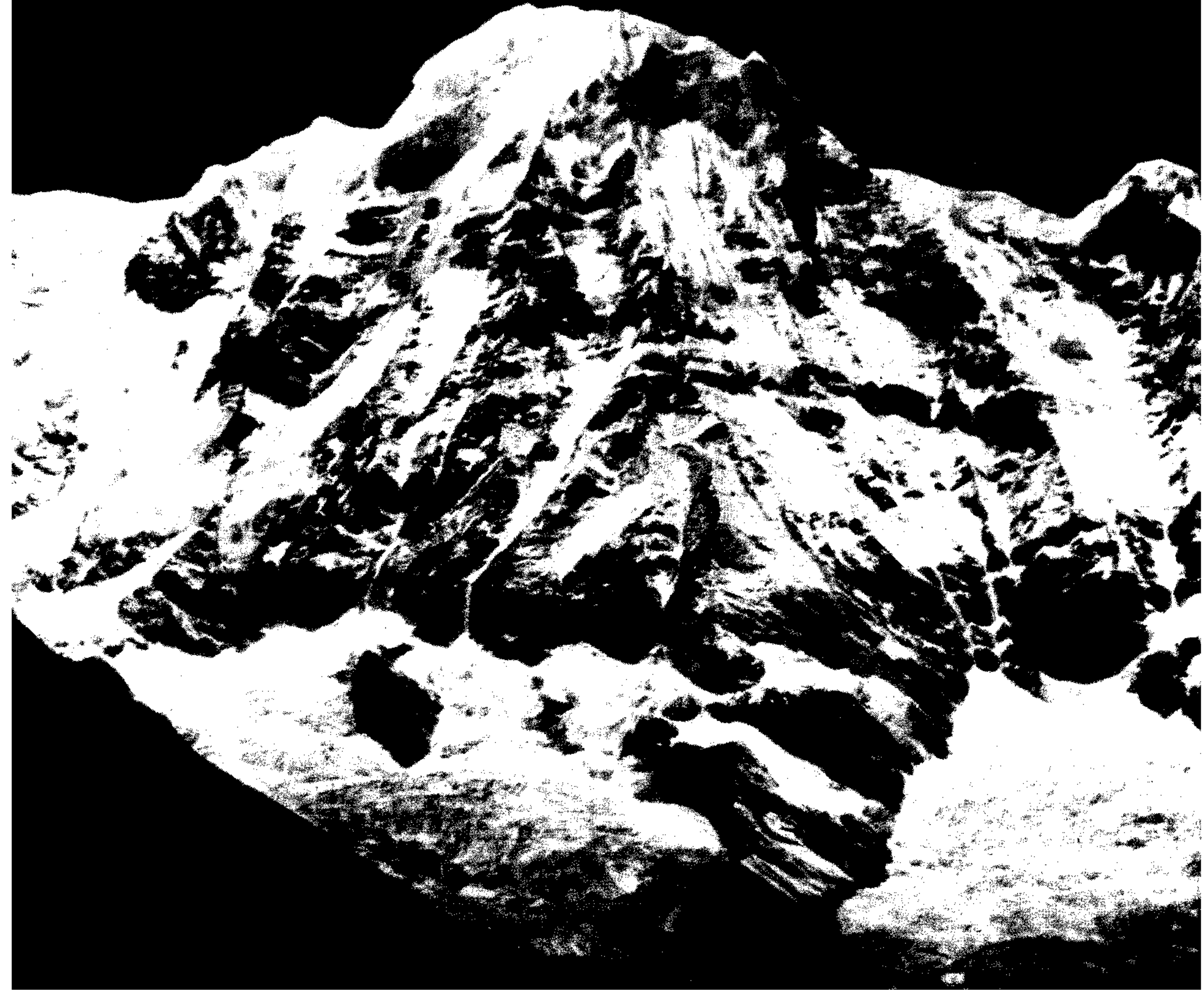


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or Awakened India



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Prabuddha Bharata

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

Prabuddha Bharata

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No. 4

Divine Wisdom

A HYMN TO SRI RAMACHANDRA

उद्भवस्थितिसंहारकारिणीं क्लेशहारिणीम् ।
सर्वश्रेयस्करिणीं सीतां नतोऽहं रामवल्लभाम् ॥

I bow down to Sita, the beloved of Rama, who creates, maintains and destroys this world, the remover of all afflictions and the grantor of all felicity.

यन्मायावशवर्तिविश्वमखिलं ब्रह्मादिदेवासुराः

यत्सत्त्वादमृवैव भाति सकलं रज्जौ यथाऽहेर्ध्रमः ।

यत्पादः प्लवमेव भाति हि भवाम्भोघेस्तितीर्वाविताम्

वन्देऽहं तमशेषकारणपरं रामाख्यमीशं हरिम् ॥

I bow to Lord Hari who is called Rama, who is beyond all cause, to whose Māyā this whole world as also the gods Brahmā and others are subjugated, and due to whose essence everything shines as real (though in reality false), even as an illusory snake in a rope, and whose feet are, as it were, the boat

to those who aspire to cross the ocean of Samsāra.

मूलं धर्मतरोर्विवेकजलधेः पूर्णेन्दुमानन्ददं

वैराग्याम्बुजभास्करं त्वघहरं ध्वान्तापहं तापहम् ।

मोहाम्भोघरपुञ्जपाटनविधौ खे सम्भवं शंकरम्

घन्दे ब्रह्माकुलकलंकशमनं श्रीरामभूपं प्रियम् ॥

I salute Rama the beloved King, who is the root of the tree of all Dharma, who is the full moon giving delight to the ocean of Viveka (discrimination), the sun for (causing to blossom) the lotus of Vairāgya, the destroyer of sin, the dispeller of the darkness (of ignorance) and destroyer of pain, who in the act of destroying the masses of clouds of delusion is like wind (born of Vyom or ether), who is propitious and who is death to the disgrace to the Brahmin family (Rāvana).

Why Do We Suffer

I

Mental suffering and physical pain are inevitable existential phenomena found in all living beings. It is not that human beings alone experience psychological agonies, and animals and plants do not. No, plants and animals, being endowed with life and consciousness, also suffer. A puppy wails a definite loss when it is left all alone by its mother. Who can deny sensing the palpable anguish of a cow when its calf has died? Near Mayavati ashrama, a deer is heard to cry pitifully at intervals for the whole night when its mate has been killed by a huntsman. Animals do have feelings of love and attachment. Similar is the case with plants, though, may be, of a different order. The famous experiments of Sir J. C. Bose at the beginning of the century proved that plants actually vibrate with life and are very sensitive. They even have memory. Backster, Sauvin, and others in the U.S., and Dr. Hashimoto of Japan, have more recently provided support for Dr. Bose's theories. Plants are sensitive to their physical surroundings, as well as to people who come near them, measurably more than people formerly thought. The sharp line that once divided the living and non-living kingdoms is now hard to detect. There are some who have always asserted that no such division can be made.

An interesting anecdote was told about Mahatma Gandhi. While he was imprisoned in Yerwada Jail for months during India's freedom struggle, he used to sit under a mango tree in the compound and recite the *Gītā*. Till then that tree had never borne

fruit. But the same year, as if by a miraculous touch of the Mahatma, the tree began to bear fruits. Like humans, plants evidently have their distinct reactions to pleasant and unpleasant stimuli, and empathy with other forms of life around them.

Of mental sorrow and physical pain, the latter can be more easily recognized and removed. If one has a toothache or a headache, medicines are there to give immediate relief. To mitigate physical distress is easy. But when there are emotional disturbances, chronic misery, depression or mental imbalance, the root causes being deep down and hidden, medical treatments are seldom seen to be satisfactory. Electric shocks and surgeries are usually drastic hit-or-miss measures. More often people suffering from chronic mental problems, frustration and unhappiness rely on their own instincts to find ways of escape. Without seeking professional help, they resort to drugs that often produce a kind of bizarre behaviour. To 'drown their suffering', as it were, some turn to alcohol. Others try to prolong the temporary euphoria induced by consuming prescription drugs or hard narcotics. Even more horrendous are the attempts of others to escape through acts of hatred and cruelty to others. Guided by perverse and uncontrolled intellect, they rise as enemies of the world for its destruction. However, no such gimmick solution that ignores sufferings' roots ever succeeds for long. Neither stupifying the mind and senses, nor alcoholism nor misanthropy has ever brought a stop to the sorrows of man. Sorrow pursues a human being like his own shadow. There has never been an exception to this rule. Each and

everyone has his own sad story to unfold and wounds to heal.

Krishna Gautami, a young woman, had an only son and he died. In her grief she carried the dead child to all her neighbours, asking them for medicine, and the people said, "She has lost her senses. The boy is dead." At length she met a man who replied, "I cannot give you medicine for your child, but I know a physician who can. Go to Sakyamuni, the Buddha." The young woman repaired to Buddha and cried, "Lord and Master, give me the medicine that will cure my boy."

Buddha answered: "I want a handful of mustard." And when the girl in her joy promised to procure it, Buddha added, "The mustard-seed must be taken from a house where no one has lost a child, husband, parent, or friend."

Poor Gautami now went from house to house, and the people pitied her and said, "Here is mustard-seed, take it!" But when she asked, "Did a son or daughter, a father or mother, die in your family?"

They answered her, "Alas! the living are few, but the dead are many. Do not remind us of our deepest grief." And there was no house where some beloved one had not died.¹

A handful of mustard—a simple thing, but so difficult to procure! This fact of life, the existence of suffering, is a burden that everyone of us has to bear. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, all must pass through the travails of life. In one respect animals seem to have an advantage over us. Their sufferings seem to be mostly on the physical level, and may be, they have shorter memories. Whitman the poet wrote about them:

...They do not sweat and whine about their condition,

They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,

They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,

Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things...²

It is only man who is subject to quick elation and lasting depression. He never forgets anything. Even in old age he remembers the bitter days of days gone by. Psychological hurts, wounds, afflictions, leave deep marks on his psyche. Sometimes he sustains grievances that grow disproportionate to their cause. There is a humorous tale:

An old woman contracted hydrophobia after being bitten by a dog. Both the doctor and the patient gave up hope of life. One day when she was a bit normal mind, the doctor gave her paper and pencil and told her to write her will. She went on writing for some time when the doctor, becoming curious, asked her what she was writing. She said she was making a list of the persons who had caused her much misery in life, and she was planning to bite them!

Happiness certainly gives a flash occasionally, like streaks of lightning in the darkness of a stormy night. But one's sorrow replaces all his gaiety and in no time gets transformed into worries, uncertainties and fears. Living an emotionally precarious life, with seeming dangers on every side, is all that is left for such unfortunate people. The perennial question goes unanswered: 'Why is suffering always with us in the world, and why cannot there be uninterrupted happiness throughout life?' Sri Sarada Devi was once asked this question by a disciple:

1. Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha* (Madras: Samata Books, 1987) pp. 186-87.

2. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1920) p. 50.

DISCIPLE: "Mother, if there exists some being called God, why is there so much suffering and misery in the world? Does He not see it? Has He not the power to remove it?"

MOTHER: "The creation itself is full of misery and happiness. Could anyone appreciate happiness if misery did not exist? Besides, how is it possible for all persons to be happy? Sita once said to Rama, 'Why don't you remove the suffering and unhappiness of all your subjects? Please make all the inhabitants of your kingdom happy. If you only will, you can easily do it.' Rama said, 'Is it ever possible for all persons to be happy at the same time?' 'Why not?' asked Sita, 'Please supply from the royal treasury the means of satisfying everyone's wants.' 'All right,' said Rama, 'your will shall be carried out.' Rama sent for Lakshmana and said to him, 'Go, and notify everyone in my empire that whatever he wants he may get from the royal treasury.' At this the subjects of Rama came to the palace and narrated their sorrows. The royal treasury began to flow without stint. When everyone was spending his days joyously, through the Māyā of Rama, the roof of the mansion where Rama and Sita lived, started to leak. Workmen were sent for the repair. But where were workmen to be had? There was not a labourer in the kingdom. In the absence of masons, carpenters and artisans, all buildings went out of repair, and work was at a standstill. The subjects of Rama informed the King of their difficulties. Finding no other help, Sita said to Rama, 'It is no longer possible to bear the discomfort under the leaking roof. Please arrange things as they were before. Then all will be able to procure workmen. Now I realize that it is not possible for all persons to be happy at the same time.' 'Let it be so,' said Rama. Instantaneously, all things were as before and workmen could once more be

engaged. Sita said to Rama, 'Lord, this creation is your wonderful sport!'

"No one will suffer for all time. No one will spend all his days on earth in suffering. Every action brings its own result, and one gets one's opportunity accordingly."³

Much of our suffering is of our own making. We hold on to everything, including our sorrows and self-pity. We never let go anything. Repeated remembrances of one's past agonies are nothing but a kind of clinging to them. The secret is to loosen our tight grip and let them go. Nothing holds us, no person binds us in this world unless we unwittingly vest power in him and allow ourselves to be bound. We live and work under the illusion that everything has power over us and we are under the control of the persons we love. We search always for the causes of suffering in the external world and blame others, or the external environment. We are the greatest contributors to our own personal misery, often we forget.

Take for example the ubiquitous presence of physical discomfort and pain. Is it not very often through our own foolish lack of self-control or inadvertence that we become victims of physical disorder and maladies? Overeating, smoking, consuming alcohol, and becoming habituated to medicines are all well known for their harmful effects. Yet we go on consuming and indulging in all these until a crisis comes. So much of our physical suffering, not to mention our mental sorrows, can be avoided with a little intelligence and self-control. In Vedanta this discriminative intelligence is called *Viveka*, and self-restraint is called *Vairāgya*. To know decisively that something is not good for one's health is *Viveka*, and not to allow

3. *The Gospel of the Holy Mother* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, 1984) p. 92.

oneself to succumb to its temptations is *Vairāgya*. Through experience we come to know that certain things are not good for our physical well-being, and that we should eschew them. Similarly, we can also overcome our own grief and agony and avoid their dire effects by the exercise of wisdom and restraint. Though experience teaches us now and then what to avoid and how to take care of our mental health, yet in our infatuation we ignore these warning signals and indulge in the same old mistakes. The result is, we suffer.

