

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or
all of these the vision of the Paramatman is obtained.



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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Dacca, 1922

On another occasion, a monastic member of the Dacca monastery said to Mahapurushji with a heavy heart: 'Raja Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) told me, "Whatever else you may do, you must not forget to make *japa* in the mornings and evenings". And yet the nature of my work is such—holding religious classes and conducting religious songs in groups—that I have to go out in the evenings at least five days a week. I have no time to sit for *japa* in the evenings. This upsets me very much.' In answer, Mahapurushji said: 'Look here, these classes and songs that you conduct should be looked upon by you as being on a par with spiritual practices, like *japa* and meditation. To sing the glory of the Lord, or to read or discuss about Him, is as good as any religious practice. Keep this idea ever present in your mind that you are doing His work alone. It will bring immense benefit to you, if you should think of these duties as service to Him. After returning from your work of songs and classes, you should sit for *japa* and meditation whenever you have a little time in hand—you

can do so even before going to sleep; but this must be done regularly. You have got to obey Maharaj's order properly.'

A devotee asked him: 'The Master used to say that one cannot realize God so long as one has the least vestige of desire for worldly things, just as a thread cannot pass through the eye of a needle so long as even a single fibre juts out of it. But our minds are full of innumerable passions and desires. What is the way for us?' Mahapurushji kept silent for a while and then said: 'There is a way. To your mind that is the thread, apply a little oil and water in the form of faith and devotion, and carefully spin in the derelict fibres of your passions and desires. Then the mind will easily merge at the blessed lotus feet of the Lord. Call on Him with all earnestness, and tell Him of the extreme misery you feel in not being blessed with His vision. He is very kind to those who take refuge in Him, and He never betrays the trust one has in Him.'

Belūr Math, 1922

Some four or five months after the passing

away of Swami Brahmananda, a high officer of the government came to see Mahapurushji at the Belur Math. He made his obeisance at the feet of Mahapurushji with great reverence and, taking his seat on the floor, introduced himself to the Swami. Then he said: 'I first met Raja Maharaj about three years ago, and from that day, I had been visiting him off and on, whenever I got an opportunity. He was very kind to me, and guided me with his instructions. Mentally, I had selected him as my *guru*. When I expressed the idea to him one day, he held out a great hope by saying: "The initiation will come in due course; there is no need to be in such a hurry. Follow the instructions I give you now. Let the mind be prepared, and everything will follow." That day, he told me much about spiritual practices etc. From that day on, I had been practising *japa* and meditation a little; I had also been visiting him now and then. But so unfortunate am I that I could not get initiation from him. Now it is my earnest desire that I should get this from you. Please be kind to me. You represent him; you are on his seat. His power now works through you. Please do take pity on me and do not disappoint me.'

Mahapurushji had never seen this devotee before. Still, he said to him with the sweetest words, as though speaking to his own: 'You are really very fortunate to have had the blessings of Maharaj, who gave you instructions out of his mercy. Know all that he said as nothing but the *mantra* itself; that itself will bring you the desired result. I do not feel that you have need for any fresh initiation. Call on him with the sincerest yearning; pray to him with tears; and you will certainly be blessed with his vision. If need be, he will grant you initiation as well. He was not like any one of the ordinary, perfected souls, acting as a *guru*. He was none other than an immediate associate of God Himself. A merciful glance of such a one destroys the worldly bondages of a man; to the aspirant, it brings the highest perfection. When God incarnates on earth for the good of the world, these asso-

ciates embody themselves and come down with Him to fulfil His mission, to preach the spiritual path best suited for the age. They seldom come independently. Besides, where could he have gone? All that he has done is to discard the physical body. Now he is with the Master in a supersensuous world with a supersensuous body; from there, he is doing infinite good to the devotees. Take it from me, you will certainly be blessed with his vision.'

The devotee: 'Maharaj, what you say is exceedingly true. I can testify to its truth. When Raja Maharaj passed away, I was filled with great sorrow that, though I had the good fortune of coming in contact with such a highly gifted *guru*, I could not get his blessing. The mind was very much upset. I prayed earnestly to the Master, and he heard my prayer. Three days ago, I had a vision of Maharaj in a dream, and he granted me initiation with a *mantra* as well. But when I woke up, I could not recollect the *mantra* fully. I tried hard to remember it, but failed. From that moment, I have been feeling very miserable. Finding no way out, I have come running to you. You have to take pity on me, and find a way out for me. I have the conviction that he will remove this want from me through you.' As he spoke these words, he burst into tears.

Mahapurushji was listening to the devotee with all attention. This supplication now drew his compassion. He again consoled the devotee, saying: 'Since Maharaj has shown so much affection to you, you need have no fear; his grace will make everything all right. Don't be despondent. When the proper time will arrive, he will reveal himself to you again and bless you. Go on calling on him with all earnestness.'

But this did not bring solace to the devotee. He pressed Mahapurushji again and again for initiation. Then Mahapurushji seemed to have partially agreed. He asked the devotee to wait for a while, entered the room where Maharaj had lived, and closed the door behind him. The present temple of Maharaj had not come up then. The things that Maharaj had used re-

mained arranged in that room as of old; and offerings were daily made before a picture of his placed there. After about half an hour, Mahapurushji opened the door and motioned the devotee to get in. As the devotee did so, the door closed behind him again. A little later, Mahapurushji came out alone, and sat down quietly on his bedstead. The devotee came out after an hour and, prostrating himself before Mahapurushji, said: 'My life is blessed today. You have given me the very same *mantra* that Raja Maharaj gave me in my dream. This has delighted me the most. I have directly perceived that he resides in you. Kindly bless me that I may realize my chosen deity even in this life.'

Mahapurushji: 'You are indeed very fortunate. Maharaj is so kind to you, and he is helping you in so many ways, just because you earned so much merit in your previous life. Now engage yourself in spiritual practices with the help of the valuable gift you have received; you will have your desire fulfilled. A true devotee relies on the Lord under all circumstances like a kitten on its mother; he calls on Him with tears; and he prays to Him with all humility. He alone knows when to grant His vision to the devotee. Take refuge in Him and keep waiting at His door, praying all the while with heart and soul for full faith, devotion, and love. He will fill your heart to the brim.'

The devotee: 'Please teach me a little how I should meditate and make *japa*. I have to remain ever engrossed in my worldly duties. Besides, the responsibilities of my post are no less exacting. Kindly bless me that I may become free from these bondages, so as to be able to call on God.'

Mahapurushji: 'As for our blessing, it is always there to be sure. You, too, have to engage yourself in spiritual practices with determination. Go on making regular *japa* of the *mantra* you have received today; and along with *japa*, pray with all humility: "Lord, bless me, so that I may meditate on you, and that my mind may lose itself at your lotus feet." And He is sure to do so, rest assured. He is the

guru in everybody's heart—the guide, master, father, mother, friend, in fact, everything to a man. All for whom people cry in this world, thinking they are their own, will live but for a few days only; the eternal companion is He alone. Go on repeating His name with full sincerity; and you will find that meditation will follow as a natural development. When one goes on repeating the name of the chosen deity with intense love, one becomes gradually filled with an ineffable bliss. When that bliss becomes continuous, it is also a kind of meditation. Meditations are of various kinds. Go on meditating on the blessed, effulgent form of the Lord with the greatest love, and imagine that every corner of your heart shines with the light emanating from His form. As you go on thinking thus, you will feel that your whole being is becoming suffused with inexpressible joy. Gradually, the form also will get dissolved, and you will have the feeling of a kind of bliss associated with consciousness. This also is a kind of meditation. There are innumerable other kinds of meditation which will become clear to you by stages. The main thing that counts is to call on Him with all sincerity. As you go on calling on Him and weeping for Him, all the dirt in your mind will be washed away, and it will become purified. Then, that pure mind itself will act as a *guru* to you. You will get all the answers from within yourself to all the questions that you may have—about what you need at a particular time, how you should meditate, how you should call on Him, and all such things. You must have read what the Master used to say: "The breeze of compassion is blowing there all the time; it is for you to unfurl your sail." This unfurling of the sail means to undertake spiritual practices with sincere diligence. He is ever eager to bestow His grace, just as a mother keeps her hands always ready to take up the child to her lap. Do try a bit, and then only you will feel how compassionate He is.'

The devotee: 'I cannot always understand how I should live in the world. It is a terrible task ever to be pandering to everybody's whims.'

Mahapurushji: 'Have you read the *Kathāmrta* of the Master? Read it very carefully. You will get beautiful solutions of these problems in the very words of the Master. This world is neither yours nor mine. It is God's creation. Those whom you think to be yours really belong to God. You have to live in this world with this belief at the background. Wife, son, daughter, relatives, friends—all are but so many creatures of God. Whatever you have to do to them, do so under the idea that you are serving Nārāyaṇa in those forms; then you won't get attached too much. And along with all this, you must have your power of discrimination wide awake. The discrimination between the true and the false gives rise to detachment. You are leading a householder's life; very well. But that is no reason why you should lose yourself in the world. Do your duty by all, but do it under the idea of service to God. The Lord is infinitely kind to you. Thousands there are who have to run madly after food and raiment; they are so much occupied with the thoughts of the bare necessities of life that they hardly get any time to think of God. But you have nothing to worry about these physical needs. This is no inconsiderable mercy of God. God creates all the necessary opportunities for those who are sincere devotees. When all fall asleep at dead of night, rise up to call on Him with your whole being, and become one with Him. Tell Him of the yearning of your heart with tears in your eyes. Midnight is the best time for spiritual practices. You have the auspicious signs of a man of spirituality; you are bound to succeed. That is why I am talking thus to you. Be up and doing at the beginning, and you will find that your whole being will be filled with an ineffable joy; you will lose yourself in the current of that maddening bliss. Can there be any comparison of that with the hollow joys of this world? The worldly pleasures appear as nothing to one who gets even an inkling of that divine joy.'

The devotee: 'Should I keep count when making *japa*? Kindly tell me what should be

the number of times I should repeat the *mantra*, and how I should do it.'

Mahapurushji: '*Japa* can be performed in three ways—with the help of a rosary, counting on finger-joints, or mentally. Mental *japa* is the best. Tulasīdāsa said: "One who tells one's beads is vulgar; one who repeats the *mantra* with the help of one's fingers is commendable; but the highest encomium goes to one who does it all mentally." If one cultivates the habit of making *japa* mentally, one can go on doing it at all times and under all circumstances—even while moving about, eating, or lying down in bed. When this becomes a strong habit, it continues even during sleep and generates a current of joy in the mind. But it is good to fix a definite number for the daily *japa*. You should sit for *japa* at least twice a day—morning and evening—and repeat the *mantra* for a definite number of times. It should not be less than a thousand each time in your case; if you can increase that number, it will be still better. You can keep count with the help of a rosary or on your own fingers.' Saying this, he showed how to keep count on the fingers.

'The Master used to say', he continued, 'that the name and the Being named are one and the same. As you repeat the *mantra* of the chosen deity, think of His form as well; thus you can have both *japa* and meditation simultaneously. God dwells in the heart, and He sees how earnest one is in calling to Him. He does not care for either the number or the time. To call on Him even once only with a sincere mind is more effective than making the *japa* of the *mantra* for a hundred thousand times with an unsteady mind. It needs intensity, earnestness, and yearning. Once you have the yearning in your mind, success is near at hand. All this does not come in a single day. Persist in your efforts with determination, and everything will come in due course. Do not forget to come to the monastery now and then. Many monks live here; you should associate with them. Even the sight of holy men generates thoughts about God in one's

heart. If, in the course of your spiritual endeavours, you are beset with any doubt, you can refer it to me. That is exactly why the Master has kept us here. The truth is that, if one has sincerity, one is seldom beset with doubts; or even if a doubt arises, God Himself solves it from within. Sincerity, earnestness, purity—these form the main basis of a spiritual life. I hope you have read the story of the highway robber Ratnākara, who attained perfection by repeating the words "Marā, Marā".¹ One must have faith in the *guru*—the faith of a child. All the doubts have their lodgement in things outside. The more the mind becomes indrawn, and the more it approaches the innermost core, the more free it becomes from doubts. Then pure bliss reigns supreme; the mind becomes suffused with divine

love. Of course, it is true that all doubts cannot be dispelled till one is face to face with God Himself. "When the Self, which is both high and low, is realized, the knot of the heart gets untied, all doubts become solved, and all one's actions become dissipated."'

¹The divine saint Nārada met the highway robber Ratnākara and persuaded him to give up his evil ways. He also asked him to repeat the name of the Lord, 'Rāma'. But so depraved had the robber's mind become that he could not remember the name or pronounce it accurately. So he went on repeating the word 'Marā', which in Bengali means 'dead', but contained all the letters of the Lord's name, so that when repeated continuously, it amounted to uttering the Lord's name itself (*ma-rāma-rāma-rā* and so on). The robber had a sincere heart, and hence the wrong pronunciation did not debar him from being blessed by Śrī Rāmacandra. This Ratnākara, the robber, became Vālmiki, the great sage and poet.

'BE NOT A TRAITOR TO YOUR THOUGHTS'

I

'He alone enters the kingdom of heaven who is not a thief of his thoughts', said Sri Ramakrishna to his devotees regarding their spiritual life. This correspondence between one's profession and practice is equally necessary in one's social as well as political life. But it is to be deplored that, in these spheres nowadays, men only make all sorts of professions without trying to practise what they preach. Down the ages, men have received ideas and ideals which are capable of changing their nature and transforming this very earth into heaven. But do men ever try to grasp their meaning and follow them in their day-to-day life? Should not man realize that practice is a hundred times more effective than precept?

II

Man is intrinsically good, and his endeavour to express this is eternal. What man has achieved, in his search for truth, in the form of philosophy and science is applied through politics and

technology for the welfare of mankind. Man loves man. Through experience, he has learnt the value of interdependence, and feels that he cannot live in isolation. His fulfilment is possible only if the society in which he lives is healthy and progressive. This aspiration for general human welfare is at the root of political organizations, social institutions, and governments. Politics owes its birth to the intrinsic goodness of man, and it seeks to bring happiness and welfare to the people at large. It does not therefore stand to reason to decry politics, or find fault with this school of political thought or that, for its failure to deliver the goods. The test is whether practice corresponds to profession.

Acquisition of scientific knowledge and its application in technology have enabled us to conquer time and space. Distance between diverse sections of mankind has been obliterated; they are now neighbours in this shrinking world. But the need of the teaching 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' has never been so

great as it is today. How delightful an experience it is to have our near and dear ones brought closer together! With a feeling heart, we go forward to receive the person we love, respect, or adore. We do all that lies in us to see him comfortable and happy. Even the inconveniences undergone seem pleasing when it ensures the happiness of those whom we love and revere. If man's love for man had not been stained by his selfish propensities, happiness would have been here in abundance. The resources at our disposal are plentiful, which can put an end to all human suffering; but it is a tragedy of our times that, with traditions so rich and ideologies so noble, suffering is still widespread all over the world.

Thanks to science, man has greatly overcome the furies of nature and the curse of disease and, to some extent, the worry of procuring food. It has provided man with shelter and given him leisure which he can profitably use. And yet, it is painful to see that man is still afraid of man, and this fear is most conspicuous in the present state of the world. Though the physical barriers have been largely eliminated, men find themselves divided mentally and ideologically. They face each other with suspicion and apprehension. Instead of making service and sacrifice the keynote of human relationship, they spend all their energy and resources in devising every possible weapon of defence and offence. The world today has become an arena of hostility and conflict. Scientists there are who curse their own work, seeing the way their inventions are being abused by belligerent nations.

