



Prabuddha Bharata

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

"Truth is one : sages call It by various names"

तदस्य प्रियमभि पाथो अश्यां
नरो यत्र देवयवो मदन्ति ।
उरुक्रमस्य स हि बन्धुरित्था
विष्णोः पदे परमे मध्व उत्सः ॥

1. May I attain to that favourite abode of Viṣṇu where men who are devoted to the Gods rejoice, where near his highest footstep springs the well of honey.¹

Rg-Veda, 1.154.5

परो मात्रया तन्वा बृधान
न ते महित्वमन्वशुवन्ति ।
उभे ते विद्म रजसी पृथिव्या
विष्णो देव त्वं परमस्य वित्से ॥

2. Your body is beyond our measurement, none can comprehend your greatness. We know only your two regions on the earth [and the sky]. O Lord, you alone know the highest region.²

Rg-Veda, 7.99.1

त्रिदेवः पृथिवीमेष एतां
वि चक्रमे शतर्चसं महित्वा ।
प्रविष्णुरस्तु तवसस्तवीयान्
त्वेषं ह्यस्य स्मविरस्य नाम ॥

3. The Lord strode forth in all his grandeur three times over the earth³ bright with a hundred splendours.

Rg-Veda, 7.100.3

विचक्रमे पृथिवीमेष एतां
क्षेत्राय विष्णुर्मनुषे दक्षस्यन् ।
ध्रुवासी अस्य कीरयो जनासः
उरुक्षितिं सुजनिमा चकार ॥

4. By walking on the earth Viṣṇu has [sanctified the earth] and given it to men as their abode. In him the humble people find their safety; for them the noble Lord has made the earth spacious.⁴

Rg-Veda, 7.100.4

* This month's selection of *mantras* concludes the well-known *Viṣṇu Sūktam*.

1. Honey (*madhu*) here means the bliss of divine realization or immortality.

2. The allusion here is to divine immanence and transcendence.

3. According to Sāyana, 'earth' here means the three worlds earth, sky and heaven which Viṣṇu covered with three steps during his Vāmana Avatāra.

4. Cf. the saying of Christ, 'Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth' (Matt. 5:5).

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

Synthesis of Yogas is an important concept introduced by Swami Vivekananda into the Neo-Vedantic movement. He saw in it a technique for the integration of personality and a way for the all-round development of society. This month's EDITORIAL discusses certain general features of the yogas and the necessity for their synthesis.

Spiritual joy is not a theoretical proposition. Scores of saints, sages, yogis and mystics all over the world have borne testimony to its certitude and availability for the sincere and persevering seeker. In the third instalment of his article JOY OF THE ILLUMINED, Swami Budhananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission centre in Delhi writes about the experience of bliss recorded in the Upaniṣads, Buddhist scriptures, and the works of Tamil saints.

The publication of Charles Darwin's great work *On The Origin of Species* on November 24, 1859, was one of the significant events in the cultural history of mankind. It radically altered man's perspective of himself and his place in the universe. However, the doctrine of evolution is still mostly confined to the field of biology. Though Julian Huxley and Le Comte du Noüy among scientists, and Teilhard de Chardin and Sri Aurobindo among religious philosophers, have tried to extend its application to man's psycho-social life, a set of universal laws covering the whole phenomenon of evolution from molecules to super-mind is yet to be framed. Dr. Sampooran Singh, M.Sc., Ph.D., D.Sc., Director, Defence Laboratory, Jodhpur, makes an attempt in

this direction in his thought-provoking article THE UNIVERSAL LAWS OF EVOLUTION. We are glad to publish it this month which marks the 120th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's epoch-making work.

In the second instalment of the article SADHANA IN THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMANUJA, Prof. S. S. Raghavachar, former Head of the Postgraduate Department of Philosophy, Mysore University, gives a lucid account of the spiritual practice lived and taught by Rāmānujācārya. The great Ācārya's scheme of Sādhana which is comprehensive enough to include Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna, self-realization and God-realization, and self-effort and grace is suitably graded to take the aspirant step by step to the highest realization.

With the third instalment of the Life of St. Francis of Assisi in our serial HOW THEY WALKED ON THE RAZOR'S EDGE, Swami Atmarupananda concludes the story of the spiritual struggles and attainments of one of the greatest and most lovable saints of the world. Among the Christian saints St. Francis stands apart by his uncompromising loyalty to poverty, bracing cheerfulness, spiritual freedom and a unique blending of nature mysticism and intensely personal devotion to God.

This month's HINTS TO SEEKERS OF GOD brings together some rare spiritual instructions of Swami Brahmananda, one of the foremost disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. These precepts compiled by Sri P. Seshadri, originally appeared in the November 1958 issue of *Vedanta Kesari*.

THE YOGAS AND THEIR SYNTHESIS

(EDITORIAL)

Etymologically, the word 'yoga' has two meanings : concentration and union. Patañjali in his *Yoga Sūtra* uses the word in the former sense. But it is in the latter sense of union that the word has gained currency in Vedantic literature. Says Swami Vivekananda : 'The ultimate goal of all mankind, the aim and end of all religions, is but one — re-union with God, or, what amounts to the same, with the divinity which is every man's true nature.... Both the goal and the methods employed for reaching it are called yoga, a word derived from the same Sanskrit root as the English 'yoke', meaning 'to join', to join us to our reality, God.'¹

The ancient teachers of Vedanta recognized only three main yogas — Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna — often called *mārgas* or pathways. Patañjali's yoga of meditation was never accepted by orthodox Vedanta teachers as a valid means of God-realization, but some of its principles and techniques were integrated into Vedanta. It was Swami Vivekananda who revived the yoga of meditation as an independent path under the name Rāja-yoga, thereby giving a new dimension to Vedantic discipline. In traditional Hinduism, Rāja-yoga is one of the four divisions of the Tantra, the other three being Mantra-yoga, Haṭha-yoga and Laya-yoga (also called Kuṇḍalinī-yoga). But the Rāja-yoga taught by Swami Vivekananda is a unique product of his own synthetic genius.

Yoga as conquest of time

All schools of Vedanta believe that souls are parts of the Infinite Reality called

Brahman. Owing to primordial nescience they get separated from Brahman and get caught in the wheel of time called karma. In Semitic religions more or less the same idea is expressed in the myth of Adam's fall through sin. The fall was from eternity into time.

Time in Indian thought is only an interval in timelessness, a gap in eternity, which may be as short as a second or as long as a *yuga* or a *kalpa* (cosmic cycle). By annihilating the time-interval in consciousness, man can rise to the Timeless again.

But it is important to understand that time does not only mean a succession of present moments. Every moment leaves behind its impression, a seed, a *samskāra*, in the mind. Human life is not only facing the challenges of the endless succession of new moments, but also bearing the heavy burden of the past. It is not enough to remain as a witness of the present ; we must also learn to destroy the burden of past *samskāras*. These seeds of the past can be burnt up only through yoga. Yoga enables a man to attain what the non-dualists call Jñāna, the yogis call Prajñā and the devotees call Grace, which alone can destroy the seeds of past time or Karma.

When the seeds of the past are destroyed, there is nothing left to break the continuity of consciousness, and the soul realizes its infinite and timeless dimension. It is in this sense that yoga is to be understood as a technique for the conquest of time. In terms of Christian myth, yoga may be regarded as a technique for the reversal of Adam's fall.

Yoga as evolutionary catalysis

One of the great contributions made by Sri Aurobindo to modern thought is his

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, in 8 vols. (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1972-76), vol. 5, p. 292.

establishment of the similarity between evolution of Nature and Yoga. According to him, 'All life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast Yoga of Nature attempting to realize her perfection in an ever increasing expression of her potentialities and to unite herself with her own divine reality. In man, her thinker, she for the first time upon this earth derives self-conscious means and willed arrangements of activity by which this great purpose may be more swiftly and puissantly attained.'²

Man shares with the rest of creation three vehicles of life : body, mind and spirit. Any kind of spiritual practice needs the use of all these three vehicles. The yogi is not a special creation. He too shares with other human beings the essential characteristics of life. But he differs from others in that in him evolution has reached a self-conscious dimension and is going on at a tremendous speed. He has turned away from the struggle for existence and is actively engaged in a struggle for higher consciousness. Yoga is only a disciplined way of life, lived consciously and intensely, for the emergence and expansion of higher consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, what Nature may achieve through slow evolution lasting for aeons, yoga accomplishes quickly in a few years through an inner *revolution*. Yoga is thus a technique of catalyzing the evolutionary progression of life.

Yoga as a two-way process

A plant grows towards the sun and the sun too sends down its rays upon the plant. In the same way, when the aspirant struggles hard to realize the Divine, the divine light and power flow into the soul and transform it in silence and secret. Human personality is in dynamic contact with the physical universe, the cosmic mind

and the universal Spirit at its three levels of body, mind and spirit respectively. Just as food for the body comes, from the physical world and knowledge comes from the cosmic mind or other minds, so also the power for the transformation and expansion of consciousness comes from the Supreme Spirit.

Spiritual evolution is actually the self-unfoldment of the Divine in human souls. According to Śaṅkarācārya, non-dual knowledge arises as a result of Brahman's self-revelation. In the Bhakti schools God's grace alone is considered to be the only factor that liberates the soul from bondage. In the school of Rāmānuja, individual effort, which includes all the yogas, is considered only as a 'possible means' (*sādhypāya*), while God's grace is the 'accomplished means' (*siddhopāya*). Human effort is imperfect and is dependent on various unstable conditions, but grace is infallible and absolutely independent.

God is not an unconcerned spectator of the drama of life. He is immanent in all creatures and shapes their destiny from within. All movements, external and internal, originate in the unmoved Prime Mover. 'O Arjuna, seated in the hearts of all beings, God whirls around all beings on the wheel of karma,' says Lord Kṛṣṇa.³ According to Sri Ramakrishna, God seeks His devotees just as a cow runs after its calf. He used to say, 'As a devotee cannot live without God, so also God cannot live without His devotee. Then the devotee becomes the sweetness, and God its enjoyer. The devotee becomes the lotus, and God the bee. It is the Godhead that has become these two in order to enjoy Its own Bliss. That is the significance of the episode of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.'⁴

3. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 18.61.

4. M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), p. 248.

2. Sri Aurobindo, *Synthesis of Yoga* (Pondicherry : Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, 1971), p. 2.

Yoga is thus as much a divine process as it is human. Self-effort is needed only to remove the obstacles and open the heart to the Divine; the rest of the yoga is in the hands of the Divine.

Samanvaya or harmony of the yogas

One of the important problems which faced the orthodox teachers during the Middle Ages was the relationship of the yogas to one another. Their views on this question were based on two principles of hermeneutics. One is that Scripture is the only proof for all supersensuous truths, and so all doctrinal points are to be accommodated within the perimeter of the Scripture. No Ācārya, however great, ever claimed that his experiences and ideas were new and different from the Scripture. The second principle, known as *eka-tattva vāda*, is that the Scripture teaches only a single doctrine which according to Śaṅkarācārya is Jñāna, according to Rāmānuja is Bhakti, and according to Kumārila is Karma. Rigid adherence to these principles led the Ācāryas to the conclusion that there was only one direct path to the realization of Truth and it was theirs.

The whole tide of Hinduism, however, took a sudden turn when Sri Ramakrishna rose with his great message of universal harmony. According to him all spiritual paths — not only the yogas but also the paths of other religions — when followed with intense aspiration and sincerity, will lead to the realization of the ultimate goal of life. Harmony of paths is possible only when there is harmony of views about the nature of ultimate Reality. According to Sri Ramakrishna, it is the same Reality or God that appears as the Personal and the Impersonal and under various names in different sects and religions. This is his doctrine of *dharma samanvaya* or harmony of spiritual paths.

Samuccaya or synthesis of yogas

Swami Vivekananda used this doctrine of his Master as the foundation for his concept of Universal Religion. But he went one step further and advocated the unique doctrine of *yoga samuccaya* or the synthesis of all yogas.

All the orthodox teachers of Vedānta, with the exception of one or two like Bhāskara, have categorically rejected the idea of *samuccaya*.⁵ According to Jaimini, Karma (by which he means performance of Vedic rituals) is the only path to the ultimate goal of life. According to Śaṅkarācārya, since non-dual knowledge of Brahman is a direct self-revelation, it is utterly independent of Karma and Upāsana (meditation which also includes Bhakti). Śrī Rāmānuja admits that Karma and Jñāna are aids to the production of Bhakti but, since God can be realized only through Bhakti, he too is against a synthesis of the yogas. The Bengal Vaiṣṇava school, on the other hand, emphatically rejects the idea that Karma and Jñāna are necessary for Bhakti which is utterly independent and stands by itself (*svarūpasiddhā*).

Has Swami Vivekananda contravened the centuries-old tradition of the Ācāryas? A right understanding of Swamiji's works will reveal that he has not. His view of synthesis of yogas is based on different premises which do not go counter to the traditional view.

In the first place, by synthesis of yogas he means the synthesis of their lower aspects. Each yoga has a higher and a lower aspect. In the path of Jñāna these are called *parā vidyā* and *aparā vidyā* respectively. In the path of Bhakti the corresponding terms are *parā* (or *mukhyā* or *rāgānugā*) *bhakti* and *gaunī* (or *vaidhī*) *bhakti*. Patañjali uses the terms *antaraṅga*

5. See the commentaries of the Ācāryas on *Brahma-Sūtra*, 3.4.26.

yoga and *bahirāṅga yoga* to make the same distinction. The Ācāryas have no objection to combining the lower aspects of the yogas ; in fact, they insist upon it. Śaṅkarācārya's severe strictures on *samuccaya* apply only to *parā vidyā*. He is not against a synthesis of Karma and lower Jñāna, though he is very careful to point out that its result will be, not non-dual knowledge of Brahman, but the attainment of the world of gods.

