrofula in his boyhood, and a scar on his abdomen showed that he had received indigenous treatment from a village doctor for 'enlarged spleen.' When all this came to light, Rajinder remarked, "Well, the patient has had a lot of previous illness." He prescribed medicine and diet, and reassuring the Master, both Sri 'M' and Rajinder took their leave. As they were about to descend the stairs, Sri Ramakrishna called them back. He disclosed that while once in the state of yoga a swelling had appeared on his chest from which there had been bleeding. It is not known what the doctor's reaction was.

Whenever Rajinder paid a visit to Sri Ramakrishna he used to bring some presents of flowers, or garlands of flowers and fruits. One day he noticed that Sri Ramakrishna was not feeling comfortable with the slippers he was using. He wanted to buy a new pair made of soft material. Dr. Rajinder took the measurements of the Master's feet and soon afterward brought a pair of slippers made of velvet.<sup>18</sup>

On 18th April, Dr. Rajinder was with the Master in Cossipore. Sri Ramakrishna had pointed out one of his close devotees, Sri Manomohan Mitra. Dr. Rajinder understood and disclosed that Manomohan was a distant relative of his. Evidently, by this time Rajinder considered himself as one of Sri

17. Swami Nityatmananda, *Sri 'Ma' Darshan* (Bengali) BS 1379 Vol. IX, p. 188.

18. These slippers given by Dr. Rajinder Dutt are now worshipped in the temple of Sri Ramakrishna at Belur Math.

Ramakrishna's circle of devotees. Three days later Dr. Mahendralal Sarcar and Dr. Rajinder came again to see the Master. Though Sri Ramakrishna suffered terribly from the painful disease, they entered into an interesting discussion. Dr. Sarcar raised the controversial point that even for a Paramahansa, to have medical treatment, money and women were necessary. Sri Ramakrishna remarked, "The expenses are mounting," and Dr. Sarcar pacified him saying, "But they (the devotees) are ready to bear them. They do not hesitate to spend money." Then addressing Sri Ramakrishna the doctor said, "Now, you see, gold is necessary." Sri Ramakrishna asked Narendra to reply, but Narendra chose to remain silent. Taking advantage of the situation, Dr. Sarcar quipped, "Gold is necessary and also woman." Dr. Rajinder rejoined, "Yes, his (meaning Sri Ramakrishna's) wife has been cooking his meals." Jubilantly Dr. Sarcar remarked, "Do you see?" Sri Ramakrishna smiled saying, "Yes—but very troublesome!" Dr. Sarcar promptly added, "If there were no troubles, then all would become Paramahansas." *Master*: "If a woman touches me I fall ill. That part of my body aches as if stung by a horned fish." *Dr. Sarcar*: "I believe that. But how can you get along without woman?"

Of late Sri Ramakrishna had once more rallied, responding favourably to Dr. Rajinder's treatment. The doctor, a proud champion of homeopathy, was happy. He remarked, "After getting rid of this illness you must begin to practise medicine as a homeopath. Otherwise what's the use of this human life?" Hearing it, the witty Narendranath's repartee was: "Nothing like leather!" To a cobbler nothing in this world is so important as leather; so likewise, to Dr. Dutt it seemed, homeopathy was the be-all and end-all of life. This evoked hearty laughter from all present.

After a respite, again Sri Ramakrishna's

condition began to get worse day by day. The devotees requested Dr. J. M. Coates, Principal, Calcutta Medical College, to make a call.<sup>19</sup> He diagnosed that the fatal disease had already spread to other parts of the Master's body. As the devotees were apprehensive of side-effects of strong allopathic drugs, none was tried. Dr. Sarcar practically gave up hope and came less frequently, but Dr. Rajinder continued to attend the Master. He stood witness to Sri Ramakrishna losing battle with cancer. Nabin Paul, the Ayurvedic physician, in consultation with Dr. Rajinder, gave his services up to the last to give symptomatic relief to the patient.<sup>20</sup> And the end came in the early hours of 16th August 1886.

Rajinder continued to have connection with the followers of Sri Ramakrishna. In 1887, Narendranath (later Swami Vivekananda), suffering from gravel stone in the kidney, was staying with his grandmother at 7 Ramtanu Bose's Lane. Narendra's brother-disciple, Niranjanananda, approached Dr. Rajinder to take up Narendra's treatment. He readily agreed. As was his wont, while coming to Narendra's residence he purchased a big *vilwa* fruit and presented it to the patient. Making his examination and giving medicine to Narendra, he placed his eye-glasses on his forehead and began to smoke from a hubble-bubble. He chatted with Narendra, who had impressed him with his erudition earlier. The doctor called on Narendra for several days, after which Naren was cured and went back to the Baranagore monastery.<sup>21</sup>

After Sri Ramakrishna's passing, Dr.

19. Brigadier Surgeon, Dr. J. M. Coates, M.B.B.S., MD, L.F.P.S.G., was the Principal of the Medical College from 1880 to 1890.

20. Akshay Kumar Sen, *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Punthi* (Bengali) p. 623.

21. Mahendranath Dutta, *Srimat Vivekananda Swamijir Jivaner Ghatanāvali* (Bengali), Vol I, p. 63.

Rajinder's hunger for spiritual fulfilment went on increasing. He became introspective. His life was sweetened, for the great sweetener, Sri Ramakrishna, had mingled a drop of his joyous being into Rajinder's heart. Small wonder that he devotedly used to partake of *Charanamrita* of the family deity Rajrajeswari and also of Sri Chandi during his last illness. Though he did not survive for more than three years<sup>22</sup> after the

<sup>22</sup>. Rajinder Dutt passed away on 5th June 1889. Next day the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, in its editorial notes, wrote about Rajinder:

Master's departure, still his life was full of meaning. Sri Ramakrishna had made him care for his inner wealth.

"There was not a more generous and large hearted man in the whole of India than he. At one time he was a millionaire and practically the leader of the Calcutta society."

Prof. Fitzeward Hall, former Principal of the Benares College, wrote about him:

'Never can the Ganges have borne in its bosom to their ocean tomb the ashes of a man richer in every virtue that merits to be recorded with reverence.' (Quoted from *A History of Calcutta's Streets*, by P. Thankappan Nair) p. 732.

## Indian Secularism and Swami Vivekananda

PROF. BHUPENDRA NATH

Contemporary Indian society, particularly of the post independence era, is faced with some problems that make secularism a concept not only of scholarly interest, but of very wide public concern. The meaning of secularism and its importance in Indian society is receiving much attention. Through its study may be found solutions for the problem of maintaining mutual understanding and peace in society made up of diverse religious faiths. In the days of Swami Vivekananda the problem was not so pronounced as it is now, yet we can profitably turn to Vivekananda's writings for pregnant suggestions and help. The problem of restoring mutual understanding between religious groups, and their harmonious spirit of peaceful cooperativeness is pressing for solution.

To understand the meaning of 'secular',

and the concept of secularism based on it, we may take a look into history. A sharp contrast between ecclesiastical and secular was seen in the conflict between State and Church in late medieval Europe. The conflict arose out of the assertion by the State of its authority in the religious realm, aggravated by the simultaneously extension of the authority of the Church in the economic-political sphere. The incompatibility of the two parallel and often conflicting powers led at times to fierce controversies which were ultimately resolved by the confining of Church authority to religious matters and the king's assurance of non-interference in them. The State accordingly withdrew from religious affairs and guaranteed unhampered religious autonomy to the Church. It is in this background that we can understand the dictionary meaning of secularism, i.e.