The age-old question of why man suffers has been taken up in *Raja Yoga*, and in it the secrets of pain are laid bare in a scientific and systematic manner. Patanjali, in the second chapter, "*Sādhana Pāda*" (Practice), of *Raja Yoga* says: "...that afflictions or pains are fivefold. *Avidyā'smita rāgadveṣābhiniveśaḥ pañca kleśāḥ* (II. 3)—"*Avidyā* (ignorance), *asmitā* (egoism), *rāga* (attachment), *dveṣa* (aversion), and *abhiniveśa* (excessive love of life or fear of death) are the five afflictions."⁴ Vivekananda explains: "These are the five pains, the fivefold tie that binds us down, of which ignorance is the cause and the other four its effects. It is the only cause of our misery. What else can make us miserable? The nature of the Soul is eternal bliss. What can make it sorrowful except ignorance, hallucination, delusion? All pain of the Soul is simply delusion."⁵

Ignorance is further defined in the next verse: *Avidyākṣetramuttareṣāṃ prasupta-tanu-vicchinodārāṇām*—"Ignorance is the productive field of all these that follow, whether they are dormant, attenuated, inter-

rupted or active."⁶ Vyasa, in his commentary on the verse, says: "Dormancy is that condition in which affliction remains in the mind in a potential state. It manifests itself when an object comes before it. In the case of a wise one who has acquired discriminative Knowledge, the seeds of afflictions are sined and therefore even as the object comes before him, afflictions do not sprout or become active. What is 'attenuation'? Afflictions get weakened when they are overpowered by the contemplation of their opposites. When they occasionally get suppressed, but come back again, they are known as 'interrupted afflictions'. For example, anger is not active at the time of attachment. Anger does not arise when attachment has its play. Again, when attachment is directed to one object it cannot be said to be non-existent towards another object. In such cases attachment is active for the present towards one and in respect of others it can be active in the future. In respect of others it is either dormant, tenuous or interrupted." Vyasa concludes that all pains are different forms of *Avidyā* or ignorance only.

Pains are sometimes dormant or remain in a potential form and when time ripens they manifest themselves. No one, other than a perfect yogi, can say he has conquered suffering. When objects are absent attachment, anger, and hatred lie in potential form in an ordinary person. When the mind beholds an object and gets attracted by it, it then says: 'I like it and I want it.' This is *asmitā* or egoism. It develops a great liking for it. This attachment or *rāga*, when it fails to procure that object becomes anger, and anger leads to hatred or *dveṣa*. The *Gītā*, also says, "In one who *dwells* a longing for objects, an inclination towards them is generated. This inclination develops into

4. (II. 3)—अविद्यास्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः पञ्च क्लेशाः ।

5. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989) Vol. I, p. 237.

6. (II. 4)—अविद्या क्षेत्रमुत्तरेषां प्रसुप्त-तनु विच्छिन्नोदारणाम् ।

desire, and desire begets anger. Anger generates delusion, and delusion results in loss of memory. Loss of memory brings about the destruction of discriminative intelligence, and loss of discriminative intelligence spells ruin to a man". (II. 62-63).

What is this *Avidyā* or loss of discriminative intelligence? Patanjali describes the nature of ignorance, and how it comes into existence: *Anityāśuciduḥkhānātmāsu nityāśuci-sukhātmakhyātiravidyā* (II. 5)—“*Avidyā* consists in regarding a transient object as everlasting, an impure object as pure, misery as happiness, and the not-Self as the Self.”⁷ *Avidyā* or ignorance is a power of *Māyā* that exerts a fourfold function. The first is to consider impermanent objects as eternal. All objects come into existence for the time being only, and after that they disappear. Yet man in his delusion identifies himself with his perishable possessions, and desperately holds on to them. A loathsome and unclean body is regarded as a pure and desirable object. The body is full of odiferous and unsightly substances—mucous, blood, hair, bile and so on—things which nobody would like to take hold of individually, but when they are all put together he regards the composite as very adorable! Vyasa therefore remarks: “The wise know the body to be impure on account of its position (in the mother’s womb close to urine, etc.), its origin (egg and sperm cells of parents), its process of upkeep (food and drinks), its perspiration and destruction (no one likes to touch a dead body), and also on account of keeping it constantly clean.” The poet, Bhartṛhari put it thus: “that in the womb man lies within impure matter (*amedhya madhye*) in discomfort, with limbs cramped.”

7. (II. 5)—अनित्याशुचि-दुःखनात्मसु नित्य-शुचि-सुखात्मख्यातिरविद्या ।

Hatred is also pain. But that pain may give a peculiar sense of pleasure to a person of twisted mind. Enveloped, as it were, by hatred, he indulges in wanton cruelty or destruction. It is due to ignorance that he is compelled to see happiness in misery. The fourth function of ignorance is to make a person think that he is encapsulated within the boundary of his body and mind, and beyond there is nothing that matters. His mind depends on the fluctuations of his organism and he in turn trusts and depends on the dictates of the deluded mind. Mind is a great conjurer. It always traps the unwary to have full faith in its clever tricks. We never suspect what our minds present before us or tell us. We are, therefore, always moving in the same circle of unreality, led by our unreliable guide, the whimsical mind. Physical reality is not the only reality. Beyond exists an infinite dimension. In fact, we (the Self) are the Witness-consciousness of all that goes on, even in our mind. The mind and body are subject to pain and pleasure and are not the Witness-consciousness which is our real Nature. We are perceiving the unreal as real all the time. Because of this mass-hypnotism, man is unable to come out of the morass of sorrow.

Sri Ramakrishna explains what *vidyā* and *avidyā māyā* are: “This universe is created by the Mahamaya of God. Mahamaya contains both *vidyā māyā*, the illusion of knowledge, and *avidyā māyā*, the illusion of ignorance. Through the help of *vidyā māyā* one cultivates such virtues as the taste for holy company, knowledge, devotion, love and renunciation. *Avidyā māyā* consists of the five elements and the objects of the five senses—form, flavour, smell, touch, and sound. These make one forget God.”⁸

8. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, 1985) p. 216.

Memoirs of Swami Brahmananda

SWAMI SARADESHANANDA*

(Continued from the previous issue)

In order that there would not be any shortcomings in the execution of the work (constructing the ghat), there were rehearsals for the training of the volunteer labourers, with baskets, hoes, spades and other tools. There was a thorough planning with demonstrations—who would take which job, where he would stand and how he would perform so that there would be no confusion or loss of even a second during the work intervals. Low tide would occur at different times on different days of the month, sometimes in mornings, sometimes at midday, sometimes in afternoon, evening, midnight, or in the early hours of dawn. So the workers were informed of the changing times of taking their food, work and rest. Their tools used to be kept carefully arranged in one corner at the ghat so that with the ringing of the bell all could assemble at the site and execute their respective tasks silently. Supervision was done by Dinu Maharaj. Swami Brahmananda would also be present to encourage and give directions. In this way that beautiful ghat was constructed with ease and at a low cost. It gave joy to everybody.

So long as Maharaj was in the mortal world he used to keep himself carefully informed about all the ashramas established in the name of Sri Ramakrishna, whether they be branch centres of Belur Math or private ashramas founded independently by devotees. He used to give timely advice and take proper steps to bring about improvements according to need. I am reminded of

so many things about how Maharaj used to show his loving attention to the sadhus, to the devotees and to the running of the ashramas. Let me narrate what happened one day.

Just after twilight, Swami Brahmananda was sitting facing the Ganga. There were many sadhus and devotees sitting with him. There was a move afoot for his going to Bhuvanewar very soon, and some words were being exchanged between him and Narayan Ayenger on the subject. Sri Ayenger was a long time devotee of Bangalore, very close to Swami Brahmananda. He was always helpful to the Sangha in all kinds of ways and for that enjoyed everybody's respect and affection. Maharaj would go to Bhuvanewar, but before reaching there he wanted to pay a visit to the new Jamtara Ashrama (in south Bihar) on the way. But because Jamtara lay to the north and Bhuvanewar lay to the south, it would be a roundabout time-consuming journey, and with the onset of summer Jamtara's open fields and hot winds was going to be a trial. When he heard about Maharaj's proposal of going to Jamtara Narayan Ayenger humbly said to Maharaj that there would be a delay in reaching Bhuvanewar, that it would be too hot for him to stay in Jamtara and it would be difficult to pay proper attention to him. In sum, he thought it would be better for Maharaj to postpone his Jamtara visit. Swami Brahmananda listened patiently to all the words of the devotee, then gravely he said, (they were conversing in English): "However, difficult and painful it may be, I shall have to go there. I myself

* Translated from Bengali by Swami Jaydevananda.

sent the boy (Bhava Maharaj, Swami Rameswarananda) there, and without grudging he went. It is a new place; how he is pulling on there, what is the arrangement for food, all this I shall have to see with my own eyes and give him further directions. Arrangement for money will also have to be made. Is it possible for me to do anything unless I myself personally see the things there?" All of us who were present were deeply impressed to observe Maharaj's large-heartedness and sincere sympathy towards the workers and the Ashrama.

In those days Vijnan Maharaj (Swami Vijnananandaji) was supervising the construction of Swamiji's temple. After retiring from work in the evening he used to sit silently on a stool on the veranda near the railing, just in front of the room occupied by Swami Brahmananda. Looking into the distance, it was difficult to guess, observing him, whether he was recollecting old memories looking towards Dakshineswar, or simply gazing at the beauty of the holy Ganga. Some of us used to go to Vijnan Maharaj during this time to offer salutations without any opportunity of having conversation with him. I too used to visit and salute him and stand near the door of Swamiji's room. Some days he would utter a few words and some days he would not—he would prefer silence. One day I was standing there; that day he appeared to be very exhausted. Possibly it was the month of Chaitra (March-April), very hot. One attendant of Maharaj came out and asked Vijnan Maharaj: "Maharaj wants to know as to whether you would like to eat a certain fruit (its name was queer) or not?" Vijnan Maharaj rollicked with laughter and said, "My boy, I guess I have become old already, but never have I heard of a fruit with such a name!" Anyway, tell Maharaj, whatever he gives to me I shall eat it." Entering into the room the attendant said everything to Swami

Brahmananda and came out with a big orange turned upside down (?). He then gave it to Vijnan Maharaj. Smilingly, Vijnan Maharaj accepted the orange and started eating it delightedly. On other occasions too, it was seen that Maharaj would send some summer fruits or drink to Vijnan Maharaj when he was tired out from work at the end of the day, giving queer or ridiculous names to them.

I remember another day. That evening all of us were assembled together. Various topics were coming up, mostly funny ones. But Vijnan Maharaj was sitting silently as though all those things being talked about did not touch him. Suddenly Maharaj blurted out: "Do you know why Vijnan Maharaj is so grave? He is now thinking (said in English) about the fourth dimension." Maharaj's comment evoked general laughter among all. During those days the new findings and research of Einstein were creating a lot of interest and discussion among the educated people. We thought it would be very natural for Vijnan Maharaj to be interested as he was trained in higher mathematics and a lover of science, but he was sitting silently. Perhaps he knew that Maharaj was also keeping abreast of all the latest news on the subject. Not only those who were closely associated with Maharaj for a long time, but also those who, like us, had the good fortune of coming in contact with him for even a short time understood that in spite of his being in the transcendental mood for most of the time, affairs of the secular world never escaped Maharaj's keen attention. That is why in all the affairs of the country, society and the world at large—in political, economic, scientific and social spheres—in all matters keeping himself posted, when he gave instructions or advice for the welfare of the Sangha, the ashramas, or the sadhus and devotees, it was always well suited to the time and occasion.

During those days of intense conservatism and orthodox sectarianism, Swami Brahmananda converted a Christian youth back into Hinduism and made him a sadhu. In fact, it was an amazing event. That very sadhu became the first Head of the Lucknow Ashrama. The way in which Swami Brahmananda directed the Math and Mission during those days of national struggle, terrorism and the noncooperation movement, and maintained the spiritual ideal intact, was really wonderful. Difficult tasks like accepting the members of the anarchist groups and insurgents into the Order, taking up their responsibilities and leading them along the right path, all these things he executed very judiciously and wisely. We were wonder-struck when we heard from those youths who were criminals in the eyes of Government and taken as dangerous by the public, but who were full of renunciation and idealism, how Maharaj conquered their hearts with affection and transformed them into untiring workers of the Ramakrishna Order. For instance, Swami Chinmayananda (who was previously an accused in the Manicktala Bomb case), after joining the Math was admired and loved by everyone because of his sweet character, efficiency and skilfulness in doing all kinds of work, and his spirit of service to the elder and senior monks. He was endowed with great reverence and love of God. Elated with wonder he told us one day: "After coming to the Math I was being praised for my ability and success in doing work, by everybody except Swami Brahmananda. Maharaj did not show any unusual interest or appreciation for secular things at all. His special concern was to see our spiritual growth, so that we became more steadfast in love for Sri Ramakrishna, and develop more faith, devotion, regularity in spiritual practice and worship." So Maharaj used to encourage his disciples always and direct them so that they could move closer to the ideals of

austerity (*tapasyā*) and spiritual discipline (*tyāga*). It used to seem very harsh of him whenever he would send his disciples out to perform severe penances and austerities, but in course of time those fortunate ones got their lives fulfilled with divine mood and the blissful state.

Viswaranjan Maharaj told us about one incident. He was then a novice. He accompanied Swami Brahmananda as his attendant to Varanasi Sevashrama. He served Maharaj and was taking his meals in the Sevashrama. After three days Maharaj called him and said: "The food of the Sevashrama is meant for the needy and the destitute, it is not good for you to take your meals here. You should partake of *prasāda* (consecrated food) in the Advaita Ashrama. And even there you should not take food without doing some work. Everyday in the morning you should pluck flowers for Sri Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna)." In this connection, Viswaranjan Maharaj also said that while he was in Kanchi for *tapasyā* and used to take *prasāda* from a temple, once Swami Virajananda came there on a pilgrimage and was very happy to see him there. Virajanandaji also told him that (a sadhu's) accepting *prasad* at a temple without doing any service for it, allowed the food to remain impure, because of its association with the sins of the donors. Since then and for that reason, Viswaranjan Maharaj used to go on collecting flowers and preparing garlands everyday as a service to the Deity of the temple. We saw ample proofs reflected in the character of Viswaranjan Maharaj of the firm and deep-rooted good instruction and ideal life of Swami Brahmananda and other senior monks, when we stayed with him at Dacca.

Having heard the recollections of the senior monks about the efforts of Maharaj to uplift and improve the newly established

(Continued on page 189)

The Unique Space-Time and Historical Sense of The Hindus

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

4. The Vast Conceptions of Space and Time and Cosmic Evolution.

It is only highly evolved and enlightened minds that can conceive of relatively infinite space, eternal time, and universal causation, and the absolutely infinite Supreme Reality beyond Space-Time-Causation, as the framework of all events and history of mankind on earth. A nation is culturally evolved to the extent it has approached this standard and made it an integral part of its life. One may say there are, as it were, concentric circles of widening vision starting with oneself and one's family, and extending progressively to the village, town, district, province, state, region, continent, hemisphere, and globe; and then expanding further by stages to include the entire universe and the cosmos. An individual as well as a nation has to broaden himself or itself until universal and cosmic identification is established. 'Broad as the sky and deep as the ocean must be the vision of man', as Vivekananda has stated.

