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AUGUST 1965

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



**By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or
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Vol. LXX

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No. 8



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:o:—

आत्मार्पणस्तुतिः

THE HYMN OF SELF-OBLATION

APPAYYA DIKSITA

TRANSLATED BY SWAMI VIMALANANDA

कस्ते बोद्धुं प्रभवति परं देवदेव प्रभावं
यस्मादित्थं विविधरचना सृष्टिरेषा बभूव ।
भक्तिग्राह्यस्त्वमसि तदपि त्वामहं भक्तिमात्रात्
स्तोतुं वाञ्छाम्यतिमहदिदं साहसं मे सहस्व ॥१॥

1. O God of gods, who is competent to find out Your might ? This manifold composition of the universe thus presented is brought about by You. You are apprehended only by acts of love ; and so, merely out of adoring love, I wish to compose this song of Your glory. Forgive me for this exceeding bumpiousness.

क्षित्यादीनामवयववतां निश्चितं जन्म तावत्
तन्नास्त्येव क्वचन कलितं कर्त्रधिष्ठानहीनम् ।
नाधिष्ठातुं प्रभवति जडो नाप्यनीशश्च भावः
तस्मादाद्यस्त्वमसि जगतां नाथ जाने विधाता ॥२॥

2. First of all, aggregates like the earth positively have an origin ; and a beginning is never conceived without an operator functioning. Inert matter has no capacity to execute, and so nothing has come to being without a master mind. By this reasoning, O sovereign Master, I understand that You are the prime ordainer of the world.

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमनिलं पद्मजं विष्णुमीशं
 प्राहुस्ते ते परमशिव ते मायया मोहितास्त्वाम् ।
 एतैस्सार्थं सकलमपि यच्छक्तिलेशे समाप्तं
 स त्वं देवः श्रुतिषु विदितः शम्भुरित्यादिदेवः ॥३॥

3. O supremely Auspicious, different denominations, according to their tastes, declare You to be Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra, being under the spell of Your Māyā. These deities, together with all that exists, are exhausted in the least vestige of Your power ; being such, O God, You are known from the Vedāntic texts as the source of beatitude and the primal Lord.

आनन्दाब्धेः किमपि च घनीभावमास्थाय रूपं
 शक्त्या सार्धं परममुमया शाश्वतं भोगमिच्छन् ।
 अध्वातीते शुचिदिवसकृत्कोटिदीप्ते कपर्दिन्
 आद्ये स्थाने विहरसि सदा सेव्यमानो गणेशैः ॥४॥

4. Together with Your Śakti, Umā, You, O Kapardin, desiring exalted and perpetual delight, have by Your will assumed a form that is an unspecifiable condensation of the ocean of beatitude, and in that form you play in the primeval abode beyond all paths, radiant with the splendour of ten million vernal suns, attended by the leaders of Your host.

त्वं वेदान्तैर्विविधमहिमा गीयसे विश्वनेतः
 त्वं विप्राद्यैर्वरद निखिलैरिज्यसे कर्मभिः स्वैः ।
 त्वं दृष्टानुश्रविकविषयानन्दमात्रावितृष्णैः
 अन्तर्ग्रन्थिप्रविलयकृते चिन्त्यसे योगिवृन्दैः ॥५॥

5. O Director of the Universe, the Vedāntic texts declare Your varied grandeur. O Bestower of Choice Blessings, everyone guided by the wise and the learned in the Vedic scriptures worships You, performing acts appropriate for each. Different classes of *yogins* contemplate on You without any desire for pleasures derived from sensuous perception and scriptural performances ; for they are intent on annihilating the internal knot binding them to *samsāra*, phenomenal existence.

व्यायन्तस्त्वां कतिचन भवं दुस्तरं निस्तरन्ति
 त्वत्पादाब्जं विधिवदपरे नित्यमाराधयन्तः ।
 अन्ये वर्णाश्रमविधिरताः पालयन्तः त्वदाज्ञाः
 सर्वं हित्वा भवजलनिघावेष मज्जामि षोरे ॥६॥

6. Meditating upon You continuously, some cross the *samsāra* so hard to surmount. Others do it by daily worshipping Your Lotus Feet according to the injunction of the scriptures. Still others who keep in view the same purpose follow with delight the religiously ordained rules pertaining to their stations and stages in life and fulfil Your commandments. Neglecting all this, I am sinking in this terrible sea of *samsāra*.

उत्पद्यापि स्मरहर महत्युत्तमानां कुलेऽस्मिन्
 आस्वाद्य त्वन्महिमजलधेरप्यहं शीकराणून् ।
 त्वत्पादार्चाविमुखहृदयः चापलादिन्द्रियाणां
 व्यग्रस्तुच्छेष्वहं जननं व्यर्थंयाम्येष पापः ॥७॥

7. O Extinguisher of Lust, I have been born here in a noble family that has given birth to eminent people. I have tasted also a few particles of the ocean of Your glory wafted on to me. Yet, my heart is not solely set on worshipping Your feet ; I am restless because of my agitated senses. Alas, such a sinner, I am making my life good-for-nothing.

अर्कद्रोणप्रभृतिकुसुमैरर्चनं ते विधेयं
 प्राप्यं तेन स्मरहर फलं मोक्षसाम्राज्यलक्ष्मीः ।
 एतत् जानन्नपि शिव शिव व्यर्थंयन् कालमात्मन्
 आत्मद्रोही करणविवशो भूयसाधः पतामि ॥८॥

8. Your worship performed with flowers of plants like *arka* (*calistropis gigantea*) and *drona* (*leucas linifolia* ?) is in order ; and by that much, O Extinguisher of Lust, one is eligible for the fruit of release—the realm of unlimited grace. Though I am conscious of this, O Śiva, supremely auspicious Lord and my inmost Self, I have turned a traitor to myself, wasting my time as a slave of the senses and falling terribly low.

किं वा कुर्वे विषमविषयस्वैरिणा वैरिणाहं
 बद्धः स्वामिन् वपुषि हृदयग्रन्थिना सार्धमस्मिन् ।
 उक्षणा दर्पज्वरभरजुषा साकमेकत्र नद्धः
 श्राम्यन् वत्सः स्मरहर युगे धावता किं करोतु ॥९॥

9. O Master, what alternative is there for me ? I am fastened to this body with my opponent who roves in full play among sensuous objects—my own internal organ streaked with diverse contradictory tendencies. Imagine for a moment an ox defiant to a feverish degree is tied to the yoke at one end and a weary calf at the other ; running although in haste, O Extinguisher of Lust, what could the poor thing do ?

नाहं रोद्धुं करणनिचयं दुर्नयं पारयामि
 स्मारं स्मारं जनिपथरुजं नाथ सीदामि भीत्या ।
 किं वा कुर्वे किमुचितमिह क्वाद्य गच्छामि हन्त
 त्वत्पादाब्जप्रपदनमृते नैव पश्याम्युपायम् ॥१०॥

10. I am not adequate to control the troupe of my senses ; for they cannot be easily tamed. O Master, frequently remembering the pain involved in the path of rebirth, I am cast down in terror. What can I do ? What befits me in this matter ? Where shall I present myself ? Alas, I do not find a way save seeking sanctuary at Your Lotus Feet.

(To be continued)

LETTERS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

(73)

Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama
Luxa, Varanasi
28 November 1916

Dear —,

I received a letter from you many days back. The Master does his work himself; by giving right understanding to all of you, too, he is getting his work done. Knowing this, pour out your devotion at his holy feet with heart and soul; your life will become blessed by it. The purpose of work is merely to rouse firm faith and devotion to his feet. Through his grace, you will all attain it. You have secured the protection of his devotees, life has become blessed. The refuge under his devotees and under him are one and the same thing—know it for certain. Are many people falling sick with fever and cold at the Math these days? We shall go to Mihijam from here. We shall return to Math after a few days' stay there and after making arrangements for (the starting of) an Ashrama at Jamtara. So we have planned.

Now as the Lord wills! Our heartfelt love and blessings to you.

Your well-wisher,
Shivananda

(74)

Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama
Luxa, Varanasi
30 November 1916

Dear —,

I have received your letter and noted the contents. I learnt from —babu's letter about your having gone there. We were happy to hear that your health is improving there day by day. May the Lord restore your health soon! Baburam Maharaj is very much better than before, and I am also somewhat all right. We are, perhaps, soon leaving for Mihijam.

Think of and meditate on the Lord always and remain vigilant. It is very difficult for monks to stay in the houses of married devotees. Conduct yourself as you have written. There is no necessity for you to teach devotional hymns etc. to the ladies, nor to mix with them. As far as possible, confine yourself to your own meditation, prayer, and study. In the morning and evening, go with the —babus for walk, and if you come across any sincere devotees, converse with them sometimes on spiritual topics. Accept our heartfelt blessings and love.

Your well-wisher,
Shivananda

ART AND THE HIGHER VALUES OF LIFE

[EDITORIAL]

Nature and nurture, or rather the nurturing of nature, is the key to all progress, individual or collective. We are born with certain tendencies, capacities, and natural endowments, and we build up on that foundation. Not all these tendencies and capacities are of equal worth. Some make for a good, healthy life, and others hinder it. Wisdom lies in weeding out the undesirables, and nourishing those that develop our personalities to the fullest extent.

Man is a composite being. Body, mind, and soul—all go to make up his personality, and they are of value in transcending order. Man's bodily needs and drives are what he has in common with the animal; they deserve to be called human only in so far as they are voluntarily controlled and regulated by the mind. Further, mind itself needs to be controlled and regulated by giving a proper direction to its three functions, namely, intellect, emotion, and will. These three aspects of the mind are the source of all our intellectual striving, artistic creations, and ethical endeavours respectively. Beyond these is our spiritual nature or religious consciousness, in which all these harmoniously blend and find their fulfilment. Though the intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical activities have their own place in the awakening of the religious consciousness, religious consciousness itself is none of these, individually or collectively. God, the object of the religious quest, includes all other objects and values, such as truth, beauty, and goodness sought by science, art, and ethics. But these values by themselves, taken separately or in combination, do not constitute God. God is the ultimate value in which are

subsumed all other values; in God they are threaded together into a unity and harmony.

Ordinarily, too, these three functions of the mind are not completely independent of each other, though we do compartmentalize them in the workaday world. Mind is a homogeneous entity, and the ideal person is he in whom all the functions of the mind work in unison. If intellect is unaided by feeling and will, it will remain as dry intellectualism; if emotion is not strengthened by intellect and will, it will result in blind sentimentalism; and if will is not guided by knowledge and love, it will end in meaningless, aimless activity. What we need is a harmonious combination of science, art, and ethics. For a man of synthetic vision, in whom the cognitive faculty, emotional stability and artistic talent, and ethical perfection are fully manifest and integrated, can alone see the problems of life in the correct perspective and provide suitable solutions for them. But, unfortunately, that is exactly what our modern generation lacks—leaders and teachers who have this all-comprehensive vision or at least who try to achieve it. Each one looks at the problems from his own sectional point of view, and lays stress on that particular point of view, with the result often the wrong side of life is presented as the acme of life's activities. This is the cause of many of our maladies. If scientists glorify merely reason, artists glorify merely beauty and joy, irrespective of other considerations.

Speaking particularly about art, the topic of our present discussion, art portrays some aspect of human life and personality—it may be physical, moral, intellectual, emo-

tional, or spiritual. When art confines its attention to the portrayal of the physical to the exclusion of all other aspects, there is great danger. For it thereby stultifies itself and, what is worse, debases those to whom it addresses itself. The lure of art is often deceptive. In the name of art and culture, a notable section of our novelists, poets, cine-artists, and others of that ilk purvey to the public all sorts of ideas about life and its aims, the main theme of which is the sanctification and glorification of the animal in man. And their influence on the adolescent minds is rather alarming. In the name of art and culture, only the weaknesses of the flesh are stimulated, devitalizing the nation thereby. What was considered as taboo and unedifying previously is glorified unabashedly and idealized. It is regarded as quite in the fitness of things to do so. The result has been: while the country badly needs men who are cast in the heroic mould and are full of manly spirit, people are after effeminate music and dancing and frothy literature. Present-day art largely caters to the lower nature of man, instead of raising him to a higher level. It is most pitiable to see that the highest ambition of many a young boy or girl, even of high respectable families, is to become film actors and actresses and dancers, not so much because of their love of art as such, but for the free life and pleasures of the flesh that they promise to bring. That few actually succeed in their ambition in this direction is immaterial; the total effect, psychologically, is demoralizing. For the whole outlook of the nation turns out to be concentrated on acquiring the sweets of life easily, without paying the price for it. And there is the point of danger. Dance, music, and song are all right provided they develop our manhood and spur us on to heroic deeds in other fields as well; otherwise, they only

spell ruin and disaster.

Nobody, of course, can deny that art is an important aspect of our life. In fact, he who neglects to develop his artistic and emotional side is so much the poorer for it. But we should have clearer ideas about art and its goal. There is art and art—art that is injurious and art that is ennobling and uplifting. Art for art's sake, unrelated to morality, ethics, and the higher ideals of life, is a misnomer. Art is the external expression, in concrete forms such as poetry, music, painting, or sculpture, of certain experiences within. These experiences may be purely those which are related to our biological urges or of something higher. Now, can a piece of literature or painting be considered as true art merely because it expresses correctly and vividly all the sentiments that arise within the human heart? Certainly not. No composition, simply because it expresses a sentiment, good or bad, correctly, could be classed as art. The real test of art is whether it is in accord with good taste and establishes some high ideal. Depicting the realities of life as they are, ugly or beautiful, low or noble, utterly disregarding the social mores, can hardly be termed as art. Such depiction of the ugly side of life is art only if it is employed to show in contrast the nobler side of life. That is the difference between the ancient Indian literature, painting, sculpture, and other arts and the modern. In ancient literature and art also, we find the graphic picturization of the lower side of nature, but that was only to impress upon the people the vulgarity of it and to create in them a disgust for it thereby, not to idealize it. For, side by side, the other view of life also was graphically painted. While the reality of sense cravings and sexual instincts was not denied by the artists, they did not philosophize over it as an ideal worthy of pursuit in an absolute sense. On the other

hand, they wanted to show that, in the ultimate analysis, they were only gross and loathsome, and that there was a far more worthy ideal. Take, for instance, Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*, where, in the words of Professor M. Hiriyanna, *kāma* or love is described in its twofold form. 'In one, it is relatively lower because it manifests itself as the impulse of an unguarded moment; and, as may be expected, it is soon repressed. But the repression is not the end of the matter here as it is. . . . Kālidāsa knows that love is the law of life, but only when it is of the higher type. So *kāma* is revived here in a purified form; and then, as the poet has shown in his masterly manner, it becomes the means of saving the whole world from the tyranny of the cruel demon, Tāraka.' (*The Quest after Perfection*, Kavyalaya Publishers, Mysore, p. 98) Further on, the Professor describes how the character of Śakuntalā in the earlier part of the drama, though possessing all the qualities like beauty, grace, and innocence, is still not perfect; nor is her love for Duśyanta, though not lacking in decorum or dignity, ideal. But in the closing chapters of the drama, she emerges as the ideal character. A work of art cannot be deemed to be beautiful simply because it possesses a perfected beauty of expression. The real test is: What is the ideal that it clothes in its beautiful form? True art is the manifestation of this fine, subtle ideal through the gross; it is the crystallization of the unseen into the seen; it consists in revealing higher and finer selves in things apparently low and gross.