III

Intelligent and far-seeing men have studied men's passions and aspirations, their desires and ambitions. They have evolved political systems in order to safeguard men's interests and to promote their social and cultural life. Man's basic needs are food, shelter, and clothing, to secure which he makes desperate efforts. All political systems, though differing from each other in many respects, profess to guarantee

these basic needs to all the members of a given society. Each of these systems, again, promises to offer equal opportunities to all men in their pursuit of the values prescribed by the system. The protagonists of each school of political thought claim that theirs is the best means for reaching the desired goal. They profess that they alone have the most potent cures for all the social evils that afflict man today.

In the past, the cause of human suffering, history tells us, lay in the rivalry between the followers of different religions. Now that the people seem to appreciate the intrinsic harmony of religious faiths, the instinct of rivalry in man finds expression through different political faiths. Today, political rivalry, in its most vicious form, is not only defeating the purpose of true politics, but also threatening civilization itself with annihilation. Often, politics has been claimed to be harmless and infallible, while religions have been accused of being responsible for social conflict and suffering. But now politicians are facing the same charge. A rational appraisal will, however, reveal that neither religions nor political systems are by themselves responsible for the bellicose attitudes of men. It is the weakness in human nature that contaminates all faiths and demoralizes all systems.

Political systems evolve with the progress of civilization. Civilization is nothing less than the total refinement of our being—refinement of our thought and conduct, impulses and desires—as also efficiency in the method of production and distribution and elimination of hardship and suffering. The systems are so formulated as to lead society to the cherished goal by the application of their principles. Every system claims to bring about all-round human welfare, but what we find in different parts of the world, where these systems are actually in operation, is rather distressing. Whatever may be the claim made on their behalf, the masses fare almost the same in every country.

IV

Though the political systems are several in number, they can be broadly divided into two

groups: democratic and totalitarian. There is no doubt that a real and genuine democracy can build up the physical, mental, and moral health of a nation. But, unfortunately, the application of democracy has been contaminated by political ambitions. As a result, appalling poverty and misery and outrageous iniquities are to be seen in many parts of the world. Individuals are deprived of their personality and reduced to mere electorates.

In totalitarian states, the picture is no better. The trend in these states is to regiment individuals in their thought, speech, and action. Their activities are dictated; their initiatives are controlled; and their needs are selected. Man is robbed of his humanity, and he is allowed to live his biological life controlled and conditioned by the state machinery. He is to barter his mental and intellectual abilities for prescribed food, shelter, and clothing. In addition, he is required to contribute all his powers and faculties to maintain and heighten the supremacy of the state. The state liquidates the godliness in man and deifies itself or the party by which it is controlled, and declares itself infallible, while the leaders at the top assume extraordinary powers.

In our own country, we have often been told about Rāmarājya, but Rāmarājya presupposes the presence of the spirit of Rāma. If Rāma is not there, *rājyas* or states, under whatever system they may be, will only lead us to chaos and ultimately to disintegration. Rāma stands for the ideal man, the leader who is called upon to pilot the ship of state and to take humanity to its cherished goal of peace, happiness, and fulfilment. It requires much training and self-discipline to become the right type of statesman. But what is paradoxical is that specialized knowledge and training is looked for in almost every field of endeavour, except in politics. Training is necessary for a motor driver to skillfully ply his vehicle. Only after a certain period of preparation is a person allowed to get employment as a school teacher to teach a small group of children. But it is a tragedy that those who have to deal with the people in

almost every sphere of life and control the destinies of millions—people on whose acts and utterances depend the very existence and welfare of humanity—seem to require no specialized training or preparation to build up their own personality. Exhaustive codes of conduct are there for the army units as well as for those who are in government service; but the persons who are at the helm of affairs, barring a few honourable exceptions, are found to be above all inhibitions and restrictions. They can employ every available resource to mobilize the masses behind them and bring untold profits to their supporters in the adventure. Under such circumstances, instead of living a life in happiness and plenty, man finds himself in misery and becomes desperate. And he goes in search of new leaders who promise a square deal. But every time, leaders prove themselves bankrupt in social vision and political efficiency. Even the few exceptions that may be there are rendered ineffective because of their surroundings steeped in corruption and self-interest.

V

This failure is due to the disparity that exists between ideologies of persons and their outward conduct. A system can achieve the desired result only when those who advocate it live up to the principles underlying the system. It is not the infallibility of any political system that counts most, but it is the type of persons that are needed to operate such systems who really count. Men and women of character must be trained to be 'lively and adventurous' and to have great idealism and ambition. There should be a deep spiritual background behind such characters. In modern times, what is most urgently called for is a combination of the spiritual values with the scientific outlook. As Prime Minister Nehru said recently: "This new age of science and technology should not make people lose sight of the spiritual aspect of the human being. As a matter of fact, scientific and technological inventions should be linked with spirituality to eliminate the danger of these inventions being used for destructive purposes."

These are words of great weight and moment. This is a message to be carefully pondered by those who desire to work for the happiness and welfare of humanity.

Politics may make a man famous overnight, and the fulfilment of his hankering after fame only adds to his vanity. The more he is talked about, the more he wishes to be talked about. Politics brings also power, and love of power is the strongest motive force in the lives of politicians. Man likes to see himself all-powerful. But when he seeks extraordinary power and influence through politics, his dispositions and actions almost invariably become pernicious. Driven by intense love of power, many are tempted to change their erstwhile occupations, which appear stale and lifeless, and take to politics, which offers the quickest means and the surest ladder for the fulfilment of their ambitions. As a result, we find a frequent diversion of brilliant careers from various other fields, such as teaching, science, medicine, and engineering, to the alluring arena of politics.

Power accumulates more power. In the name of efficiency, all the departments of public service are controlled by the groups or parties in power, whose only interest seems to be to catch votes and win the elections. When the politicians' definite aim is to win the election, they begin to use all their power and resources towards that end. All the means of publicity and propaganda at their disposal are used to create the necessary public opinion in their favour. In this process, the interest of the masses is lost sight of, and the gulf between the leaders' profession and their practice grows wider and wider. The lot of the common man remains as pitiable as ever. All this happens because the politician is madly after power, and seeks his own selfish ends. The remedy for this state of affairs can really be found in a different kind of politics, a politics which derives inspiration from the higher values of the spirit and which inculcates a spirit of humility and service in the minds of those who wield power.

VI

The modern mind is aware of the above shortcomings, and it is groping for ways out of the blind alley into which politicians have led it. There is difference among men in many respects—in the food they take, in the language they speak, in the dress they wear, or in the pigment of their skin. But in their craving for happiness and security, they all behave in the selfsame way. Today, men cannot think in terms of their own families, clans, or tribes. The primitive herd instinct in man must go. Darwin observes: 'As man advances in civilization, and small tribes are united into larger communities, the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all the members of the same nation, though personally unknown to him. This point being once reached, there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending to the men of all nations and races.' But man's attitude towards those people whom he regards as his neighbours or kinsmen is different from his behaviour towards those whom he considers to be foreigners. The artificial demarcation which makes men foreigners, keeping them beyond some imaginary geographical line, has been continuously shifted from the family to the village, and from the village to the country. Now a time has come when such distinctions should disappear altogether. As, in religion, the various paths lead to the same goal, so also in the secular sphere, different systems and ideologies, though arising from varying local conditions and traditions, can lead different sections of mankind to the same goal of happiness and prosperity.

Viewed from this point of view, there is no reason why humanity should still remain divided into several sections. If science has proved the fact of 'One World' in the spheres of knowledge, communication, and commerce, why should not all men think themselves as members of one human family in their activities and aspirations? If food produced at one end of a country can feed people needing it at the

other end of it, how can one section of humanity in one part of the world afford to throw its surplus produce into the sea when another section of humanity starves in another part of the world? If language, colour, dress, and religion stand as no bars to unity and amity in family, group, or national relations, why should these be treated as factors provoking hatred and rivalry among nations? But the greatest misfortune is that the common people, who are generally free from such feelings of hatred and rivalry, are roused by selfish and short-sighted leaders and used for their own ends.

Merely professing great ideals will lead nowhere. They must be brought into practice in the lives of individuals and expressed in their character and behaviour, especially so in the

lives of those who wish to assume the leadership of men and nations. Harmony between one's words and deeds is the first condition necessary for an honest life in the world. Honesty in one's private and public life is as much necessary in the social and the political sphere as it is in the spiritual sphere. That is the profound significance of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching, when he said: 'Be not a traitor to your thoughts. What you think, that you should speak. Let there be harmony between your thoughts and words.' Until and unless this harmony is established, and practice is scrupulously made to correspond to profession, all attempts on the part of politicians and public servants to ameliorate the condition of the common man will only end in frustration and despair all round.



THE VISION OF KĀLĪ

BY MR. CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

Thus it was that, at the age of twenty, Ramakrishna suffered a second great bereavement. When his father Khudiram died, he had been a child, only seven years old; the loss of Ramkumar must have hurt him much more deeply. For Ramkumar had been even more than an elder brother to him; he had stood, especially during the past four years, in the place of Ramakrishna's father.

The young man's mind now turned altogether away from the world and its impermanence, toward the one resource which he believed to be unfailing. He became passionately resolved to obtain a vision of Kālī, the Divine Mother—to know the Reality within the image he worshipped daily in the shrine. Obsessed by the love he felt for Kālī and by his desire to see her, he spent every moment that he could in the temple. And when its doors had to be closed, according to custom, at

midday and at night, he avoided the company of others and wandered off alone into the jungle-thickets which covered the northern end of the temple property.

Hriday now became gravely concerned, for he saw that Ramakrishna was neither sleeping nor eating sufficiently. And he knew that his uncle was in the habit of going off into the jungle—a thing which nobody else at Dakshineswar would willingly do, especially at night. Since the place had formerly been a graveyard, you might expect to meet ghosts there—not to mention snakes.

One night, however, the devoted youth put aside his own fears and followed Ramakrishna at a distance. In order to scare him into turning back, Hriday threw some pebbles and gravel after him. They fell around Ramakrishna, who ignored them and went on into the thicket. The next day, Hriday asked his

uncle outright what he had been doing in such a sinister spot, in the middle of the night. Ramakrishna then explained to him that an *āmalakī* tree (which bears an astringent plum-like fruit) grew there, and that, according to the scriptures, anyone who meditates beneath an *āmalakī* will have his dearest wish fulfilled. Ramakrishna was meditating under the tree in order to get his vision of Kālī.

Hriday became increasingly distressed by his uncle's austerities. Being himself temperamentally unable to understand this kind of devotional obsession, he felt that Ramakrishna was going beyond the bounds of propriety and even of sanity. And his feeling was shared, to some extent, by almost everybody at Dakshineswar. There is comedy in the situation. Here were all these religious people protesting, because their head priest took his religion more seriously than they thought decent!

On another occasion, Hriday went into the jungle when he knew that Ramakrishna was already there. He found his uncle seated in meditation under the *āmalakī*. Ramakrishna had taken off his dhoti and even the sacred thread which he wore as a Brahmin, and was sitting there stark naked. Hriday was so scandalized that he roused Ramakrishna from the depths of his meditation and reproached him energetically: had he gone mad to do such a thing?

Ramakrishna replied calmly that this was the right way to meditate. Man labours from his birth under eight forms of bondage, he told Hriday: they are hatred, shame, fear, doubt, aversion, self-righteousness, pride in one's lineage, and pride in one's caste-status. All these forms of bondage tie man's mind down to worldly thoughts and desires and prevent him from raising his mind to spiritual things. The sacred thread reminds a man that he belongs to the highest caste, that of the Brahmins; therefore it makes him proud of his birth. And so it must be discarded, along with every other pretension, possession, desire, and aversion, before one can approach the Mother in meditation.

It is characteristic of Ramakrishna that he

was never content with a merely mental renunciation; the thought must be accompanied by a deed. Just as he had discarded his clothes and his sacred thread, so on other occasions he performed other acts of renunciation and self-mortification which were equally drastic. For example, in order to humble his caste-pride, he cleaned out a privy with his own hands. In order to affirm his belief that the Divine is present within all beings, he ate as *prasād* the remains of the food which the poor had been given, outside the Kālī temple, carried the leaves they had used as plates upon his head for disposal, and himself swept and washed the eating-place clean. In order to learn to regard the so-called valuable and the so-called worthless with impartial indifference, he took in one hand some clods of earth and in the other some coins; these he threw into the Ganges, repeating to himself 'rupee is dirt, dirt is rupee', over and over again.

Ramakrishna's spiritual genius was constantly being expressed by this literalness. His actions meant exactly what he thought and said. There were no evasions. Most of us like to dwell on the idea of mental renunciation; physical renunciation seems to us crude and even perhaps unnecessary. But the blunt truth is that the two go together, if any real spiritual progress is to be made. What is more, the process must start from the outside. We have to begin by renouncing attachment to the gross elements.

Ramakrishna was now entering upon that phase of life which is characterized by *sādhana*, the period of spiritual discipline. All the avatars and the great religious teachers have passed through such a phase. One need only instance the wanderings and austerities of the Buddha and those years of Christ's early manhood which are passed over in the Gospel narrative—years of retirement among the Essenes, if the scholars' latest guesses are correct. Except in the cases of Buddha and Caitanya, no such *sādhana* has been recorded in detail. This may well be because the devotees of later times did not wish to show their Ideal in the throes of temptation, spiritual anguish, and despair. They did not

wish to show an incarnation of God behaving like a human being. This has never been the attitude of the truly great devotees, however. Such devotees have even felt unwilling to dwell on the power and majesty of God, lest awe should interfere with their devotion. This was Ramakrishna's attitude toward Kālī, as we shall see later in this chapter.

We ought not to imagine that the story of Ramakrishna's *sādhana* is somehow unworthy of him, because at times it makes him seem weak, helpless, laughable, eccentric, and very human. Even if we have come to regard Ramakrishna as an incarnation of God, we must still beware of supposing that the divine incarnation leads a life in the world which is only a sort of charade or make-believe. No—his sufferings and his moments of weakness are not simulated. Coming into the world with absolute knowledge of the Reality, he assumes the ignorance and the weaknesses of ordinary men, in order to be an example to others by transcending them. The orthodox Hindu view regarding this, however, is just the opposite: that an incarnation is all the time fully conscious of his divinity, so that whatever he does is only a kind of play-acting (a *līlā*).

Nevertheless, the incarnations of God *are* aware, even from their birth, that they are other than ordinary people. And this knowledge gives them immense compassion for all who are in bondage to worldly desires. It is to help them that the incarnation performs his *sādhana*.

Ramakrishna used to tell this story: "Three men went walking in a field. In the middle of the field, there was a place surrounded by a high wall. From within this wall came the sounds of music; instruments were played and voices sang. The men were charmed by it, and wanted to see what was happening. But there was no door anywhere in the wall. What were they to do? One of the men found a ladder somewhere and climbed to the top of the wall, while the other two waited below. When the man who was on top of the wall saw what was happening inside, he was beside himself with joy. He even forgot to tell the two below what

he saw; he uttered a loud laugh and jumped down inside. The other two exclaimed: "A fine friend he is! He didn't tell us what he saw. We'll have to look for ourselves." So the second man climbed the ladder. And, like the first man, he looked over the wall and burst out laughing with joy, and jumped. So what was the third man to do? He, too, climbed the ladder and looked over the wall and saw what was on the other side. It was like a market of happiness, given free to all comers. His first thought was to jump down and join in the rejoicing. But then he said to himself: "If I do that, no one outside will ever know that this place of joy exists. Am I to be the only one to find it?" So he forced his mind away from the sight, and he came down the ladder and began telling everyone he met: "In there is the market of happiness. Come with me—let's enjoy it together." So he took everybody with him, and they all took part in the rejoicing.'