According to Swami Vivekananda, synthesis is necessary only at the lower levels. For at higher levels each yoga ends in higher experience. Each yoga, when followed properly, leads to a radical transformation of consciousness. As consciousness gets transformed, it expands and in the immensity of Self-experience all distinctions disappear. The yogas then cease to be yogas. They are transformed into different orientations of the soul towards the ultimate Reality, the *sat-cit-ānanda*. In the path of Karma the soul is more strongly oriented towards the *sat* (Existence) aspect ; in Jñāna the orientation is more towards *cit* (Consciousness), and in Bhakti it is more towards *ānanda* (Bliss).⁶ A person who practises all the yogas will naturally be equally oriented towards all the aspects of Brahman.

Thus, synthesis of yogas at their lower levels and harmony of experience at the higher levels is the ideal that Swami Vivekananda has placed before us.

Secondly, Swamiji's interpretation of synthesis is more from the standpoint of psychology than philosophy. He sees each yoga as a technique of disciplining and developing one of the three faculties of mind : reason, will and emotion. In Hindu spirituality, these faculties are called 'powers' (*śakti*)—*jñāna śakti*, *icchā śakti* and *kriyā śakti*. Jñāna-yoga develops *jñāna śakti*, Bhakti-yoga and Rāja-yoga develop

icchā śakti, and Karma-yoga develops *kriyā śakti*. By synthesis of yogas Swamiji means the *equal* development of all these three natural powers of the mind. His ideal of a perfect man is one in whom all these three powers are fully developed. He speaks about this ideal : 'Would to God that all men were so constituted that in their minds all these elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion and of work were equally present in full ! That is the ideal, my ideal of a perfect man. Everyone who has only one or two of these elements of character, I consider one-sided....'⁷

Thirdly, and more importantly, by synthesis of yogas Swamiji means not an incongruous bundling of some spiritual techniques. His idea really is a *fusion* of the yogas—a re-in egration of the faculties of the mind in order to make it a fit receptacle of non-dual consciousness. The goal of life for him is to attain the knowledge of unity at the three levels of body, mind and spirit, and manifest it in all walks of life. An integral life needs an integral mind, and Swamiji conceives synthesis of yogas as a means of creating such a mind.

Need for synthesis

Here it may be asked, where is the need for synthesis of yogas ? Why not follow any one yoga according to one's own aptitude ? One of the main arguments in favour of synthesis is that every yoga has its own drawback and, when pursued to the exclusion of all other yogas, can create obstacles on the path of progress. Swami Vivekananda has pointed this out : 'Jñāna is all right, but there is the danger of its becoming dry intellectualism. Love is great and noble, but it may die away in meaningless sentimentalism. A harmony of these is the thing required.' Similarly, Karma when practised without Jñāna or Bhakti may

6. *Complete Works*, vol. 5, p. 385.

7. *Complete Works*, vol. 2, p. 388.

cease to be a spiritual discipline. The yogas when combined help to neutralize the defects of one another, and this leads to quicker progress.

Following of only one yoga and ignorance of other paths may breed fanaticism and social disharmony. The religious quarrels and recriminations that vitiated the past in all countries can be avoided by the practice of all the yogas together.

Another argument in favour of synthesis is that the old idea of practising meditation etc. only after attaining purity of mind (*citta śuddhi*) is no longer practicable. It worked in olden days when religious training began in childhood in the hermitages of Ṛṣis. Modern man takes to spiritual life rather late in life, and he cannot wait several years for the purification of mind and the cultivation of love of God. In his case meditation, purification of mind through service, love of God, knowledge of self—all these must go hand in hand.

Lastly, modern socio-political conditions have made manual work unavoidable, and every man has to work either for self-support or for social service. This has two important implications. One is that Karma-yoga has become an indispensable adjunct of all forms of spiritual life. Secondly, every man has an inescapable social commitment. Modern society has become so complex and its demands so diverse that only an integration of all the four yogas can make spiritual life meaningful, or even possible, for the majority of people. Each individual is in the centre of a web, and spiritual help should reach him through several channels.

How to practise synthesis of yogas

It is to be admitted that Swami Vivekananda has not left detailed directions about how synthesis of yogas is to be practised. When he was once questioned about it, his laconic but significant answer was, 'By association with persons whose character

has been so developed.'⁸ This is indeed the best solution. And Swamiji saw the perfect embodiment of the ideal of harmony and synthesis in the life of his great master, Sri Ramakrishna. Referring to him, Swamiji said, 'In other words, the older Teachers were rather one-sided, while the teaching of the new Incarnation or Teacher is that the best point of yoga, devotion, knowledge, and work must be combined now so as to form a new society.'⁹ And again in another place, 'Ramakrishna was such a harmony. Such beings are few and far between. But keeping him and his teachings as the ideal, we can move on.' Blessed indeed are those who have accepted such an ideal as the pole-star of their life! All the more fortunate are those who have the direct personal guidance from a living person who lives such an ideal.

But the company of such integrated spiritual men is difficult to come by, and so everyone should learn to practise synthesis of yogas in the best way possible. One way to practise synthesis of yogas is the traditional method taught by the orthodox teachers. That is, the yogas are to be practised one after the other, each succeeding yoga being taken up only after gaining proficiency in the earlier one. We may call this 'Vertical Synthesis'. The order of succession of yogas is, according to Śaṅkara, Karma-Upāsana-Jñāna; according to Rāmānuja, Karma-Jñāna-Bhakti. Though Śrīdhara (in his gloss on the *Gītā*) has styled this *krama samuccaya* (graded synthesis)¹⁰ none of the other Ācāryas are willing to call this sequence a synthesis of yogas. As already mentioned, this method of synthesis is not suitable for modern times, even if it were possible.

The second way is to practise all the yogas together, at different times of the day. One

8. *Complete Works*, vol. 5, p. 315.

9. *Complete Works*, vol. 7, p. 496.

10. Śrīdhara, gloss on the *Gītā*, 5.2, 4.

may do work for some time, then do a little meditation, followed by prayer and chanting of hymns and then do some *vicāra* (self-analysis or self-enquiry) before starting work once again. We may call this 'Horizontal Synthesis'. This is what is popularly understood by synthesis of yoga, and this is what most of the people do in modern times. The disadvantage of this method is that it lacks a unifying frame-work. Very often the aspirant finds that his work goes in one direction, his meditation goes in another direction, his emotions follow a third course and his studies and thinking may not be related to any of these. Spiritual life for many is a hotch-potch of several puzzling ingredients !

There is, however, a third way which we may call 'Self-synthesis'. In this method, the self is regarded as a ladder the rungs of which represent different levels of consciousness, and each yoga is associated with one particular level. Or we may look upon the self as covered by the five *kośas* (sheaths), and regard each yoga as the function of a particular *kośa*. Thus Karma-yoga may be associated with the physical level, corresponding to the *annamaya* and *prāṇamaya kośas*. The yoga of meditation may be associated with the mental level corresponding to the *manomaya kośa*. Bhakti-yoga and Jñāna-yoga may be associated with the *vijñānamaya* and *ānandamaya kośas* according to one's temperament. Since the *kośas* are always active, the aspirant is always engaged in all the yogas. Even when he is engaged in work a part of his mind is fixed on God or repeating His name, while his inner self is absorbed in loving adoration of the Lord and is aware of its identity with Him at a higher level. In the beginning of spiritual life the aspirant may pay greater attention to work and the function of lower *kośas*, but as he progresses, as he learns to identify himself more and more with the higher levels of the self, he

may pay greater attention to the other yogas. Thus all the four yogas can be simultaneously practised without a break throughout the day. One is engaged in yoga always. If properly done, this integral awareness can be maintained even in sleep. This is perhaps the best way to practise synthesis of yogas.

Swami Vivekananda has spoken of yet another way of synthesis. We may call this fourth type 'Collective Synthesis'. In a family or a monastery all its members may not have the same temperament and capacity. One may be active and extroverted, another introverted and contemplative, another emotional and devotional, still another intellectual and rational. To force all these people to follow one and the same method is harmful. It may happen that some of them may find it easy to practise only one yoga and almost impossible to practise the others. What is to be done under such circumstances ?

If there is proper understanding and co-operation among the members of the family or monastery, then they can together achieve synthesis of yogas as a group. Says Swami Vivekananda about this possibility, 'And if among us each one may not individually attain to that perfection, still we may get it collectively by counter-acting, equipoising, adjusting, and fulfilling one another. This would be harmony by a number of persons and a decided advance on all other forms and creeds.' This type of synthesis can be practised in a family. But in a monastery or a similar institution, where people of diverse temperaments and cultural backgrounds live together, it is an imperative necessity. The power and effectiveness of a brotherhood or a sisterhood, monastic or lay, lies to a great extent in developing the creative talents and capacities of its members and directing them all towards a common goal. This is what collective synthesis means.

The emblem of synthesis

No one who visits a Ramakrishna monastery or goes through one of its publications can fail to notice the prominently displayed emblem of the Order. It shows a sea breaking into waves, a lotus in bloom, a rising sun and a graceful swan—all enclosed by a hooded snake. Swami Vivekananda explains the meaning of the emblem as follows: 'The wavy waters in the picture are symbolic of Karma, the lotus of Bhakti, and the rising sun of Jñāna. The encircling serpent is indicative of yoga and awakened Kuṇḍalinī Śakti, while the swan in the picture stands for the Paramātmān. Therefore the idea of the picture is that by the union of Karma, Jñāna, Bhakti and Yoga, the vision of the Paramātmān is obtained.' What a magnificent concept! It brings together in compact harmony all the beautiful images that Indian culture has cherished for centuries.

An emblem is a symbol and, like all symbols, points to a world of meaning. It has therefore far greater value than it is usually thought to have. To wear an emblem is to carry a shelf of books. To understand an emblem is to master a philosophy. However, all its meaning may not be immediately obvious. Like a piece of sugar-candy in the mouth, an emblem takes time to dissolve in the mind and reveal its true significance and power. The main idea of the emblem of the Ramakrishna Order is synthesis of yogas. But its deeper significance lies in the womb of the future.

Designed by no less a person than Swami Vivekananda himself, the emblem miniaturizes his stupendous vision of the future. It is the paradigm of a new consciousness evolving in the collective mind of humanity. The monks of the Ramakrishna Order are not just living together for their own material benefit. They are engaged in an epoch-making experiment in synthesis for the creation of a new consciousness, which em-

braces all levels of existence, by integrating all the ideals and attainments of the past and the present. As already mentioned, by synthesis of yogas Swami Vivekananda meant, not a bundling up, but a fusion. When hydrogen atoms fuse, the result is the creation of a new element and the liberation of an enormous amount of nuclear energy. When the yogas fuse, the result is the creation of a new consciousness and the production of a large amount of psychic energy which can be used for the good of humanity.

Fusion of yogas can be achieved only by their expansion. Each yoga must expand and integrate vast fields of existence. Karma-yoga should expand and include not only religious activities but also all forms of secular activities. Rāja-yoga must expand and include the insights of Western psychology and the educative process. Jñāna-yoga should expand and include all the discoveries of modern science. Bhakti-yoga must expand into love for the whole humanity. The result of this expansion and fusion of all the yogas will be the transformation of the whole life of the seeker into yoga.

Sister Nivedita describes the nature of such a transfigured awareness in a famous passage: 'It is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realization. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion.'¹¹

Such a new integral consciousness can at first be created only in a small community of all-renouncing people. But this primary nucleus of consciousness will grow and expand and radiate in all directions, permeating all strata of society, transforming and illuminating the minds of more and more

11. Sister Nivedita's Introduction to *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 1, p. xv.

people, leading them on to supreme fulfilment. It was this promise of the future that Swami Vivekananda had in his mind when he said, 'The older ones were no doubt good, but this is the new religion of this age—the synthesis of yoga, knowledge, devotion and work—the propagation of

knowledge and devotion to all, down to the lowest, without distinction of age or sex.'¹² The emblem of the Ramakrishna order stands for this promise.

^{12.} *Complete Works*, vol. 7, p. 496.

JOY OF THE ILLUMINED—III

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

Personal experience of joy by mystics

What we have said till now about the joy of illumination is in a sense theoretical, like the enunciation of a law. We would not have any idea of this joy—it would have been a mere word to us—but for the fact that in the world's religious literature there is a massive record of the personal experience of this joy by mystics all over the world, down the ages. Nothing is perhaps more inspiring in the world's literature than these records of supreme joy experienced by man. Even the little taste of this joy that can be had from hearing of these experiences is greatly refreshing. We shall quote at random here a few examples covering a period of four thousand years and more.

In the Upaniṣads we find certain rapturous descriptions by some sages of the joy they actually experienced when they attained illumination.

In these ecstatic words one sage describes his supreme experience :

The blissful Brahman is in the front, it is at the back, it is in the north and the south, it is above and below. Yea, this is the best of the worlds.⁴¹

Here we find the spiritual aspirant recom-

^{41.} *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 2.2.11.

pensed for submitting to the exacting demands that are made on him. When he attains illumination, he verily sees that the world which he once renounced is the best of the worlds, for it is no other than the Supreme Spirit. When the illusions are shattered, when the bondages have fallen off, when fear is gone, when all desires have vanished, when the root of these—ignorance—is destroyed, this very world of Māyā is realized as *sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahma*, 'All this is verily Brahman'.⁴² Hence this is the best of the worlds.

The seer Vāmadeva, having realized this [Self] as That—the Atman as Brahman—, came to know : 'I was Manu and the sun'. And to this day, whoever in a like manner knows the self as 'I am Brahman', becomes as this [universe].⁴³

Brahman is called *sukṛtam*, or self-made, in the Upaniṣad. And it is said :

Verily, what that self-made is, verily is the essence of existence. For truly, on getting the essence, one becomes blissful. For, who indeed could live, who breathe, if there were not this bliss in space?⁴⁴

The ultimate fact that the bliss of Brah-

^{42.} *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 3.14.1.

^{43.} *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.4.10.

^{44.} *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.7.1.

man indeed suffuses and saturates everything, came to be one of the boldest discoveries of man. So the Vedic sage could make such confident invocations as :

May the winds bring us sweetness.
May the rivers carry sweetness to us.
May the plants give us sweetness.
May night and day yield us sweetness.
May the very dust of the earth bring us sweetness.
May the heavens give us sweetness.
May the trees give us sweetness.
May the sun pour down sweetness.
May the cows yield us sweetness.⁴⁵

If Brahman is bliss, everything is verily bliss, yea, even to the dust of the earth, for 'all this is verily Brahman'.