The artist, it may be argued, is not concerned with the ideal, but only with the real and its picturization to the minutest detail; and if that picturization of the real gives joy and recreation to the artist and the spectator, there his task ends; whatever other effect it may have on the audi-

ence, good or bad, is not his concern, in other words, its educative value is of little importance to him. Therein arises the question of the relation between the art, the artist, and morality. What is this picturization of the real, or the real that the artist wishes to picturize? Is nothing else real but the gross which is perceptible to our senses? Matter, mind, and spirit are the three gradations of reality. Matter itself, to the purer vision of the seer, will reveal a finer inner content, namely, the spirit, provided he has the patience to undergo the necessary discipline. In fact, the experience of the common man in this regard is very superficial, and not final in any way. The lower the man, the more is his enjoyment in the senses, and he lives more in the senses. As he rises higher, his vision of life changes. Then he sees things differently. Civilization and culture mean the transforming of the animal man revelling in sense life into the divine man finding joy only in the higher life of the spirit, and giving him the vision of higher planes of existence. And the work of true art also is the same, that is, must be the same.

To the ordinary man, the higher beauty in the gross is not manifest; it is the work of the artist to reveal it to him. Normally, man takes the enjoyment of the senses to be permanent and real, and makes its realization the goal of his life. And if a work of art only idealizes what is apparently real, this natural proneness of man towards sensual enjoyment, it is no art. True artists would not be satisfied with what is apparently real, with what is perceptible to the senses, but would like to penetrate behind the veil and realize the truth that is the essence of what is apparent. And they, in their works of art, would try to realize this ideal and give a glimpse of it to others. In the hands of such artists, the mere flesh would stand transformed into

something ethereal and call forth a wealth of noble ideas in the human mind. A true artist is a creator of higher values. As Swami Vivekananda says: 'The secret of Greek art is its imitation of nature even to the minutest details; whereas the secret of Indian art is to represent the ideal. The energy of the Greek painter is spent in perhaps painting a piece of flesh, and he is so successful that a dog is deluded into taking it to be a real bit of meat and so goes to bite it. Now, what glory is there in merely imitating nature? Why not place an actual bit of flesh before the dog? The Indian tendency, on the other hand, to represent the ideal, the supersensual, has become degraded into painting grotesque images. Now, true art can be compared to a lily which springs from the ground, takes its nourishment from the ground, is in touch with the ground, and yet is quite high above it. So art must be in touch with nature—and wherever that touch is gone, art degenerates—yet it must be above nature.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, p. 258, 8th edition) The greatness and nobility of the artist lie in his power of elevating himself and his audience, not in mere stimulation of superficial joy. It is the function of the artist to reveal to us the significance of life. He must evoke in us the sense of the larger beauty of the universe to which we in our busy lives are blind.

And what is this ideal that a true artist, such as we have been speaking of, will or should represent in his art? It is spiritual in essence, and refers to the very core of man's being. There is an eternal Being, the Soul of our soul, whose realization confers perfection on us and we become filled in every way (*pūrṇa*). When we are in touch with this Divinity within, we are lifted above the little things of life, and are not troubled by the vicissitudes of this life. When we know and become one

with It, we attain the *summum bonum* of life and we reach that shore of calmness and blessedness which is *satyam*, *śivam*, and *sundaram*—the true, the good, and the beautiful. Those who are swimming in this ocean of bliss know It—not the world of senses—to be the most beautiful. And if they be artists with the power to translate their experience into words, sounds, or marble and stone, they will reveal to the world the glory of those higher realities through the help of the lower realities; and, in the process, lift humanity to undreamt off regions of perfection.

But the way to the realization of this ideal lies through the purification of our hearts, through the control of our senses and mind, through the chastening of our passions, in other words, through rigorous hard moral discipline, through the practice of truthfulness, selflessness, chastity, and kindness. Thus, true art can never be opposed to morality. An art independent of morality, which has no roots in our deepest ethical instincts and which does not draw us towards the Divine in things is injurious and harmful to the people of the community as a whole, and society, at least the saner section of it, should stand up against such art which goes against the standards of behaviour and morality built up through centuries of experience. A correct estimation and appreciation of art is impossible unless the sense of the higher reality is awake in us. And this sense of the higher reality can come only through religion and morality, not through mere art devoid of them. Above all, we need courage and strength to win through the battle of life, and that can be achieved only through art that is vigorous and dynamic, and carries about it a religious aroma, and not through effeminate dancing and music, which only retard our spiritual growth.

IMMORTALITY: THE HINDU VIEW

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

This paper is based on the Vedānta philosophy formulated in the three major Hindu scriptures, namely, the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, and the *Brahma-Sūtra*. There are many interpretations of Vedānta given by different commentators. The three main schools affirm non-dualism, qualified non-dualism, and dualism as the conclusion of Vedānta. Non-dualism teaches the ultimate oneness of Brahman, embodied souls, and the universe, and the unreality of the last two apart from Brahman. Its best known exponent is Śaṅkarācārya (A.D. 788-820). According to qualified non-dualism, whose chief exponent is Rāmānujācārya, the ultimate Reality, though non-dual, admits the distinctions of God, living beings, and nature. Dualism asserts the reality of two principles, namely, the supreme Being and the individual soul. Its chief exponent is Madhvācārya (A.D. 1199-1276). In this paper, I have followed non-dualism.

Sometime during the evolution of thought at the human level, when consciousness became self-conscious, man asked himself three questions in one form or another. Who am I? Whence have I come? Whither am I going? These remain man's perennial questions.

Belief in the immortality of the soul, denial of it, and indifference or agnosticism seem to be as old as human thinking. For instance, one of the Upaniṣads—the philosophical section of the Vedas, which contains the earliest record of the Indo-Aryan religious and philosophical speculation—states that the tangible universe was in the beginning non-existent, and that names and forms arose from non-existence. (cf. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. 2) * The Cārvāka

school of Indian philosophy, accepting sense-perception as the only valid proof of reality, denied the existence of both the soul and God. In another Upaniṣad (*Kaṭha*, I. i. 20), the pupil says to his teacher: 'There is this doubt about a man, when he is dead: Some say that he exists; others, that he does not.' He seeks the answer to this doubt.

On the other hand, belief in the continuity of life after death is widespread, perhaps more so than disbelief or doubt. It has been cherished by common men, philosophers, thinkers, and religious mystics. A child, as far back as he can remember, takes life for granted; he must be taught the fact of death. It is said that persons committing suicide often make a last desperate attempt to save their lives.

MODERN SCIENCE AND THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY

Modern scepticism is the result of the investigations of physical science, though many eminent scientists do not reject the idea of immortality. A total philosophy of life deduced from the investigations of physical science, which may be called scientism, upholds atheism. Such thought began in the sixteenth century and has received wide recognition since the latter part of the nineteenth century, when Darwin's theory of evolution dominated the minds of intellectuals.

It may be that some who wanted to deny God and the soul in order to enjoy maximum worldly happiness hailed the law of

Upanishads, Volumes I, II, III, and IV. translated by Swami Nikhilananda, Harper & Bros., New York. 1949, 1952, 1956, 1959.

Quotations from the *Bhagavad-Gītā* refer to *The Bhagavad Gita*, translated by Swami Nikhilananda, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, 1952.

* Quotations from the Upaniṣads refer to *The*

evolution as a veritable godsend, the sanction to lead a godless life. But a study of evolution reveals the continuity of life. The life-principle is indestructible. It has faced many challenges of the outer world—bitter cold, torrid heat, various obstacles in water, on land, and in the air, flood, epidemic, and war—but survived. Somehow it has always adapted itself to new situations by changing its outer forms. Charles Darwin speaks of the evolution of physical structures through such methods as adaptation, natural selection, and the struggle for existence. Neither he nor Thomas H. Huxley denied the continuity of life.

As to the overall picture of the universe created by the scientific investigation of the last three hundred years, the conclusion seems to be that it is matter in motion. This statement may be an over-simplification, but is substantially true. In such a world, there is no place for an intelligent Creator, nor is there any ultimate purpose behind the cosmic process. Physical laws are indifferent to spiritual or moral values. By implication, science has disturbed the very heart of religion and made life hollow at the centre. Morality has become dependent upon individual taste, an expression of our likes and dislikes. Good is what satisfies our desires, and evil its reverse.

This is not meant to deny the numerous benefits bestowed upon humanity by science. The scientific method of reasoning provides satisfactory explanations for many natural events for which supernatural causes were sought in pre-scientific days. Technology, too, has been admirable in tackling the problems of ill health, poverty, and illiteracy, and it has all but annihilated distances. But science is only a means to an end. Man's goal should be the development of his spiritual faculties through a healthy body and mind and a stable society.

Various interpretations of man have been

given by the sciences. Man is a physical and chemical entity and obeys the laws of nature. A combination of certain elements has produced life. Man is one of the animals; like them, he eats, grows, reproduces, and dwells on earth. Sociologists study man as an individual in relation to other human beings, endowed with certain social and cultural characteristics. Many modern psycho-analysts speak of man in terms of libido. None of these explanations is completely erroneous, but all are inadequate. They leave out an important element in man—his soul. In short, people influenced by physical science think that man is a psychophysical complex. Occasionally they grant that he may have a soul.

Materialistic and mechanistic interpretations of man have fragmented him and made life empty. The sense of frustration of modern man has been caught by the sensitive poet T. S. Eliot, who writes :

We are the hollow men
 We are the stuffed men
 Leaning together
 Headpiece filled with straw. Alas !
 Our dried voices, when
 We whisper together
 Are quiet and meaningless
 As wind in dry grass
 Or rats' feet over broken glass
 In our dry cellar
 Shape without form, shade without
 colour,
 Paralysed force, gesture without
 motion. . . .

Sarojini Naidu, the Indian poet, expressed the emptiness of life in the following lines :

Dream yields to dream, strife follows
 strife,
 And death unweaves the webs of Life.

Many serious scientists, however, defer to the doctrine of immortality. They con-

fess that knowledge of the soul is beyond the realm of scientific investigation, which is dependent upon sense-data and the reasoning based upon them.

IMMORTALITY A METAPHYSICAL TRUTH NOT A DOGMA

The desire for immortality is apparently inherent in human nature. People show that they crave immortality by begetting children, creating works of art, erecting monuments, or pursuing scholarship. Names are inscribed on stones or the bark of trees to perpetuate the memory even of ordinary people who have no claim to be remembered. Noticing such an inscription, Cowper wrote:

So strong the zeal to immortalize himself
Beats in the breast of man, that even a
few,
Few transient years, won from the abyss
abhorr'd
Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown.

In contrast to the physical sciences, religion gives a spiritual or sacramental interpretation of man and the universe.

One of the assumptions of religion is the survival of the soul after death. Such a belief promises the devotee eternal happiness and peace. Indeed, if the soul does not survive death, who will enjoy the rewards of religion? The moral foundation of life is based on the belief that the soul continues to exist after death. Life on earth is short. One cannot experience all the consequences of one's action in the short span between birth and death.

The Old Testament mentions resurrection, though the Jewish prophets gave primacy to God and His holiness, power, and justice. Hebrew prophecy is God-centred. The apocalyptic vision of immortality was transformed into a religious doctrine much later, especially in the

writings of Maimonides (A.D. 1135-1204). Hellenistic and eastern thought and the philosophy of Plotinus, among other factors, contributed to this transformation.

Jesus was no doubt familiar from boyhood with the belief of his Jewish ancestors regarding the hereafter of the soul, and spoke of life after death in heaven or hell. But what happened three days after the Crucifixion, first witnessed by the grief-stricken women who went to the grave in a mood of anguish to anoint the body of Jesus, was made the strong pillar of Christianity by St. Paul. Despair over death was turned into the hope of eternal life. Resurrection, with its promise of the immortality of the soul, was formally accepted as the principal dogma of Christianity and incorporated in the Nicene creed in A.D. 325. What was an intuition of the Jewish prophets became the great support of Christianity.

Hinduism, one of the major religions of the East, believes in the soul's immortality and in its inevitable corollary, the doctrine of rebirth. The thought of countless millions of Hindus has been strongly influenced by these concepts. Immortality and rebirth explain to them the present inequality among men, show them the way to future improvement of their lot, and assure them of their ultimate liberation from the pain and suffering of life.

Immortality, as understood by the Hindus, is not a dogma, but a metaphysical truth based upon direct experience. The scriptures and reasoning indicate it, but do not attempt to prove it conclusively. The concept of immortality is intimately associated with the nature of the soul and ultimate Reality, or the Godhead. We shall first discuss the nature of Reality.

THE NATURE OF REALITY

The seers of the Vedas discovered the eternal unity of existence, which 'holds

in its embrace all that has come to be'. Reality is a seamless garment which includes super-human, human, and sub-human beings. It pervades the entire universe, forms the inmost essence of all created beings, and yet transcends all. As the Reality behind the universe It is called Brahman, and as the indestructible Spirit in man, Ātman.