The Hindus, from the most ancient times, had developed such concepts in their religious, philosophical, social, and secular views. It is to their credit that they thought in terms of man and not the nation. Though they had their own individuality, their vision was always directed to universality. They opened their hearts and their hearths and homes to all the persecuted from other parts of the world. They prayed for the enlightenment of the intellects of all (*Dhiyo yo nah*

pracodayāt), and welcomed good ideas from everywhere (*Ā no bhadraḥ kratavo yantu visvataḥ*)—both from *Ṛig-Veda*. Universalistic ideas are expressed very often.¹⁴ It

14. There are numerous passages of universal import in the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, the *Gītā*, *Purāṇas*, the *Itihāsas*, and in the whole of Sanskrit literature. We quote here only a few:

(a) *Tyajed-ekam kulasyārthe, grāmasyārthe kulam tyajet; grāmam janapadasyārthe, ātmārthe sakalam tyajet.*

(One should rather give up an individual for the sake of the welfare of the clan; and give up a clan for the sake of a big group or community; and a community for the sake of a State; and for the sake of Truth and Reality, the highest Self (*Atman*) in all, one should renounce everything.)—The *Mahābhārata*.

(b) *Ekam sat; vipra bahudha vadanti*—(Truth or Reality is One; the learned describe it variously.)—*Ṛig-Veda*

(c) *Brahma eva idam visyamidam varistam*—(This one, this universe of experience, is the manifested Supreme Reality, Brahman only.)—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*.

(d) *Yatra visvam bhavati eka nīdam*—(Where the whole universe becomes a common nestling place for all beings)—*The Vedas*.

(e) *Samam pasyan hi sarvatra sam-avastitam īsvaram, na hinasti ātmanā ātmānam tato yāti parām-gatim.*—

(Perceiving with an equanimous vision, the Supreme *Īsvara* present in all beings equally, one does not injure anyone, considering him as his own Self.)—*The Gītā*, XIII. 29.

(f) *Ayam nijah paro vā iti gaṇanā laghu-cetasām, udāra-caritānām tu vasudhā eva kutambakam.*

(This one is mine, that one is an alien, such considerations are entertained only by low-minded

is owing to such universal ideals that narrow nationalistic ideas could not take root in India. Narrow ideas began to sprout when this broad vision was hindered from circulation in society by fanatical alien forces which conquered parts of the country and let loose vandalism openly or in a subtle manner, and tried to impose their own ideas and ideals for the last several centuries. India has to activate that universal vision again for the benefit of mankind. Fortunately, great personalities appeared in recent times embodying that vision and have placed it before the country and mankind. It may, however, take some time before becoming effective for the alien legacy has sunk deep and has to be uprooted.

The Hindus had not only conceptions of vast cosmic and universal Space-Time-Causation as the framework for the drama of life, but they also systematized these conceptions into easily graspable ideas. They created the Purāṇas as a genre of

people; but for the persons of generous character, the whole world is one family.)—*Sanskrit literature*.

Here is a passage from Max Muller regarding Sanskrit literature:

“Sanskrit literature allows you an insight into the strata of thought deeper than any you have known before, and rich in lessons that appeal to the deepest sympathies of the human heart. ... I may perhaps be able to show how imperfect our knowledge of universal history, our insight into the development of the human intellect, must always remain, if we narrow our horizon to the history of the Greeks, Romans, Saxons, and Celts with a dim background of Palestine, Egypt, Babylon, and leave out of sight our nearest relatives, the Aryans of India, the framers of the most wonderful language, the Sanskrit, the fellow-workers in the construction of our fundamental concepts, the fathers of the most natural of natural religions, the makers of the most transparent of mythologies, the inventors of the most subtle philosophy, the givers of the most elaborate laws.”

literature and made use of myths for the purpose of lifting minds gradually to higher levels of conception to reach the supreme Cosmic Reality. But these myths were not mere airy imaginations. The macrocosmic structure was built up on the solid foundations of microcosmic experience and reasoning. Modern science too builds up the conceptions of its physical universe on the basis of certain observable phenomena such as the analysis of the spectrums of light, sound, electrical and radio waves, etc. It has also delved deep into the micro-world through physics and the macro-world through astronomy with relevant artificial man-made instruments. However, science has confined itself to the sensible universe, because it has decided by choice to work within that limited framework with a pragmatic approach, without going into the fundamentals of a ‘before’ or an ‘after’, or even into the real nature of the investigator himself. All the empirical knowledge gained through science is conditional and utilitarian and not final leading to ultimate Truth and Enlightenment or Spiritual Freedom (*Mukti*).

The Hindus had the insight that to know the universe in reality, one must first know the knower himself truly and fully, since the knower is a part and parcel of the totality of existence. The knower is the agent and store of all knowledge, and knowledge has value only in relation to the knower. Hence they delved deep into themselves, using appropriate mental techniques to understand the mechanism of their own life and knowledge. They discovered to their wonder that the macrocosm and microcosm are built on the same plan; every layer or level and aspect of the microcosm is manifested in the macrocosm fully, and *vice versa*, the macrocosm is represented in the microcosm minutely or potentially, just as a whole tree is represented in its seed, the seed itself being a part of the fruit of the

tree. This is a great rudimentary and germinal discovery which is the master-key for the understanding of the comprehensive Hindu view of life and profound thought in almost all respects—art and science, religion and philosophy, societal and political ideas, etc. —, that the individual and the universal are one stuff, One Reality. The Hindu locates the whole of the universe within himself through the process of *Nyāsa*, and identifies, for purposes of meditation, the different aspects of the universe with the different limbs and organs of the Cosmic Person and with one's own person. The idea that the Cosmic Being permeates all beings and entities, that they are all Its own expression and manifestation in every respect, is to be found in all aspects of Hindu thought.

The macrocosmic projections, though symbolical in nature as regards names and forms, are actual in substance, just as a human being's name and form are symbolical and changeable, but Man as a being is factual. Hence it is possible that supra-human beings can be conceived under different names and forms in different civilizations according to their experience and language. But these serve as a means of understanding the cosmic universe and provide a scale of values to reach out towards higher stages or planes of existence. They help to cast the life's activities in the universal context. For that matter all our terrestrial life in all civilizations is mostly guided by symbols and artificial devices. The languages and the scripts we use are themselves very conspicuous and useful symbols by means of which we propagate and store knowledge. Scripts and languages do not exist anywhere by themselves; but they have their origin and existence in the mind of man. Similarly, an aeroplane is an artificial device based on the knowledge of the properties of different elements and materials and of mechanics and engineering. It helps us to fly and move

fast in the air from place to place. An aeroplane does not exist anywhere naturally. Similarly, all the mythical and spiritual devices, though artificial, have their existence and are based on cosmic principles and human psyche; they are capable of leading man to the goal envisaged. The empirical and the mythical both serve human purposes; the difference is only in kind and not in reality. As such we cannot discard symbolic existence since they serve the purpose of life and activity, of acquirement of knowledge and understanding, and achievement of human goals (*Puruṣārtha-s*). They are also effective means to some ends (*Artha-kriyā-kāritva-s*).

The macrocosmic already lies hidden in the microcosm and one can establish rapport with the macrocosmic counterpart at different levels. This is called Yoga or Union. There is no hiatus anywhere in the entire existence. Everything is one integral whole and interpenetrating.

Now with this analytical background, let us have a look at the special conception of the Hindus in regard to Space-Time-Causation. First of all there is the ubiquitous infinite *Ākāśa* (Space) or subtle proto-Nature (*Prakṛti*) in its different subtle and gross aspects, arising from the Supreme Reality or Absolute Existence; it accommodates the subtle and gross material and mental universes to exist, or rather evolves as these universes. The totality of all these universes is called *Brahmanāṇḍa*,¹⁵ the infinite Sphere of Existence, projected by the Absolute Reality (*Brahman*), which is of the nature of absolute infinite consciousness, by Its creative Power called *Māyā*, through the medium

15. For details, see this author's book on *Hinduism—A Brief Outline of Its Framework* and the chart on *The Evolution of the Brahmanāṇḍa* given there, provided with explanations. (Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Trichur, Kerala).

of *Ākāśa*. It is called '*Anḍa*' (Egg) of Brahman to indicate that it is of the nature of its source, Brahman, i.e., it is instinct with life and consciousness in a potential form, as in the case of an egg, and will manifest all its parts in due course in time in an evolutionary manner. In the whole of Existence, manifested or potential, there is nothing absolutely devoid of consciousness, though appearing insentient and inanimate, like the hair and nails of a living person. It is only a question of degree. Within 'matter', life, mind, and spirit are inherent. That is why evolution and emergence of life and beings in the universe are possible. In a way, modern science also is accepting this idea recently, as we see from such publications as Fred Hoyle's, *The Intelligent Universe*, and the statements of eminent scientists.

Now, just as man, the microcosm, has different layers of his personality such as the physical, vital, mental, intellectual, intuitional, aesthetic, and spiritual, there are corresponding macrocosmic layers of the *Brahmāṇḍa*.¹⁶ These are called *Loka-s* or Planes of Cosmic Universe, or *Brahmāṇḍa*. They are the seven higher planes. Similarly, there are seven lower planes or *Loka-s*, corresponding to the different demoniac tendencies in man and other creatures. These fourteen *Loka-s*, each of which has its own designation, make up the entire *Brahmāṇḍa*. The Absolute Brahman transcends these and is non-material and transpersonal. These fourteen planes are inhabited by beings appropriate to those spheres, just as we have land, sea, and areal creatures, and micro life on our earth. Our sensible physical universe which is related to our physical personality, is the seventh from the top i.e., in the order

16. See this author's book on *Human Personality and the Cosmic Energy-Cycle* for a detailed treatment of this topic. (Published by the Author).

of decreasing subtlety tending to grossness, it is just on the threshold of higher planes, and it is the eighth from the bottom, one step above the seven lower demoniac worlds, which too are invisible. We may illustrate it by the ultra-violet and infra-red rays in a spectrum of light, both of which are invisible to the normal vision. We have in the physical universe also the vast astronomical bodies which are invisible because of their distance, and the microbes, viruses, etc., which too are not visible because of their minuteness. But both have existence, whatever be our conceptions of them. We know them by their effects on our life through special instruments and devices. Similarly, the different *Loka-s* can be contacted by a mind made subtle and trained through special inner mental disciplines.

Our entire physical universe of the micro-world and the macro-world perceivable by the senses of our physical personality, (may be with the help of instruments), is called the *Bhūr-loka* (not *Bhu-loka*, which means our Earth). We can go inward and contact the corresponding different higher macrocosmic *Loka-s* by special *Sādhana-s* (appropriate efforts) and also reach the Absolute Self (*Ātman*) within, beyond personality, which is one with Absolute Brahman, beyond all *Loka-s*.¹⁷ In the cosmic evolutionary

17. When we reach the Self, the Infinite Brahman/*Atman*, beyond all Space-Time-Causation, the whole Brahmanda in all its vastness with the 14 *Loka-s* will shrink to 'a hoof-mark of a cow' (*Brahmāṇḍam gopaḍāyate*), as it were. A devotional hymn describes how our universe will appear when we have a glimpse of the Supreme Being: "All solids in the universe will be reduced to a dust-particle; all the waters to a spray-particle; all the luminaries to a tiny spark; all the air to a breath; the whole sky to a pin-hole—and all the angels, demigods, and gods, to minute microbes." (Note: From Solids to the Sky or Space, represent the five primal cosmic elements of which the universe is composed.)

process from the Reality, there is progressive grossification up to the *Bhūrloka*, in which our physical personality functions, and as we travel towards the Self within in our inward journey, we progressively attain to the higher subtler planes. Hence cosmic evolution is from the subtle to the gross, wherein the Spirit, the Subtlest, gets involved, and human evolution is from the gross to the subtle to reveal the Spirit within progressively more and more. Of course, a human being can degrade himself to the demoniac levels by evil thoughts and actions.

We shall deal with the time-scale for the evolution and involution of the *Brahmāṇḍa* in a later section.

In the way our personality is constituted, it is an axiomatic truth that we cannot know the macrocosm and its real nature without reference to the microcosm. *Rita-Dharma-Karma*, i.e., the laws of Cosmic Order relating to Elements (*Rita*), to Beings (*Dharma*), and to Action (*Karma*), on the different planes provide the necessary cosmic causal mechanism for the evolution and functioning of the *Brahmāṇḍa* which is meant for the development and perfection of beings by realizing the highest Reality and not for its own sake. If there were no beings, there would be none to be aware of or vouch for the existence of the *Brahmāṇḍa*. As to the Supreme Reality, which inheres in every entity and being, It always remains in Its own glorious non-dual nature. The fire does not feel that it is hot; only others feel and speak of the fire and its heat.

5. *The Mythical and Philosophical Conceptions of the Evolution of the Macrocosm on the Basis of Microcosmic Experience.*

In modern science, recently, the evolutionary hypothesis of the physical universe

and life on earth have been put forth with the help of physics, astronomy, geology, and bio-geology, etc. In Hindu thought the evolutionary hypothesis has been the basic conception in a more comprehensive manner from ancient times to cover the entire *Brahmāṇḍa* in all its aspects. As already pointed man has not only a physical aspect, but also vital, mental, intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects as well. So the origin of man and the history of mankind has to be related to the very source of the *Brahmāṇḍa*. Just as modern science tries to delve into the origin of the physical universe and life on earth in its own way, based on certain visible evidences, and then tries to build up speculative theories on their basis—which, however, cannot be physically verified or demonstrated—similarly the Hindus tried to build up a complete picture of life and existence from the very source, delving deep into the nature of human personality and its possibilities and experiences gained in different states of consciousness.

Now, apart from the different layers of his personality, man has three states of consciousness which are experienced by all universally. Firstly, he has his waking-state physical consciousness, when he is aware of his physical personality which functions in a corresponding physical universe, which has its own laws of Space-Time-Causation applicable to all. On this basis our activities and relationships with other entities and beings go on consistently in this world.

