



Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXXIV

MAY 1979

No. 5

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

THE UNIQUE AND THE UNIVERSAL

THE INTEGRAL VISION OF THE VEDIC SEERS

(It is now being increasingly recognized that the R̥g-Veda is a record of the profound spiritual experiences of great sages ensouled in the vibrant symbolism of a forgotten past. The key ideas of Hinduism like the transcendental unity of Godhead, divine immanence in creation, and the universal moral law or Dharma, can all be traced back to this most ancient scripture of the most ancient living religion of the world.

To the illumined vision of the Vedic seers the whole universe was a manifestation of one Universal Spirit. Every object in the universe—fire, water, earth, sun, wind, sky—reflected in a unique way the *vibhuti* (glory and splendour) of the one Supreme Reality. The effable transcendence of the Supreme Spirit did not prevent them from recognizing the uniqueness of its immanence and embodiment, and from entering into personal relationship with every object in a spirit of love, adoration and trust. Jnana, Bhakti and Karma were harmoniously blended in their rapport with Reality. After attaining the highest spiritual experience of the Absolute Reality, the great Vedic R̥sis (seers) saw this Divine Light scintillating through every object. So they called each of these powers of nature a Deva (literally, 'the shining one'). When they addressed a prayer to water or fire they did not think of the ordinary water or fire but of the supernal Light behind it. This integral experience was formulated in the famous dictum : *ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti* ('Truth is one, sages call it by various names'). To the illumined sages, Being and becoming were two poles of one total existence. They regarded themselves as participators in the cosmic drama of life, the bewildering diversity of which was caused by the variations of one great rhythm of becoming. To this basic cosmic rhythm of life and existence the sages gave the name *ṛtam* which, as a moral principle of social life, came to be called Dharma in later Hinduism.

The light of Truth hidden in the Vedic mantras can be understood only by meditating upon them and by gaining identity with their spirit. With a view to helping our readers in this highly rewarding spiritual exercise we are publishing from this month onwards choice Vedic Mantras. This month's selections are about Agni which as a psycho-physical power sustaining life acquired pride of place in Vedic religion.—Ed.)

अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं

यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् ।

होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥ १ ॥

1. I glorify Agni, the high priest of the sacrifice, the divine, the ministrant, who presents the oblation (to the gods), and is the possessor of great wealth.

R̥g-Veda, 1.1.1.

त्वमग्ने प्रमतिस्त्वं पितासि नस्त्वं
 वयस्कृत् तव जामयो वयम् ।
 सं त्वा रायः शतिनः सं सहस्रिणः
 सुवीरं यन्ति व्रतपामदाभ्य ॥ २ ॥

गर्भो यो अपां, गर्भो बनानां
 गर्भश्च स्थातां, गर्भश्च रथाम् ।
 अद्रौ चिदस्मा, अन्तर्दुरोणे
 विशं न विश्वो, अमृतः स्वाधीः ॥ ३ ॥

स हि क्षपावाँ, अग्नी रयीणां
 दशद् यो अस्मा, अरं सूक्तैः ।
 एता विकित्वो, भूमा नि पाहि
 देवानां जन्म, मर्ताश्च विद्वान् ॥ ४ ॥

2. Thou, Agni, art well disposed to us, thou art our protector, thou art the giver of life to us; we are thy kinsmen. Uninjurible Agni, hundreds and thousands of treasurers belong to thee, who art the defender of pious acts and attended by good men.

Rg-Veda, 1.31.10

3. (They offer oblations) on the mountain, or in the mansion, to that Agni, who is within the waters, within woods, and within all movable and immovable things, immortal, and performing pious acts, like a benevolent (prince) among his people.

Rg-Veda, 1.70.2

4. Agni, the lord of night, grants riches to the worshipper who adores him with sacred hymns. Agni, who art omniscient, and knowest the origin of gods and men, protects all these (beings dwelling) upon earth.

Rg-Veda, 1.70.3

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

Last month's editorial discussed some laws of happiness. There it was stated that the attainment of higher forms of happiness was possible only through a transformation of consciousness. Some of the principles involved in the unfoldment of consciousness are discussed in this month's EDITORIAL.

The Ramakrishna temples now appearing in India and abroad are not just beautiful additions to the local landscapes. They are the symbols of a new faith animating the great changes in the social, moral and spiritual levels of human culture going on all over the world. In a brief but luminous talk given in Mauritius on December 5, 1976, reported in our columns under the title RAMAKRISHNA TEMPLE—THE SYMBOL OF A NEW AGE, Swami Vireswaranandaji

Maharaj, President-General of the Ramakrishna Order and Mission, points out that each temple is not only the visible sign of the divine Promise but also a new gospel in stones for the message of religious harmony, world solidarity and spiritual fulfilment.

One of the main causes for the misunderstanding about Islam among non-Muslims is the view that it is based on a cult of violence. In the article entitled NON-VIOLENCE AND ISLAM, Janab Mohamed Zainulabedeem, Joint Director of Agriculture (Rtd), Hyderabad, vigorously counters this view by profuse quotations from the Holy Quran and citing several incidents in the life of the great founder of Islam. He rightly points out the mistake of identifying *ahimsā* with vegetarianism and states that true non-viol-

ence is a moral virtue, which means a certain temper of the human soul indicated by love for fellowmen, freedom from hatred, jealousy and selfishness, and submission to the will of God.

The tremendous development of theoretical physics after Einstein and the immense popularity of oriental thought in the West have made a rapport between these two systems of thought almost inevitable. Several attempts have been made to unify them within one philosophical framework. In the well-documented article entitled *SPACE-TIME*, Dr. Sampooran Singh, M.Sc., Ph.D., D.Sc., has made a fresh, stimulating attempt in this direction. The author's central thesis is that the universe, which includes the observer as the 'participator', is an image of the dynamic interplay of the forces of one ultimate Reality, and is produced by the imposition of the space-time structure in the latter. The author is the Director of the Defence Laboratory (Ministry of Defence), Jodhpur.

Manhood is not a state of unmixed blessing, says Swami Mukhyananda, the author of the article on *WOMEN'S PLACE IN SOCIETY*.

When women try to compete with men they cannot avoid bringing down upon themselves man's unenviable lot. The solution to the problem of equality of the sexes lies in the spiritual plane, and can be found only when men and women try to manifest their true divine nature by playing their distinctive roles in society, says the author who is an Acharya in the Probationers' Training Centre, Belur Math. His article is based on a talk that he gave in Colombo in November 1975 at a function organised by the Colombo Sarada Samiti to mark the International Women's Year.

In *THE EQUANIMITY TAUGHT IN THE GITA*, Dr. B. K. Sahay, Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at G. D. College, Begusarai, Bihar, discusses briefly three types of equanimity: subjective, objective and transcendental.

Brian G. Cooper, the Director of Christian Action for East-West Reconciliation, has discussed the dilemma faced by British Christian leaders created by *THE NEW BLACK PRESENCE IN BRITAIN*, this month's Human Trends feature.