Brahman has been described in the Vedas from two standpoints: acosmic or transcendental, and cosmic or phenomenal. From the transcendental standpoint, It is indescribable in words and cannot be characterized by any indicative marks or attributes: '... whence words together with the mind turn away.' (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II. ix. 1) The impossibility of knowing Brahman by any human means has been expressed by the well-known Vedāntic formula: 'Neti, neti—Not this, not this.' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. iv. 22) In speaking of Brahman or pure Consciousness, the Upaniṣads usually employ the technique of negation. 'Which ... cannot be seen or seized, which has no root or attributes, no eyes or ears, no hands or feet ... which is imperishable and the source of all beings.' (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, I. i. 6) It is unknown and unknowable by the finite mind and is experienced in the depths of meditation by the illumined seers. All that can be predicated of Brahman is 'Existence', to dispel the idea that It is non-existence or void.

From the relative standpoint, however, the Vedas concede the empirical reality of the phenomenal universe and the multiplicity of creatures. Obviously the attributeless, non-active Spirit cannot be the Creator, nor an object of prayer and worship. No relationship can be established with It. It is too lofty for the finite mind to grasp. But man is eager to know the Creator of the universe. A victim of fear, frustration, and

suffering, he needs a Saviour and a Personal God who are benign and compassionate, and to whom he can lift up his hands for succour in times of stress and trial.

These needs are supplied by the Vedic conception of the Saguna Brahman, or Brahman with attributes, who is the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe. He is the Personal God. 'He is the Lord of all. He is the knower of all. He is the inner controller.' (*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, 6) 'His hands and feet are everywhere; His eyes, heads, and faces are everywhere; His ears are everywhere; He exists compassing all.' (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, III. 16) 'Under the mighty rule of this Imperishable ... the sun and moon are held in their respective positions. Under the mighty rule of this Imperishable ... heaven and earth are held in their respective positions. Under the mighty rule of this Imperishable ... moments ... days and nights, fortnights, months, seasons, and years are held in their respective positions.' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III. viii. 9) His love for creatures knows no bounds. He is the all-forgiving Father, all-compassionate Mother, and ever patient Teacher. He is not disturbed by man's good and evil deeds. A man acts rightly or wrongly in the world under the spell of delusion. When delusion is destroyed by the knowledge of God, God is revealed as the sun is when clouds disappear. 'Even the most sinful man, if he worships Me with unswerving devotion' becomes a saint. (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, IX. 30) 'He soon becomes righteous and attains eternal peace.' (*ibid.*, IX. 31)

These two Brahmanas, with and without attributes, active and non-active, are not two separate entities, but two aspects of the same Reality. They are like fire and its power to burn, or like a gem and its lustre. While active in creating and governing the world, the Reality is called Brahman with attributes or the Personal

God. While inactive, It is known as the attributeless pure Spirit. It is the same water whether it is calm or agitated by waves. Brahman appears as the Personal God through a power inherent in It called *Māyā*, a kind of metaphysical nescience, which first conceals the transcendental Spirit and then projects the universe. It is the sort of oblivion that descends on a man when he falls asleep and then sees dreams. *Māyā* is incomprehensible to the finite mind, for the finite mind itself is projected by it and functions in the relative world. What the doctrine of *Māyā* really teaches is that there lies hidden in the heart of reality a great mystery, which makes the One appear as many, and which, though motiveless and transcendental, projects the world of name and form and creates the notion of good and evil, pain and pleasure, life and death, and other pairs of opposites. It is emphasized by Vedānta that the conditioning of pure Spirit by *Māyā* is apparent and not real. Even when regarded as the Creator and the Preserver, Brahman remains untouched by activity as the desert by the water of the mirage.

Vedānta admits the fact of creation, but not the act of creation. The illusory mirage is a fact, but the desert does not become the mirage. All the waters of the mirage cannot wet a single grain of sand in the desert. When the devotee worships the Personal God, the Reality appears to him as his Chosen Ideal—Kṛṣṇa, Father-in-heaven, Viṣṇu, or Śiva—and when the same devotee seeks to realize Its absolute aspect, It withdraws Its name and form and is revealed as Brahman or pure Spirit. This is the act of grace.

On the basis of the identity of Brahman and Ātman, Hinduism has established the immortality of the soul. We shall now discuss the nature of the soul and its ultimate destiny.

THE NATURE OF THE SOUL ITS ULTIMATE DESTINY

The Vedic philosophers, in their insatiable search for the First Principle, carried on their investigation from two directions. As the study of the changing phenomena revealed an indivisible, eternal, intangible, and unlimited substance which is the sub-stream of the universe, so also the study of the changing tangible man revealed to them a reality, intelligent, conscious, and directly intuited, which animates the body, the sense-organs, and the mind. They called the former by the name of Brahman, and the latter by the name of Ātman, who functions as the witness of the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep.

It may be contended that Brahman is a vague form of matter which is unlimited and intangible. Ātman, or the consciousness associated with the individual, though directly intuited, may be a finite entity, limited by other individuals. But in deep meditation, the seers of the Upaniṣads realized the oneness of Brahman and Ātman as undifferentiated Consciousness or pure Spirit, and thus postulated a new dimension of Reality, which they called Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, or Saccidānanda. It is infinite and eternal like Brahman, and also directly perceived as one's soul or inmost consciousness. The identity of Brahman and Ātman has been expressed in the Upaniṣads by such well-known statements as 'I am Brahman', 'This Self is Brahman', 'Brahman is Consciousness', and 'All that exists is Brahman'. It must be emphasized that this conclusion of non-dualistic Vedānta is neither a religious dogma nor a philosophical abstraction, but a direct experience. Speculative philosophy creates doubt. A philosopher is a doubter.

As in the case of Brahman, Vedānta describes Ātman from two standpoints: absolute or transcendental, and relative or

phenomenal. From the absolute standpoint, Ātman, or the Soul, though dwelling in a changing and perishable body, is independent of the body. It is incorruptible, unchanging, divine, non-dual, and without beginning or end. It is all peace, all knowledge, and ever free. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (II. 18-19) says: 'Only the bodies, of which this eternal, imperishable, incomprehensible Self is the indweller, are said to have an end. . . . He who looks on the Self as the slayer, and he who looks on the Self as the slain—neither of these apprehends aright. The Self slays not nor is slain.' 'It is never born, nor does It ever die, nor, having once been, does It again cease to be. Unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval, It is not slain when the body is slain.' (ibid., II. 20) 'Even as a person casts off worn-out clothes and puts on others that are new, so the embodied Self casts off worn-out bodies and enters into others that are new.' (ibid., II. 22) 'Weapons cut It not; fire burns It not; water wets It not; the wind does not wither It.' (ibid., II. 23) The soul is the source of attraction: 'Verily, not for the sake of the husband is the husband loved, but he is loved for the sake of the self.' (*Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, II. iv. 5, IV. v. 6) The same is true of the love one feels for wife, children, men, gods, and all created beings. The real attraction is that of the soul, not of the flesh. Physical attachment is distortion of the love of Spirit, coming through the channel of the body, senses, and mind. The soul, being the inmost essence of everything, cannot be perceived by the senses or grasped by the mind.

'You cannot see the seer of seeing; you cannot hear the hearer of hearing; you cannot think of the thinker of thinking; you cannot know the knower of knowing. This is your self that is within all; everything else but this is perishable.' (ibid., III.

iv. 2) The soul is pure Intelligence, which uses the sense-organs for perceiving external objects. It is described as 'the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of speech, the Life of life, and the Eye of the eye'. (*Kena Upaniṣad*, I. 2) 'You cannot know the knower of knowing.' (*Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, III. iv. 2) 'He is never seen, but is the Seer; He is never heard, but is the Hearer; He is never thought of, but is the Thinker; He is never known, but is the Knower. There is no other seer than He, there is no other hearer than He. . . . He is your Self, the Inner Controller, the Immortal. Everything else but Him is perishable.' (ibid., III. vii. 23)

Hindu philosophers and psychologists later indicated by reason the presence of the soul in man. In their opinion, any perception presupposes the presence of an unchanging spirit. The visible eye, the external instrument of perception, carries the impression of an object by the subtle optic nerve to the brain centre. This starts a reaction of the mind, which creates doubt. The intellect resolves it by referring to the storehouse of memories. This is followed by the reactions of the ego, which are various and detached from one another, as is known from such statements as 'I am happy', 'I am unhappy', 'I am depressed', 'I am elated', and so on. As in a moving picture there is the need of an unmoving screen on which the pictures must be focused to give the idea of continuity, so also there must be in man an unmoving detached element to unify the detached experiences of the ego. Otherwise, they cannot be co-ordinated. This still entity is the Self, the Witness-Consciousness.

Secondly, the mind and the body are two layers of the same material substance, the mind being finer than the body. Both the body and the mind are in constant motion, and we can distinguish one movement from the other. The mind moves faster than the

body. This difference in speed can be perceived only in relation to something which is motionless. This motionless entity is the Self.

Thirdly, the seer must be relatively one in order to see the diversity. Thus the eye is the seer and various objects of the outside world are the seen. But again, the eye, with its diverse characteristics of keenness, dullness, or blindness, is the seen and the mind is the seer. The mind, too, has various features such as doubt, deliberation, calmness, fickleness, fear, and fearlessness, which are witnessed by Consciousness. Consciousness is the final seer; otherwise, another perceiving consciousness is to be postulated. This ends in an infinite regress. So there is in man an unchanging Consciousness which is the ultimate Seer. It is Ātman, or the Self. As mentioned before, the argument of the philosophers can only indicate, but not definitely prove, the existence of Ātman. Philosophers think in terms of concepts. Ātman is not a concept of the mind. When the mind is free from concepts and becomes still, then the true nature of Ātman is revealed. Jehovah is described as 'I am that I am'. The Old Testament says: 'Be still and know that I am God.' All that can be said of Ātman is that It exists. This is unrelated to existence in time and space, which operate in the phenomenal world.

Though from the absolute standpoint the soul is one and without a second, from the phenomenal or relative standpoint, Hinduism admits the multiplicity of souls (*jīvātman*), and distinguishes them from the supreme Soul (*Paramātman*). As the attributeless and non-active Brahman, with the help of Māyā, projects the universe—as the spider projects its web—and becomes the Creator, endowed with such attributes as omniscience, omnipotence, and compassion, so also the supreme Self, under the influence of nescience, becomes identified with

the physical body and individualized. It should be emphasized that the Creator *uses* Māyā as His instrument to project the universe, but the embodied Self comes under the *influence* of Māyā. God is the controller of Māyā, whereas the creature is controlled by Māyā. The embodied soul, characterized by scant knowledge, little power, and other phenomenal characteristics, cherishes desires and becomes the agent of action and the experiencer of its fruit. It feels pleasure and pain, as a result of virtuous or wicked deeds, and experiences fear, fearlessness, and the other pairs of opposites. Birth and death are related to the individual soul; so also are the concepts of heaven, hell, and rebirth. These are governed by the law of time, space, and causation. As Brahman, while creating or preserving the universe, is in reality pure Spirit, so also the embodied soul, while active on account of identification with the body, is nothing but the supreme Self. Māyā, or ignorance, like a cloud hiding the sun, conceals the immortal nature of the soul, but cannot destroy it. Evil action makes the veil of ignorance thicker, and virtuous action makes it thinner. Behind Māyā, thick or thin, shines the light of the Spirit, like the sun behind the cloud.

The Upaniṣads speak of two souls that dwell, as it were, in man: the real or supreme Soul, and the apparent or individual soul. They are like two birds of similar plumage, inseparable companions like light and shadow. One of the birds, hopping from one branch to another, eats sweet and bitter fruits and feels happy or unhappy, while the other bird, perched on the topmost branch, looks on without eating, serene and undisturbed. The apparent soul runs after the enjoyments of the world and feels elated or depressed. Bewildered by its impotence, now and then it gets a glimpse of the real Soul and envies its calm-

ness. When, through the practice of non-attachment and contemplation, it realizes its oneness with the supreme Soul, its grief passes away.

THE HINDU DOCTRINE OF REBIRTH ITS SPECIAL FEATURE

Birth and death apply to the apparent man. What happens to him after death? The materialistic doctrine of complete annihilation did not appeal to the Hindus. It is inconsistent with the desire for immortality in every person. It conflicts with the moral order of the universe. If everything ends in death, then competition determines our action. Self-interest, either enlightened or crass, becomes the guiding principle. Life on earth becomes cruel, nasty, and brutish.

The doctrine that the soul is created at the time of birth and then lives for ever lacks rational basis. One does not see or cannot imagine anything with a beginning and without any end. This doctrine does not satisfactorily explain the inequality between one man and another in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual spheres. To leave it to the will of God is to hypothesize a Creator who must be cruel, dogmatic, or indifferent to the weal and woe of His creatures. If inborn tendencies and aptitudes are the result of the chance combination of the material particles of sperm and ova, one will not go too far in comparing this phenomenon with an explosion of type in a printing press which produces Plato's *Republic*, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, or *Lady Chatterly's Lover*. To explain character and personality by education and environment—which, no doubt, have influence upon them—is not adequate. The law of cause and effect which operates in the physical world cannot be confined to one life alone. Habit is formed by repetition; so one can reasonably assume a previous life which supplies the blue print of

the present one.

The doctrine of monotonous and eternal life and happiness in heaven did not impress the Vedic philosophers. That happiness, being an effect of righteous deeds, can endure only as long as the cause that has produced it operates. Everlasting life in terms of time is irrational. What begins in time must end in time. Time is the Great Devourer. (cf. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, XI. 32) Time, according to the Hindu philosophers, is a state of mental vibration. A dream experience, for example, covering several years may be discovered to have lasted only a short time when the dreamer awakes. Likewise, everlasting life in heaven may be of very short duration from another standpoint, when the mind vibrates differently. The subtle or spiritual body through which one experiences celestial happiness cannot last for ever. A body consists of parts which sometime or other must fall apart. The earth, heaven, and other planes are parts of creation, and are controlled by the law of time, space, and causality. Hence they cannot be eternal. The embodied person cannot be immortal. The immortality in heaven of which religions speak is relative. A denizen of heaven may live for more years than one can dream of here on earth. But even if life in heaven endures for an inconceivable length of time, it is still not true immortality.