Of all descriptions of beatific experiences, the most striking, and of unsurpassed grandeur, is a post-illumination monologue of the sage who, after transcending the limitations of the various sheaths of the body, and having experienced the oneness of existence, breaks forth into the following song of universal unity :

How wonderful ! How wonderful ! How wonderful !
I am the food. I am the food. I am the food.
I am the eater of food. I am the eater of food.
I am the eater of food.
I am the maker of their unity. I am the maker of their unity. I am the maker of their unity.⁴⁶

These words mean that the sage experienced himself as all matter and all spirit, as well as the connecting link between them. He is himself the subjective world and the objective world, as well as the entire subject-object relation. Proceeding, the ecstatic sage exclaims :

I am the first born of the true, prior to the gods and the navel of immortality. He who gives me away, he alone preserves me. He who eats food—I, as food, eat him. I, as the supreme

Lord, overpower the whole world. I am radiant as the sun.⁴⁷

Such are the expressions of the great joy of the enlightened found in the Upaniṣad. And this joy, this happiness, this bliss and peace know no fluctuation. The enlightened soul has no way of ever losing his joy. It is, therefore, categorically claimed in the Upaniṣad that there is such a thing as eternal happiness, and the way of attaining it is thus enunciated :

There is one Supreme Ruler, the inmost Self of all beings, who makes His one form manifold. Eternal happiness belongs to the wise who perceive Him within themselves—not to others.⁴⁸

In regard to the way of attaining eternal peace, the Upaniṣad says :

There is One who is the eternal Reality among non-eternal objects, the one truly conscious Entity among conscious objects, and who, though non-dual, fulfils the desires of many. Eternal peace belongs to the wise who perceive Him within themselves—not to others.⁴⁹

Śaṅkarācārya, the great mystic philosopher, beautifully sums up the effects of illumination in these terms :

When illumination is attained the entire world becomes a paradise, and people become like celestial wish-fulfilling trees. The entire mass of water becomes sweet and holy like Ganges water, and all women become full of beauty and sanctity ; all speech whether in the language of gods or of men becomes, as it were, the highest and holiest verse of the Vedas. The whole world becomes a holy place like Varanasi, and every movement becomes a movement of joy.⁵⁰

* * *

In the life of the Buddha we have the record of his supreme joy of enlightenment.

45. *Taittirīya Aranyaka*, 10.39.

46. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 3.10.5, 6.

47. *Ibid.*, 3.10.6.

48. *Katha Upaniṣad*, 2.2.12.

49. *Ibid.*, 2.2.13.

50. Śaṅkarācārya, 'Dhanyāṣṭaka', 10.

Siddhārtha's illumination on a full-moon night of May was preceded by acts of severe austerity for six years, before which he had studied under traditional teachers without much benefit or satisfaction. In practising these austerities, Buddha had one end in view: to find a way of deliverance for mankind from the sufferings of life. When ultimately the answer to his search came to him, it came as the attainment of Nirvāṇa—supreme joy unqualified. Truly speaking, the problem of the misery of life has no other solution except in this joy. Attained joy alone dissolves all sorrow, not disciplines as such. It is not that the Noble Eightfold Path by itself is the answer; but the ripe fruit of it, Nirvāṇa, is the answer.

After the attainment of illumination, we are told, for forty-nine days the Buddha remained immersed in bliss, not noticing how days came and nights went. During these days he took no food, nor performed any other bodily function, but was wholly taken up by the ineffable bliss of illumination. He just sat on, enjoying that endless bliss.

In the Buddhist scripture we have this description:

At that time the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling at Uruvelā at the foot of the Bo-tree on the banks of the river Nirañjarā, having just attained the Buddhahood. Then the Blessed One sat cross-legged for seven days together at the foot of the Bo-tree experiencing the bliss of emancipation.

Then the Blessed One, during the first watch of the night, thought over Dependent Origination both forward and back....

Then the Blessed One, concerning this, on that occasion breathed forth this solemn utterance—

When to the strenuous, meditative Brahmin
There come to light the elements of Being,
Then vanish all his doubts and eager questions,
What time he knows the elements have causes.

Then the Blessed One, during the middle watch of the night, thought over Dependent Origination both forward and back....

Then the Blessed One, concerning this, on that occasion, breathed forth this solemn utterance—

When to the strenuous, meditative Brahmin
There come to light the elements of Being,
Then vanish all his doubts and eager questions,
What time he knows how causes have an ending.

Then the Blessed One, during the last watch of the night, thought over Dependent Origination both forward and back....

Then the Blessed One, concerning this, on that occasion, breathed forth this solemn utterance—

When to the strenuous, meditative Brahmin
There come to light the elements of Being,
Then scattereth he the hordes of Māra's army;
Like to the sun that lightens all the heavens.

Then the Blessed One, after the lapse of seven days, arose from that state of exalted calm, and leaving the foot of the Bo-tree, drew near to where the Ajapāla [that is, the Goatherd's] banyan-tree was; and having drawn near, he sat cross-legged at the foot of the Ajapāla banyan-tree for seven days together, experiencing the bliss of emancipation....

Then the Blessed One, after the lapse of seven days, arose from the state of exalted calm, and leaving the foot of the Ajapāla banyan-tree, drew near to where the Mucalinda tree was; and having drawn near, he sat cross-legged at the foot of the Mucalinda tree for seven days together, experiencing the bliss of emancipation....

Then the Blessed One, concerning this, on that occasion, breathed forth this solemn utterance—

How blest the happy solitude of him who
hears and knows the truth!
How blest is harmlessness towards all, and
self-restraint toward living things!
How blest from passion to be free,
All sensuous joys to leave behind!
Yet far the highest bliss of all
to leave the pride which says, 'I am'.⁵¹

In one of his sermons, the Buddha himself describes the experience of Nirvāṇa in this fervent language:

There is, monks, he said, the stage where there is neither earth nor water, nor fire, nor wind, nor

51. Charles R. Lanman, gen. ed., *Harvard Oriental Series* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1922), vol. 3: *Buddhism in Translations*, trans. Henry Clarke Warren, pp. 83-87.

the stage of infinity of space, nor the stage of infinity of consciousness, nor the stage of nothingness, nor the stage of neither consciousness nor the non-consciousness; neither this world, nor the other world, nor sun, nor moon. There, monks, I say there is neither coming nor going, nor staying nor passing away nor arising. Without support, or going on, or basis is it. This indeed is the end of pain.⁵²

Though here the Buddha described Nirvāṇa negatively as the 'end of pain', elsewhere he has described Nirvāṇa as 'blissful', 'sublime and peace-giving', 'the cessation of all bondages', and 'purest joy'.

Buddha died at the age of eighty. For about forty years he preached his doctrine of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. He moved on foot from place to place, begging his food and preaching his doctrine. Thousands upon thousands came to him and accepted his doctrine and followed him. What was the secret?

The secret was Buddha's transfigured personality from which emanated holiness, joy, compassion, peace, and bliss wherever he went. He was a veritable spring of bliss, from which gushed forth unending streams of beatitude and which flooded all directions with their sweetness and joy. People—bereaved, distressed, scorched, confused, agonized—came to him with all their pangs and problems, but had all their difficulties dissolved at once.

It is not as if Buddha's power of joy and bliss ceased to operate with his physical disappearance. In fact, this peace and joy of his enlightenment became a powerful assuaging legacy for all mankind. If we look at any statue or picture of the Buddha intently, we cannot but feel a soothing influence on the feverishness of our body and mind. When we read his words of wisdom, we feel their powerful influence within us even today.

* * *

^{52.} *Udāna*, 8.1, in Edward J. Thomas, ed., *Early Buddhist Scriptures* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1935), p. 110.

To Perialwar, illumination came like a dynamic deluge, as he records in this hymn:

After Thy taking hold of me the big of me of birth has dried up. And I have reached the highest state. The forest of sin that caused death hath caught fire and is being burnt. The ambrosia of divine wisdom like a river is swelling more and more.⁵³

* * *

Nammalwar, being born perfect, did not have to go through the usual travail of those who struggle from a sinful state to sainthood. His affirmation of spiritual joy is therefore more like the blue of the sky than like lightning that has become permanent: 'For ever, for all days, months, years and age after age, He is my insatiate nectar for each moment.'⁵⁴

* * *

Apparswami's joy of illumination gave him an enduring feeling of sovereignty over all the forces of life and death. He records this triumphant feeling in one of his hymns:

No man holds sway over us,
Nor death nor hell fear we;
No tremblings, griefs of mind,
No pains nor cringings see.
Joy, day by day, unchanged
Is ours, for we are His,
His ever, who doth reign,
Our Sankara, in bliss.
Here to His feet we've come,
Feet as plucked flow'rets fair;
See how His ear divine
Ring and white conch-shell wear.⁵⁵

* * *

Manickavachagar, in the fullness of his joy of illumination, makes a comparative

^{53.} Perialwar's Hymns, 5.4.2.

^{54.} Nammalwar's Hymns, *Thiruvoymozhi*, 2.5.4.

^{55.} Vide F. Kingsbury and G. E. Phillips, *Hymns of the Tamil Saivite Saints* (Calcutta: Association Press, 1921), p. 51.

study of his gain with that of his beloved Deity and shows how wonderful has been the trading! He asks in a hymn :
had

Without Thou hath given is Thee ; and what hath gained is me. O Sankara, who is the knowing one? I have obtained the rapturous bliss that

knows no end ; yet now what one thing hast Thou gained from me?⁵⁶

^{56.} *The Thiruvachakam*, trans. Rev. G. U. Pope (Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1900), p. 224.

(To be Continued)

THE UNIVERSAL LAWS OF EVOLUTION

DR. SAMPOORAN SINGH

Introduction

As a general term, 'evolution' is definable as a one-way, irreversible process in time, which during its course generates novelty, diversity and higher levels of organization.¹ It operates in all sectors of the phenomenal universe—inorganic, biological and cultural. It reveals a scale of forms and structures of increasing orderliness, complexity and coherence. The highest of such forms thrown up by cosmic evolution is the human being, who is the culmination, at present, of this tendency to integrate and unify diverse elements into a harmonious whole. However, man's evolution is not biological but cultural or psychosocial : it involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products.

The phenomenon of evolution leads to two conclusions—on the one hand, evolution may be looked upon as an undirected, unique historical process ; on the other hand, it seems to be determined by a great number of laws and rules—and these conclusions seem to be contradictory. A choice between these two different conclusions will be very important for the philosophy of man.

The study of evolution has proved that all living beings on earth are related to one another through their origin from common ancestors.² This suggests that the universal laws governing evolution are the same everywhere and at all times. This article is an attempt to find the meaning of evolution in the form of some universal laws. To understand and follow these all-embracing laws is the only hope for the world in its present perilous state.

Every individual organism is something unique. This is evident from the fact that : (1) All living beings on earth are related to one another through their origin from common ancestors. (2) Chemical and serological investigations show that apparently all species of animals and perhaps even most individuals have their own specific types of proteins. With regard to this fact, each species and—especially among mammals—each individual is unique. (3) Genetical and cytological inquiries have shown that in all well-organized animals and plants the number of genes is so large that the number of possible gene combinations is of an astronomic order. In this respect, too, each individual is something unique. (4) Mutations are determined by

^{1.} Julian Huxley in *Evolution After Darwin* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1960), vol. 3, pp. 107, 111.

^{2.} G. F. Gause in *Evolution After Darwin*, vol. 1, p. 627.

factors changing frequently in the course of time. Hence, also, the special phylogeny of a species, a family, an order, or a class of animals and plants—that is, the development of each special type of construction—is a unique event like all historical events.³

The uniqueness of an individual organism, a family, a species suggests that evolution is directed, non-random, comprehensible and predictable to a large extent. The processes in living organisms are very complex and their interactions are very complicated. Biological and psychosocial laws appear to be distinct as they deal with different levels of integration, but they are still causal laws.

Evolutionary research is not restricted to somatic phylogeny but deals also with psychic development or psychogenesis or psychosocial evolution. At the level of man, we know that man's essential fields of experience are psychological—truth, goodness, beauty, love, joy are intimately related to man's mental life. A higher animal, for example a dog or a parrot, is not merely a physiological machine but a being capable of seeing, hearing, remembering, feeling pleasure, etc. The mental life surely did not arise suddenly in the course of phylogeny as something absolutely new and peculiar. This seems to suggest that mind once remained involved in lower organisms and is now evolving in higher animals, especially in man. Each evolution presupposes an involution. Further, we can say with certainty that the life of each one of us, individually and collectively, is a display of 'multiple interactions'—a two-way traffic between somatic personality and psychic personality. It is emphasized that these interactions are without overlap and all interactions are harmonious. It is also well established that this is true in all higher animals, though the expression of these may

be less pronounced. We can safely extrapolate this to lower animals, and perhaps we can extrapolate these still further back to plant life, where the expression of mental life may be dormant. The appearance of any psychic trait which is absolutely new and peculiar could not exist without there having been a hidden cause. The manifested or the gross state is the effect, and the unmanifested or finer state, the cause. Further, the effect of one event is the cause of the next, so cause and effect follow each other in a linear order or rhythm. And this is precisely what evolution really means.

All living organisms are dynamic systems. At the somatic level there is a struggle between thermodynamic processes: a building-up process coping with a running-down-breaking-down process. The living body is all the time building up more complex chemicals from the chemicals it feeds on, more complex forms of energy from the energy it absorbs, and more complex matter-energy organization. At the level of mind, especially in higher animals and man, it constructs more complex patterns of 'information' — perceptions, memories, ideas — from the input of its receptors. At the human level evolution becomes self-directed. Man is active and not merely reactive; he adapts the environment to his needs, instead of passively adapting himself to it; he learns from experience and constructs systems of knowledge out of the chaos of sensations impinging on him. The natural movement of the mind is from disorder to order, from noise to rhythm, from incoherence to coherence, and from imperfections to perfection.