THE STRUGGLE FOR CONSCIOUSNESS

(EDITORIAL)

Existence and consciousness

The Maharaja of Khetri once asked his Guru, the world famous Swami Vivekananda, 'What is life?' Without a moment's hesitation Swamiji answered: 'Life is the unfoldment and fulfilment of a being under circumstances tending to press it down'. Swamiji's definition accentuates an important characteristic of life, namely, struggle. Life is a constant struggle.

Ordinary life as we see all around us is

a constant struggle for existence. In the worlds of animals and plants the struggle for existence—the struggle to live, multiply and evolve—goes on at the physical level. It is a fierce and relentless struggle for the maintenance of the biological identity of the species in which only the fittest or the fitter ones survive, and according to Darwin and Herbert Spencer, it is this struggle that is the driving force behind biological evolution.

The situation is of course different in the case of man. All attempts at improving

human society—social, political, economic—are aimed at reducing the struggle for bare physical existence. But mankind has not succeeded in eliminating the struggle for the existence of the ego. When the struggle for existence at the body level is reduced, it only gets shifted to the mental level. The ego constantly struggles to maintain its identity by claiming a distinct status in family, in the field of work, in the circles of friends and other areas of social life. It is the struggle for the existence of the ego that is the cause of unhappiness and most of the problems of human life. As Bertrand Russell remarks in his book *The Conquest of Happiness*: 'What people mean, therefore, by the struggle for life is really the struggle for success. What people fear when they engage in the struggle is not that they will fail to get their breakfast next morning, but that they will fail to outshine their neighbours'.

Now the question naturally arises whether all this struggle for the maintenance of the ego, what William Faulkner called 'the same frantic steeplechase toward nothing', is after all so very necessary or worthwhile. Western thinkers and society in general have maintained that it is an unavoidable existential necessity. When Soren Kierkegaard, the father of Existentialism, said that all human experiences must pass through the narrow gate of the ego, and tersely summed up the characteristics of human life in four words: individuality, contradiction, choice, and dread, he was pointing to the struggle for the existence of the ego and its backwash. In recent times Teilhard Chardin has tried to explain the widespread prevalence of anxiety syndrome in modern society as a sign of the emergence of the next stage in the evolution of man. Though Western thinkers have tried to analyze the existential problems of man they have not found a lasting solution to them. The marxian nostrum of collectivization is

looked upon with suspicion by a majority of people because of its denial of certain basic human values. Though traditional religions advocate reduction of egoism and competition through a universal church, they too do not offer a satisfactory solution to modern problems as their theological premises are deeply entrenched in the supernatural.

In India, on the other hand, it was discovered at least three thousand years ago that the solution to the problems of human existence lies in consciousness. A man's attitudes, emotions, thoughts and actions depend upon the state of his consciousness. By the word 'consciousness' we mean the Puruṣa or the spirit or the self. It was discovered long ago that 'I'-consciousness is like a staircase leading to different levels of existence, and that 'ego' is only a term applied to the lower steps of this staircase. The centre of consciousness lies in the upper rungs and is the Atman, the true or higher self of man. The Atman alone is truly conscious—nay, it is consciousness itself—and everything else in the universe, living and non-living, including the ordinary human mind, is *jada*, that is, unconscious. The problems regarding the ego can be answered only by studying the roots of the ego-structure.

Spiritual life is a disciplined search for the higher dimensions of consciousness. It is an intense struggle for the attainment of higher consciousness which, according to Swami Vivekananda, is the *raison d'être* of religion. That is why he defines religion as 'the struggle to transcend the limitation of the senses'. This struggle to transcend the senses takes place in three stages: turning away from the struggle for existence, transformation of consciousness, and expansion of consciousness.

Turning away from the struggle for existence

The struggle for higher consciousness begins only when we turn away from the

struggle for existence. Religion is the total response of the human personality to the ultimate Reality, and as long as we remain engrossed in the struggle for the existence of the body or the ego, our religious life must remain partial or incomplete. We turn away from the fierce struggle for existence only when we realize the futility of it. Life is a mighty self-sustaining stream of unknown and unconscious forces which is constantly changing our bodies and minds. What is called ego is a projection of the true Self into this stream. The existence of the ego is not threatened by the life stream because its foundation lies deep in the bed-rock of immutable and self-existent Atman. So our incessant competition and desperate efforts for survival are superfluous. All that is necessary is to live in harmony with cosmic life and its universal laws.

This understanding comes to people in different ways. In the case of some fortunate souls it comes suddenly through a process called 'conversion'. The sudden conversion of St. Paul and St. Francis of Assisi, Tulsi Das and Nam Dev are well known examples of this phenomenon. In a less dramatic way such changes occur in the lives of many spiritual aspirants. They suddenly feel that the walls of resistance in their unconscious are breaking down, and that they are under the control of a new power which wrenches their souls away from the grip of worldly life with one final jerk.

However, in the case of majority of people the turning away from the struggle for existence is not a sudden but a slow, long-drawn-out, change. It may begin in adolescence with a newly awakened interest in science, art or social service, which develops into an ardent pursuit of the higher values of life like truth, goodness, beauty. These higher values are the dim intimation of the supernal glory of the ultimate Reality reaching the soul through the medium of life

which, as Shelly puts it, 'like a dome of many-coloured glass stains the white radiance of Eternity'.

The pursuit of science, art and social service brings about important changes in a person's attitude towards reality. The first change is the awareness of a larger existence beyond the cramped world of the ego. The second change is faith in a new inner imperative of ultimacy. For a scientist, artist or a social worker, the call of the ideal and his response to it become the ultimate concern of life and the foundation of his faith. The third change is the attainment of a new joy and sense of worth higher than physiological pleasures. It should, however, be remembered that these changes are seldom complete or thoroughgoing. They may raise a person from animal struggle for the existence of the body. But, except in the case of a true scientist, a great artist or a sincere social worker, they do not disentangle him from the struggle for the existence of the ego because these secular changes do not touch the deeper levels of 'I'-consciousness.

Spiritual life demands greater changes. The worlds of scientists, artists and social workers are sense-bound, limited, impermanent. Whereas the new world into which a spiritual man is admitted is boundless, eternal and more real. The faith of a spiritual man is not merely a commitment to what he regards as the ultimate; it is entering into a personal relationship with the ultimate spiritual Reality in a spirit of trust, devotion and surrender. Lastly, spiritual joy is of a very high order, brings about detachment from sense enjoyments and leads to complete fulfilment. Discrimination, devotion and detachment—these are the hallmarks of a spiritual man's turning away from the struggle for existence.