The doctrine of eternal suffering is inconsistent with God's impartial love for His creatures. Most people die as sinners. Consequently, they must suffer torment after death. This certainly cannot make our Heavenly Father, who has created men 'after His own image', happy. The soul, being 'an eternal portion of God' (ibid., XV. 7), cannot be punished for ever. Every creature, however wicked, must be given opportunities to get rid of his imperfection. On earth, the soul is exposed to many errors

and temptations which an individual cannot always control. To believe in the eternal punishment of the soul for a mistake of a few years is to go against the dictates of reason.

In contrast with annihilation or eternal retribution in heaven or hell, Hinduism formulates the doctrine of rebirth, which is the necessary corollary of the soul's immortality. If the soul is immortal, it must have had a pre-existence. Rebirth is governed by the law of Karma. 'Even as the embodied Self passes, in this body, through the stages of childhood, youth, and old age, so does It pass into another body.' (ibid., II. 13) As soon as the fruit of past action and desires is reaped, the purpose of the present body is fulfilled. It is discarded. This accounts for the short or long life of a person on earth. What does he know of life who knows one life only? The illumined can easily witness the passing of the soul from one body to another, but the ignorant fail to see it in spite of many efforts. (ibid., XV. 10)

According to the law of Karma, man is the architect of his own fate and the builder of his own destiny. Fate (*adr̥ṣṭa*) is nothing but the accumulated result of his own past actions. Thus, a Hindu feels responsible for his present suffering and also looks forward to the future with courage and joy. The experiences of the hereafter cannot be demonstrated by the scientific method, as time, space, and other factors of experience are different on the two sides of the grave. Even if the dead were to tell us of their experiences, we would not understand them.

THE TRUE NATURE OF IMMORTALITY AND THE WAY TO IT

According to the teachings of the Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, desires are responsible for man's embodiment on earth. They are of many kinds. Some can be fulfilled in a human body and others in a

subhuman or superhuman body. Thus, a soul assumes an animal, a human, or a celestial body as determined by his unfulfilled desires. Through the animal or the celestial body, the soul only reaps the result of past actions. It cannot create new actions which will produce their effect in a future life, or which will hasten spiritual progress. This is possible only through the human body. Hence, the Hindus believe that birth in a human body is a unique privilege.

The Vedas speak of different heavens where righteous souls enjoy happiness in different degrees. The highest is called *Brahmaloka* and is similar to the heaven of dualistic worshippers. There the most intense joy is experienced for the longest period of time. In *Brahmaloka*, all desires are fulfilled. The soul enjoys uninterrupted communion with the Creator Brahṁā, or the Personal God. There one is free from sickness and old age, and lives as long as the cycle lasts. A person who performs extremely meritorious action in this life, but does not attain liberation through Self-knowledge, goes to *Brahmaloka* after death.

Brahmaloka is a part of creation. There, individuality, however subtle, is retained for the enjoyment of the bliss of divine communion. *Brahmaloka*, with its inhabitants, merges into Brahman at the end of the cycle. Some souls, however, come back to earth from *Brahmaloka* for a new embodiment. Life in the highest heaven is described as immortality in the scriptures. According to non-dualistic Vedānta, which teaches the sole reality of Brahman and the unreal nature of the universe, this is relative immortality. A continued existence in time is quite different from liberation or the non-dualistic immortality.

The sole factor in the attainment of immortality or liberation is desirelessness. After pondering over the happiness a man obtains from the fulfilment of desires

through repeated births in different bodies—ranging from the body of a blade of grass to the body of a denizen of *Brahmaloka*—he realizes that he has not attained true immortality. He then gives up all desires and in the twinkling of an eye discovers immortality through the knowledge of the Self. It comes like a flash of lightning. 'When all the desires that dwell in the heart fall away, then the mortal becomes immortal and here attains Brahman.' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II. iii. 14) The Gordian knot of repeated birth is cut asunder in one stroke. It is a direct experience which has nothing to do with time. There is no relationship between time and timelessness.

Immortality, it should be noted, is not the *effect* of knowledge. It is not something acquired. If immortality were the effect of knowledge, and therefore had a beginning, it would then come to an end. 'All creatures are ever free from bondage and free by nature. They are ever illumined and always liberated.' (Gauḍapāda : *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, IV. 92-93) All that a seeker of immortality need do is to get rid of the veil of ignorance, which produces ego and desire. These are inevitable as long as one is attached to the body and the world. He must isolate himself from the psychophysical complex by the practice of spiritual disciplines. This demands self-effort. Immediately 'the man, who is always free, realizes his freedom'. (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II. ii. 1) This experience comes by the grace of God.

How does a man know that he has attained Self-knowledge? Vedānta speaks of the three tests of Truth. Truth is free from quarrel and free from contradiction, and It is conducive to the welfare of all. (Gauḍapāda : *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, IV. 2) Only a partial truth sees contradiction and opposes. Its usefulness is confined to a limited area. But the complete Truth, which makes a man see himself in all and

all in himself, and see Brahman in himself and himself in Brahman, can neither oppose nor contradict anything. He has known That by the knowing of which everything is known. His heart overflows with infinite compassion. The doctrine of the soul's non-duality fulfils all these conditions.

Realization of the soul's immortality robs death of its paralysing fear. The materialist tries to avoid death as long as he can and then accepts the inevitable end with stoic resignation. An agnostic on his death-bed, often depressed and distraught, finds nothing to hold to. Only a man who has experienced the immortal nature of the soul can say : 'O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?'

If death gives finality to a man's existence, 'there is, then, nothing to be hoped for, nothing to be expected and nothing to be done save to await our turn to mount the scaffold and bid farewell to the colossal blunder, the much-ado-about-nothing world'. (W. Macneile Dixon, *The Human Situation*, Gifford Lectures 1936-37) It is immortality that gives stability and permanence to the soul, a unique possession which, if lost, leaves nothing else worth preserving in the world.

The Vedas teach *Ātmavidyā* and *Brahmavidyā*, the knowledge of the soul and the knowledge of Brahman. The Vedas exhort man : 'Know that non-dual Ātman alone and give up all other talk.' (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, II. ii. 5) Self-knowledge, as formulated in the Upaniṣads, is unique. It was regarded by the Vedic seers as more precious than offspring, wealth, and all the meritorious actions prescribed by religion. Therefore they were chary of imparting it to one not properly qualified.

Who is qualified for Self-knowledge ? The beginner must fulfil all obligations to family and society, practise daily devotion to God, acquire a general knowledge of the scriptures, and abstain from actions con-

demned by religion. Thus a proper mood is created for the practice of higher disciplines, such as discrimination between the real and the unreal and detachment from the unreal (which includes craving for happiness in the tangible world and also in the unseen higher planes after death), control of the body and the mind, bearing the inevitable suffering of life with calmness, withdrawal from passing pleasures, introspection, meditation, and last, an unflagging longing for liberation from the prison-house of the universe.

Such a qualified student approaches an illumined teacher with humility and receives instruction on the nature of the Self. The instruction is more of the nature of *transmission* of knowledge by silent influence than by words or example. The student next reflects on the instruction and rids himself of doubt. Finally, he meditates on the Self with undistracted mind. All traces of ignorance are dispelled, the knots of doubt are cut asunder, and knowledge of the identity of Ātman and Brahman becomes revealed. The rediscovery of this identity is the ultimate goal of evolution.

THE IMMORTAL FREE SOUL

A knower of the Self is called a *jīvan-mukta*—one who is free while living in a physical body. How does he act? How does he move? How does he behave?

A free soul is like a person who, having been sick, is made whole again; like one who, having been blind, has regained his sight; like one who, having been asleep, is awake. He has discarded the mask of individuality and discovered his all-pervasiveness as pure Spirit. Whether absorbed in meditation or conscious of the outer world, his knowledge of the immortal nature of the soul is constant and his bliss steady. Though often he behaves like an ordinary mortal in respect to hunger, thirst, and other demands of the physical body, he

is never overwhelmed by them. Though active, he is never involved in action nor craves its results, because he knows that the soul is neither the doer nor the enjoyer of the fruit of action. He is free from worry and tension, because he does not dwell on the past, remains unconcerned about the present, and is undisturbed by the thought of the future. Death, being a mere change of body (like moving from one room to another), has no terror for him. Established in the knowledge of the oneness of existence, he regards the pleasure and pain of others as his own pain and pleasure. He cannot injure any creature by thought or word or action, and he dedicates himself to the welfare of others. In short, a free soul lives, acts, and dies under the spell of immortality.

A free soul, living in the world of duality, is undisturbed by its pairs of opposites, such as good and evil, and pain and pleasure. Tormented by the wicked or honoured by the good, he is always unruffled. Under repeated blows from the world he remains unshaken, steady as an anvil. A free soul is bound neither by the injunctions of the scriptures, the conventions of society, nor the imperatives of ethics. While preparing himself for Self-knowledge, he had suppressed all selfish desires and wicked propensities. Now his goodness is spontaneous. He is free but not whimsical, natural but not given to licence. He can never set a bad example to others. Such virtues as humility, unselfishness, charity, and sympathy, which he had previously practised as spiritual disciplines, now adorn him like so many jewels. He does not strive for them; they cling to him.

A free soul is not a miracle-monger, nor does he advertise his holiness. As a fish swimming in water leaves no mark behind, or as a bird flying in the air leaves no footprints, so does he move in the world unnoticed by others. He can only be known

by another free soul, as the power of a lion can be recognized by another lion, not by a barnyard fowl. In his presence, turbulent minds become quiet.

To ordinary men, a free soul is an enigma. He is indifferent to wealth, fame, social status, or political achievement. Though without riches, he is ever content; though outwardly active, he is inwardly actionless; though seemingly helpless, he is endowed with exceeding power; though unattached to sense-objects, he is inwardly satisfied; though dwelling in a finite body, he is ever conscious of his infinite nature.

The embodied soul, on account of its entanglement in the world, strives for liberation. The concepts of bondage and liberation apply only to the unillumined. But for the free soul there is neither bondage nor liberation. A free soul, while living in the body, often experiences disease, old age, or decay; he may be a victim of blindness, deafness, or other infirmities; but having realized that these are the characteristics of the body, the mind, and the senses, he regards them as unreal and remains undisturbed. He witnesses the events happening to his body or mind, or to the world, as a play on the stage. He enjoys them as a spectator of a comedy or a tragic drama. To him the events of the world are like the unfolding of a divine play.

It is said in the Hindu scriptures that the body does not usually survive long after the attainment of Self-knowledge. The impact of this experience shatters it and its nervous system. But death does not create any ripple in the mind of the free soul. When the purpose of his embodiment—namely, the attainment of Self-knowledge—has been fulfilled, what difference does it make whether the body remains or not? When the image is cast, the mould has lost its value. A free soul may of his own free will continue to live or assume a new body, for the welfare of mankind.

What happens to a knower of the Self after death? Does his soul go anywhere? The unillumined repair to different planes or return to earth to satisfy their unfulfilled desires. 'As to the man ... who is without desire, who is freed from desire, whose desire is satisfied, whose only object of desire is the Self—his organs (life-breath) do not depart. Being Brahman, he is merged in Brahman.' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. iv. 6) The water of the ocean goes up in the form of vapour, changes into clouds, falls on the earth as rain, and then becomes rivers, which are called by different names. After meandering through different lands, they ultimately disappear into the ocean whence they originated. Just as the lifeless slough of a snake, when cast off, lies on an ant-hill, so does the body of the illumined lie after death. His soul emerges bright and radiant. Once his ignorance is destroyed a free soul merges in Light, Knowledge, Freedom, and Reality, and never again enters into darkness, bondage, ignorance, or illusion. When the butterfly has emerged from the chrysalis, it does not re-enter its cocoon but flits from flower to flower, bathed in the light of the sun. As milk poured into milk becomes one with milk, water poured into water becomes one with water, oil poured into oil becomes one with oil, so the free soul, absorbed in Brahman, becomes one with Brahman.

CONCLUSION

I have discussed immortality from the standpoint of non-dualistic Vedānta, which is the peak of Hindu philosophical speculation. It should be mentioned here that there are many Hindus who follow the dualistic school of Vedānta and regard souls as parts of God, like sparks of a blazing fire, or as separate from God, as servants are from their master or children from their parents. But all admit the

soul's immortality and its eventual perfection.

Three other contributions made by Hindu philosophers to the thought current of the world may be mentioned at this point. They are the oneness of existence, non-duality of the Godhead, and the harmony of religions. It may be noted that the divinity of the soul, already discussed, is the spiritual basis of the freedom and democracy so greatly prized in the West. A man should be evaluated by his inherent divinity, and not by the colour of his skin, or by his religious affiliation, or social position, or economic rank. The oneness of existence is the spiritual basis of the golden rule and other ethical laws. By hurting others, a man hurts himself. Conversely, by loving others, he loves himself. The oneness of existence includes all created beings, organic or inorganic. The non-duality of the Godhead and the harmony of religions, if rightly understood and properly practised eliminate religious friction. 'Truth is one: sages call It by various names.' (*Rg-Veda*, X. cxiv. 5) God is the goal, and religion is the means to His realization. A true lover of God should have complete loyalty to his own faith, but unreserved respect for the faith of others.

Many people in the West are taking an interest in the theory of rebirth, which to most of them is the same as the immortality of the soul. Belief in rebirth may bring comfort to those who are afraid of

annihilation after death or of boredom in heaven. To a Hindu, however, the ultimate goal of life is not to be born again and again on earth, or anywhere else where life is not free from certain limitations. But he regards rebirth as an important corollary of the immortality of the soul. It explains to him the seeming chaos of the moral inequality, injustice, and manifold evil present in the world of human life, and provides a strong motive for self-denial and the striving to rid oneself of one's imperfections.

The immortality of the soul, an inner experience, cannot be tested by the physical scientist in his laboratory. But the scientific method of experimentation, observation, and verification, as well as the collection of facts and their correlation, can be applied to verify it.

The immortality of the soul, with its corollary of rebirth, provides the unbiased scientific mind with a good hypothesis—something with which many scientific investigations start. We can test it by acting on it. Then we shall know whether or not it works. It is more reasonable to believe in immortality than to disbelieve in it. It is more probable than improbable. A man can live by it as if it were true. From the doctrine of immortality and reincarnation he is certain to derive courage and inspiration to face the many baffling problems of life as serenely as countless millions of Hindus have done during the past thousands of years.