But, as soon as we go into the dream-state consciousness, we have a different kind of personality in a different type of universe, with its own very fluid laws of Space-Time-Causation. When compared to those of the waking-state, they are incoherent and changeful like clouds. Though there seems to be some sort of an impressionistic relation between them, they are mutually exclusive

and inoperative in each other's realm, except psychologically. Though during the dream, we feel the dream world real and substantial, and that we were having real experiences. When we wake up to physical consciousness, we are sure they were all insubstantial and unreal. We do not attach any value to them, and when we do, we give the dream experiences a symbolical value since the dream has some sort of relationship to the waking. Since dreams are universal and represent a state of consciousness, we cannot dismiss them either. They represent a subtle state of existence behind the physical state of existence and its beings. Dreams of different kinds come by themselves; we do not make them, we only experience them. Just as the dream experiences are contradicted in waking, the waking ones are also contradicted in the dream state. Even as the physical universe and the physical personality which functions within it are made of the same physical stuff and belong to the same order of physical reality, the dream personality and the dream universe are also made of the same dream stuff and belong to the same order of dream reality. The dream experiences of entities, persons, and events may be unreal from the waking state point of view, but even then one cannot deny that a person had a particular dream and had certain experiences within it, whatever be their value.

Then we have the dreamless sound sleep consciousness universally, when neither the physical personality nor the dream personality is there; nor is there the universe of any type and its experiences. But there is simple pure awareness of existence, even without the sense of 'I', and of peaceful happiness, without the conscious operation of the senses and the mind. Thus, in this state of consciousness, though our personality and the universe of any type are not there, existence and awareness are not obliterated. This is

also a universal experience and we are not, therefore, afraid of going into deep sleep. Rather we welcome it.

These three states of consciousness, mutually exclusive, with their relative experiences, come and go, but the real person within us is aware of all the three states, though identified with the particular state for the time being as the 'I', and must be therefore, independent of them as their unchanging witness (*Sākṣī*). Hence, there is an indestructible Reality within all as their inmost Self (*Pratyak-Ātman*), beyond Space-Time-Causation, beyond all universes. And from there, cosmically, first the subtle universe of gods and angels, etc., comparable to the dream (the dream of the Cosmic Person, *Virāṭ Puruṣa* or *Nārāyaṇa*), arises and then the gross physical universe of our empirical experience. We can realize all this when we go inward with our waking mind.

We are able to see through the device of television things taking place in far away places, even on other planets, like the moon. Similarly, there are capabilities within the human personality by developing which one can place oneself in contact with cosmic planes and the happenings there. After all, even the television and other devices were fabricated by the human intellect. The sages of India who developed such capabilities through *Tapas* (concentration of all the faculties) and *Dhyāna* (meditation), visualized the different planes and their denizens and envisaged an integrated cosmic history of man on the Earth in harmonious continuity with it. No doubt, the names and forms of supra-human beings, and the perspective of the events was coloured by their own experiences, environment, language, and system of thought. When the Europeans went to the Americas, their own experiences, environment, languages, and ideas influenced

their descriptions of the Americas—their history, and the naming of places, rivers, mountains, trees, creatures, etc. The places, rivers, mountains, etc., are all facts, but the names and views of the Europeans are anthropomorphic and symbolical and not actual. Similar is the case in the Hindu description of the different planes and their denizens. Though they appear to be mythical, facts underlie them.

Those facts are substantiated by spirituo-mystical experiences recorded in the *Tantras* and *Āgamas* and other mystic literature, and by philosophical reasoning in the *Sāṅkhya*, *Vedānta* and other philosophical systems. For the religio-philosophical steps in the evolution of the *Brahmāṇḍa*, the readers are referred to the author's book on *Hindusim: A Brief Outline of Its Framework*, wherein a detailed chart is appended with explanations of the different stages of evolution, and also to the charts in his book, *Human Personality and the Cosmic Energy-cycle*, for the coordination of the Microcosmic and the Macrocosmic aspects. Here we are concerned with the application of the cosmic Space-Time-Causation concepts to the history of mankind on Earth with the cosmic history in the background as a vast canvas. The culture, history, and goal of mankind has to be related and integrated to its cosmic counterpart if it is to be seen in the proper perspective and prove to be meaningful and

purposive. Otherwise it will remain disjointed pieces of dry information, called 'history'. Even the Codes of Law of the Hindus (*Dharma-Sāstrās*), such as that of the great and ancient lawgiver Manu, start by describing the evolution of the *Brahmāṇḍa* and mankind from the Supreme Reality, and then relate the Code to it as a means of shaping the conduct (*Dharma*) of mankind to be in harmony with it to enable everyone to realize It in life and be free (*Mukta*). With this end in view, the duties of the different sections of mankind are laid down, according to their ability and aptitude, in the cosmic context so that the whole society may move progressively towards the goal of realizing the Supreme Reality beyond all phenomenal distinctions of birth and qualifications.¹⁸

(to be concluded)

18. The *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* of Acarya Sankara describes the nature of the Supreme Reality (Brahman) and exhorts everyone to realize It as one's Self (*Ātman*); of the several stanzas, we give here the first one (verse 254):

*Jāti-nīti-kula-gotra dūragam
nāma-rūpa-guṇa-doṣa varjitaṃ;
Desa-kāla-visaya ativartī yat
brahma tat-tvamasi bhāvaya ātmani.*

(That which is beyond caste and creed, family and lineage; devoid of name and form, merit and demerit; transcending space, time, and sense-objects—that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind constantly.)

The Tantra says, "That person goes to hell who regards his Guru as a mere human being, who holds the holy Mantra of his Chosen Ideal as mere words, or looks upon the images of gods and goddesses as mere stone or clay." The meaning is that if, owing to want of faith and devotion, a person entertains such perverted and materialistic notions contrary to scriptural injunctions, as stated above—he not only blocks the path of his spiritual progress, but also courts his own ruin.

—Swami Virajananda (*Towards the Goal Supreme*)

Gayatri

P. V. NARAYANSWAMY

The chanting of Gāyatrī occupies a place of great importance in the Hindu tradition. The author unveils a deeper significance of the holy mantra.

“Ah! what a ridiculous spectacle is Man! The two-legged pigmy of limited brain and still more limited sympathies, that standing arrogantly on his little grave—the earth, coolly criticises the Universe, settles laws and measures his puny stature against the awful unknown force deeply hidden, but majestically existent—which for ampler designation, we call God—GOD, whom some of us will scarcely recognise save with a mixture of doubt, levity and general reluctance,—God, whom we never obey unless obedience is enforced by calamity; God, whom we never truly love, because so many of us prefer to stake our chances of the future on the possibility of His non-existence!”—

It is indeed a lamentable fact that, in this jet-age and *kali-yuga*, the finer values of life and the enduring ideals of religion are conspicuous by their absence. It is not for nothing that our ancient *Rṣis* predicted that *dharma*, or righteousness, will be at its lowest ebb. In that context a thought or two on some of the highly metaphysical truths propounded by them would be highly rewarding. The chanting of *Gāyatrī Mantra* is one such.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said: “The *Veda* loses itself in *Gāyatrī*; *Gāyatrī* loses itself in *Pranava* (OM), and *Pranava* loses itself in *samādhi*—the super conscious state.” *Gāyatrī* is unique for more reasons than one. Firstly, it is an exalted Vedic prayer. Secondly, it is also a *mantra*. It is a symbol, which used in meditation, helps man to realise the fundamental tenet of ‘unity in diversity’.

*Mananāt trāyate iti mantrah
gāyanāt trāyate iti gāyatrī*

Thus, the mantra is that by repeating which one is protected. *Gāyatrī* is that hymn, by singing which one is saved from the clutches of *samsāra*, *Māyā*. The literal meaning of the *Gāyatrī* hymn is: “Let us meditate on the glory of that Divine Being who has created the three worlds. May He direct our understanding.”

The first stage in reciting the *Gāyatrī* is ‘*Pranava*’ and the three ‘*mahā-vyahṛtis*’, which prepare one for the subsequent portions of this sublime prayer. The second part stimulates the mind of the *sādhaka*, the spiritual aspirant, for the effective contact between mind and the Divine Consciousness behind *Savitā*, the Sun. The last part is a humble exhortation to surrender and be receptive to the influences brought to bear through the chanting.

To understand and appreciate the intrinsic merit of *Gāyatrījapa* (repetition of the *mantra*), one has to perforce go beyond the literal meaning and contemplate on its inner and deeper significance. As observed by the great Śaṅkarācārya in his *Vākyavṛtti*:

Hetuḥ padārthabodho hi vākyārthāvagateriha...“The meanings of the words are fundamental to the understanding of the idea in a sentence.”

Thus the syllable OM, which begins the *mantra* is explained. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* has it:

Sarve vedā yat padam āmananti, tapāmsi sarvāni ca yad vadanti, yad icchanto brahmacaryam caranti, tat te padam saṅgrahaṇa bravīmi: aum iti etat.

“That word which all the Vedas speak of, That which all treatises on austerities proclaim, That for which seekers tread the path of the religious student—That I will tell you briefly. It is OM.”

OM represents the ‘higher’ and the ‘lower’ aspects of Brahman. It has infinite capacity to bless. It is a substantial prop to link one to the correct groove in the pursuit of liberation. How does OM become a profound significance for Brahman? OM consists of three sound parts, A-U-M, pronounced in combination as OM, the generalised symbol of all possible sounds. It is the symbol both of the Personal God (in His aspect of Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer) and of Impersonal Reality. A, U, and M represent, respectively, creation, preservation and destruction. OM stands for all the subtle forms of Brahman. Reciting OM, one is enabled automatically to recapitulate all aspects of Brahman mentally.

This concept of mentally linking OM with Brahman constitutes the sheet anchor of the seeker’s attitude. In fact, being the holiest symbol of God, it becomes the first article of his faith. The thought flow in the mental process should be unbroken and silent, as is beautifully brought out by Sankaracarya in the immortal words: *Ājyadhārayā srotasā samam saralacintanam viralataḥ param*—like ghee (oil) flowing from one vessel to another freely and uninterruptedly. According to Vedānta, the *summum-bonum* of life is to attain Brahman. This is the idea conveyed by Sri Krishna in the *Gītā* when He declares: “He who...meditates on Me (the Universal Self) alone, and goes forth, leaving the body (at the time of death), he

attains My Being. (VIII. 5); and ...*sadā tadbhāvabhāvitah*—“Whatever one constantly remembers, that one becomes.”

OM may also be said to indicate the normal three states of human consciousness, waking, dream and deep sleep, and the seeker by meditation transcends them to become united in the fourth state, (*Turiya*) with the Divine. OM thus helps one to visualise *Aham brahmasmi*, the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme. Though distant from the aspiration of the soul in bondage, there is none so near as the Supreme Lord. Sri Krishna says in *Gītā* (Ch. X. 39) “...*There is no being, whether moving or unmoving, that can exist without Me.*”

The next part of the *mantra* is the mention of the *Mahā-vyahṛtis*. The intention is to arouse in oneself those spiritual potentialities which are the inestimable heritage of every being, but which ordinarily remain dormant. In fact, the *Jīva*, the embodied soul, or microcosm, is nothing but the same Substance as the *Paramatma*, the macrocosm. The *Vyahṛtis*, *Bhuḥ*, *Bhuvah*, *Svah*, stand for the Deities of the lower planes, viz, *Pṛthivī* (earth), *Antarikṣa* (the nether worlds), and *Swarga* (heaven), indicating respectively, the *tattvās*, *Agni*, *Vāyu* and *Āditya* or the *Sāma Veda*. We have it on the authority of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* that *Agni* is the essence of *Ṛg-veda*, *Vayu* of *Yajur-veda*, and *Āditya* of *Sāma-veda*. *Agni-deva* purifies, *Vāyu-tattva*, or *Prāṇa-vāyu*, marks the seat of vitality and perception, and *Āditya-tattva* helps for mental (as distinct from physical) illumination.

Savitā, the next word in the *Gāyatrī* mantra, means the Sun. It is no less an important part of the meditation, with deep spiritual value and high metaphysical truth. Our work-a-day world starts with dawn when the Sun comes up, giving life and

energy and sustaining creation. The Sun is also called *Ravi* (*Rāvayati-iti*), i.e., one who showers his rays, not merely physical but also divine, beckoning us to reach Brahman, the Supreme Reality, through Him. In the magnificent description of His *Vibhuti Yoga* in chapter ten of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Lord Krishna begins: *Ādityāṇām Aham Viṣṇu*: ...“Among the *Ādityas*, I am *Viṣṇu*. *Aditya* has twelve names corresponding with the twelve months. The *Āditya* of January is termed *Viṣṇu* and is the most popular aspect of the twelve *Ādityas*, since it marks the course towards summer solstice, dispelling the dismal cold of winter. *Viṣṇu*, as the very name connotes, is that which pervades everything, everywhere, i.e., *Brahman*.

The Sun among all the heavenly bodies is symbolic of everything resplendent and brilliant. But how much more splendid must be the spiritual Light behind that Sun, which is the real object of our adoration and worship, attracting us to link our own consciousness to that spiritual glory. Yet it is a matter of discovery only for the *Yajñavalkya Saṁhitā* unambiguously asserts that inner spark of our consciousness and the divine glory behind the material Sun are one and the same:

*Adityantargatām yasya jyotiṣām
jyotiruttaram |
hṛdaye sarvabhutānām jivabhutam
sa tiṣṭati ||*

“The spiritual reality behind the Sun and the divine consciousness in man are self-same.” This identity should be sought to be established and experienced when one utters the word *Savitā*.

‘*Bhargo*’, occurring next in the *Gāyatrī Mantra*, means Light or Splendour. No doubt, the Ultimate Reality is infinite and changeless, though the world is always in

flux. Imagine for a moment the Sun’s reflection shining in the pure waters of the upper Ganga. The same glorious sunlight is also reflected in the filthy water flowing in a gutter. The fact that one reflection is in pure clear water and the other in dirty water does not cause an iota of change in the Sun. In like manner, the degree of divine consciousness varies from man to man, and in all things sentient and insentient. The *Gāyatrī* makes it possible to worship God in all beings and things, where He is ever present, and helps to raise oneself rung by rung on the ladder of spiritual evolution by insensible degrees nearer to the Supreme—slow but steady. Does not the Lord often say in different words in the *Gītā*?—

*Sarvabhūtaṣṭhitāṁ yo māṁ
bhajatyekatvamāṣṭhitāḥ
sarvathā vartamāno’pi sa yogī mayi
vartate. ||*

“He who being established in oneness worships Me dwelling in all beings; that yogi, in whatever way he lives his life, lives in Me.” (Ch. VI. 31)

And:

*Api cedasi pāpebhyah sarvebhyah
pāpakṛttamaḥ |
sarvam jñānaplavenaiva vṛjinam
santariṣyasi ||*

“Even if you be the worst among the sinners, even then, you can cross over all sin.” (Ch. IV. 56)

The Lord thus gives hope to every one of us, seeming to say: ‘As every saint has a past, every sinner has a future.’ But the seeker should persevere. In Ch. II. 40, Sri Krishna underscores the importance of making effort. He says:

“In this (yoga of practice), no effort is ever lost and no harm is ever done. Even

very little of this dharma saves a man from the great fear.