“secular spirit or tendency, especially a system of political or social philosophy that rejects all forms of religious faith”.<sup>1</sup>

But when we attempt to examine the meaning of secularism in the Indian context, we take note of the fact that India's problem arose from a background completely different from that which obtained in medieval Europe. Perhaps never in ancient India was there a conflict between political authority and the seats of religious authority as witnessed in medieval Europe. In ancient India the political power was wielded by the Kṣatriyas, the Brahmins being custodians of religious authority. Though there are a few mythological stories of rivalry between the Brahmins and the Kṣatriyas, nevertheless, it can be said that on the whole there was no conflict between the political rulers and the religious heads. The relationship between the kings and the priests, was more of cordiality than of conflict. Then in medieval India, the Hindu kings and emperors enjoyed a position of such pre-eminence that perhaps there was no occasion for any conflict between the king and the priest. The political power and the religious order did not confront each other as happened in Europe. Nor did socio-religious conditions lead to the adoption of a social or political philosophy upholding some forms of religious faith and rejecting others. Rather, religion in some way always remained mingled in the political life of the country. However, it is in this medieval period of India's history that a new element appeared on the historical scene—the coexistence on common soil of two great religious communities, namely the Hindus and the Muslims. But here too, when we consider carefully the whole panorama of Indian society, we find that though the Muslims were the more

privileged community, belonging to the class of the rulers, the Hindus enjoyed a peaceful coexistence. Our medieval period thus presented neither intercommunal conflict nor a conflict between the state and the religious order. The phenomenon of intercommunal conflicts, particularly between Hindus and Muslims, appears to have begun with the advent of British rule in the modern period, due to the evil designs and maneuvers of the foreign rulers. The process of cultural and religious synthesis, which was a feature of the medieval period, was reversed in the British era. It is really here that the problem of disruptive sectarianism and breakdown of relations had its origin.

When India attained her independence, secularism was adopted as one of the basic principles of the Indian polity. It was envisaged that India would continue to be a homeland of persons belonging to different religious faiths and it was hoped that all citizens, irrespective of their religious affiliation would lead lives of harmonious and peaceful coexistence. Religion would never be a ground for discord or dissension. Secular government did not mean that the religious life of the country should be weakened. It promised full religious freedom for individuals and religious groups, and all were guaranteed full protection, even when religious denominations happened to be small minorities. India was thus required to evolve a policy of secularism which would capture the creative imagination of the people while insuring full freedom and protection of religious faith and profession and would also help bring all within a single socio-political fold to build one unified nation.

## II

The problem which confronted India after about the mid-twentieth century appears to have been anticipated by Swami Viveka-

1. *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (Bombay: Random House Pubs., 1977) p. 1190.

nanda about five decades earlier. With his keen perception he recognized the distinctiveness of Indian society and gave a call for nation-building and man-making along the lines of India's own genius, rich cultural heritage and history. He declared:

We must grow according to our nature. Vain is it to attempt the lines of action that foreign societies have engrafted upon us; it is impossible...we cannot be twisted and tortured into the shape of other nations...this is the first lesson to learn...We naturally can follow our own bent, run in our own grooves.<sup>2</sup>

Vivekananda finds that religion is the most essential and basic element in the character of the Indian people. "In India," he remarks, "religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life."<sup>3</sup> Western nations like England or America may ignore religion in their schemes of social well-being, but India can do so only by endangering her national vitality. Vivekananda is of the view that unlike other nations whose whole soul as it were, lay in political conquest or social utilitarianism, India must meet all the challenges of the future through the vitality and inspiration of religion. Religious tolerance and acceptance of all sects as so many paths of the one Eternal Religion must be allowed to pervade all aspects of our national life. Thus Vivekananda would have heartily approved Mahatma Gandhi's assertion: "Yes, I still hold the view that I cannot conceive of politics as divorced from religion. Indeed, religion should pervade every one of our actions."<sup>4</sup>

The fact that India is the homeland of diverse religious faiths does not stand in the way of Vivekananda's and Gandhi's declar-

ing religion as central to the Indian way of life. Nor should the adoption of a religious-oriented polity come into conflict with the secular (non-sectarian) political system. Harboring a diversity of religious faiths, India must have a socio-political system which upholds the principles common to all faiths without contradicting the secular spirit of non-favouritism in the administration. India cannot afford to do otherwise because religion and life are so intimately interwoven here that no aspect of life can be separated from religion.

Unlike in the West, where secularism often means rejecting or ignoring religious faith and motivation, Indian secularism cannot do so. On the contrary, secularism in India must always mean an outlook in politics and social philosophy which not only accommodates all, but encourages, fosters, and esteems genuine spiritual values. It is the common sense experience of the Indian people down the ages that must be reflected in India's politics and government. A multi-religious society of the type found in India is usually not found in the West where Christianity alone forms the overwhelming majorities of people and the Western intellect is not called upon to conceive of a secular order which should accommodate large numbers of people of different religions. This explains why the Western mind, which neither faces a multi-religious society nor conceives of religion as all-important and all-pervasive in the lives of people, construes the meaning of secularism as rejection or separation only. According to Swami Vivekananda this is neither desirable nor possible in the Indian socio-political order, and religion must be positively regarded here, in all matters, even though there is often a bewildering diversity of faiths and religious views, spiritual values are one, at the centre and have first consideration. The need for different paths in religion was recognized and taught by

2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989) Vol. III, pp. 219-20.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

4. *Selections from Gandhi*, N. K. Bose, Editor (Ahmedabad: 1957) p. 256.

both Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. It does not pose any problem to a Vivekananda to adhere to his religious faith without coming into confrontation with other individuals and communities practising theirs. With broad and universal mind, he could say, "It is possible for persons holding divergent faiths to live in peace and harmony together...It is possible for me to be a dualist and my wife to be a monist."<sup>5</sup> For the rest of us, however, particularly when we come together in groups and organizations, it is peripheral interests and objectives of religion and not pure ideals that take away our attention. The common experience is that our diversity of faiths has led to conflicts of interest with others, confrontations and not unoften, bloodshed. But, as Vivekananda said, as it is true that "...no other human motive has deluged the world with blood as much as religion..."<sup>6</sup> [it is also true that] no other human influence has taken such care, not only of humanity, but also of the lowest of animals, as religion has done."<sup>7</sup> Religion is essential for human progress and it is inextricably woven into the fabric of India's social and cultural life. But the question remains, how can we retain religion in our socio-political and cultural life without being adversely affected by its negative aspect?

### III

The negative aspects of religion—the proclivity to give rise to discords and dissension, disputes and fanaticism—raise a difficult problem. How can a positive attitude towards secularism, with freedom in religion and non-favouritism in government, be developed in a country like ours with vast numbers of people belonging to large and small religious pluralities?

5. *Selections from Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1981) p. 94.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

An emphasis on toleration of others is sometimes preached to us as the remedy, but looked at from the viewpoint of Vivekananda, it is not at all adequate to be merely tolerant. To tolerate someone or his faith means that though we may not like him or it, we condescend to try to endure the man and his ideas. Such an attitude can at most only minimize open expression of hostilities for a time, but can never be a basis of real harmony and good-will. A person tolerating others' religious faith may look upon those faiths as inferior to his own. Gandhi too, said: "I do not like the word tolerance... Tolerance may imply a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own."<sup>8</sup> Ramakrishna and Vivekananda taught that acceptance rather than tolerance is the needed thing. Acceptance requires one to be broad-minded and enables us to seek light from all scriptures and all men at all times. Probably it was in this spirit that Vivekananda once placed some questions to one of his disciples, an orthodox Hindu: "If the Upanisads are authority, why not the Bible or the Zend-Avesta equally so?"<sup>9</sup> And... "What right have you to maintain that truth can be found nowhere except in the Vedas?"<sup>10</sup> Vivekananda advocates acceptance rather than tolerance because tolerance is not enough to bring love, peace and amity in our multi-religion society.

Again, some religious leaders and scholars have attempted to discover a reasonable underlying unity among all the religions. They hope that by closing the eyes to obvious differences and by preaching unity and equality, it will be possible to persuade all to give up hostilities and accept the faith of all denominations. But the question, really, still remains: Is unity and equality among religions a fact? Is it desirable to

8. *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 257.

9. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. VI, p. 470.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 470.

force all the religions in a single mould?

Some others have toyed with the idea of forming a new religion on more or less universal principles. They would bring together the best points from many of the existing religions. Vivekananda, however, does not see the possibility of success in any attempt to establish a universal religion in this way. But, in fact, he says, such universal religion already exists...“because *Vedanta* teaches principles and not persons”.<sup>11</sup> All the major world religions and minor ones also are each one of its expressions. But...“if by the idea of a universal religion is meant that one set of doctrines should be believed in by all mankind, it is wholly impossible. It can never be...”<sup>12</sup> If unity is believed as universally reigning, then diversity too must be recognized as a law operating everywhere and in all human affairs. We would be doing violence to the natural order of things if we try to force all into the same set of religious beliefs and practices. Vivekananda warned:

“Unity in variety is the plan of the universe. We are all men, and yet we are all distinct from one another...as a part of humanity...It can never be, there can never be a time when all faces will be the same. Again, if we expect that there will be one universal mythology, that is also impossible, ...or ritual...or methodology. Such a state of things can never come into existence; if it ever did, the world would be destroyed, because variety is the first principle of life...The unity of sameness can come only when this universe is destroyed, otherwise such a thing is impossible. Not only so it would be dangerous to have it. We must not wish that all of us should think alike. There would then be no thought to think.”<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the fabrication of a religion meant to fit everybody, by blending together the doctrines of all the religions, is neither possible nor desirable. It would stifle human progress. All progress demands diversity

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 250-51.