The universe is thus a dynamic system of interconnected events; all phenomena are uniquely determined by mutual self-consistency; and all laws are latent in each object-process and organism—that is, inherent in its 'within' nature. The harmonious co-operation of atoms, molecules, cells, organs, and holistic organisms suggests mutual interre-

3. Bernhard Rensch in *Evolution After Darwin*, vol. 1, p. 95.

lation and self-consistency of all phenomena. Further, each unit is a part of a hierarchy of 'wholes' forming a cosmic pattern, and what each obeys is the internal dictates of its own 'within' nature. The remarkable self-consistency can only be explained by the omnipresence of all-pervading consciousness. Evolution of each part of the whole and the evolution of the whole are directed towards increasing order and organization. This integrative tendency towards increasing order—a higher form of unity in a more complex variety—may be called the 'Life Principle' or 'Universal Consciousness'.

What has been discussed above may be restated in the form of ten laws which govern the evolution of life from the lowest animalcule to the highest man.

THE UNIVERSAL LAWS OF EVOLUTION

1. *The Law of Involution and Evolution*: Every evolution is preceded by an involution, and each involution is succeeded by an evolution.

2. *The Law of Emergence of Life*: When an inert and insentient matter-energy complex is illumined by the Life Principle, the matter-energy system expresses gross sentiency, and this manifestation of gross sentiency is known as life.

3. *The Law of Emergence of Mind*: When the self-replicating, self-varying (mutating) organic macromolecule (DNA) or cell is further illumined by the Life Principle, the living matter-energy complex expresses subtle sentiency, and this subtle sentiency is known as mind. Mind emerges out of life in matter.

4. *The Law of Multiple Interactions*: Each organism is a system of 'multiple interactions'—a two-way traffic between somatic life and psychic life.

5. *The Law of Cause and Effect*: All the laws that govern existence are parts of

one universal law called the Law of Cause and Effect or the Law of Causation.

To a biologist, life denotes the totality of the self-replicating metabolic organization of matter-energy comprised under the head of 'organism'. To an ethologist (one who studies animal behaviour), 'mind' denotes a progression in emancipated living, from limitations imposed by the environment to the positive control over environment in the external world. A biologist may argue that the law of causation may be explained by induction. Primarily, the causal laws are statements of processes which always occur in the same manner if certain spatial constellations of matter exist. Such single 'natural laws' gain a special character by the fact that they are connected with one another in such a manner that special laws follow from more general laws and that all of them are based on the general law of causality. Hence many biological laws can be reduced to chemical and physical laws.

Recently, physicists have come to the conclusion that microphysical laws are of only a statistical nature, because it is impossible to predict single microphysical processes. Such an assumption may lead to the conclusion that causal laws are valid only in macrophysical processes. This, however, would be a false conclusion. If laws are valid only in the macrophysical realm, they must already exist implicit in the realm of microphysical processes, the interaction of which determines the macrophysical and, hence, the biological processes also. We are only incapable of predicting special microphysical processes. But predictability is only the practical result of causal laws; it is not a necessary component of their definition.⁴

We have therefore to assume that in the realm of microphysics the processes are 'caused', as otherwise the causal relations in macrophysical processes could not result.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

In the microphysical realm there is no chance to analyse the processes to such a degree that they would become predictable (because of the principle of complementarity). Even the biological process of mutation itself appears to be random only because of the vast possibilities of molecular rearrangements. It is expected that mutation may become comprehensible and even predictable in the near future, which will lead us to conclude that mutations are not undirected but directed by latent forces.

At the level of man, the ego—which is the summation of past memories and animal instincts—determines the quality of thought, hence all psychic phenomena are governed by the law of causality.

When we see a red flower and pluck it, an uninterrupted causal process is going on, beginning with the entering of reflected light rays of certain wave lengths into the eye and inducing an excitation in the sense cells of the retina running to the optic centre in the forebrain and from there to motor regions and further, by the pyramidal tract, to the fingers (all of which can be proved electrophysiologically); but the sensation 'red' runs parallel to only a part of this process. This means that there is filtering or abstraction or elimination of certain excitations at different levels of the neural system. In a corresponding manner, other phenomena like ideas and feelings run parallel to causal physiological processes in the brain. As most, if not all, animals show reactions to light, temperature, chemical substances, touch, etc., it is obvious to presume at least sensations running parallel to such 'sense reactions'.

Our main sense-organs are like narrow slits which admit only a very narrow frequency-range of electro-magnetic and sound waves. But even the amount that does get in through these narrow slits is too much. Life would be impossible if we were to pay attention to the millions of stimuli bombard-

ing our senses—what William James called 'the booming, buzzing multitude of sensations'. Thus the nervous system, and above all the brain, functions as a hierarchy of filtering and classifying devices which eliminate a large proportion of the sensory input as irrelevant 'noise', and processes the relevant information into manageable shape before it is presented to consciousness. By analogy, a similar filtering mechanism might be assumed to protect us from the booming, buzzing multitude of images, messages, impressions and confluent happenings in the 'psycho-magnetic field' surrounding us.⁵ From all these observations we deduce the sixth law.

6. *The Law of Elimination*: At each successive stage in the mechanism of perception, there is a successive elimination or filtering which gives us a holistic picture. It is intelligence or consciousness which guides the elimination. Similarly, the natural movement of the mind from disorder to order, from noise to rhythm, from incoherence to coherence, from diversity to oneness, from imperfections to perfection is guided by a process of elimination.

The world is a construct of our sensations, perceptions and memories. We seem to inhabit an ever-dynamic world; we need what may be called an integral calculus of potentiality rather than one of probability. At each level of thought, we have to eliminate the differentiating tendencies of mind, practise discrimination and non-attachment, and thus pave the path to integration. We have to eliminate the lower values of life and live higher values—love, mercy and compassion—of life.

We next come to the question of Life itself. It is not easy to classify the manifold rules of life, as there are different possibilities. We distinguish two main categories: (1) the

5. A. Koestler, *The Roots of Coincidence* (London: Hutchinson, 1972), p. 131.

laws and rules mainly determined by the internal structure and functions of the organisms, and (2) the rules which are mainly determined by the interaction with the environment. It is not possible to define these two categories definitely, as most internal processes are connected with processes of metabolism and therefore also with the environment. At the physical level of organisms the biological rules are: (1) the long-lasting constancy of the species is effected by the identical reduplication of genes; (2) these stable genes, however, show mutations in approximately constant intervals (mutation rates). All somatic mutations, except gene mutations, are irrelevant for evolution. At the mental level also we find a similar process of internal adjustment and adjustment with the external world. This is what the next law says.

7. *The Law of Harmony of Life*: Life, both at the somatic level and cultural level, is a continuous process, with a set purpose, a glorious pattern and a rigid logic. There is harmony within each organism and between the organism and the environment. The purpose of evolution is to achieve unity, to live in harmony with all that exists in the cosmos. The evolutionary process is one of 'becoming' and all becoming means becoming a harmonious 'being'.

An organization of matter when devoid of the Life Principle is said to be dead. But this does not mean the end of life. Life seeks expression through new bodies. The 'integrated psychic personality' again manifests itself in suitable matter and this is called rebirth. The Principle of Life is indestructible. It may withdraw itself from one particular organization of matter, but this is only the fall of a wave. The wave rises again in another organization of matter. Birth and death are thus the ceaseless pulsations of Life. This principle may be stated in the form of another law.

8. *The Law of Continuity of Life*: Death is defined as the discarding of the old-worn-out physical body and birth is putting on a new, physical body by the 'integrated psychic personality'. The cycle of birth-death-rebirth is eternal.

9. *The Law of Immutability of Life Principle*: Organization of matter, involution of the Life Principle in nescient matter, followed by the evolution of life and finally the emergence of mind shows that there is an integrating force called the Life Principle which is immutable. The secret of terrestrial evolution is the slow and progressive manifestation or expression of the latent Life Principle. There must be an unchanging principle to unify and co-ordinate the countless changes of existence. Though the Life Principle pervades each object-process and organism, it itself is immutable and eternal, and does not undergo any evolution. The Life Principle is fundamental; and matter, life and mind are only its derivatives or expressions.

10. *The Law of Self-direction*: At the human level the Life Principle becomes self-conscious and self-directed. Man has the power to direct his own destiny. Upon man has been bestowed the gift of self-awareness and the ability to accelerate the rate of his psychosocial evolution. He is responsible for the future of civilization on our planet. The future of civilization depends on the degree to which we can balance the forces of nature and our own mental forces. Man is destined to be the custodian of his civilization on earth. We shall survive only if we prove by our art of living that we deserve to survive.

These are the eternal laws directing evolution—inorganic, biological, cultural. We have to realize the truth that beyond the divisiveness among men, there exists a primordial 'Unitive Power' or 'Life Principle' deep within us, which integrates the somatic organization and cultural traditions into

oneness, coherence, orderliness and unity. The universal laws point to the fact that truth is great and will prevail, and will set us free. The truth of evolution when properly understood frees us from subservient fear of the unknown and supernatural, and exhorts us to face this new freedom with courage, wisdom, hope and knowledge.

Evolution has given us not only a body and a mind, but also the freedom to choose and shape our destiny. This philosophy of life will liberate the human soul from the shackles of fear and ignorance. A harmonious but free life is the only comprehensible picture of human destiny and significance.

SADHANA IN THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMANUJA

PROF. S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

(Continued from the previous issue)

3

Having briefly outlined the path of Sādhana followed by Śrī Rāmānuja in his own life, we must now gather the doctrine of Sādhana from his great writings.

Ultimate Reality, *paratattva*, for Rāmānuja is the Supreme Atman, called Brahman in Vedānta and Nārāyaṇa in the *Nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad* and Vaiṣṇava scriptures. Reality in its essence is one, eternal, unconditioned existence, omniscient and infinite, characterized by Ānanda or Bliss. It transcends everything material as well as the finite consciousness. But the world, made up of non-sentient and sentient beings, is not Māyā in the sense of a mistaken superimposition on Reality, but an authentic element of its splendour. It is a *vibhūti*. The two together, the absolute Spirit and its cosmic *vibhūti* constitute one undivided and indivisible whole, analogous to the integrated personality of an embodied soul. The world is the body and the divine substantive is the soul holding it as a part of its infinite actuality. This, in brief, is Rāmānuja's concept of reality.

The concept of *puruṣārtha* or supreme value flows from and corresponds to this

nature of reality. Though the individual soul, the Jīva, belongs to God as His inseparable body or adjective, by virtue of its autonomy as a self-conscious moral agent it blunders into a repudiation of its life-giving subservience to Him and falls into the bondage of imperfection, marked by ruinous undivine longings and consequent fetters of misdeeds. It thereby chains itself in the prison-house of matter and languishes in the wretchedness of sin and suffering. The root of this entire evil course is the disowning of the Supreme Spirit, the Soul of its soul, the Life of its life.

Redemption lies in acknowledging the liberating status of belonging to God and living in accordance with the glorious potentialities accruing from that awakening. This life in God is no obliteration of individuality but its full unfoldment. Personality is not a curse, but its abuse in the service of anything other than the Supreme Personality is. Mokṣa is liberation from the negation of God and all the calamities following from that negation, and is the attainment of plenitude of life in the continuous ecstasy of adoration. Well has the Upaniṣad declared that to affirm God is to

exist and to lose that affirmation is to pass into a great annihilation—*mahatī vinaṣṭih*.²

With the clarification of the two connected concepts of Brahman and Mokṣa, the pathway of life that Rāmānuja presents as Sādhana can now be pictured in considerable clarity. The texts that portray this superbly are his commentary on the *Gītā* and the shorter devotional prose-poem called 'Śaraṇāgati-Gadya'.

4

The first stage of Sādhana is what is called Karma-yoga. This is meant to counteract and set aside the karma of the past which has bound the individual to his body in *samsāra* and which is bearing fruits by way of afflictions. Karma as yoga transforms karma itself into an instrument of emancipation. This specific doctrine is the great teaching of the *Gītā*, upon which Rāmānuja bases his concept of Karma-yoga. Karma, in this context, is to be understood as including the entire range of human activity—religious, moral and so-called secular and worldly activity. Activity prompted by desire for gains and performed in that spirit is a cause of bondage. Karma-yoga is involvement in activity of the same range, if not wider, but without the evil attachment to personal gains. It is action for its own sake. But action requires some motive, some end in view. Following the prescription of the *Gītā*, Rāmānuja furnishes a motive: to please God. Action must be dedicated to God, and all egoistic concern must be relinquished. In fact, God must be placed in the centre of the scene of action, and should be looked upon as the principal Agent, with the human agent as a mere tool in His hands. The action, whatever it

be, should be regarded as God's own work and not that of the individual doer, and the fruit, whatever it be, should be wholly dedicated to Him. This threefold renunciation of doership, the doing and the fruits of doing to the Supreme is the essence of Karma-yoga. Such action is eminently successful in unbinding the soul from the meshes of old karma. Karma-yoga is no mere action but carries within it an enlightened perspective as to what type of action binds and what can free one from that bondage; it also offers a devoted invitation to God to take mastery of the entire situation of action. There is thus an element of Jñāna and an element of Bhakti in the heart of Karma-yoga. But the element of action is its dominant manifestation.

The imprisoned spirit in man, thus cleansed of the defilements of old karma, turns inward and struggles to recover its authentic identity. This process, according to Rāmānuja, is to be called Jñāna-yoga. In it there is the stage of intellectual self-discrimination, followed by meditative effort at self-intuition, and finally a mature and unshakable realization of what one is in one's essential being. Man realizes that he is not the physical complex with which he has identified himself all along, but an Atman, immortal and self-luminous, whose essence lies in the power of knowing. He recovers through Jñāna his own nature as the Atman. He is released from self-oblivion and is set up in his proper excellence as a knower. When this power of knowing is liberated from impediments, he realizes that his true destiny lies not in matter nor in his own isolated self-existence, but in the pursuit of self-fulfilment in the exercise of his power of knowing in the apprehension of Brahman. By self-knowledge he understands his perfection to lie in reaching out to the Supreme Self. Jñāna-yoga consists of three gains: understanding (1) that one transcends the

2. इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति

न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः ॥

Kena Upaniṣad, 2.5.

body, (2) that one's essence and proper excellence lie in knowing, and (3) that this knowing should be developed and expanded so as to complete itself in the apprehension of the Supreme, knowing which is real knowledge. The search for God is instituted in Jñāna-yoga.