Ramakrishna was accustomed to teach that the whole purpose of *sādhana* was to become able to see Brahman in all things, everywhere. *Sādhana*, ultimately, is the effort to know the Universal Cause beyond time and space. We ordinary mortals see only the multiplicity of beings, not the one eternal substratum. We see multiplicity instead of unity, because we are ignorant. We are ignorant, because we are within *māyā*, the web of seeming which has been put forth by the Power of Brahman. This ignorance should not be thought of as an individual delusion. It is shared by all who are within *māyā*; that is why our perceptions are roughly identical. If I think I see a table, then so do you. Our ignorance consists in being unable to see that the table is essentially Brahman, and that nothing but Brahman exists. But, though this ignorance is shared, any one of us can individually escape from it, and thus reach freedom.

It is said that there are two main paths of *sādhana*: the path of discrimination and the path of devotion. Since the knowledge that life ends in death has always been common to mankind, it is probable that discrimination was

practised before devotion. For discrimination consists in rejecting all that is impermanent, in order to come at last, by a process of elimination, to the permanent substratum, the Reality. The Buddha began his search in this way, after his first contact with sickness, old age, and death had made him realize the impermanence of human life. It has been said, therefore, that the path of discrimination can be described by saying 'not this, not this'—meaning that nothing in the world of phenomena is permanent and that all must be rejected.

The path of devotion, on the other hand, is described by saying 'this, this'—because the devotee is constantly reminding himself that he is everywhere in the presence of Brahman. In saying this, he is not disagreeing with the man of discrimination. He does not worship phenomena *as* phenomena. He worships the Reality behind the phenomena. We find followers of these two paths in all the world's religions. The difference between them is really one of temperament. It is the nature of some people to arrive at truth by means of the intellect, of others to arrive at it by means of love. Both of these paths have led countless men and women to union with the Reality. This unitive experience has been the goal of every true mystic. The Buddhists call it *nirvāṇa*, the Christians the mystic union, the Hindus *samādhi*.

In my second chapter, I briefly mentioned *samādhi*—known as the fourth state of consciousness, because it is neither waking, dreaming, nor dreamless sleep. But it is impossible for me to say anything very explicit about it. Like all but the merest handful of people alive in the world today, I have never even come anywhere near experiencing it. And even those who have experienced it have had great difficulty in speaking of their experience. One may say, indeed, that it is by definition indescribable. For words deal with the knowledge obtained by the five senses; and *samādhi* goes beyond all sense-experience. It is in its highest form a state of total knowledge, in which the knower and the thing known become one. This is *nirvikalpa*

samādhi. The so-called lower *samādhi*, *savikalpa*, is that in which the sense of duality is not yet quite lost; knower and known are still separated, but only, as it were, by a thin pane of glass. The mystic who has reached the lower *samādhi* is almost certain to be able to pass on to the higher, if he desires it.

Outwardly, *samādhi* appears to be a state of unconsciousness, since the mind of the experiencer is entirely withdrawn from the outer world. Thus it is often referred to as a 'trance'. In fact, *samādhi* is a state of awareness unimaginably more intense than everyday consciousness. It is the very opposite of a trance, which, in its primary meaning at least, is a condition of stupor, or bewilderment.

Of the few mystics who ever reach *samādhi*, the majority do so toward the end of their lives or at the moment of death. Ramakrishna, as we shall see, entered *samādhi* not once, but several times a day, over a period of many years!

The reader may now ask some such question as this: 'You say that intense meditation can bring a man to the state of *samādhi*. But how does he actually get there? What is going on inside him during this process? What are the psycho-physical steps which lead to complete spiritual awakening?'

According to the Hindu physiology, there is a great store of potential spiritual energy at the base of the spine. This energy is known as the *kuṇḍalinī*, meaning 'that which is coiled up'; thus it is sometimes referred to as 'the serpent power'. The Hindu physiologists tell us that most of us barely use this energy at all. The little of it that we do arouse goes into our sex-drives and other physical appetites. But when the *kuṇḍalinī* is fully aroused—by the practice of meditation and other spiritual disciplines—it is said to travel up the spine through six centres of consciousness, until it reaches the seventh, the centre of the brain. It is this rise of the *kuṇḍalinī* to the higher centres which produces various degrees of enlightenment. Ramakrishna, in later life, described the process as follows:

"The scriptures speak of seven centres of con-

sciousness. The mind may dwell in any one of these centres. As long as the mind is attached to the things of this world, it remains in the three lower centres: at the navel, at the sex-organ, and at the rectum. While there, it has no higher ambitions and no visions. It is plunged in the passions of lust and greed.

'The fourth centre is the heart. When the mind learns to dwell there, a man has his first spiritual awakening. He has the vision of light all around him. Seeing this light, he marvels and cries: "Ah, what joy!" After this, his mind does not go back to the lower centres.

'The fifth centre is at the throat. When a man's mind reaches that, it is set free from ignorance and delusion. The man does not care to hear or talk of anything but God.

'The sixth centre is at the forehead (between the eyebrows). When the mind reaches this centre, it has direct vision of God, by day and by night. But, even so, there is a little trace of egotism left. . . . It's like a light in a lantern. You feel as if you could touch the light, but you can't, because the glass prevents you.

'The seventh centre is at the top of the head. When the mind reaches it, it achieves *samādhi*. Then one becomes a knower of Brahman. One is united with Brahman.'

Ramakrishna was, of course, speaking to people who were more or less acquainted with Hindu physiological theory. But here I must explain that the spinal column is said to contain two nerve-currents, called *idā* and *piṅgalā*. (These have been identified, I do not know how correctly, with the sensory and motor nerves of our Western physiology.) *Idā* is said to be on the left of the spinal column; *piṅgalā* on the right. In the middle is a passage which is called the *suṣumṇā*. When the *kuṇḍalinī* is aroused, it passes up the *suṣumṇā*; which otherwise, in the case of normally unspiritual people, remains closed. When Ramakrishna speaks of the centres of the navel, heart, throat, etc., he is using physical organs to indicate the approximate positions of these centres; actually, they are located within the *suṣumṇā* itself.

These centres are also often called 'lotuses' in

Hindu writings on the subject, because they are said to appear in the form of a lotus to those whose spiritual vision enables them to see them. It is wrong to think of the centres as being gross physical organs; but it must be remembered, on the other hand, that Hindu physiology makes no sharp distinction between gross and subtle. It is all a question of degree.

It was noticed that, in the case of Ramakrishna, the ascent of the *kuṇḍalinī* was accomplished by a constant and powerful movement of the blood toward the chest and brain. In consequence of this, the skin of his chest was always flushed.

As the months of this year, 1856, went by, Ramakrishna's spiritual efforts became more and more intense. Addressing the image of Kālī in the temple, he exclaimed piteously: 'Mother, you showed yourself to Rāmprasād and other devotees in the past. Why won't you show yourself to me? Why won't you grant my prayer? I've been praying to you so long!' And he wept bitterly.

'Oh, what days of suffering I went through!' Ramakrishna used to say, as he recalled this period in after years. 'You can't imagine the agony of my separation from Mother! But that was only natural. Suppose there's a bag of gold in a room and a thief in the next room, with only a thin partition in between. Can the thief sleep in peace? Won't he try to burst through that wall and get at the gold? That was the state I was in. I knew Mother was there, quite close to me. How could I want anything else? She is infinite happiness. Beside her, all the world's wealth is nothing.'

Often, before the shrine, he became absorbed and stopped the performance of the ritual, sitting motionless for hours at a time. Because of this, some of the temple officials became impatient with him; others laughed at him for a half-crazy fool. But Mathur was deeply impressed. And he told the Rani: 'We have got a wonderful devotee for the worship of our Goddess; very soon, he will awaken her.'

Before long, Mathur was proved right. This is how Ramakrishna describes the experience:

'There was an unbearable pain in my heart, because I couldn't get a vision of Mother. Just as a man wrings out a towel with all his strength to get the water out of it, so I felt as if my heart and mind were being wrung out. I began to think I should never see Mother. I was dying of despair. In my agony, I said to myself: "What's the use of living this life?" Suddenly, my eyes fell on the sword that hangs in the temple. I decided to end my life with it, then and there. Like a madman, I ran to it and seized it. And then—I had a marvellous vision of the Mother, and fell down unconscious. . . . It was as if houses, doors, temples, and everything else vanished altogether; as if there was nothing anywhere! And what I saw was an infinite shoreless sea of light; a sea that was consciousness. However far and in whatever direction I looked, I saw shining waves, one after another, coming toward me. They were raging and storming upon me with great speed. Very soon they were upon me; they made me sink down into unknown depths. I panted and struggled and lost consciousness.'

It is not quite clear from Ramakrishna's narrative whether or not he actually saw the form of Mother Kālī in the midst of this vision of shining consciousness. But it would seem that he did; because the first words that he uttered on coming to himself were 'Mother, Mother!'

After this vision, Ramakrishna was so absorbed that he was often unable to perform the temple worship at all. Hriday had to do it for him. Hriday was so disturbed by the mental condition of his uncle that he called in a doctor to treat him. It would be interesting to know what form the treatment took. Needless to say, it was quite ineffectual.

On the days when Ramakrishna was able to perform the worship, a strange phenomenon would occur. 'No sooner had I sat down to meditate,' he later recalled, 'than I heard clattering sounds in the joints of my body and limbs. They began in my legs. It was as if someone inside me had keys and was locking me up, joint by joint, turning the keys. I had no power to move my body or change my posture,

even slightly. I couldn't stop meditating, or go away elsewhere, or do anything else I wanted. I was forced, as it were, to sit in the same posture until my joints began clattering again and were unlocked, beginning at the neck, this time, and ending in my legs. When I sat and meditated, I had at first the vision of particles of light like swarms of fire-flies. Sometimes, I saw masses of light covering everything on all sides like a mist; at other times, I saw how everything was pervaded by bright waves of light like molten silver. I didn't understand what I saw, nor did I know if it was good or bad to be having such visions. So I prayed anxiously to Mother: "I don't understand what's happening to me. Please, teach me yourself how to know you. Mother, if *you* won't teach me, who will?"'

In such statements, we hear the artless accents of Ramakrishna, and they convey, more vividly than any words of his contemporaries, the personality he was more and more completely assuming—that of a child of the Divine Mother. Childlike, he now obeyed the will of the Mother in everything, no matter how trivial, and was utterly careless of what the world might think of his behaviour.

And now he had begun to see the Mother frequently. He saw her within the temple and outside it, without any longer having to make an effort of will in his meditation. He no longer saw an image in the temple, but the form of Mother herself. Later, he described how 'I put the palm of my hand near her nostrils and felt that the Mother was actually breathing. I watched very closely, but I could never see her shadow on the temple wall in the light of the lamp, at night. I used to hear from my room how Mother ran upstairs, as merry as a little girl, with her anklets jingling. I wanted to be sure that she'd really done this, so I went outside. And there she was, standing on the veranda of the second floor of the temple, with her hair flying. Sometimes she looked toward Calcutta and sometimes toward the Ganges'.

Hriday has left us a description of his re-

lations with Ramakrishna at this time, and of his uncle's astonishing behaviour. 'You felt awestruck when you entered the Kālī temple in those days, even when uncle wasn't there—and much more so when he was. Yet I couldn't resist the temptation of seeing how he acted at the time of the worship. As long as I was actually watching him, my heart was full of reverence and devotion; but when I came out of the temple, I began to have doubts and ask myself: "Has uncle really gone mad? Why else should he do such terrible things during the worship?" I was afraid of what the Rani and Mathur Babu would say when they came to hear of it. But uncle never worried. . . . I didn't venture to speak to him much, any longer; my mouth was closed by a fear I can't describe. I felt that there was some kind of barrier between us. So I just looked after him in silence, as best I could. But I was afraid he'd make a scene, some day.'

Hriday's fears were certainly justified. He continues: 'I saw how uncle's chest and eyes were always red, like those of a drunkard. He'd get up reeling from the worshipper's seat, climb on to the altar, and caress the Divine Mother, chucking her affectionately under the chin. He'd begin singing, laughing, joking, and talking with her, or sometimes he'd catch hold of her hands and dance. . . . I saw how, when he was offering cooked food to the Divine Mother, he'd suddenly get up, take a morsel of rice and curry from the plate in his hand, touch the Mother's mouth with it, and say: "Eat it, Mother. Do eat it!" Then, maybe he'd say: "You want me to eat it—and then you'll eat some afterwards? All right, I'm eating it now." Then he'd take some of it himself and put the rest to her lips again, saying: "I've had some. Now you eat."

'One day, at the time of the food-offering, uncle saw a cat. It had come into the temple, mewling. He fed it with the food which was to be offered to the Divine Mother. "Will you take it, Mother?" he said to the cat.'

The appalling Power that makes and un-makes the universe may also be known in the

aspect of an indulgent Mother, whom one can laugh with and pester for favours like a child. And that Power is everywhere present—within the air around us, within an image in a temple, within a stray cat. These are the simple and overwhelming truths which Ramakrishna was demonstrating by his seemingly insane actions. No wonder the orthodox temple officials were outraged! They sent a message of complaint to Mathur, who was away from Dakshineswar at the time. Mathur replied that he would soon return to see and judge for himself; in the meanwhile, Ramakrishna was to be allowed to continue the worship. Shortly after this, Mathur did return, unannounced. He went into the Kālī temple while Ramakrishna was making the offering. What Mathur saw convinced him that he was not in the presence of insanity, but of great holiness. He gave orders that Ramakrishna was not to be interfered with on any account. 'Now the Goddess is being truly worshipped', he said to the Rani.

But the confidence which Mathur and his mother-in-law felt in Ramakrishna was to be put to an even more severe test. One day, the Rani paid a visit to Dakshineswar, bathed in the Ganges, and went into the temple for the worship. Ramakrishna was already there. The Rani asked him to sing some of the songs in praise of the Mother, which he sang so beautifully and with such ecstatic devotion. Ramakrishna sang for a while. Then suddenly he stopped, turned to the Rani, and exclaimed indignantly: 'Shame on you—to think such thoughts even here!' And so saying, he struck the Rani with the palm of his hand.

Immediately there was a commotion. The women attendants of the Rani who were present began to scream for help. The gate-keeper and various officers of the temple came running up, ready to seize Ramakrishna and drag him out of the shrine. They only awaited the Rani's order. But the Rani herself remained calm; and Ramakrishna was now quietly smiling. 'He is not to blame', the Rani told the officers. 'Leave him alone.'

For she already knew why Ramakrishna had

struck her. Instead of listening to the song, she had actually at that moment been thinking about a lawsuit in which she was involved! She only marvelled that Ramakrishna could have known what was in her mind. Later, when her

attendants exclaimed at his insolence, she replied gravely and humbly: 'You don't understand—it was the Divine Mother herself who punished me and enlightened my heart.' And she forbade them ever to refer to the incident again.



RELIGION'S CHALLENGE TO MODERN MAN

BY SWAMI BUDHANANDA

Most of you have heard and read much in a general way about the modern man's challenges to religion. Those of you who are associated with any religious practice or movement should have often found yourselves challenged by unbelieving friends, who have always a clever new little thing to say against religion. Maybe the sharpness of their glittering arguments has silenced you; maybe you have wavered, but yet stuck to religion, because something in it has suckled you like a mother, and you had not the heart to forsake it. Unable to shatter the arguments of your unbelieving friends, unable also to forsake religion, you have perhaps resigned yourself to the necessity of always being on the defensive for the sake of your old mother, your faith.