12. *Selections from Swami Vivekananda*, p. 162.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-63.

and differentiation, and not merely a blank unity. “It is this differentiation,” says Vivekananda, “which is the very soul of our progress, the soul of all our thoughts. This must always be.”<sup>14</sup>

Thus, according to Vivekananda, neither tolerance nor any sort of eclectic unity can be of much help in fostering the secular spirit so urgently needed in our society today. Following Vivekananda, we may suggest that real secularism—a broad-minded and open-hearted acceptance of others’ religious points of view—can be acquired only by those who are willing to sincerely practise their own religious precepts. Only thus can a real understanding of the already existing underlying unity of purpose of all religions be acquired. Then respect, tolerance and acceptance will be earned. Then it will be realized that the same truth which we are searching for in our religion is also being searched for and revealed by different religions in different ways. Vivekananda puts it:

“...every vision of truth that man has is a vision of Him and of none else...all the various views of religion are true...We must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes. We must learn that the same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints, and yet be the same thing.”<sup>15</sup>

This realization that it is the same truth which is being revealed through different religions may bring about a revolutionary change in our attitude towards the seemingly competing faiths, and this may provide a sound foundation for a true secular society.

The revelation of truth in different forms through different religions may be shown to be conforming to the diversity of nature found in different types of men. The distinctiveness of religions follow from the varieties of human nature. Men are of varying tastes. Vivekananda underlines this

14. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

variety when he says: "In society we see so many different natures. There are thousands and thousands of varieties of minds and inclinations."<sup>16</sup> There may be numerous lines for the spiritual journey which one may take or find oneself placed upon, a line which suits him. Vivekananda puts it thus: "One, according to his nature, travels along one of these lines, and another, along another; and if we all push onward along our own lines, we shall surely come to the centre, because all roads lead to Rome."<sup>17</sup> Thus each religion is true in its own right and each has a justification since each answers the need of certain types of people. All the religions contribute in the spiritual progress of humanity and all are engaged in the same task of helping people in their quest for the same Truth.

#### IV

Today when religious obscurantism, fundamentalism and fanaticism are on the

16. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

ascendance in our society, and the meaning of secularism is being distorted and misrepresented by communalists and politicians to use secularism as a camouflage for encouraging separatism, or for unfairly securing political advantages, it is essential that we keep in mind the various aspects of its true purport. The peculiarities of the contemporary Indian scene raise some special problems, for solving which much time and much patience will be needed. So that Indian secularism can achieve its avowed purpose of fostering harmony, peace and cooperative spirit among our people, it is incumbent upon us to remember the special nature of the contemporary problem and also the special heritage India is possessed of with which to meet the challenges. It would be damaging to try to assess India's problems only in terms of the Western experience and framework. The insights into the true nature of religion steeped deeply in Indian wisdom and tradition which have been bequeathed to us by Vivekananda will be of great help to us: We must turn to him in our attempts to understand the Indian secular spirit and to help it succeed.

## Beyond The Horizon of The Visible

SWAMI JAGADATMANANDA

Our picture of existence is only partial. What we generally understand by 'life' is only one half of the circle. The other half remains hidden from us, beyond life as we usually mean it, in an existence beyond the body. Ordinarily people cannot comprehend this, for the subtlety of it is far beyond perceptions in day-to-day life. When we refer to a river we naturally imply also its source, its depth, the towns and cities it

flows by, and the sea it meets. But still there is something more to a river than meets the eye. Solar heat evaporates its water to form clouds, winds carry the clouds over mountain tops and rains fall there, again to join the river which meanders its way to the sea. In the same way, forces seen and unseen work upon the stream of life. For the vast majority, the life of sense experiences alone is real, and it is everything, until the cloak

of death falls upon them at last. Yet there are a few who are given to perceive with clear vision that it is only the physical body that falls; the subtle body, for which the gross body was only a covering, carries on. For the people who experience it, life-after-death and the existence of the subtle body are indisputable realities. For them it is not just a matter of belief, but a truth which requires no further comment. The ancient seers of India learned ages ago that man is not just the gross body, but is a spiritual entity which dons the gross body. They discovered that the human soul transmigrates in acquiescence to certain inviolable laws of the world of subtle matter.

Be that as it may, it is stimulating to probe into the matter in the light of modern scientific oriented investigations. In fact, since the past century, people of the West have shown marked interest in the subject. Their enquiries have led them to opinions of which many of us have not been aware.

*Is there anything beyond?*

Are we human beings mere combinations of flesh and blood, bones and nerves? Or is it true that there is an incorporeal life principle which enlivens the body? Perhaps this tangible earthly body is only a shroud?

Although everyone of us can tell a dead body from a living one, our understanding about 'life' and 'consciousness' is not quite adequate. The human organism is vibrant with a myriad subtle psycho-physical activities; not only that, it is scintillating with consciousness. There is a self-conscious principle that fades away only when a man is on the verge of death, then life departs from the gross body. All the same, the body remains, it does not vanish from our sight. Only its constituent elements start decomposing. In other words, the earthly body, though wasting away, continues before our eyes. But what about our life, what about

consciousness? It is so subtle that nothing can be definitely expressed about it. What is that power which made the body, now lifeless, sparkle with buoyant activity before it moved out? What is its real nature? Where did it go? In other words what happened to the person's individuality? Where did he go? This is the one significant question that baffled the Vedic thinkers: Does everything end up at the grave, or is there anything beyond?

Life-after-death, reincarnation and the Law of Karma—these are the substructures over which the superstructures of Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina philosophies are erected. The Occident may not attach any credence to these concepts, but still many firmly believe that the human soul is destined to live eternally either in heaven or in hell. Do these ideas and beliefs have a sound basis? Can these concepts be examined with the aid of contemporary science? Let us see.

*What does the psychologist say?*

Modern psychology is a very vast subject which has extended along many different branches. Originally *psychology* meant *knowledge of the soul*. However, the science that started in search of the soul abandoned its initial quest and got engrossed in the study and analysis of human behaviour. This is why ordinary books on psychology do not contain any discussion about the existence of the soul, about the mind as distinct from the brain, or about intuitive and extra-sensory perception and knowledge. These are areas of darkness which remain uninvestigated, or because of the difficulties in scientific procedure, they have long been given up. It is no more surprising to us when most scientists only smile derisively at our 'unquestioned beliefs'. They hold that if anything must be accepted as true, it must necessarily be tangible. Extra-sensory experiences are not so, and therefore are

worthy only of being dismissed as simple or fantastic products of imagination. It is believed that, though some of the cases might contain a trace of truth, they cannot endure systematic analysis. According to most psychologists too, the very rules and laws that explain physical phenomena can also explain mental phenomena. But then, scientists are not spared. Now and then, however, mysterious happenings do take place in the lives of enlightened people of rational bent, and then, though the experiences cannot be easily explained or probed, they cannot be easily laid aside either as mere fantasies or 'strange coincidences'.

### *It happened!*

Mikhail Quni of Soviet Russia is an authority in parapsychic research. A strange incident altered the course of his life. Quni was a student of an art school in Moscow and shared an apartment with his friends. One early morning he woke up excited. He had had a nightmare. He dreamt that a rat had bitten his mother on the leg and that the wound had started festering. He saw himself by her bedside as she lay in agony. He felt that she was going to die. On waking up Quni related his dream to his roommates. They tried to console him telling him not to worry about a mere dream. But still Quni felt rather apprehensive. A few hours later during the day he received a telegram asking him to start for home immediately as his mother was expecting her final moments. Quni started at once and reached his place next day—to see that every bit of his 'dream' had come true. The mother had been longing to see her son. The impact of this dramatic event turned Quni from his life as a painter, and led him to psychic studies.

For most of us, common people, dreams are no more than meaningless wanderings of the subconscious mind. They are of no consequence. But once in a while it happens

that events which we saw in our dreams come true in our life a few days later. Not only that, they might have taken place right when we were dreaming—like a programme telecast live as it were. How is this possible? Can thoughts be put on the air like radio waves?