Thus the Sādhaka is led to the path of Bhakti. Rāmānuja is principally a philosopher of Bhakti, and in all his works he loses himself in describing the endless riches of Bhakti. It is practically impossible to bring out the full shape of Bhakti as he understands it. All that can be attempted is to delineate its leading features and leave the rest to the leisurely enjoyment of his spacious writings.

It is necessary to remove two familiar misconceptions about Bhakti. First, it is no frenzy of mere emotion. Emotion of an exalted nature may enter into Bhakti, as we shall see later on; but it is not indulgence in mere emotion, even if such a thing were not a psychic fiction. Secondly, neither is it the observance of the mere rituals of worship. Acts of worship might form part of Bhakti as a whole, but in that case they have value imparted to them by the actuating spirit. In itself ritual may degenerate into external and mechanical performances done in conformity to a cult; this has nothing to do with Bhakti.

The *Gītā* distinguishes four types of Bhakti: that of afflicted souls seeking relief through divine aid; that of utilitarian devotees seeking prosperity through divine benevolence; that of seekers of knowledge, who pray to God for it; and finally, that of men of knowledge, who see God as their all in all—and that knowledge itself matures into an intense love of God. It is the last type of devotion that constitutes genuine Bhakti. The speciality of this is that it is seeking Divine aid for attaining Divinity itself. God is an intrinsic value; and for attaining Him, His grace is sought. This

is the Bhakti that Rāmānuja, along with the *Gītā*, regards as Bhakti proper. Bhakti in this case is love of God founded on the knowledge of Him or, alternatively, it is the knowledge of God growing into a love of Him. Herein the *nididhyāsana* of the Upaniṣads and the Bhakti of the *Gītā* are fused into a single discipline. Therefore, Bhakti is enlightened attachment to the Supreme and no mere emotion or ritual or the utilitarian use of religion. 'Love' is a weak English word in the context; it does not carry the implication that the devotee seeks, not to appropriate his Deity but to be appropriated by Him. In 'Bhakti', on the contrary, there is the strong and definite connotation of total offering of oneself to one's Divine Beloved. Thus real Bhakti involves the intellectual apprehension of God, love of Him for His own sake, and through this love total self-dedication. Jñāna of the Supreme Reality becoming *prīti*, such that the object is valued solely for its own sake, issuing in total surrender of personality to the object of adoration—described by Rāmānuja and in Bhakti literature in general as *ātma-nivedana*—is the full reality of Bhakti.

Rāmānuja maintains that God is no remote and conjectural target of this type of Bhakti. He reveals Himself to the devotee possessing this exalted and intense love, and becomes an immediate Presence. This is his interpretation of the expression in the *Gītā*, *pratyakṣāvagamam* ('directly perceived')³ and also of the line *nivasiṣyasi mayyeva ata urdhvam na saṁśayaḥ* ('Henceforth thou shalt live in me alone, there is no doubt about this')⁴. If this attainment of God takes place in Bhakti itself, it is hardly right to describe it as a mere Sādhana. In it stands accomplished the Siddhi (attainment) itself. This exalted form of Bhakti passes

3. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 9.2.

4. *Ibid.*, 12.8.

beyond the status of an *upāya* (means) and becomes the *phala* (fruit) itself. Mokṣa is nothing more than a confirmation of what is realized in Bhakti. It is a fuller and stabler state of Bhakti itself. Further, Rāmānuja points out that Bhakti is a self-rectifying, self-nourishing process to which all have an equal right. All inequalities are dissolved in this alchemy. 'Samo'ham *sarva-bhūteṣu* ('I am impartial to all')⁵ can have no other meaning. Deficiencies, ethical and intellectual, are remedied by the perfecting flame of Bhakti; feebleness or dryness of love is cured by the ravishing self-revelation of supreme beauty, majesty and abounding love; and mundane inequalities are submerged in the equalizing ecstasy of love. Thus Bhakti ripens by its own power and sheds its instrumental role in its own self-consummation. No wonder Rāmānuja prays in the great invocatory verse of the *Śrī Bhāṣya* for this wisdom of Bhakti, *śeṃṣi bhakti-rūpa*.

A great idea of Rāmānuja should be noted in this context: that the ultimate Sādhana for man to reach the Godhead is the grace of God Himself. Whatever human effort is put forward, even by way of the highest Bhakti, is just a subsidiary factor required to evoke grace for effecting redemption. Grace is an eternally accomplished reality waiting to be rendered operative by man's aspiring effort. Hence grace is named *siddhopāya*, and man's work is called *sādhyopāya*. The *siddhopāya*, though omnipotent by itself, awaits the birth of aspiration on man's part, for only then can it be a desired boon. Man is a free spiritual entity, and grace can function in saving him only on invitation, as it were. Grace undesired is a violation of man's personality and, as such, would be an infliction and not a blessing. When man opens up his life for the descent of redemptive grace, he

is invaded and lifted up to his high destiny. So Bhakti considered as a Sādhana is an accessory, but it is essential for the operation of the principal means, namely God's grace.

Now it may so happen, and does happen in almost all lives, as testified to by the prayers of even the greatest seekers, that man finds himself inadequate and incompetent to accomplish even the accessory or subsidiary condition. He may see himself as incapable of furnishing the occasion for the operation of grace. Under such a circumstance, all too common in the lives of real spiritual seekers, he is exhorted to surrender to God for the completion of his part of the covenant. Then grace will complete his preparation and accomplish its own task of saving. This kind of surrender is called *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*, and in the present situation it is practised for the completion of man's effort in the right direction and hence is called *aṅga-prapatti*. A more extreme situation of helplessness may also develop in which the devotee cannot wait for the slow evolution of his poor Sādhana even with Divine aid and wants the requirement on his part to be circumvented or done away with. His craving for the working of grace may have reached the breaking point and then he surrenders to his Saviour for fulfilling the roles of both the *sādhyopāya* and *siddhopāya*. This is self-sufficient and autonomous surrender, *svatantra prapatti*. Then there is nothing for the saving grace to await and it gets released in all its magnitude and power accomplishing its benediction with unimpeded abundance. This is *prapatti* proper and in its own right. Rāmānuja records his own personal *prapatti* in his great 'Śaraṇāgati Gadya'. The essence of *prapatti* is the transfer of one's own spiritual burdens and responsibilities to God in utter helplessness, with devout prayer and infinite confidence in the might and mercy of the Lord. Hence it is fittingly named

5. *Ibid.*, 9.29.

bhāra-samarpaṇa, 'handing over of the burden'. Such an act of abandoning oneself to the care of God in all completeness is assured of unfailing and absolute triumph. There is nothing wanting when the Almighty Lord is placed in total charge of one's life.

This pathway is certainly a boon to the lowest and the last. But it is not there-

fore a lesser or lower way. It is not a Hīnayāna. As salvation here lies entirely on the infinite resources of God and not on the paltry and uncertain capabilities of the seeker, it is a greater way, nay, the supreme way. Rāmānuja's last word on Sādhana is *śaraṇāgati*.

(Concluded)

How They Walked on the Razor's Edge

ST. FRANCIS, MIRROR OF THE WORLD

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI ATMARUPANANDA

Francis, by his preaching and example, now had such power over others that many—nobles and commoners alike—began to renounce all earthly ambition and follow him. The secret of his influence was that he had first convinced himself of the truth of what he preached by practising it in his own life; there was therefore a surety about what he said, and he had no fear of reproof. Moreover, God was so real to him that the opinions of men mattered little: though he was perfectly humble, he spoke the truth that was in him to the high and the low, and all bowed before his inspired words.

Among those he inspired through his preaching was a pure young virgin named Clare, who came of a noble family of Assisi. From her childhood she had longed for the religious life, and had refused her parents' attempts to have her married. When she first heard Francis preach in the cathedral of Assisi, she knew that he was

the one she must follow. Under his protecting guidance, she ran away from home, entered a convent, and professed her vows. Her younger sister soon followed her, and later on, other young ladies. Francis organized these virgins into the Franciscan order of nuns, known as the Poor Clares.

Many men and women who were tied in wedlock also wished to follow Francis. For them he formed the Third Order of Franciscans (the first consisting of monks and the second of nuns). These were to be *in* the world but not *of* it, and they sought to follow the Franciscan ideal in their daily lives of duty. Though they usually lived in the family, they sometimes withdrew into solitude; and they always led austere lives of prayer.

From the beginning Francis had emphasized missionary work. Now, with the increased numbers, groups of missionaries were sent all over Italy, into Germany and

Hungary, through France to Spain and England. Francis himself went to Spain and to the Holy Land. For him and his followers, missionary activity did not consist in talk, much less did it involve force or coercion. They preached by humble, patient and prayerful example. They bore witness to Christ by leading Christ-like lives; and in order to do so, they led intense spiritual lives. All over central Italy one may find caves which Francis and his followers frequented for long or short retreats from activity.

From time to time Francis was tempted to withdraw entirely from the world and live a life of solitary prayer, like the hermit ascetics of old. As Thomas of Celano, his biographer and contemporary, said, Francis was not one who prayed now and then: his 'whole being was changed into prayer'. Naturally he felt an urge to leave the world and withdraw into himself in constant communion with his beloved Christ and Mother Mary. But one thing prevented him: Jesus also could have chosen to remain in unbroken communion with His Father in heaven, but instead He came down among men out of compassion and took upon Himself their sufferings. Once when Francis was torn between these two opposing tendencies in his heart, he asked St. Clare and Brother Silvester to pray and hear from God what He wanted of His servant. Both Silvester and Clare, as well as another Sister, got the response from God that 'God has not called him for his own sake only, but also to save others'. When he heard this, Francis was filled with spiritual power and glory by God. He rose up in exultation and said to two of his companions, Brothers Masseo and Angelo, 'Let us go!'

As the three friars walked, Francis saw on the roadside a multitude of birds of all kinds, and he told his companions to wait for him. He went up to the birds and began preaching to them, addressing them as

'Sisters'; and those that were in the trees flew down to the earth to sit among the others. None of them stirred or made a sound the whole time Francis preached, so much so that as he walked among them his cowl brushed against their bodies without causing them the slightest fear. It is said that, when his sermon was over, they all fluttered their wings and bowed their heads to the ground in reverence. Then Francis blessed them and they flew away making a joyous noise. His spiritual experiences had given him a mystic kinship with all creation. Is it any wonder, then, that his words had such power over the hearts of men?

Francis insisted that his friars be cheerful. Once it was reported to him that some of the brothers were tormenting themselves with hair shirts, iron rings and the like on the naked body. He forbade at once such ascetic excesses. One day Francis noticed that one of his companions showed a gloomy face. He said to him severely: 'A servant of God should not be sad and gloomy before other men. He should always be of good cheer. If you have sinned, go to your cell, examine yourself and weep over your sin before God. But when you return to your brothers, put aside your sadness and be cheerful like the others.' On another occasion he said: 'As long as the heart is filled with spiritual joy the serpent of evil finds it in vain to instil his deadly poison. Evil cannot harm the servant of God so long as he is filled with holy joy.'

Francis taught the brothers that they were not only to be cheerful themselves but that they were to be messengers of holy joy for the whole world. Said he: 'What else are the servants of God than His singers, whose duty it is to lift up the hearts of men and move them to spiritual joy?'

One pillar supporting his joy was his love of freely accepted religious poverty. Renunciation meant for him a *liberation* from worldly concerns and anxieties. Further-

more, earthly poverty had been sanctified by Christ, who had not where to lay His head. It is blessed to give alms, Francis said, but it is also blessed to receive them. He used to call bread that had been begged 'Angels' bread'. A brother returning from begging should therefore sing the praises of God.

The other pillar of his joy was his spirituality. He was not frivolous or happy-go-lucky. In his 'Admonitions' he said, 'Blessed is that religious who finds all his joy and happiness in the words and deeds of our Lord, and uses them to make people love God gladly. Woe to the religious who amuses himself with silly gossip, trying to make people laugh.' He wanted to hear only spiritual conversation, and himself only spoke of spiritual things. He sang the praises of God; he laughed at the playfulness of God; he was enraptured by the sweetness of God; he danced in the bliss of God. He was carefree because he had surrendered himself—body, mind, will, and affection—to his Beloved and was thus free of the terribly weighty burden of ego that we all bear.

Mention has been made of the passionate love Francis bore in his youth for nature. With his conversion, that poetic vision was chastened and transformed into a perception of spiritual beauty and significance in all creation. Indeed, he lived in a transfigured cosmos in which everything animate and inanimate became a powerful icon of the Spirit. As all creation was born from God the Father, he saw the whole universe peopled with his own brothers and sisters: Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Fire, Sister Ashes, Brother Stone, Sister Plant. And there was nothing artificial in this fraternal love. He had the child's vision in which all things appear as living and responding persons. He would talk to Brother Sun, to Brother Fire, to Sister Moon as if they were actually hearing and communing with him.

And who knows? Didn't the birds listen and thank him for his sermon? At Portiuncula Francis once bade 'Sister Cicada' to sing the praises of God, and the 'Sister Cicada' sang until Francis bade her keep silence.

His love for nature was partly symbolic. He had a special love for birds because 'they sow not, neither do they reap', nor do they store up for the morrow. And among birds he loved most the larks because their hoodlike crest and earth-coloured plumage reminded him of the habit of the friars minor. Out of reverence for the cross of Christ, he would never permit the friars to step on two straws or two sticks that lay across each other.