When we speak of religion's challenge, we do not here mean any particular religion. By 'religion' here is meant those foundational, eternal, spiritual principles, of which the various religions of the world are but conduits. Swami Vivekananda says in his lecture on 'My Master': 'I learned from my master (meaning Sri Ramakrishna) the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic; they are but various phases of one eternal Religion; that one eternal Religion is applied to different planes of existence, is applied to the opinions of various minds and various races. There never was my religion or yours, my national religion or your national religion; there never existed many religions, there is only the

one. One infinite Religion existed all through eternity, and will ever exist, and this Religion is expressing itself in various countries, in various ways. Therefore we must respect all religions, and we must try to accept them all as far as we can.' It is in this sense that we are going to use the word 'religion'.

Now, what do we mean by 'modern man'? Who is he? How does he look? How does he think and behave?

In one sense, the 'modern man', like the *māyā* of Vedānta, is *anirvacanīya* or indescribable. He is, and yet he is not. Today he is, tomorrow he is not. In the morning he is, at night he is not. When he is awake, he talks fire, but when he is asleep, he snores like the primitive man. And if a tiger chases him in a dream, he shivers even after he is awake. In sleep and dream states, the modern man is the same old fellow; he is in no way different from the primitive man. Modernity therefore should be looked for in the waking state. Even in the waking state, you will find that he is swayed and moved by the same passions and delights, cares and cravings, follies and aspirations, as his forbears were.

Then, where exactly is the modern man located, in which state of his consciousness? It is only in a fraction of the waking state that a man manifests his modernity. Again, the son is almost always a better modern than his father. No particular man can be always young, but a

young man is always available. Likewise, no man is modern all his life, but a modern man is always available.

It may even be taking a risk to say, 'A modern man is always available'. Is 'modern man' really available today? Norman Cousins, Editor of the *Saturday Review*, of New York, wrote a small book in 1945, with the title *Modern Man Is Obsolete*. After analysing the various implications that flowed from the Hiroshima bombing, he remarked: 'If this reasoning is correct, then modern man is obsolete, a self-made anachronism, becoming more incongruous by the minute. He has exalted change in everything but himself. He has leaped centuries ahead in inventing a new world to live in, but he knows little or nothing about his own part in that world. He has surrounded and confounded himself with gaps—gaps between revolutionary technology and evolutionary man, between cosmic gadgets and human wisdom, between intellect and conscience. The struggle between science and morals that Henry Thomas Buckle foresaw a century ago has been all but won by science' (p. 11).

By being called 'obsolete', the modern man, however, does not become non-existent, but only qualified. You cannot say that this qualified 'obsolete' modern man is an unreal man. He makes his presence felt by knocking and kicking hard, which, if you are alive, you cannot easily ignore. This 'obsolete' modern man, whom Norman Cousins considers a 'self-made anachronism', has also a Messianic urge to liberate all those who do not share his views from what he considers to be their obscurantism. And so he attacks religion with a learned ferocity, saying, 'the whole epic of man's spiritual and imaginative experience' amounts to but 'closely-written, contradictory, half-illegible idiocies' (John Langdon Davis, *Man and the Universe*). He earnestly believes that the scientist is called to the noble mission of scavenging the human mind of all its false ideas, meaning man's religious heritage.

By 'modern man', therefore, we mean the dogmatic, impulsive, and almost mad devotee of

science, who, with his own soul given to Mephistopheles, appears to consider the world to be soulless, a mere mechanism of matter governed by natural laws, and having nothing to do with a God imagined by the heated little brains of the religious. In his own way, he is a very honest person having more fervent faith in the scientific method, consisting of experimentation, observation, and verification, than the average religious person probably has in God.

Now, is he the only man who should be called modern? Does a man cease to be modern if he believes in God, religion, or spiritual values? Are you all modern men and women or not?

We presume, while most of you will not endorse the views of the scientist quoted above, you will not also like to be called unmodern men and women. You do not like to live behind your times. Living in modern times as you do, you have always considered yourselves as moderns, and would also like to be so considered. But your conduct and disposition show that you are also religious persons. In other words, you are modern, but religious. It will be hard for us to believe that any one of you is really opposed to the true scientific spirit. Therefore, 'modern man' broadly signifies two types of persons:

(a) Those who, because of their attachment to science, denounce religion.

(b) Those who, in spite of their scientific spirit, or, better, because of their scientific spirit, are also religious.

Religion's challenge is to both these types of modern men. This challenge of religion is not of the nature of pouring on brimstone. Before religion, the great ancient mother, the modern man, who repudiates it, is like a naughty baby. On the head of the turbulent baby who breaks feeding bottles, his mother does not break another bottle if she is not mad. She uses a strategy of challenge, which brings out the best in the roguish baby.

If the direct language of religion's challenge to such a person could be imagined, it would be somewhat like this: 'Child, many before you have used equally unsweet words against me.

Like them all, you, too, are quite safe in my lap.'

What would this cryptic challenge of religion mean? Notwithstanding all the vehemence of your knowledge, like a baby you fall asleep at night. At that time, you do not know what happens to the world or to yourself. When you are awake again, you get back your body, mind, and the world. Do you know who preserves all these for you? Do you know who feeds that intelligence of yours with which you denounce religion?

The ancient language of religion as recorded in scripture is: 'It is by Me that one eats; he who sees, he who breathes, he who hears what has been said, does so by Me: they that know not Me decline. . . . It is I who blow like wind, bringing into being all the worlds and transcending the heavens and the earth; so much am I by My greatness' (*Rg-Veda*, X.125).

The *Mahābhārata* defines religion as *satya*, which literally means 'isness', popularly translated as 'truth'. Nothing exists beyond, apart from, and without this *satya* or 'isness'. This 'isness' or truth is religion. You may not understand. But by not understanding, you do not escape 'isness'. You may fly anywhere in the world, the heavens, or the nether worlds, but you cannot get a pin-point of space where 'isness' is not. And religion is even more than this.

You may not have regard for scripture, but you will think a few times before you flout scientific opinion. This is what Einstein said about science vis-à-vis religion: 'Even though the realms of religion and science in themselves are clearly marked off from each other, nevertheless there exist between the two strong reciprocal relationships and dependencies. Though religion may be that which determines the goal, it has, nevertheless, learned from science, in the broadest sense, what means will contribute to the attainment of the goals it has set up.

'But science can only be created by those who are thoroughly imbued with the aspiration towards truth and understanding. This source of feeling, however, springs from the sphere of

religion. To this, there also belongs the faith in the possibility that the regulations valid for the world of existence are rational, that is, comprehensible to reason. I cannot conceive a genuine scientist without that profound faith. The situation may be expressed by an image: Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind' (*Out of My Later Years*). When the scientist understands science better, he discovers this mutuality between science and religion.

The imagery used by Einstein is, however, somewhat misleading. Instead of saying, 'Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind', he should have said, 'Science without religion is blind and religion without science is lame'. The world situation of today will prove our contention. Einstein would not perhaps accept our rejoinder, because his approach to reality was thoroughly empirical. Therefore he could say categorically: 'Science can only ascertain what *is*, but not what should be, and outside its domain, value-judgements of all kinds remain necessary. Religion, on the other hand, deals only with evaluations of human thought and action; it cannot justifiably speak of facts and relationships of facts' (*ibid.*).

But the question is: Does science really know what *is*? Does science really claim that it knows the ultimate reality? In the absence of such a claim, strictly speaking, science knows only what *appears to be*.

Einstein thinks that religion is only confined to what 'should be', or, in other words, to ethics. On the other hand, religion alone claims to know what 'is'. The empiricism of the illumined soul, who has worked out the validity of the great Ātman-Brahman equation in his life, is beyond the methods and the understanding of the scientist. Undoubtedly, religion embraces within its scope what 'should be'. But at this point of time, religion alone claims to know what 'is'. No doubt, in his own way, Einstein travelled a long way with religion; but religion travels farther and beyond his domain.

Religion is not only the 'ought', but also the 'it'. It is struggle and tranquillity, restraint and release. It is both union and unity, truth and reality, destination and destiny. It is what makes for the advancement, growth, and liberation of all. It is an expedition; it is a song. Here and now it is, and there and then too. It is Law that knows no affection; it is Nemesis that knows no hesitation. It is closing the eyes and opening the vision. It is indeed a running away; it is equally a coming home—renunciation and realization.

How seriously do you take the aboriginal who says that physics is all nonsense, because it is neither meat nor mat? The enlightened person raises his eyebrows only that much at the modern man's denunciation of religion. If the modern man is not a fool, he will look to his own welfare. If he is intelligent, he will see that in others' welfare is rooted his own. Seek to survive, prosper, or be happy—not to speak of higher things—then, today or tomorrow, in daylight or darkness, in joy or in agony; your very bones are bound in effect to be religious, label or no label. And who is the man in his senses who does not seek to survive, prosper, or be happy?

Religion's main challenge is not, however, to the irreligious, but to the religious.

Four years before his death in 1902, Swami Vivekananda went on a pilgrimage to a famous shrine of the Divine Mother known as Kṣīrabhavānī in Kashmir. The Swami passed a week there in spiritual absorption. Though he was in a highly exalted mood, the Swami was really distressed in heart, pondering over the ruin and desecration of the temple wrought by the vandalism of the Mohammedan invaders. Anguished in heart, he thought: 'How could the people have permitted such sacrilege without offering strenuous resistance? If I were here then, I would never have allowed such things. I would have laid down my life to protect the Mother.' As the Swami thought like this, something astounding and incredible happened—something that entirely transformed his attitude to life. The Swami clearly heard the voice of

the Mother, saying: 'What even if unbelievers should enter My temples and defile My images? What is that to you? Do you protect Me? Or do I protect you?' The Swami said later to his disciples, referring to this experience: 'All my patriotism is gone. Everything is gone. Now it is only "Mother, Mother!" I have been very wrong. . . . I am only a little child.'

Many people these days evince a sincere concern as to the future of religion. Many people did so in the past. But in this nuclear age, when man has dived into absolute space, the good people, the religious, are feeling an undefined apprehension about religion's future. They seem to harbour a fear that one day science will either blow up religion to nothingness or make it absolutely unnecessary. And either way religion dies. So they want to know if they can do anything to save religion from such an inglorious death, for they love religion even as the child loves its mother.

To such as these, religion's smiling challenge would be: 'Dear children, it is so touching that, with your little hands, you want to protect your mother. But foolish ones, do you protect me or do I protect you?'

When we know religion better, we understand that, if there is anything about whose future we are not to worry in the least, it is religion. For what is religion? Understood in its profoundest depths, whatever it is is religion. That is to say, religion is the very reality. That which holds everything together is called *dharma*. That is called 'isness' or *satya*. The ultimate reality is both the basis and the goal of religion. And whatever is done to realize that reality in life is also included in that religion.

Religion has been defined as the 'manifestation of the divinity already in man'. And this divinity is nothing but the Ātman, which, in the ultimate analysis, is non-different from Brahman, the reality behind the universe. If God is the beginning and the end and everything of religion, and if the Kingdom of God is already within you, how can religion be ever in peril in any point of time, whatever may be the advancement of science?

If God is real, if He can be realized—it has been shown by many saints that He *can* be realized—then how can religion ever be destroyed? Or, if God is not real, and therefore He cannot be realized, what does it matter if religion is destroyed?

Religion has nothing to fear from truth. For truth itself is the warp and woof of religion. That truth may come from science. In that case, science becomes the instrument of religion, not the destroyer of religion. Those accessories or non-essentials of religion that cannot stand the blow of time and truth must perish. Once one is firmly established in the conviction of the indestructibility of fundamental religion, one can boldly, confidently, and knowingly face any eventuality of religion, either in the present or in the future.

Let not the religious man look foolish, shamefaced, unsure, and uncertain. There is no need for fumbling or groping. Let him look the future in the face. Without being conceited, let him be bold; without being dogmatic, let him be firm; without being complacent, let him be confident; without being restless, let him be dynamic; without being servile, let him be humble.

The believing person may not have realized the great truths proclaimed by religion, but let him know that he is moving in the right direction. Let him carefully deepen his understanding of religion, every day and every night. As Manu, the ancient lawgiver of the Hindus, says: 'One must slowly build up *dharma*, even as the ants build the ant-hill.' With his penetrating sense of realism, Swami Vivekananda says: 'Religion is a question of fact, not of talk. We have to analyse our souls and find what is there. We have to understand it and realize what is understood. That is religion. No amount of talk will make religion.' And he asserts: 'As a matter of fact, ninety-nine per cent of those who talk against religion have never analysed their own minds and have never struggled to get at the facts. So their arguments do not have any weight against religion, any more than the words of a blind man who cries

out "You are all fools who believe in the sun" would affect us.'

If a silent man of realization lives in a cave somewhere, but the whole country raves against religion, even then in that country religion is. Let the religious be assured, once for all, that the fundamental religion, by which is meant the reality and its realization, has never been in danger, nor is in danger today, nor can be in danger in the future.

But this fundamental religion, in its expressions through different religions of the world, is associated with certain things—dogmas, customs, rituals, institutions of various sorts—which by their very nature are always prone to be in danger, in the sense that they are mutable. No one can, need, or should try to stop these inevitable changes. They are in the nature of things; and this nature, in another sense, is part of religion itself. That is to say, the changeability of the non-essentials of religion is also a truth of religion. When we know this, we should be rather worried when religion gets stuck in an unchangeable pattern of non-essentials, because the health of the unchangeable core is well maintained only when it passes through various changeables. If the immutable Ātman were to be identified with one physical body for all time, how horrible it would be! But no one should try to change them according to his whims or fancies. *Kāla* or time alone should determine this change, not you and I. These changes will happen, but no one need or should plan for them. Only an incarnation of God has authority to change the pattern of religion.

Therefore, as far as religion is concerned, when the unchangeable essential in it by its very law continues to be unchanged, and its changeable associates by their very nature continue to change, nothing in religion could be really considered to be in danger. Let us all be sure about that.

The next point in religion's challenge to the modern man, who professes to be religious, would be: 'Children, I am never in danger. But you always are, until you realize me.'

We consider ourselves religious and go about with an air of being superior to the so-called atheists. But what precisely is the distinction between the atheist and the religious man of our type? The atheist does not believe in a thing he has not seen; but the religious man believes in a thing he has not seen. Now, if seeing is believing, the atheist should be considered a more honest person for not believing in a thing which he has not seen. And when this honest atheist lands some punches on our faith, we groan in pain and exasperation. But to be sure, the religious richly deserve all the knocks they get. This at least should awaken them.

The faith of the common believing man, who will vehemently profess that he is not an atheist—if you analyse his faith—will be found to be made of such valuable stuff as vapour and vagueness! Yes, he believes in God; once in a while, he goes to the temple, or church, or mosque; he shows respect to monks or ministers; and also he may believe in prayer or ritualistic worship, pilgrimage, religious fasts, feasts, or festivals. Like a little sauce on his favourite dish, religion does have a place in his life, but not as important a place as eating, sleeping, or drinking. He has all the energy and all the time for aimless hiking, driving, idling, gossiping, or hobbying, but no time for spiritual practices. And how many ever even think that such a thing as spiritual practice is necessary in order that they may be religious?

Even then we consider ourselves religious. We are perfectly reconciled that, in these days when atheists are making so much noise in the world, God has become rather shy, and it is no longer possible to see Him in the manner of saints and seers of the past.

And, again, the intellectuals among the religious do not think that they have to take the trouble of belonging to a church or religious persuasion, for religion, after all, is a personal matter, between soul and God. Apart from that, religious institutionalism, according to them, is not also a sign of genuine spirituality. Therefore the intellectuals among the religious,

out of their sense of superiority which is nothing but crass egoism, keep themselves aloof from the collective religious strivings of society, with the result that unknowingly they become religiously sterile—peculiar creatures who are neither here nor there.

