



Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXXIV

APRIL 1979

No. 4

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

THE HOLY MOTHER REMINISCES*

'The Master used to say, "Formal religiosity is no religion." When I was living at Kamarpukur [after the Master's passing], people began to comment about this and that, and I was so afraid of what people would say that I took off my bangles. I used to wonder how I could possibly stay in a place where there was no Ganga; I wanted to bathe in it; I had always had this weakness. One day I saw the Master walking along the road in front of me, from the direction of Bhutir Khal. Behind him followed Naren, Baburam, Rakhal,¹ and other disciples, crowds of them. A fountain of water gushed forth from near his feet and the waves flowed on ahead of him in a strong current! I said to myself, "Now I see that he is everything and the Ganga rises from his lotus feet." Quickly I broke off handfuls of hibiscus blossoms from the plant beside Raghuvir's house and offered them into the Ganga. Then the Master said to me, "Do not take off your bangles. Do you know the Vaiṣṇava Tantra?" I answered, "What is the Vaiṣṇava Tantra? I don't know anything." He said, "Gaurmani [Gauri-Ma] will arrive this evening; she will explain everything." Gaurdasi really did come that very afternoon and explained it all to me. From her I heard that one's husband is really pure consciousness.

'Naren once said, "Mother, everything is taking flight nowadays. I see everything fly away." I said [here Mother laughed], "Well, see that you don't put me to flight as well." And Naren said, "But Mother, if I put you to flight, where shall I stand? Knowledge which sets at naught the lotus feet of the Guru is ignorance. Where can knowledge stand if it denies the sacred feet of the Guru?" But when one attains true knowledge, God Himself ceases to exist separately. One calls upon the eternal Mother and in the end finds Her in all creation. Everything becomes One. That is all.'

* The Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi was the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna. These reminiscences about the Master and Swami Vivekananda have been taken from the book *At the Feet of Holy Mother* written by Her Direct Disciples (Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, 1963). ¹ Swamis Vivekananda, Premananda, and Brahmananda, respectively.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

Everyone wants to be happy but few really are. Moreover, it is a well-known fact that when happiness itself is deliberately sought, it eludes one's grasp. Happiness is usually the result of some meaningful and socially useful endeavour. How can we solve this 'hedonistic paradox', as moral philosophers call it? What is the connection between work and happiness? What part does consciousness play in man's search for happiness? This month's EDITORIAL, based mainly on a study of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, tries to find answers to some of these existential questions.

Marie Louise Burke has distinguished herself by her monumental volumes on Swami Vivekananda's life and work in America. In her article entitled SCIENCE, RELIGION, AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, the second and concluding part of which is published in this number, she has counterpoised Swamiji's interpretation of Advaita Vedanta against the metaphysical bases of modern science, which are being steadily undermined not a little owing to the impact of Swamiji's ideas on world thought. The first part of this article appeared in March 1979.

Man is a denizen of two worlds: the natural world and the world of values. It is in trying to meet the demands of these two worlds that he encounters the problem of ultimate Reality or God. His understanding of God may be based on a direct intuition or on an analysis of the elements of his experiences of the two worlds. In THE MORAL ARGUMENT, Dr. R. Balasubramanian, Ph.D., D.Litt., has, following the second path, presented a lucid account of some of the proofs that Western philosophers have adduced for the existence of God. By doing this the learned author has enlivened a traditional and seemingly jejune philosophical standpoint and, by the clarity

and cogency of his arguments in the light of Vedantic reasoning, has made its study a stimulating and rewarding experience. Dr. Balasubramanian is Professor of Philosophy and Director of Dr. Radhakrishnan Institute of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras.

Gauri-Ma, whose true name was Mridani Chattopadhyay, was one of the foremost woman-disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Endowed with intense aspiration, indomitable will and extraordinary purity of mind, she chose the path of spiritual adventures right from her childhood. After Sri Ramakrishna's passing away she dedicated her life to the education and uplift of girls and women in Bengal. In the FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA: MRIDANI CHATTOPADHYAY, the fascinating story of her inspiring life is narrated by Swami Prabhananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Purulia, West Bengal.

In A NOTE ON PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION Sri S. Balasundaram, a writer on philosophy from Madras, gives a brief account of where religion and philosophy meet and where they diverge from each other.

Though the name of Swami Vivekananda has become a household word in India, deep studies of his influence on the socio-political cross-currents of this country and its modern spiritual renaissance have rarely been undertaken. Sri Sankari Prasad Basu, a noted Bengali writer and Reader in the University of Calcutta, has been assiduously trying to fill up this lacuna by his painstaking research and devoted work. The article entitled VIVEKANANDA AND CONTEMPORARY INDIA is a review of the third volume of Sri Basu's massive four-volume book in Bengali which recently won the Sahitya Akademy Award of the Government of India.

LAWS OF HAPPINESS

(EDITORIAL)

Consciously or unconsciously, all beings are seeking happiness. It is one of the most fundamental urges in all human beings.

Man is almost incessantly engaged in diverse kinds of activity, and every action has a motive behind it, even though the agent may not always be conscious of his real intention. Freud and his followers have shown that unconscious motivation is an important psychological fact in day to day life. As a Sanskrit proverb has it, 'Even a fool does not act without some purpose.'¹ A question that presents itself in this context is : is there a common motive to all human activities? Philosophers in the East and the West have tried to answer this question in different ways.

According to Vedanta, the motive behind all actions is the pursuit of happiness, the term happiness being used to include all forms of positive experience, from sense pleasure to the highest bliss of Brahman. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* identifies the highest Reality with Ānanda, Bliss, and queries, 'Who would have ever breathed without that?'² Every human being thinks, *sukhaṁ me bhūyāt, duḥkhaṁ me mā bhūyāt* ('May I get happiness, may I not get sorrow'). All living beings including the lowest animalcules are seen to avoid pain instinctively. Its natural corollary, a positive and intentional seeking of happiness, may not be so equally obvious in all cases, but at least indirectly and remotely all life movements are linked to that basic urge.

Human life is more or less a constant quest for happiness of some sort or other.

But paradoxically, happiness seems to be always eluding our grasp. Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on 'Steps to Realization' compares man's search for happiness to the oilman's bullocks going round and round the press in the hope of getting the wisp of straw tied to the yoke just in front of their eyes.³

We want boundless and endless happiness. But our efforts in this direction are checked by certain natural factors of phenomenal existence. The most important of these is ignorance. Apart from Māya or 'cosmic ignorance,' which nowadays everyone seems to know a lot about, there are minor 'ignorances' like ignorance of the workings of one's own mind, ignorance about the future, etc. A second check is powerlessness, that is, the inherent limitations of the body, senses and mind. Then there is a third check, the scarcity of objects of enjoyment. Owing to these obstacles we cannot fulfil our desires for enjoyment, and this gives rise to sorrow.

In order to free himself from sorrow man at first seeks worldly means, but finds that these are inadequate.⁴ So he turns to supernatural means and seeks the help of a Personal God. This is what most of the non-Indian religions exemplify. In India, on the other hand, the desire to solve the problem of sorrow made the ancient sages undertake an enquiry into the mystery of life and the true nature of the self. Through deep reflection and direct experience they discovered some important truths about existence, consciousness and happiness. Some of these, codified in the form of laws for

1. प्रयोजनमनुद्दिश्य न मन्दोऽपि प्रवर्तते ।

Subhāṣita.

2. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.7.1.

3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama), 1(1977): 408.

4. Cf. *Sāmkhya kārīkā* of Iṣvarakṛṣṇa, 1.

the sake of clarity, are discussed below. The term 'law' as used here does not imply any rigid causal relationship. It only means an ordering of ideas according to certain patterns of human experience.

The First Law of happiness may be stated as follows: *All beings exist at different levels of consciousness, and for every level of consciousness there is a definite and fixed degree of happiness.*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Gītā, 'Seated in the hearts of all beings, the Lord by His maya makes them revolve as if mounted on a machine.'⁵ As planets move round the sun, or as electrons whirl around the central nucleus in an atom, all beings are revolving around a particular divine Centre called God. According to the theory of rebirth, life and death alternate with each other in countless cycles. What we call life is only half the circle of our total existence, the other half being constituted by our postmortem existence of which we know very little. When we speak of a river we mean only the water-course that is visible to us. But there is an unseen river formed of water vapour which the sun and the wind carry from the ocean back to the mountain tops. Life, like the stream, consists of visible and invisible movements going on in cycles impelled by the inexhaustible power radiating from the divine Centre which keeps up its beginningless rhythm.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* describes human personality as constituted by five *kośas* or sheaths or chambers: the *annamaya kośa* (the physical sheath), the *prāṇamaya kośa* (the vital sheath), the *manomaya kośa* (the mental sheath), the *vijñānamaya kośa* (the sheath of intuition or higher consciousness) and the *ānandamaya kośa* (the sheath of bliss). According to Vedānta, the ultimate Reality or Brahman is of the nature of

Absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, and the true Self of man (Ātman) is identical with it. Each *kośa* or sheath represents a plane of existence and consciousness through which the supreme bliss of Brahman filters down giving rise to the joy of experience appropriate to each *kośa*. 'I'-consciousness may get identified with any of these sheaths, and it is this identification that determines a person's character and temperament. In the gross sensualist, the 'I' is wholly identified with the first two sheaths, and his happiness is only sense pleasure derived from contact of the senses with external objects. In the intellectual man the 'I' is mostly identified with the mental sheath, though once in a while he slips down to the lower planes. Spiritual life begins only when one consciously tries to shift one's centre of consciousness or 'I' to the level of *vijñānamaya kośa*. The experiences of each sheath are not lost but are recorded in it in the form of latent impressions called *samskāras*. Since we find a great variety in human temperaments and a corresponding variation in personal experiences, we may regard each *kośa* as consisting of several sub-levels or layers. It is owing to the multiplicity of levels of consciousness that human life appears so complex, and each individual seems to live in several worlds within worlds.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* also speaks about five levels of cosmic existence corresponding to the five main individual *kośas* or sheaths, for the macrocosm (*samaṣṭi*) and the microcosm (*vyāṣṭi*) are, according to Vedānta, built on the same pattern. Each of these cosmic levels may be looked upon as a kind of vast invisible orbit around the cosmic divine Centre along which each individual soul moves, encountering different objects and getting different types of personal experience. Corresponding to the subdivisions of the *kośas*, each orbit may also be thought of as having several sub-

5. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā*, 18.61.

orbits. Now, what the First Law states is that there is a definite degree of happiness associated with each level and sub-level.

Next we come to the Second Law which may be stated as follows: *The degree of happiness associated with each level or sub-level is independent of external events.*

This means that as long as a person remains at a certain level of consciousness, he can get only the degree of happiness natural to that particular level, whatever be the type of work he does or the circumstance he is in. The nature of the objects he encounters may vary and so also his experience, but the degree of happiness he gets remains the same. When hungry one person may fill his belly with a South Indian meal consisting of rice and hot curries; another may turn to a Western style dinner; a third person may prefer Chinese cuisine. But the degree of happiness resulting from the appeasement of hunger is the same in each case.

The universe we live in is so complex that it is often called a 'multiverse'. It is full of discontinuities and mysterious physical constants, many of which have been discovered by modern science. Water boils at 100°C which remains constant however much be the quantity of heat supplied. The movements of electrons within an atom are restricted to certain 'shells', each with a definite quantum number. The inner world of man is also full of discontinuities and constants, with the all-pervading Brahman as the only continuous and unchanging substratum. One such inner constant is the degree of happiness associated with each level or sub-level of consciousness. As long as we remain at a particular level of consciousness, we can get only its specific degree of happiness, and we cannot increase this by any external means.

We usually think that our happiness

depends upon the type of work we do or the amount of wealth we have. This is a great delusion which human beings cherish. Can we say that the happiness of a doctor who handles blood and pus is greater than the happiness of a farmer who ploughs the land? Can we say that a businessman who rushes here and there with his bulging briefcase is happier than an elementary-school teacher? Whether we are doctors, engineers, office clerks, farmers or students, as long as we all remain at a particular level of consciousness we can get only the same degree of happiness, whatever be the type of work we do.

This important principle is the basis of Karma Yoga, and unless we understand it, we cannot grasp the secret of Karma Yoga. Work does not create happiness: it only brings out the happiness that is already within; but the degree of happiness thus roused has nothing to do with the type of work we do. When we understand this truth we stop grumbling about our work, stop complaining about others; competition and jealousy vanish from our minds, and we get mental peace. Realization of this truth will make a student a better student: he will no longer study only to pass his examinations or to secure a job, but also for the joy of knowledge. It will make a doctor, an engineer, a businessman do his work not only for the sake of earning money, but also for the joy of doing it. In his lectures on 'Karma Yoga', Swami Vivekananda says, 'Each is great in his own place'. This principle can be understood very well in the light of what has been enunciated above as the Second Law.

In a poverty-stricken country like India the significance of this law may not find immediate and widespread recognition. But in the affluent societies of the West it is being increasingly appreciated, though not in the way it has been presented here. In his thought provoking book *To Have or*

To Be? the well-known psychologist and thinker Eric Fromm has forcefully advocated the need to follow a similar principle in the reconstruction of modern society.⁶

The Third Law of happiness may be stated as follows : *Effort is needed only to remove the obstacles to happiness.*

If our happiness is independent of external events as the Second Law states, then it is clear that by sitting quietly in one place without doing any work one can get all the happiness that work is supposed to give. Indeed, this principle is the foundation of contemplative life. But then, what part does action play in our lives? Where is the need to do work at all?

The answer is, in the first place, work is necessary to remove the obstacles to happiness. A well or a river may be a constant source of water, but in order to get the water we have to dip a bucket into it. This effort in itself does not produce water but is necessary to overcome the obstacle of gravity. Similarly, there is a perennial flow of joy in the depths of our being, but we have to put forth effort in order to overcome the obstacles that stand in our way of getting it. Work is needed only to remove the obstacles to happiness, but we seldom do work with this idea. On the contrary, by doing work ignorantly and carelessly we only create more obstacles, and our work often leads to frustration or ennui. But when we understand that the true purpose of work is to help the unfoldment of inner happiness by removing the obstacles to it, our whole attitude towards work will change, and we will look upon it as an important aid to spiritual progress.

What are these obstacles to happiness that work is expected to remove? They are many, mostly wrong emotional drives

like greed, hatred, jealousy, vanity, etc. All these stem from one basic defect, namely, egoism or selfishness. It is a veil that lies thick upon the soul and unless it is at least partially lifted, one cannot discover the true happiness that lies beneath it. The best way, and for the majority of people the only way, to destroy all selfishness is to work for others, to serve one's fellowmen. Work is necessary to break the prison walls existing around the Self and liberate the dammed up bliss within.