But more significant was his entirely direct love of nature springing from his awareness of the divine immanence in the universe. In his vision, all created things participated in the being of God. Only such mystic knowledge could account for the incandescent love which he possessed for all beings. Due to a heightened sensitivity resulting from this awareness, he told the friar who cut wood that he must never cut down the whole tree, but should spare some branches that the tree might live. If Francis found an earthworm on the road, he would gently put it to the side so that no one might crush it. In winter he would feed honey to the bees. His love for water was so great that, when he would wash his hands, he chose a place where the water would fall without being trod under foot. Even when he walked over rocks he would often be seen to step reverently and carefully.

Of all creatures, however, he had a special love for Brother Sun and Brother Fire. For by day Brother Sun illumines all things, and by night Brother Fire gives us light. He loved fire so much that no matter how pressing the need, he could never bring himself to put out a flame. Once the linen underclothes he was wearing caught fire, but he

refused to put out the flames; his brothers had to forcibly extinguish them. Another time, the cell where he and a brother were staying caught fire, but Francis refused to do anything about it. When others came to put it out, Francis merely got up and walked away with his fleece blanket. When he returned sometime later he said, 'I shall not use this fleece over me again, for in my avarice I would not allow Brother Fire to consume it.' Would such selfless love for fire have ever been possible had he seen it merely as a form of physical energy, or even as a symbol of God's light and energy? There is a wonderful livingness in his love which convinces one that he saw the living God present in all things.

Francis didn't look on nature, however, with the eyes of a romantic who naively blinds himself to the evil and violence in the world. Such 'love' is usually rooted in selfishness and sensuality. Francis saw the pain of created life, but with the eyes of spiritual love; and he therefore offered himself as a sacrifice in order to deliver others from misery.

He held in great respect all spoken and written words, since they symbolized to him divine self-revelation. He would never obliterate a word he had written, however unnecessary it might be. And he used to gather up any scraps of writing he found on the road and put them aside in reverence. Once when it was pointed out to him that the scrap of writing he had saved was from some heathen author, he replied that it mattered not, since the words, whether of heathen or of other men, all came from the wisdom of God.

* * *

As the Order grew, it soon became obvious that the informal organization of the early days was no longer feasible. In the beginning the only organization had been Francis—all looked to him for guidance,

and all obeyed his wishes implicitly. But now the Order was too big, and the original unity of all friars in mutual love was disintegrating. Rules had to be laid down and the organization had to be formalized. The personal charisma of Francis alone could no longer hold together hundreds upon hundreds of friars, some of whom hardly knew him. Besides, he had no capacity for organizational work, nor could he rule by law. He knew only to teach through example, to rule by love, to convert with prayer. So in all humility he decided to resign as head of the Order in 1220, and appointed one of the brothers as vicar in his place. Until his death, however, all considered him the true leader, and all looked to him for their inspiration.

In the summer of 1224 Francis retreated into solitude with three friars at Mount Alverna. Here he wished to celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin (August 15) and to fast for forty days in preparation for the feast of St. Michael (September 29). For some time past he had been anxious over the future of his Order, for it was straying from the high ideals of poverty, simplicity, and evangelical joy that he had set for it. As he could by no means regain his peace of mind, he asked Brother Leo to open the Gospel thrice to find out what the Lord willed. Each time it was opened at Christ's Passion. Thus Francis knew that there was no solution but to resign himself to God's will in loving imitation of Christ's last days on earth. The following night, after hours of useless attempts, he finally drifted off to sleep, when he saw an angel by his bed with violin and bow in hand. 'Francis', said the heavenly being, 'I will play for thee as we play before the throne of God in heaven.' Then the angel drew the bow across the strings but once, and Francis was transported by such divine joy and living sweetness that he no longer seemed to have a body, and all the sorrow

of his soul vanished, even the last trace. 'And if the angel had drawn the bow across the strings again,' Francis said the next morning, 'then would my soul have left my body from uncontrollable happiness'.

Soon afterwards Francis withdrew into still greater solitude on Mount Alverna. And solitude was necessary now, for he was so rapt in the contemplation of God that sometimes he could not speak for a whole day. One moonlit night Brother Leo found Francis lying on the ground with outstretched arms in the form of a cross, praying over and over again: 'O my dearest Lord and God, what are Thou, and what indeed am I, Thy little, useless worm of a servant?' Then, while moving, Brother Leo made a noise which startled Francis. Finding that it was Brother Leo, Francis asked him why he had come to spy on him, and told him never to do so again. Then Leo asked the meaning of the prayer he had heard. Francis explained: 'O little lamb of Jesus Christ, O my own brother Leo! In that prayer which you heard, two lights were manifested to me: one light in which I knew the Creator, and one in which I knew myself. When I said, "What art Thou, my Lord and God, and what am I?" then I was in the light of contemplation, in which I saw the infinite depth of the Divine God-head and my own wretched abyss of nothingness.'

Then came the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14). The cross had been a special object of devotion for Francis ever since the crucifix at San Damiano's had spoken to him in his youth. Now, before sunrise on the feast day, he was absorbed in contemplation on the mystery of the Cross. He prayed: 'O Lord Jesus Christ, two favours I beg of Thee before I die. The first is that I may, as far as it is possible, feel in my soul and in my body the suffering which Thou, O gentle Jesus, sustained in Thy bitter passion. And

the second favour is that I, as far as it is possible, may receive into my heart that excessive charity by which Thou, the Son of God, wast inflamed, and which actuated Thee willingly to suffer so much for us sinners.'

As the *Little Flowers* tells it, 'St. Francis began to contemplate with intense devotion the Passion of Christ and His infinite charity. And the fervour of his devotion increased so much within him that he *utterly transformed himself into Jesus* through love and compassion.' Then out from heaven descended an angelic figure with six resplendent and flaming wings. As the angel came closer, Francis saw that it bore the likeness of a Crucified Man, and he was rapt with joy and wonder to see the friendly look of Christ who appeared so very familiar to him. But at the same time Francis was filled with compassion to see Him nailed to a cross. This joy, compassion and wonder intensified until Francis lost outwards consciousness.

When Christ in the form of the angel disappeared, Francis regained external consciousness and found that the vision had left imprinted in his own flesh the wounds of the crucifixion. In the wounds there were nail-like formations of flesh piercing all the way through and protruding from the hands and feet. And in his side there was a wound like that made by a lance, covered over with scar-tissue. This was the final seal, imprinted by Christ Himself, on Francis' Christification. His prayer had been answered: in his body he bore the signs of Christ's sufferings, and in his heart he possessed the boundless charity which Christ had borne for all men. And from this moment until his death he lived on a plane so exalted above that of ordinary men that words fail to describe it.

He wanted to keep secret this grace of the Saviour; but as blood continually oozed

from his wounds, and as he could not walk because of the nail-like formations protruding from his feet, it was impossible to conceal. From then to the end of his life he bore these marks of identification with Christ, and had to keep them bandaged.

On September 30, he left Alverna with Brother Leo. He bade loving farewell to the brothers that were to remain, saying: 'Live in peace, dearest sons, and farewell! My body is to be separated from you, but my heart remains with you. I go forth with Brother Little Lamb of God [Leo], and I come back here no more! Farewell, sacred mountain: farewell, Mount Alverna: farewell, thou Angel mountain! Farewell, dearest Brother Falcon, who used to wake me with thy screams; thanks for thy care of me! Farewell, thou great stone, beneath which I used to pray; thee I shall see no more! Farewell, Santa Maria's Church—to thee, mother of the Eternal Word, I commend these my sons!'

The journey from Alverna back to Portiuncula became a triumphal procession. Though even earlier he had been venerated as a saint throughout Italy, now the populace met Francis everywhere with olive boughs and the cry *Ecco il Santo!* 'Here comes the Saint!' People rushed out just to touch him and thereby become blessed. But Francis was far beyond the effects of such praise. He ever remained the simple and humble lover of God in the midst of such adoration; he was so transparently humble that all adoration directed towards himself he saw as the praise of God, the author of all holiness.

Now Francis was approaching his end. In 1225 an eye-sickness which he had contracted in Egypt worsened until he was almost blind. Though for long he had resisted medical treatment, he now had to consent to the importunities of his brothers. Francis always addressed his body as

'Brother Ass'; for, according to him, it was to have its own will broken and made into a submissive servant of the soul. But now Brother Ass was about to collapse. So the physicians asked Francis, 'Has not your body all through your life been a good and willing servant and ally?' Francis admitted that it had. 'Then how have you treated it in return?' asked the physicians. With great remorse Francis said, 'Rejoice, Brother Body, and forgive me; now I am ready to humour you in your wishes!'

But his repentance came too late. The physicians tried everything and failed. Then, according to the practice of the time, they decided to apply red-hot irons to both his temples. When Francis saw the glowing irons being brought, he said, 'Brother Fire, you are nobler and more useful than most other creatures! I have always been good to you and always will be so for love of Him who has created you! Now show yourself gentle and courteous to me and do not burn me more than I can stand!' The physician applied the irons, and all the brothers fled in terror as they heard the hissing of burning flesh. When it was over, however, Francis said, 'If that is not enough, then burn it again, for I have not felt the least pain.'

But all was to no avail. As days passed, his physical condition grew worse. Yet his spirit grew ever more radiant: it was during the days of his most intense suffering that he composed his 'Canticle of Brother Sun', a song of spiritual joy and praise.

In the summer of 1226 Francis was taken to Celle near Cortona in the hopes that the change would improve his health. Instead, dropsy was added there to his several already severe troubles. Now he had but one wish: to see his beloved Assisi once again before leaving this world. Accordingly, in August 1226 he was transported to the Bishop's residence in the town of his birth. There he demanded to know of the phys-

ician how long he would live. The physician said, 'I consider that you can live till the end of September or beginning of October.' Francis stretched his hands upward and cried out, 'Then be welcome, Sister Death!' and added five lines in praise of Sister Death to his 'Canticle of Brother Sun'. From this time he wanted Brother Leo and Brother Angelo to remain with him always in order to sing the praises of Sister Death whenever he would wish it.

Every day hundreds and thousands would assemble before the Bishop's residence to pay their respects to the dying saint. In silent reverence they stood; and now they were struck with wonder to hear joyful song rising from the room of the saint. Brother Elias, the Vicar of the Order who had been largely responsible for opposing Francis and leading the Order away from its original spirit of evangelical joy and poverty, came to the saint and said, 'There is a watch set below, and they don't think you are a holy man when they hear singing and playing always in your room!' Francis replied, 'By the grace of the Holy Spirit I am so completely united with my Lord and God that I may well be allowed to be glad and rejoice in Him!'

In September 1226 he knew that his death was imminent, and insisted that he be taken to his beloved Portiuncula. The brothers carried him on the road out from the walls of Assisi, as the whole town followed reverently, until they reached the leper's hospital, which had played so important a part in his conversion. Here he asked to be set down facing Assisi. Assisted by

the friars he sat up and looked long over this town which carried so many sacred memories for him. Slowly he lifted his hand and made the sign of the cross over the town and said, 'Blessed be thou of the Lord, for He had chosen thee to be a home and an abode for all those who in truth will glorify Him and give honour to His name!' Then the friars carried him on to Portiuncula.

On the first of October he called all the brothers to his side and blessed each one of them. With special love he placed his hands on the head of Bernard and asked that all others in the whole Order honour Bernard 'as if he were myself, for he was the first who came to me and gave his goods to the poor.' Then he gave his last sermon to the brothers, commanding them to be faithful to Lady Poverty and, as a symbol thereof, to be faithful to Portiuncula: 'If they drive you out of one door, then go in the other; for here is God's house and the gate of Heaven!' With a heart overflowing with love he blessed all of the brethren in the Order, and all who should ever enter the Order: 'I bless them as much as I can—and more than I can.'

On the evening of October 3, Francis asked to be undressed and laid naked on the bare earth, that he might die true to Lady Poverty. Then, this troubadour of God welcomed Sister Death and went into Eternity singing the praises of God. Outside, the larks broke into a twitter—a last farewell to their beloved brother.

(Concluded)

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA* —XX

To Mrs. G. W. Hale

20

Greenacre Inn
Eliot, Maine
8 August 1894

Dear Mother,

I have received the letter you sent over to me coming from India.

I am going to leave this place on Monday next for Plymouth⁴¹ where the Free Religious Association is holding its session. They will defray my expenses of course.

I am all right, enjoying nice health, and the people here are very kind and nice to me. Up to date I had no occasion to cash any cheque as everything [is] going on smoothly. I have not heard anything from the Babies. Hope they are doing well. You also had nothing to write; however, I feel that you are doing well.

I would have gone over to another place but Mr. Higginson's⁴² invitation ought to be attended to. And Plymouth is the place where the fathers of your country first landed. I want therefore to see it.

I am all right. It is useless reiterating my love and gratitude to you and yours—you know it all. May the Lord shower His choicest blessings on you and yours.

This meeting is composed of the best professors of your country and other people, so I must attend it; and then they would pay me. I have not yet determined all my plans, only I am going to lecture in New York coming fall; every arrangement is complete for that. They have printed advertisements at their own expense for that and made everything ready.

Give my best love to the Babies, to Father Pope, and believe me ever in gratitude and love,

Your Son,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S.: I am very much obliged to the sisters for asking me to tell them if I want anything. I have no want anyway—I have everything I require and more to spare.

'He never gives up His servants.'

My thanks and gratitude eternal to the sisters for their kindness in asking for my wants.

V.

© The President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math.

⁴¹. A city in southeastern Massachusetts, founded by the Pilgrims in 1620.

⁴². Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, President of the liberal Free Religious Association, who had made Swamiji's acquaintance at the Chicago Parliament of Religions.

C/o Mrs. J. J. Bagley
Annisquam
20 August 1894

Dear Mother,

Your letters just now reached me. I had some beautiful letters from India. The letter from Ajit Singh⁴³ shows that the phonograph has not reached yet, and it was dated 8th June. So I do not think it is time yet to get an answer. I am not astonished at my friends' asking Cook & Sons to hunt for me : I have not written for a long time.