Laws discovered by modern physical science are incapable at present of explaining these extraordinary mental phenomena. But this being the case, it would be highly unscientific to brand them as false, 'accidents', 'imaginings', 'hallucinations' or 'yarns'. Then what do these things mean anyway?

### *The travel of thought*

As a result of many rigorous experiments conducted in course of their research, some Russian investigators concluded that thought waves (telepathic impulses) relayed from one mind have the potency to make themselves felt in another receptive mind many miles away. Biophysicist Yuri Kamensky 'aimed' telepathic messages from Moscow at Karl Nikolaiev, stationed in Leningrad about four hundred miles away. Kamensky visualized with intense vividness that Nikolaiev was there, right in front of him, before beginning to transmit thought signals. Before 'receiving' those messages, Nikolaiev eliminated all muscular and mental tension by maintaining a state of 'operative rest' in the well-known yogic posture, *śavāsana*. In theory, any form of tension, however fine, would block thought-reception. During this period his brain beamed a steady alpha rhythm, the pattern of rest. Thought signals sent by Kamensky were picked up by Nikolaiev within five seconds. But the electro-encephalograph (EEG) detected and registered the resultant variation in Nikolaiev's brain waves a few seconds before he himself was consciously aware of receiving the message. At first there was a non-specific activation in the front and mid-sections of the brain

which quickly became specific and switched on to the rear brain afferent regions.<sup>1</sup>

Conducted in a modern laboratory, up-to-date with electronic monitoring and measuring devices, this experiment became an important milestone in the history of Soviet parapsychological research. Many other experiments carried out in similar laboratories convinced the Russians about the journey of thought. Now, if we admit that thoughts have the power to leave behind time and space, it goes without saying that thought-travel cannot be known through those laws that explain physical events. If thoughts themselves are so fine and subtle, what about the mind, the generator of thoughts?

#### *A knock at the door.*

Swami Saradanandaji in his *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master*, tells us a true story: Rameshwar and Gopal were intimate friends and lived in the same village. One night Gopal was awakened from sleep by a tap at his door. On enquiry he got the reply, "I am Rameshwar, going to take a dip in the Ganga...Please see that Raghuvir's worship does not suffer in any way." At once Gopal recognized his friend's voice and hurried to open the door. But the familiar voice told him again, "I am not in my body, so you cannot see me even if you open the door." Still Gopal opened the door but found none there. He went to his friend's house to know if what he heard was true and found that Rameshwar had really passed away. The incident at Gopal's house coincided with the time of Rameshwar's death.<sup>2</sup>

So, if it is possible for a person to see or hear or even talk after his death, does it not

mean that he continues to live possessing mind and subtle sense organs? Then would it not mean that only the physical body dies away and not the psyche? Now, this conclusion corresponds with that of the ancient Vedic sages of India. They knew through direct experience that the total man actually consists of two bodies: an outer gross body and an inner subtle body made of fine material.

#### *Subtle body or Jivātman.*

These subjects were not mere matters of speculation with the great yogis, matters of meditation; with them these were matters of deep conviction, resulting from their immediate realization. Moreover, as already mentioned, these experiences are not completely out of the range of the common man, either. Out-of-body experiences, cases of persons being possessed and such other things, have happened and are happening even now in all countries. Given that there is enough room for the play of superstition and mystery mongering, a few cases are perfectly true. When one analyzes authentic reports one becomes convinced beyond question that man's existence cannot be limited by his physical body. There is something beyond.

Some American authorities in transpersonal psychology hold that real out-of-body experiences can be demonstrated in the laboratory. They have published a good deal of information about their research.

Mr. Stuart Twemlow, head of the department of psychiatry at the Veterans' Hospital in Topeka (Kansas) suggests that scientists should have such experience first-hand. As a result of experiments, he too has proved that supersensory experience can be obtained in the laboratory with the help of drugs, hypnosis and electro-convulsion. Here is an account of one of his own experiences.

This amazing experiment was conducted

1. Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* (New York: Bantam Books, 1971) p. 15.

2. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master* (Madras: Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, 1978), p. 350.



in the Upton Laboratories in Kentucky using a well-equipped isolation chamber. When ultrasonic sound waves were passed into Mr. Twemlow's brain he had an experience. He distinctly saw his mind disengage itself from the body and speed through a dark tunnel, and in a few moments reach his home in Topeka several hundred miles away. There he saw his wife go from her bedroom to the kitchen and return. He stood near her for some seconds. Then he went to a mirror to look at his reflection but saw none. After a little more time he again became aware of his body. The time was nine-thirty in the evening. Twemlow did not write or otherwise communicate anything of this wonderful experience to his wife. She would not believe in such 'unscientific nonsense' either. But to his utter astonishment when he returned home she said to him, "One night while you were away in Kentucky, an eerie shadowy thing came and stood near me when I was returning to the bedroom after a glass of water in the kitchen. Remaining near me for a few seconds it went to the mirror, and then vanished. It was nine-thirty in the evening"! From that time onwards, Twemlow had had no qualms about expressing his belief in the supernatural.

But the most outstanding ingenuity which has silenced all challenges was accomplished by the Kirlian couple of the USSR. They succeeded in photographing a subtle body with the help of high-frequency optical instruments. Through Kirlian photography, Russian experts established that an invisible 'counterpart body', an exact duplicate of the physical body, interpenetrates the physical body. When the gross body falls, it emerges from the covering of flesh and continues its life as an 'energy body'. This fine body is also variously called the 'astral body', 'etheric body', 'beta body' to name a few.

This subtle body is the seat and cause of all our physical and mental activities. It is made up of the ten subtle sense-organs (five

of perception, five of action), the vital force, the mind, the intellect and the countless subtle impressions created by the actions performed in the course of innumerable lives. This subtle entity also contains the records of all our desires and deeds, good and evil. When it is separated from the gross body at the time of death it becomes charged with keen awareness and intense sensitivity. So if the physical body dies, it does not mean that the person himself dies. As Sri Ramakrishna said, death is like drawing the sword out of its scabbard. Even as a person casts off worn-out clothes and puts on others that are new, according to the unfailing Law of Karma and rebirth, a soul is born again and again, high or low, depending on the merit or demerit of his previous actions. In every birth he may acquire a little more understanding and detachment, with the accumulation of experience, and in the end attain Perfect Knowledge and Freedom. This theory is in conformity with the universal law of cause and effect, which is the very basis of the physical universe. It has also been corroborated by the spiritual experiences of the mystics. Man's ultimate end is the attainment of Knowledge of the soul's immortality. Rebirth is the inevitable corollary of the soul's indestructibility and explains the *raison d'etre* of its embodiment in the relative universe.

#### *Recent trends.*

It is common knowledge that the semetic religions do not recognize the Doctrine of Karma and reincarnation, and that they disregard it as 'oriental superstition'. For all that, a 1982 Gallup Poll revealed that nearly one American in four believed in reincarnation while belief of the general public in British polls rose from eighteen to twenty-eight percent in a ten-year period. Dr. Roger Woolger is a Jungian psychotherapist and author of the book *Other Lives, Other Selves*. In his book he has presented a few

cases where cure was effected through age-regression by hypnosis. How? He says that our subconscious forgets nothing. Some of our deep-seated complexes have their roots in certain experiences of lives past. Memory of those experiences can be brought by hypnosis. Dr. Woolger hopes to see many more such clinics all over the world within the decade.<sup>3</sup>

3. Roger J. Woolger, *Other Lives, Other Selves* (Toronto: Bantam Books).

The famous English writer Paul Brunton once remarked that if the Western world, with its existing pattern of culture and society is to endure, the ideas about the Law of Karma would have to be spread broadcast among the people. Maybe he hinted that an honest appraisal of this universal law would help the West pull through its present state of intellectual limitations.

## The Rainbow Of Consciousness

DR. KAMALA S. JAYA RAO

The world around us is full of contrasts. In it one sees all kinds of people—the cruel and kind, poor and rich, ugly and beautiful, dull and bright, wily and innocent, and so on. These are obvious things we learn to accept and live with. Yet when overpowered by despair or jealousy, or when doubts assail us, we wonder whether the All-merciful and Ever-compassionate One is prone to partiality. It is but natural that this question should have bothered an intelligent and kind soul like Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. We find the following conversation in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*:

MASTER: “Just see how picturesque this universe is!...and how many varieties of living beings!—big and small, good and bad, strong and weak—some endowed with more power, some with less.”