Bhagavan brings out in subsequent chapters how constant practice accompanied by devotion to the ideal (*bhakti*) helps to the attainment of Yoga—without *bhakti* would be like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark.

The term *Dhīmahī* can mean an assertion, or a prayer—i.e., “We meditate”, or “May we meditate.”

The lat part of the mantra enjoins a total surrender on the part of the seeker in the attitude of *śaraṇāgati*, taking shelter in the Truth. *Dhīya*, the plural form, conveys the idea of praying with an unselfish motive for all beings. The Sanskrit root *Dhī* refers to intelligence of the pure intellect (*buddhi*) as distinct from ‘knowledge’. Academic knowledge may make one a veritable pedagogue, able to preach philosophy, but never a true seeker. Knowledge has to be illumined with the pure light of the subtle understanding to enable one to experience the highest Truth. The *sinequanon* for receiving such a light of *buddhi* is firstly, an unshakeable faith, and then indefatigable self-effort and the Guru’s blessing. Lastly, the grace of God and the Guru.

The Lord gives the assurance: “On those who are ever devoted to Me and worship Me with love, I bestow the yoga of understnd-

ing, by which they come to Me.” (*Gītā* X. 10) And—

*Sraddhāvānlabhate jñānam tatparaḥ
sāmyate indriyah
jñānam labdhvā parām
sāntimacireṇadhigacchati* (IV. 39)

“He who is full of faith and zeal and has subdued his senses obtains Knowledge; having obtained Knowledge, he soon attains the Supreme Peace.”

With such a pure understanding supreme peace comes, and bliss, because the spiritual soul comes not into conflict with anyone in the world, nor does he crave for anything. He rests in the joyful knowledge that his Self is the Self of all beings.

The term *Prachodayat* means to unfold or to awaken, used in the subjunctive mood, becoming “May He unfold, or May He awaken our intellect or understanding.” The seeker now assumes, in that spirit of submission and supplication for divine grace, the attitude of unity he wants to experience by piercing through the Sun to get at the hidden Reality behind. For this the eye of wisdom, the pure understanding, has to be exercised. The Lord says: “By devotion may I be known in this form, O Arjuna, realised truly, and entered into... *Bhaktiā tvan-anyayā śakya ahamevaṁvidho’rjuna’ jñātum dṛṣṭuhcha tattvena praveṣṭam ca parantapa.* (*Gītā*, XI. 54).

Know the Mantra to be the source of great power and the very essence of the Chosen Ideal. One has to catch hold of the gross to reach the subtle; and through the subtle, one attains to the super-subtle, which is beyond the reach of mind and speech.

—Swami Virajananda
(Towards the Goal Supreme)

Saktipata

JANKINATH KAUL

According to the Śaiva tradition God bestows His grace of Saktipat out of intense love, on a sincere and earnest devotee whom he chooses. It is transmitted through the Guru in the form of Śakti to the disciple. The learned author who is of Kashmir, casts illumination on this interesting subject.

*Yā kācidvai kvacidapi daśā
kincidabhyāsapūrād-
ānandākhyā bhavabhayaharā
syāt subhaktasya sadyah ;
Sidhissaiṣā surapitrṇṇām
yasya bhaktyā bhavenu
tam svātmānam vibhavavapuṣam
sadgurum vai prapadye.*

That indescribable Supreme state which is revealed in a spontaneous moment (of grace) regardless of time or place to an earnest devotee, while he has been absorbed continuously in spiritual practice for an unknown period, confers supreme joy (ānanda) that wipes off all doubt and fear whatsoever. That is verily the true accomplishment for celestials, for manes and for human beings. By whose grace this happens, to That Great Preceptor of Supreme splendour who is my own Self, this prostration is made.

The Śaiva Āgama and expansion of the Vedas (Nigama) both are understood to be eternal ; and the one bears proximity to the other. This is also held by the follower of Trika Śāsana, popularly known Kashmir Śaiva mysticism. Rediscovery of Śaiva faith was made around the ninth century A.D. in Kashmir, conspicuously by Vasugupta, to whom Śiva-Sūtras were revealed by Lord Śiva Himself. Vasugupta's Spanda Kārikā, a purport of the Śiva-Sūtras, was elaborated by his well-conducted disciple, Kallaṭṭa by name. Kallaṭṭa Butṭa is therefore known as

the first Ācārya of the Spanda Order of Kashmir Śaivism, which is also called Trika Śāstra (or Śāsana), because it evidently discusses the three modes of Reality, viz. Nara, Śiva, and the connecting link Śakti (Naraśaktiśivātmakam trikam) precisely known as Aparā, Parā and Parāparā, as an evidence of monistic character of the Tantras. Later Somanandanatha's Śiva Dṛṣṭ, and Utpaladeva's Īsvaraḥṛtyabhijñā respectively, introduced and elucidated the Pratyabhijñā Thought by which name Kashmir Śaiva mysticism is known today.

Before this development, according to Swami Lakṣman Joo, the living exponent of Kashmir Śaivism, the Kula system, advocating the highest form of Śiva, had been introduced in Kashmir sometime in the fourth century A.D., and the Krama system, connected with Rājā Yoga and Kuṇḍalinī Yoga, which stress the independence of vital airs and mind, had existed there even earlier, as is witnessed through Yoga Vāsiṣṭha. The Vedantic Thought of Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkarācārya through their Māṇḍūkya Kārikā and Prasthānatrayī respectively, had also influenced Kashmir simultaneously. The result was that polytheistic faith with greater inclination towards Kashmir Śaiva mysticism (i.e. Trika philosophy) developed with ideas relevant to the order from almost all schools of Indian Philosophy. Kashmir Śaivism, in its entirety, was further elaborated in a systematic form by the great Master Abhinavaguptapāda in

his *Tantrāloka*. Among his other important works, *Parātrīśikā*, that explains the secret of Tantric mysticism, is the most outstanding one. Thus, Abhinavagupta gave clear dimensions to Śaivism that developed with its different forms in Kashmir. Consequently, there are different means suggested for attainment of Supreme Beatitude that every human being, celestials and manes aspire for directly or indirectly. But the most direct and easy way is to have the Grace of a *Guru* and the impact of his power, called *Śaktipāta*. Even while the means are followed by aspirants in accordance with their individual capacities, levels of intellect or intensity in devotion, there arises need of one important thing for all and that is compassion (*kṛpā*) or favour (*anugraha*) which the Tantric *Ācāryas* called *Śaktipāta*. It appears necessary to understand *Śaktipāta* in three ways, namely: (a) what it is, (b) when it happens, and (c) how it works.

1. *What Śaktipāta is:*

Śaktipāta is difficult to define, but it is certainly more than just the absence of desire. It reflects the state of consciousness, serene and taintless, and virtually constitutes the sovereign will of Lord Śiva. In the English language we strictly call it 'grace' and not 'favour', because the latter is measurable against its opposite term 'disfavour'. Grace is immeasurable. It is an elegance of manner, which can only be a gift from God. It is not given because we desire it. God gives this gift out of intense love for the devotee whom he chooses to be blessed. Grace does not descend even upon an aspirant who is actually alert for it, or ever in *samādhi*. Sage Aṣṭāvakra said to Janaka—"*Ayameva hi te bandhaḥ samādhi avatiṣṭhasi—This is what binds you, that you always sit in samādhi.*"¹

1. *Aṣṭāvakra Gītā*

Grace may descend in passive alertness which is actually 'choiceless awareness' of Divinity. *Śaktipāta*, therefore, may depend on the power of complete surrender to the Absolute—'*Īśvara praṇidhānādvā*'. According to the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali, the aspirant says to himself:

'What have I to do with wishing,
His will be done.
To Him surrendered
I have no wish of my own.'

Pārvatī seems to have made such an utterance to herself when Śiva in the guise of a *brahmacāri* came to test the depth of her faith that had led her to perform severe penances. No sooner did the Brahmacāri want to take away her mind from Lord Śiva than she wanted to turn away from his presence. But how far! She could neither go ahead nor keep back. The situation is beautifully expressed by Kālidāsa in *Kumarsambhavam*—"*Sailādhīrājatanayā na yayau na tasthau*—It was that divine ecstasy, that abrupt bloom of supreme consciousness where there is no 'coming in' or 'going out'." Pārvatī experienced perfect bliss on recognizing the presence of Śiva Himself.

Śaktipāta, according to Monistic mysticism, is unconditional and unhindered. "*Nātra ko'api ātmīya puruṣakāraḥ vidyate—There is no human effort for earning Śaktipāta.*"² *Gale pādikāyā nātha nīyate sadgurum prati—One is directed to the great preceptor as if tethered with a rope.*"³ The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* also declares—"*Yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyastaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūm svām—Ātman can be realized by him whom He favours and to him He reveals Himself.*"⁴ Duttatreya's *Avadhūta Gītā* begins with the declaration—"*Īśvarānugrahādeva puṁsām*

2. *Siva Tantra Śāstra*.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Kathapaniṣad*, I. 2.23.

advaita vāsanā—It is through the Lord's Grace alone that one is led to monistic practices for Self-realization.”⁵ It is, therefore, by the independent will of Lord Śiva that *Śaktipāta* or Divine Grace may be granted to anyone at any place and even at any time. It is a transmission through *Guru-Śakti* through which the *Śakti* in the person of the disciple is awakened and activated. “And that is natural,” says M.P. Pandit. Clarifying further:

...For this discipline revolves upon an axis of two ends, the *Guru* and the disciple. In the dynamics of this *yogic sādhanā*, both have their parts to play. True, the major role is played by the power of the *Guru*, which initiates and works the *yoga*. But the disciple too has a responsibility. He has to contain and support the *Śaktipāta* in its continued workings. ...Ceaseless purification and reorientation of one's energies of the body, life and mind so as to collaborate with the power set in operation by the *Guru* is indispensable. ...Personal exertion, in some form or other, is necessary to equip and perfect the *ādhāra* in which the *Guru* releases his *tapas-sakti*. At any rate, it is indispensable till the nature and the being of the disciple are completely surrendered to the higher will that is active and his *sādhanā* is entirely taken charge of by the *Śakti*.⁶

It is evident, therefore, that surrender (*Prapatti*) and grace (*Śaktipāta*) go together as is concretely expressed by Kesavamurti: “It looks as if in the scheme of manifestation both man and God wait for some excuse—one to receive the Grace and the other to bestow it, and at the end of the long journey both man and God fuse in a grand play—*Lila*.”⁷

Thus *Śaktipāta* is an indefinite point of contact between *Jīva* and *Īśvara*, where the

former's individual ego merges completely in the Supreme Reality, the monistic sovereignty that the wise call Eternal Joy and Perfect Bliss.

Divine Grace is that light whose presence removes the darkness of ignorance with all its associated doubts. It changes a guessing game into a vivid and colourful experience of Supreme awakening where there is not an iota of duality—all Self everywhere—“*Sarvamidam aham ca brahmaiva*,” says the *Śrūti*. Utpaladeva prayed to Lord Śiva and pined to get firmly established in this super state:

*Anyavedyamanumātramasti na
svasvarūpamakhilam vijrambhate
yatra nātha bhavatāḥ pure sthitim
tatra me kuru sadā tavārcituh*⁸

O Lord! Bereft of all individual cognition, let Thy all-pervading effulgence blooming in every atom, be my state of constant worship of Thee.

The Upaniṣad also tells about the favour granted to Brahmā among Devas, to Sanaka among Ṛṣis, and to Sukadeva among human beings, who remain not even for a moment without the awareness of Supreme Consciousness, *Brahmākāra Vṛttiḥ*.

*Kṣanārdham naiva tiṣṭhanti
vṛttim jñānamayīm vinā.
yathā tiṣṭhanti brahmādyāḥ
sanakādyāḥ sukādayaḥ.*

Abhinavagupta calls this state *Jagadānanda*, imparted to him by his *Guru* through *Śaktipāta*:

*Yatra ko'api vyavacchedo
nāsti yadviśvataḥ sphurad*

5. *Anugraha* is synonymous with *Śaktipāta* in the context.

6. 'Śaktipāta' in his *Traditions in Sadhana*, pp. 129-30.

7. 'Versatile Genius', edited by M.P. Pandit.

8. *Sivastotrāvalī*, XIII. 9.

middle path of *Prāṇa* and *Apāna*, with perfect knowledge of Self—*Madhyamam prānamāśritya prāṇāpānāpathāntaram ālambya jñānaśaktim ca...*—as also evidenced in the *Netra Tantra*. His supreme consciousness had awakened through the grace of *Prāṇa Kuṇḍalinī*.

(ii) Queen Cūdāla¹¹ is described to have worked grace on her husband Śikhidhvaja at the mental plane. She aroused his *Cit Kuṇḍalinī*, telling him: “Recognize *Kuṇḍalinī* in your self, that is the very life of mind which is called *Puryaṣṭaka*. Such a grace is imparted like the scent of a flower, by means of touch.

(iii) Hanumāna, directed by King *Sugrīva* for spying, was chosen for *Śaktipāta* through *Bodha-Kuṇḍalinī* when he met Śrī Rāma who had been wandering in the forest of *Kishkindā* in search of *Sīta*. Hanumān recognized his divine preceptor in Rāma, who graced him through mere sight. Both had met in their choiceless awareness.

Śaktipāta, thus, takes place in a situation of desirelessness or *kāmasannyāsa*, which the *Bhagavad Gītā* calls *karma sannyāsa* or *niṣkāmakarma-yoga*. This may be possible only when individual ego is not able to work for its limited ends and when actions are performed with detachment but devotion and to the best of one’s ability. Then the endless chain of karma also cease—*Kṣīyante cāsya karmāni tasmin drṣṭe parāvare—When the Supreme Reality is revealed, all karmas (āgāmi, sancita and prārabdha) are put to flight.*

God-realization, the wise say, is an overall change in mental attitude of a *sādhaka*. It is spiritual entirety and that divine transformation comes in a moment when the grace of *Śaktipāta* works through. It comes instantaneously, almost unaware, *Suvi-bhātam sakṛdvibhātam*. The *sadhaka* blessed

with very intense (*tīvra-tīvra*) *Śaktipāta* has not to strive or search for it. It comes spontaneously to him like a surprise gift.