Apart from that, in order to keep religion absolutely pure and unspoiled, we keep it in its place, because a mixing up of things leads to many complications. You cannot keep religion pure when you mix it up with life! Therefore, religion and life are kept separate. We do not bring God either to our apartments or to our business office. Religion is kept in the temple, the church, and the scripture. And life is life; it flows on, like the river carrying all the dirt.

Did not Christ say, 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon'? Therefore, we do not mix up these two services. We worship them separately. Complete segregation between God and worldly activities, we have found to be the only way to an intelligent, religious, successful life. Therefore, in our secular activities, our political or social life, our international relations, we do not allow religion to penetrate. Should we degrade God down to our level? We are not yet that bad! Such is the state of the so-called religious people all over the world.

We are living today in momentous times with mighty challenges to face. Man's very survival on this planet depends on his ability to change his nature. Only that way can we fill up the gap between 'revolutionary technology and evolutionary man'. A change of nature is urgent, because, behaving as we have been in the world in a tribal manner, we just cannot survive. But we cannot *behave* better unless we *are* better. And we can become better only through spiritual disciplines, through no other means. These spiritual disciplines the irreligious will not observe. The religious will have to become so spiritual as to indirectly but vitally influence, by sheer power of example, the very conduct of the irreligious in the world. Therefore, it may be said that science has indeed

made spiritual discipline imperative in the world today.

If the religious man is really conscientious, he has only one way open to him. He must become truly spiritual. And how does he become spiritual without making spiritual practice the breath of his life? He must have this flaming faith, he must accept this postulate as put forward by Swami Vivekananda: 'Religion is not only based upon the experience of ancient times, but that no man can be religious until he has the same perceptions himself. . . . If there is a God, we must see Him; if there is a soul, we must perceive it; otherwise, it is better not to believe.' The central idea of fundamental religion is: 'Just as we can come in direct contact with the objects of the senses, so religion even can be directly perceived in a far more intense sense. The truths of religion, as God and soul, cannot be perceived by external senses. . . . Reason leaves us at a point quite indecisive, . . . we may reason all our lives, . . . we are incompetent to prove or disprove facts of religion. . . . The whole scope of realization, therefore, is beyond sense perception.'

The spiritual experiences which our forbears had, we also can have in our lives, in the manner a scientific experiment can be repeated in the laboratory. But we must work as they did and fulfil the same conditions as they did. Now this faith alone will not do. The religious man must know that God is not just a loose adjunct precariously hanging on him like a bat. But God is the very ground, the goal, and the breath of life. One can never reach this divine goal of life by walking on a crooked path.

Said Jesus Christ: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life' (John: 14.6). For the religious man, there can be no difference between the way, the life, and the truth. Truth alone is both life and way for him. For him, there can be nothing secular. Nothing is trivial in life; nothing is beneath the notice of God. His every action must be motivated by God-hunger, and lead him one step nearer to God. Every act must become worship. That way alone spiritual strength comes to course through his veins.

Therefore, all our actions must become worship. This is the meaning of the great *mantra* of the *Īsā Upaniṣad*: 'All this—whatever exists in this changing universe—should be covered by the Lord.'

Why does the scientist shine in glory, and the religious man wallow in confusion?

The answer is that the scientist has stolen a precious secret of religion. Look at the scientist—what dedication, what one-pointed search, what discipline and penetration, what unremitting effort, what invincible courage and devotion to truth! A discovery does not wait for him at the edge of the table. After years of hard labour in seclusion, he comes to have a glowing day, the day of discovery. Maybe his whole life will pass away without seeing such a glowing day. But that does not deter or disappoint him. In this, whether he knows it or not, he follows precisely a spiritual precept of the Vedas.

In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, a gospel of creative dynamism is imparted through telling imagery. Such is the imperative:

'There is no prosperity without constant movement. So we have heard from our superiors. . . . The Lord is the friend of the wanderer. So march on.

'Of one who always keeps moving, his legs become beautiful, his body strong and healthy. His sins are destroyed by pilgrimage. So march on. . . .

'The fortune of a man keeps sitting while he is sitting, stands when he is standing, sleeps when he is sleeping, and moves on when he moves. So march on.

'While wandering, one gets honey and sweet fruits. . . . So march on' (XXXIII. 15).

When this gospel of dynamism, of continuous effort, became the life-breath of the scientist, he came to dominate the world for good or bad. While he has proved the truth and efficacy of the truly religious man's way in another field of activity, the religious man has languished in sloth and make-belief and self-delusion. If humanity is to survive at all, it is this gospel of

unremitting spiritual striving that must become the breath of life of the religious man today.

But it is not even the question of survival alone that should goad his spiritual effort, for that would become another sort of materialism. What is at stake in the religious man's life is the honour, the truth, the purpose, the sense and sanity of his life. It is not that, being afraid of the future, he should practise spiritual discipline, in order to somehow manage to survive like rats in the hole of future. The religious man wants to practise spiritual discipline, because he wants to take the future as a gift from the hands of God, as a blessing, whatever may come; because he wants to rediscover the meaning of life, the purpose of life, which is nothing but realization of God.

The religious man has other duties also, which he cannot perform unless his very soul

is on fire. In this miserable world of cruel deeds, he must bring the balm and blessing of compassion; in this world corroded by hideous hedonism, he must teach by example the sublimity and sweetness of the life of rectitude; in this world of senseless selfishness, he must hold aloft the joy and light of self-giving.

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, we read that the heavenly voice declared in the form of thunder the triple accents: 'Da, da, da'—which means: 'Be self-controlled, be charitable, be compassionate.' This was the redemptive challenge of religion to men in ancient times. Accepting this challenge, men became mighty seers of spiritual truths. The same is the challenge of religion to modern men, to each and every one of us. Let us accept this challenge with all our might for our own salvation and for salvaging the future of mankind.

EXISTENTIALISM AND INDIAN THOUGHT

BY SRI M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

Existentialism is the name of a school of philosophy which rose in the last century. Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), who lived at Copenhagen in Denmark, is the founder of the school. Nietzsche, Jaspers, Marcel, Heidegger, and Sartre are other writers of eminence who belong to this school. These thinkers did not look upon themselves as the disciples of Kierkegaard in any sense. They were too individualistic to label themselves as the followers of any tradition. Further, they belonged to different nationalities, and temperamentally they were wide apart. Yet, it is possible for the careful student to detect a common theme in their writings. Though their modes of expression are different, there is, nevertheless, a deep undercurrent of common sentiment in their writings. That is probably because all of them came in the wake of the Romantic Movement in Europe. Their books, though written in their

respective national languages, are now available in faithful English translations. We have also some anthologies, giving relevant extracts from their writings in a connected manner. Authoritative critical expositions have not yet been attempted. In the pages of the *Hibbert Journal*, we occasionally read articles of a critical nature. But there is reason to think that the criticisms are based on insufficient knowledge. These writers still await an authentic interpreter, who will exhibit their interrelations, how their thoughts run into one another and form a coherent whole, and put it in its proper perspective in the history of philosophy.

Soren Kierkegaard is not only the founder of the school, but also its most daring and courageous exponent. Even in translations, his writings leave a permanent impression on the reader's mind. They are extremely original,

and, as must be expected, furnish much material for serious thinking. It may be that we find much room for disagreement, but there is no question as regards the sincerity of his convictions. His whole personality, not merely his intellect, seems to be involved in his writings. He wrote as many as eighteen works, but only two of them are very important: *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. When we read the extracts from these two books, we get the impression that we are in contact with a mind of a very fine penetration, and one that is highly sensitive to the meaning of life and its main problems. Evidently, Kierkegaard, like Śrī Śaṅkara, was a thinker who was dreadfully in earnest about the purpose of life, and was anxious that his fellowmen should not run after ephemeral things, missing the main aim of life. Thus, his denunciations of the age must be attributed to his zeal and not to cynicism.

Kierkegaard was born and bred up as a pious Christian, but in course of time, he was dissatisfied with the religion of his fathers, as it did not stand the test of reason, and had to be accepted largely as a matter of faith. He therefore broke with Christianity, and was on the look-out for some other safe anchorage. Hegel's philosophy was then the fashion, and, no wonder, the young Ishmaelite sought refuge in it, thinking that it would prove to be a way of life. After deep study, however, he discovered that Hegel's philosophy was terribly disappointing. It was a system based on pure thought, which bore no relation to things and in which the individual was nowhere. 'A philosophy of pure thought', he writes, 'is for an existing individual a chimera, if the truth that is sought is something to exist in.' He writes elsewhere: 'The case of most systematizers is as when a man builds a huge castle and lives himself by the side of it, away in a hut. They do not live in the huge systematic building of theirs. This is a decisive objection. Spiritually speaking, a man's thought should be the building in which he lives.' Kierkegaard, therefore, rejected Hegel's philosophy, because it was based

on a standpoint that was inaccessible to the individual. Only from a vantage ground outside of human possibility could one survey the totality of existence.

He again sought refuge in Christianity, because it laid the emphasis on the individual and his destiny. The example of Christ was any day more inspiring than all the systems of thought put together. Christ was a historical personality, who claimed to be an incarnation of God. He was a God-Man descended on earth. He was near to us, inasmuch as he was a human being like any one of us; and, at the same time, by claiming divinity to himself, he became an ideal for us to follow. One had to place implicit and absolute faith in Christ, if one was to profit by his example. But the conception of God-Man was not free from difficulties. How could God, who is eternally perfect, incarnate Himself as the son of man? It is possible to adduce arguments to prove the existence of God. In regard to a historical human being, there is no difficulty in believing in his existence. But the combination of the two does present logical difficulties which are hard to overcome. It is only by abandoning reason, and taking one's stand on pure and uncorrupted faith, that one could believe in Christ as God-Man. It is a leap comparable to the leap from the summit of a precipice into the abysmal chasm below. The incarnation of God in the person of Christ is a puzzle which can never be rationalized. It is therefore both a limit and a challenge to reason. The true Christian has to lay aside reason and experience and hold fast to this uncertainty. The more passionately he believes in this paradox, the more he proves himself to be an individual. It no doubt entails great risks, but that is the price that the believer has to pay. The man who joins himself to this paradox in the passion of faith is 'out upon the deep, over seventy thousand fathoms of water'.

Reason and faith are therefore discontinuous. Various attempts have no doubt been made to reconcile them, but Kierkegaard is definitely of

the opinion that the breach cannot be healed. The gulf that separates them is too wide to be bridged. They belong to separate spheres, and the only way of avoiding confusion, error, and misdirection of effort is to keep them in their respective spheres. St. Thomas of Aquinas and Hegel made serious attempts to rationalize Christian beliefs, but Kierkegaard does not think highly of them. In his opinion, Christian beliefs are wholly alien to rational thought and incapable of assimilation with the rest of our experience. In taking this view, Kierkegaard is in the very good company of Luther and Pascal.

Kierkegaard is not, however, unaware of the place of reason and thinking in life. He did not mean to contest the traditional claim of reason to guide the day-to-day affairs of life and even to make the right choice as between good and evil. Various finite aims, like seeking wealth, pleasure, and happiness, present themselves before us, and we have to examine them carefully. Reason will show that they are not finally satisfactory and hence have to be renounced as not worth our while. From these finite aims, we may make the transition to what is Infinite, viz. God, but since God is a purely intellectual conception, it is bound to leave us cold. It will not appeal to our will and emotions, and hence it will be one-sided. We have therefore to give up belief even in God, and proceed to something higher which will call into play our deepest emotions and all the strength of our will-power. Such a conception is that of God-Man exemplified in Christ. It is thus by the rigorous exercise of reason that Kierkegaard formulates the final end which will be worthy of a human being as an existing individual.

Reason can take us thus far and no further. Its role is mainly negative. Its function is to expose the worthlessness of the aims that we ordinarily pursue in life. With the aid of abstract reason, Kant tried to reveal the nature of reality, but failed. The thing-in-itself eluded the grasp of reason. Hegel fared no better. He built a colossal system by the process of

reconciling seeming contraries in a higher synthesis, but it did not do justice to the reality of the individual self, nor did it bear any relation to things. No method of reasoning can throw light on the nature of the self. Thought finds its limit here. Existence is not a category of reason. Since it precedes essence, it cannot be defined. It therefore falls outside the scope of thought. A system of thought may be ever so comprehensive, but if it leaves out the individual self, it must be treated as pure fantasy. Hegel maintained that the real was the rational, and that it was therefore possible to render intelligible the whole of reality, including the self, but his claim is untenable.

The only approach to the self is by an act of inwardness. The individual can be known only by himself from within. The self cannot be proved, since it is the presupposition of all proof. The proper business of thought is with the thinker's personal existence, to throw light on its nature, and not to find arguments in support of its being. In the final analysis, the nature of the self is ethical and not intellectual. Its essence consists in taking a total decision in respect of one's vocation in life, or marriage, or believing in Christ as God-Man. Choosing one's vocation and one's mate are finite aims, and cannot be pursued as altogether worthy ends. The real decision which calls forth all the spiritual powers of the self, and keeps it in a state of perpetual tension, is in respect of the belief in the incarnation of God as man. Such a conception cannot stand the test of reason. It is difficult to rationalize it. How the Infinite, who is eternally satisfied, can appear as a human being and live like one of us and subject himself to the extreme humiliation of the crucifixion passes one's understanding. Objectively speaking, it is most improbable. And yet the strength, sincerity, and genuineness of one's faith consist in believing in Christ as God-Man with passionate fervour.

The existing individual is therefore one who wills absolutely. There should be nothing to act as a check on the absoluteness of his ethical decisions. Kant's 'categorical imperative' does

not go far enough. It lays down the condition that what an individual wills must be capable of universal application. Kierkegaard recognizes no such limit. A man can will without let or hindrance only in an original choice. It must be made with one's eyes fully open, with the highest sense of responsibility, and in utter solitude. One should not think of following in the footsteps of others, nor expect others to walk along the path laid by one. There is no question of looking to others for guidance, for no two human beings are ever found in identical situations. Each individual must take the decision by himself, throwing the full weight of his personality into it.

The tension between reason and faith will always be there. Even after taking the final decision, the tension will not slacken in the least, for nothing has happened in the meanwhile to change the situation. The absurd does not become probable, merely because one decides to build one's life upon it. This total decision has to be renewed from time to time that its tension may not weaken. 'The truth of inwardness is a function of uncertainty.' As uncertainty increases, inwardness also grows. 'To depend for one's life upon the object of a supreme choice and to lay hold of it with one hand and with the other to hold on to its objective uncertainty and hang suspended between the two, that is the meaning of faith.' Repeated renewal of the decision makes for growth in inwardness, but there is no development of experience which would remove the tension.

Such an absolute decision means a 'clean break with society and all that is finite. Before taking the absolute decision, one must turn one's back on the things that people ordinarily hold dear. One must cease to look for guidance or inspiration from one's fellow-beings. Nor should one follow tradition or cling to the established customs. Social and political institutions are a delusion and a snare. By relying on them, we lose our real self. It is no use trying to draw lessons from history. Hegel believed that in history there was the unfolding of a divine purpose, and that an individual

might realize the best in him by identifying himself with it. But Kierkegaard does not agree with this view. He thinks that it is absurd to go to history for one's life without first having a life of one's own. It is to abdicate the responsibility of living an authentic life and become colourless and inauthentic. It is feeble and ridiculous imitation to call oneself a member of an association, or to identify oneself with the age, or the public good, or the redemption of humanity. By relying on these external factors, the individual ceases to be an individual and becomes a pale and insignificant nonentity.