VIDYASAGAR: “Has He endowed some with more power and others with less?”

MASTER: “As the All-pervading Spirit He exists in all beings, even in the ant. But the manifestations of His power are different in different beings; otherwise...why do all

people respect you? Have you grown a pair of horns? (Laughter.) You have more compassion and learning. Therefore people honour you and come to pay you their respects.”<sup>1</sup>

Sri Ramakrishna recalled this conversation for various devotees on different occasions. His statement that beings are endowed with powers of different degree and quality appears to affirm to us that creation is indeed unequal and discriminatory. Can One who creates such an imperfect universe be called a perfect creator? At best, He is like a manufacturer, producing light bulbs of varying wattage! To a questioning mind or to one who suffers, Sri Ramakrishna's answer may hardly afford satisfaction.

Swami Ashokananda makes the categorical statement that there are no such differences anywhere in the creation. To quote him: “There are no degrees of manifestation, more here and less there; there is equal

1. Sri 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, 1988) p. 104.

manifestation of the same Divine Spirit everywhere. In the living, in the non-living, in the saint and in the sinner, the Divine Spirit is fully and equally manifested.”<sup>2</sup> The swami prefaces his statement with the comment that his observation is a little unusual. But though unusual, it stands to reason. ‘A little more here’, or ‘a little less there’ would indicate a parcelling out of energy and by implication, its division. Since Energy or Consciousness is One and Infinite—indivisible (*Akhandā*), the statement that different beings are endowed with different degrees of it cannot be true.

One may therefore argue that while the amount of energy is the same everywhere, the way it is revealed may be different. Using an analogy, we may say that many lamps are burning with the same intensity but their shades, being of varying thickness allow light to shine through variously, making all the difference between a saint and a sinner. This however is not the actual case, but is rather an error of perception. To the perceiver, the light that appears is of various intensities, but in fact, within the lamps it is one. A ferocious tiger or a majestic elephant do not possess the qualities of ferocity or majesty in themselves, but these are attributes given by us. They are perceived as such because, as Swami Ashokananda puts it, “we interpret the rest of the universe in terms of human consciousness. But that is a mistake,” continues the Swami, “why should you think that all manifestations are in terms of human consciousness and human behaviour?”<sup>3</sup>

What the Swami seems to be saying is that human consciousness is of a different kind when compared to consciousness in other beings. Here one encounters another

contradiction. While denying quantitative differences, we seem to admit qualitative differences (i.e. shades of varying thickness). Thence, we cannot absolve the Creator from his supposed partiality or imperfection! This paradox can be resolved when one recognizes that man does not perceive what *is*, but only *what appears to be*. In other words, there is no lamp shade reducing the intensity of light, and man is using a wrong instrument to measure the intensity, an instrument whose scope of measurement is extremely limited. To quote the Swami again: “As long as I am completely identified with human consciousness, I shall never understand stone consciousness, or tree consciousness, or lion consciousness.”<sup>4</sup> Only when one transcends limited human consciousness can every other type of consciousness be perceived and understood.

There is an interesting incident in Swami Brahmananda’s life when he was staying in Bhuvaneshwar.<sup>5</sup> During an evening stroll he suddenly came face to face with a leopard. While the Swami stood still and calmly confronted it, the animal silently went away. The leopard was subdued, not because it perceived a saint who would do it no harm, but because it perceived only leopard-consciousness! This should not be construed as a scaling down of human consciousness, which Swami Brahmananda had long transcended. It is the play of the Universal or Pure Consciousness which can operate at any level it chooses, for every type of consciousness is an intrinsic part of it. A good analogy would be the spectrum of light.

Light passing through a crystal and breaking up into its full spectrum of seven colours, does not actually get divided up into the various colour bands, but merely spreads itself into the well-known spectrum,

2. Swami Ashokananda, *When the Many Become One* (San Francisco: Vedanta Society of Northern California, 1987) p. 33.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

5. Christopher Isherwood, *Sri Ramakrishna and His Disciples* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974) p. 329.

the familiar seven primary colours of the rainbow. There are no quantitative or qualitative differences between the colour bands. The allusion to the bands is actually a misrepresentation of facts, for the rainbow is itself an illusion. The rainbow is visible to the organic human eye but the light ray perceives no rainbow, but only itself—the light. Universal Consciousness, too, while spreading itself into different levels of consciousness, does not perceive the spectrum into which it has spread itself out. The term 'level' is used here as one of convenience and does not connote any ascending or descending scale, as in a ladder. Thus Swami Brahmananda did not descend to the level of leopard-consciousness, but helped the leopard, the little band of light as it were, to recognize itself in the Pure White Light.

A question that may legitimately be raised is whether we are contradicting Sri Ramakrishna, who appeared to state in no uncertain terms that the manifestation of God's Power is different in different beings. Sri Ramakrishna's reply to Pandit Vidyasagar may be seen in three parts. When he exclaimed, "Have you grown a pair of horns? —implying of course that the Pandit had not, Sri Ramakrishna was in fact denying *both*, the existence of quantitative or qualitative differences in the manifestation of God's Power. For, the possession of horns would be an additional endowment, and hence a quantitative difference, and a man with horns would be of a kind apart from the rest of the species—a qualitative difference.

Sri Ramakrishna's reply that God exists in all is, where the analogy of the rainbow comes in, the fact that all bands of the spectrum contain the same light. The main and most important part of his statement that the manifestation is different in different beings, needs to be seen in conjunction with the above. The bands in the rainbow are

indeed different—blue is distinctly different from yellow, as yellow is from violet, and so on, but they are all manifestations of the same light. This statement, as also his explanation as to why Vidyasagar is highly respected, is made at the *vyāvahārika* level, the level of human consciousness. Man has always paid homage to the best and the highest values present in the universe, Divine Love and Non-attachment. This acknowledgement of the higher values is the intuitive means by which human consciousness turns towards Universal or Divine Consciousness. This is the essence of *Vibhuti Yoga*, expounded in the tenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, where man is helped to recognize Divine Consciousness through the 'best' in each species, where human consciousness is helped to recognize that each and every band of the rainbow is nothing but light.

This brings us to a riddle. If human consciousness is being helped to recognize the nature of the rainbow, what is its own position vis-a-vis the rainbow? We may say that human consciousness is not a part of the rainbow, but operates at a critical point where the light ray is ready to break into the rainbow. It however remains largely unaware of the significant position it occupies in the totality of the scheme and hence unaware that the rainbow is not outside of it.

Sri Ramakrishna tests Vidyasagar to assess how conscious he is of his relationship with the rainbow. He refers to the great value Vidyasagar possesses—the virtue of compassion, a virtue far superior to the possession of a pair of horns. It is a virtue by which one can establish sympathy and rapport with grass consciousness, dog consciousness, lion consciousness, or any other consciousness. This is a process by which the light ray establishes its identity with the different bands of the rainbow.

Vidyasagar had obviously not succeeded much in this process. His view of the

rainbow is hazy, due to the interference of a cloud, the cloud of erudition. Erudition and the attendant intellectualism tie one down to logical reasoning and scientific analysis, preventing ascent to the aesthetic level. Needless to stress what an anathema dry scholarship was to Sri Ramakrishna! His simultaneous reference to Vidyasagar's learning, therefore, carries more meaning than is readily apparent. He elaborated upon this many many days later at Dakshineswar: "With all his fame and erudition, Vidyasagar said such a childish thing as 'Has God given greater power to some than to others?'"<sup>6</sup> This makes it absolutely clear that when he affirms differences in manifestation of God's power, Sri Ramakrishna is not reducing God to the level of a lamp manufacturer. That, according to him, would indeed be a childish and foolish interpretation.

Swami Vivekananda was equally surprised at what Sri Ramakrishna described as Vidyasagar's 'utmost limit of intelligence'. Swamiji declares: "He who rightly understands one thing understands everything else."<sup>7</sup> It means that Vidyasagar did not understand the power and impulse working behind his compassion and acts of charity.

6. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 249.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 992.

This underlines the difference between compassion in an intellectual like Vidyasagar and that of a God-conscious personality like Swami Brahmananda. Vidyasagar is like a child much bothered about the uneven length of his toes and ever trying to stretch the little toe. Swami Brahmananda accepts the difference as an evolutionary and anatomical fact, but is ever-ready to attend to the little toe, which is a part of him, when it is injured or is otherwise in need of help.