PILGRIMAGE TO AJANTA AND ELLORA

SRI R. DEB

For a person in the position of the writer, a subject like this is somewhat out of tune, but one feels tempted to give others a glimpse of the rare ecstatic joy that one had the privilege of receiving from one's visit to the famous rock-hewn caves of Ajanta and Ellora.

These huge cave-temples carved out of the rugged cliffs of the Western Ghat Hills by a thousand years of tireless work of the monk-artists of ancient India have a beauty all their own, the extent and depth of which can only be realized by a personal visit to the spot. Here the artist finds an exhibition of art *par excellence*; the historian finds a rare book narrating in vivid characters the magnificent history of a thousand years of Indian culture; and the mystic finds a vision of the immortal 'Ānanda' which the artist-seekers of Ajanta and Ellora have epitomized in stone out of the very fervour and devotion of their hearts. So a proper appreciation of the great creative genius of the artists of Ajanta and Ellora, can only be done by a man who combines in himself the aesthetic sense of an artist, the erudition of a historian, and the mysticism of a spiritualist.

TAPASYA THROUGH ART

The artists who gave us such a priceless national heritage were not only great architects, sculptors, and painters but, above all, they were spiritual devotees of a very high order, whose only *sādhana* in life must have been to realize the Divine through a course of progressive development of their artistic talents. They had no considerations of fame or reward, except perhaps the love of art and a sense of dedication to the Master. The names of the artists who painted these

masterpieces of Ajanta, therefore, lie in utter oblivion. It was not an art for art's sake; it was art for the sake of the Divine—art used as a vehicle for unfolding the inner divinity in one's own self, in an attempt to establish a holy communion with the Lord. It was art offered as homage to the Lord of one's heart. It was therefore natural for these monk-artists to have chosen mostly spiritual subjects for their work, but instances are by no means uncommon where they have also chosen secular themes. Professor Sisir Kumar Mitra feels that their choice of non-religious subjects may be ascribed to their attempt to transform their worldly instincts, in a gradual process of *sādhana*, into a love for the Divine, so that, freed from the tentacles of desire and passion, life may again reflect its celestial glory and become one with the Divine. This flight from the bondage of lower nature towards a divine becoming—a transcendental, ineffable, and ever conscious existence—has been the quintessence of Indian *tapasyā* in ages. It is this all-pervading sense of spirituality that lends so much of charm to the art of Ajanta and Ellora. A sense of other-worldliness pervades the entire environs of Ajanta and Ellora.

Every figure there is resplendent with a deep spiritual significance, and not even a cursory glance can miss the sublime spirit that manifests itself in all its divine glory through these marvellous works of the great spiritual seekers of ancient India. Apart from its artistic excellence, architectural grandeur, and sculptural beauty, it is this expression of spiritual beatitude that gives Ajanta and Ellora perhaps the greatest place amongst the historical monuments of

ancient India. Referring to the famous 'Kailash' cave (cave No. XVI of Ellora), Dr. Smith has said: 'The Kailash temple is one of the wonders of the world, a work of which any nation may be proud of.' And Mr. Havel, another great Indologist and admirer of Indian art, while paying eloquent tributes to the mural paintings of Ajanta, has remarked that these paintings constitute India's claim to the respect and gratitude of humanity. It is a pity that we are not yet fully conscious of this great national heritage, which has attracted the respectful attention of many a western scholar. Hundreds of people are no doubt visiting these caves every year, but many more hundreds of them must come to offer a fitting homage to the unknown artist-seekers of Ajanta and Ellora.

TOPOGRAPHY AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Greatest care must have been taken to select the site for the excavation of these caves. The caves are situated amidst surroundings of rare natural beauty. The beauty of Ajanta, specially after the rains, with the gorge below overflowing with foamy snow-white water from the high cliffs of the surrounding hills, presents a sight for the gods to see. Nature has endowed the hills and environs of Ajanta with the best of scenic beauty, so as to afford a fitting background to the sublime frescoes of the master artists inside the caves. The physical texture of the rock, too, is extremely suitable for rock-cut architecture. These inaccessible hills of granite not only provided the monk-artists with a good material for their work, but also afforded them the requisite opportunity to carry on their *sādhana* in a comparatively calm and serene atmosphere without any distraction.

The twenty-nine caves of Ajanta are situated about sixty-nine miles away from Aurangabad. They appear in a semicircle

just above the Wagoor river (also called the Ajanta river), with a stiff hill in front which shuts out the caves from the view of the open country below. The village Ajanta, which falls on the way to these caves from Aurangabad, is at a distance of about seven miles from the actual caves. The entire village is surrounded by a high protective wall, which still bears evidence of the proud position that Ajanta continued to have, down to the Moghul period, as the headquarters of a garrison guarding the vital highway from Delhi to Aurangabad, the capital in South India. Thus there is no denying the fact that the village Ajanta, after which these world-famous caves have been named, must have been a famous place in the olden days. It should be remembered that these wonderful caves, which are as big as large modern halls, have all been dug out from massive granite by the sheer use of chisel and hammer. Herein lies a thousand years of patient labour and toil, beginning from the third century B.C. down to the age of Harṣa in the eighth century A.D.

The earliest caves of Ajanta were perhaps begun in the third century B.C., under the inspiring patronage of the greatest of all kings, Emperor Aśoka, whose highest aim in life was to propagate the teachings of Lord Buddha. The caves IX and X as well as a number of other earliest caves are of the Āndhra-Śatavāhana period. The date of caves IX and X can definitely be ascribed to the second century B.C., on the basis of two inscriptions, one painted and another engraved, found therein, bearing unmistakable dates of the second century B.C. 'The painting on which the former inscription is found depicts a Rājā visiting the Bodhi Tree. It seems to have been a long painting, but the little that now remains shows the Bodhi Tree fairly intact with the Rājā, his family and attendants on the side to the left and a large party of

fifteen musicians and dancers to the right. Human life in all its aspects, material and spiritual, is represented in this painting and figures express not only spiritual feelings, but also a joyful outlook on the beautiful features of the world.'

The highly advanced mural paintings found in caves I and II, as well as those in caves XVI and XVII, may be ascribed to the fifth century A.D., from the reliable evidence available in the painted and engraved inscriptions in these caves. Thus caves I, II, XVI, and XVII may be attributed to the Vakata kings, who ruled in this part of the country between A.D. 280—530. Under the Cālūkyas of Bādāmi (A.D. 543—753) and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas (A.D. 753—973), the rock-hewn architecture continued to flourish unabated, and some of the best known works of Ajanta and Ellora are associated with the Cālūkyas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of the eighth century A.D. Pulakeśin II, the greatest king of the Cālūkyas who reigned in the early part of the seventh century A.D., enjoyed a paramount position in Deccan, and his fame spread even to Persia, whose King Khusru II did him honour by sending an embassy to his court. This is known from a fresco painting in one of the caves of Ajanta. The existence of a human figure in Persian dress in the painted ceiling of cave No. I and the figures of the Chinese devotees in the painted wall of cave No. XVII confirm the fact of contact with both Persia and China in those days. The most outstanding rock-cut architecture of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, viz the cave temple of Kailāsa at Ellora was, however, built in the reign of Kṛṣṇa I in the eighth century A.D. Till today, it remains one of the most marvellous work of art ever accomplished by man.

Great alike as masterpieces of sculpture and painting, these cave-temples are unsurpassable monuments of indescribable beauty. It is almost impossible to give an

accurate idea about the magnificence and beauty of these unique caves within the scope of a short article like this. It must also be realized that such a lofty height of art, architecture, and sculpture could not have been reached in a day and must have been preceded by centuries of very advanced studies in these domains. It is therefore proposed to confine our attention only to a few of the outstanding expositions of art and sculpture that strike one most in the course of one's pilgrimage to these world famous shrines.

THE CAVES OF AJANTA

Cave No. I: It is a big square hall supported by a number of massive ornamental columns. On all sides of the hall, there are small living rooms for the hermits. In the shrine facing the hall is a colossal figure of Lord Buddha in meditation with two attendants on two sides. On the left of the shrine, there are beautiful frescoes depicting the conquest of Māra by Lord Buddha. On the eastern wall of the hall, there shines a marvellous painting of Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi, the celestial beauty of which is manifest through the very eyes and limbs of this rare painting. An expression of calmness that comes only from a glimpse of the divine Spirit permeates through the very conception and execution of this wonderful figure. The figure may not show the anatomical accuracy of the Greek Apollo, yet it has a physical beauty of its own with a broad chest, stout shoulders, well-developed arms and a graceful neck. But it is that rare expression of spiritual candour that gives it a unique place amongst the great paintings of the world. 'The half closed meditative eyes, with the eyebrows slightly stretched upwards in the broad forehead, and the lips closed as if in a divine silence, indicate a majestic indifference to the charm of worldly life, on the one hand, and a spirit-

ual tranquillity, on the other. The highlights on the forehead, nose, and chin heighten the effect of serenity.'

The ceiling of the hall has been painted in the design of a lovely carpet. On the eastern wall, there is a beautiful picture of Nāgarāja sitting at a court of justice, and on the northern wall, there appears the story of renunciation of the world by king Mahā Janaka. The portraits of the weeping maids, and particularly of the servant engaged in blowing the sacred conch, deserve special attention. The effect of blowing the conch has been wonderfully depicted in the bulging out eyes and blown up cheeks of the servant. On the top of a column just close to the ceiling, there is a picture of fighting bulls. The ferocity of the animals and the force applied in the struggle have been vividly delineated in the picture. On the western wall, the story of Rājā Śibi and the pigeon has been frescoed in all its details. Close to it, on the same wall, appears the picture showing Buddha's return to Kapilavastu after attaining Buddhahood. Buddha gave *darśana* to every member of his family except his wife Yaśodharā, and when she came to learn that her Lord had left the city without visiting her, she fell into a fit. The convulsion and spasm produced by the fit have been painted with characteristic vividness. A maidservant is seen sprinkling water in the eyes of the fainted princess with a view to arousing her consciousness. On the southern side of the hall, just on the top of a column, there appears a picture of four deer in different poses with one common head. The head has been so painted that it nicely fits in with all the four figures almost simultaneously.

Cave No. II: Like cave No. I, this is also a big hall supported by beautifully engraved pillars. There are extensive frescoes in the ceiling and walls of this cave, too. On the ceiling of the varanda, just in front

of the entrance, there is a picture of two males with socks on their feet. This shows that socks were definitely in use in those days. In the shrine, there is a giant statue of Lord Buddha seated on the deer and of *dharmacakra*. On the left and right of the shrine, there are mural paintings of Buddha in various poses of meditation. The ceiling of the hall is also painted with beautiful designs of flower, conch, and swan. Just to the right of the shrine, there is a small hall with a statue of a *yakṣa*. The ceiling of this hall is painted with a picturesque design of twenty-three flying swans in different poses. The very conception of this marvellous design has its irresistible appeal to all lovers of fine art.

Cave No. VI: This is a two-storeyed cave and, perhaps, the second of its kind in Ajanta. The entrance to the shrine on the ground floor is beautifully decorated with flowers, creepers, and fairies, carved out of massive granite. In the northern extreme of the first floor, there are two wonderful rock-cut pillars which, when thumped with the palm, emit rhythmical sound of a *tabla*.

Cave No. IX: This is, perhaps, the oldest cave in Ajanta, and appears to have been excavated in about the third or the second century B.C. 'The sculptured group by the entrance of the Caitya-hall is one of the best creations of Ajanta sculpture. A Nāgarāja is seated with his queen who holds in her hand a lotus and on her head the coiled cobra. Both of them, the Nāgarāja more visibly, are in a mood of contemplation, almost in a state of trance, unto which they have been plunged by the invocations chanted by the monks in the Caitya-hall, a fact which shows the artist's sense of harmony between his subject and his surroundings.' On the northern corridor of the main hall, just below a wall-painting, there are several small depressions in the floor, which suggest that the artists must have used

them as receptacles for keeping different paints in course of their work.

Cave No. X : This cave is in the shape of a big arch-like hall supported by thirty-nine massive pillars, all very beautifully frescoed with figures of Lord Buddha in different poses. On the right of the entrance, almost near the top of the cave, there is something written in an ancient script. It is said that it was this writing that attracted the attention of Major Gill while he was out on a hunting expedition, and eventually led to the discovery of the twenty-nine caves of Ajanta. The place from where Major Gill had the first view of this cave is still known as the 'view point'.

Cave No. XVI : The hall of this cave is supported by twenty pillars of stone. On the top of the pillars, there are human figures supporting the ceiling on their backs. Exactly similar columns are also visible in cave No. XXIII. The height of sculptural excellence of these human figures, almost bent to the breaking point under the heavy weight of the ceiling, can never be realized except by a personal visit at the spot. The ceiling of the hall is painted in the form of a canopy. The realism that marks the depiction of this canopy is almost a wonder in the realm of art. The undulation that is usually caused in a canopy by the effect of the wind has been meticulously reflected by a masterly touch of the brush. These delicate curves appeared to John Griffiths 'to be nothing less than miraculous.' In the shrine sits a huge statue of Lord Buddha on a pair of lions. The perfect execution of this statue deserves special mention. Even the nails of the toes have been delineated with wonderful precision. On the northern wall of this cave, there appears the picture of a diseased woman under the care of her nurse. The way in which the agony of the diseased woman has been reflected in her eyes makes this picture one of the masterpieces of Ajanta

art.

Cave No. XVII : This cave is exceptionally rich in its wall-paintings. On the top of the doorway, there is a picture of a couple assisting each other in painting. This tends to suggest that women, too, probably made some contribution to the development of fine arts in those days. On the northern wall, we find a picture narrating the story of *Mahākapi Jātaka* in all its details. The eastern wall shows a hunting scene with a herd of deer chased by a pack of hounds and the charioteer. The plight of the deer as well as the ferocity of the hounds has been wonderfully depicted in colours.