Secondly, there is a creative urge in all of us and work is necessary for its expression. Cosmic energy is flowing in and through us rousing our *samskāras* (latent impressions of past actions and experiences), and these force us to do work. The cosmic élan cannot be stopped; it must be directed into right channels through creative work. Work is thus a constitutional necessity. A man can live without any work only when he is totally free from selfishness and has succeeded in directing the cosmic élan into higher spiritual channels constantly; such a person alone can live an exclusively contemplative life.

This takes us to the Fourth Law which states that *there is an urge in all human beings to seek higher forms of happiness.*

Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says : 'Everyone aspires for the higher and the still higher.'⁷ There is a teleological urge in man to go up from a lower state of existence to a higher state, and the motive power supporting this urge is man's thirst for higher forms of happiness. This urge is clearly manifest in spiritual people. But even in other people it exists either in a rudimentary form or eclipsed or swayed by baser passions. Albert Schweitzer used to say that even in the jungles of Africa he did not find it

⁶. Eric Fromm, *To Have or To Be?* (New York : Harper Row, 1976).

⁷. सर्वो हि उपर्युपर्येव बुभूषति लोकः ।

Śaṅkara, com. on *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.28.

difficult to preach religion because even the most primitive tribal had a distinct moral sense. The great eighteenth-century philosopher Immanuel Kant defined morality as a 'categorical imperative'—an inexorable urge to act morally, present in all human beings—though he could not trace its actual source. He was wont to say that two things puzzled him: the starry heavens outside and the moral law within.

As a matter of fact, in every human being there is an urge to seek higher forms of happiness which finds expression in the pursuit of truth, goodness, beauty, and finally in *mukti* or liberation. Known as value fulfilment or search for meaning, this universal urge lies at the foundation of philosophy, social service, art and religion. It is this undeniable psychosocial evolutionary urge that distinguishes man from animals. It is this teleological urge to transcend the limitations of biological existence and even the limitations of rational mind that Swami Vivekananda defined as religion. Every man according to him is potentially divine, that is, in each soul lies involved the capacity and urge to attain spiritual illumination and the supreme happiness that results from it.

Man has a hierarchy of needs and correspondingly there exist different types of happiness. Hindu scriptures classify happiness into four main grades. The lowest one is *viśayasukham*, pleasure derived through the senses. This is invariably a discontinuous experience. Any sense experience pushed beyond a certain limit leads to satiety and even revulsion. It is in order to overcome this inherent defect that man constantly seeks diversity in sense-experience, and the modern world has provided almost an infinite variety of ways of satisfying the senses. The second type of happiness is *śamasukham*, the joy of self-control. It is not the result of the activity of the senses and does not depend

upon external objects, and is therefore continuous and long lasting. When through long practice the senses are brought under control, one experiences great peace, a kind of pure delight that is undisturbed by the vagaries of mind and the changes of external objects. Devotion to God turns the mind away from the attraction of sense objects, and so the joy that a devotee feels in worshipping the Lord, which Sri Ramakrishna called *bhajanānanda*, may also be classified under this category.

Higher than this happiness is the third type of happiness known as *ātmasukham*, the pure joy of the higher Self in its natural state. It cannot be obtained merely by leading a moral life or by conventional devotional exercises. It is the result of a real spiritual awakening and is the first genuine spiritual experience that a sincere aspirant gets, perhaps after years of intense struggles. He directly perceives the pure radiance of the Self in the depths of the heart and this detaches him for ever from the illusory joys of the senses. It brings a sense of great fulfilment to the soul. But scriptures speak of a still higher degree of happiness called *brahmānanda*, which is the result of communion with God. The soul realizes the infinite ultimate Reality and experiences boundless bliss. Man's insatiable and seemingly endless quest for happiness ends only when he begins to experience this measureless and everlasting bliss. As the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says: 'That which is infinite (*bhūmā*) is alone true happiness. There is no happiness in anything finite (*alpa*).'⁸ And until man experiences this supreme bliss he can never remain satisfied in life and avoid the struggles—direct or indirect—for its attainment.

We now come to the Fifth Law which states that *in order to get higher degrees of*

8. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7.23.1.

happiness one has to bring about corresponding changes in one's consciousness.

We have seen that according to the First Law each level of consciousness has its own fixed degree of happiness and that, according to the Second Law this is independent of external events. Now the Fifth Law says that higher forms of happiness, that is, different grades of spiritual bliss, cannot be obtained all on a sudden by 'quantum jumps' but only by bringing about a transformation of our 'I'-consciousness.

Our normal consciousness is limited by the sense-bound world. Ordinary senses cannot reveal any other state of human or divine existence. If we want to unravel the mysteries of higher planes of existence and the spiritual joys connected with them, the only way is to transform our *cit* or consciousness.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* speaks about the bliss of various classes of celestial beings. Taking as the unit the happiness of a young man endowed with health, wealth, ambition, learning and capacity, the *Upaniṣad* says that hundred times the joy of this young man is the joy of a *Manuṣya Gandharva*. Hundred times greater than the joy of the latter is the joy of a *Deva Gandharva*. Higher still in the ascending order are the joys of manes, gods, Karma Devas, Indra, *Br̥haspati*, *Prajāpati* (or *Virāt*) and *Hiraṇyagarbha*, the happiness of each of them being hundred times greater than that of the preceding one.⁹ The *Upaniṣad* further says that the happiness of all these celestial beings can be attained by a person who is free from desires and is endowed with spiritual knowledge. In other words, man by transforming his own consciousness can reach the status of each celestial being and

experience the bliss natural to his state. Each celestial being of the hierarchy mentioned above represents a level of consciousness, and the joy associated with that level can be obtained only by attaining that consciousness.

The *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* describes the self of man as having four dimensions. The lowest is the *vaiśvānara* or the sense-bound ego which animates the gross physical body. Higher than this is the *taijasa* which, dwelling in the *viññānamaya kośa*, supports the subtle body. Higher still is the *prājña* which is identical with the causal body. In the last and highest dimension of the self the distinction between the individual and the cosmic is lost. Thus the self may be regarded as a 'Jacob's ladder' which goes on expanding as it goes upward. If we want higher forms of happiness, we must go up this staircase. In other words, we must undergo progressive transformation of our 'I'-consciousness. In the lower dimensions of the self, existence, consciousness and happiness are seen to be separate categories, but as one's self-awareness undergoes transformation and expansion, one finds that the three categories meet and, at the highest dimension of the self, finally merge into one undivided, infinite, ultimate Reality known as *saccidānanda*, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, in which one's 'I'-consciousness is lost.

We thus find that happiness is an inseparable aspect of our real nature. It is the natural state of our being. Masked by primordial ignorance, hemmed in by the limiting adjuncts of body, mind and the senses, we are separated from the boundless ocean of *saccidānanda* of which we are parts. And this is the basic cause of our unhappiness. Some day we will realize that all life is one and that existence is itself bliss.

9. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.8.2-4.

SCIENCE, RELIGION, AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—II

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S WORK IN THE WEST AS SEEN AGAINST THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY WORLD

MARIE LOUISE BURKE

3

In its most simple terms, the fundamental problem that confronted the Western world was whether the universe was ultimately governed by mechanical laws or by a supreme and benevolent Intelligence. It could not be both. One reason that these two world-views—scientific and religious—were incompatible was that the former, for all its supposed lack of dogmatism, rejects that which cannot be known empirically or explained rationally, and it so happens that it can find no shred of acceptable evidence for the existence of spiritual forces. Thus in order to embrace an effective Personal God—transcendent or immanent—modern man had to compromise his hard-won scientific outlook and betray his reason. Orthodox Christianity prescribed this solution: Swami Vivekananda strongly opposed it. 'It is better', he said, 'that mankind should become atheist by following reason than blindly believe in 200,000,000 of gods on the authority of anybody.'¹³

Just as the scientific view of the universe and the religious view (that is, the theistic view) were logically incompatible, they were also psychologically so. Trying to hold onto both, Western man was splitting himself in two. With his great advances in scientific knowledge and technology of which he was justly proud, he saw no limits to his future achievements. He strove with growing enthusiasm and ability to understand his environment and to control and alter it in

such a way that his life on earth would become a veritable heaven. His outlook was rational, utilitarian, humanitarian, and self-reliant. He did not see the least reason why he should not solve *all* his problems by reason alone. That was his fundamental view—the view that motivated and guided him in his dealings with the world around him. Against this stood his traditional religion, which had taught him from his childhood that he was a sinner incapable of redeeming himself by himself and wholly reliant upon a God whose ways were past understanding. To a greater or lesser degree, this abject dependence of man upon God was a cardinal doctrine in all shades of Christian belief, and it was at war, if only on subconscious levels, with man's actual everyday thought and conduct. In short, Western man's attempt to embrace the doctrines of both science and Christianity was creating a schizoid culture. The idea that the two could somehow be reconciled through a speculative idealistic philosophy agreeable to the human heart only further compounded the muddle.

Indeed, the romantic and metaphysical idealism of the nineteenth century, unchecked by reason and 'brute fact', took off in all directions and its excesses knew no bounds. The late years of the century were particularly full of spiritualists, faith healers, astrologers, theosophists in their most esoteric phases, New Thought adherents of all hues, mesmerists, and occultists. Some were deeply sincere and searching, some were sensation seekers, some were simply unhinged. All were severely rebuked by the Swami: 'A fool or semi-lunatic', he said,

13. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati, Himalayas, India: Advaita Ashrama; Birthday Centenary ed., 1963), 2:336.

'thinks that the confusion going on in his brain is inspiration, and he wants men to follow him. The most contradictory irrational nonsense that has been preached in the world is simply the instinctive jargon of confused lunatic brains trying to pass for the language of inspiration.'¹⁴

Even as in some quarters religious thought tended to become irrational and airborne, in other quarters it tended to become (or remain) secular and pedestrian, held to earth by the ethical idealists, who believed in the innate goodness of man and longed to bring about the perfect human society in which all people would in all ways prosper. In their robust and earnest effort to make moral values effective in man's life, to rectify the injustices and deprivations that the Industrial Revolution was relentlessly inflicting upon society, they espoused various types of liberal Christianity, the emphasis of which was, as in the eighteenth century, more on ethical and social betterment than on spiritual attainment. Thus the liberal Christian became ever more and more utilitarian in his approach, his religion less and less related to the divine. Simultaneously, other equally earnest, and perhaps more consistent, men strove toward the same ends without bringing God into the picture at all. They were out-and-out atheistic. During the last decades of the century, London and the East Coast of America were full of such daring and outspoken 'heretics', each with his own solution.

In short, serious attempts to reconcile the two radically opposed world-views, or to jettison one or the other, occupied the best minds and hearts of the century. The doctrines that were put forward with intense energy ranged from traditional Catholicism (which had not budged all this time) through Christian Socialism, Utili-

tarianism, Radicalism, Secularism, and so on, to outright atheism. Everything was tried, at least on paper. The dozens of organizations with their magazines, pamphlets, tracts, meetings, lectures, sermons, and schisms were perhaps the one thing about the latter part of the nineteenth century that was characteristic.

And in the midst of all these roily clouds of thought, lightning had again flashed, further polarizing the two world-views. On November 24, 1859, Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in England. As is well known, the theory of evolution was as shattering to orthodox Christianity as had been Galileo's heliocentric universe. In fact, Evolution, together with geological and archaeological discoveries, to say nothing of the 'higher criticism' of the Bible, was in some respects even more devastating than had been seventeenth-century physics. Christian orthodoxy was outraged.

On the other hand, in their valiant attempt to reinterpret the Christian tradition so as to give meaning and purpose to modern life, many liberal Protestant leaders adapted Evolution to their own ideals. Their forecast was exceedingly optimistic. It was generally understood that God had been working in and for the world from the very beginning of time in order to evolve a perfected Christian society—that is, a moral society in which everyone would be productive, happy, and kind forever. 'Modern Socialists generally assign the next century as the period at which we shall all have achieved Utopia,' Leslie Stephen, an agnostic, remarked wryly in 1893—an observation which in this twentieth century needs no comment.

Swamiji had no quarrel with scientific evolution, but he did not need to wait for history to demonstrate the fallacy of the nineteenth-century dream of steady Progress. Nor did he spare that dream in the slightest. 'I do not see', he said, 'that what you call

14. *Ibid.*, 2:390.

progress in the world is other than the multiplication of desires.¹⁵ Moreover :

We often hear that it is one of the features of evolution that it eliminates evil, and this evil being continually eliminated from the world, at last only good will remain... Very good, yet this argument is fallacious from beginning to end. It takes for granted in the first place, that manifested good and evil in this world are two absolute realities. In the second place, it makes a still worse assumption that the amount of good is an increasing quantity and the amount of evil is a decreasing quantity... Very easy to say, but can it be proved that evil is a lessening quantity?... As we increase our power to to be happy, we also increase our power to suffer, and sometimes I am inclined to think that if we increase our power to become happy in arithmetical progression, we shall increase, on the other hand, our power to become miserable in geometrical progression. We who are progressing know that the more we progress, the more avenues are opened to pain as well as to pleasure... There will never be a perfectly good or bad world, because the very idea is a contradiction in terms. The great secret revealed by this analysis is that good and bad are not two cut-and-dried separate existences.¹⁶

The Western man of the nineteenth century had tried in all the ways he knew to heal the rift in his understanding of the universe and of himself. Nothing was really working. Whether he liked it or not, by the end of the century his entire culture was committed to a scientific world-view. On the one hand, he had come into his own : he had broken his chains, he had asserted, and to a large extent had won, his freedom in all fields ; soon his knowledge and his power would be that of gods. But on the other hand, this *Weltanschau-*

ung could not satisfy the deep, irrepressible longing of his soul for a meaning beyond his material environment. Indeed, there was no certainty that he *had* a soul. In whatever way he tried to combine his two needs, he came up against a question and a doubt. His practical world of reason had no rhyme ; his beautiful world of rhyme had no reason. A culture so divided against itself cannot long survive, and in a world so closely knit as is ours, the rise of *adharma*—the decline of a living religion—in one culture spelt peril for all mankind.