I have a letter from Madras which says they will soon send money to Narasimha—in fact, as soon as they get a reply to their letter written to Narasimha. So kindly let Narasimha know it. The photographs have not reached me—except two of Fishkill when I was there last. Landsberg has kindly sent over the letters. From here I will probably go over to Fishkill. The meerschaum⁴⁴ was not sent over by me direct, but I left it to the Guernseys. And they are a lazy family in that respect.

I have beautiful letters from sisters.

By the by, your missionaries try to make me a malcontent before the English government in India, and the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal in a recent speech hinted that the recent revival of Hinduism was against the government. Lord bless the missionary. Everything is fair in love and (religion?).

The word Sri means 'of good fortune', 'blessed', etc. Paramahansa is a title for a Sannyasi who has reached the goal, i.e. realized God. Neither am I blessed nor have I reached the goal, but they are courteous, that is all. I will soon write to my brothers in India. I am so lazy, and I cannot send over the newspaper nonsense day after day.

I want a little quiet, but it is not the will of the Lord it seems. At Greenacre I had to talk on an average 7 to 8 hours a day—that was rest if it ever was. But it was of the Lord, and that brings vigour along with it.

I have not much to write, and I do not remember anything of what I said or did all these places over. So I hope to be excused.

I will be here a few days more at least, and therefore I think it would be better to send over my mail here.

I am now almost become dizzy through the perusal of a heavy and big mail, so excuse my hasty scrawl.

Ever affectionately yours,
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

⁴³. The Raja of Khetri, a very devoted disciple of the Swami.

⁴⁴. A tobacco pipe with the bowl made of 'meerschaum' a white, claylike mineral.

Annisquam

Date do not know

[Postmarked AUG 28, 1894]

Dear Mother,

I have been for three days at Magnolia. Magnolia is one of the most fashionable and beautiful seaside resorts of this part. I think the scenery is better than that of Annisquam. The rocks there are very beautiful, and the forests run down to the very edge of the water. There is a very beautiful pine forest. A lady of Chicago and her daughter, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Sawyer were the friends that invited me up there. They had also arranged a lecture for me out of which I got \$ 43. I met a good many Boston people, Mrs. Smith Junior who said she knows Harriet, and Mrs. Smith the elder knows you well.

In Boston the other day I met a Unitarian clergyman who said he lives next to you in Chicago. I have unfortunately forgotten his name. Mrs. Smith⁴⁵ is a very nice lady and treated me with all courtesy. Mrs. Bagley is kind as ever, and I will have to remain here a few days more I am afraid. Prof. Wright and I are having a good time. Prof. Bradley of Evanston⁴⁶ has gone home. If you ever meet him at Evanston give him my best love and regards. He is really a spiritual man.

I do not find anything more to write.

Some unknown friend has sent me from New York a fountain pen. So I am writing with it to test it. It is working very smoothly and nicely as you can judge from the writing. Perhaps Narasimha's difficulties have been settled by this time, and 'heathen India' has helped him out yet, I hope.

What is Father Pope doing? What the Babies are doing and where are they? What news of our Sam?⁴⁷ Hope he is prospering. Kindly give him my best love. Where is Mother Temple now?

Well, after all I could fill up two pages. Yes, there was a Miss Barn(?) who said she met me at your house. She is a young lady of Chicago.

Magnolia is a good bathing place and I had two baths in the sea. A large concourse of men and women go to bathe there every day—most part men. And strange women do not give up their coat of mail even while bathing. That is how these mail-clad she-warriors of America have got the superiority over men.

Our Sanskrit poets lavish all the power of expression they have upon the soft body of women; the Sanskrit word for women is 'komala', the soft body;

45. A note at the bottom of the letter, perhaps in Mrs. Hale's hand, reads : '(Mrs. Percy Smith he means)'.
 46. A city in northeastern Illinois on Lake Michigan, near Chicago
 47. Sam Hale, the only son of Mrs. Hale.

but the mail-clad ones of this country are 'armadillas' I think. You cannot imagine how ludicrous it appears to a foreigner who never saw it before. Shiva, Shiva.

Now Narasimha's Mrs. Smith does not torture you anymore with letters I hope. Did I tell you I met your friend Mrs. H. O. Quarry at Swampscott?—she can swamp a house for all that, not to speak of a cott—and that I met there the woman that pulls by the nose Mr. Pullman? And I also heard there the best American singer they said—she sang beautifully; she sang 'Bye Baby Bye'. I am having very very good time all the time, Lord be praised.

I have written to India not to bother me with constant letters. Why, when I am travelling in India nobody writes to me. Why should they spend all their superfluous energy in scrawling letters to me in America? My whole life is to be that of a wanderer—here or there or anywhere. I am in no hurry. I had a foolish plan in my head unworthy of a Sannyasin. I have given it up now and mean to take life easy. No indecent hurry. Don't you see, Mother Church? You must always remember, Mother Church, that I cannot settle down even at the North Pole, that wander about I must—that is my vow, my religion. So India or North Pole or South Pole, don't care where. Last two years I have been travelling among races whose language even I cannot speak. 'I have neither father nor mother nor brothers nor sisters nor friends nor foes, nor home nor country—a traveller in the way of *eternity*, asking no other help, seeking no other help but God.'

Yours ever affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

HINTS TO SEEKERS OF GOD

SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

<p>Who cares for spiritual realization? Ordinary man is engrossed in the things of the world which cater to his sense enjoyment. His mind is constantly tossed to and fro with thoughts of living a luxurious life with his wife and children. He hurries restlessly in quest of momentary enjoyment.</p> <p>Rare indeed are those who really believe that there is one Supreme Being who sustains the universe. Many do not even care to believe in the existence of God. How can they take to a spiritual life of prayer and meditation with all their heart and soul to</p>	<p>realize Him, discarding the pursuit of other things?</p> <p>When a man is beset with various misfortunes, troubles and tribulations and finds no relief elsewhere, he turns to God to help him to overcome his difficulties. Very rare are those souls who seek God of their own accord, led by an inner prompting alone. The majority of mankind are absorbed in the pursuit of the pleasures of the senses. Those who care not for such pleasures and give them up, seeking God alone, are but a handful.</p>
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There is not even the faintest trace of selfless devotion in the minds of many who are engaged in the external observances of religion. The men of the world can seldom call on God disinterestedly. With every salutation to God they harbour many selfish desires. They are not sincere in their devotion. They are shopkeepers seeking return with compound interest for every service they render.

To call on the Lord is not a joke. It is because they carry a big cart-load of evil thoughts and tendencies in their hearts that ordinary men cannot turn their minds towards God. The desire for sense-enjoyments takes a man away from God. The mind of man is restless and strays about seeking the objects of sense gratification. So he cannot concentrate on God. As long as evil tendencies sway him, he cannot turn a new leaf and become spiritual. The man of the world wastes his whole life in the vain pursuit of sense-pleasures. If he could but spend a sixteenth part of his time in the thought of God, he would be reformed and regenerated.

Very few are really convinced that misery predominates over happiness in this world. Such only will try wholeheartedly to break the bonds of *Samsāra* [relative existence]. Unless one feels in the core of his heart that the vanities of the world are transient, one cannot realize God.

You are still young. Worldly thoughts have not taken a firm hold on you. If you do not exert now, you cannot have spiritual realization. We had the great blessing to associate with Sri Ramakrishna from our early days, and hence we have been saved from the afflictions of worldly life. Did any one prompt us to go to Sri Ramakrishna? It was an innate intuition that attracted and eventually led us to him. We were not advised by anyone to seek him and strive for religious realization.

If we learn to mould our lives in purity

and goodness, we shall be free from the ills of life which will never again worry us or throw us off our balance. What is there in the worldly life? Viewed superficially, this earthly existence is a bed of roses flowing with milk and honey. But there is no escape from its inextricable though bewitching coils once you fall in its trap. Hence, turn your minds Godward even from your teens. Call upon Him knowing that He looks after you more than you yourself. There is no peace anywhere except in and through Him. He is the source of all peace and blessedness.

No period of life is too early to begin to walk in the path of God. Childhood is the best time to take to spiritual practices. If one wastes that precious period of life, one will have to repent afterwards. With advancing age, the body will become weak and unfit to stand the strain of *Sādhana*. All sorts of disease creep in and destroy one's mental poise. How can such a one fix his mind and concentrate on God?

The worthy candidate for pursuing the higher stages of *Sādhana* such as meditation is born endowed with a suitable body and mind. Ordinary men cannot sit in a steady posture for seven or eight hours consecutively engaged in the continuous contemplation of God. Only a handful can stand that strain and they are the fit *Sādhakas*. Their minds are steady, calm and introspective without the faintest trace of any evil tendency.

Those who are easily excited by trifling things or sink in despair at the slightest shadow of misery can never progress in the path of God. The minds of irritable nature are always unbalanced and can never become calm and steady. Can one concentrate on God with such a mind? The sick, the idle and the gluttonous can never hope to become real *Sādhakas*. The body fit for practising *Sādhana* is of a different

type altogether. An unhealthy body is a great obstacle in the path of Sādhana.

Sit up in the early hours of the day and night in a secluded spot and call on the Lord with a yearning heart. Pursue this steadily every day and you will progress. There should not be any relaxation in the practice at any time. It would not do to sit for an hour or two at a time and then turn to worldly affairs. You should maintain the purity of thought of God at all times.

The mechanical repetition of the name of God even during the whole of one's life without real yearning of the heart will not lead to much progress. Call upon the Lord with your whole heart and soul and pray to Him to free you from the shackles of Samsāra. Individual souls falling under the trap of Māyā feel helpless and miserable and turn to God hoping to be saved from their afflictions. But the observance of external forms without faith and devotion is of no avail.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

DIMENSIONS OF RENUNCIATION IN ADVAITA VEDANTA : BY KAPIL N. TIWARI. Publishers : Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-110 007. 1977. Pp. xii+156. Price : Rs. 45/.

Prof. Kapil N. Tiwari's work is a unique and valuable reconstruction of the much maligned and misinterpreted concept of 'renunciation', which is so basic and fundamental to the Indian way of living in all its phases. Critics are not wanting both from within and without the Indian tradition who have viewed renunciation (in its more superficial meaning of *karma-sannyasa*) as an escape from life and as discounting all values of social life. Advaita Vedanta, with which the concept of *karma-sannyasa* is associated, has received especially much philosophical and religious criticism throughout the ages. To many, Advaitism is escapism. Social concern it has none, according to its critics, as it is thought to decry the reality of the practical and empirical world. To contradict this misunderstanding, or superficial understanding, the author has made a remarkable attempt at revealing the true value of renunciation as advocated in Advaita, and as it should be in all walks of life for a richer and more effective participation in the empirical world. Dr. Tiwari's analysis of the matter is done on two levels, which he calls 'the personal and social dimensions of renunciation'. The one leads to self-realization, and the other to the achievement of social ends—cultural, ethical, economic and political. It is a very fascinating

analysis and is brimming with evidences from philosophical and religious tradition and the lives of great saints and men, Gandhiji being one of the latest in this direction. Dr. Tiwari's work, touching upon the aspect of social concern, fills up the existing lacuna in the Advaitic studies. It is as interesting to a strict academician as it is to any inquirer facing the challenge that the Hindu philosophical and religious tradition neglects and discounts all values of life by being other-worldly or life-negating.

Some of the following statements of the author bear out his thesis: 'It therefore becomes obviously an urgent matter to examine the question of renunciation as a religious attitude towards *vyavaharika satya* (empirical truth) where the latter does not stand cancelled or negated but is transformed and transcended' (p. 24). '*Sannyasa* therefore is a sanctifying principle at the cosmic level and a sanctified principle at the metacosmic' (p. 29). 'The main purpose of renunciation along with that of *jnana* is a complete eradication of egoism which is absolutely necessary if man is to be free... Renunciation is not a negative ideal as it is primarily derived from a positive ideal of life' (p. 40). 'Renunciation does not mean, therefore, lack of constant vigilance and retirement into the barren life of isolation but perfecting oneself by subduing those impressions and desires of life which are life-negating by strong personal effort' (p. 74).

As a prelude to the main task of expounding the concepts of the personal and social 'dimensions of renunciation', Dr. Tiwari has made a

fascinating study of the historical and Typological development of the concept of renunciation in the first three chapters.

One is impressed by the thought-provoking treatment of the matter throughout. Abounding in balanced argumentation, both metaphysical and logical, Dr. Tiwari's study is very refreshing. It deserves keen and careful attention not only of scholars but also of sannyasins.

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PRATYABHIJNAHRDAYAM : BY JAIDEVA SINGH. Publishers : Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-110 007. 1977 (second enlarged edition). Pp. ix+187. Price : cloth Rs. 40/- ; paper, Rs. 30/-.

The writings of Dr. Jaideva Singh are popular with students of Indian philosophy. He is known for his erudite and excellent translations of Saiva texts, particularly the present one, whose first edition appeared in 1963. This second revised edition of the *Pratyabhijnahrdayam*, with its enlarged Introduction and Notes, is all the more welcome.

Pratyabhijnahrdayam is a Sanskrit work by Ksemaraja (tenth century A.D.) who was a student of the famous Abhinavagupta. The text gives a simple, direct and non-polemical picture of Kashmir Saivism, and has an important place in the line of books on that philosophy. The title 'Pratyabhijna' itself is suggestive of the technique of realization which the philosophy advocates, namely, 're-cognition' of the nature of one's real Self. A forgetting of the real nature of the Self is the root cause of the incidence of the finite individual Jivahood, which is overcome by a 'recognition' of its real nature, when it is realized as Siva Himself. Pratyabhijna philosophy is Saivaite, for it recognizes Siva as the Ultimate Real ; it is non-dual as it conceives of the non-duality of the Absolute and the individual self. However, the type of non-dualism Pratyabhijna advocates is not the same as that of Sankara. While Sankara's Advaita is absolute and unqualified non-dualism, elements of dualism and realism mark the Pratyabhijna approach. It is interesting to study the distinctions between these two major approaches to reality, and Dr. Jaideva Singh draws illuminating contrasts between them in his introduction, besides giving a historical account of the origins of Kashmir Saivism and the major thinkers who shaped the philosophy.