But close to the shrine on the eastern wall, the picture of the mother and the child standing before Lord Buddha in a spirit of dedication is perhaps the most outstanding of all the wall-paintings in this cave. Sri Aurobindo has spoken about this particular painting in the following words :

'If we look long at the adoration group of the mother and the child before Buddha, one of the most profound, tender, and noble of the Ajanta masterpieces, we shall find that the impression of intense religious feeling of adoration there is only the most outward general touch in the ensemble of the emotion. That which it deepens to is the turning of the soul of humanity in love to the benignant and calm Ineffable which has made itself sensible and human to us in the universal compassion of the Buddha, and the motive of the soul moment the painting interprets is the dedication of the awakening mind of the child, the coming younger humanity, to that in which already the soul of the mother has learned to find and fix its spiritual joy. The eyes, brows, lips, face, poise of the head of the woman are filled with spiritual emotion which is a continued memory and possession of the physical release, the steady settled calm of the heart's experience filled with an in-

effable tenderness, the familiar depths which are yet moved with the wonder and always farther appeal of something that is infinite, the body and other limbs are grave masses of this emotion and in their poise a basic embodiment of it, while the hands prolong it in the dedicative putting forward of her child to meet the Eternal.'

On the southern wall of this cave, there appears another beautiful picture—the toilet scene of a queen which, despite its secular character, is equally worthy of adoration because of its poise, elegance, dignity, and decorum. The two maids assisting the queen in her toilet, though extremely familiar with the queen, are still in a reverential mood, whereas the queen with the mirror in hand figures as the most perfect specimen of feminine beauty, grace, and charm. The exquisite and flawless delineation of the beautiful curves of the body, waist, neck, limbs, eyes, and eyebrows not only shows the wealth of imagination of the artist, but also pays a glowing tribute to his wonderful brushwork.

Cave No. XIX: This cave exhibits the sculptural and architectural excellence of Ajanta. It has, perhaps, the most exquisitely beautiful facade amongst all the caves of Ajanta and Ellora. With beautifully cut figures of Buddha and artistically decorated arch supported by richly engraved columns, the facade presents in one stone a unique and splendid combination of artistic excellence, architectural grandeur, and sculptural magnificence of ancient India.

Cave No. XXVI: Somewhat similar to the facade of cave No. XIX, the facade of this cave is perhaps the second best in Ajanta. Inside the arch-like hall supported by twenty-eight beautifully engraved pillars stands the holy *stūpa* in all its grandeur. On the left of the hall, there is a colossal statue of Lord Buddha before the *mahā-nirvāṇa*. The depression caused in the

pillow by the pressure of the head of Buddha has been vividly portrayed in the cutting of the stone. The figure of this lying Buddha would be about 17 cubits in length and 4 cubits in breadth. The foot alone measures about $1\frac{3}{4}$ cubits in length. All the walls of this cave are studded with beautifully sculptured figures of Buddha in various poses.

THE CAVES OF ELLORA

The thirty-four caves of Ellora are situated about fifteen miles away from Aurangabad, almost in the opposite direction of Ajanta. At Ellora, one sees more of architectural and sculptural excellence than of fine arts in the form of frescoes, which are still found in abundance in Ajanta. The beautiful paintings of Ellora, the slight traces of which are still found here and there, have all been destroyed through many centuries of neglect and carelessness. This does not, however, mean that compared to Ajanta, Ellora dwindles into insignificance. It has its own grandeur. The caves of Ellora are much bigger than those of Ajanta, and their sculptural beauty, specially that of the famous Kailāsa cave (cave No. XVI) definitely surpasses that of Ajanta. If Ajanta is a marvel in fine arts, Ellora is a marvel in sculpture and architecture. If the former represents the beauty, grace, and elegance of Haimāvati, the latter reflects the grandeur and dignity of the meditative Śaṅkara. If one is the Venus of delicate beauty, the other is the Apollo of masculine charm and vigour. Each has its own beauty; each remains equally great in its own domain.

The first twelve caves are of Buddhist origin, and are studded with innumerable statues of Buddha in meditation. In the shrine of each of these giant cave-temples, there appears a statue of huge Buddha-mūrti, which is great alike as a masterpiece of constructional and sculptural beauty.

But the excellence of Ellora is more manifest in all its glory in its Hindu caves, viz caves XIII-XXX, where art plays a more dominant part in carving out stone into beautiful figures of mythological gods and goddesses. Here the subject of the sculptor no doubt continues to be spiritual, as was apt to be in ancient India, but the sculptor does not confine art to the limits of spirituality. Rather, he tries to exhibit the varying human sentiments of love, beauty, hatred, fear, agony, and wrath in figures of stone—a task marvellous in its conception and infinitely glorious in its execution.

Cave No. XIV: In this cave, there is a statue of Śiva dancing as Natarāja. The destructive aspect of the dance becomes manifest through every limb of the statue. Another statue of Hara-Gaurī, too, deserves special attention. In this statue, Gaurī figures as the better half of Hara and not as Mahāśakti. The figure of Gaurī here is just that of a pretty and bashful young wife. But in another statue in the same cave, she figures as Mahiṣāsuramardinī, with all her prowess and relentlessness in the act of killing the demon. The death agony of the *asura* has also been wonderfully depicted in the statue in all its vividness.

Cave No. XV: This cave is also known as Chotā Kailāsa. It is a two-storeyed cave. The Kailāsa in this cave has been shown as a monolithic hall with Gaṅgā and Yamunā standing on two sides of the doorway. There is some evidence of plaster work and painting in this cave. The second storey comprises of a very big hall which, in fact, is a temple dedicated to Śiva. The first statue that attracts the eyes here is that of Bhairava. Here Śiva is seen engaged in killing the *asura*. The aggressive attitude of Śiva is apparent from the very poise of the statue. The Lord of the universe appears to be magnificent in action.

The next noteworthy statue is that of Śiva dancing *tāṇḍava*, the dance of destruction. The destructive ferocity of the God has been portrayed not only through the very poise of the body, but also through every limb of the statue. Even the muscles and veins of the arms have been beautifully shown through a masterly handling of the chisel. Another figure of Śiva and Pārvatī playing *chausar* (dice) seems to be a piece of wonder worked out in stone. Here Śiva is seen catching the right hand of Pārvatī with his left hand and entreating her to play yet another game, which Pārvatī seems to decline. She seems to say: 'Well, what is the fun of it? You are losing again and again and yet want to play.' There is no note to indicate this in any language, ancient or modern, but an intelligent visitor never fails to perceive this from a sheer glance at this wonderful work in stone. There is another statue of Śeṣa Nārāyaṇa in this floor, which also deserves special attention. Nārāyaṇa here lies on the snake Anantanāga, and Trimūrti-Brahmā emerges on a lotus from the navel of Nārāyaṇa. The coils of the snake as also the depression caused in the pillow by the pressure of Nārāyaṇa's body have been marvellously depicted in the cutting of the stone.

The figure of Viṣṇu on Garuḍa in this hall is yet another matter of special study for every lover of Indian art. The Garuḍa appears in this statue in the form of a human being, and has no wings. The beauty of this work lies in the wonderful way in which the flying movement of Garuḍa has been indicated in the statue. Here the flying movement is indicated by the outstretched legs unlike in European art, where the flying movement is invariably shown by the use of the wings. The last in this glorious series is the statue of Viṣṇu as Narasimhāvatāra. Here the Narasimha catches hold of the demon

Hiranyakaśipu with his hands, and twines round the legs of the demon with his own legs. The two figures vividly depict the movement of the flight. The figure of Narasimha not only shows superior strength, but also manifests the divine power of God, whereas the smiling face of the *asura* indicates a feeling of jest and mockery as Hiranyakaśipu considers himself immortal by the boon of Lord Śiva.

Cave No. XVI: The Ellora art and architecture reached the pinnacle of glory in this cave. 'An inscription records that on its completion the architect was lost in wonder at his own creation, and that celestial beings in the sky considered its art superhuman in its inspiration.' Dr. Vincent Smith, the famous historian, has characterized this vast cave-temple to be a wonder of the world.

On entering this cave, one finds two very beautiful statues of Goddess Durgā, resplendent with two different emotions. In one she figures as the goddess of love and peace, and in the other she appears as the killer of Mahiṣāsurā. In the former we notice more elegance of form and beauty of a female figure than a spirit of aggression, but in the latter the ferocious and angry attitude of the Goddess is manifest through the very eyes, limbs, and poise of the statue. The *asura* also is attacking the Divine Mother with a club and shows an aggressive attitude. In the inner courtyard of the temple, there are huge lamp-posts and elephants carved out of stone as monolithic structures. In the lower plinth of the shrine, which is known as the 'Nandi Pavilion', there appears a colossal figure of Śiva as Kālabhairava and facing it stands another figure of Śiva as Mahāyogin. The former represents a state of excitement in all its vividness—the bulging eyes, the firm grip on the dagger, and the raised hair are all indicative of a great state of excitement—whereas the latter, with its meditative

eyes and tranquil face, exhibits a sense of serenity, calmness, and quietude that can only come from the realization of the immortal Ānanda. The plinth walls of the main temple are decorated with statues of all sorts of wild animals and give an impression as if the animals are supporting the temple on their backs. On the northern and southern sides of the plinth, the animals seem to be in a mortal fight amongst themselves, whereas in the back of the temple they are quiet and calm. A side hall on the north of the main temple still bears different kinds of chisel marks in its ceiling. This shows that the great architect of Ellora carved out these magnificent temples by the sheer use of chisel and hammer.

In the northern corridor of the temple, there is a statue which shows bestowal of a boon to Rāvaṇa by Śiva. Pārvatī, who does not approve of this action of her husband, seems to be in an extremely melancholy mood. Her face, particularly the sad look of her eyes, seems to pour out the very grief of her heart in all its vividness. It is one of those masterpieces of Ellora that combine in stone artistry of a rare order with the highest degree of sculptural excellence. Towards the southern side of the corridor, we get a figure of Śiva as Tripurāntaka. The determination to kill the demon Tripura is manifest in the closed lips of Śiva. But it is probably on the southern side of the porch in the 'Shaking of Kailāsa by Rāvaṇa' that we get the best work of art in stone in this temple.

In this statue, Rāvaṇa is shown to be shaking Kailāsa from below with all his might. The outstretched hands of Rāvaṇa give a vivid indication of the enormous strength he has applied for the job. The jerk he gives makes it difficult for Śiva and Pārvatī to sit on the mountain. This unusual phenomenon frightens Pārvatī so much that in fear she clings close to her

Lord. Here Pārvatī figures not as the Mahāśakti, but as a member of the weaker sex—a wife in distress looking eagerly to her husband for protection. The frightened and agonized look of her eyes, the pale and nervous expression of her face, the unsettled and unbalanced contour of her body and the way she clings to her husband Śiva, all combine to make it another masterpiece of Ellora. In striking contrast to Pārvatī, Śiva remains calm, placid, and undisturbed. He is confident of his strength, and asks Pārvatī not to worry at all. The sculptor who could translate with so much candour and vividness the varying human emotions in characters of stones was not only an artist of a very high order, but must have been equally rich in his knowledge of human psychology, imagination, and creative art.

After Kailāsa, right up to cave No. XXX, we get a series of finished and unfinished caves. The last four caves, namely, caves XXXI-XXXIV, appear to be of Jaina origin. In cave No. XXXII, there are beautiful statues of Mahāvīra in meditation. The ceiling of the first floor of this cave has been beautifully cut out in the design of a huge lotus that attracts everybody's attention.

In the pillar and ceiling of cave No. XXXIII, which is yet another Jaina temple, there is still some evidence of lime plaster and fresco painting. The remnants of the fresco painting definitely establish the fact that, like Ajanta, Ellora, too, must have been once rich in its mural paintings.

CONCLUSION

What has been stated above is merely an attempt to give an indication about the magnificence and glory of Ajanta and Ellora, but nothing short of a personal visit at the spot can give one an actual idea about these wonderful cave temples. Then again, what is there in Ajanta and Ellora that has caused such universal approbation of all the world? Of course, art has its irresistible appeal to all art-lovers of the world irrespective of country, creed, or religion. Neither has it any limitation of time nor of space. To an occidental mind, these wonderful frescoes of Ajanta have the same appeal as the paintings of Michelangelo and Raphael. Had it not been so, one could not possibly account for the continuous inflow of hundreds of western visitors who come year after year from thousands of miles away to pay their respectful homage to these shrines of art and beauty. The art-appeal is no doubt there, but that is not all. The redeeming feature of Ajanta and Ellora lies in their spiritual wealth. Here the *tapasyā* of the ancient seers finds a unique expression in stone and colour. Let the non-believer go to these wonderful shrines and have a glimpse of the divine vision that eludes him every day. Even if he fails to have it, he will at least see a magnificent work of art that sustains and sublimates the soul with a lofty feeling of abiding peace and beauty. And then art is an expression of beauty, and beauty is an expression of the Divine.

THE ESSENCE OF GREATNESS IN MUSIC AND IN LIFE

MR. ERNEST BRIGGS

Each year, when the closing days of autumn take on a keener chill, I pay a special visit to a local second-hand bookshop, where David Lloyd sets out his stock, and carry home a pile of books for winter reading. At evening, as the days grow shorter, when the day's work is over and before I commence to write toward the midnight hour, or after I gather to the fire, I read on and on while time stands still or rather runs on and on unheeded. At intervals the glowing embers fall, and then there comes a time when they fall no longer; and, as the air grows chill, I again become aware of the world of time. I hear the clock chime softly—whatever the hour may be, and reluctantly I place a marker-ribbon in the book, and prepare for work, or if the hour is very late, for bed.

This year,* reading through travel, poetry, letters, criticism, autobiography, I took up a small book, only about an inch in thickness, that held within its pages more of the reality and the poetry of life than many books three times its size. On the dust cover, which was illustrated by the lithe-some figure of a young exponent of the art of Indian dancing, was printed 'Rhythm of the Universe'. It was the autobiography of Ram Gopal.

Ram Gopal, the principal exponent of the traditional dances of India, together with others of his own creation, vividly describes how, as a young boy, thrilled by the impending deluge of a monsoon, he rushed from the house and, throwing off his clothes, danced naked in the downpour, achieving the exultation of merging his self with the Self of the God Śiva, the Divine Creator. He tells superbly how, in an elemental surge

of mingled fear and joy, he grew at one with all the bright profusion of the flowering garden, the awe and terror of the tempest, and all the pungent fragrance of the soaking earth.