4

It was at this juncture—when every way to reconcile a mechanistic and a religious view of reality had been (or was shortly to be) found wanting—that Swami Vivekananda appeared at the Parliament of Religions. The message he brought was drastic. It was also very simple. He taught the Vedantic doctrine of Oneness, than which nothing could be less complex. But to the Western tradition, with its deeply ingrained dualism, its insistence upon an eternal subject and object, its basic assumption that consciousness must *always* have a content, whether that content be matter, mind, or spirit—to this Western mode of thinking the Vedantic concept of Oneness seemed unpalatably cold and abstract ; it required a complex explanation. The Swami, studying the ins and outs of Western thought, familiarizing himself with the workings of the Western mind and the feelings of the Western heart, probing the doubts, the tensions, and the needs of the Western people, seeing through their eyes with love, and, like a father, speaking in their own idiom, was able to make the explanation so simple that, as he said, even a child could understand it. His teachings were, moreover, fraught with a revealing power, the power of a divine Prophet who came to bring a new

15. *Ibid.*, 2:172.

16. *Ibid.*, 2:95-98, *passim*.

and redeeming religion—a religion which he himself exemplified. Thus, to those with ears to hear and eyes to see, the truth of his words was self-evident.

It will be impossible here to do anything like justice to Swamiji's message to the West. But it will be enough, perhaps, to dwell briefly upon his primary solution to the basic problem, for it underlies and gives supreme meaning to all else that he taught. Let us try, then, to catch what he seemed to feel was the keynote of his multithemed teaching. First of all, he did not attempt to combine a universe ultimately governed by mechanical forces with a universe *not* governed by mechanical forces. Rather, he saw each universe, so to speak, as a different *reading* of an unchanging and indivisible Reality. Neither was ultimately true, nor were both together ultimately true. The ultimately true subsumes all world-views, as an ocean subsumes waves or a desert subsumes a mirage. The ultimately true is One—beyond all forms, beyond all names; it is Absolute, Infinite, Eternal, and Unchanging. 'This universe itself is the Absolute, the unchangeable, the noumenon; and the phenomenon constitutes the reading thereof.'¹⁷

It is important to note that in the Swami's view the Personal God was as much a part of the phenomenal world as was matter. 'The same mass of delusion extends from God to the lowest animal; from a blade of grass to the Creator. They stand or fall by the same logic.'¹⁸ And again:

Every phenomenon that we can see, feel, or think of is finite, limited by our knowledge; and the Personal God as we conceive of Him, is in fact a phenomenon. The very idea of causation exists only in the phenomenal world, and God as the cause of this universe must naturally be thought of as limited, and

yet He is the same Impersonal God. This very universe, as we have seen, is the same Impersonal Being read by our intellect. Whatever is reality in the universe is that Impersonal Being, and the forms and conceptions are given to it by our intellects.¹⁹

Seen in one way, from one state of consciousness, the universe appears as a mass of matter, moving and changing according to its own laws; seen from a different standpoint, it appears to be composed of ideas, of thought-forms; seen from a yet higher standpoint, it is made of pure consciousness, as is a wax garden (to use a simile of Sri Ramakrishna's) composed through and through of wax. The Swami often described different views of the universe in terms of religious thought, or graded stages of Vedanta philosophy:

In dualism, the universe is conceived as a large machine set going by God, while in qualified monism, it is conceived as an organism, interpenetrated by the Divine Self... The non-dualists say, all this is nonsense... 'This universe does not exist at all; it is all illusion. The whole of this universe, these Devas, gods, angels, and all the other beings born and dying, all this infinite number of souls coming up and going down are all dreams.'²⁰

It is from the standpoint of nondualistic Vedanta that all apparently irreconcilable world-views are known as different phases of the same reality. It is only within the dream that each phase seems logically sufficient in itself, ultimately true, and exclusive of all else. When the dreamer awakes, the whole dream, if remembered at all, is as senseless, Swamiji was fond of saying, as the events in *Alice in Wonderland*.

There is no such thing as law or connection in this world, but we are thinking that there is a great deal of connec-

¹⁷. *Ibid.*, 2:338.

¹⁸. *Ibid.*, 3.15.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:338.

²⁰. *Ibid.*, 1:401-3.

tion... When we wake from this dream of the world and compare it with the Reality, it will all be found incongruous nonsense, a mass of incongruity passing before us, we do not know whence or whither; but we know it will end.²¹

Unlike Buddha (and unlike some modern schools of thoroughgoing empiricism), Swamiji did not, of course, stop with a 'mass of incongruity'; nor did he posit a duality of noumenon and phenomenon.

...Our Buddhist says, 'You have no ground for maintaining the existence of ...a substance; the qualities are all that exist; you do not see beyond them.' This is just the position of most of our modern agnostics. For it is this fight of the substance and qualities that, on a higher plane [than during the Middle Ages], takes the form of the fight between noumenon and phenomenon. There is the phenomenal world, the universe of continuous change, and there is something behind which does not change; and this duality of existence, noumenon and phenomenon, some hold, is true, and others with better reason claim that you have no right to admit the two, for what we see, feel, and think is only the phenomenon. You have no right to assert there is anything beyond phenomenon; and there is no answer to this. The only answer we get is from the monistic theory of the Vedanta. It is true that only one exists, and that one is either phenomenon or noumenon. It is not true that there are two, something changing, and in and through that, something which does not change; but it is the one and the same thing which appears as changing, and which is in reality unchangeable.²²

Swami Vivekananda's explanation of Maya, or world-illusion, reminded some Western thinkers of the philosophy of Kant, which also posited a time-space world, determined by the very structure of the

human mind. But as conceived by Kant, the groundwork of the mind was a real and fixed thing without the least possibility of ever attenuating or transcending itself. There was no way of directly and fully knowing the real world; ignorance of 'things in themselves' was an unalterable condition of human existence. In the Vedanta philosophy, on the other hand, Maya, or the world of appearances, is precisely not unalterable; its very cause is an illusion—a nothingness. Indeed, it cannot be said to have a cause; the coloured glass of the mind through which the whole finite phantasmagoria is projected on Infinity is itself unreal. It can disappear, leaving behind the one eternal Reality. Nor is there any question that Reality cannot be known to man: It is Consciousness, fully known to Itself, and, therefore, fully knowable to everyone through identity; in the words of the great Upanishadic *mahāvākya*, which the Swami uttered again and again in the West: *tat tvam asi*—'That thou art.' The Reality lay within man himself; It was not 'outside'.

One of the most salient points of the Swami's teaching was that the Reality, the Absolute, was not a matter of speculation, but of *supersensuous* experience. Nor was the possibility of such experience a matter of speculation. Down through the ages, the great seers and saints of the world have testified to their own vivid, immediate, permanent, realization of ultimate Reality. The Swami himself not only vouched for such knowledge, but insisted that everyone can and must attain it; for without it, religion was mere talk:

Argument will not help us to know God. It is a question of fact, and not of argument. All argument and reasoning must be based upon certain perceptions... But curiously enough, the vast majority of mankind think, especially at the present time, that no such perception is possible in religion, that religion can only

²¹. *Ibid.*, 3:23-24.

²². *Ibid.*, 2:332.

be apprehended by vain arguments... There are certain religious facts which, as in external science, have to be perceived, and upon them religion will be built... The sages of the world have only the right to tell us that they have analysed their minds and have found these facts, and if we do the same we shall also believe, and not before... This is one great idea to learn and to hold on to, this idea of realisation... This is the watchword of the Vedanta—realise religion, no talking will do. But it is done with great difficulty.²³

A very large part of Swamiji's teaching in the West was devoted to the practical means of attaining the realization of Reality. Suffice it to say here that the crux of the matter was the clarification and purification of one's thought, will, and emotion; it was a matter of shifting the centre of consciousness from the small egocentric self, with its desires and aversions, to the vast all-inclusive Self, from the appearance to the Reality. It was a revolution in world-view far more drastic than the Copernican revolution. It was, indeed, a total about-face of the outlook of the Middle Ages. Where man had once been the central figure in the universe—the *raison d'être* of the Cosmic Drama, he was now the vast Eternal Being in whom 'universes rise and fall'. He was again all-important, but was now the Container rather than the small contained pivot. The whole thing was turned inside out.

As Swamiji so often said, this thorough revolution of outlook was the very essence of religious practice. The methods (or yogas) that he taught were various, and he taught them in detail and at length. He taught renunciation, detachment, discrimination between the Real and the appearance, meditation, selfless activity, devotional practices in their purest form—in short, he taught all means to purify and raise the

mind. He taught man to know God not by having sweet thoughts and vague feelings, but by literally altering the grooves and patterns of his mind, of permanently transforming himself. The mind with which we customarily view the universe, and which Kant assumed was unalterable, is, the Swami pointed out, muddy and ruffled; it must be made as clear as crystal, then will Reality be known without distortion. Indeed, in the highest transcendental state the mind disappears, and one knows oneself directly as the Real Itself. That was Religion. 'Until you have attained realisation,' he said, 'there is no difference between you and atheists. The atheists are sincere, but the man who says that he believes in religion and never attempts to realise it is not sincere.'²⁴

In such religious realization lay the answer to all the Big Questions that science and empiricism had seemed to make unanswerable and therefore meaningless. And to be sure, in a material universe that revolves in endless time to no fathomable purpose, there could be little meaning. The Swami would no doubt have agreed with Bertrand Russell. 'It is all futile,' he said. 'Time the avenger of everything, comes, and nothing is left.'²⁵ The *why* of anything within Maya cannot be answered; nor can the 'why' of Maya itself be explained. The meaning was not to be found inside the 'little circle within which human reason must move'; nor was it to be found within the mindless wheels of matter; nor in the omnipotent will of a Personal God; nor, again, in making the best of a futile world, in hiding 'a carrion with roses'. It was to be found only in the great struggle of the soul to rid itself of the bonds of nature, to stand free, and to realize in actual immediate experience its identity with Brahman.

23. *Ibid.*, 2:162-65, *passim*.

24. *Ibid.*, 2:285.

25. *Ibid.*, 2:121.

To the rationally and scientifically oriented West, the Swami often pointed out that the findings, methods, principles, and goals of science were in harmony with the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. He also showed the similarities between the cosmologies of Sankhya and Vedanta and what was then known of physics (today he would be able to indicate even more striking parallels). But his primary solution to the rift between a scientific and a religious outlook did not depend upon the agreement between the findings of science and the doctrines of religion; it lay, rather, in his explanation of both these world-views as partial manifestations of one Reality.

[Man] is a thinking being and wants to find a solution which will comprehensively explain all the universes. He wants to see a world which is at once the world of men and of gods, and of all possible beings, and to find a solution which will explain all phenomena.... If we could possibly find something which we could know as the common property of the lower as well as of the higher worlds, then our problem would be solved. Even if by the sheer force of logic alone we could understand that there must be one basis of all existence, then our problem might approach to some sort of solution; but this solution certainly cannot be obtained only through the world we see and know, because it is only a partial view of the whole. Our only hope then lies in penetrating deeper.²⁶

Although we are not attempting here to discuss the whole of Swami Vivekananda's teachings in the West, or even a small part in all its ramifications, it can be said that his application of Advaita Vedanta to the modern Western world left nothing out. It was complete and detailed in the sense that it answered all questions in regard to God, the soul, and world, and provided for all

possible states of mind and heart. Standing, as it were, on the ground of Advaita Vedanta as the Swami taught it, everything found its justification and its meaning: the world of science and the world of religion, of reason and of faith, of gross matter and of the Personal God—all were harmonized as different readings of the one Reality. But, as he said, because they were partial readings only, none was in itself sufficient to explain the vast theatre of the universe; nor was a superficial combination adequate or even possible.

We have to get to something higher, to the Impersonal idea. It is the only logical step that we can take. Not that the personal idea would be destroyed by that, not that we supply proof that the Personal God does not exist, but we must go to the Impersonal for the explanation of the personal, for the Impersonal is a much higher generalisation than the personal.... And that Impersonal is the Truth, the Self of man.²⁷

All in all, it would seem that Swamiji's essential solution to the dilemma that the West had posed for itself through three centuries of conflict between science and religion, between reason and heart, lay in his presentation of Advaita Vedanta. Indeed, he felt that a monistic philosophy and religion was the need of the whole modern world. 'If man wants to be rational and religious at the same time,' he said in Lahore, 'Advaita is the one system in the world for him.'²⁸ And in London, 'The salvation of Europe depends on a rationalistic religion, and Advaita—the non-duality, the Oneness, the idea of the Impersonal God—is the only religion that can have any hold on any intellectual people. It comes whenever religion seems to disappear and irreligion seems to prevail, and that is why

²⁶. *Ibid.*, 2:156.

²⁷. *Ibid.*, 2:333, 334.

²⁸. *Ibid.*, 3:404.

it has taken ground in Europe and America.²⁹

And that perhaps was why Swami Vivekananda, the Apostle of this highest truth, came to the Western world.

²⁹. *Ibid.*, 2:139.

(Concluded)

THE MORAL ARGUMENT

DR. R. BALASUBRAMANIAN

There are three different approaches to the problem of the existence of God. They are (1) the rational approach, (2) the negative approach and (3) the mystical approach. The rational approach consists in formulating arguments to prove the existence of God. The traditional arguments which have been advanced by philosophers and theologians come under this category. There are philosophers who react to the problem of the existence of God in a negative way (i) by denying the existence of God, or (ii) by holding that God as conceived by philosophers and theologians is beyond our powers of understanding and that there is no way of knowing such a being who is alleged to exist, or (iii) by maintaining that no meaningful discourse is possible with regard to God and that any discussion about God is, therefore, meaningless. The standpoint of atheism, the standpoint of agnosticism and the standpoint that the talk of God is meaningless and nonsense are the three kinds of negative approach to the problem of the existence of God. There is finally the mystical approach to God according to which the existence of God can be intuited through mystical or religious experience.

Is it possible to prove the existence of God by means of arguments? While some philosophers answer this question in the affirmative, others maintain that the existence of God cannot be proved by arguments. Even theologians hold the view that a

philosophical proof of God's existence is impossible. The arguments given in support of God's existence are generally said to be five in number. They are : (1) the ontological argument, (2) the cosmological argument, (3) the teleological (or design) argument, (4) the moral argument and (5) the argument from religious experience. While the ontological argument which proceeds from the 'idea' of God to the 'existence' of God is *a priori*, the other arguments are *a posteriori*, for they try to prove the existence of God from evidences or data provided by our experience—either from the existence of the world to the existence of God as in the case of cosmological argument, or from the factual relation of means to ends in nature to the existence of God as in the case of teleological argument, or from the existence of moral fact or law or value to the existence of God as in the case of moral argument or from religious experience to the existence of God as in the case of argument from religious experience.