It is to teach this unavoidable first step, to wean the aspirant from struggling in the wrong direction, and to train him for the

transformation and expansion of consciousness, that Karma Yoga has been prescribed by the great teachers of Vedanta. Karma Yoga is not mere doing work. It is a technique of putting one's individual life in tune with universal life and at the same time detaching the will, the soul, from it. It is a way of living without competition, without struggling for the establishment of the ego. It is based on two fundamental laws of existence, viz. the Law of Karma and the Law of Sacrifice. The first law, which is based on the fundamental unity of life, states that the present is determined by the past. This means that we get what we deserve, and the desperate rat race for name and fame is unnecessary. According to the second law, which is based on the discontinuity of levels of existence within one life, the attainment of a higher state of existence is possible only by the sacrifice of lower states. This sacrifice may take the form of surrendering the fruit of one's actions to a Personal God or it may take the form of disinterested action for the welfare of the world. Continual performance of this kind of self-sacrifice gradually disentangles the soul from the whirlpools of life. This is how purification, austerity and self-control are practised : in fact, all ethical disciplines are based on the law of sacrifice. Thus Karma Yoga, when followed in the right way, acts as a means of turning the soul away from the futile and painful struggles for the existence of the ego in the transmigratory world.

Transformation of consciousness

As already mentioned, this 'turning away' is only the first step in spiritual life. The second step is the transformation of consciousness. Our normal consciousness is limited to the sense-bound universe. What lies beyond this limited world is unknown to us. Not only that ; our knowledge about our own real nature is also very much limited.

According to Vedanta, the microcosm and the macrocosm, the individual and universal aspects of Reality, are built on the same basic pattern, and are dynamically interconnected. Awareness of the macrocosm is directly proportional to awareness of the microcosm. In other words, our knowledge of Reality depends upon the extent of our knowledge of ourselves. This may be taken as an important spiritual law. It seems to be an important principle of the school of Vedanta known as Qualified Monism, and has been enunciated by Ramanuja as follows : 'What an individual pursues as a desirable end depends upon what he conceives himself to be'.¹

Swami Vivekananda says : 'We see this universe as human beings, and our God is our human explanation of the universe. Suppose a cow were philosophical and had religion, it would have a cow universe, and a cow solution of the problem, and it would not be possible that it should see our God. Suppose cats became philosophers, they would see a cat universe and have a cat solution to the problem of the universe, and a cat ruling it'.² What does this statement mean ? It means that it is the nature of our 'I'-consciousness that determines our view of reality. If our 'I'-consciousness is limited to our body, we can only experience the sense-bound physical universe, and then we tend to look upon God as a person like us. If we identify our 'I' with the mind, we come to live in a world of ideas, and regard God as the Cosmic Mind. Some modern philosophers and scientists have come only up to this level of consciousness.

But the 'I' has still higher dimensions. In fact, according to Vedanta what we call

1. आत्माभिमानो यादृशः तदनुगुणैव पुरुषार्थं प्रतीतिः

—*Vedantha Samgraha*, par. 45

2. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1976), Vol. III, p. 155.

'I' or ego is only a reflection or shadow of the true higher Self or Atman, which is our source of consciousness. If we look upon ourselves as luminous spirits, our whole concept of God and reality will change; then we will look upon God as the Supreme Spirit whose light fills and supports the whole universe. In order to worship God 'in truth and spirit' we should first realize our true nature as the spirit. That is why Ramanuja insists on self-awareness, which he styles *ātmavalokana*, as an important first step in Bhakti Yoga.

The self is like a staircase only the lower rungs of which, constituting the ego, are known to us. The higher rungs spiralling away through the unknown regions of higher consciousness remain closed to most of the people. It is only through intense struggle and God's grace that one can open this path by breaking through the thought-barrier. The discovery of a higher dimension of the self results in the transformation of our consciousness. It marks the awakening of the Jiva or soul from its age-long slumber, and it is the immediate aim of yoga, meditation, prayer, self-analysis—in fact, all spiritual techniques.

The question of God-realization comes only after the awakening of the self. This awakening opens the 'inner eye' or higher intuition without which the aspirant cannot probe into Brahman, the infinite Reality. When Sri Ramakrishna was once asked, 'How can we see God?', he replied: 'Not with these eyes. God gives one divine eyes; and only then can one behold him. God gave Arjuna divine eyes so that he might see His Universal Form'.³ What are the changes that take place in the 'I'-consciousness of a person when the 'inner eye' opens?

The first change is the discovery in the region of the heart of an inner space variously described in the Upanisads as

'sinless space' (*daharam vipāpam*), the 'cave' (*guha*), the 'heart', etc. It is the locus or the seat of the Jivatman or the spirit of man and is the true source of his consciousness. It is often symbolically represented as a lotus with eight petals. The discovery of this centre leads to the experience of two 'I's in us: a lower self or the ego, the participator and enjoyer, called the 'unripe I' by Sri Ramakrishna; and a higher self which is a mere witness of one's thoughts and which Sri Ramakrishna termed the 'ripe I'. It is about this dual nature of the self that the *Katha upanīśad* speaks in the mantra beginning with *ṛtam pibantau*, and this idea is then elaborated in the famous chariot metaphor.⁴ Another related change is the emergence of *prajñā* or intuition technically called *ṛtambhara prajñā* ('truth bearing consciousness') in the *Yoga Sūtra* of Patañjali.⁵ This is usually of the nature of photic experience and is therefore also called *prajñāloka*⁶ ('light of intuition'). This light makes the object (usually the image of a deity) meditated upon luminous and living. This photic experience has also a remarkable subjective effect: it radically alters one's self-image and imparts a divine glow to it.

Secondly, spiritual transformation means the shifting of the centre of our vital activities from a lower *cakra* or centre to a higher one. According to the Tantras, Prāna or vital energy flows along three subtle channels in the human body of which the main central one called *suṣumna* has six centres in it. In the unawakened state vital activities are controlled by the three lower centres while the higher centres remain closed. Spiritual awakening means the opening of the fourth centre called *anāhata cakra*, and its taking over control of the vital life of the personality.

³. M. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974) p. 116

⁴. *Katha Upanīśad* 1.3.2-7

⁵. *Yoga Sūtra*, 1.48

⁶. *ibid*, 3.5

A third change is the development of the inwardness of mind known variously as *pratyak pravaṇata*, *antarmukhata*, *avṛttacakṣu*. In an unawakened person the mind is completely outgoing. With the awakening of the higher centre of consciousness, one's thoughts get drawn inward just as iron filings are drawn to a magnet. This interiorisation of mind is quite a different thing from 'introversion' which psychologists like Dr. Jung speak about. Too much introversion is a morbid state of mind caused by fantasies and brooding over the past. An introverted mind is still an outgoing one, only in this case the outer environment has been internalized and the energy of the mind instead of issuing forth in action gets dammed up. Inwardness or interiority is, on the contrary, a state of mind in which psychic energy flows freely towards a spiritual centre.

A fourth change involved in the transformation of consciousness is the elimination of self-forgetfulness. Usually, most of our physical activities are going on in an unconscious way. We are seldom self-aware. As Dr. Jung has pointed out, there is a lot of difference between the two statements : 'I am doing a work' and 'I am *aware* that I am doing a work'. A little introspection is enough to show that the latter condition is very rare. We have only momentary self-awareness, and most of our time is spent in self-forgetfulness. Constant *japa* or repetition of mantra, constant mental alertness practised by Buddhist monks, constant *dhikr* or 'recollection' practised by Sufi mystics—these are techniques meant to overcome self-forgetfulness. With the awakening of the self, constant self-remembrance becomes spontaneous.