When all safe ground has thus been taken away from under our feet, we are in a state of despair. It is a state of utter loneliness and isolation. It is then that the individual will awaken to a true knowledge of his nature. A new and unsuspected dimension of his being will then be revealed to him. This is any day more valuable than collecting a mass of irrelevant information and working it up into a system. The only worth-while knowledge is self-knowledge. The self is not a static entity, but a dynamic, functional unit. It exists only in making and constantly renewing total and irrevocable decisions. The manner in which it lays itself open to be impressed by a critical ethical situation is more important than its assimilating a fund of useless knowledge. 'It is the *how* of appropriation and not the *what* of approximation that is important in knowledge.' 'An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation process of the most passionate inwardness is the highest truth attainable by an individual.' Only such a truth has an intimate bearing on our most cherished interests.

Such is the chart of life that Kierkegaard has mapped out for the individual. The essence of the self is ethical. To live on the ethical plane means to be making absolute decisions. The decisions must relate to an apparently absurd belief. Between faith and reason, there is no possibility of reconciliation. The two are discontinuous. It is no use therefore trying to rationalize the object of Christian faith.

Knowing full well that it is most improbable, one must still cling to it with the most passionate inwardness. The tension arising from the opposite pulls must always be there. There is no possibility of the tension relaxing even after the decision is taken. A man deserves to be called an individual only so long as he takes total decisions in absolute solitariness and experiences the tension arising from reason and faith pulling in opposite directions. The state of tension is the *sine qua non* of the individual.

A superficial view may suggest that there are many points of contact between the speculations of Kierkegaard and Indian thought, especially the Vedānta. But closer study will show that the resemblances are more apparent than real. In so far as Kierkegaard places a limit on the role of reason and maintains that, since existence precedes essence, the former cannot be defined, he takes up positions that the Vedānta will endorse. When he further declares that the only real knowledge is knowledge relating to the true nature of the self, and not the mass of information concerning the external world, and that the Infinite is not object but subject, that it must be sought within ourselves and not among objects of sense, the Vedāntin again will most readily agree with him. When, finally, he makes out that spiritual life, in the final stages, is one's own sole responsibility and that one must not look for set patterns or guidance from others, he is only stating the most important Vedāntic truth that the man of vision will not be guided by customs and conventions, that he will not allow even the Vedic rule of life to sit tight on him, but will be a lone adventurer in a trackless region.

Here agreement must stop. We may now notice the points of difference which, as will be seen, are fundamental. Though the Vedāntin assigns a subordinate place to reason, he does not look upon it with distrust or suspicion, as many passages in Kierkegaard tend to show. Nor does the Vedāntin believe in the irreconcilable antithesis between reason and faith. The absolute discontinuity between them, as well as between the three stages of man's spirit-

ual development, viz. the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious, smacks of rhetorical exaggeration. Indian genius, like that of Hegel, lies in harmonizing seeming contraries in a higher synthesis and not in dichotomizing and treating them as irreconcilables. From reason to faith, from intellect to intuition, there is surely a process of development and not a leap 'over seventy thousand fathoms of water'. Intuition and faith supervene on intellect and reason as the crown and consummation of the latter and not by negating them. Similarly, when a man passes from the aesthetic to the ethical stage, and finally from the ethical to the religious, he does not take a leap by making a clean break with his past, but moves by gentle and imperceptible stages of growth. In the processes of nature, there is only evolution and no revolution.

If the discontinuity is replaced by the notion of continuity, it follows that our knowledge becomes more and more comprehensive and more and more systematic. Our experiences, which are a chaotic mass to start with, are gradually analysed and brought under certain categories like matter and spirit. The subject of experience, the individual self, will not be left out as Kierkegaard thinks, but will be included under spirit. Strictly speaking, therefore, there will be three entities—nature, man, and God. In the first instance, these three will be subsumed under the notion of *Saguṇa Brahman*, which corresponds to Hegel's Absolute, against which Kierkegaard is never tired of railing. But the Advaita Vedāntin looks upon even this stage of systematization as only penultimate. The final synthesis is in the *acosmic Absolute* or *Nirguṇa Brahman*, which proves to be the ultimate ground of *prakṛti*, *jīva*, and *īśvara*.

Kierkegaard's objection to the systematization of knowledge is therefore totally misconceived. Knowledge would not deserve its name if it did not hang together as a system of inclusions and exclusions. By the exercise of reason, we obtain deeper and yet deeper insights into the

inner affiliations of things and events; and by virtue of these intuitions, we are able to organize large masses of seemingly disparate facts into a well-knit, coherent whole. As we progress from popular to scientific knowledge, and from scientific to philosophic knowledge, we obtain fresh glimpses into the deeper unity underlying the surface appearances. Ultimately, we are filled with the vision of the unity of all existence — what the Vedāntin would call *sarvātmabhāva*. Man is always progressing towards this supreme goal, though sometimes by devious paths. It is this grand endeavour that invests all our actions with meaning and significance. The Vedāntin would take strong objection to what Kierkegaard seems to suggest by implication that the universe is without plan or purpose and that it is meaningless.

The perception of the cosmic plan, and the realization that all our conscious endeavours are in step with it, removes the initial tension and fills us with joy and a sense of having achieved something worth while. Surely, tension cannot, in the nature of things, last for all time. It cannot be a permanent feature of our spiritual life. It is wrong to say, therefore, that a man deserves to be reckoned as an individual only so long as he is experiencing the tension. On the other hand, the perfect individual, for example, the *sthitaprajña*, is always serene, calm, and unruffled. It is because Kierkegaard lacked the beatific vision that he makes so much of tension. According to the Upaniṣads, 'The knot of ignorance is cut asunder, all doubts are set at rest, and all *karma* is cancelled, when the Highest that is beyond cause and effect is seen' (*Muṇḍaka*, II. 2.8). In another Upaniṣad (*Taittirīya*, II.9), it is said that the man who has realized the Self is no longer tormented by the sins of omission and commission.

Lastly, we take up the special case of tension to which Kierkegaard frequently refers, viz. belief in Christ as God-Man. In his opinion, it is difficult to imagine how God could incarnate as a human being. Christ spoke of himself as God on earth. The conception of a human being with all his limitations ill accords with

that of God, who is free from limitations of every kind. It is absurd to speak of Christ, or, for that matter, of any other human being, as God descended on earth. The conception of God-Man is a contradiction in terms. And yet one had to believe in it with all his heart and soul. The tension between reason and faith is bound to be there for ever. It would not slacken in the least even after pinning one's faith in it and continuing in that state by renewed repetitions. Now the notion of God incarnating as a human being is not peculiar to Christianity.

In Hindu religion, there is the conception of *avatāra*, which literally means 'one who has descended'. Śrī Hari has gone through ten *avatāras*, of which those of Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are justly famous. What is the picture of Śrī Rāma that the sage-poet Vālmiki has painted for us in the *Rāmāyaṇa*? There are many passages which make out, both explicitly and implicitly, that Śrī Rāma is a human being, the son of Daśaratha. Similarly, there are other passages which speak of him as superhuman, as God descended on earth, as Śrī Hari in human form. The two sets of passages are left in juxtaposition; and pious Hindus who read the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a spiritual exercise do not experience any tension, as there is no difficulty in effecting a reconciliation between them.

The Lord is seated in the heart of every human being. Those who realize the spark of divinity in them come to be spoken of as godly men. If there is total awakening to the Spirit, then one becomes God-Man, and there is nothing that he cannot achieve. He can walk over the waves or feed thousands of people with a single loaf of bread. He can kill fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* in a trice or bid the ocean to make way for him. In other ways also, he rises to unsuspected heights of heroism. The great deeds of Śrī Rāma, like those of Christ, can well be imagined in a man who lives and moves and has his being in the realm of the Spirit. It is possible for man to rise to godhood. Whether we call it the ascent of man or the descent of God does not matter much.

Once we take this view, all tension disappears like mist before the rising sun. There is, consequently, no need to abandon reason and throw oneself completely into the arms of faith. The fact that Śrī Rāma was not a historical personality makes little difference to the argument.

Our conclusion therefore is that Kierkegaard

was undoubtedly an original thinker with a penetrating insight, but his insight did not go far enough. It did not ripen into a vision of the ultimate Reality. If this *saṁyagdarśana* had been vouchsafed to him, it would have completely changed the entire complexion of his philosophy.

CHĀNDOGYA UPANIṢAD : AN INTERPRETATION

BY DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

In this article, an attempt is made to interpret the first four sections of the sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* from the Sāṅkhya point of view.

The Upaniṣads have dealt with thirty-two *vidyās*. The *mumukṣu*, who wants to have a direct realization of the ultimate truth, can choose any of the *vidyās*. The sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* deals with one such *vidyā*, known as *Sad-vidyā*. This chapter consists of sixteen sections.

Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja have tried their best to refute the Sāṅkhya interpretation of the *Brahma-Sūtra*, in their respective commentaries. These endeavours made by the two great thinkers of India naturally lead us to infer that there was a time in the Vedic period when the Upaniṣads used to be taught from the Sāṅkhya point of view.

It has been admitted that the Sāṅkhya system is one of the oldest systems of thought. In fact, the Sāṅkhya thought can be traced legitimately to the Upaniṣads. The conjectures about the teachings of the Upaniṣads from the Sāṅkhya point of view seem quite sound and logical. The fact that the Sāṅkhya line of thought found greater perfection in the later Upaniṣads, like the *Śvetāśvatara*, the *Maitrāyaṇi*, etc., also lends support to the hypothesis that the Upaniṣads used to be taught from the Sāṅkhya point of view.

The Sāṅkhya version of the Upaniṣadic texts is no longer available to us. This article is just an attempt to formulate an exposition of some of the texts of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* from the point of view of the dualistic Sāṅkhya.

SECTION I

In the first section of the sixth chapter, father Āruṇi wanted to know if his son Śveta-ketu was able to learn from his teacher that principle by knowing which one could know all. Elucidating further this very point, the father says: 'Dear boy, just as through a single clod of clay all that is made of clay would become known, for all modification is but name based upon words and the clay alone is real' (VI. 1.4).

Here, by following the Sāṅkhya line of thought, we can very well say that the principle mentioned by Āruṇi is Pradhāna or Prakṛti, which is the ultimate cause of the world. Although diversities have emerged from Prakṛti, and they are real in the sense that they are not mere modifications of consciousness without any independent basis of their own, still all of them are nothing but the different permutations and combinations of the three *guṇas* of Prakṛti. The differences expressed through different names are useful for different practical purposes, and they are also treated as real. But, in reality, this is due to *guṇa-saṁyoga*, resulting in the overpowering of

any two of the *guṇas* by the third. Quantitative inequality of the three *guṇas* causes diversity in the objects, and these diversities are always felt as real.

Even then, because the three *guṇas* are present in each one of the objects, all things can be traced to one ultimate source. All objects emerge from Prakṛti, are nourished by it, and get merged in the same ultimate substance. So, by knowing Prakṛti, we can know all its products. Moreover, according to the Sāṅkhya, the world is not wholly unrelated to consciousness. The world is possible, simply because there is *sannidhāna* (nearness) between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Although Puruṣa is not the *upādānakāraṇa* of the world, it is at least its *sthitikāraṇa*. As such, it will also be revealed to us whenever we make an attempt to know Prakṛti as the *samavāyikāraṇa* of the world.

According to the Advaita Vedānta, too, pure consciousness cannot by itself create this world. It can bring the world into being through its limiting adjunct. Here, the *upādhi* of the Advaita Vedānta has been replaced by *sannidhi*, and this does not seem to have created any unbridgeable gulf between the Sāṅkhya and the Vedānta, so far as the relation between the world and pure consciousness is concerned.

It seems to us that the word '*vācārambhaṇam*' has not been used to denote the illusory nature of the things of the world. This word really implies that the things of the world have no other essence than Prakṛti. Prakṛti, being the cause, is present in all the effects, and it also maintains its identical existence even when the effects are unmanifested. So Prakṛti is permanent and eternal, and also the essence of all things, whereas all the things of the world (as effects) are temporary, and do not have any being independent of their material cause.

Nature always remains identical in respect of its *sāmānyarūpa*; it is only *vaiṣamya-rūpa* that undergoes modifications. These modifications are therefore called mere *vikāras*, non-eternal objects, because of their essentially mutable nature. They are changeable, but not false. We have real experience of them, and

they are pragmatically useful. This view of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is not therefore the *vivarta* view of the Advaita Vedānta, according to which Brahman is the only reality, and transformations are all mere illusory forms. This text simply seeks to unfold the inherent identity between *upādāna* and *upādeya*, and such an identity is also accepted by the followers of the Vivartavāda.

The *vivarta* view, however, is that all differences, admitted in practical life, are metaphysically false. The Sāṅkhya, on the other hand, asserts that all the effects are real as effects, and from the point of view of form and use, they are different from the causal substance. But they derive their being from the being of the causal substance, and they are thus dependent on it. The difference between the cause and its effect is a fact of real experience. We do find that threads cannot cover a body, whereas cloth is capable of serving this end. The cause and the effect are identical only as *upādāna* and *upādeya*; and because of this identity, by knowing the cause, one is able to know the effect.

Critics may very well ask: How, by knowing Prakṛti, is one able to know all, when Puruṣa does not lie within the domain of nature? In answer to this, we can very well point out that the contact between Puruṣa and Prakṛti is beginningless, as a result of which we never get an inert and wholly unconscious nature. On the other hand, we get a Prakṛti through which consciousness of the self is reflected, thereby transforming Prakṛti into an intelligized nature. For this reason, our empirical knowledge is always a dual knowledge of the subject and the object, of the knower and the known. In fact, Prakṛti cannot be known without being related to consciousness. An object of knowledge is always a thing related to knowledge. To know means to have consciousness. If we seek to know Prakṛti, that means Prakṛti becomes related to consciousness, which is reflected through it. Consciousness will automatically be known in and through the process of knowing nature. Knowledge and object are revealed together in

every act of knowing. Truly speaking, to know the real nature of a glass through which red colour is reflected is also to know the red colour which has changed the natural colour of the glass. Hence, a full knowledge of Prakṛti implies a knowledge of the self also, although the self is different from nature. *Pradhāna-jijñāsā*, thus, automatically leads to a knowledge of the dual principles of Puruṣa and Prakṛti.

According to the Sāṅkhya, the only means for the attainment of liberation is the acquisition of *viveka-jñāna*. By this, Prakṛti is fully discriminated from Puruṣa, and the *mumukṣu* is able to have a thorough knowledge of Prakṛti. So, both self and nature should be known and discriminated, if anybody aspires after liberation.

The Upaniṣadic texts which describe the pure and changeless consciousness are accepted by both the Sāṅkhya and the Advaita Vedānta; but the texts on Prakṛti are differently represented by the followers of the Vivartavāda, as natural objects have been interpreted by them as illusory forms of pure consciousness produced by a false *māyā*.

Abolition of Prakṛti is necessary for the *vivarta* doctrine of causation and not for the *pariṇāma* doctrine of the Sāṅkhya school. Hence the Sāṅkhya is in a better position to describe Prakṛti, in the light of the original Upaniṣadic texts, than the Advaita Vedānta.

SECTION II

'In the beginning, dear boy, this was Being alone, one only, without a second. Some say that, in the beginning, this was Non-being alone, one only, without a second. From that Non-being arose Being' (VI.2.1).