Mere possession of a good quality, howsoever great and lofty, does not automatically turn human consciousness towards Universal Consciousness. One needs to be aware of the source from which it proceeds, and its significance. Hence Swami Vivekananda wonders how Vidyasagar could understand his acts of charity and doing good to others, if he has not understood God or Oneness. Knowledge leads to perception of Unity and perception of diversity stems from ignorance. A virtue, be it intellectual, moral or aesthetic, should help raise human consciousness from the scientific level of analyzing the spectral band to the aesthetic level of appreciating the harmonious blend of the colours. Then 'big and small', 'good and bad', 'strong and weak' cease to have any intrinsic value and the world of contrasts is perceived as what it truly is—a picturesque universe.

Prophets preach, but the incarnations like Jesus, Buddha, Ramakrishna, can give religion; one glance, one touch is enough.

—Swami Vivekananda

# REVIEWS & NOTICES

**RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA: New Perspectives**, by Arvind Sharma, Published by Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., (1) L-10, Green Park Extension, New Delhi 110-016, (2) G-2, Cunningham Apartments, Cunningham Road, Bangalore 560-052, 1989, pp. viii plus 138, Rs. 125/-

The book under review presents a critical survey of the life and doctrines of Sri Ramakrishna in particular and that of Swami Vivekananda to a lesser extent. The author is a professor of Indian and Comparative Religions at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. He has cited several references to evaluate the spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna and his doctrines on the touchstone of intellectual arguments. Out of twenty-five essays in this book, including an introduction, twenty-one are given to the critical study of Sri Ramakrishna.

Rooted in the ancient spiritual doctrines of Vedanta, the universal spiritual teachings and spiritual versatility of Sri Ramakrishna, along with the dynamic practical philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, have today awakened world-wide recognition. World thinkers have begun to look upon these new figures in Hinduism with reverence and admiration. The book under review critically analyses the new developments in Hinduism, particularly Ramakrishna and Vivekananda themselves. The author specifically remarks on his critical attitude in his introduction and cautions admirers against being overly occupied with the great success of their ideas and teachings. He writes: 'There has been a tendency to look at them reverently rather than critically and further to look upon them as representing not merely the triumphant vindication of Hinduism but also indirectly encouraging a form of Hindu triumphalism'.

Taking the major developments within Hinduism as mainly the figures Ramakrishna and Vivekananda who helped 'Hinduism become a world force,' the author Arvind Sharma compares Sri Ramakrishna with Sri Sankaracarya and Mahatma Gandhi from the standpoints of religious experiences and in a study of 'contrastive theism'. These comparisons are based only on superficial observations of philosophies and experiences, and appear not to comprehend purity and divinity which were at the base of those spiritual lives. However, the first comparison with Sri Sankaracarya is informative and interesting. The author

should have discussed the topics in more detail. In three short essays to determine whether Ramakrishna was an *Advaitin*, a *Visistadvaitin* or hypnotist by culling profuse references, the author has shown only pedantic scholarship, and his conclusions are drawn in a roundabout way. The ninth chapter entitled 'Ramakrishna and Parapsychological Research' is only a narration of some of the great yoga and psychic powers of Sri Ramakrishna which are recorded in the books *Sri Ramakrishna: The Great Master* by Swami Saradananda, and *The Life of Ramakrishna* by Romain Rolland. The chapter is neither a critical study nor does it suggest how these will help research in parapsychology.

There are five essays which analyse some aspects in Max Muller's book *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings*. In the essay 'Max Muller and Romain Rolland: Biographers of Sri Ramakrishna' the author has delineated 'the curious contrast in the approaches of these (western) scholars towards the attitude of modern science to the type of experiences associated with Sri Ramakrishna'. This is mainly in his examination of a few mystical experiences of *Samādhi* of Sri Ramakrishna and Ramakrishna's power to induce trances in others and to change conditions of consciousness of others by touch.

The essays such as 'Ramakrishna from a Buddhist Viewpoint,' 'Some Unresolved Questions,' 'Was Ramakrishna an Authentic Guru?' and 'Folklore and Modernity: The Case of Ramakrishna' are interesting but reveal very little philosophy that is present in the immense treasure of Sri Ramakrishna's wisdom. Many things are discussed and hinted at in the essay 'Ramakrishna Paramahansa: A Study in a Mystic Attitude towards Women'. The essay is well written and it touches many points but fails to note that to understand the things in the path of mysticism, one has to follow the mystic traditions. The ways of a mystic are difficult to comprehend by mere intellectual knowledge. The full appreciation of new doctrines of such outstanding sages as Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is difficult unless we train not only our sensibilities, but our whole being.

In the essay 'Did Ramakrishna Believe in Reincarnation?' The author seems to be confused by the utterance of Sri Ramakrishna: '...It is not right to try to know these things at the beginning. First of all realize God; then He Himself will let you know whatever you desire.' (*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* p. 901) This statement

of Ramakrishna will be clear to the knowers of God who 'eat the mangoes' and do not indulge only in 'counting the leaves.' Thus the author's comment that Ramakrishna's acceptance of reincarnation did not result from personal verification but from the acceptance of tradition is not germane to the context.

Similarly, in the essay 'New Myths in Hinduism: The Saraswati Myth in the Life of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda' the author again cites references from the western scholars such as F. Max Muller, Romain Rolland and Christopher Isherwood. Max Muller wrote his *Life and Sayings of Ramakrishna* from the information furnished by Swami Vivekananda but mixed his own impressions of Sri Ramakrishna with it since *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* by 'M' was not published then. So before quoting Max Muller that 'Ramakrishna was ignorant of Sanskrit, nay,...(that) he did not know a single word of the sacred language of India,' the author should have consulted the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, either 'M's edition published in 1907 or the translation published by Swami Nikhilananda in 1942. In the *Gospel* p. 357, the Master spoke the following sentence to a devotee on March 23, 1884: 'If a pandit speaks to me in Sanskrit, I can follow him but I cannot speak it myself.' Similarly, though the author has made the statement in his references (No. 12, p. 128) that Swamiji's familiarity with Sanskrit was that of an average literate Bengali (p. 128), it is far from true. The author should have referred to *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*. Not only did the Swami know Sanskrit well, but he had command over the Sanskrit language. He had studied Panini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* at Porbandar. He composed several Sanskrit hymns and wrote letters in Sanskrit. Once he had discussion in Sanskrit with the pandits of Barabazar in Gopal Lal Seal's garden house at Cossipore in 1897 (see conversation and dialogues from 'The Diary of Saratchandra Chakravarti': *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* Vol. VI, page 461). It seems that in his so called new perspective, the author has drawn certain conclusions from his own understanding. These are merely dry intellectual exercises to evaluate the lives and doctrines of such great spiritual personalities as Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. As such these are not so much 'new' as in many cases they are unauthenticated, highly opinionated views hardly sustaining the grand word 'Perspectives.'

Swami Brahmasthananda

**SRI RAMAKRISHNA PRADHANA SISHYAVARGAMU:** By Dr. P. Shyamasundara Murthy, Published by Shri Ramakrishna Seva Samiti, Maruteru, W. Godavari, A. P., 534 122, p. 112 + XI, Rs. 5/-.

Much of the vast Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature is yet to be translated into Telugu. While the gospel of Shri Ramakrishna has been translated only recently, the *magnum opus*—The Great Master, still remains a hidden treasure. Under the circumstances, any book on Shri Ramakrishna in Telugu would be welcomed and the book under review, dealing with the lives of the direct disciples of Shri Ramakrishna will be widely welcomed.

The book is based on the Apostles of Shri Ramakrishna, compiled in English by Swami Gambhiranandaji, the erstwhile President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. It is not a literal translation and is highly abridged version of the original. The several touching incidents in the life of each disciple and the struggles during spiritual practices, the special relationship each had with the Master, and the bonds of fraternity between the sixteen of them—these are what vividly portray the greatness of the life and mission of each of the sixteen direct disciples. Unfortunately, much of this has been sacrificed due to the brevity of the life sketches. The last fifteen pages of the book have been devoted to 'namavali' and hymns. This space could have been better utilised for giving some more details of the lives of at least a few of the monks.