Among the thousand names of *Parā Śakti* listed in the 134 *Saṅskṛt* verses of *anustubha* metre in *Bhavānināmasahasrastutiḥ*, there are names like ‘*Nimeṣā*’, ‘*Meghamālā*’, and ‘*Muhūrta*’, extolling the deity who is one with *Parā Śiva*. The name ‘*Nimeṣā*’ connotes that *Parā Śakti* bestows grace of *Śaktipāta* in a moment, like the high tension power of electricity, which is blissfully soothing and eternally sweet. *Parā Śakti* is named ‘*Meghamālā*’ as She acts like a streak of lightning in the clouds. The Divine Mother’s grace may rise from anywhere or may get absorbed at any moment. Her grace accelerates the degree of awareness in an aspirant. The name ‘*Muhūrta*’ stands for the equinoctial point of grace. *Śiva*, according to *Śaiva* mysticism, is the great Guru. His grace remains always unlocked. *Pārvatī* (*Parā Śakti*) is the power of His grace, known as *Guroranugrāhikā Śakti* in the *Śaiva-Sākta* way of thought. *Śiva* impels grace through His *Śakti* who, with Her own free will, effects *Śaktipāta* on a sincere and earnest devotee; the when-where-and-how of which cannot be known. It is an internal process concealed in the rarely catchable moment at the impollent point. The devotee who is passively aware of the Supreme Self, may benefit from this flowing grace. That moment is like moments of passing colour shades of the setting sun, *sandhyābhralekheva muhūrtarāgā*.¹²

In yogic parlance, that moment of Grace is also termed ‘*Viśuva*’ and ‘*Abhijit*’, quite different from *Uttara-mārga* (higher path) and *Dakṣiṇa-mārga* (lower path) as referred to in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the *Pancastāvī*, etc. For an external illustration the two moments

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Pañcatantra*, I. 194.

geographically correspond with summer equinox and winter equinox. But in the internal setting of the moment there is no taint of any thought whatsoever, as is beautifully put by Śrī Sāmba:

*Tābhyāmanya viṣuvadabhijit
madhyamā kṛtyasūnyā*¹³

It is called Madhya-mārga, the Middle-path or royal path. This middle path of graceful character is *Kṛtyasūnyā*, without any taint of action, for there is no egress or ingress of *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* for the period one can remain in the state. It is the state of 'perfect ease':

*Sukhamātyantikam yat
tadbhudhigrāhyamaṅdriyam;
vetti yatra na caivāyam sthitascalati
tattvataḥ*¹⁴

Nay, in which the soul experiences the eternal and supersensuous joy which can be apprehended only through the subtle and purified intellect, and wherein established the said yogi moves not from Truth on any account.

It is then that *Śaktipāta* may come to happen out of sovereign spontaneity.

3. The nine variations of *Śaktipāta*:

Actually there are no classes of Grace. These are, as Abhinavagupta himself says, only the variations between intensity and slow process:

*Tatrāpi tāratamyādiyadivaśācchīghra-
cirādītaḥ*¹⁵

The nine degrees of *Śaktipāta* discussed in the *Tantrāloka* and *Tantrasāra*, in brief, are:

I. *Tivra-tivra*, or the grace of extreme intensity. This is spontaneous and sudden, infused with the great power—*Mahāśaktiḥ samāviṣṭaḥ*.¹⁶ Jayaratha, in his commentary

on *Tantrāloka*, says that the person who happens to receive this degree of *Śaktipāta* is fit for experiencing the wonderful Reality of Supreme Consciousness:

*Parasamvit camatkārānubhava bhājanam
bhavatityarthaḥ*¹⁷

It is impressed that such a soul cannot live in a body and that he is automatically liberated at once—*Tivrativrah śaktipāto dehapātavasāt svayam mokṣaprada iti*.¹⁸

II. *Madhya-tivra*, or the grace of middle intensity. With this degree of grace ignorance gets dissolved because the yogi himself knows the essence of liberation and bondage through his own wisdom and not from the (external) *guru* or *śāstra*—

*Madhyativrātpunaḥ sarvamajñānam
vinivartate;
svayameva yato vetti
bandhamokṣatayātmatām;
tatprātibham mahājñānam
śāstrācāryānapekṣi yat*.¹⁹

His body stands but ignorance vanishes—

*Na dehasya nivṛttiḥ kintu ajñānasya*²⁰

He has unflinching 'devotion to *Rudra-Śiva*'—

*Rudro bhaktiḥ suniṣcala*²¹

This sign of the yogi, according to *Pūrva Śāstra*²² is followed by *Mantrasiddhiḥ*, accomplishment of the divine syllable. The third sign is 'control over all the elements'—*sarvatattva vaśitvam*. The fourth sign is 'indifference towards the fruit of actions of previous births'—*Prārabdhakāryanispatiḥ*, and the fifth sign is 'perfection in knowledge and speech'—*Kavitvam sarvaśāstrārthavettṛtvam*.

17. *Ibid.*, 211. (comm).

18. *Ibid.*, 130.

19. *Ibid.*, 131, 132.

20. *Ibid.*, (comm).

21. *Ibid.*, XIII. 214.

22. *Mālinīvijaya Tantra*, VIII. 13.

13. *Sāmbapancaśikā*.

14. *Bhagavad Gītā*, VI. 21.

15. *Tantrāloka*, XIII. 210.

16. *Ibid.*, 211.

III. *Manda-tivra*, or the grace of slow intensity. The yogi gets eager to meet his preceptor who is perfect in every respect, *Sāmsiddhaḥ saṅskṛtopi ca*.²³ He becomes instantly liberally liberated at the time when his preceptor initiates him into the Absolute and continues to live in body as a *Jīvan-mukta*—

*Yasminkāle tu guruṇā nirvikalpam
prakāśitam
tadaiva kila mukto'sao yantram
tiṣṭhati kevalam.*²⁴

All doubt regarding pain and pleasure of the body goes off—

*Prārabdhakarmasambandhād-dehasya
sukḥ-dukhite na viśanketa.*²⁵

IV. *Tivra-madhya*, or the grace of intense middle degree. When initiation does not get firm in the aspirant because of certain persisting impressions, those haunt the mind throughout the life and so there is absence of comprehension of the Absolute. He knowingly asserts that he is Śiva, but gets release only after leaving the mortal coil—

*Vikalpāttu tanao sthitvā dehānte
śivatām vrajet.*²⁶

He is called *Putraka Sādhaka*.

V. *Madhya-madhya*, or the grace of middle degree of middle intensity. The yogi, even being earnest to profit by attaining Śivahood, *śivalābhotsukho'pi san*,²⁷ enjoys yogic accomplishments in the same body and finally on its fall attains to Śiva—*Sa ca yogābhyāsalabdhamanenaiva dehena bhogam bhuktvā dehānte śiva eva*.²⁸ Such an aspirant is known as *Śivadharmī*.

VI. *Mandha-madhya*, or the grace of slowed middle intensity. This aspirant in the category of *Śivadharmī*, enjoys yogic accomplishments in the following birth. After that he attains to Śiva through the slow degree *Śaktipāta*—*Nikṛṣṭa madhyāttu dehāntareṇa bhogam bhuktvā śivatvameti*.²⁹

VII. *Tivra-manda*, or the grace of slow but intense degree. The aspirant sustains with the power of initiation. He enjoys his desired accomplishments through some lives. In the long run he takes to the path of *Sakala* or *Akala* (concrete or absolute) according to his capacity and finally attains Śivahood—

*Prārabdhadehbhede tu bhunkte
sāvnimādikam
bhuktvordhvam yāti yatraiṣa yukto'tha
sakale'kale.*³⁰

Such an aspirant is called *Lokadharmī*.

VIII. *Madhya-manda*, or the grace of slow-but-middle degree. The aspirant of this category enjoys his accomplishments through some more births and life experiences and finally gets initiation in the course of attainment of Śivahood.

IX. *Manda-manda*, or the grace of slow, very slow degree. The aspirant, by and by passes through *sālokya* (seeing from near), *sāmipya* (being near) and *sāyujya* (becoming one with) stages of spiritual development and only after enjoying the accomplished desires, receives initiation for proceeding towards the attainment of Śivahood.

There is essential relation between *ŚAKTIPĀTA* and *KUNDALINĪ*:

Awakening of *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti* takes place with corresponding variations of *Śaktipāta*. In fact, it is the power of Grace that brings about various blossoms on the tree of *Kuṇḍalinī*. It is the sovereign will of Lord

23. *Tantrāloka*, XIII. 224.

24. *Ibid.*, 230.

25. *Ibid.*, 231.

26. *Ibid.*, 242.

27. *Ibid.*, 242.

28. *Tantrasāra* XI.

29. *Ibid.*,

30. *Mṛgendra Tantra* 15/31.

Siva that works through *Śakti-Pārvaṇī*, unconditioned by any human effort. It falls spontaneously on any seeker after Truth in its own range of variety comprising Intense (*tīvra*), Middle (*madhya*), and Slow (*manda*) degrees. This trichotomy of *Śaktipāta* apparently works through *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti* in various ways of its various states. It is therefore, that this essential power is given the name *Mahākuṇḍalinī*.

The nine degrees of *Śaktipāta* are described to set a standard for aspirants who have to comprehend the intricacies and subtleties within the limitations of their minds. According to different modes of the awakening of Kundalini the nine kinds of *Śaktipāta* are classified under three heads:

(i) *Tīvra*, comprising *Tīvra-tīvra*, *Madhya-tīvra* and *Manda-tīvra*, falls in the region of *Bodha Kuṇḍalinī*, which awakens through the grace of sudden and spontaneous revelation of Supreme Knowledge.

(ii) *Madhya*, comprising *Tīvra-madhya*, *Madhya-madhya* and *Manda-madhya*, is the range of *Cit-Kuṇḍalinī*, or grace through *Citta*, i.e., reflection, meditation, etc.

(iii) *Manda*, comprising *Tīvra-manda*, *Madhya-manda* and *Manda-manda*, is the work of *Prāṇa-Kuṇḍalinī*, the grace initiating the right practice of *Prāṇa* and *Apāna*, or simply called *Prāṇāyāma*, including japa and other modes of *Saguna* worships.

Awakening of *Kuṇḍalinī* thus takes place in the corresponding degrees of *Śaktipāta*.

4. How *Śaktipāta* works:

Śaktipāta affords what is called the 'waking *samādhi*' to the devotee yogi to whom effortless normal state of consciousness is revealed. Utpaladeva uses the phrase '*vyuthane'api samāhitah*'³¹ wherein, in his own words, there is spontaneous revelation of Supreme Reality—*Evameva śivābhāsaḥ*

*syat!*³² *Aṣṭāvakra* uses almost the same phrase to effect his grace upon Janaka. (*Aṣṭāvakra Gītā*) That is '*Evameva sukhī bhava*'. By this it becomes clear that *Śaktipāta* is bestowed, not obtained.

Lord Śiva, in the form of the Guru, gives the aspirant ammunition to fight the attraction towards petty enjoyments of the world. Otherwise, the search remains a mere intellectual exercise and the individual soul becomes an easy prey to confusion, doubt and frustration. Since the source of grace is the Real Self, all beings can partake of it equally. But the veil of ego, even though unreal, blocks the light of grace as do the clouds which cover the sun and make its life-giving power ineffective. One has, therefore, to wait and watch with passive spontaneity as is said:

"Waiting the word of the Master
Watching His hissing sound."

One has only to be alert with purity of mind and sincerity of heart till *Śaktipāta* is bestowed. Then how it works, is remarkably expressed in the *Sat Darśana Bhāṣya* of Sri Ramana Maharshi:

The Beyond takes hold of you. You can feel yourself one, with the One that exists, the whole body becomes a mere power, a force current; your life becomes a needle drawn to a huge mass of magnet and as you go deeper and deeper you become a mere centre and not even that, for you become here consciousness. There are no thoughts and cares any longer; they are shattered at the threshold; it is an inundation, you are a mere straw; you are swallowed alive, but it is very delightful for you to become the very thing that swallows you. This is the union of Jīva with Brahman, the loss of ego in the real self, the destruction of ignorance, the attainment of Truth.

31. *Sivastotrāvalī*.

32. *Ibid.*,

Śaktipāta worked on Sukadeva when King Janaka told him—“*Mithilāyām pradiptāyām na me dahyati kiñcana*—Even if the whole of Mithila burns, nothing is burnt to me.”

Śaktipāta worked in Maitreyi when she posed a resounding question to sage Yājñavalkya, her husband, while he was renouncing: “*Yenāham nāmṛtā syām kimaham tena kuryām?*—That which cannot give me immortality, of what avail is that property to me?”³³

It worked in Nāma Deva of Maharashtra when he ran after the dog who had taken away his bread. The saint ran after the dog saying, “O my Gopāla! just stop and let me

apply butter to the bread so that you swallow it with ease.”

This is how *Śaktipāta* works.

In the end I again quote Ramana Maharshi, who gave a practically useful prescription for aspirants to follow:

Retreat ever within thine own self, seek the source whence the restless mind spins out an unceasing web of thoughts, brush aside the springing thought, concentrate at the root of thought and take repose in that stillness and quietude. So much is thy effort. What next is one for inner (experience) realization and does not admit of exposition in words.”

Peace be to all
on this earth, in the sky
and beyond.

³³. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

MEMORIES OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(Continued from page 169)

ashramas at different places, made us understand that Maharaj was, as it were, the life behind those institutions. He used to keep with him detailed information about their lands, buildings, and activities, and after considering and discussing, would administer them and send help in the form of money and manpower. He kept a vigilant eye so that all the ashramas were spacious and delightful to the mind, clean and productive of plenty of fruits and flowers. He also used to encourage the local devotees to help the ashramas. We heard from the elders at Varanasi Sevashrama that at the time of purchasing the land for the Sevashrama, Maharaj was specially thinking about the

future acquisition of more land for the hospital. Of course the authorities of the Sevashrama in those days could not dare to do it, but later on much of the land desired by Maharaj was acquired. In the case of the Kankhal Sevashrama too, due to the enthusiasm and help of Maharaj, the work was nicely established. Varanasi and Kankhal are both important centres for the monks. Maharaj stayed at both the places, mixed familiarly and intimately with the other monks of the traditional Orders and made the Ramakrishna Order one with them in spirit.

(to be continued)

Medical Ethics in Ancient India

SWAMI BRAHMESHANANDA

A prerequisite for healthy human society is the ethical and virtuous life of its people. Degenerating of moral and ethical life in any field of human activity spells disaster for the future of that society. The medical profession in ancient India was inspired by high and noble ideals. The author, who is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, Varanasi, cites many ancient Indian medical treatises to show how sacred was the work of the medical community.

Since time immemorial, in India the rules and regulations for different social groups and the code of conduct for people belonging to various professions were framed in such a way as to lead them to the highest spiritual culmination of their life. It is in accordance with the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gītā* (18.45) that each individual can attain a high state of perfection by rightly following his duty or *Svadharmā*. The medical profession was no exception in this respect. Although its immediate aim was the alleviation of physical and mental suffering, its ultimate aim was to help the patient, nurse and the physician to attain everlasting happiness and bliss.