This *Chāndogya* text seems to imply that, in the very beginning, there was only one causal substance, which was absolutely indeterminate, unnamed, and unformed. Existence only was realizable, and not any division or differentiation. Here also, Āruṇi is referring to Prakṛti, which is the one ultimate cause of the world. The reference is directed to the subtle, un-

manifested, and unevolved form of Prakṛti, which is not suitable for bearing any name or form. It is an absolutely homogeneous state, and does not admit of any distinction or differentiation. This state is so subtle and indeterminate that it cannot be designated by any other name but *sat*. This real and determinate world could not have arisen from *asat* or nothing.

Truly speaking, Āruṇi is not eager to explain here the theory of illusory modification; he is simply making an effort to make his son understand the general principle of Satkāryavāda, according to which the effect is not different from its *pariṇāmikāraṇa*, i.e. Prakṛti, so far as the essence is concerned.

In the previous section, Āruṇi has already explained the relation of identity between *upādāna* and *upādeya*. Here, he is mentioning the general principle of Satkāryavāda, perhaps with the motive of making this point clear to his son that bondage in the forms of pleasure, pain, and delusion, forming the worldly life, really belongs to Prakṛti, which is truly the material cause. Puruṣa by nature is *asaṅga* and free. If, in these texts, the scripture had affirmed that the whole of creation, involving pleasures, pains, and delusions, has emerged from self, then the scripture would have to make further attempts to prove that pleasures, pains, and delusions do not belong to Puruṣa, who is *asaṅga* by nature.

In order to make the situation easily understandable to Śvetaketu, father Āruṇi is repeating here, by way of instruction, the already-mentioned truth that Prakṛti is the changeable matrix of the whole of creation, and that Puruṣa is eternally free and non-attached. This text is followed by: 'That Being willed, "May I become many, may I grow forth". It created fire. That fire willed, "May I become many, may I grow forth". It created water. Therefore, whenever a man grieves or perspires, then it is from fire that water issues' (VI.2.3).

Here, we must remember that the cause of the world is not a wholly unconscious Prakṛti, but a *cetanāviṣṭa* Prakṛti, whose activities re-

semble the activities of an intelligent principle. The contact between Puruṣa and Prakṛti is beginningless. Even in the state of *pralaya*, when all manifested things are absorbed in Prakṛti, and Prakṛti becomes absolutely subtle and unmanifest, a connection between Puruṣa and Prakṛti still persists. Hence, even in this subtle state, just prior to a particular creation, Prakṛti is not wholly inert and unintelligent.

Even in the Advaita Vedānta, *ikṣāṇa-kriyā* does not belong to pure Brahman. It belongs to Saṅga Brahman, which is a joint production of *māyā* and *cit*. But this *cit* is devoid of *ikṣāṇa-kriyā*, as the power of knowing or of willing does not really belong to pure consciousness. These powers are the *vṛttis of māyā*, which is the limiting adjunct of pure consciousness. So, if intelligized *māyā*, though false, can perform *ikṣāṇa-kriyā* without difficulty, then it is not illogical to hold that a real and intelligized nature is able to perform that activity at least with equal efficiency. The Advaita Vedānta has to prove the falsity of the world, and so the *pariṇāmikāraṇa* of the Advaita Vedānta has been named *māyā*. The Advaita Vedānta proves the *asaṅgatva* of self by demolishing the world, whereas the Sāṅkhya admits the reality of Prakṛti as well as of the world, and then proceeds to prove the *asaṅgatva* of Puruṣa by showing that both bondage and liberation actually belong to Prakṛti.

SECTION III

‘That deity willed, “Well, let me, entering into these three deities through this living self (*jīvātman*), differentiate name and form’ (VI.3.2).

The *jīvātman* is the result of the union between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Consciousness limited by adjuncts like *adṛṣṭa*, subtle body, etc., appears as *jīva-puruṣa*. Since creation is beginningless, the relation between Puruṣa and Prakṛti is also beginningless. The fact that the relation here is to be established with the subtle elements of earth, fire, and water indicates

that the evolution of the psychological principles is complete and that, by assuming *jīva-bhāva* in the form of intelligized *buddhi*, Prakṛti now seeks to produce more determinate and definite objects in the forms of the gross elements.

‘*Imāḥ devatāḥ anupraviśya*’ really means that the intelligized *buddhi*, by entering into a more definite relation with the subtle elements, proceeds to create the gross elements. This text seems to throw light on the Yoga view that the subtle elements are the *aviśeṣa-pariṇāma* of the intelligized *buddhi* or *mahat*. Since the subtle elements are pervaded by the intelligized *buddhi*, it has been stated in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* that the intelligized *buddhi* enters into the subtle elements, as it were, and makes them more determinate in the forms of the gross elements.

“Of these, let me make each one threefold”, willing thus, this deity entered into these three deities through this living self and differentiated names and forms’ (VI.3.3).

The intelligized *buddhi*, making a resolution to create the gross elements by mixing the three *guṇas* in each of them, enters into subtle essences and makes them manifest in more definite and gross forms.

‘It made each one of them threefold. But, dear boy, how each of these three deities becomes threefold (outside the body), know that from me’ (VI.3.4).

Here, Āruṇi is making an attempt to explain to his son, in full detail, why each one of the objects, though composed of the three *guṇas*, is treated as one, and is given a single name.

SECTION IV

‘In fire, the red colour is the colour of fire; that which is white belongs to water; and that which is black belongs to food (earth). Thus vanishes (the idea of) the quality of fire from fire; for all modification is but name based upon words, only the three forms are real’ (VI.4.1).

Through all the texts of this section, Āruṇi is attempting to make this point clear to his son that all the gross physical objects, like the

sun, the moon, the fire, and the lightning, are the results of the different permutations and combinations of the three *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. They are, in essence, nothing but the three *guṇas* in different aggregations, and it is because of the differences in the proportions of the three *guṇas* that they are given different names. Due to the same reason, they are also capable of performing different functions. These are, however, identical in essence, since nothing else can be discovered in them except the three *guṇas*. Quantitative differences causing differences in their gross forms and empirical functions are significant, although all of them consist of the same stuff, and are evolved from the same source. If anybody can possess the full knowledge of the three *guṇas*, he can have a perfect understanding of

the whole process of creation. To know *cetanāviṣṭa* Prakṛti, or the three *guṇas* in which consciousness is reflected, is to understand the duality which is inherent in the structure of the universe.

In fact, the process of *pañcīkaraṇa*, which the Advaita Vedānta upholds, is applicable only through *lakṣaṇa*. But the *trivṛtkaraṇa* process is very useful and convenient, in the sense that, by admitting every object as being pervaded by the three *guṇas*, it has been clearly held that pleasure, pain, and delusion belong to the objects only. The subject or the knower is never affected by them. Thus the *asaṅgatva* of Puruṣa, which has been proclaimed in so many ways by the Upaniṣads, can be logically proved in a straight and easy manner from the Sāṅkhya point of view.



SPINOZA AND RĀMĀNUJA

BY SRI G. SRINIVASAN

The system of Spinoza is an old one, and its exponents are many. But few of them seem to attach due importance to the question of the reality of the individual soul or mind in Spinoza's philosophy. There seems to be more than one reason for this act of omission on their part. Firstly, Spinoza himself does not dwell at length on this question; and in his work, our attention is frequently shifted from the unity and the individuality of the mind to the succession and discreteness of the ideas. Secondly, Spinoza is usually studied as *one of the Cartesians*, whereby the relation of substance to attributes and the doctrine of parallelism come to be looked upon as the most important problems in his philosophy, to the partial neglect of the question of the reality of the individual soul or mind. Thirdly, Spinoza is often interpreted through Hegel, whereby the reality

of the individual soul is lost sight of; such an interpretation perceives discrepancy in Spinoza's system between the two attributes and one substance, and seeks to resolve this discrepancy only by 'idealizing' the attribute extension and ontologizing the attribute thought into substance so as to be equated with Hegel's Absolute.

Whether Spinoza is interpreted merely as one of the Cartesians or as the fore-runner of Hegelian thought, the error committed by the interpreter is the same; it is the error of categorizing a system of reality into a table of concepts, wherein the spirit of the system gets lost. Spinoza's system, with all its terms and definitions, unfortunately, lends itself to such categorization much better than other systems.

Spinoza's designation of his system as 'ethics' seems but appropriate, inasmuch as it emphasizes the main trait of his philosophy as the

search for freedom or perfection of the soul.¹ Being essentially a 'freedom-seeking' philosophy, his system falls in line with the Platonic tradition of Europe. His system also bears close resemblance to any system of Indian philosophy, inasmuch as the goal of his philosophical enquiry is freedom or perfection of the soul. In any 'freedom-seeking' philosophy, the question of the status and nature of the individual soul or mind will be of great importance, since no freedom or perfection is thinkable without a soul which should seek it and attain it. It would therefore be necessary to determine the nature and status of mind as conceived by Spinoza.

In Spinoza's philosophy, the individual soul or mind is credited with a twofold status—the empirical and the trans-empirical.

In its empirical status, it is the idea of the body, since that is what corresponds, in the attribute thought, to the body, in the attribute extension.² Being the idea of the body, the mind perceives all that takes place in the body, as well as the ideas of all that takes place in the body. This only means that the ideas of modifications, as well as the ideas of these ideas, fall within the idea of the body (mind), which is their knower or perceiver.³

In its trans-empirical status, the individual soul or mind is referred to by Spinoza as the idea of the mind or the essence of the mind.⁴ Since the idea of the mind or the essence of

the mind is in God, the mind comes to be endowed with noumenal significance in Spinoza's philosophy. God knows the idea or essence of the mind as following from His own essence;⁵ and in this sense, God constitutes the essence of the mind. In so far as the essence of the mind is constituted by God, the mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the destruction of the body, but part of it survives;⁶ and the part that survives is the essence of the mind.

Thus a distinction arises within the mind between its two statuses, the essence and the non-essence, the part that relates to God and the part that relates to the body. The part that relates to God survives the destruction of the body, while the part that relates to the body perishes along with the body. This distinction of parts within the mind is an important one, since it helps to clear up some of the difficulties in Spinoza's philosophy and brings to light the full significance of the concept of mind.

At first sight, it would appear that this distinction gives rise to an inconsistency in Spinoza's philosophy with regard to his doctrine of parallelism. To be consistent with itself, the doctrine of parallelism would demand that a part of the body should also continue to exist after death, if a part of the mind should continue to exist; and hence Spinoza's assertion that a part of the mind can survive the destruction of the whole body seems to contradict this doctrine.⁷

But this apparent inconsistency disappears, since, on a closer examination, it seems clear that the essence of the mind stands for an order of reality which transcends the parallelism of mind and body. This is clearly implied in Spinoza's assertion that in God there is necessarily an idea which expresses the essence of

¹ Spinoza, *On the correction of human understanding*: 'After experience had taught me that all things which are ordinarily encountered in common life are vain and futile, ... I at length determined to enquire if there were anything which was a true good, capable of imparting itself, by which alone the mind could be affected to the exclusion of all else; whether, indeed, anything existed by the discovery and acquisition of which I might be put in possession of a joy continuous and supreme to all eternity'—quoted from Stuart Hampshire, *Spinoza* (Pelican Books, 1951), p. 13.

² Spinoza, *Ethics* (Trans. Fullerton), Prop. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, Prop. 21, Scholium. 'When any one knows a thing, from that very fact, he knows that he knows it, and at the same time knows that he knows that he knows it, and so to infinity.'

⁴ *Ibid.*, Prop. 21, Scholium. 'In truth, the idea of the mind, that is, the idea of an idea, is nothing else than the essence of an idea, in so far as this is considered as a mode of thinking, and without relation to its object.'

⁵ *Ibid.*, Prop. 3. 'There is necessarily in God an idea both of His own essence and of all those things which necessarily follow from His essence.'

⁶ *Ibid.*, Prop. 23. 'The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains, which is eternal.'

⁷ *Ibid.*, Fullerton's critical notes, p. 342.

the body under the form of eternity,⁸ and this idea which expresses the essence of the body is something which belongs to the essence of the mind.⁹ By thus identifying the essence of the body with the essence of the mind, Spinoza is conceiving the essence of the mind as a metaphysical and metapsychical reality. That is, the essence of the mind (i.e. the idea of the idea of the body) is the basic unity of both the idea of the body (mind) and the body, and is logically prior to the distinction of the mind and the body as two modes belonging to two different attributes. In this respect, the essence of the mind is like God (infinite idea), who is the basic unity of the two attributes, thought and extension. The relation of the essence of mind to the mind and the body is similar to the relation of God to thought and extension. But God being infinite is the basic unity of infinite thought (all minds) and infinite extension (all bodies); the essence of the mind being finite is the basic unity of two finite modes, i.e. a particular mind and a particular body. What perishes at death is the body and the mind in relation to the body (the non-eternal part of the mind); what survives after death is the essence of the mind, which combines within itself the essence of the body.

On the basis of the above analysis of the individual mind or soul in Spinoza's philosophy, it is possible to perceive some similarity between Spinoza and Rāmānuja.

1. In the first place, their approach to the problem of human personality seems almost identical. The person is not a mere mind-body, but a soul or the eternal essence capable of holding together a mind and a body as its instruments. This soul or eternal essence has its being in God, and can neither exist nor be conceived apart from Him; it has a status superior to that of mind and body, both of which are non-eternal or perishable.

2. Secondly, both Spinoza and Rāmānuja deny anthropomorphism of any crude form; but both seem to use the finite person as the

key to the interpretation of Reality. Just as the finite person combines within himself both a mind and a body, so does the Infinite or God combine thought and extension or *cit* and *acit*. That is, God is the macrocosm, of which the finite person is the microcosm.

3. Thirdly, Spinoza's description of substance as qualified by two attributes—thought and extension—bears resemblance to Rāmānuja's description of Brahman as *sūkṣma cidacit viśiṣṭa Brahman*. Rāmānuja's *cit* is similar to Spinoza's 'thought', inasmuch as both stand for individual souls which, in their empirical existence, can be conceived only as including the ideas of objects which they perceive. Rāmānuja's *acit* is similar to Spinoza's 'extension', inasmuch as both exist in relation to the individual souls capable of experiencing or perceiving it. In Spinoza's philosophy, both thought and extension express an identity of essence or substance, just as, in Rāmānuja's philosophy, both *cit* and *acit* express an identical inner being or God. In Spinoza's philosophy, every mode is derived from God's own essence, just as, in Rāmānuja's philosophy, God enters the being of each and all of His manifestations.

4. Fourthly, knowledge or consciousness is not the same as soul, but attributive to it, in the systems of both Spinoza and Rāmānuja. Knowledge or consciousness of the soul admits of various degrees of expansion, the highest degree of expansion being an intuitive apprehension of God as the inner being, or the essence, or the source of all that exists. This intuitive apprehension of Reality, which, in other words, is the greatest expansion of consciousness, takes place only by an infinite condensation of the variety of data of perception.

However, despite these similarities between these two philosophers—Spinoza and Rāmānuja—there are fundamental differences between them. Spinoza does not fully adopt and develop the organismic approach to Reality, as is done by Rāmānuja. He does not clearly conceive of the relation of God to the individual soul (the essence of the mind) in terms of

⁸ *Ibid.*, Prop. 22.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Prop. 23, Proof.

organism, and he leaves it vague in his philosophy. Moreover, Spinoza's definition of substance, as that which exists in itself and is conceived through itself, seems to advocate a 'unity' superseding all 'diversity', and his doctrine of parallelism seems to drive his system towards a final acosmism or denial of the finite realities from the standpoint of the infinite or the substance.