Nevertheless, the Telugu readers who have had no opportunity to read these biographies will surely welcome the book, which is written in simple and chaste Telugu. The author an agricultural scientist by profession, is an ardent devotee of Shri Ramakrishna.

The book is very low priced and within the easy reach of most people. We hope the readers will try to benefit from this and we also hope the original English version will be fully translated in the near future.

Kamala S. Jaya Rao.

**SANATSUJATIYA:** With text, translation and running commentary; by Swami Amritananda, Published by the President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-600 004, First Edition 1988 p. ii + 94; Price Rs. 10/-.

*The Mahabharata* is replete with several episodes of transcendental wisdom imparting self-knowledge.

It embodies the teachings of Sanatsujat, popularly known as Sanatkumar, to the blind king Dhritarashtra in the Udyoga Parva of *The Mahabharata*. It is in the form of a dialogue in a very interesting way between Sanatkumar and Dhritarashtra who was sleepless and restless thinking of destruction and death in war and at the same time was clinging to the blind affection for his sons.

The translator, Swami Amritananda, has given us an English rendering of the Sanskrit text and a running commentary based on Sri Sankaracharya's Bhashya. In addition to this, he has also referred to commentaries of Nilakantha and Sri Vadiraja Swami of the Madhva tradition occasionally. There are many practical instructions, useful even in our modern times to the spiritual seeker to attain liberation.

There are four chapters of the book which are the guiding steps to self-realization, as it were. In the first chapter, Sanatsujat emphasizes an idea—'eternal vigilance is immortality and inadvertence is death'. The second chapter deals with explanation of "Muni", "Mauna" (silence), "Tapas" (austerities) and "Tyaga" (sacrifice). The experience of this bliss in the path of Jnana Yoga, is emphasised in the third and fourth chapters.

*Swami Brahmasthananda*

**VEDA MURTI SHRI RAMAKRISHNA:** By Swami Apurvananda, Published by Advaita Ashrama, Kaladi, p. 250, Price Rs. 24/-.

This book presents the life story of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in Sanskrit. Sanskrit is one of the 15 languages, scheduled in the Indian Constitution, even though it is not the official language of any state. But Sanskrit is the language of India's dharma, civilisation and culture. Swami Apurvananda has rendered a signal service by producing Paramahansa's life account in Sanskrit.

The writer says that the powers of all gods entered the personality of Paramahansa. He was an *avatar*, an Incarnation of God. The writer adds that the powers of all *avatars*, Rama, Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and others also entered his person. He is the composite image of God. He practised for a while each of the religions. This gave a new shape and direction to this religion. The old faith was that our religion alone is of God, the rest are of the Devil. And all the non-elect are Kaffirs (heretics). All these are disproved by the historic life of Shri Ramakrishna.

*P. D. Shastri*

**HOLY SCRIPTURES:** Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1989, p. 312. Price: Rs. 12.00

This book is, as it introduces itself, a symposium on the great scriptures of the world. Initially published as the 1988 Annual Number of the monthly, Vedanta Kesari, it is now made available in book form. It is elegantly brought out in a handy size and at a very easily affordable price. The book may be considered a homage to Sri Ramakrishna's aphorism, 'as many faiths, so many paths'.

As the editor says in the prologue, 'Scriptures contain only hints about God, and there is no need, really speaking, to read too many scriptures'. Yet, a book such as this is of importance at this juncture in the history of mankind, when there is general scepticism and cynicism regarding religion, on the one hand, and the rise of a very dangerous religious fundamentalism, on the other. The book gives a peep into the "treasures every scripture holds within" and may enthuse some to go deeper into one or more of them.

The book starts with a masterly exposition on the Vedas. The other Hindu scriptures discussed here include the Upanishads, the Gita and the Mahabharata. Opinion may be divided as to whether the last mentioned can strictly be considered a scripture, as it is normally understood Dharma is the rock on which the edifice of Hindu Life is built, and the Mahabharata expounds Dharma and how it faces trials at every crucial stage of life. Many readers may be disappointed that the Srimad Bhagavatam has not found a place in the book. Included are the Rama Charita Mānas, Chaitanya Charitāmrita, Goda's Tiruppavai and Jnāneswari, presumably as representative of the regional scriptures of India.

There are essays on the Dhammapada, the Guru Granth Sahib and the Acharanga—scriptures of three other religions which have their origin in India.

The scriptures of the religions which originated outside India, and which are included in this book are the New Testament, the Holy Kuran, the Torah of the Jews, Gathas of Zarathustra and the Philokalia. The last may not be familiar to many Indian readers. It belongs to the Eastern orthodox tradition of Christianity, where mysticism is given prominent place. In this branch of christianity, the repetition of the prayer of Jesus, similar to the Nama-Japa of the Hindus is given much importance.



The book ends by discussing the place of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, as holy scriptures.

The articles are presented in a lucid manner and are easy to understand. The book should find a place in every modern home, where parents and children alike are ignorant of what the different scriptures contain, and although literate, depend entirely on the television for such knowledge.

*Kamala S. Jaya Rao*

SONG OF THE HEART (Poems from the Land of the Golden Temple) By K. S. Bhinder. Published by Deepak Publishers, Mai Hiran Gate Jalandhar City. pp. 96. Rs. 50.

Poetry, said Dylan Thomas, is what in a poem makes you laugh, cry, prickle, be silent, makes toe-nails twinkle, makes you want to do this or that or nothing, makes you know that you are alone in the unknown world, that your bliss and suffering is forever shared, and forever all your own. The book under review carries poetical effusions of the writer on a variety of subjects ranging from the aesthetic, the historical and the mundane to the transcendental and the amorphous.

The varied moods, ideas, feelings and emotions of the poet are reflected in about a hundred pages. His heart sings songs of inner peace. The "wanton winds on the seashore" delight him, and uplift him into the world beyond. He experiences immeasurable joy at the foothills of the Shivaliks. He is wonderstruck at the working of nature which is ingenuous to its very core.

Despite all my sensitivity  
I know not what a flower is.  
With such a face of beauty,  
Turned up to receive God's kiss.

At other times the poet suffers spiritual pangs born of his inner propensity to visualise the divine.

In the very heart of my being,  
There goes on an acute longing.  
A vein of a sunflower in me runs  
When my sun woos the Sun of Suns.

The poet's devotion to the Almighty is total surrender. "I have nothing to do but wait on the Lord, and burn by His Love like incense", he says. God is his "soul's call whom no earthly form can imprison". He cries like a *bhakta* with feelings of divine love.

Like a Zoroastrian he is convinced that the

battle between the good and the evil continues. But rather than externalizing it in the forms of Ahura Mazda or Ahriman, he discovers it in the very heart of man.

Here are locked the saint and the devil  
And the fight goes on unconcealed...

Besides, the poet sings the song of the snake charmer, the ploughman, the lotus, the peepul tree, the butterfly, the Himalayas and the Chenab river. His reverence for Sikh gurus, Sikh shrines and Adi Granth pours forth in a natural, scintillating manner. But he is equally a great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, of whom he writes:

On God's Jewelled feet reposed  
Like buds half-opened, half-closed  
Appear so strange, these up-turned eyes,  
In the Garden of paradise.

The strength of this anthology lies in its *sattvikata* and ennobling thoughts. It makes delightful reading despite some typographical errors.

*Dr. Satish K. Kapoor*

THEY LIVED WITH GOD: By Swami Chetanananda. Published by the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, 205 South Skinker Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri, 63105 USA. 434 p. \$ 17.95.

Perhaps everyone who has read the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* published by the Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, or *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, published by Ramakrishna Math, Madras, and the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in New York, remembers the names of the large number of the Master's devotees. Perhaps also they have felt curiosity to know more about the lives and fortunes of those who associated closely with Sri Ramakrishna, but were destined to remain in the world as lay-disciples. Up to now one could learn about those blessed ones only with great difficulty. This new book answers therefore a great need. Swami Chetanananda, leader of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, and a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, has brought together in one volume a collection of twenty-eight short biographies of those well-known lay-disciples of the Great Master, Sri Ramakrishna. Some of them are: Rani Rasmani, Hridayram Mukhopadhyaya, Balram Basu, Yogin-ma, Gauri-ma, Pratap Chandra Hazra, 'M', (Sri Mahendra Nath Gupta), Girish Chandra Ghosh, Kalipada Ghosh and Purna Chandra Ghosh. Altogether, the book is a

fascination from start to last. The biographies, though not exhaustive, are written beautifully. Reading them one feels more closely drawn to the Master himself. From the *Lives*, we get a better understanding of Sri Ramakrishna and learn something of his era. The volume comes with clear photographs of all but one or two of the lay-disciples. Beyond this, there are photos of other persons and places which figured prominently in the story of Sri Ramakrishna's life. The book comes handsomely bound and printed. We take pleasure in recommending it to one and all.