It is very likely that *Ayurveda*, the ancient Indian medical science, evolved out of religion. Historians are of the view that in remote past the only therapy available for ailments was spiritual—so called *Daiva vyapāśraya cikitsā*,¹ comprising procedures and acts such as reciting incantations, chanting of hymns, keeping talismans, wearing gems, observance of vows and making atonements, offering gifts and donations, propitiating deities by offerings, going on pilgrimages, etc. Such acts are in vogue even today since psychic disorders are often seen to improve by them, and the persons

performing them gain in physical and mental health. It is, therefore, natural that many of the religious values and moral codes would form part and parcel of the medical ethics in ancient times as well. In Ayurvedic texts one finds wholesome and ample instructions for a healthy and pious mode of life.

Definition of Ethics.

Ethics is the science of moral values. Medical ethics consists of the moral principles which should guide members of the medical profession in their dealings with each other, with their patients and with society and the state.

In ancient Indian literature the word used for ethics was *Sadvṛtta*,² which etymologically means, 'the right physical, mental, and vocal conduct expected of the pious'. Caraka, the father of Indian medicine, advises everyone desiring peace and happiness to observe the rules of right conduct diligently. He who follows the ethical code, gains mastery over the senses and obtains a healthy body.³ He authoritatively advocates ethics as a part of personal hygiene. Vagbhata too, claims that man can attain long and healthy life, wealth and fame, in this existence, and glory and

1. Jyotir Mishra, "Religion and Medicine", Lecture delivered at the 17th Biennial function of Ayurveda; Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.

2. Commentary of Chakrapani on *Caraka Samhitā, Sūtra Sthana*, 8:17. Choukhamba Sanskrit Samsthana, Varanasi, U.P. 1984.

3. *Caraka Samhitā*, Sūtra 8:17-18.

higheres after death, by following the ethical code.⁴

The ancient sages framed the rules of ethics and built up early Indian society in such a way that the character could be moulded from the very childhood and the individual could grow into a useful citizen. The ethical training began at home with the parents, was extended to the schools through the teachers, and continued in professional life later with the help of the wise and leaders of society.

The Aim of Indian Medicine.

Although as a profession the medical practice provides a livelihood for the physician, the wise have condemned its being for that purpose only. Those who would sell their skills to make a business out of the practice of medicine are like persons who would pursue a heap of dust, as it were, letting go a mass of gold. (*Caraka*, 1.59) Medicine must be practised, neither for wealth nor for fulfilment of worldly desires, but only out of compassion for creatures (1.58). There is no austerity higher than treating the sick. It leads to destruction of sins, accumulation of virtue, and benefits both here and hereafter.⁵

The physician must not undertake treatment of a patient motivated by his own love, lust, or greed. Nor even friendship, enmity or affection for a kinsman should be a reason for giving his treatment. The expectation of earning a reward, or the acquisition of fame too, should not tempt the physician. Only one urge and aim—that is, kindness and mercy, should prompt the physician to practise the art of healing. (*Kalyāṇa Karaka*, 7:33-34).

The practice of medicine is never fruitless. Sometimes a physician may earn money. Sometimes he may get what he desires. Occasionally he may win fame or friendship. But even if he does not obtain any of these, there is bound to come to him, at least, the benefit of practical experience.⁶ As long as the earth is inhabited by human beings who cannot remain completely free from illness and disease, the physician need never worry about unemployment or starvation. (*Kalyāṇa Karaka*, 7:37). The gifts of life and health are the highest among duties. Those benefitted by such gifts may, out of gratitude, either praise the physician or pay him with due remuneration. In this way his needs of *dharma* (duty), *artha* (money), and *kāma* (desire) are fulfilled.⁷

An individual can be happy or unhappy personally and harmful or helpful to society. The ancient Seers not only set the above mentioned high aims and ideals before the individual, but framed the ethical code in such a way that the physician could both derive the maximum benefit from the pursuit of his profession and prove helpful, not harmful, to society. Thus the final aim of the ethical code was the attainment of harmony and equilibrium at all the three levels, physical, mental and social. (*Caraka*, (1:41).

Qualities of a Good Physician.

According to Suśruta, the great ancient Indian surgeon, a medical graduate must meet the following standards for starting his practice. He must have learnt and mastered both the theory and practice of the art of healing, and must have obtained permission from the governing authority. He must wear

4. Vagbhatta, *Aṣṭanga Hridaya*, Sūtra 2:48. (New Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass, 1990).

5. *Kalyāṇa Karaka*, 7:32; Sakharam Nemi-chand Granthamala, Solapur, 1940.

6. *Ibid.* 7:36.

7. *Kasyapa*, quoted by Sharma Gaur, Pt. Damodar, in *Medical Ethics in Ayurveda*, *Sacitra Ayurveda*, June, 1962, p. 1032.

clean white dress, which should not be ostentatious. He must remain clean shaven and tie his hair in a knot. He must be cheerful, noble, large hearted, well behaved, polite and friendly towards all creatures.⁸ While walking along the road he should proceed forward looking ahead, far and wide. On meeting others he must accost them first. He must always speak clearly without ambiguity and doubts, sweetly and ingenuously in a simple and ethical tone, avoiding controversies, and in accordance with the law of *dharma*.⁹

Kalyāṇa Karaka lays down further qualifications of a physician. He must be a speaker of truth, a man of courage endowed with patience, blessed with a lucky hand that has achieved many cures, one who has witnessed and practised notable methods of treatment, and be one who does not get upset under any adverse circumstances. (7:38). Caraka advises the physician to carefully assess his ability to treat a particular case before taking it up. (*Caraka*, 8:86). This precaution is important, specially in the beginning of the career of the fresh graduate, not only for the patient, but also for the reputation of the physician.

According to Caraka, vast knowledge of medicine, extensive practical experience, dexterity, and purity are the four qualifications of a physician. (9:6). A reputation as unfailing in prescribing appropriate medicines is another qualification. One who possesses the fourfold knowledge regarding cause, diagnosis, cure and prevention of diseases is fit to be appointed a royal physician, (9:19). The effectiveness of medical knowledge (like any instrument or weapon)

to a large extent depends upon the person who handles it. Hence the physician must always continue to sharpen his intellect and increase his proficiency. (9:20). Elsewhere Caraka enumerates six qualities of a successful physician as follows: Having knowledge, critical approach, insight into allied sciences, sharp memory, promptness and perseverance. To these he adds sharp intellect, practical experience, continued practice, success in treatment, and being in consultation with an experienced teacher. (9:21-22).

Since there is no limit to knowledge, Caraka advises the physician to try to learn every moment. According to Suśruta, study, discussion, perusal of foreign literature and devoted service to the masters of particular techniques are essential for gaining wider knowledge and improving skills. One cannot come to the right conclusion by studying just one aspect of a subject. Hence the physician must learn other viewpoints also to become proficient.¹⁰

Code of Conduct While Treating the Sick.

A physician must not visit a patient at his residence uninvited and without prior intimation. On being invited he must go to the house of the patient and observe the portents and signs. He must not look at anyone other than the patient, and all his senses must be alert and concentrated on him. Every action of the physician should be precise and deliberate. (*Kaśyapa Samhitā*, 1.8).

The physician must not converse or make fun with the ladies of the patient's household, nor should he refer to their names disrespectfully. He should not sit with them in private, nor show excessive regard towards them.¹¹

8. *Susruta Samhitā Sutrasthana*, 10:3. Choukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 1980.

9. Subba Reddi, D.V. "Medical Ethics in Ancient India"; *J. Indian Medical Association*, Vol. 37, No. 6; 1961, p. 287.

10. *Susruta Samhitā*, 4:7.

11. *Kaśyapa Samhitā, Vimanasthan*, 1:8.

A physician must not reveal the secrets of the household or the patient, nor spread broadcast the demerits of the family. (5.8). A patient may not have faith in his father, mother, friend or children but may open his heart to the physician. He must therefore never expose the patient and must honour the confidence the patient has in him.¹²

A definite order must be followed while treating a patient. First, the physician must examine the patient thoroughly before arriving at a diagnosis. Next he must decide the treatment and lay down the course of management. (*Caraka*, 20:20). Vagbhata warns the physician against starting treatment without complete knowledge of a case, which could be responsible for the loss of art, fame, reputation or whatever other benefit the patient and physician may have derived.¹³

After initiating his treatment, the physician should observe the progress of the disease and the condition of the patient at frequent intervals, and should modify his treatment accordingly. (*Caraka*, 8:37). The rules and the order of prescribing medicines as laid down in the scriptures must be followed. Medicines of one's own invention must not be prescribed. (*Kaśyapa Samhitā*, 1:8).

If the condition of the patient deteriorates or serious complications arise, he must not be told directly. Nor should the relatives of the patient be told directly about the impending death, which may badly shock them. Instead, the physician may indirectly hint at the prognosis thus: "None is immortal in this transitory world, nor can one escape death. However, disease can be cured and

suffering can be alleviated"¹⁴ Or, "The physician is not the master of life. He is the knower of diseases and the reliever of suffering."¹⁵

During emergencies, every available means must be employed, with minimum loss of time. If the life of the patient is threatened the physician must inform the relatives and friends of the patient and start his treatment after obtaining their consent.¹⁶

General Rules of Social Conduct

With a view that a physician should be an ideal citizen, numerous rules of conduct have been laid down for him in the ancient literature.

The physician should never harbour ill will towards fellow physicians or get into confrontations with them. If need be, he may join them in treating a case and should not hesitate to consult them in deciding the diagnosis and treatment of a case. He must pardon the unethical conduct of his colleague, or politely try to set him right. But if the envious opponent continues to criticize his procedure, he must defeat him by his knowledge and experience. Even while defending himself the physician must avoid harsh words and use ethical language. He must always be suggestive and never direct. (*Kaśyapa Samhitā*, 1.9).

Advertisement or self-aggrandizement by a physician was poorly esteemed in ancient India. Self-praise is not only unpleasant to others, it is disagreeable also to a really deserving but dignified physician. (*Caraka*, 8:13). With a view to decrying such boastful

¹². *Susruta Samhitā, Sutrasthana*, 25:43-44.

¹³. *Vagbhata, Aṣṭāṅga Sangraha, Sutrasthana*, 2:31.

¹⁴. *Kaśyapa Samhitā*, 1:8.

¹⁵. *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*, 3:15; Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthana, 1986.

¹⁶. (a) *Vagbhata, Sutrasthana*, 23.

(b) *Caraka Samhitā*, 13:176.

physicians, Caraka gives a picturesque description of how such egoistic fellows engage in broadcasting their own virtues and abusing others. (29.9).

A physician is entitled to due remuneration for his services, and it is enjoined that none should go to a physician empty-handed.¹⁷ According to Caraka, anyone who does not repay the help obtained from a physician remains under an eternal debt. (1.55). On his part, the physician must treat Brahmins, preceptors, the poor, friends, wandering monks, orphans, and other such people in need, gratuitously.¹⁸

The physician must not attempt treatment of a patient whose death is certain or who has an incurable disease, or if he has not the necessary facilities for treatment.¹⁹ Often, in ancient India, charitable physicians supplied medicines to poor patients who could not afford them. Although it appears inhumane to deny help to anyone seeking it, there were certain restrictions on physicians in ancient society. Caraka, for example, advises physicians not to treat enemies of the state or the ruler. The list of persons debarred includes the mentally abnormal, the wicked, people of blemished character and conduct, those who had not vindicated their honour, and those who had no guardians, especially women. (8:13).

Apart from voluntary gifts from patients, physicians were paid by the state according to their merit and efficiency. They were liable to punishment if they committed mistakes or indulged in unethical practices, the severity of the punishment varying with the seriousness of the offence.²⁰ Caraka also

describes the malpractices of quacks and decries them in uncompromising terms. He considers them murderers in the guise of physicians, who introduce and spread diseases rather than curing them. They flourished because the government failed to curb them. (29:8).

Summary

It will be noticed that the above rules of moral conduct culled from various sources, aimed at making a physician not only a perfect physician but a perfect human being. Vagbhatta has briefly summarized the qualities of an ideal physician as follows: A physician must be steadfast, dignified, patient, truthful, good looking, well-read, master of his subject, and a knower of the effect of time. He should honour the teachers and treat the orphans and the sick as his children. He must visit the patient only when invited and with pure intentions. In the patient's house, he must pay attention only to the patient and to nothing else. He must thoroughly examine the patient, arrive at a diagnosis and plan the line of treatment. He must not disclose the secrets of the patient, must not waste time during emergency and must be capable of handling serious and urgent cases.²¹

A physician was to be friendly to all, compassionate towards the suffering, pleased with the healthy, and indifferent towards the wicked.²²

Qualities of the Nurses and Attendants

According to ancient Indian medicine, the patient, physician, medicine and nurse are the four limbs of medical treatment. (Caraka, 9:23). The ideal conditions for each of

17. *Bhava Prakasa*, 5:52.

18. *Susruta Samhitā*, 2:8.

19. Subba Reddy, p. 187.

20. Kautilya, *Arthasāstram*, 4:1, 56-57.

21. *Vagbhatta, Sūtrasthana*, 2.

22. *Ibid.*, *Uttarasthana*, 50.

these four limbs to contribute the maximum are described in the ancient medical literature. We have already seen the qualities of a physician.

According to Caraka, purity, efficiency, having the knowledge of the art of nursing, and devotion to the physician, are the four cardinal qualities of a good nurse. (9:8). According to another text the nurse and attendant of the patient must be strong, forbearing and forgiving, desirous of doing good to others, efficient, polite, and well-behaved. (*Kalyana Karaka*, 7:41). He or she must be of clean habits, good-natured, kind-hearted, and proficient in other kinds of work, like cooking, sponging and bathing the patient, preparing and administering medicines, ambulating patients and carrying goods from one place to another. Attendants and nurses must not be grumblers, and must be willing to do all kinds of work. (15:7). Caraka is of the opinion that women nurses, especially those who are mothers of many children, are best suited to become nurses because of their constant, kind, and gentle manner. They have better understanding of patients, are hardworking, patient, forbearing and able to stand excessive strain. Their common sense and presence of mind specially qualifies them for nursing difficult patients. (8:34).

Characteristics of An Ideal Patient

The third limb of medical treatment is the patient himself. It is needless to say, that the treatment of a cooperative, intelligent patient is much easier, and considerably helps to improve the prognosis. According to Caraka, a good memory, willingness to follow the instructions of the physician, fearlessness, and not hiding any relevant information about his symptoms and disease, are the four qualities of a good patient. (9:7). He further states that one who takes

a wholesome diet, who possesses healthy physical habits, who acts after giving thought and consideration, who is unattached to objects of sense enjoyment, who is charitable, truthful, same-sighted, forgiving, and who serves the learned, seldom falls ill. (2:46). Disease rarely strikes a person who leads an austere life, has a habit of meditation, and who engages himself in higher intellectual pursuits. (2:47).