It is necessary to state, at the outset, the view that I hold with regard to the philosophical arguments for the existence of God in general and the moral argument in particular. The existence of God cannot be known or established by reasoning. Scripture or revelation is the source of our knowledge of God, and what is known through Scripture mediately has to be intuited in one's own experience.

If we bear in mind Kant's criticism of the ontological argument, it will be seen why it is impossible to prove the existence of God by *a priori* reasoning. Then, what about *a posteriori* arguments? *A posteriori* arguments which seek to prove God, the critics argue, are defective because they beg the question. The critics maintain that without assuming God in one of the premises, no *a posteriori* argument for the existence of God is possible. It means that the moral argument which is *a posteriori* is vitiated by the fallacy of *petitio principii*. I shall argue in the course of this paper that the moral argument, in whichever way it is formulated, is not an inference (*anumāna*) from a set of premises to the conclusion, but is of the nature of *arthāpatti* (postulation) which is different from *anumāna*. And when the moral argument is viewed as a case of *arthāpatti*, there will be no room for the objection that it begs the question.

I shall refer to three versions of the moral argument from the Western tradition and to one from the Indian tradition.

There is a popular, but at the same time forceful, statement of the moral argument by C. S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity*.¹ Lewis first of all refers to the difference between the behaviour of the objects of the physical universe and that of human beings. Objects of the physical universe are what they are. It makes no sense to say that they ought to have been otherwise. When we speak of the Laws of Nature governing their behaviour, there are, strictly speaking, no laws over and above the facts themselves. They describe the nature of things. So far as human beings are concerned, we not only speak of how they behave, but also of how they ought to behave. In the case of a

human being, we say, for example, 'David's action is wrong. He ought not to have done that.' This is quite different from the case of a stone which we say has a wrong shape and which is, therefore, unfit for a rockery.

After showing the difference between the behaviour of the objects of the physical universe and that of human beings, Lewis speaks of the *moral law* which is the law of human nature. The moral law, says Lewis, is not a fact about human behaviour in the sense that the law of gravitation is a fact about the behaviour of objects like a stone. Further, it is not a *mere fancy*, for we cannot get rid of it. If we did, what we say about human beings would be reduced to nonsense. And also, it is not a way of giving expression to our likes and dislikes. It is something real; and yet it is not a fact in the ordinary sense, in the sense in which we say that our actual behaviour is a fact. It is a law which we have not invented and which we know we ought to obey.

How do we know the moral law? Anyone studying man from the outside cannot know about the moral law to which man is subject, for his observation will tell him about what man does; but the moral law is about what he ought to do. We not merely observe men; but we are men. So man has inside information about himself. He knows that he is subject to the moral law which he has not invented.

From what we know about man, Lewis proceeds to the case of the world. We want to know whether there is a power which makes the universe what it is. Lewis argues that 'since that power, if it exists, would be not one of the observed facts, but a reality which makes them, no mere observation of facts can find it.' That power could not show itself to us as one of the facts inside the universe. The only way in which we could expect it to show itself would be inside ourselves as an influence or a command trying to get us to behave in a certain

1. See C. S. Lewis, 'The Basis of the Moral Law', *Philosophy and Contemporary Issues*, ed. J. S. Burr and M. Goldinger (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1976), pp. 109-14.

way. So the argument comes to this. I know I am under a moral law, and that *someone*, some Power, wants me to behave according to the moral law. Likewise, there is someone who compels the stone and the tree to be what they are, to obey the law of their nature. This *someone* who is directing the universe appears in me as the moral law. And this someone, this lawgiver, must be more like a mind than like matter.

Three points emerge from Lewis's explanation of the moral argument. (1) The moral law does not admit of naturalistic explanation. (2) It can be explained only by assuming the existence of a lawgiver outside the universe. (3) The link between the moral law and God is not logical, but factual. That is, God is not logically inferred from the moral law; we have to postulate the fact of God in order to account for the fact of the moral law.

I shall now take up Kant's version of the moral argument.² Kant argues that God must exist in order that the highest good be possible, that is, in order that happiness should follow upon virtue. Kant says: 'It has been admitted that it is our duty to promote the highest good, and hence it is not only allowable, but it is even a necessity demanded by duty, that we should presuppose the possibility of this highest good. And as this possibility can be presupposed only on the condition that God exists, the presupposition of the highest good is inseparably bound up with duty, i.e. it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God.' The following are the steps involved in Kant's argument which leads to the postulation of God: (1) It is our duty to promote the highest good. (2) We should, therefore, presuppose the possibility of the highest good. (3) The highest good must be both supreme and complete. As supreme, it is virtue (i.e. conformity with duty); and as complete, it must include happiness proportionate to virtue. That

is, the highest good is composed of virtue with proportionate happiness. (4) In the judgement of unprejudiced reason, happiness is an end. (5) Man should become worthy of happiness by his action in conformity with duty. (6) There is no connection, logical or causal, between virtue and proportionate happiness. (7) A finite moral being in the world, who is not the cause of the world, but who is dependent on it, cannot order events so as to secure happiness with virtue. (8) We must, therefore, postulate the existence of a cause of all nature, distinct from nature itself, and containing the principle of connection between virtue and happiness. Such a cause must have *intelligence* and *will*; and this cause is God. (9) So the postulate of the existence of God is a moral necessity. The admission of the existence of God as a principle of explanation may be called a necessary presupposition.

The third version of the moral argument which I shall present now is not with reference to any particular thinker in the post-Kantian period. This formulation of the argument is comprehensive enough to include the views of Hastings Rashdall, William Sorley and A. E. Taylor, who have championed the moral argument. I have closely followed Bertocci³ in the statement of the argument in this form in seven steps. Bertocci is sympathetic towards this version of the argument, though he would try to justify it with reference to what he calls 'the wider teleological argument' which he formulates.

There is, *first* of all, the fact of moral choice between good and bad, right and wrong exercised by human beings. Our

2. See John Hick, ed., *The Existence of God* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1964), pp. 137-43 for Kant's version of the moral argument.

3. P. A. Bertocci, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1953), pp. 286-303.

interpretation of the world must take into consideration this fact of human beings.

Secondly, we choose what we think we ought to choose; that is, we choose between right and wrong; we choose among values. Our experience of obligation is *sui generis*; it is irreducible. It cannot be explained in a naturalistic way in terms of want, fear, social conditioning, etc.

Thirdly, the experience of obligation is a kind of knowing. When we experience obligation, we *know* what we ought to do. We are not concerned here with the question whether this knowing is through moral reason, or moral sense or intuition. It is enough if we take note of what is generally called moral consciousness which reveals to us the goals or the values to be achieved. This moral consciousness is autonomous; and it cannot be explained in terms of utility or evolutionary process.

Fourthly, man is an inhabitant of two worlds, the natural world and the moral world. The former is the world of *is*, while the latter the world of *ought*. In the physical-biological world, events take place in a particular order. They are what they are; and man cannot change them. What is called the moral world is the world of ideals or values.

Fifthly, the moral world is as real as the natural world. There is the evidence of sense-perception for the physical world. Though we cannot always trust every case of sense-perception, we nevertheless accept its evidence on the basis of its coherence with what we have already accepted on the basis of our sensory experience. Further, we believe in the value of truth in our empirical world. Truth is a fundamental value for every human being. Though we never know the whole truth—a point which both the scientist and the philosopher would admit—we nevertheless strive to achieve it. The point which the advocate of the moral argument stresses here is this: if our belief

in the reality of values is a delusion, the belief in the validity of science is also a delusion, since it rests on the conviction that truth is valuable. Just as we accept the evidence of sense-perception by applying the test of coherence, even so do we accept the evidence of moral consciousness on the basis of coherence; that is, our intuitions of value which are consistent with the remainder of our value-experience may be accepted as true.

I now come to the *sixth* step in the argument. Though the two realms, the realm of nature and the realm of values, are logically distinct, we cannot in practice separate them, for the two realms are related as means and end. Human beings endeavour to organize their life in the world of facts in terms of values. While the physical-biological world provides 'the means of life', the moral world provides 'the ends of life'. So the natural world and the moral world are interconnected. They form a whole. As a person gains an insight into what Sorley calls 'the higher life' and 'the wider life', that is, the life of spirit and the life for others, and sees the relation between these two realms, he finds that the moral world is consistent with the natural world and makes the moral ends of life fundamental in the interpretation of experience.

We are now at the *last step* in the argument. The advocate of the moral argument argues that the interconnection between these two realms is possible and intelligible only if we postulate the existence of God. He makes use of analogy to give the final shape to the argument. If human beings plan their activities in accordance with values, whose connection with the world of facts cannot be denied, why should we not postulate, in order to make this connection intelligible, a Cosmic Person, who plans for the entire universe, who is responsible for the interrelation between these two realms,

and who is the ultimate source of both values and nature ?

Before I take up the statement of the moral argument from the Indian tradition, I propose to consider some major objections raised by the critics against the moral argument as formulated in the Western tradition.

I shall first consider Broad's criticism of Kant's argument, as it will help us to view the moral argument in the correct perspective. Making a distinction between two kinds of possibility, logical and factual, which arises because of two different senses of 'ought', Broad maintains that Kant's use of 'ought' in his argument enables him to hold the view that the existence of God is a logical and not a factual possibility. Kant's argument, says Broad, does not imply that there actually is God. To quote Broad: 'If a perfect God existed, he would order the course of Nature so that virtue would receive its appropriate reward in happiness. He is not entitled to the categorical conclusion that such a being exists.'⁴ Broad's argument, it seems to me, is not convincing. When Kant argues that God ought to exist in order to account for the highest good which is willed by the moral will, he is certainly thinking of the existence of God as a factual possibility. Further, it is not clear how what is logically possible cannot be factually possible. Unless this is substantiated, one cannot agree with Broad's conclusion that Kant can speak of the existence of God only hypothetically and not categorically.

If critics feel dissatisfied with the moral argument, in whatever way it is formulated—whether it is Lewis's version, or Kant's version, or some other version—it is because of the fact that they treat the moral argument as an inference. Certainly it is

not claimed by the advocates of the moral argument that their argument is an inference, that is, that they infer the existence of God from a set of premises. The moral argument is not an inference or *anumāna*. On the contrary, it is a case of *arthāpatti* or postulation, which is different from inference.

There is the fact of moral law which governs human beings in the same way as the Laws of Nature govern the objects of the physical universe. Moral law, which is a fact, can be accounted for only if we postulate God. Or, the highest good, which includes both virtue and happiness, can be accounted for only if we postulate God. Or, the interconnection between the moral order and the natural order can be accounted for only if we postulate God. The point to be noted here is that in all these versions of the moral argument, the argument is of the nature of *arthāpatti*. From the knowledge of the fact to be accounted for (*upapādyā-jñāna*) we proceed to the knowledge of the explaining fact (*unpapādaka-jñāna*). The postulation of a fact (e.g. the night eating of Devadatta) in order to account for a fact already known to us (fasting by day and stoutness) is not a case of inference. The same is true in the case of the postulation of God as the only way of explaining something which is already known to us and which calls for an explanation.

Let us now consider a major objection raised by John Hick. Theistic proofs of the *a posteriori* type, argues Hick, are open to a basic philosophical objection, namely that they necessarily beg the question. He says: '... theistic arguments of this type rely upon some connection between God and the world. In order to provide a basis for a strict proof of God's existence ... the connection must be such as to warrant the proposition, "If the world (or some particular aspect of it) exists, God exists."

4. C. D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (New Jersey: Littlefield, Adam & Co., 1959), p. 142.

But clearly anyone who accepts this premise already either acknowledges the existence of God or else is unable to reason at all.⁵ This argument, it seems to me, is untenable. If the connection between God and the world or some aspect of it is already known to us, and if on this basis God is inferred, it is undoubtedly a case of *petitio principii*. The moral argument is not an inference in which the hypothetical proposition, 'If the world (or some particular aspect of it) exists, God exists' is one of the premises. Nor is it the case that the moral argument is an inference in which the disjunctive proposition, 'Either there is God or the world is ultimately unintelligible' is one of the premises. If this were the case, one could raise the objection that the moral argument begged the question. The moral argument as presented by Kant and others must be viewed as *arthāpatti* which finds out what is presupposed by the given and which explains the given by showing its ground.

The statement of the moral argument which I am going to consider now is from the standpoint of Vedānta. The Nyāya system also formulates the moral argument, which is called the argument from *adrṣṭa* (the sum total of merit and demerit). Though the two versions of this argument are substantially the same, the Nyāya, unlike Vedānta, holds the view that the existence of God can be proved by rational arguments such as the causal argument. It will be of interest, therefore, to consider the Vedāntic version of the moral argument.

Three points have to be borne in mind in this connection. First, scripture, according to Vedānta, is the *pramāṇa* (source of knowledge) for our knowledge of God. It is impossible to infer the existence of God through an *anumāna* (inference), for any such *anumāna* would require a *hetu* or

liṅga (reason or mark) which must be known as connected with God. If the relation between them is not known, then God cannot be inferred through the help of a *hetu* or *liṅga*. The Vedāntin, therefore, rules out inference in the case of God. Secondly, the moral argument is presented in the context of the law of karma which holds good in the moral sphere of human actions. Thirdly, there is a two-way relation between God and *adrṣṭa*, the sum total of merit and demerit (*dharmādharmā*) of the individual soul, which plays an important role in the moral argument. It means that the one presupposes the other. If so, to the Vedāntin, the moral argument does not prove God, but it presupposes God.

The argument proceeds with the fact that there are differences among human beings—some are created poor and some rich, some are happy and some miserable, and so on. There must be a cause for this. The *jīvas*' own actions, good and bad, in this or in some previous life, are the cause of their present condition. *Adrṣṭa* or *dharmādharmā* of each *jīva* determines its lot. But *adrṣṭa* or *dharmādharmā*, being an unintelligent principle, cannot function on its own unless it is guided by an intelligent principle. And this intelligent principle is God. If so, God, the Vedāntin says, cannot be accused of partiality and cruelty, because He as the *phaladātā* (giver of fruits) dispenses the rewards according to the merit and demerit of the individual soul. God is not arbitrary in His dispensation of justice. His work presupposes *adrṣṭa* or *dharmādharmā* of each *jīva*. This is clearly brought out in *Brahma-sūtra* II.i.34, which says: 'Partiality and cruelty cannot be attributed to God, due to His taking into consideration (merit and demerit); for Scripture so declares it.' Śaṅkara, in his commentary on this *sūtra*, elucidates the role of God as *phaladātā* by giving the example of a king who rewards

5. John Hick, *op. cit.* p. 5.

his servants according to their action and also the example of the rain which helps different seeds to sprout, each according to its nature.