Apart from being a very competent translation of Ksemaraja's text, Dr. Singh's work contains comprehensive information, technical and general, about the school and its place in Indian philosophy in his exhaustive notes, which is a boon to the serious student of the subject. The work may be recommended without reservation as a fine introduction to the study of Kashmir Saivism.

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A STUDY OF YOGA : BY JAJNESWAR GHOSH. Publishers : Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-7. 1977 (second revised edition). Pp. 274. Price : Rs. 45/-.

The book under review by Jajneswar Ghosh, is a fresh attempt to expound Yoga Shastra in an academic manner to suit the understanding of modern university students interested in philosophy in general and psychology in particular. The main emphasis is on the theoretical, rather than on the practical, side of yoga. Yoga, which is considered to be the source of Indian psychology, is treated here in five chapters, each containing eight to seventeen sections dealing with different topics relating to Yoga Shastra. In the first chapter dealing with the scope and spirit of Yoga, the subject is elaborately discussed under eight topics, but the author adduces too many views and remarks of Western Indologists, as if they were the highest authorities on Yoga Shastra nowadays. Really speaking, most of their views on Yoga are prejudiced and erroneous, and still the author exerts very much to refute them before establishing his own views based on original Indian interpretations. Even Dr. Radhakrishnan, the great exponent of Indian philosophy in modern times, is not spared in this respect for his passing thoughtless remarks on the Yogic concept of Isvara. We feel that much of the author's energy could have been saved and the bulk of the book reduced, if he had not dragged into his thesis the views of opponents of Yoga so much. He could have produced a more useful work if he had adhered to the traditional methods of study and elucidation in his exposition of the topics under discussion.

Chapter Two deals with Self-Consciousness and Intelligence, Chapter Three with Mind, Chapter Four with Nature, and Chapter Five with the Discipline of Yoga based on Samkhya Psychology. Samkhya philosophy and psychology are the main themes discussed all through the

four chapters. The discussions, based chiefly on Vijnanabhikshu's commentary on the Samkhya Sutras and the Bhashya of Vyasa, are very scholarly. The author has not, however, commented upon the Sutra texts of Patanjali directly anywhere in his exposition, except to cite one or two here and there just for the sake of authority.

Ever since the introduction of Raja Yoga to the Western world by Swami Vivekananda in 1895, hundreds of spiritual aspirants from that hemisphere have been coming to India every year, seeking light and guidance in the practice of Yoga which, they hope, will cure them of their mental unrest and anxieties forever. To such aspirants a treatise of this kind may not prove beneficial, we think. But to those intellectual skeptics, obsessed with all sorts of misunderstandings and misgivings about Indian thought and culture, this 'Study of Yoga' will certainly be an eye-opener and a source of blessing.

SWAMI SAKHYANANDA
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MOTHER CULT : BY SUDHIR RANJAN SENGUPTA. Publishers : Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., 257 B, Bepin Behari Ganguli Street, Calcutta-700 012. 1977. Pp. 112. Price: Rs. 20/-.

The cult of the Divine Mother is found in almost all the older civilizations of the world in some form or the other. In India it has a sizable following even today. In the eastern part of the country, especially in West Bengal and Assam, the Saktas and the Tantrikas worship goddesses like Kali, Durga, Bhairavi, etc., representing the frightening aspects, and also Sarasvati, Lalita, Lakshmi, etc., representing the fascinating manifestations of Divinity.

Although literature on this sect is not meagre, the language is often not easy to comprehend. The masters believe in direct initiations rather than public demonstrations. The book under review is a lucid introduction in English to the Mother cult by a person who has had the privilege of being in the company of several Sadhakas and Siddhas. Sri Sengupta lived for some time at the Kalipur Ashrama in the Kamakhya hills (Assam) with the leading Sadhaka Swami Purnananda (1834-1928), who had been associated with Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The author also has received the blessings of another leading Sadhaka, Swami Bhairavanandaji.

The work contains eight chapters, preceded by a long introduction. Then follow a brief account

of source-literature, nature of the Mother (as the supreme Self or God), Tantra (an elaborate description of a cult according to fact and logic), Mantra (the formula), Yantra (the plan or the blueprint), Devata (the conscious energy of the Mother particularized in stages in course of the evolution of Her will in its different phases), and the various forms of worship of the Mother, for example the Vedic, Vaishnava, Saiva, Dakshina, Vama, Siddhanta and Kaula (in whose proximity everybody finds his own *kula* or goal), and the indispensable vehicle for the achievement of this goal—Kundalini Yoga.

The book deserves wide reception by inquisitive as well as expert minds. It is a clear but brief account of the Mother cult about which many confusions and misgivings prevail even among educated people. The reader will have had a more clear perspective of the cult of the Divine Mother when he turns the last page of the book.

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THE QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE : BY DR. NORMAN R. PHILLIPS. Publishers: Philosophical Library, 15 East 40 Street, New York, N.Y. 10016. 1978. Pp. 179. \$ 8.50.

The education of a people is perhaps the most important, though much neglected, aspect of a nation's life. It has usually been handled either by unqualified individuals or ill-qualified politicians. The present-day situation is even worse. The immediate goal of today's society all over the world is to obtain technological perfection, for which education is just one means amongst several. The moral and spiritual groundings prevalent in the older, more traditional societies are lacking now in the so-called liberal education which aims at instantaneous fulfilments.

The book under review is a critique of educational mediocrity in the United States and presents as remedy a neo-conservative philosophy of education. During the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War, there have been efforts to replace the conservative educational system by a meritocracy which, according to the author, has lowered academic standards. The fundamental aim of education, as perceived by him, is the development of an élite characterized by the ability to discriminate between ideas and values in terms of their intrinsic nature and relative worth. Conservatives, on this

count, try to preserve whatever has been established. Neo-conservatism attempts to re-interpret the situation in the light of the changes taking place after the French Revolution. It is a reaction to the present crisis. Thinkers like T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) and Russell Kirk (of Michigan) have contributed substantially towards a non-liberal educational system, and have espoused traditionalism and humanism and have stressed the importance of culture and society respectively.

Dr. Phillips presents a comprehensive analysis of the conservative educational philosophy. He examines conservatism, both as a philosophy and as an ideal of life. He also examines the views of the most influential contemporary exponents of the conservative approach in education, and proceeds to develop a methodology of education based on conservative lines. For him, a system of absolute moral and intellectual values based on conservative assumptions, and in harmony with certain features in the ideal value structure of reality itself, is possible and can be justified.

The neo-conservative approach to education, according to the author, differs from the left wing as well as the right wing of educational thought. The Left (including the Centre) stresses freedom for the students and a more ambitious programme of educational services. The Right, on the other, stresses academic education. The perennialist rightists (both neo-rationalists and neo-Thomist wings) focus on the study of the classics (contents) whereas the essentialists focus on studies which would give students functional skills. The neo-conservatives stand for the humanities and the social sciences, and stress the importance of qualitative excellence and the recruitment of a leadership characterized by wisdom and moral virtue so that Watergate scandals might be avoided.

The essential characteristic of the contemporary world crisis, according to the author of the text, is the spread of disorder—both on the intellectual and the social levels. On the intellectual level nihilism and equalitarianism have deprived man of values. On the social plane the result has been the birth of the rootless individual, completely alienated from the main stream. Fragmentation and separation are the obvious results of this disorder, and conservatism treats fragmentation as an evil and order as something good.

It would be interesting to read a rejoinder to

the book from the pen of a liberal educationist. But a balanced course would be to tread the middle path as per the advice of Kālidāsa, who says, in his famous work *Mālavikāgnimitra* (I.ii), that we should not take everything to be good simply because it is old, or unworthy simply because it is new. Great men accept the one or the other only after due examination; only the fool's understanding is misled by the beliefs of others.

The work is a valuable addition to the philosophy and methodology of education from the point of view of neo-conservatism. It thoroughly argues the case for a turn back to the older system of education which, of course, does have many more virtues than the present liberal system of education.

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DIVINE FLASHES : BY SWAMI SATYANANDA.
Publishers : Sree Sree Ramkrishna Ashram,
2 P. K. Saha Lane, Calcutta-700 036. 1978.
Pp. 35. Price : Rs. 5/-.

Written partly in prose and partly in verse, the book under review gives within a short compass many good and inspiring thoughts embodied in the Indian scriptures. The author has shown that 'the age-old wisdom of India has been corroborated by Sri Ramakrishna in modern times and also verified by modern science'. Those searches which have kept man ceaselessly going from the very morn of his life, those stirring questions which have agitated his mind, have been dealt with in this small book with profundity of wisdom, the other name for which is realization. The originality displayed in the analysis of thoughts is unique. This book will certainly stimulate even a casual reader to a deeper study of philosophy and religion.

It is to be regretted that the table of contents has been, by mistake I presume, given the heading 'Index'; and a few typographical mistakes are discernible, too. We hope that the publisher will take more care about proofreading in the next edition.

SWAMI SHANTARUPANANDA
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NEWS AND REPORTS

VIVEKANANDA MONASTERY AND RETREAT, GANGES, MICHIGAN, U.S.A.

*Dedication of Shrine and Auditorium
August 3-5, 1979*

In the township of Ganges, Michigan, 130 miles north-east of Chicago, lies the Vivekananda Monastery and Retreat. For the last ten years this monastery, situated away from the noise and haste of the city, has been functioning as a training centre for young aspirants who wish to lead a monastic life according to Vedantic ideals. It is attached to the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago.

By August 1979 a new shrine and auditorium were almost completed through the incessant hard labour of the Swamis, Brahmacharis and innumerable devotees from all walks of life. The dedication of the new shrine and auditorium was celebrated on the weekend of August 3-5. Swami Bhashyananda, President of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society, presided. Special guests for the occasion were : Swami Ranganathananda, Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, India ; Swami Aseshananda, Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon ; Swami Nihseeyasananda, Central and South Africa ; Swami Shraddhananda, Vedanta Society of Sacramento, California ; Rev. A. Allen Bryan, United Methodist Church, Brownsville, Pennsylvania ; Rev. Donald Klingler, St. Peter's Catholic Church, Douglas, Michigan.

On Friday evening at 8 p.m., Swami Bhashyananda opened the deliberations with welcoming remarks. Then followed a slide show depicting the life of Sri Ramakrishna and illustrating the worldwide popularity of Vedanta.

The activities on Saturday began at 6 a.m. with meditation and chanting in the old shrineroom. In the morning, everybody gathered and brought the images in procession to the new shrine, accompanied by Vedic chanting. After the

installation of the images, Puja and Homa were performed by Swami Aseshananda and Swami Shraddhananda. Following the Homa, Swami Ranganathananda unveiled the new statue of Shankaracharya which had been made for the Society by Mr. E. R. Marozzi of the Vedanta Society of Hawaii.

After lunch, the program began with devotional singing. Swami Bhashyananda recited the opening prayer, then Swami Yogeshananda, the resident Swami at Ganges, gave a report on the activities and future plans for the Ganges site. The guest Swamis spoke on 'God's Descent on the Earth Through His Messengers'. At 6 p.m., vespers were held in the new shrine. After supper, everyone returned for more music and talks.

Sunday began with morning meditation and chanting in the new shrine. After breakfast, the devotees were given a tour of the museum, which is housed on the second floor of the temple. The museum features items associated with Swami Vivekananda during his stay in America. It also contains a series of box-sculptures depicting scenes from the *Mahabharata* and the life of Sri Ramakrishna, many statues, musical instruments and art objects from India.

At 11.00, the talks began again. This time the subject was 'The Place of Shrines and Retreats in Building Up Harmonious Life'. Throughout the function, the guest speakers, each with his own spark of illumination, shed light on the spiritual path. They stressed the point that through shrines and retreats 'God's Descent on Earth' should be driven home to every individual.

The talks were followed by an offertory, closing remarks and prayer. Lunch was served, and then the famous film 'Meerabai', featuring Subhalakshmi, was shown. The film was in Hindi, but Swami Nihseeyasananda provided an English translation. After the film, the festival came to an end.

LAST PAGE : COMMENTS

Tragedy in Morvi

The calamity that descended upon the people of Morvi in Saurashtra district on 12th August will long darken the memory of people. In the mid-afternoon of a torrentially rainy day, the 197-foot-high earthen dam known as Machhu dam suddenly burst open. With unmitigated fury the pent-up waters swept through several villages and crashed into the semi-industrial town of Morvi with a population of 75,000. The fifteen-foot-high flood washed away most of the mud houses and smashed hundreds of brick and concrete houses. In the town and adjoining villages thousands of people and cattle perished. Within a few hours, the beautiful town of Morvi with its green parks and broad avenues lay buried in four feet of ooze.

Through its branch at Rajkot, the Ramakrishna Mission immediately swung into action with characteristic efficiency and commitment, and started distribution of food, clothing and other necessary things among the survivors. Other voluntary organizations have also organized relief operations. But relief work however efficiently done, cannot call back the dead or assuage the grief of the bereaved. India has more than six hundred million people, but that does not mean we have enough to spare for such havocs, though the frequent occurrence of such calamities in India gives foreign nations such an impression.

What makes the Morvi tragedy all the more tragic is that, unlike natural calamities like cyclone, earthquake and drought, this was a man-made one. It was the result of an accident and, like other accidents, could have been averted. The seven-year-old Machhu dam had been designed to cope with an average annual rainfall of 22 inches. The storm that had preceded the disaster dumped 28 inches in twenty-four hours. According to newspaper reports, water was already lapping over the dam when engineers rushed to the spot and tried to open the sluice gates. However, for some unexplained reasons, some of the gates stuck and the earthen wall collapsed. Had proper checks been periodically conducted, such a costly mistake could have been avoided.

The Morvi tragedy is not an isolated occurrence. Floods take a heavy toll of human lives in this country almost every year. India is not the only country in the world with rivers. But breach of embankments and bursting of dams do not occur so frequently in other countries. This nation has not so far evolved a master-plan for the control and efficient utilization of river water. In a predominantly agricultural country with vast tracts of arid land, rivers are nature's greatest blessing. But sheer carelessness and want of foresight turn this blessing into a curse.