Caraka gives a long list of virtues which must be cultivated if one wishes to remain free from psychosomatic disorders. One must perform religious duties, be friendly towards all, pacify the angry, reassure the frightened, and be compassionate towards the poor and miserable. One must be able to make compromises, and be forbearing of unpleasant words of others. One must have a peaceful disposition and root out hatred and attachment from oneself. (2:47). One must not be driven helplessly by a restless mind, nor become a slave to inordinate appetites of the senses. One must never act in a fit of anger or become over-elated or submerged in grief. One should neither become conceited in success nor be depressed in failure (8:27). The *Samhitā* is replete with such instructions meant to foster the cultivation of charity, chastity, friendship, compassion, detachment and peace. (*Caraka*, 8:29).

Apart from the general ethical admonitions, Caraka gives detailed instructions about food, clothing, exercise, sleep, sex, relationship with women, and the like, which need not be elaborated here. Suffice to state in ancient India, physical and mental health were never considered separate from sane living. (8:17-28).

Conclusion

Each country has its own code of ethics. In India, where there are several systems of

medicine practised, there are various ethical codes governing the members who practise under these different systems. Nevertheless, there are many principles common to them in the ancient medical ethics, as there are among the various codes of modern medical ethics. There are some important differences too.

The four cardinal aims set before the modern doctor are: the preservation of life, curing of illness and lessening of suffering, prevention of diseases, and the advancement of knowledge. As has been elaborated, the aims set before the physicians in ancient India, while including the above four aims, were far wider, loftier and nobler. They were no less than the spiritual emancipation and eternal happiness of the patient, the nurse and the doctor, and the building up of a sane society.

It must be noted that the ethical principles and moral admonitions are incorporated into, and form part and parcel of, the body of such authoritative ancient medical texts as the *Caraka Samhitā*, the *Suśruta Samhitā*,

and others. In contrast, most of the texts of modern medicine are totally devoid of ethical instruction. Nor does *Ethics* form a part of the curriculum in modern medical education. The ancient system of incorporating ethics into medical education is worthy of adoption in modern times. This suggestion becomes all the more relevant in view of the fact that now a days there is seen a sharp decline in professional ethical behaviour. Let the modern medical men be reminded that "no greater opportunity, responsibility or obligation can fall to the lot of a human being than to become a physician. In the care of the suffering, he needs technical skill, scientific knowledge and human understanding. He who uses these with courage, with humility, and with wisdom, will provide a unique service for his fellow men and will build an enduring edifice of character within himself. The physician should ask for his destiny no more than this, he should be content with no less."²³

23. (a) *Caraka Samhitā, Sutrasthana, 9:3.*

(b) *Kalyāṇa Karaka, 1:28.*

The past of India was great no doubt, but I sincerely believe that the future will be more glorious still.

Nothing else is necessary but these—*Love, Sincerity and Patience.*

—*Swami Vivekananda*

REVIEWS & NOTICES

THE MYTH OF SAINT THOMAS AND THE MYLAPORE SHIVA TEMPLE, By Iswar Sharan. Voice of India Publishers, 2/18 Ansari Road, New Delhi 110-052. 68 pages ; Rs. 15.00.

This thin book is a bold challenge and at the same breath strongly protests against the long standing and popular accepted myths of Saint Thomas, the direct disciple of Jesus Christ, who was supposed to have come over to India to preach the doctrine of Jesus and was supposed to have been killed by the Brahmins of Madras. The author has proved by historic evidence and from writings of many Christian and non-christian authorities that the story of Thomas's acts in India and his so-called relics preserved in the St. Thomas Cathedral of Madras are but the mean devices of the motivated preachers of Christianity.

This book also supplies us with sufficient valuable historical, literary and archaeological materials regarding the destruction of the Kapaleeswara Shiva Temple of Mylapore by the Portuguese Christian bandits, and the construction of the present St. Thomas Cathedral on the very site.

The author in the appendices of the book has quoted an article by Swami Tapasyanandaji, a Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Order, in which the Swami has pointed out that the legend of St. Thomas's killing was designed only "to stain Hinduism", and "to camouflage their destruction of the Hindu temple of Kapaleeswara ... probably at the very place where Santhome Church now stands".

The author regrets that the myth of St. Thomas which is far from a historic truth has been accepted by some of our politicians and so-called educated citizens. The author feels that this great lie has undervalued the tolerant spirit of the Hindus. To establish the historic truth and to remove the false allegation against the Hindus, the author invites the archaeologists, historians and

philosophers to come to Mylapore to find out the plain fact "and record it for our children".

This small book is a key to open the lid which covers the golden truth of history that would add to the glory of the gentle Hindus and expose the evil character of mischievous foreign elements which are ever active to sow seeds of discordance in India.

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SRI AUROBINDO FOR ALL AGES, A Biography by Nirodbaran. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 605-002; 1990. pp. 241 ; Rs. 50/-.

The work is a biography of Sri Aurobindo, written for the young generation by a sādḥaka who was very close to Sri Aurobindo. The author had the great privilege of serving Sri Aurobindo for twelve years as his literary secretary. This biography was originally drafted by the author and again rewritten by Sri Ashit Gupta.

The book is divided into two parts. The first contains the events of Sri Aurobindo from his birth in 1872 to 1910, the year of his arrival at Pondicherry. The second part consists of the various yogic and spiritual activities of the Ashrama at Pondicherry up to his last samādhi, December 5, 1950. All these striking and insightful experiences are very lucidly recorded by the author.

The writer says that the life of Sri Aurobindo is immensely strange and wonderful. It is a most fascinating life, rich in its many-sided splendours. Sri Aurobindo was a poet, philosopher, interpreter of Indian culture and spirituality, patriot and revolutionary; but above all he was a supreme Seer and Yogi. He integrated Life and the Spirit, visualizing the transformation of the vast field of all existence through the power and light of spiritual Truth. He was always calm and unruffled in pleasure and pain,

prosperity and adversity, praise and blame. For the fulfilment of the spiritual mission he practised rigorous self-culture, even amidst the din and bustle of an active worldly life. His most precious gift to humanity is the 'Truth-Consciousness' and its action upon the world.

The author has painstakingly cited the reminiscences of various sādhas to bring out the perfect personality of Sri Aurobindo. He has ended with his own personal note, which itself is the very illuminating presentation of Sri Aurobindo's biography.

This invaluable biography with some beautiful photographs and appropriate content will no doubt inspire many spiritual seekers. In the appendix the author gives the five dreams (messages) of Sri Aurobindo of 15 August 1947, both his own birthday and the birthday of free India.

Though this important biography lacks a glossary and a selected bibliography, on the whole it is a welcome addition to the philosophical and spiritual treasure-house of Sri Aurobindo.

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THIRTEEN PRINCIPAL UPANISHADS,
Vol. 2: Mandukya Upanishad with Gaudapada's Karikas. By MM. Prof. J. H. Dave, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 400 007. Rs. 200/-.

The first volume in this series, published two years ago, dealt with the *Prasna* and *Mundaka Upanishads*. The present volume, the second, is an elaborate work discussing the importance of the *Māṇḍūkya* in the development of the Advaita Vedānta. The text itself has only twelve mantras commented upon by Acharya Shankara. There are, however, 215 *kārikās* on the text by Gaudapada, the traditional Paramaguru of Sri Shankara. The Acharya has also commented upon these *kārikās* which expound the theme of the *Upanishad* in four *prakaraṇas* or chapters. Both together constitute the bedrock of the Shankara Vedānta. This is

the generally accepted view. There are however scholars—notably Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya—who question this view. According to them Gaudapada (if at all there was such a person) was a Buddhist, and he could not have been the Paramaguru of Shankara. The *kārikās* are not commentaries on the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*. They are four independent treatises, and the *Upanishad* only highlights certain keynotes of the first *Prakarāṇa* (*Āgama*). Dr. Dave, author of the present exposition, rebuts this view with convincing arguments and proofs. He also takes exception to the view of Dr. Radhakrishnan that the Buddha was very near the stand of the Upanishads on the question of a permanent Self. He refutes the position that there are differences between Gaudapada and Shankara, especially regarding the *svapna* and *nidrā* concepts, and that the older teacher was more negative than the Acharya.

Referring to the question of why *Īśvara Prājña* (in the *Māṇḍūkya*) are equated by Shankara, the author writes: "This *Prājña* (of the individual or *Adhyātma*) is identified with *Īśvara* or *Avyakṛita* of the cosmic, i.e., *Adhidaiva* and various attributes applicable to *Īśvara* are stated in connection with *Prājña*, thereby implying the identity of *Adhyātma* and *Adhidaiva*. Thus *Prājña* is called Lord of all, Knower of all, Inner Controller, and creator and destroyer of everything...By applying in the sixth mantra the *Adhidaiva Īśvara* to *Adhyātma Prājña*, the *Srūti* indicates the ultimate identity of *Adhidaiva* and *Adhyātma*, i.e. *Tat* and *Tvam padārthas*." (p. xxi).

The comprehensive plan of the work, apart from a scholarly introduction, fully documented, is highly satisfying. There are separate chapters on Vedānta and Buddhism; Summary of *Māṇḍūkya* and *Karikas* according to Shankara; brief essays on *Kevalādvaita*, *Vishishtādvaita*, *Dvaita* and *Suddhādvaita*; *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad Āgama Kārikā* and translation of Shankara's commentary; *Āgama Prakaraṇa* with comments of Ramanuja, Madhva and others; the *Vaitathya*, *Advaita* and *Alātaśānti Prakaraṇas* with Shankara's commentary (text and translation) and notes of the author; index

and list of important terms in the *Kārikās* with meanings given by Shankara, and Buddhist texts.

Dr. Dave draws discriminately from other authorities, old and new, and leaves no objection unanswered. An authentic and exhaustive edition of the *Māṇḍūkya* and the *Gaudapāda Kārikās*.

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BHAGAVAD GITA FOR THE LAY READER, by R. I. Easwaran and Ardhendu Sekhar Ghosh. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay—400-007; 1986. 61 p. Rs. 15/-.

The authors of this small book are to be congratulated for their commendable effort.

Bhagavad Gita For The Lay Reader is no doubt written for easy comprehension by those not long familiar with the Gita, and the lay readers who are just taking up their study; but the authors' deep insights and elegant phrasing will make this small book delightful and stimulating reading for anyone who chances to come across it. Written in a charming and lucid manner, it touches on many salient topics of spiritual life. The present reviewer felt rewarded while reading under the headings: "Detachment and Objectivity", "Brahman", "Karma and Naishkarma", "Variations of Knowledge", and "Supreme Realization" in the Chapter "*Journey To Fulfilment*".

The authors quote extensively from the Gita and also from other Vedantic scriptures to give the layman a good account of what religious life and spiritual practice is all about. It will never make anyone shy away from the subject, but rather arouse more interest. An appendix at the end of the book gives a letter written by the author on some of his personal experiences in the

spiritual path. It is an interesting testimony to the truth of spiritual life and the power of Swamiji, who is working in the world for human uplift. The Introduction and the other two chapters—"Yajna, Dhyana, and Bhokti", and "Illumined Life" are also well written.

Gita For The Lay Reader will be a worthy acquisition for any library.

Sivaprasadananda
Mayavati

THE STORY OF SRI KRISHNA FOR CHILDREN: PART II, 42 pages; Rs. 15/ (ii) **MAHABHARATA FOR CHILDREN: VOL. I**, 43 pages; Rs. 15/-. Both by Swami Raghaveshananda. Published by the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 600 004.

The above two books are in the series of books for children being published by the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

The story of Sri Krishna starts with Krishna's training under Sandipini, and ends with his exit from this earth. *The Mahabharata* starts with the interesting episode of how Lord Ganesha consented to become scribe to Vyasa. It is followed by the story of Bhishma's birth and continues up to the burning of Khandava forest.

Both the books are written in simple English and can be easily understood by children. The books have been brought out very elegantly and with attractive covers. They are also profusely illustrated with very beautiful pictures, for which the artist, Padmavasan, needs to be congratulated.

These books are a very good introduction to children of Indian epics and mythology.

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FOR SEEKERS OF SPIRITUALITY

FAITH AND SELF-SURRENDER

“If man realises Brahman in this life then he attains great bliss, otherwise great is his loss.” He who wants Him gets Him. It is very easy to attain Him, for He is so very kind. But who wants Him?—there is the rub. The Lord has promised that if one searches Him in the right way He will manifest Himself to such a one in the twinkling of an eye. But who searches like that? Such is the force of Māyā. She, the Divine Mother, has kept man so busy with other things that he finds no inclination to realise God. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that in a granary a few grains of puffed rice coated with molasses are kept in a winnowing basket. The rats eat this to their hearts content and do not get at the bagfuls of grain stocked at the very place. Similarly, man is mad with wife, children, and other things, and never cares for the bliss of God-realisation, though He is very near, within himself. Such is Māyā.

“Those who resort to Me alone cross over this Māyā.” “Take refuge in Him with all thy heart. By His Grace shalt thou attain supreme Peace and the eternal Abode.” You must have faith (*śraddhā*), then there is no more fear. In the spiritual world *śraddhā* is the one thing that leads to progress. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* we find how Naciketa through *śraddhā* attained knowledge. In Yoga philosophy also we find *śraddhā* praised. In the *Gītā* also the Lord says, “The man with *śraddhā*, the devoted, the master of one’s senses, attains this knowledge. Having attained knowledge one attains at once the supreme Peace.” These

are facts of experience, one perceives them as it were within oneself—so what matters it how people look at it? What one experiences one does not doubt even if others say against it. One is filled with bliss. “He neither gives nor denies.” It is no wonder if one attains this state through His grace. The darkness of ages is lighted up in a second by a single match stick.

“Uncle moon is everybody’s uncle,” goes the Bengali proverb. So is God everybody’s; there is no doubt about this. Why should you feel weak? You are all children of the Divine Mother and therefore possess infinite strength. “He whose mother is the Divine Mother Herself, of whom shall he be afraid?” There can be no want of strength in Her children. Through Her grace there is infinite power latent in you. She is really the mother, it is not a mere imagination. “Thou art the Power of Viṣṇu, of infinite strength art Thou, and the cause of this universe. Thou has deluded everyone and Thy grace is what leads to liberation in this life.” Such is our Mother; so what fear can there be? As one thinks, so one becomes. So if you think you are weak, weak you will become; but why should the children of the Mother think themselves weak? What is impossible for you through Her grace? How long does it take to free oneself of the ideas, “I” and “mine”? Mother through Her grace can do it for you in a moment and really She does it too.

*from the teachings of
Swami Turiyananda*