*Swami Shivaprasadananda*

**TRIADIC MYSTICISM:** By Paul E. Murphy.  
Published by Motilal Banarasidas Delhi,  
p. 226, price Rs. 120/-.

Kashmir has given a very distinct school of thought to the Indian philosophical literature, popularly known as Kashmir Shaivism (Trika) is a religio-philosophical system, elaborated, mostly in the *Pratyabhijna darshana*: In this philosophy the main stress is attached to recognition of Self. Vasugupta and Somananda can be called the propounders of Shaiva-Trika philosophy as we call Shankara the propounder of Advaita Vedanta. According to Swami Lakshman Joo, living exponent of Kashmir Shaivism "is a system which endeavours to remove the innate ignorance that separates the individual from the universal, but whereas Vedanta holds that the universe is unreal, *Trika* firmly believes that the creation is just like its creator, very real." (*Indologica Taurinensia-Italy* Vol. XII, 1984, p. 366).

It is heartening to note that apart from Indian scholars outside Kashmir, a host of scholars and seekers of truth from West have started showing keen interest in this profound philosophy of '*Trika*' which has originated from Kashmir. Paul E. Murphy is one such earnest scholar whose work *Triadic Mysticism* is reviewed here. The author is of the view that 'Few Indic Theologies equal it in architectonic power and mystical profundity.' The author has very systematically dealt in the beginning with the fundamentals of the monistic Shaivism of Kashmir, with its three fold composition—the Gradation School, the Family School and the Vibration School. Because of its triadic

structure Kashmir Shaivism is referred by the term *Trika*, which the author has well translated as Triadism.

In the first chapter the author gives a systematic historical growth of Triadic Shaivism. Particular emphasis has been given on the teachings and literary accomplishments of main theologians and propagators of this system. Abhinava Gupta, the well known Shaiva Philosopher, has been discussed in the Volume very elaborately. The chapter II deals with the Gnostic Triadism, elaborating the ways to Liberation. In chapter III the author discusses the Devotional Triadism. Here he has chosen only the three main poets, namely Bhatta Narayana, Utpaladeva and Lalleshwari. Of these three the works of first two are in Sanskrit, *Stava Chintamani* and *Shivastotravali*. The sayings (popularly known as *Vakhs*) of Lalleshwari are in Kashmiri language. Lalleshwari is mainly an exponent of Kashmir Shaivism. It is too much to find a lot of influence (as the author has tried to see in her works) of Sufism. Some stray words used in her *Vakhs* cannot be claimed to have very significant parallels with Sufism. In the final i.e. IV chapter, the author has attempted to compare the Gnostic and Devotional Triadism under the heading 'Triadic and Catholic Parallels.' It is this chapter which makes a scholarly attempt of comparative study of two eminent theologies of East and West. This healthy trend is an encouraging sign in developing and understanding religious unity and harmony. In this way we ultimately understand and realise the words of Shri Ramakrishna, *Jato mat Tato path*.

The translations of original works of the theologians and devotional poets of Kashmir, which form the primary source of this Volume have been extensively studied and quoted by the author. He has also studied the works of various modern authors, which are certainly the secondary source. Here I feel astonished to see the names and works of two eminent living scholars namely Swami Lakshman Joo, and Dr. B. N. Pandit missing in the introduction as well as in the Bibliography.

To end I should say it is an admirable attempt on the subject. The English equivalents of Triadic terminology, listed in the appendix, is surely a boon to lay readers not acquainted with Sanskrit.

*C. L. Sapru*

# PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

*It was 12th October 1919.*

The Swami (Turiyananda) was sitting in his room. A few Sannyāsins and lay devotees were present. A conversation was going on Sir John Woodroffe's *Is India Civilized?*, the second edition of which had come out much enlarged.

*Disciple:* "There is an advantage in writing work. You can make steady progress. If you write one hour every day, you will find at the end of the year that much has been written. But with spiritual practice the case is different. You may practise meditation and Japa two or three hours a day and continue it for ten long years, yet you won't notice any appreciable progress. It is as though you are just where you were in the beginning."

*Swami:* "What do you mean? Who says that spiritual practice produces no effect? Surely it does. There is not a shade of doubt about it."

"People of the world give you wages, if you work for them. Is God so unkind that He will not requite the works done for Him? But you must work in the right spirit. Working haphazardly will not do. A mad man lived near a distillery. Every noon he would go where the rejected earthen pots used in distilling wine were thrown and break them one by one with a stick, and perspiring profusely he would cry out, 'Oh, I can work no more.' He would then take a little rest and begin again!

"It will not do if you toil this way. You may irrigate the field all day, but it would be all in vain, if there be a hole in the field.

When you go to the field in the evening, you will find that not a drop of water has remained in the field, all has run out through the hole. Attachment to sense-objects is the hole."

*Disciple:* "What shall we do, Mahārāj, if we cannot find out the hole? It all depends on the grace of the Guru. Sri Rama-krishna said, 'If anyone intending to make a pilgrimage to the temple of Jagannātha travels in a wrong direction through mistake, someone will surely point out to him the right direction sooner or later.' A seeker of God may adopt a wrong course, but it is certain that his object is the attainment of God. Why then should his labours prove fruitless?"

*Swami:* "No, they will not, if he really be in quest of God. Such a man is sure to receive a glimpse of His grace some day. 'If anyone advances one step towards God, He comes nearer by ten steps.' This is no idle talk. Whoever has made even a little effort to earn His grace has realized this. (*Turning to A.*): What do you say?"

*A.:* "Yes, sir. Certainly He does."

*Swami:* "Truthfulness, obedience, and looking upon all women as mother, if these do not lead one to Hari, then Tulasi is a liar.<sup>1</sup> Few, alas, speak the truth. What is obedience? It is complete resignation. And one must look upon another's wife as one's mother. Whoever will have these, will reach God; Tulasi stands surety for it."

1. A couplet of Tulasidāsa, the great devotee of Sri Rāma.

Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached! *Katha Upaniṣad*, I. iii. 14

### MISSIONARIES IN CONFERENCE

Comparing the Christian religion with other religions to illustrate the weakness of those other religions, no less a personage than Dr. Barrows said:

“You remember the discourse said to have been spoken by Gautama himself, telling how a young mother, who was only a child, gave birth to her first born. When the boy was able to walk by himself he died. The young girl in her love carried the dead child clasped to her bosom and went about from house to house asking if any one could give her medicine for it. When the neighbours saw this they said, ‘Is the young girl mad, that she carries about on her breast the dead body of her son?’ But a wise man, thinking she did not understand the law of death, said to her, ‘My good girl, I cannot myself give medicine for it, but Buddha can give medicine.’

She did homage to Buddha, and said, ‘Lord and master, do you know any medicine that would be good for my boy?’ The sage answered, ‘I know of some: I want a handful of mustard seed; I require some mustard seed taken from a house where no son, husband, parent or slave has ever died.’ The girl said, ‘Very good’, and went to ask at the different houses carrying the dead body of

her son. The people said: ‘Here is some mustard seed; take it.’ And she asked: ‘In my friend’s house has there ever died a son, a husband, a parent or a slave?’ They replied, ‘Lady, the living are few, but the dead are many.’ One said, ‘I have lost a son’; another, ‘I have lost a father,’ another, ‘I have lost a slave’.

And she began to think, ‘This is a heavy task; I am not the only one whose son is dead’, and thinking thus, she acquired the law of fear and putting her affection for her child away she summoned up resolution and left the body in the forest and went to Buddha and paid him homage. He Said: ‘Have you procured the handful of mustard seed?’ ‘I have not,’ she answered; ‘the people of the village told me the living are few, but the dead are many’. And Buddha said to her, ‘You thought that you alone had lost a son. The law of death is that among all living creatures there is no permanence’. And this was all that he could do. Could anything more touchingly illustrate the utter helplessness of Buddhism to comfort in the presence of death?’

Good God, in what light are teachings of one religion viewed by another! Man has coloured spectacles indeed, especially our missionary brethren!