On the evening on which I read this memorable passage, feeling the need of music attuned to the mood of the dancer, I selected an LP recording of Madame Elly Ney, that consummate pianist, recording at the age of 75 a superlative performance of Beethoven's sonata in C minor, opus 13 (The Pathétique), thinking as I listened to the long initial movement, 'What a miracle of wisdom and insight she has achieved with the passage of the years! Accomplished as she was in her youth, there was certainly no magic like this in her early discs!' Spellbound by the perfect blending of gravity and gaiety that is the pellucid spontaneity of youth exulting wholly in its own strange lustihood, and in the earnest make-believe of sorrow that is all the more inexpressibly poignant because of its guilelessness.

I opened the farmhouse door to the rising moon which was then showing above the dark ridge of scrubby trees. Putting out the light, I closed my eyes and leaned back in an easy chair, waiting serenely for the second movement, the 'adagio cantabile'. Gently it began, reflectively and spaciouly, the indisputable stamp of truth upon each tone, because of the slower tempo that made every detail clear, a tempo that would have been impossible to any lesser pianist, yet the measures never faltered, never dragged. All was coherence; all communicative; greatness and grandeur of perception and understanding were implicit in every phrase. The sur-

* i.e. 1964

passing beauty of it was at the same time unconscionably near; nearer than breathing it was, and yet intangible and far. The sigh in the sound of it was like the distant going of the wind among the topmost branches of the mulberry trees.

'How richly apprehended; how purely felt!' I thought. Broadly, lambently, and eloquently the music moved to the close that was not a close, for its magic was not spent.

I listened to the final cadence, but I still sat on, pondering upon the indescribable mayhem and murder that has been perpetrated upon the Pathétique sonata by generations of itinerant pianists who have indifferently assaulted it in the sacred name of music. Its inherent spontaneity, immaculate still before the onslaught of tentative pianism, however, is of such surpassing substance and iridescence that it triumphantly defies all passing profanation and deliberate desecration. The mood that lingered in the clear air of the winter night was illumined even in its aftermath by the dedicated spirituality and the mellowed understanding of the art of Madame Ney, so that its spirit was still projected gloriously—as gloriously as when it stirred the placeless air before Beethoven set it down in staves.

To me, the 'adagio cantabile' of this Sonata, for all its seeming simplicity, is one of the most searching tests in the whole range of pianoforte literature, ranking with the ultimate challenge for violinists that is implicit in the great Chaconne of Bach. Merely by being what it is, the austere and lofty content of the simple measures cut down the would-be great to proper size; for it is only the pure in heart and the selfless in spirit who may come to it in the mood of rightful understanding, and of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Many a pianist has flaunted his talent in the massive sonatas of Beethoven—the

opus 109, 110, 111, and the Hammerklavier, and for his playing of such has won worldwide esteem, only to be diminished and mortified when confronted by the unassailable purity of the Pathétique, of which he has mastered nothing but the score. The pianist who treats this sonata with contempt is laying up for himself inevitable and utter weariness of spirit, for this is the last sonata that unfolds its secret to the almost great, and sets the crown of fadeless laurel on their worthy brow. It is by their Pathétique that you may know them, for rare indeed is he or she to whom all things within it have grown concordant with all things that have grown crystalline within the self. In spite of its seeming simplicity, the Pathétique will not yield its secret to any less than the great—not greatness as is reckoned by the world, but the greatness of the spirit that is softly luminous, for it must be long yearned over, long desired, long mused over, and long loved. Then, one day, if the pianist is worthy of its rich bestowal, perhaps far on in life, as with Madame Ney, as with her great teacher Emil von Sauer, the pianist's understanding of the work will flood with the luminescence of purest spontaneity, so that measures long familiar sing with new significance—an abiding richness that is in the nature of the inspiration of improvisation. So fresh is it that vista upon vista open to the receptive soul—the bright translucent stuff that noblest dreams are made of, the ultimate endowment by which an artist rises to his real reward as he comes to the full unfoldment of his greater self. It is not without significance that some years ago when Madame Ney recorded a reading of the Heiligenstadt Testament of Beethoven, of all the works of the Master available for the pianoforte, it was her playing of the 'adagio cantabile' of the Pathétique sonata that was selected for issue on the reverse side of the disc. The

Testament was written in 1802, when Beethoven began the composition of his Second Symphony at Heiligenstadt, which Ney spoke with the eloquence of the very spirit of Beethoven, and we are fortunate to have the beauty of her voice on the obverse and the perfection of her playing on the reverse, an identical vision of amplitude and eloquence informing each.

Slowly the moon rose higher, and as the final movement of the sonata came to my mind again, I sat on and on in the semi-darkness thinking and thinking of the many aspects of that great performance. I considered: It is nearly forty years since I first heard the playing of Madame Ney as reproduced through the medium of a series of recordings that she had made for the Brunswick 'Hall of Fame'. Those Gold-Seal records have given me much pleasure; but, accomplished pianist as Madame Ney was then, the full greatness of her spirit was yet to be revealed, as it is in this performance of the complete Pathétique sonata, when 75. There was certainly not in those early discs the present elevation of mind and spirit; that loftiness that quickens vision until all things are seen as segments of a whole. I asked myself, 'How has this all-surpassing greatness come?' Then, glancing at the book of Ram Gopal, still clasped between my hands, I suddenly realized that in the vividly recounted story of that remarkable book I held a clear clue not only to the unrivalled eminence of the great Indian dancer, but also to the mellowed wisdom of the great pianist; for the quality of their greatness was the same—pure selfless unity with universal Spirit, the apprehension of whose essence by both the dancer and the pianist was identical, although expressed in differing yet related modes.

Slowly I got up, switched on the light, and then, I read again that long arresting passage in Ram Gopal's book. Then, put-

ting out the light, I played the middle movement of the Pathétique again. Yes, the mood that each evoked was *one*—all things without in purest harmony with all within, the transcendental miracle of selfless love. Closing my eyes, and then, clasping my hands, slowly and softly I repeated words that I had heard a long time since—words that my father had first read to me by lamplight when I was a child in an isolated old slab-cottage among country hills—words that I had later read and memorized as I walked in summer twilight by a country river, long ago. If you would like to read them when and where you will, you may find them in the western book of Holy Writ in which the eastern sage Saint Paul, writing to new believers, the Corinthians, says beautifully (1 Cor. xiii. 1-7, 10, 13):

'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

'And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing. . . .

'Charity suffereth long, and is kind; Charity envieth not, Charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things. . . .

'But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. . . .

'And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is—Charity!'

The gadding world in which the majority of us live by enforced circumstance is in

all respects save one an alien world, with which we are compelled to compromise and make our peace or, alternately, compelled to develop our higher faculties and master it. To most it is a noisy, harassing world, loud and fragmentary, casual and disdainful, where the accent is continually upon *doing*, and so rarely upon the true reality of living, which is *being*.

The material world is chronically afflicted by the 'Gimmes', for even in their prayers the majority of people pray unashamedly, 'Give me this' and 'Give me that', not realizing that a plenitude of possessions may be inhibiting, and that it is only hands that are emptied continually by personal giving that have the capacity to continually receive new riches from the ample and other-worldly store of universal love. Silent and unified, the wise of the world, who are in the world and yet not of the world, breathe in the sacredness of silence only a prayer of thankfulness. Then, again, giving to the world their present store, receptive and still, serene and attentive, they await the pure beneficence of love that they may receive and bless, and give anew, knowing that love, the essence of all greatness, is inexhaustible and that the more they give of it, the more they have, so that love comes ever to them, flooding, unifying all. For they have learnt through long questing, long attentiveness, long selflessness, and long solitude that the stillness of the Spirit far out-travels noise; that a sigh can travel farther than a nuclear missile; that a song can outlast time and all its turbulence. It is only those who have heard a timeless music come from far away, and who have grown to simplicity in pure humility, so that the fervent dedication of their all is all, and who alone are malleable to the magic wherewith the greatest Master of them all may toil:

Have Thine own way, Lord, have
Thine own way;
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay;
Mould me, and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.

We would all be wiser, happier, greater, were we to realize that the true richness of life is to work in the material world through the illumination and the power of the all-encompassing and inexhaustible love of Spirit that is the primary mode of living in the worlds invisible; that all we do takes on richness and meaning only as it is directed and approved by universal love, without which there is neither greatness nor significance in anything:

As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own;
So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All Heaven's sweetness seems around it
thrown!

Artists, musicians, poets, pastors, scientists, reformers, peasants, priests, and artisans! It is not so much our vocation or our mere geographical location that is of paramount importance; it is what we are that supremely matters—our attitude, our attentiveness, our direction, our purposefulness, our dedication, and our humility; not where we are, but *what* we are, and with what purposefulness and grace we are yearning and ever growing in becoming. It is not so much our gift alone that makes a path of greatness for our travelling feet as what the eternal Spirit is, which works its high surpassing miracles within—greatness that will endure beyond a span of transient life, beyond a changing circumstance and the sounds of time:

Come to the Thomaskirche
Climb the stair,
Johann Sebastian Bach
Is at the organ there,

A new nobility to shape and build,
Till Mind and Spirit blend,
And there cohere ;
Where Number breaks and blows in
deathless bloom

Acclivity of ages is fulfilled
In polyphonic symmetry ;
Here, where the tumult of the world
is stilled,
Time is confounded by eternity.

'CENSORS'

SRI M. P. PANDIT

It is a common enough phenomenon in the life of many who pursue a line of self-development in any sphere, especially in the spiritual. One is earnest and puts in steady effort to reject what is contrary to the Ideal—not only physically, but also mentally ; one goes on to build up an edifice of the positive elements which give substance to the growth of the consciousness within. But each time one feels a satisfaction of having achieved something, there peeps in a doubt : 'Is this not wrong ? Does it not show you are far from what you claim to be ? Are you really sincere ? Did you not hide something a moment ago ? Is that honest ?' What is disturbing is not the mere rise of the doubts ; but there is a simultaneous perception that they are true. At any rate, they strike one so. It is an unnerving experience which robs the joy of each conquest.

Such stinging reminders, such challenging questions, are thrown at the seeker time and again—most when a decisive step is taken or is about to be taken. They cite instances ; pull out a vibration here or a vibration there that had indeed passed through our consciousness, and which we would rather forget. It is dragged out in the open, and we are placed in front of it and questioned of our sincerity : 'How could you get that thought or allow that movement if you were really sincere and

ready ?' And so on in a thousand ways they pursue, they harass. The more sincere we are, the more vehement and pitiless is their hammering.

Why does it happen ? Are they our own fears or searchings of our sincerity ? How is it that they shake the being and even seem to break it into pieces at times ?

There are in the subtle worlds certain formations of the hostile forces whose function it is to spot out the shortcomings in those who seek to progress and strike at them. They are always critical and leap up at the first opportunity. They are what Sri Aurobindo calls the 'censors', before whose scrutiny nothing can escape. They are there in the atmosphere of each person who attempts to cross the belt of ignorance. Even the ancient Vedas speak of them as the *nidadh*, the restrainers, whose password is indispensable before the journey can be proceeded with. They are the censors who constantly emphasize the deficiencies, put them up as barriers walling our advance and seek to limit the realization to the present.

As in most things, in this sphere too, much depends upon our attitude, upon the way in which we handle these censors. Up to a certain extent, their activity can be made helpful. If one is sincere and has the right trust and confidence in the divine grace, these visitations can be turned into

useful opportunities. Their objections must be looked straight in the face and, where right, the lacunae made up. But it must be borne in mind that this can be so only up to a limit. They are prone to exaggerate. They even twist things, make you suspect yourself; they undermine the morale. And that is so because they are not in their origin our well-wishers, but agents of the adversary, and their real aim is to confuse, confound, and break our effort. They do not concede the fact of the divine grace and the salvation of man by the higher help. They create a wholly unbalanced and false picture of the situation and, if allowed their way, they work irreparable havoc. They get full opportunity when one's mind is too weak, when one is unsure of oneself, or when one has some insincerity lurking somewhere in him and seeks to cover it up. The censors, however, are merciless in their exposure, and if one is not ready to face the realities, one goes under.

Thus, we can never be too careful in dealing with these visitors. We need to keep a balance when they confront us with their unending interrogations, and allow them to play only their legitimate role. They should never be allowed to overrun

our being. If they are permitted to overstep their limits, they quickly seize control, become masters of the situation, and wreck the life into miserable shambles. To observe without getting caught up in their current, we have to accept only what is patently true in order to correct and perfect the movements in our consciousness; but to resolutely ignore all that is purposefully exaggerated, with a quiet and firm trust in the power and the compassion of God, whose guiding hand can set aside in a trice all our hundred imperfections and failings of ignorance, is the best way to deal with their solicitous attentions.

For the spiritual seeker, what is indispensable is a *central sincerity*. It is understood that it takes time for the sincerity to spread and organize itself in all the parts of the being. Errors and failings are inevitable in the process of this growth. The Divine does not punish for them. On the other hand, His hand stands extended to correct and to uplift. Fear, fear that is the basis of the operation of this tribe of censors, is wholly out of place in this context. For, after all, in the ultimate analysis of things, it is the higher divine grace that effects the deliverance and not the effort of our puny little selves.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

'Immortality: The Hindu View', by Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, was originally given as the Garvin Memorial Lecture at Lancaster, Pa., and is reprinted here through the courtesy of Mr. F. Lyman Windolph, Windolph, Burkholder & Hartmann, Lancaster,

Sri R. Deb, B.A. (Hons.), B.L., Assistant Commandant (Law and Sociology), Central Police Training College, Mt. Abu, is the author of sumptuous books on criminal law and allied subjects. But, besides being a painstaking master of his own branch of teaching, his intellectual tastes and scholarly inclination have induced Sri Deb to write also as a hobby. ... Ajanta and Ellora is a theme of perennial interest,

There is much written on these archaeological sites by westerners and Indians, ranging from heavy illustrated expensive monographs to guide pamphlets. But a sketch of the important items to be looked for by the visitor when he goes there, giving in sequence the necessary details and significance, is useful not only to create interest, but also to guide the visitors. The article by Sri Deb, appearing in this number, fulfils this need.

Mr. Ernest Briggs, poet and music critic, Brisbane, Australia, dilates on 'The Essence

of Greatness in Music and in Life', with particular reference to the artistry of the Indian dancer, Ram Gopal, and the consummate pianist, Madame Elly Ney.

In his short article on 'Censors', Sri M. P. Pandit, of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, draws our attention to one of the important subtle phenomena in spiritual life, which very often acts as an obstacle to our spiritual progress, and points out how we can overcome the obstacle by self-surrender to divine grace.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

PHILOSOPHIES OF HISTORY. BY GRACE E. CAIRNS. Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N.Y. 1962. Pages xxiii+496. Price \$ 6.