Expansion of consciousness

The opening of the inner eye and the resulting transformation of consciousness described above are only the beginning of

spiritual unfoldment. But it is an unavoidable step and qualifies the aspirant to undertake the next stage in the struggle for consciousness, namely, the expansion of consciousness. The early spiritual awakening gives one knowledge of oneself as a spirit or centre of consciousness separate from the body and thoughts. But it does not give the experience of the Infinite, though it may give rise to an intense longing for it. This longing of the individual spirit for the Supreme Spirit is the true *brahma jijñāsa* ('desire to know Brahman') and the true *parā bhakti* ('supreme devotion'). The fulfilment of this longing is possible only through the expansion of consciousness.

According to most schools of Hindu philosophy each soul has the potential capacity for infinite consciousness. In the unawakened state this consciousness remains suppressed by the action of *gunas* (according to Sankya and Yoga), or remains in the contracted state (according to Rāmānuja), or remains veiled by ignorance (according to Śankara). When the obstacles are removed, consciousness expands and encounters the Supreme Spirit.

This expansion of consciousness takes place in two stages : a conscious stage and a superconscious stage. The word 'superconscious' is often loosely used to denote any kind of higher spiritual experience, and its indiscriminate use has led to a lot a confusion in understanding higher mental processes. All spiritual experiences in which 'I'-consciousness is retained belong to the realm of the 'conscious'. How then do these higher conscious experiences differ from the normal physical consciousness of ordinary waking state ? In the first place, in ordinary waking life 'self-consciousness' is, as already pointed out, a rare thing, since most of our normal waking life is controlled by the unconscious. Whereas in higher spiritual experiences there is intense self-awareness. Secondly, ordinary waking consciousness is

sense-bound. But higher spiritual consciousness is super-sensuous; the technical term given to it by Patanjali is *samprajñāta*, that is, with *prajña*.

The difference between this 'super-sensuous conscious' experience and super-conscious experience is important. In the first one, 'I'-consciousness is retained. But in super-conscious experience, 'I'-consciousness is totally lost; Patanjali's term for this is *asamprajñāta*. The loss of 'I'-consciousness may be the culmination of spiritual life brought about by the complete purification of the mind and the destruction of all latent impressions. It is then called *nirbīja samādhi*. According to Sri Ramakrishna, after attaining this state ordinary mortals do not return to physical consciousness. The loss of 'I' may also be the result of wilful suppression of the 'I'. Advanced yogis often practise this for certain higher purposes, especially to speed up their spiritual progression. If ordinary people attempt this, it may only result in slavery to Tamas or inertia and a plunge into the darkness of the unconscious.

The mode of expansion of consciousness and the resulting spiritual experiences are not the same for all people. Most of the differences and conflicts among religions and religious sects arise from the bewildering variety of religious experiences open to man. Within Hinduism the experiences claimed by Yogis, Bhaktas and Jnanis are vastly different from one another. For Yogis, the expansion of consciousness is an end in itself and leads to the total isolation of the *Puruṣa* from the hold of *Prakṛti*; this is achieved through intense exercise of will power. For Vedantins expansion of consciousness is only a means of realizing Brahman, the ultimate Reality.

For the followers of Advaita, expansion of consciousness takes place in two stages: *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa*. In the second stage it takes the form of an 'unbroken

mental wave' (*akhandākāra citta vṛtti*) which destroys primordial ignorance, and then the individual consciousness becomes one with the infinite Consciousness. For devotees of God expansion of consciousness is almost synonymous with the increase of devotion for God. It means the gradual intensification of love and the awareness of the immanent and transcendent glory of the Divine Person, leading to the climactic union of the soul with God. Though the devotee depends on God's grace for all this, intense self-effort is needed 'in his case too in order to keep up his longing and self-surrender.

Owing to the influence of Thomist theology, Christian mystics of the West take an entirely different view of spiritual experiences. St. Thomas Aquinas denies the existence of any special faculty in man for spiritual experience and hence the question of expansion of consciousness does not rise at all. For Christian mystics spiritual experience is the result of purification of the ordinary mind and the impression of God's image upon it by pure intellectual *species impressae* emanating from Him. Higher mystical experiences which fall within the category of 'Infused Contemplation' are a free gift of God and are utterly beyond human effort. But the 'dark nights' of St. John of the Cross, the experiences of St. Theresa and other great mystics show that struggle is unavoidable even in their case, though these struggles may be initiated and controlled more by the Divine than by the soul.

The real fact about spiritual life, known to every sincere aspirant, is that it involves intense effort and struggle. But the rewards are also equally great. Since existence, consciousness and joy are inseparable aspects of one and the same Reality, the more the consciousness expands, the vaster becomes one's sense of existence, and the greater the experience of bliss.

In this connection it should be mentioned that some people with sensitive minds sometimes get a spontaneous experience of vastness, and a sort of mystic identity with nature. This is the result of a sudden impact of the Infinite on the ordinary mind. But in the absence of purification of mind and transformation of consciousness, this experience usually leaves the person without producing any lasting spiritual benefit. True higher experiences, which are the result of an expansion of consciousness are beyond the reach of the vast majority of people. Most people can have only some theoretical knowledge about such experiences, though even a theoretical understanding is helpful and necessary to strengthen one's moral fibre, faith in God and goal-orientation. But one should not mistake imaginations for real experiences. There is a tendency in modern times to oversimplify spiritual

realization and to suggest shortcuts to the superconscious. This kind of self-deception is self-defeating and is a great obstacle to true spiritual progress.

Now to conclude : Spiritual life is a struggle for consciousness which takes place in three stages : turning away from the struggle for the existence of the ego, transformation of the self, and expansion of consciousness. Though struggle is unavoidable in all these stages, its nature is not the same throughout. It becomes subtler and subtler as one progresses. The higher forms of struggle take place in the secret depths of the heart. The heart-centre acts like a chamber with two doors. One door opens to reveal the individual spirit, while the other door opens to reveal the Supreme Spirit. All struggle comes to an end when the individual merges in the Infinite.

RAMAKRISHNA TEMPLE—THE SYMBOL OF A NEW AGE

(An Address)

SRIMAT SWAMI VIRESWARANANDAJI MAHARAJ*

Mister Prime Minister and Friends,

Temples, churches, mosques and such other places of worship are a distinct feature of human civilization. They have come into existence to meet a psychological need of man. Man wants to grasp the Infinite through concrete symbols and feel His presence in a particular place; and as a

result, we have got all these places of worship—temples, churches, mosques, etc.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His advice to Uddhava in the *Bhāgavatam*, Eleventh Skandha, says : 'One must install an image of Mine, construct a strong temple over it, raise flower gardens all around, and make arrangements for daily worship as well as for occasional festivities by making endowments, either in cash or lands or villages, domains or shops. One who does this, gets great merit.'