From the foregoing explanation it is obvious that there is a two-way relation between God and *dharmādharmā*. God functions with reference to *dharmādharmā*, and *dharmādharmā* requires God. It means that the moral argument is presented in Vedānta against the theistic background and that it is significant only in the context of belief in God. The moral argument is not intended to secure belief in a non-believer.

Several objections against the Vedāntic account of God and the moral argument have been anticipated by Bādarāyaṇa himself in his *Brahma-sūtra*. There is an objection in the form of the problem of first creation. It is asked: Whence comes the difference in the condition of the *jīvas* in the first creation? There is again the objection of circularity in reasoning (*anyonyāśraya-doṣa*): the diversity in the conditions of life depends on karma, and vice versa. *Sūtras* II.i.35 and 36 are relevant in this connection. Creation, according to Vedānta, is *anādi* (beginningless), and so the problem of first creation does

not arise. The question, 'Which is chronologically prior—karma or diversity of condition?' cannot be raised at all when creation is said to be *anādi*. Śaṅkara justifies this position in his commentary on the *sūtra* II.i.6 through reasoning and Scripture. Russell's criticism⁶ of the moral argument loses its force when we view the moral argument as presented in Vedānta. Is it the case, asks Russell, that right and wrong came into existence through God's fiat? If so, God, says Russell, is not good. If they do not come into being through God, then they are, says Russell, logically anterior to God. Objections of this type have to be ruled out when it is held that creation is *anādi* and that both *Īśvara* and the *jīva* are *anādi*.

Scripture is the *pramāṇa* for our knowledge of God. What is known through Scripture is made intelligible through reasoning. Scripture gives the content, and reason provides the necessary form to the content. And it is in this perspective, according to Vedānta, that we have to view the moral argument.

6. Bertrand Russell, 'Why I am not a Christian?' *Philosophy and Contemporary Issues*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA : MRIDANI CHATTOPADHYAY

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

Mridani was the fourth child of Parvati Charan Chattopadhyay. Her mother, Gribala Devi, had distinguished herself by composing Bengali songs and Sanskrit hymns, some of which were published; she had some knowledge of Persian and English too, and was well-known for her religious zeal and piety.

Born in 1857 at Sibpur, in the district of Howrah in Bengal, Mridani was brought up in the typical religious Hindu family of her grandmother at Bhowanipur, Calcutta. As a child she was most devoted to prayer and the practice of austerities, and naturally drew the attention of the other members of her family. On the growing girl the religious

temperament of her mother and grandmother must have exercised great influence. A powerful religious fervour seemed to have taken hold of her mind even at a tender age, and it continued to be the ruling passion of her later life. Even as a child she showed no attachment for luxuries in food, dress, ornaments or the like. She was a vegetarian from childhood. Mridani was admitted to a school in South Calcutta started by Bishop Robert Milman, but she did not continue there for long as the young girl became disgusted with the hostile attitude of her Christian teachers towards Hindu religious beliefs. However, she learnt by heart many Sanskrit hymns as well as the *Gītā* and *Caṇḍī* and select passages of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. As she passed into girlhood her distaste for the world and her yearning for a more spiritual life also increased.

At about ten years of age she came across by chance a simple-looking brahmin who blessed her with the words, 'May you have devotion to Kṛṣṇa'. Some days later the girl met him again in a garden near Dakshineswar where he initiated her with a holy *mantra*. This event kindled a new flame in the heart of the girl. In later life, she was convinced that it was Sri Ramakrishna who had appeared before her as the unassuming brahmin. Strangely enough, some days later she was presented with a sacred stone emblem, called Rādhā-Dāmodara, by a pious woman from Vrindaban who stayed for some days with her family. Mridani worshipped the emblem throughout her life and experienced therein the holy presence of the Lord of her heart's love and adoration. From now on she secluded herself from worldly affairs and passed her days in prayer and contemplation. The advancing spiritual fervour of the girl and her detachment from the world made her widowed mother and other relations apprehensive. While still a girl of only thirteen years she

was bold enough to declare to her parents, 'I shall wed only that Bridegroom who never dies'. She had already accepted as her husband the eternal Spouse and heavenly Bridegroom who, to Mridani was, of course, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Astounded at the young girl's audacity, but incompetent to appreciate her deep spiritual attitude, the elderly members of her family decided to force a marriage upon her. Lest she should flee home she was confined to a room on the day preceding the one appointed for the marriage, but she escaped at night. She was, however, found out and brought home. All the family members except her mother did their utmost to dissuade her from her resolve. But Mridani held her own with a firmness above her years. The family members were finally obliged to leave her in peace.¹

Her strong desire to consecrate herself to God alone made her abandon every wish for temporal things, and she became restless. To console Mridani, her relatives agreed to send her on some pilgrimages, long and short. Aspiring after a mendicant's life she left her companions unnoticed during one such journey to Gangasagara. A maiden of eighteen, Mridani joined a group of up-country monks and nuns bound for Hardwar. She continued changing the company of monks and nuns until she decided to walk her path alone facing all kinds of dangers and hardship. Dāmodara, the stone emblem, tied to her neck in a small bag, was her only friend and protector. A few sacred books, the pictures of Śrī Gaurāṅga and Mother Kālī, and a few articles of everyday use were her sole possessions. Her stout and undaunted spirit was all the more strengthened as she moved through the centres of holy pil-

1. Swami Vivekananda once observed, 'She is very pure, pure from her infancy—I have not the least doubt about it.'

grimage in India, from Kailas and Amarnath in the north to Rameswaram and Kanyakumari in the south, and from Dwaraka in the west to Kamakhya in the east. During the first part of her travels she visited Navadvip where she was initiated by a Vaiṣṇava guru and received the name Gaurdasi.² During her travels through hill and dale, town and village, she used to put on the ochre robe; at times she would cover her body with ashes or mud, and often she wore flowing garments and a turban like a man. She cut her hair short and on certain occasions she had to feign that she was a lunatic. Thus for seven years she passed her days in *tapasyā* (austerity) and in visiting holy places. Under the most difficult and trying circumstances, when an ordinary woman would have lost her bearings, she remained steadfast to her ideal. In later years, when a courageous young man who had already visited some of these difficult places of pilgrimage asked her, 'Did you really undertake such adventures?' she smiled and remarked, 'Well, I am a mother to sons like you.'³

During her wide travels the simple village folk used to refer to her as Gaur Mayi, the 'fair-complexioned mother', and it finally led to her being called Gaur-Ma or Gauri-Ma. Later Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Saradamanī were to call her simply Gaurdasi. All these hazardous travels lent her invaluable help in understanding people of various kinds. But more important than this were the blessed spiritual experiences she was crowned with at different centres of pilgrimage, particularly at Dwaraka.

At Puri an old man named Harekrishna Mukherjee, told Mridani: 'Mother,

I saw at Dakshineswar a wonderful man of unique appearance; he goes frequently into divine ecstasy. Filled with the knowledge of God he radiates love.' On her return to Calcutta she put up with Balaram Bose at Baghbazar, Calcutta. As Balaram Bose was a close friend of Mridani's eldest brother, Abinashchandra, Mridani used to address him as 'Dada', elder brother. As in the past, Balaram told her once again about Sri Ramakrishna. Still, she did not feel the urge to visit the saint. She simply brushed aside the idea by saying, 'I have had enough of holy men. If your holy man has the power, let him draw me to him; otherwise I shall not visit him.'

It was 1882. Mridani was only twenty-five. Sri Ramakrishna, forty-six, was living at Dakshineswar. Born of a pious brahmin family in a remote village of Bengal Sri Ramakrishna had begun a life which was more traditional than that of most orthodox brahmins, and which was at the same time more unconventional than that of the English educated 'Young Bengal'. The priestly duties he began performing in the temple of Mother Kali at Dakshineswar brought to a focus the vague yearnings and aspirations of his boyhood interspersed with flashes of spiritual experiences. Unconcerned about hunger and thirst and the happenings around him, the young man spent twelve long years in search of God, with an astonishing tenacity of purpose, till he was crowned with the highest spiritual illumination, the experience of identity with God. All those years he lived as if there were none in the world except himself and God.

Without remaining satisfied with even the highest form of illumination, Sri Ramakrishna practised the spiritual disciplines of Islam and Christianity, and was rewarded with the same experience through all of them. This led him to the firm conviction that all religious paths lead ultimately to the same goal.

2. See Ramchandra Dutta, *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahamsadever Jīvanbr̥ttānta* (Bengali), (Kankurgachhi, Calcutta: Yogodyan, B.S. 1310), p. 126. Hereafter, *Jīvanbr̥ttānta*.

3. Mahendranath Dutta, *Māṛḍvaye* (Bengali), (Calcutta: Mahendra Publishing Committee).

Returning to the world with a rich harvest of spiritual experiences, he met other spiritual aspirants and checked his experiences with theirs. On looking at the society around him, he was deeply moved at the educated youths' rank materialism and their playing with religion without any religious experience. Dependent entirely on the Divine Mother, he soon perceived that God was to speak and work through him to save human society from rank materialism.

Sri Ramakrishna could see God everywhere and in all beings every second of his life. And it was because of his unbroken communion with the God in all that people who used to visit him felt uplifted and strengthened without understanding why. His life ushered in a rising tide of pure religion which slowly rolled on over the land, and brought in new strength, light and joy for the coming generations.

While living in the home of Balaram Bose, one day Mridani was in her worship room. A murmur of a song composed by Srinibas Das broke from her lips.⁴ She was about to place on the throne the stone emblem of Dāmodara after *abhiṣeka* (ritual bath), when she suddenly noticed a pair of footprints on the throne. As she offered *tulasī* leaves to the stone emblem, they slipped onto the footprints. This remarkable experience brought her spiritual ecstasy, and she lost outward consciousness for hours together. When returned to the consciousness of the world, she felt in her heart the pull of a string, as it were. In the night Mridani dreamt of a holy man. She distinctly heard him call her and felt once again the strong pull at her heart. Early next morning Mridani went to Dakshineswar in the company of Balaram Bose, his wife, Chunilal Bose's wife, and some others.

4. See Durgapuri Devi, *Gaurīmā* (Bengali), (Calcutta : Sri Sri Saradeshwari Ashrama, B.S. 1346), p. 73. Hereafter, *Gaurīmā*.

As their hackney carriage⁵ reached Dakshineswar a bright clear morning greeted the party. When the group entered the living room of the saint of Dakshineswar the latter was seen sitting on a cot, winding some thread around a stick. Mridani observed that, overwhelmed with divine ecstasy, the saint, with his face radiating joy, was singing in a melodious voice the song :

O Mother, for Yasoda Thou wouldst dance,
When she called Thee her precious 'Blue Jewel' ;
Where hast Thou hidden that lovely form,
O terrible Syama ?
Dance that way once for me, O Mother !
Throw down Thy sword and take the flute...⁶

Winding of the thread over, Sri Ramakrishna kept the roll aside. Following others she took the dust of his feet. The first sight of the holy man's smiling face brought an upsurge of emotion in Mridani, for she immediately recognized in him the man who had met her in her childhood and had given her spiritual initiation. She discovered that the pull she was experiencing at her heart had suddenly been replaced by an ineffable joy. Soon after, she could discern that the footprint she had vividly seen on the throne of the emblem, Dāmodara, was of the feet of Sri Ramakrishna. She was now smitten by divine love.

Like other ladies Mridani had kept her face covered with the end of her sari. Though Sri Ramakrishna could see her through her veil, he enquired of Balaram about her. Balaram introduced her as the youngest sister of one of his friends, and

5. According to Akshay Kumar Sen the party travelled by a country boat to Dakshineswar. See *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Punthi* (Bengali), (Calcutta : Udbodhan Office, 5th edition), p. 305.

6. Translation of the Bengali song done by Swami Nikhilananda. See *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), p. 452.

as one now living with him like a member of his own family. Sri Ramakrishna remarked, 'That's right. She belongs to this place only. She is known for long.'⁷ (Sri Ramakrishna later said about Gaurdasi that she was 'a Gopī perfected by God's grace'.)⁸ Now, satisfied with the account of Balaram, Sri Ramakrishna gave a brief religious discourse in his inimitable way. Gaurdasi was simply charmed. When the party was about to take leave of Sri Ramakrishna the latter told Gaurdasi in a sweet voice, 'Please come again, Mother.'

These parting words of the great saint of Dakshineswar worked wonders on her as they did on many others. She returned to Balaram's house in Calcutta but her mind was hovering around Sri Ramakrishna and the memories associated with him. Early next morning she took a holy dip in the Ganga and, carrying a packet of clothes, she started for Dakshineswar. Her Dāmodara was in a small bag suspended from her neck. Sri Ramakrishna who was standing near the main entrance of the temple received her cordially and said, 'Well, I was just thinking of you.' Much moved, Gaurdasi narrated many incidents of her personal life. She also narrated how she had seen Sri Ramakrishna's footprint on the sacred throne of Dāmodara. She finally observed, 'I wish I had known earlier that you had kept yourself hidden from public gaze here.' Similingly Sri Ramakrishna replied, 'Then, how could you perform all the austerities that you have done?' Sri Ramakrishna took her to the *nahabat* (music tower) and told Sri Sarada Devi who was staying there, 'O dear, you had asked for a companion—here is one.' Gaurdasi lived now and then with Sarada Devi at the *nahabat*. Gaurdasi regarded Sri Ramakrishna as her father and

mother in one. She used to prepare various delicacies and feed Sri Ramakrishna with devotion. She often sang devotional songs in her melodious voice in the *nahabat*, which frequently induced deep spiritual ecstasy in Sri Ramakrishna.

As in the case of many other devotees, Mridani's mind got crimsoned with the tinge of Sri Ramakrishna's personality. In fact, the influence of Sri Ramakrishna worked silently on her mind like leaven until her personality was entirely transformed. Sri Ramakrishna took charge of her spiritual welfare and guided her along the path divine. His life and words transmitted spiritual vitality into her pure heart and gradually transformed her life entirely. She developed deep regard for Sri Ramakrishna, for she came to realize the identity between Śrī Caitanya and Sri Ramakrishna. Her regard for Sri Saradamani was also equally deep, and she once observed, 'Sri Sarada Devi was not only the Master's partner in his life-work but also the object wherein he worshipped the Cosmic Mother... A full appreciation of the significance of her life is bound to have a liberalizing influence upon the whole world.'⁹ In her holy company Gaurdasi experienced spiritual moods several times. One day Sri Ramakrishna asked Gaurdasi jokingly, in the presence of Sarada Devi, which of them she loved more. Gaurdasi promptly replied through a song :

O Kṛṣṇa, player of the flute, surely
You are not greater than Rādhā.
Those who are in distress may pray to You,
But when You are distressed, it is Rādhā
You call upon with Your flute.