There have been many histories of philosophies since the dawn of human thinking. During the last two centuries, these philosophies have been largely attempts at justifying or defending or evolving a pattern of political and economic power; and to that extent, they suppressed some data or misinterpreted the data. These tendencies have led the way to the totalitarian states and to isms that take a single aspect of life to be the only aspect.

In this intellectual chaos, it is highly refreshing to go through Dr. Grace E. Cairns's work. The great pattern theories of history in oriental and western thought have been studied here together for the first time. The author finds great similarities between East and West as far as the meaning and goal of history are concerned. The pattern theories are the recurrent-cosmic-cyclic pattern, the one-cycle pattern, and the culture-cycle pattern. The oriental theories are sound philosophical ones seeking to emancipate man from the ego and to lead him into a spiritual centre or unity. The Buddhist, the Jaina, and the Hindu views are ably presented and evaluated. Then, the author examines the views of the Greeks, the Moslems, and the Christians. The chapters on Vico, Spengler, Sorokin, and Toynbee are extremely valuable.

Professor Pitirim A. Sorokin introduces the book,

which has a fine bibliography. This work is a *must* for all students of human culture and civilization.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

STUDIES IN THE TANTRAS AND THE VEDA. BY M. P. PANDIT. Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras 17. 1964. Pages 146. Price Rs. 6.

The author belongs to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. He is the author of several books, and is the editor of a Kannada journal, *Dīpti*, published from the Aurobindo Ashram. He is also a notable reviewer of religious and philosophical literature to most of the important periodicals in India.

The present work consists of his 'recent reviews of some of the latest books on Tantra Śāstra and of Vedic literature, as also studies on certain aspects of culture and philosophy'. These reviews are actually more than mere reviews, since they can be read as independent essays containing a good amount of information, written in a graceful style.

The book consists of two parts, the first part dealing with the Tantras and the second with the Veda. The former deals with the many aspects of the Tantras, and some of the essays like 'The Guru-Śiṣya Tradition' are well written.

The latter part contains essays on the 'Puruṣa-Sūkta', 'The Nivids', 'Gayatri-Upāsānā', etc., which are of course reviews of certain works dealing with those subjects.

An appendix of the text of *Nivids* has been added.

The printing and get-up are very good.

A grammatical mistake has crept in in the first sentence on page 62. A few printing mistakes have crept in here and there (e.g. p. 48, fn. 1).

The book is a welcome addition to the philosophical and religious literature of India.

SWAMI HARSHANANDA

ONE WHITE RACE OR FOLLOWING THE GODS. BY JOSEPH SHEBAN. Philosophical Library, Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N.Y. 1963. Pages 326. Price \$ 6.

Through its forty-three well-written chapters, the book follows the migration of man and his gods from old old days. It is 'the product of 20 years of study, travel, and research'. A distinguished attorney and lecturer, the author naturally argues well. In his enthusiasm to explode the myth of dividing the white race into Aryan and Semitic (pp. 136 ff.) and tackle the race issue more rationally, he differs in places with orthodox anthropologists and ethnologists and focusses his attention on the forbears of the whites from a new angle, skilfully making out the following points: (1) There is only one white race whose original members were called Amorites; (2) its division into Aryan and Semitic is artificial; (3) its original abode was in the mountains of Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine; (4) it moved into Egypt and elsewhere much later; (5) even before leaving the mountains, it developed certain religious beliefs, a set of gods, and a code of laws, which may be said to form the bases of present-day Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Besides, the author has tried to show that the Indo-Aryans (he prefers 'Whites', quite understandably) had descended from the same Amorites, and worshipped the same gods, some of whom were Indara, Baal, and Poseidon (part fish, part man-god). Of course, his researches in this direction are not as extensive and penetrating. With reference to India, he quotes L.A. Waddell many times. But the latter's reading of Indus Valley seals found in Mohenjo-daro-Harappa has been accepted by no scholar worth the name. The fact is that the last word about the Indo-Aryans is yet to be said. For obvious reasons, the deepest layers of Mohenjo-daro could not be excavated on some plea or other. Very recently, another site of the same era has been found out by archaeologists in Gujarat (India), whose finds are eagerly awaited by all. Most scholars now agree that the Indus Valley Civilization, an intermixture of Aryan and non-Aryan cultures, was as old as the Great Pyramid Civilization (5000 B.C.). Is it really unlikely that a day may come when the pundits will agree that

civilization dawned on earth in more than one place of Asia, intercourse between whom took place as late as 3000 to 2000 B.C.? Swami Vivekananda firmly believed that Indo-Aryans did not come from outside (cf. also *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. I, *The Vedic Age*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., pp. 215-17). It is interesting to note that last year a research scholar, Michael Ridley by name, deciphered a Cretan seal found in Pandu (West Bengal), which showed that Crete and Bengal had trade relations as early as 1500 B.C. More startling facts may one day revolutionize our race theories. Who knows?

However, the atomic age has made one thing clear. If we want to survive, we have to leave aside issues like 'White' and 'non-White', 'Aryan' and non-Aryan', which create bad blood in spite of our best intentions. We should try to think ourselves, along with Professor Toynbee, one of the greatest historians of this age, as members of one human family. That will bring more understanding, more amity.

As the aim of the book seems to forge a bond of friendship among people who sprang from the same source, the author should have refrained from hurting other people's sentiments by making uncharitable remarks about Indian religious customs (p. 14). Surely, it is a travesty of truth to say that out of their excessive reverence for cows, Indians allow them to roam about in the city streets and gobble goods off the counters of shops with impunity. While referring to India, he could have, instead, at least once mentioned that wonderful treatise *Legacy of India*, edited by G. T. Garratt and published by the Oxford University Press. He does not either miss an opportunity of having a jibe at Winston Churchill (p. 101).

But to be fair to the author, his treatment of controversial issues, on the whole, is creditable. The publishers in particular should be congratulated for bringing out this profusely illustrated nice volume, whose paper, printing, and get-up leave nothing to be desired.

SWAMI SATYAGHANANANDA

SŪDRAS IN MANU. BY CHITRA TIWARI. Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawaharnagar, Delhi 6. 1963. Pages 102. Price Rs. 10.

This is a dissertation approved for the M.A. degree of the Banaras Hindu University. The rationale of investigation is primarily academic, and the end sought to be achieved is to collect, collate, and analyse whatever evidence is available in Manu and the other relevant scriptures in support of certain hypotheses, purporting to lay bare the origin and

further evolution of the so-called scheduled castes. The social, political, and economic status of the Harijans even today is far from satisfactory, though the *de jure* status presents a facade of protection and paternal care extended by the State.

The authoress presents a scientific exposition of the evolution of this phenomenon, as recorded by Manu, the greatest law-giver of the Hindus. The analysis is clear. The conclusions are unsparing, though it is difficult to accept some summary views regarding the origin of this unfortunate community. That race and stock have nothing to do with the origin of the Śūdras does not seem to be a plausible argument. In fact, it runs counter to the facts as they stand for the bare eyes to see. Accepting the theory of conquest and enslavement, and not accepting the role of race, would, perhaps, entail some contradictions, unless it could be established that the conquerors and the conquered belonged to the same stock. There does not seem to be much evidence in support of this proposition.

When land to cultivate was there in plenty and population was thin, the conquered races could not possibly have been enslaved, except by dispossessing them of all their basic economic rights of the pre-conquest era. The social, economic, and legal status of the Śūdras as delineated by the authoress is a picture of abject misery. The injustice done to them is, indeed, beyond the power of words to describe. Here is a clear demonstration of the class interests of the upper caste Hindus reducing the Śūdras to subhuman levels of existence. The book should be an eye-opener to the caste Hindus, if at all it is necessary at the present juncture.

H. G. KULKARNI

RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS DISCIPLES. BY CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD. Methuen & Co. Ltd., Ludgate Circus 9855, 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4. (Indian Edition: Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14.) 1965. Pages 348. Price 36 shillings.

This magnificent biography of Sri Ramakrishna is the fruit of twenty-five years' association on the part of the author with the greatest spiritual 'phenomenon' of the nineteenth century. Here Mr. Isherwood, who is one of the leading writers in English enjoying world-wide reputation, faithfully recounts in his own charming, lucid, and succinct style the absorbing story of God-realization lived by Sri Ramakrishna. All the important details

of Sri Ramakrishna's life have been strung together beautifully so as to give us a vivid picture of the different facets of his wonderful life, and the total effect is marvellous. He approaches the subject with devotion, candour, objectivity, and a scientific spirit. As he himself explains at the start of the narration: 'This is the story of a phenomenon. I will begin by calling him simply that, rather than "holy man", "mystic", "saint", or "avatar"; all emotive words with mixed associations which may attract some readers, repel others. A phenomenon is often something extraordinary and mysterious; Ramakrishna was extraordinary and mysterious; most of all to those who were best fitted to understand him. A phenomenon is always a fact, an object of experience. That is how I shall try to approach Ramakrishna. ... As for myself, it would be dishonest to pretend I am addressing you as an impartial biographer. I myself am a devotee of Ramakrishna; I believe, or am at least strongly inclined to believe, that he was what his disciples declared that he was: an incarnation of God upon earth. Nevertheless, I am not writing this book primarily for confirmed believers or unbelievers. The sort of reader I *am* writing for is the one who is not afraid to recognize the marvellous, no matter where he finds it; the sort of reader who is always on the lookout for a phenomenon. I only ask you approach Ramakrishna with the same open-minded curiosity you might feel about any highly unusual human being: a Julius Caesar, a Catherine of Siena, a Leonardo da Vinci, an Arthur Rimbaud.'

The author deals with the incidents of Sri Ramakrishna's life from this angle. He had the privilege of his manuscript being read and corrected from chapter to chapter by Swami Madhavananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, which gives the book the authority of a historic document. And he was inspired to write this biography by his *guru*, Swami Prabhavananda, Head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California.

Sri Ramakrishna embodied the spiritual aspirations of humanity, and his life and work stand as strong bulwarks against the materialistic trends of the modern age. And this book brings to the English-knowing world the gospel of truth and wisdom embedded in that life, which is so much needed today. The book is a must to all seekers of Truth, and the author has laid them under a deep debt of gratitude by this monumental work.

SWAMI GABHIRANANDA

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA KANPUR

REPORT FROM APRIL 1963 TO MARCH 1964

Started in 1920 with humble beginnings, this Ashrama has now developed into one of the premier philanthropic institutions of the city. The activities of the Ashrama during the year under review were as follows:

Spiritual and Cultural: Besides regular worship and prayer in the Ashrama shrine, religious classes were held on Sunday evenings in the Ashrama premises, and in the mornings in other parts of the city. The monastic members addressed several meetings in response to invitations from local and outside educational institutions and cultural bodies. The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda were observed as usual with programmes of *bhajan*s, worship, poor-feeding, and discourses, and *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Jayantī*, *Rāmanavamī*, *Vaiśākhapūrṇimā*, and Christmas Eve were observed with due solemnity.

Educational: The Higher Secondary School for Boys: Besides imparting thorough general education within the framework of the prescribed syllabi, the school has been making an earnest endeavour to provide the scope and atmosphere for an integrated growth of the student's personality. Towards this end, the following programme of systematic co-curricular activities is provided for: annual sports, compulsory physical training, games, and ACC.; lessons in first aid, uniform dress, and due care about personal hygiene; training in common etiquette and the school proctorial board with an efficient and co-operative monitorial system, which has gone a long way in fostering discipline; moral education, reinforced by a close vigilance and check-up of students' conduct, the loving care of the teachers, and the edifying effect of the contact with the Ashrama. The students' diary system is a unique feature of the school. The district psychological centre gives every year educational guidance to the students of class VIII and vocational guidance to those of class X. Total number of students who received educational guidance during the year was 148, and vocational guidance 90. Various types of co-curricular activities were conducted under the auspices of the School Hindi Sahitya Parishad, the Science Association, and the Vivekananda Vratī Sangha; and educational tours to Delhi and Bhakra Nangal and picnics and campings were organized, in which about 500 students participated. The school library had 5,114 books during the year under review, and the reading room received 18 boys' magazines; 4,239 books were borrowed by the students and staff. Total strength during the year under review: 640.

Medical: The Charitable Hospital: Started in 1924, it has at present five departments in its allopathic section: general diseases, ophthalmology, pathology, dentistry, and radiology, and there is provision also for homoeopathic treatment. The total number of patients treated during the year: 1,70,872, of whom 75 per cent were women and children. Minor and major operations: 706; injections given: 17,372; electro-therapy treatment: 57; specimens examined in the laboratory: 415; operations performed in the ophthalmic department: 464.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA PATNA

REPORT FOR 1963-64

The activities of the Ashrama during the period under review were as follows:

Religious: Scriptural classes were held regularly during the year both in and outside the Ashrama. The total number of classes held during the year: 247. *Rāmanāma-saṅkīrtana* on Ekādaśī days, celebrations of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda, observance of the *Kālī-pūjā*, *Sarasvatī-pūjā*, *Śiva-rātrī*, and other festivals, and the birthday anniversaries of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Śaṅkarācārya, Caitanya, and Jesus Christ, were the other activities during the year.

Educational and Cultural: The Adbhutananda U. P. School: The school, started more than three decades ago, imparts free education to the boys, most of whom come from the poor and backward classes of the community. Total number of students on the roll during the year: 224.

Students' Home: The Home is exclusively meant for college students. Total number of students at the end of the year: 29 (free 12; part-free: 7; and paying: 10).

Turiyananda Library and Free Reading Room: Total number of books in the library: 7,151. Periodicals received in the reading room: 98; dailies: 7. Total number of books issued: 9,125. Total attendance in the reading room: 17,809.

Medical: Bhuvaneshwar Homoeopathic Charitable Dispensary: Total number of patients treated: 69,163 (new cases: 7,708). *Allopathic Charitable Dispensary:* Total number of patients treated: 50,000 (new cases: 6,149).

Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary: The concluding functions of the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda were held on the occasion of the 102nd birthday of the Swami; on 8 January 1964, the last day of the functions, a public meeting was held, which was presided over by Sri A. S. Ayyangar, Governor of Bihar.