Now this temple of Sri Ramakrishna has become a possibility by the co-operation of you all; and I am sure all of you have gained merit either by making cash donations or by giving expert advice, or by

*An address delivered by His Holiness Srīmat Swami Vireswaranandaji, President of the Ramakrishna Order, on the occasion of the dedication of the newly built Sri Ramakrishna Temple in Mauritius on 5 December 1976. The function was attended by the Prime Minister of Mauritius.

supervising the work or by contributing labour for the temple's construction. And I am also thankful to you on behalf of the Indian nation for the co-operation you have extended in this matter.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says further in the *Bhāgavatam* that there are two kinds of temples : one type built for deities like Śiva, Durgā, Viṣṇu; and another class of temples built for Incarnations and great saints. This temple comes in the second category—temples built for Incarnations or great saints. Though many may have hesitation to accept Sri Ramakrishna as an Incarnation of the modern age, yet no one can have any objection to regarding him as a great saint of this age. And Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that those who worship the saints with desires will have their desires fulfilled, and that those who worship them without any desire will attain Mokṣa, Liberation. So whether you think of Sri Ramakrishna as an Incarnation or as a saint, if you worship here with desires you will get all the three desires : Dharma (virtue), Artha (wealth) and Kāma (enjoyment); and if you worship him without desires, you will attain Mokṣa. So all the four Puruṣārthas can be had here by worshipping Sri Ramakrishna.

This temple has a further significance. Sri Ramakrishna realized God by various Sādhana's prescribed by various sects of Hinduism like the Śāktas, Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas. After that, he was curious to know how people of other religions worshipped God and what was the goal they attained. Therefore he practised other religions like Christianity and Islam, and ultimately found that all these religions led to the same goal. So by direct experience, he realized that all religions led to the same ultimate goal, namely, God-realization. That experience he put in a few words : '*Yato mat tato path*', that is, 'as many religions so many ways to God-realization'. Hence, Sri Ramakrishna

and this his temple stand for the unity of all religions.

There is another significance to this temple. Today we find great thinkers trying to work for a united world. We live in a world divided by a multiplicity of races, nations, colours, languages—a world divided into the rich and the poor, the educated and the non-educated, the saint and the sinner, and so on. All these differentiations will have to be synthesized into one ideal through which there will be one world. The great thinkers of the world, however, have not been able to find a basis for it. But Sri Ramakrishna by his realization has given a basis for that one world. He realized that the same Atman was in all human beings, and so none was a native or an alien to him; all were very dear to him because he found that at the back of all these differentiations there was the one Atman common in all. This realization of Sri Ramakrishna gives the foundation for the building of one world. Sri Ramakrishna spoke about this only after getting direct experience; and this direct experience worked first in the religious field. Direct experience—this is the one proof that the modern scientific world demands. The doctrine of unity was for Sri Ramakrishna not a mere theory or metaphysical doctrine but actual realization.

So these two messages—the harmony of religions and the unity of the world—have got a great significance for modern man. This temple is open to all, to all people to whatever race or religion, caste or creed they may belong, whatever be their language, whether they are rich or poor, educated or non-educated, men or women. All can come and worship in this temple; and I have great pleasure to declare this temple open to one and all on this island of Mauritius.

If we look through history we find that every civilization has been ushered in by the life and message of some great spiritual

luminary. The Buddhist civilization, the Christian civilization, the Islamic civilization are all examples of this; and today in this modern world we have had this great spiritual personality, Sri Ramakrishna, and his great message—the message about which I have already told you : the harmony of all religions, and the fundamental unity of mankind. He has also given proof of the existence of God by direct experience, which modern science demands; and he has thereby given back to the world the faith in God, which had become rather shaky on account of the attack on it by science. All this shows that his message has got the potentiality to usher in a new civilization. In fact, we are at the end of an epoch and at the beginning of anew one.

Before I came to this island, one gentleman in Bombay said to me that God created Mauritius first and then built Heaven after this pattern. After coming here I find that there is some justification for his statement, though it is no doubt very hyperbolic. This island is really very beautiful and the

people are very loveable. And when I move back, I carry with me the pleasant memories of my visit to this beautiful island and of the people here, the happy memories of my visit to this small but great nation. 'Small' I say because of its dimensions, but 'great' for the principle it holds up in its national and international life.

Before closing, may I thank you Sir, Mister Prime Minister, for gracing this occasion by your presence in spite of your various responsibilities as the Head of the State and in spite of the heavy work schedule caused by your electioneering campaign. That shows you have love for this Institution and appreciation for its humble work.

I also thank the members of the Managing Committee here for extending an invitation to me to come, and I am very happy to have been here and taken part in this celebration. If I had not come, I would have missed something very great, and so I thank them once again for extending their invitation to me to come to this island.

NON-VIOLENCE AND ISLAM

MD. ZAINULABEEDEN

There is a deep-rooted misconception among non-Muslims that Islam and non-violence (Ahimsā) are poles apart, and as such any attempt to find one in the other is a futile exercise. It is also felt that a study to bring out a compromise between Islam and non-violence may result in a theoretical adjustment rather than a practical proposition. This misunderstanding is based on two factors : (1) not studying, understanding and evaluating Islam in its true perspective, and (2) a defective and incomplete concept of non-violence. The first is again based on two factors : (a) the incapacity

of many Muslims to project their religion properly, not only in its practice but in its preaching and presentation (especially in the local languages), and (b) a preconceived prejudice against Islam and its followers.

Islam may be called a militant religion, but militant in the sense that the religious and social exercises prescribed by it are dynamic and keep its followers disciplined, vigilant, and active to remain on the right path. It must be admitted that some not only overdid these exercises (mostly the Muslim rulers and their puppet subordinates), but some also indulged in out-of-bound practices

which created a fear of personalities and prejudice against their principles in general among non-Muslims. It is very unfortunate that amidst the glitter, glamour and glory of the Muslim rulers in this country (India), the real pioneers, who with their spiritual eminence and personal example have attracted innumerable non-Muslims to Islam, are lost sight of. Their exemplary lives and activities are overlooked and forgotten, while their tombs built with inert materials are respected and even worshipped! Many of the common Muslims remain Muslims in name only; as such, their aspirations, ambitions and activities are not governed by the true tenets of Islam, and they therefore fail to be true models of Islam, projecting its true principles and practices. Unfortunately, not enough literature on Islam has been produced in the local languages to enable non-Muslims to study it with an open mind and understand it in its true light.

The second point to consider is the exact nature of non-violence. Is it to abstain from causing physical injury to any living thing, whatever be the circumstances, and thereby to lead a secluded, ascetic life? A quotation from the writings of Gandhiji, the great exponent of non-violence in modern times, is worth quoting here :

Ahimsa is not the crude thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of Ahimsa. But it is its least expression.