An embarrassed Sarada Devi pressed Gaurdasi's hand. Sri Ramakrishna laughed heartily and walked away.~

7. Durgapuri Devi, *Gaurīmā*, p. 78.

8. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master* (Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1970), p. 650.

9. Swami Tapasyananda, *Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother* (Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1969), p. 195.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say about Gaurdasi, 'If a woman takes to Sannyāsa she ceases to be a woman ; she becomes a man.' Sarada Devi once remarked, 'A great soul is always a rarity, having hardly any parallel. Gaurdasi is one such rare soul.'

Gaurdasi looked upon Sri Ramakrishna as Śrī Caitanya reincarnated. She cherished a desire to witness the manifestation of love displayed by Śrī Caitanya at Navadwip. One day when she was serving meal, Sri Ramakrishna introduced her to Kedarnath Chatterjee, a great devotee. Under the spiritual influence of Sri Ramakrishna both Gaurdasi and Kedar were fired with divine love and ecstasy similar to that experienced by the followers of Śrī Caitanya. Love is very infectious. Not only they but others present began to behave like madcaps, intoxicated with joy, till Sri Ramakrishna brought them back to normalcy.¹⁰

One day Gaurdasi was plucking flowers in the temple garden. Sri Ramakrishna came to her and said, 'Well Gauri, I am pouring water on the earth ; you knead the clay.' She could not grasp the significance of this cryptic remark. Then he explained smilingly, 'What I mean is, the women of this country are in a sad plight. You must work for them.' Though she did not quite like the idea, she offered to train, if necessary, young girls in a quiet retreat in the Himalayas. But he would not let her go. He emphatically told her, 'No, no ! You must work in this very city. You have had enough of spiritual practices. Now dedicate your life to the service of women. They are suffering dreadfully.' In the words of Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Sri Ramakrishna decided to provide her with the life-giving spirit, and Gaurdasi was to transform the raw material of young women to be placed under her charge. A healthy

combination of work and contemplation constituted the essence of the Neo-Vedanta preached by Sri Ramakrishna. Now he demanded a demonstration of this from Gaurdasi.

Towards the end of his earthly life Sri Ramakrishna had an attack of throat cancer. Brave and cheerful to the last, in spite of his long and painful illness, he busied himself with the training of his faithful followers. He asked Gaurdasi to take up certain austerities, and early in 1886 she began them at Vrindaban. Her spiritual exercises lasted for nine months, but before they ended Sri Ramakrishna left his body. She became all the more sorry, for she gathered that Sri Ramakrishna had wanted several times to see her at Cossipore, Calcutta. Struck with utter grief she resolved to end her life by severe austerities but was dissuaded from this by a vision of Sri Ramakrishna. When Sarada Devi went to Vrindaban she had Gaurdasi searched out. She met her in a solitary cave at Rawa. After Sarada Devi left Vrindaban, Gaurdasi continued to stay in and around Vrindaban, except for a second pilgrimage to the Himalayas, for nearly ten years. The entire gamut of her hard austerities and spiritual disciplines coupled with God's grace flowing through Sri Ramakrishna resulted in the spiritual unfoldment of a high dimension in her. Such unfoldment may be compared to the transformation of a larva into a butterfly. The larva lives on leaves, and with the aid of air and sunlight changes into a chrysalis and then finally into a beautiful butterfly. Mridani was transformed into the saint Gauri-Ma, a spiritual luminary and Sri Ramakrishna's torch-bearer. On her return to Calcutta in 1895, a new chapter in her illustrious life opened up. She was, in fact, the only monastic woman-disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. It has been claimed that during her stay at Dakshineswar Sri Ramakrishna presented her with ochre cloth.

10. See Ramchandra Dutta, *Jivanbrttānta*, pp. 126-27.

According to his instruction Gaurdasi arranged for the Sannyāsa rituals. It is said that Sri Ramakrishna himself offered a bilva leaf to the sacred fire.¹¹

Her wide travels which gave her first-hand knowledge of the pathetic condition of women in this country, her scholarship, her dynamism and organizing ability, her spiritual experience and, above all, the order of her Master, urged her to take up the task of educating Indian women. The uplifting letters of Swami Vivekananda from America inspired her further to take up that responsibility. He had written in a letter to Swami Ramakrishnananda, 'There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing... Hence, in the Ramakrishna Incarnation, the acceptance of a woman as the guru, hence His practising in the woman's garb and frame of mind, hence too His preaching the Motherhood of women as representations of the Divine Mother... Hence it is that my first endeavour is to start a Math for women. This Math shall be the origin of Gargis and Maitreyis, and women of even higher attainments than these...' ¹² To achieve that end he wanted to 'depend primarily on those who were chosen by Sri Ramakrishna himself. In another letter addressed to Swami Ramakrishnananda he wrote in 1894, 'Where is Gaur-Ma? We want a thousand such Mothers with that noble stirring spirit.' ¹³ In still another letter dated April 27, 1896, Swamiji suggested, 'Please show this letter to Gaur-Ma, Yogin-Ma and others, and through them establish a Woman's Math. Let Gaur-Ma be the President there for one

year... They will manage their own affairs.' ¹⁴

Thus drawing her inspiration from Sri Ramakrishna and encouraged by the blessings of Saradamani Devi and the letters of Swami Vivekananda, Gauri-Ma started the Saradeswari Ashrama at Kapaleswar on the Ganga in Barrackpore. As the institution grew rapidly, in 1911 it was shifted to a rented house in Calcutta, and in 1924 to its present site at 26 Maharani Hemanta Kumari Street, Shyambazar, Calcutta. In the new resurgence that burst on this country with the advent of Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi, the walls of superstitions about women broke down, and a tide of progressive ideas swept across the country. Saradeswari Ashrama did pioneering work in guiding the course of this tide for the benefit of hundreds of girls and women in Bengal.

Gauri-Ma enjoyed the special love and affection of Sarada Devi. About her dedicated service and its purpose Sarada Devi once said: 'Gaurdasi takes great care of the girls of her Ashrama. If anyone is ill, she does all her personal services herself. She has never had to do these things in life; but the Master is making her do them this way, this being her final incarnation.' ¹⁵

After the Master had departed from the world-scene his directive assumed a concrete form in Gaurdasi. She remembered that Sri Ramakrishna had demanded of her the love and service of women of the country. Sarada Devi's life was a demonstration of the Motherhood of God, acting as a leaven to silently change the newly awakened consciousness of womanhood. Blessed by Sarada Devi, Gauri-Ma dedicated with unflagging zeal the last forty years of her illustrious life to the service of the living temples of the Mother of the uni-

11. See Durgapuri Devi, *Gaurimā*, p. 103.

12. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama), 6(1978): 328. Hereafter, *Comp. Works*.

13. *Comp. Works*, 6:285.

14. *Comp. Works*, 7(1972):497.

15. Her Direct Disciples, *At Holy Mother's Feet* (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1963), p. 188.

verse, namely, the girls of the country. And behind all her service there stood the eternal fount of inspiration, the life and deeds of Sri Ramakrishna.

Hundreds of persons received spiritual guidance from Gauri-Ma. She was a tower of strength to her disciples as well as to her colleagues and workers. Truly one writer observed, 'She was what the Upaniṣads ask one to be—strong, courageous, full of determination... Her very presence radiated strength and would infuse courage and hope into drooping spirits... She had a dynamism rare even amongst men.'¹⁶ To Indian housewives she exhorted, 'Mothers, you must never forget that, in the present state of society, your responsibility is the greatest for maintaining the order and equilibrium of social life through peace, purity and steadfast conduct.'¹⁷

¹⁶. *The Disciples of Sri Ramakrishna*, (Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, 1955), p. 489.

¹⁷. *Gauri Mata and Her Mission* (Calcutta : Saradeswari Ashrama, 1958), p. 23.

February 28, 1938, was the day of Śivarātri. Gauri-Ma, the octogenarian nun, declared that she was feeling the irresistible pull of Sri Ramakrishna once again. Towards the close of the night Gauri-Ma asked of her Dāmodara. When the stone emblem was brought she exclaimed, 'How beautiful. I see Him vividly with my eyes open and with my eyes closed. I see Him all the time.' She kept the emblem on her head and then on her bosom and finally handed it over to the chief inmate of the Ashrama. Next day she breathed her last. It is difficult to estimate how far the silent influence of this great woman-saint worked in transforming the lives of those who came in contact with her. But her saintly life, inspiring personality and untiring work have won her an important place not-only in the Ramakrishna movement, but also in the history of the awakening of Indian womanhood.

A NOTE ON PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

S. BALASUNDARAM

What is philosophy? Philosophers have answered this question variously. To define philosophy is not easy. The ancient Greek philosophers defined it as the love of wisdom and knowledge. The ancient Indian sages and philosophers confined it to the theory and practice of religion, and declared that philosophy was not only an inquiry into the nature of the self of man and the Ultimate Reality, but also the realization of the Truth through experience. Our definition is that philosophy is the persistent attempt to lift the veil of the existential mystery and wonder; it is the attempt to understand the world and man and the relation of man to the world. For such an

understanding, we have to undertake a general survey of the world and life as a whole instead of limiting our inquiry to some particular aspect. Religion, on the other hand, is the intuitive realization by man of God, the absolute Supreme Being, who is the cause and governor of the world.

The philosophic attitude is speculative, analytical and critical, whereas the religious outlook is marked by faith, love and worship. The philosophic enquiry starts as a result of wonder, intellectual curiosity and the thirst for knowledge, which are natural to the human mind. Intellectual curiosity is curiosity about everything that exists, that is actual, and everything that is possible,

that is capable of actualization. This curiosity is the mother of all knowledge and it never dies, because by the very nature of things it can never be fully satisfied. The religious feeling is anterior to the philosophic quest. It is rooted in the firm intuitive faith of man. Unlike the intellect, intuitive faith, which is of the spirit or soul, has no gradations. It does not grow or develop in stages : it is total ; it either exists or it does not. But there is spiritual development which means the gradual destruction of ignorance and realization of the true nature of things, of the ultimately real.

The difference between philosophy and religion, though important, is not basic. Both are concerned with the fundamentals of human experience at different levels, namely, physical, mental and spiritual. Any one or two of these levels of experience may be denied as real, as authentic facts, but not all of them. There can be no knowledge, in fact no conscious human life, without some experience at one of these levels. There are, or may be, many things in the world which no one has experienced, *but this assertion is possible only because there has been experience of the world*. According to Bertrand Russell, the importance of experience has been exaggerated by the philosophers. He writes, 'I feel that the concept of "experience" has been very much over-emphasised especially in the idealist philosophy, but also in many forms of empiricism.'¹ This is not correct, for everything in human existence is rooted in some kind of experience—physical, mental or spiritual. Dr. Radhakrishnan is right when he says that 'everything is known to us only through experience.'²

As regards the difference between philosophy and religion, we find that philosophy depends mostly upon reason in dealing with the basic questions of life which are metaphysical and ethical. Religion is also concerned with ethical and metaphysical problems, but the religious approach is different in that its doctrines and teachings are based on spiritual insight and, to some extent, on instinct. This does not, however, mean that religion is indifferent to reason or does not recognize the important role of reason in human affairs. Religion uses the intellect in formulating spiritual experience in the form of tenets and teachings and in expounding the basic truths about life and the world. But these truths were arrived at by the ancient seers and founders of religions through direct spiritual experience and insight, and not as a result of reasoning. This spiritual insight is suprarational and not irrational. In support of our argument that spiritual experience and insight alone can lead to higher knowledge, we may cite the case of Buddhism. Among the great religions of the world, Buddhism is the most rational religion in that its doctrines and teachings are not concerned with anything supernatural and do not demand faith in a transcendent Supreme Being. But Buddha arrived at the truths expounded in his teachings by spiritual awakening and experience, and not by reasoning and logical analysis.

Next to metaphysics, it is in the sphere of ethics and morals that the inadequacy of reason is keenly felt. The subject of ethics and morals is not of mere academic interest ; it is of the utmost practical concern to man in his daily life. We cannot be indifferent to ethical and moral values, because being indifferent to them is being indifferent to life. But in this sphere of such vital importance, we have to depend ultimately on our instincts and intuitive faith

1. Bertrand Russell, *My Philosophical Development* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1975), p. 97.

2. S. Radhakrishnan, *Recovery of Faith* (Delhi : Hind Pocket Books Pvt. Ltd., 1968), p. 98.

for justification of the ethical and moral code, in view of the fact that ethical problems cannot be completely dissociated from metaphysical problems. Reasoning and logical analysis may clarify many of the ethical and moral imperatives and throw light on their origin, but reason and logic cannot prove incontrovertibly why one course of action is better than another, why a particular act or course of conduct is good and beneficial and another bad and destructive, without bringing in questions like the nature of truth, and the significance and purpose of life and the world. In short, if we maintain that reason is the only guide

in human affairs and the scientific method the only useful method in the conduct of life and in meeting the challenges of life's problems, the question 'Why should we be good and moral?' is as unanswerable as the question 'Why should we live?' It is here that the spirit in man as revealed in the teachings of religion brings all his activities and all the events in the world into a harmonious and meaningful whole and provides enlightenment. Therefore, philosophy alone as a mere intellectual pursuit is sterile and unfulfilling. Religion combined with philosophy is the final answer to the fundamental problems of human existence.

VIVEKANANDA AND CONTEMPORARY INDIA

(A Review Article)

[Vivekānanda O Samakālin Bhāratvarṣa (Bengali), Vol. III, by Sankari Prasad Basu. Publishers: Mondal Book House, 78/1 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Calcutta-700 009, 1978, pp 518. Rs. 30/-.]