Much unlike Rāmānuja, Spinoza denies to the individual soul the possibility of communication with God in terms of love, worship, and trust. According to Spinoza, God neither 'first

loves us', nor does He return our love. And it is just this impossibility of reciprocation of love which makes it impossible to speak of Spinoza as teaching the personality of God. 'The love of God' for Spinoza is merely the intellectual activity of apprehending everything in the universe as necessarily following from God. Further, even the 'intellectual love of God' is conceived by Spinoza as God's love of Himself ; this view is but consistent with his pantheism, which seems to deny to God the 'otherness' from the finite person and, consequently, makes impossible any personal relation between them.



THE NEED FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING

BY SRI Y. N. SUKTHANKAR

There was a time when religion, instead of uniting, divided the people. It, of course, created unity within a group, whether small or big ; but outside that group, instead of bringing about unity, it created dissensions and hostilities leading to bitter wars. The reason for this must be looked for in the origin of religion. It could best be described as an eternal quest. In the very early stages of the world, there was a lot to frighten man. Unfamiliarity always frightens him. Thunder, lightning, heavy rains, earthquakes, and the like were the phenomena of which he could not give to himself any satisfactory explanation. He therefore looked upon them as powers, malignant and cruel. This gave rise to the thought of punishment and retribution. God punished the evil-doer. The evil-doer was one who did not accept the beliefs of the group. When more and more groups were formed, it was found that varying beliefs were held by different groups. The strange beliefs were feared as likely to bring down the punishment of God. These beliefs must therefore be crushed. Later, as civilization progressed, these beliefs persisted, but in a different and modified form. Just as the ego of the child

develops, and becomes more marked and inflated as the child grows, becomes a boy, and later a man, the same is the case with a nation. Its ego flourishes, and the nation must impose its culture and religion on other nations and peoples. This led to wars of conquest, motivated by religious beliefs. Some religions, of course, were more militant than others ; and the followers of those religions looked upon religious wars as dictated by a solemn duty.

It will be seen that these remarks apply to a particular type of religion, viz. religion in an organized form. Such a religion wants to consolidate itself by tightening up its regulations. Such religions are, as a rule, dogmatic ; they lay down a code of conduct and require that certain rites and rituals should be scrupulously followed. Fortunately, compared with some other countries, India has been free from religious wars as such. That is due to the fact that Hinduism looked upon religion as something personal. This was the influence of the Upaniṣadic thought. The sages and seers of India admitted no restrictions to the speculative thought. They went on surmounting one obstacle after another, attained to a knowledge

which was beyond all phenomena, and finally came to the conclusion that, howsoever different may be its manifestations, the truth was one. Buddhism, similarly, laid stress on tolerance, compassion, and non-violence. All this had a permanent effect on the Hindu thought. Today, religion is looked upon as something personal—a personal relationship between God and man

It may be contended that religion is now a spent force. Most of the dogmas could be believed only by credulous persons. These would not stand the test of science. The various scientific discoveries have given a great stimulus to materialism. It will be seen that this criticism of religion really applies to the organized religion. Sir George Thomson, F.R.S., Master of Corpus Christi College, who presided over the annual session of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, recently said that there were two aspects of science—control and understanding of nature. Control of nature led to consequences which were feared by sections of mankind. In trying to understand nature, science has something in common with religion and philosophy. Therefore, there need be no conflict between science and religion. All the improvements in the materialistic life brought about by the scientific inventions have not led to peace or happiness in the world. The nuclear inventions have given rise to great fear and anxiety, in so far as they could be used for war-like purposes. It seems as if by pressing a button you can destroy almost the whole world. Democracy, again, has not materially increased the happiness of mankind. It has not eliminated poverty. It has not led to any appreciable amount of understanding and sympathy among the peoples. Indeed, in some parts of the world, it is held that democracy has failed and some other system of government must be tried. In

fact, great success is claimed for some of these systems, as against a democratic form of government. It is clear that there is great dissatisfaction and restlessness all over the world. It is therefore essential that something else is required, and that something is religion—not so much in an organized form, but something which will lead to genuine spiritual attainments. And this is necessary for every one—for the common man, for the ruler, for the administrator, for the politician, for the scientist, and for the statesman. Professor Tawney, in his book *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, has given an apt quotation from Bishop Berkeley: 'Whatever the world thinks, he who hath not much meditated upon God, the human mind, and the *summum bonum* may possibly make a thriving earth-worm, but will most indubitably make a sorry patriot and a sorry statesman.'

The Ramakrishna Mission has played an important part in the religious history of the country, and continues to do so even today. The greatest contribution of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa to religious thought was a moral synthesis of religion. He was not just tolerant to other religions, but he believed that they were true. What is more, he experimented in some of them and found for himself that they were perfectly true. In his teachings, he explained the results of his experiments by homely illustrations. He described different religions as different paths. Just as Kalighat could be reached by different roads, which people adopted according to their needs and convenience, so could the different religions lead to the same destination. Another illustration of his was that of a mother and her children. She cooked the same fish in different forms for her children, according to their age and state of health. So each one adopted the religion which suited him best, but they were all true.



NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Mr. Christopher Isherwood's forthcoming biography of Sri Ramakrishna is being printed in instalments in *Vedanta and the West*, the two-monthly journal issued by the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood. 'The Vision of Kālī', forming the sixth chapter of Mr. Isherwood's book, appeared in the January-February 1960 (No. 141) issue of the above journal, and we are presenting it here with the kind permission of Swami Prabhavananda, head of the Society. . .

Swami Budhananda is Assistant Minister at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York. His article on 'Religion's Challenge to Modern Man' is based on a sermon given by him at the Center recently.

The article by Sri M. K. Venkatarama Iyer, M.A., formerly Professor of Philosophy, Annamalai University, shows that, though a superficial view may suggest similarities between 'Existentialism and Indian Thought', especially the Vedānta, a closer study will reveal that these resemblances are more apparent than real. . . .

In her article on 'Chāndogya Upaniṣad: An Interpretation', Dr. Anima Sen Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., of Patna University, and a frequent contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*, makes an attempt to formulate an exposition of the first four sections of the sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* from the point of view of the dualistic Sāṅkhya. . . .

The similarities regarding the concept of mind in the philosophies of 'Spinoza and Rāmānuja', as well as the fundamental differences that exist between their respective philosophies, are shown in the article by Sri G. Srinivasan, M.A., of Kolar, Mysore State. . . .

The Bombay branch of the Ramakrishna Mission held an Inter-religious Convention in September 1960, which was presided over by Sri Y. N. Sukthankar, Governor of Orissa. His article captioned 'The Need for Inter-religious Understanding', presented in this issue, is extracted from the speech delivered by him at the Convention. The caption of the article is inserted by us.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

REVELATION AND REASON IN ADVAITA VEDĀNTA. BY K. SATCHIDANANDA MURTY. Published by Andhra University, Waltair. 1959. Pages 365. Price Rs. 25.

This book is a valuable contribution to the philosophic thought of our country.

The author has tried to give an exhaustive and critical study of the problem of scriptural authority in the Advaita Vedānta. The whole work has been divided into two books. Book I contains simply a detailed exposition and analysis of the Advaita conception of reason and revelation. No attempt has been made to evaluate the arguments and conclusions of the said school.

Book II, on the other hand, contains a critical and comparative study of the problem from the points of view of the other five systems of orthodox Indian philosophy. Here, the author has given his independent criticism of the Advaita theory and also of the theories of the other schools of orthodox Indian philosophy.

So far as Book I is concerned, both the analysis and the explication of the Advaita theory are impressive and fairly exhaustive. The author has tried to give a correct exposition of the Advaita concept of the problem on the basis of a direct study of the original Sanskrit texts.

In Book II, however, the author has raised some objections against the Advaita theory, which are not

truly justifiable. There is little scope for a detailed discussion in a review. Yet I will refer to some points raised by the author against the Advaita theory. On page 252, the author says: 'How can *māyā-avidyā*, which is beginningless, have an end, for only produced things come to an end?' In other words, in the opinion of the author, a thing which is beginningless is also non-destructible. It is true that, in all the other systems of Indian philosophy, the non-destructible nature of a beginningless thing has been accepted as a general rule. But this generalization is not admitted in the Advaita Vedānta, according to which the moment the real substratum is perceived, the object superimposed on it is totally destroyed. The philosophy that recognizes the non-destructible nature of a beginningless object does not believe in the existence of an *adhyasta-vastu*. The Advaita believes in *adhyāsa*; and in its opinion, excepting the metaphysically real, everything else comes to an end. The Advaita has recognized a few beginningless objects, such as *jīvatva*, *īśvaratva*, difference between the individual soul and God, etc., and each one of them is destructible. So the question, How can beginningless *māyā* come to an end? does not arise in the Advaita Vedānta, which has not accepted a universal relation between beginninglessness and indestructibility. Moreover, *māyā* has been admitted as a covering or veiling power of God. If it is a cover, it ought to be removable, no matter whether it has a beginning or not.

Further, on the basis of the evidence collected from *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, the author has remarked: 'Śaṅkara has said that the beginningless *avidyā* can end by knowledge, just as the beginningless prior non-existence of a pot ends when a pot is made.' Whether *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* is a work of Śaṅkara has not been decided as yet. In his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara has specially refuted the existence of *prāgabhāva-padārtha*. It is from the point of view of direct realization of the *adhīsthāna* that *māyā*—an *adhyasta-vastu*—is destroyed and not from the point of view of *prāgabhāva*. In defining *māyā*, adjectives like *abhāva-vilakṣaṇa*, *bhāva-rupa*, *abhāvātirikta*, etc. have been used frequently by Śaṅkara. Other objections are also flimsy, and can be likewise refuted from the point of view of the Advaita philosophy.

The author's comments on the other schools, too, are not, in all cases, very sound. On page 265, for example, the author has remarked: 'None of the Hindu schools except the Pañcarātra maintain that souls are created.' Anyone familiar with the philosophy of Rāmānuja knows that this is not a correct statement about the Pañcarātra. Like the other schools of Hindu philosophy, the Pañcarātra, too, believes in the eternality of souls. Śaṅkarāṇa,

Pradyumna, and Aniruddha are only the three forms which God assumes with a view to ruling over the soul, mind, and ego. There is no cause-effect relationship between God and His *vyūhas* or between one *vyūha* and another. Hence the question of the non-eternality of souls does not arise at all.

Again, on page 208, the author has remarked: 'The Nyāya cannot disprove the Cārvāka hypothesis that matter can of itself evolve into the world.' But the Nyāya has refuted the Cārvāka philosophy from its own point of view. What the author really means by this statement is not clear.

In spite of all these points, the book is a very appreciable addition to the Advaita literature.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

ROLE OF VEDĀNTA AS UNIVERSAL RELIGION—VOLUME I. BY P. M. VERMA. *Published by the Indian National Renaissance Society, Anoop Bhavan, Allahabad-2. 1959. Pages 220. Price Rs. 15.*

The object of the book, as the author himself says, is to collect in one place all necessary information for the benefit of those interested in Vedānta and its role in life. Another purpose of the compilation is to wean the intelligentsia of the present intellectual age from what one may call the *tridoṣa* (triple sins) of agnosticism, atheism, and materialism. The author makes no pretence to any scholarly interpretation of these collections, which he simply desires to share with others.

In his Foreword, Sri Sriprakasa has rightly observed that the freedom we have won will be of no avail if we simply have made ourselves a carbon copy of some other country, are swayed by its ideologies, and follow its footsteps in our activities. We have to make our own proper contribution to world-thought and world-endeavour. This book tells us in its own way how best we can accomplish this.

The author's knowledge is profound, and he has quoted profusely from our philosophical literature as well as from European scientists, philosophers, and poets to make his arguments and conclusions clear. Especially the chapter on 'Rita and Dharma—Cosmic Laws' is illuminating. It has thrown a flood of light on the much-maligned *varṇa-āśrama*, so ancient and so fundamental, which pseudo-reformers have attempted to besmirch and belittle. The author also pertinently suggests the introduction in schools of a study of comparative religion, emphasizing the essential unity of religions and the universal principles of ethics and morality. This only can form the true foundation of an ideal democracy in India. The book is timely, and it is hoped its readers will be many, especially those who guide our educational in-

stitutions and leaders of our times, who have a great need to glean from these nuggets of our ancient wisdom.

A. V. RAMAN

THE STORY OF BARDOLI. BY MAHADEV DESAI. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pages 249. Price Rs. 3.*

Bardoli's name has been permanently inscribed in the pages of modern Indian history. The non-violent battle waged by the peasant population of this little *taluk* of Gujarat for seven months during 1928, under the brave and inspiring leadership of the late Sri Vallabhbhai Patel, was aimed at securing remission of an increased levy in land revenue. The *satyāgraha* drew the attention of people even from remote countries and created a stir in the British Parliament. Its triumph acted as a fillip to India's

freedom struggle. Gandhiji wrote then: 'Though the object of the proposed *satyāgraha* is local and specific, it has an all-India application. . . . The struggle has an indirect bearing on *svarāj*' (p. 45).

The work under review is from the masterly pen of the late Sri Mahadev Desai, a martyr in the cause of India's freedom, who worked for many years in close association with Gandhiji. The book unfolds, in arresting language, the history of Bardoli *satyāgraha* and its sequel, in two parts. When it was first published in 1929, the volume must have acted as an immediate tonic to the freedom movement. This new edition, published in the post-independence era, will be read like a story by the younger generation. All the same, Sri Desai has made the book authentic with numerous quotations from actual correspondence and many statistical details.

S. S.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION TUBERCULOSIS SANATORIUM, RANCHI

REPORT FOR 1959

At present, there are 189 beds in the Sanatorium, of which 154 are in the general wards and the rest in the cottages, cabins, and the special ward of single-bed rooms. 32 beds are maintained free, and a few beds at concession rates. 102 beds are reserved by different organizations, which pay the maintenance charges of their nominees. The rest are paying beds. The operation theatre and the recovery room are air-conditioned. There is a well-equipped laboratory, and four X-ray plants with tomograph attachment. There is a small medical library, which receives 12 Indian and foreign medical journals. A separate library containing 2,602 books in different languages, a recreation hall with permanent stage and auditorium, staging of dramas, exhibition of films, musical soirees, radio news and music relayed through loud speakers installed in the wards, supply of periodicals and newspapers in different languages, indoor games, and annual sports held in winter, are the various amenities provided for the patients. The patients publish a manuscript magazine, called *Jyoti*.

Medical Report: Total number of cases treated: 388 (newly admitted: 216). Details of treatment:

discharged during the year: 214; still under treatment at the end of the year: 174; disease arrested: 125; quiescent: 16; improved: 30; stationary: 10; discharged cured: 2; discharged as non-tuberculous: 28; died: 3 (1 non-tuberculous). Statistical report of the cases: in the first stage of disease when admitted: 12; in the second stage: 26; in the third stage: 145; surgical operations: 53; screenings done: 604; skiagrams taken: 2,176; tomograms: 1,011; bronchograms: 47; specimens of blood, sputum, urine, and faeces examined in the laboratory: 14,550. Number of patients who were given medical advice and assistance in the out-patient department: 1,001 (tuberculous: 644). Number of patients treated free of all charges: 83; at concession rates: 25.

After-care Centre: During the year under review, there were 25 ex-patients in this centre. Of them, 4 were employed in the office, 1 worked in the X-ray department, 3 in the laboratory, 1 in the electrical department, 1 in the co-operative stores, and 1 in the poultry farm. 6 ex-patients were trained in the tailoring department. The free homoeopathic dispensary was in charge of an ex-patient, who is a qualified homoeopath. 6 ex-patients were allowed to stay in the centre to recoup their health.

Free Homoeopathic Dispensary: Total number of patients treated: new cases: 4,587; old: 5,639.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The 126th birthday of SRI RAMAKRISHNA falls on Friday, the 17th February 1961.