Ahimsa which to me is the chief glory of Hindus, has been sought to be explained away by our people as being meant for sannyasis only. I do not share this view.¹

If not to hurt any living thing is only a part of Ahimsā, and if Ahimsā is not meant only for sannyasis renouncing the normal worldly activities, what then is the complete and practical Ahimsā which all

people can follow and thereby derive the maximum benefit? This question can be answered very well through another quotation of Gandhiji :

The principle of Ahimsā is violated by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. It is also violated by our holding on to what the world needs.

They [Ahimsā and Truth] are like the two sides of a coin... Nevertheless, Ahimsā is the means and Truth is the end.

I have held that it [Ahimsā] is 'the way of life'. India has to show it to the world.²

Again, concluding his book *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, in the chapter called 'Farewell', Gandhiji observes with mature wisdom : 'But this much I can say with assurance, as a result of my experiments, that a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of Ahimsā'. Further he says that 'without self-purification the observance of the law of Ahimsā must remain an empty dream'. 'Ahimsā is the farthest limit of humility.'³

The concluding sentence of his Autobiography is also worth reproducing : 'In bidding farewell to the reader, for the time being at any rate, I ask him to join with me in praying to the God of Truth that He may grant me the boon of Ahimsā in mind, word and deed.'⁴

The foregoing quotations on Ahimsā lead us to the following conclusions :

(1) Ahimsā comprehends not only not hurting any living thing, but also avoiding thoughts and actions such as evil thoughts, undue haste, lying, hatred, wishing ill to anybody and holding on to what other people need. It is also equated with self-

2. Ibid.

3. M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House).

4. Ibid.

1. M.K. Gandhi, *My Religion* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House).

purification and humility. In short it is an all-comprehensive principle, as Gandhiji himself says.

(2) Truth can be realized only through the practice of Ahimsā.

(3) Ahimsā is a way of life connected with man's thought, word and action.

Now let us examine Islam in the light of the above discussion and conclusions.

The two fundamental guiding principles of a man of Ahimsā are peace and compassion. He should live in peace with himself and with the world outside, and shower kindness and compassion on all human beings, treating them as his own brothers. How can one develop peace? If a person's mind is disturbed and agitated by many actions and reactions, naturally he cannot have mental peace. The fruits of his thinking and actions may not come up to his expectations, resulting in frustration. Therefore, the best and only way to live in peace is first to recognize the existence of a Supreme Power, God, and submit to Him, leaving to Him the results of actions in the world; in other words, to do *niṣkāma karma* as taught in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Absolute submission to God's will generates peace. Therefore, submission and peace are the two guiding principles for a man of Ahimsā—the former with respect to God and the latter with respect to other human beings resulting in a feeling of universal brotherhood. Submission should be both out of love and fear; love for the Great Power who has created us, is sustaining us and is bestowing on us innumerable benefits day in and day out, and fear that He is watching us and will punish us some day for our evil actions. Islam is the name of the perfected code of conduct based on these two cardinal principles of submission and peace. In fact, the very meaning of the Arabic word 'Islam' is 'submission and peace'.

A true Muslim lives and dies in submission to God and in the establishment of peace in

this world. His implicit faith in God based on the dynamic formula '*la ilaha illallah*' ('there is no object of worship except God') gives him those values of life which earn him peace and universal brotherhood. He has no greed or ambition in life except to please God and to carry the message of peace to others so that all may live in happiness and harmony. He has no double standards of behaviour towards Muslims or non-Muslims. For him the whole of humanity is a brotherhood, and is divided into two sections only: those who believe in God and live in this world according to His guidance (the Muslims), and those who do not believe in God and create chaos but who still have the inborn tendency to fall in line with those loving God and living peacefully. We may call the second category potential Muslims. Even while carrying the message of peace to potential Muslims, God advises Muslims in the Holy Quran to argue and convince: 'Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in a better way.' (16 : 125). The following passages from the Holy Quran show catholicity and religious tolerance :

Lo! Allah is my Lord and your God. So serve Him. That is the right path. [19 : 36]

Reville not those unto whom they pray besides Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance. [6 : 108]

Unto each nation have we given sacred rites which they are to perform; so let them not dispute with thee of the matter, but summon them unto thy Lord. [22 : 67]

With such broad concepts of religion, a Muslim cannot afford to be violent. Above all Islam is a simple and scientific religion, which has to be understood before it is accepted. Therefore, the Holy Quran states categorically: 'There is no compulsion in religion'. (2 : 256)

The following are some of the instructions

of the Holy Quran enjoining Ahimsā :

We decreed for the Children of Israel that whosoever killeth a human being for other than man-slaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind. [5 : 35]

If you punish, then punish with the like of that wherewith you were afflicted. But if you endure patiently, verily it is better for the patient. [16 : 126]

The guerdon of an ill-deed is an ill the like thereof. But whosoever pardoneth and amendeth, his wage is the affair of God. Lo ! He loveth not wrongdoers. [42 : 40]

The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil with one which is better ; then lo ! he between whom and thee there was enmity (will become) as though he was a bosom friend. [41 : 34]

Let them forgive and show indulgence. Yearn ye not that God may forgive you ? God is Forgiving, Merciful. [24 : 22]

Keep to forgiveness, and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant. [7 : 199]

Work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering (thereof). [7 : 55]

The (faithful) slaves of the Beneficent are they who walk upon the earth modestly and when the foolish one addresseth them answer 'Peace'. [25 : 63]

Confound not truth with falsehood, nor knowingly conceal the truth. [2 : 42]

A kind word with forgiveness is better than almsgiving followed by injury. [2 : 263]

Whoso interveneth in a good cause will have the reward thereof, and whoso interveneth in an evil cause will bear the consequence thereof. [4 : 85]

When you are greeted with a greeting, greet ye with a better than it or return it. Lo ! God taketh count of all things. [4 : 85]

And walk not in the earth exultant. Lo !

thou canst not rend the earth, nor canst thou stretch to the height of the hills.

Turn not thy cheek in scorn toward folk, nor walk with pertness in the land. Lo ! God loveth not each braggart boaster. [31 : 18]

Be modest in thy bearing and subdue thy voice. Lo ! the harshest of all voices is the voice of the ass. [31 : 19]

The way (of blame) is only against those who oppress mankind, and wrongfully rebel in the earth. [42 : 42]

Lo ! the noblest of you in the sight of God is the best in conduct. [49 : 13]

The life of the Holy Prophet (may God's blessings be on him) is an illustrious model for all Muslims to emulate. He has shown the greatest restraint in the preaching and practice of Islam. His life in Mecca was full of examples where he suffered without a protest.

Prophet Mohammad was subject to many hardships and personal injuries when he was preaching Islam in Mecca. His reactions to these were nothing short of the true exposition of Ahimsā. People threw rubbish on his body and showered abuses. One particular lady adopted a novel technique: as the Prophet passed in front of her house every day, she threw rubbish, collected in her house, right on his body. This became such a regular practice that one day when rubbish was not thrown on him he wanted to know the reason for it. On enquiry he learnt that the old lady was sick. He then went into the house, sat by the bedside of the lady, consoled her and prayed for her early recovery.