In an age when men are increasingly being caught up within the narrow limits of positivistic-mechanistic thinking and getting infected with a spirit of resignation, Vivekananda's ideas may seem dated; but a thorough discussion of them is extremely urgent. For his was a philosophy of protest for social change imbued with faith in the capacity of man to liberate himself and to realize his essence. In this, Vivekananda was in line with the highest traditions of Western as well as Indian thought. It was natural for him to pin his faith on socialism and egalitarianism, and it was just as natural for him to get involved in a fierce struggle with all those sectarian occultists deriving their authority from fake Mahatmas, with arch conservatives trying to create a mindless and soulless man by

keeping society under the weight of horrendous social practices of dubious origin, and with well-intentioned but half-hearted social reformers who infested India during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The story of that epic struggle was not unknown to Vivekananda's immediate disciples and contemporaries. But their desire not to be drawn into controversial matters prevented them from publicly raising these issues. Sankari Prasad Basu, an eminent writer and social historian, in his multi-volume work *Vivekananda and Contemporary India* (in Bengali), has been very meticulously unveiling the different facets of those critical issues and historically significant events. In this, Sankari Prasad's aim is not to generate new controversies nor to revive the old ones. One need not agree

with the whole of his point of view. But this much one must admit that his is a sincere and deeply researched effort to place Vivekananda in the frame of his time.

The volume under review is the third in a massive four-volume work (the fourth volume is expected to be out soon). It is one of the lengthiest (518 pages) books of its kind the reviewer has seen. An enormous amount of highly interesting material has been amassed under its six chapters.

Although the volume starts with a very lively description—sometimes charged with emotion—of the ‘Old Calcutta boy’s’ glorious return to the city and of how the noted men of Calcutta, after some initial hesitation, finally decided to follow the lead of Madras (described in Volume II) in welcoming the Swami, the pivotal chapter in this volume is the following one on ‘My Plan of Campaign’. In this very brief chapter, covering less than four pages, Sankari Prasad has drawn attention to the Swami’s perhaps most explosive speech delivered within the first fortnight of his return to India, on February 9, 1897, in Madras. The speech was a frontal attack on what Vivekananda considered to be the evil forces in India, namely, the Theosophy movement and orthodoxy. At the same time, Vivekananda did not spare that more sophisticated group of social reformers beneath whose apparent progressivism personal inconsistencies and narrow-mindedness were not hard to find. The next three chapters of the volume neatly unfold the story of the reaction to his speech. In the long final chapter, Sankari Prasad has undertaken a contextual exposition of the Swami’s egalitarian ideas.

Vivekananda and Theosophy were poles apart. The Theosophy movement, founded by Madame Blavatsky in 1875, drew its sole strength from occultism. With Annie Besant’s entry into the movement and her assumption of its leadership, it received a

new lease of life. When Besant declared herself a Hindu and started to eulogize even some obnoxious Hindu beliefs and social practices she, of course, became a target of attack for both the social reformers and Christian missionaries; but nonetheless, she won the hearts of millions of Indians all over the country. For how could Indians, even some of the most highly educated among them (such as Justice Subramānya Iyer, Narendra Nath Sen of the *Indian Mirror* or Sisir Kumar Ghosh of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*), ignore such a renowned English lady with outstanding oratorical power who was all in praise of Hinduism? When Vivekananda made an ‘unmistakable declaration of war’ against Theosophy, all the wrath fell upon him. In doing this, the Swami had to sacrifice many a valued friendship; yet he was uncompromising. Sankari Prasad, in addition to pointing out the essential vacuousness of the Theosophy movement as exposed by the Swami, has very interestingly analysed the Swami’s reasons for talking down Theosophy. Apart from other factors, simply on religious grounds the Swami had to fight Theosophy; for his Vedantism could by no means compromise with the occultism and supernaturalism of Theosophy. For, in the opinion of Vivekananda, one could not be a Hindu and a believer in such third-rate magical powers of religion at the same time.

But there were two other reasons as well. First, something had to be done about the total lies the Theosophists, such as Col, Olcott, were spreading in India about the indispensable help they had provided Vivekananda while he was in America. Secondly, and of greater importance to Vivekananda, was the great injury that Theosophy was doing to the Indian national character: when Indians needed strength to make themselves a virile race, occultism which is ‘injurious and weakening to humnity’, was

further dragging them 'down to the depths of hopeless imbecility'.

At the centre of the conflict between Vivekananda and orthodoxy were the facts that Vivekananda, even after his sea voyage, claimed himself to be one hundred percent Hindu, that being a kayastha he declared himself a sannyasin, that he publicly defended sharing food with foreigners and non-Hindus, that he was a severe critic of the *yajmani* system and *kulaguru*, and finally, that he denied that the institution of caste could be a permanent and inalienable feature of Hindu religion. It is difficult for us, in this last quarter of the twentieth century, to imagine the saliency of these issues. In fact, since the beginning of this century orthodoxy gradually has lost its grounds, and as Sankari Prasad shows, an important reason for its defeat was the mighty and relentless struggle that Vivekananda had launched against it. But it is important to remember that throughout the nineteenth century, orthodoxy had indeed maintained its bastion with full vigour even in the face of successive attacks by great social reformers. The fact that in the early years of that century so great a man as Rammohun Roy had to take his own cook to England, and that even at the end of the century both M. G. Ranade and Bal Gangadhar Tilak had to go through purification rites for simply attending a Christian missionary tea party even though they did not take tea, was enough evidence of the strength of orthodoxy. When, in such a context, Vivekananda burst upon the society with such statements as 'Our religion is in the kitchen. Our God is the cooking-pot, and our religion is "Don't touch me, I am holy"'. If this goes on for another century, every one of us will be in a lunatic asylum';* or when he had defended sea voyage on the

ground that give and take with other peoples and nations is a must if we are to build ourselves as a nation, he could by no means have endeared himself to orthodoxy. As Sankari Prasad vividly documents, orthodoxy counter-attacked Vivekananda with all its force, wondering how the Swami, let alone being a sannyasin, could even claim himself to be a Hindu.

Swami Vivekananda was broadly in agreement, with the essence of the social reform movement, though his emphasis throughout had been on 'root and branch reform' rather than the piecemeal reform which was usually preferred by the social reformers themselves. In general, it appears that the social reformers of western and southern India showed greater understanding of what Swamiji stood for than their counterparts in Bengal. On his part, Vivekananda had greater reservation regarding the actions of the social reformers than their professions. Of all the great social reformers, Rammohun Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar held a very special place in Swamiji's mind. With a remarkable capacity for unbiased analysis—but not without an emotional point of view—Sankari Prasad has elaborately discussed the Swami's views of a number of social reformers of the first rank, including Rammohun, Vidyasagar, Shivanath Shastri, M. G. Ranade and Sasi Pada Banerjee (and also the views of N. G. Chandavarkar, Kamakshi Natarajan, G. K. Gokhale and others who spoke about Vivekananda), as well as his views on most of the critical social reform issues such as the position of women, widow-marriage, early marriage, divorce, etc. Having forcefully challenged the view that Vivekananda should be regarded as a revivalist, Sankari Prasad, it may be mentioned, has claimed that the Swami was the only person in nineteenth-century India to have demanded fundamental changes in social structure.

It is true that the social reform movement

* *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama), 3(1973):167.

of nineteenth-century India had almost exhausted itself by the turn of the century. Yet the fact remains that both the movement and a number of its leaders made very important positive contributions to Indian awakening. An explicit appreciation of this positive role of the social reform movement would have made the chapter more complete.

In the final chapter, which is a particularly meaty one, the author makes an attempt to substantiate the claim that Vivekananda stood for fundamental social changes by systematizing Vivekananda's views on socialism and egalitarianism. But the chapter, in fact, achieves much more than this. In order to properly explore the nature of Vivekananda's thoughts on these would-be crucial issues, and further, to demonstrate the validity of the Swami's claim that he was 'a socialist'. Sankari Prasad has made a very rigorous and thorough survey of socialistic thinking in India prior to Vivekananda. This has led him to review the social thought of the Indian élite from Rammohun through Keshub and Bankim to Rabindranath and Aurobindo. This by itself is a contribution of great merit. Furthermore, the author has thrown new light on the question of the Indian intellectual élite's interest in Marxism and other forms of Western socialism (the author finds, for instance, that Marx had been mentioned in Indian newspapers as far back as 1890), and has given a good idea of the wide coverage of news on European labour and other mass movements given by Indian newspapers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

It is very difficult to construct any system out of the socialist and egalitarian ideas of Vivekananda for the simple reason that such ideas were never expressed by him in any well-organized form, written or otherwise (his essay *Modern India* being the sole exception). He always expressed them, albeit

forcefully, through speeches, letters, personal conversations, and scattered writings. Yet, Sankari Prasad has performed the near-impossible feat of collecting nearly all the relevant documents and organizing in a systematic manner Swamiji's thoughts on socialism.

It is interesting to know that Vivekananda was very emphatic about the economic factor in social change; that he vehemently attacked the existence of special privilege in any form and demanded equality of opportunity and equal rights for all; that he recognized that the real source of all power is the people and said that the power-holders in any given period of history dig their own grave by isolating themselves from the people; that he realized the exploitative nature of commercial capitalism; that he rejected the doctrines of 'hereditary transmission' and 'survival of the fittest'; that he prophesied, on a number of occasions, a revolutionary future for Russia and China; that he thought that the rise to power of those who belonged to the bottom of the society was inevitable; and that he firmly believed that fundamental social changes have to be brought about by cultural transformation through mass education.

It is indeed true that Vivekananda made use of a caste framework rather than class framework for understanding historical changes, and that he did not believe in the inevitability of conflict. Besides, while he demanded a 'root and branch reform', the nature of such reform was not thoroughly explicated. Also, Vivekananda founded his socialistic and egalitarian ideas on Advaita Vedantism which advocated the essential unity of life. These indicate that a considerable scope for further analytical and comparative research on Vivekananda's ideas still remains. (This, however, does not mean that Sankari Prasad has fallen short

of his promise, for such a large-scale research would go beyond the scope of his book.) Meanwhile, Sankari Prasad, by systematically presenting the Swami's ideas and by raising a number of critical questions,

has taken a giant step towards understanding the phenomenon called Vivekananda.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

OUR HERITAGE : BY SWAMI SIDDHINATHANANDA, Publishers : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati K. M. Munshi Marg, Bombay-400 007, 1978, pp. xi+295, Price : Rs. 10/-.

'When the Jews first came and settled in Cochin, the Prince of Cochin allowed them to build a synagogue adjacent to the Devi Temple which belonged to the royal family. Some people questioned the wisdom of allowing these aliens access so close to a Hindu temple. An astrologer was consulted. He, after reading the stars and consulting his sacred book, revealed the divine will. The Devi said : "They also sing my glory in their language." That settled the matter.' (p. 90).

This is one of the telling examples given by the author in highlighting the Indian approach to the diversity of religion, in the course of his brilliant survey of the panorama of Indian Heritage from the ancient past of the Vedic times down to the problems of the present day. Apart from underlining the main features of the several institutions and traditions that distinguish the Indian legacy, he throws interesting light on some of the mysteries and riddles that strike the deeper eye.

While on the Epics, he raises certain questions: How is it that Sri Ramachandra tells Bharata in their forest meeting that Dasaratha had promised Kekaya that Kaikeyi's son would ascend his throne, when there is no mention anywhere of it earlier in the narration? Was Rama justified in abandoning Sita just because of town gossip regarding her character? Was it right for him to hit Vali below the belt at a crucial moment in their fight? He offers some possible answers. We might recall here Sri Aurobindo's defence of Sri Rama's adoption of infra-human means while dealing with an infra-human enemy.

The place of meditation in spiritual life, the nine steps of love in Bhakti-Yoga, the pre-eminent place occupied by the concept of Dharma (though under different names in the various scrip-

tures of succeeding ages), the spiritual revival effected by the advent of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, the real role of Narada in the evolution of the Indian spirit,—these are some of the other important themes developed in a fascinating manner by Swami Siddhinathananda. His is a versatile mind which scintillates whether it deals with a textual problem (for example, if the *Gita* has only 700 or 745 verses), or explains the statement of Sister Alphonsa that sufferings are a grace (p. 226).

And lastly his quotation from Confucius on the subject of world-peace: 'If there be righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there be beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home. If there be harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation. If there be order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.' The responsibility rests squarely on the individual, on how far you and I cherish and cultivate peace in ourselves.

This is the kind of book which must be prescribed for general reading at the college level in our universities if we want to build a national character.

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ONE LIFE'S PILGRIMAGE : BY SRIMATA GAYATRI DEVI, Publishers : Vedanta Centre, 130 Beachwood Street, Cohasset, Mass. 02025, U.S.A., 1977, pp. x+342, Price : \$ 4.95.

This work depicts Srimata Gayatri Devi's illustrious and commendable life and work in the cause of Vedanta for a period of fifty years (1926 to 1976) in the U.S.A. It is introduced with a short biographical account. The author was born in Dacca (now in Bangladesh) in a well-to-do and enlightened Hindu family in 1906—the fiery patriotic days of Bengal Partition, when the tremendous influence and inspiration of Vivekananda's life and clarion call to service were still fresh. She had good schooling, and, being intelli-

gent, acquired good knowledge of Sanskrit and English, which were of great service to her in her future work. Highly precocious as she was, she imbibed idealistic and religious influences from the environment at home and outside. She was inspired by Vivekananda's exhortations for the uplift of women and especially his call to Indian women. Added to this, Swami Paramananda, who became a disciple of Vivekananda in his early teens, was her uncle; he had been doing Vedantic work in the U.S.A. since 1906, and had established two Centres—the Ananda Ashrama, at La Crescenta in California on the West Coast, and at Boston on the East Coast—and she dreamed of joining him. Thus, when Swami Paramananda visited India in 1926, Gayatri Devi left with him for the U.S.A. as his disciple to assist in his work.

Thus started Gayatri Devi's Life's Pilgrimage; they sailed from Calcutta on May 2 and reached San Francisco on June 18, 1926. Being intelligent, idealistic, and well equipped with Sanskrit and English, she soon earned the confidence of the Swami and she was asked to give her first talk to the entire Ashrama community in August 1927; and from September she began holding weekly religious classes. In November 1927, she was taken by the Swami to the Boston Centre, where she lived and worked for many years under the guidance of her Guru; and when the Swami passed away in June 1940 at the age of fifty-six, she was chosen to be the Director of the two Centres. The Communities at these Centres primarily consisted of women and were run by women, and inevitably they had to separate themselves administratively from the parent Ramakrishna Order in India, while maintaining spiritual affinity.

Thus commenced the work of the two Centres (they had also a Retreat Centre at Cohasset, twenty miles from Boston, and in 1952 the Boston Centre was shifted to and amalgamated with it), 3,000 miles apart, under the independent guidance of Srimata Gayatri Devi which she has ably and admirably carried on for the last fifty years, assisted by able and devoted monastic members like Sisters Devamata, Daya, Shanti, and others at different periods. These long years have indeed been 'One Life's Pilgrimage' to Gayatri Devi (she is now seventy-two), for she leads while following the path to God.