When the Prophet went to the town of Taif and started preaching Islam, he was chased with stones by the people of Taif. He was badly hurt ; bleeding, he fell down in a swoon. But he never scolded his abusers nor hated them. He calmly prayed that God lead them to the right path and pardon them as they did not know what

they were doing. He felt that someday light would dawn—if not on them, then at least on their progeny—and they would accept the Truth. As such he refused to curse these potential Muslims.

It may be argued that as the Prophet was powerless during this period he had to adopt this method of Ahimsā; but that when he migrated to Medina and became powerful he actually fought wars. But it should be clearly understood that all the wars fought while in Medina were in self-defence. With meagre men and materials he had to face an enemy well-equipped and bigger in size. Self-defence is a part of Ahimsā, a virtue which does not expect people to lie down and allow opponents to pass over them. The Truth or Dharma has to be kept up, and it was with this purpose that the Pāṇḍavas had to take up arms under the inspiration and guidance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa against the Kauravas. An instance which occurred in one of the wars shows the absolute non-violent attitude of the Prophet. During the thick of battle as the Prophet was taking rest under a tree, an enemy soldier locating the Prophet alone rushed at him with his drawn sword. When the Prophet got up, the enemy brandished the sword at him, and with authority asked him, 'Who is there to save you now?' The Holy Prophet, totally unperturbed, smiled and said, 'God'. The word 'God' coming out of the Prophet's mouth was so powerful that the enemy shivered as under a shock and dropped the sword on the ground. The Prophet quickly picked up the sword, and asked the antagonist the same question, 'who is there to save you now?' The man, who was without faith in God, was confused and admitted, 'There is none except you.' Here was an enemy who wanted to kill the Prophet, but was now completely at his mercy. With one stroke the Prophet could have chopped off his head. But he handed back the sword to

the enemy saying, 'Believe in God and have faith in Him.'

Even in the height of his power the great Prophet preferred to be a Servant-Prophet. A recorded tradition says that once a villager who came to see the Prophet urinated in the mosque. When people were about to beat him up, the Prophet asked them to leave him alone and himself poured a bucket of water on the urine.

The conquest of Mecca is unique in history, and is a glowing example of non-violent war. With an army ten thousand strong, the Prophet marched on Mecca. There was no opposition, no resistance, practically no blood was shed, and only a handful were taken prisoners. The mode of entrance of the conqueror into the city is a lesson in humility and grace. The Prophet was so overwhelmed with compassion towards the people of Mecca and with humility to find himself in the position of a conqueror, that he bent down his head to touch almost the back of the camel on which he was riding. He was no doubt the victor, but he preferred to take the posture of a victim conquered by the affection of innumerable people of Mecca, most of whom were his own kith and kin. This is the person who is regarded as a model for all Muslims. How can they then forget the example set by their great Prophet and behave otherwise? If some of them stray away from his example and from the teachings of the Holy Quran which are personified in him, they should not be taken as representing Islam.

The following are some of the teachings of the Prophet regarding Ahimsā :

One who supports an oppressor and strengthens him, knowing that he is an oppressor, has gone out of Islam. [*Mishkat*]

Beware of the cry of one who is the oppressed as he demands his right from God, and God does not deprive anyone of his rights. [*Mishkat*]

God informed Prophet Moses that of all his servants the dearest to Him was he who was strong enough to take revenge and yet forgive. [*Mishkat*]

Beware of envy, for envy destroys virtues as fire consumes wood. [*Abu Daud*]

The best men are those whose manners are good. [*Bukhari and Muslim*]

You cannot be admitted to Paradise and cannot be true believers, unless you have affection for one another. [*Muslim*]

The Prophet has enjoined on his followers not to acquire properties and estates in the world, as all their activities will be centred on them only. [*Mishkat*]

Anything kept with them in trust should be safely returned and if anyone has misappropriated their property they should not misappropriate his in return. [*Mishkat*]

Do not give trouble to anyone and that will be an act of charity which will be misappropriate his in return. [*Mishkat*]

If you hate anyone do not think of destroying his life or property. [*Mishkat*]

When anything is sold the defects in the commodity should be clearly pointed out. [*Bukhari and Muslim*]

You should treat orphans and servants as your own children and feed and clothe them like yourself. [*Ibn Maja*]

That man whose neighbour is not safe from harassment has no faith. [*Bukhari and Muslim*]

It did not befit a believer to have his full meal while his neighbour went without it. [*Bukhari and Muslim*]

The cure for hard-heartedness is to put an affectionate hand on the head of orphans and feed the poor. [*Mishkat*]

The best Muslim house is one where there is an orphan and he is well treated. [*Ibn Maja*]

A labourer's wage has to be paid before his sweat is dry. [*Ibn Maja*]

The Holy Prophet advised his followers again and again regarding proper treatment

of animals. He said that they should fear God, show all kindness to domestic animals and feed them properly. They should ride them while in good condition and leave them in good condition. He prohibited striking animals on the face or branding their faces with hot irons. He said mercy shown to animals would be rewarded by God, and narrated the instance of a merciless woman being thrown into hell because she had kept a cat tied up without giving it any food.

Thus it can be clearly seen that non-violence exists as a dominant element in Islam as an individual Dharma and as a comprehensive and perfect Dharma. Simply because Muslims are non-vegetarians and because Islam permits the use of the sword in times of need, Islam should not be misunderstood to be a religion of Himsā or violence. If anyone claims that Islam was spread with the sword, the only reply is to ask with Carlyle, how could Islam get the first few who wielded the sword?

Regarding the applicability of Ahimsā to the present-day problems, the evils of the modern world are a result of false values of life. People do not have faith in God nor the fear that they will be called upon to account for all their actions. They attach little importance to truth, justice, selflessness, simplicity, humility, purity in thought and action, and such other qualities which moderners allocate to people of previous times and cultures. The result is corruption, hatred and greed with all their associated evils. Man desires to live in the world only for his own pleasure and enjoyment and for that of his near and dear ones. This concept of life has disturbed fraternal feeling and peace. The ethical standards established by great men like Prophet Mohammad have gone out of style. Life's guiding principles such as 'a good opinion of others is also part of worship', 'simplicity is a symbol of faith', 'the leader of the community is its servant', 'no one has a right over what-

ever is surplus with him', 'prayer purifies a person', and many others which the great Prophet preached, have lost their meaning in the bustle of the so-called modern civilization. Let me recall the prophetic words of the Great Messenger of God : 'When evil becomes rampant in a community it will be confronted with famine, and when cor-

ruption prevails it will be subject to fear and panic.' We are seeing and experiencing both conditions today.

The role of Ahimsā in remedying evils is vital. Only if the values of life are changed and the all-comprehensive concept of Ahimsā is adopted as 'the way of life' can man make this world a haven of peace.