Gayatri Devi is the first Indian woman to preach Vedanta in the West in a systematic way as the Head of an organization, thus making efforts to fulfil Vivekananda's dream under the inspiration of Swami Paramananda. This book

contains her addresses, letters, articles and other writings which throw a flood of light on her deep spiritual nature and insight, her motherly love and affection, her capacity to handle administrative problems courageously and with wisdom, and her ability to guide the community under her patiently and with understanding and to resolve their spiritual difficulties. She has literary talent, noble ideas and broad vision. The writings and addresses, presented here in simple, elegant language, without technical philosophical complications, are illuminating and practical. Her work, based on the universal principles of Vedanta, has been appreciated widely in the U.S.A., so much so that she was one of the five invitees to speak at a religious conference organized at the U.N. in October 1975. Now that India has numerous well-educated and capable ladies, Srimata's work should inspire other able and devoted women to go and found Centres in different parts of East and West.

The printing and get-up are good and there are a number of illustrations.

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA
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SRI SARADA DEVI—CONSORT OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA : EDITED BY NANDA MOOKERJEE, Publishers : Firma KLM (Pvt) Ltd., 257/B Bepin Behari Ganguly Street, Calcutta-700 012, 1978, pp. xxviii+136+9, Price : Rs. 25/-.

The book is a collection of writings on Sri Sarada Devi found in the pages of old journals and books. By bringing out the book the editor feels his long-cherished desire fulfilled and his onerous endeavour inwardly rewarded; his social duty to the present generation has, it seems, been discharged in presenting this holy life, 'a dependable model in the combined figure of Guru, mother and deity from which all could draw the necessary inspiration'. In the Introduction the editor has shown his keen power of observation in regard to the significance of the life and teachings of Sri Sarada Devi. This will appeal to those readers who are anxious for the development of our society, particularly the uplift of women, by making the necessary social adjustments. Readers may think seriously about what Swami Vivekananda wrote : 'There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.' This book will offer a guide-line to this end.

The editor's collection of writings has been aptly selected. Some of the writers were monas-

tic disciples of Sri Sarada Devi, while others were deeply drawn to her wonderful life. The writings from the pen of scholars like Ramananda Chatterjee, Dr. Mahendranath Sarkar, R. R. Diwakar, Romain Rolland and Max Muller deserve the attention of all. Four articles contributed by women writers are thought-provoking. Swami Abhedananda's 'Hymn to Sri Sarada Devi' and Dorothy Kruger's 'To the Holy Mother' written in verse show the divine aspects of Sri Sarada Devi.

The Appendices at the end include a chronology of important events, genealogy, sayings, and so on, of the Holy Mother.

The book is cloth-bound with a bright jacket.

SWAMI JYOTIRUPANANDA
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EXISTENTIAL STRUCTURES—AN ANALYTIC ENQUIRY: BY ROGER A. KENYON, Publishers: Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40 Street, New York, N.Y. 10016, 1976, pp. 63, Price: \$ 6.00.

The book under review is intended to be a small compendium on the existential structures of our thinking and existing. Its approach is, as can be expected, strongly linguistic, following the trend which Wittgenstein and the Structuralists have set. In small, closely written chapters, the author reviews some of the structures which he believes to be most basic to our human condition. He divides them into three chapters, namely 'Primitive Existential Structures', 'Formative Existential Structures', and 'Axiological Existential Structures'. In the first chapter he, all too briefly, discusses the existential meaning of myth and, in connection with this, various techniques by which the mind comprehends existence and transforms it into language. The second chapter is devoted to the discussion of 'Subjects', 'Objects', and 'Projects' by which the author means the act of 'projecting' between subjects and objects. The final chapter deals with 'Justice', 'Ethics', and 'Aesthetics', but again too briefly, defining these terms with the terminology developed in the preceding chapters.

We have closed the book with a feeling of dissatisfaction. For whom, one feels compelled to ask, has this book been written? Certainly not for 'quotidian man', as the author asserts. Students of philosophy and linguistics will profit little from this book, because it is too concise, does not explain the terminology it uses (and the book is overloaded with philosophical ter-

minology!), and completely lacks a pedagogical method of presentation. The book is, in fact, highly speculative (the author is not an academician, as he himself admits), one may even say, somewhat eccentric, despite its technical, 'objective' content. A student needs a didactic approach which leads him gradually and carefully from simple and known patterns of thought to those which are complicated and unknown. Is this book, then, meant for the person more advanced in the subject, for scholars? They in turn will find (the treatment of the subject utterly unscholarly, will criticize the lack of references, of completeness, of a 'position', that is, a certain scholarly self-assertion which evolves in a book by comparing the results of one's own thinking with earlier writings on the subject. Surely the intentions of the author are good, but he has written a book which is plainly unuseable.

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ATLANTEAN TRADITIONS IN ANCIENT BRITAIN, BY ANTHONY ROBERTS, Publishers: Rider and Company, 3 Fitzroy Square, London W1, 1977, pp xv+120. Price: £ 2.95.

The book, in four parts and twelve chapters and well served with an exhaustive Bibliography and good Index, is an excellent work on that part of archaeology which is concerned with the legend of Atlantis, the 'strange, mystical land' that has 'haunted the dreams and visions of mankind' (p. xi). In Part One the author describes 'Visions of Albion', in Part Two 'Archaic Ireland', in Part Three 'Magical Heritage in Wales' and in Part Four 'Lore and Mythology of Scotland'.

In its search, it is mainly interested in the roots of British mythology and history where the central theme is the Lost Continent, Atlantis. Fairy tales, flood memories, giant lores, ancient magic and allied topics have been analysed in detail and with dexterity. The author has also used all the existing findings on the topic in the books already published.

The author is critical of the 'orthodox scholars' who have 'consistently sneered at all references to Atlantis because of their narrow training' and 'academic dogmatism' (xi). But in justice to the orthodox scholars it must be said that the discipline of history does not permit the acceptance of anything not proved on the basis of documents. It is precisely here that any treatment of mythological themes in history becomes very difficult and questionable. Nevertheless, the author has done

justice to the subject and the book is a definite contribution in this field of knowledge.

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SANSKRIT

SRI VIVEKANANDA KARMA YOGA SUTRA SATAKAM : By SWAMI HARSHANANDA, Publishers : Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Vani Vilasa Mohalla, Mysore-570 002, 1978, pp. xii+118, Price : Rs. 16/-.

In modern times, it was Swami Vivekananda who brought to the fore Karma-Yoga, which first had its origin ages ago in the Vedas, received some philosophical background in the Upanishads, was practised by King Janaka and other ancient royal sages, and was delineated in its practical bearing and universal application, with all its implications as a path to perfection, in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Vivekananda expounded it systematically and in a way that can be grasped by modern man, in the light of modern psychological thought and the spiritual teachings and ideals of the great Buddha and his own seraphic Master, Sri Ramakrishna.

The book under review contains a hundred aphorisms (Sutras) in Sanskrit on Karma-Yoga, bringing together Vivekananda's writings and ideas on the subject scattered through his Complete Works, in harmony with and in the style of the Sutras composed for Jnana, Bhakti and Yoga systems by Badaranyana, Narada-Sandilya and Patanjali respectively. Thus, the author tries to fill up the lacuna regarding Karma, which was not attempted by anyone before, as Karma was always held to be a path subsidiary to Jnana or Bhakti, leading only to the requisite purification of mind (*citta-suddhi*) enabling the aspirant to grasp the higher truths. Swami Harshananda's is a laudable pioneering effort to codify in Sutra-form, on traditional lines, the theory and practice of Karma-Yoga on the basis of Swami Vivekananda's ideas, investing it with the status of an independent path leading to Liberation or Moksha.

The book gives the Sutras as well as the author's commentary on them in Sanskrit, with appropriate quotations from Vivekananda and the scriptures, keeping to the traditional manner of exposition, followed by an English rendering of both. The printing and get-up are good.

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA TRIVANDRUM

REPORT : APRIL 1976—MARCH 1978

The Ashrama was founded in 1916 by Swami Brahmananda, the first President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, at Nettayam hills, about nine kilometres away from the town. Being situated in a solitary and beautiful spot, the Centre is an ideal place for Sadhana. The Ashrama has an extension in the city at Sasthamangalam where a Charitable Hospital is being conducted.

Religious and Cultural Activities: Daily worship and birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda and other direct disciples of the Master were observed at the Nettayam Ashrama as well as at the Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Hall in the city. In addition, weekly discourses on Wednesdays and Sundays, an Interreligious dialogue

on every second Sunday of the month, and a monthly retreat usually on the second Sunday of the month, were held at the Ashrama. The sannyasis of the Ashrama also took classes and attended religious and cultural functions at various places in the city. On the first of the Malayalam months there was a regular Bhajana programme at the Ashrama. On Sunday mornings classes were held for the children to give them training in singing devotional songs, recitation of the *Gita*, and to acquaint them with religious literature. On May 1, 1978, the new Shrine and Prayer Hall were inaugurated by Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

Hospital Activities : The Hospital had 240 beds for indoor patients. It also ran an Outdoor Polyclinic for the benefit of the needy. In addition, there were the following departments : A Psychiatric Ward with 30 beds providing Electro-Convulsive Therapy ; two modern Operation

Theatres fully equipped with Boyle's Apparatus etc.; E.N.T., Dental, and Paediatric Clinics; X-ray department with two X-ray plants; Electrocardiography and Physiotherapy departments; Clinical and Bio-chemical Laboratories; an extensive Coronary Care Unit with five beds; and a Casualty Section.

School of Nursing: The Hospital has been recognized by the State Government for Auxiliary Nurses and Midwives Training since 1962. Every year fifteen students are enrolled for a two-year course and coached for the examination held by the Kerala Nurses and Midwives Council. In 1977, the Hospital received an additional recognition for starting a four-year course in General Nursing and Midwifery. The course was started in 1978 with ten students.

The Hospital has an efficient and well-qualified staff. The nursing services and coaching are also looked after by fully qualified staff.

Needs: The Centre has the following requirements for improving the existing facilities: (1) Addition of another floor to the Nursing School and Hostel for General Nursing and Midwifery, its estimated cost being Rs. 2,00,000/-; (2) A new electric laundry machine and drying shed Rs. 1,50,000/-; (3) One 300 MA X-ray plant Rs. 1,50,000/-; (4) Endow-

ments for the maintenance of free beds, per bed Rs. 25,000/-; (5) Quarters for Doctors and Nurses, estimated cost Rs. 3,00,000/-.

Appeal: The organizers of the Ashrama appeal to the generous public to contribute their mite in cash or kind for the welfare of the Institution and through it to the poor and deserving patients. The donors may help in any of the following ways: (1) By ear-marked donations for any of the needs mentioned above; (2) by contributing Rs. 120/- for a day to supplement the hospital diet by a cup of milk to the 140 poor patients on any of the festive occasions in one's family; (3) by contributing Rs. 750/- per month for the free supply of costly medicines, injections, tablets, X-ray, etc. to the poor patients; (4) by contributing Rs. 10,000/- or more for the construction of a room in memory of the donor's dear and near ones.

Donors are exempted from Income Tax on donations to this Institution under section 80-G of the Indian Income Tax Act, 1961. All such donations should be addressed to: The President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Sasthamangalam, Trivandrum-695 010, Kerala State. Cheques may be drawn in favour of: The President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandrum.

CORRIGENDUM

In the February 1979 issue on page 71, rt.-hand column 2nd para 27th line beginning with, 'Someone.... laughingly replied,' should be *read as*: He childishly snatched away the money-bag from one monk's hand. The monk repeatedly asked him to return it, but he was not yielding. At last when the monk said, 'You must give me the bag, the train is leaving just now', Maharaj laughingly replied,...

Editor, Prabuddha Bharata.

LAST PAGE COMMENTS

A Nation in Search of Its Identity

The core of Indian culture—the soul of the nation—is spirituality, and its goal the realization of the universal Self. The soul of India was born in its ancient river valleys amidst the chantings of Vedic R̥sis and the meditations of Upaniṣadic sages. A unique society soon took shape for its embodiment in which everything was subordinated and geared to the realization of its goal. The society was no doubt stratified, but its overall harmony and basic solidarity were assured by recognizing the uniqueness of the individual and by orientating him in a meaningful way to the Reality. The rise of empires and the repeated invasions of foreign hordes towards the end of the Vedic period had their impact on society and brought about alterations in its structure, but the soul of the nation remained unchanged. Indeed, over the centuries the soul of India has, true to the words of the Teacher of the Gita, changed its body several times, as a man casts off his worn-out clothes and puts on new ones. The socio-political crises that this nation is now facing are only the external signs of its inability to evolve a suitable modern body for its ancient soul. A body compounded of alien elements like secularism, socialism and materialism, and incongruous with its native spirit, is liable to serious disorders.

And that is precisely what we are witnessing in India today. Torn by warring parties and factions, rified by unbridled selfishness, stifled by contradictory ideologies, preyed upon by shameless demagoguery, this great nation now seems to be teetering on the brink of chaos. When one sees the social, political and religious turmoils going on everywhere in this country one cannot but feel shocked at the colossal waste of national energies. The whole nation seems to be exhausting itself on endless bickerings. In the words of David Holden, a veteran British correspondent, 'There are times in any appraisal of modern India when despair seems almost the only appropriate reaction.' This does not, of course, mean that the nation is not progressing. But there ought to be a better way of achieving progress than muddling one's way through.

Thirty years ago, India was a nation which had made a tryst with destiny. The leaders of the country had a vision of the future and a mission to fulfil. But now there is utter bewilderment about the future. The nation as a whole lacks self-direction. Progress means growth, and growth is the transformation of the past into the future. Only a comprehensive philosophy of life can meaningfully connect the nation's past with the present and the future and sustain a steady mobilization of the energies of the people along constructive channels. A nation cannot be run for long only on slogans.

In order to exploit and harness the energies of the earth, it is first necessary to rouse and channelize the energies of man. This can be done only through what Swami Vivekananda called 'man-making education' and orientating the people to life and reality by a philosophy which is in harmony with their culture. It was the firm faith of Swami Vivekananda that the Vedantic *Weltanschauung* could provide the basis for a powerful and beneficial socio-politico-economic philosophy, of which there is a vacuum in this country. The ancient soul of the nation is in search of a modern India for its unfoldment and fulfilment.