SPACE-TIME—I

DR. SAMPOORAN SINGH

Introduction

Space and Time constitute the boundaries of our daily lives. They are the enclosures (limitations) within whose confines our mental and physical life can move with a certain measure of freedom, but not beyond. Our notions of space and time figure prominently in the construction of our map of reality. They serve to order things and events in our environment and are therefore of paramount importance not only in our everyday life, but also in our attempts to understand nature through science and philosophy.

There is a close affinity between the notions of space and time in modern physics and those held by Eastern philosophers : both say that space and time are creations of the mind and 'are nothing but names, forms of thought, words of common usage'. It is interesting to note that both physicists and Eastern philosophers emphasize the fact that their concepts of space and time are based on experience : through scientific experiment in one case, and through mystical experience in the other. This paper attempts a synthesis of the views of scientific thought and Eastern philosophy on the space-time continuum and on the concept of Reality.

We see the world as a system of insepar-

able, interacting and ever-moving components with man (the participator) as an integral part of this system. In scientific terminology, the use of 'participator' has gained increasing favour over 'observer' to denote the experimenter's relationship with the observed facts ; for there is no absolute dichotomy between observer and observed : by the very act of observation the scientist effects changes in the thing observed, as twentieth-century physicists have discovered. By an extension of this concept, all men may be called 'participators' ; for man, by virtue of his conceptual framework, imposes a structure on the participatory universe. Hence, each frame of reference in the mental continuum has its own space and time.

The Reality, the Supreme Truth sustaining the universe is Universal Consciousness ; and space, time and matter are essentially equivalent to 'maya' : substantially nothing but mere ideas. The manifestation of Being (Reality) into becoming (maya) is 'timeless translated into time manifestation' ; so 'space-time' is the name we give for the self-extension of the One Spaceless and Timeless Reality. It is a supreme adventure to consciously strive for the evolution of conscient mind to Superconscient Mind, where there is totality of vision in which space and Spaceless, time and Timeless, causation and

Causeless Cause coalesce, resulting in total perception of Oneness.

Scientific Thought

Classical physics was based on the notions of an absolute, three-dimensional space, independent of the material objects it contained, and of time as a separate dimension which again was absolute and flowed at an even rate, independent of a material world. But Einstein recognized that temporal specifications are relative and depend on the state of the observer, that observers moving at different velocities will order events differently in time. Two events which are seen as occurring simultaneously by one observer may occur in different temporal sequences for others. For ordinary velocities, the differences are so small that they cannot be detected, but when the velocities approach the speed of light (186,000 miles per second), they give rise to measurable effects.

This relativity of time also forces us to abandon the Newtonian concept of an absolute space. Through relativity theory all measurements involving space and time lose their absolute significance. Mendel Sachs expresses this in the following words :

The real revolution that came with Einstein's theory...was the abandonment of the idea that the space-time coordinate system has objective significance as a separate physical entity. Instead of this idea, relativity theory implies that the space and time coordinates are only the elements of a language that is used by an observer to describe his environment.¹

In relativistic physics, a new situation arises because time is added to the three space-coordinates as a fourth dimension. Both are intimately and inseparably connected to form a four-dimensional continuum, which is called 'space-time'. This concept of

space-time was introduced by Hermann Minkowski in a famous lecture delivered in 1908 with the following words :

The views of space and time which I wish to lay before you have sprung from the soil of experimental physics, and therein lies their strength. They are radical. Henceforth space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadows, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality.²

The theory of relativity predicts various distortions of space and time ; for example, the length of a rod in motion is shorter than when at rest with reference to a stationary observer. A stationary observer will see a sphere in motion as an ellipsoid, all clocks and physical processes in motion as decelerated, and the mass of a body in motion as increasing proportionately with its velocity. In other words, if we could travel in a space-ship with a speed close to that of light, our length in the direction of motion as measured by an observer on the earth would appear to be contracted, our mass would seem greater, and our time scale slower than usual ; but we ourselves would be unconscious of these changes. The primary quantities—space (length), time and mass—can only be defined relative to one specified observer.

Coming down to the atomic scale, numerous experiments have confirmed that the lifespan of an unstable subatomic particle depends on its state of motion. It increases with the speed of the particle. Particles moving with 80 per cent of the speed of light live about 1.7 times as long as their slow 'twin brothers', and at 99 per cent of the speed of light they live about 7 times as long. From the particle's point of view, its lifetime is always the same ; but from the point of view of the laboratory observer

1. Mendel Sachs, 'Space, Time and Elementary Interactions in Relativity', *Physics Today*, 22 (February 1969): 53.

2. Quoted in Albert Einstein et al., *The Principle of Relativity* (New York : Dover Publications, 1923), p. 75.

the particle's 'internal clock' has slowed down, and therefore it lives longer.

We cannot experience the four-dimensional space-time world with our senses, nor can we even form a mental picture of it as it is in itself; we can only observe its three-dimensional 'images'. These images have different aspects in different frames of reference; moving objects look different from objects at rest, and moving clocks run at a different rate.

Since space can never be separated from time in relativity theory, the curvature caused by gravity cannot be limited to three-dimensional space, but must extend to four-dimensional space-time; and this is, indeed, what the general theory of relativity predicts. Time does not flow at the same rate as in 'flat space-time'; and as the curvature varies from place to place, according to the distribution of massive bodies, so does the flow of time. In astrophysics, which deals with extremely massive bodies like planets, stars and galaxies, the curvature of space-time is an important phenomenon. All observations have so far confirmed Einstein's theory and thus force us to believe that space-time is indeed curved. Due to variations in the gravitational field, space is curved to different degrees, and time flows at different rates, in different parts of the universe.

The deeper implications of the space-time concept in relativistic physics is given in the words of Louis de Broglie :

In space-time, everything which for each of us constitutes the past, the present, and the future is given en block.... Each observer, as his time passes, discovers, so to speak, new slices of space-time which appear to him a successive aspects of the material world, though in reality the ensemble of events constituting space-time exist prior to his knowledge of them.³

3. Quoted in P. A. Schilpp, ed., *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist* (Evanston, Illinois : The Library of Living Philosophers, 1949), p. 114.

Space and time are, as dimensions, fully equivalent; they are unified into a four-dimensional continuum in which the sub-atomic particle's course can stretch in any direction, even 'backwards' through time.

Philosophical Thought

An Evolving Mind Perceives an Evolving Universe : Modern physics has confirmed that the world is a construct of our sensations, perceptions, memories. All the concepts we use to describe nature are limited : not features of reality, but creations of the mind; parts of the map, not of the territory. Eastern philosophy has always maintained that space and time are constructs of the mind and, like other intellectual concepts, are relative, limited and ultimately illusory. In Buddhist texts, we find the words :

It was taught, O Monks, that...the past, the future, physical space...and individuals are nothing but names, forms of thought, words of common usage, merely superficial realities.⁴

Be it clearly understood that space is nothing but a mode of particularization and that it has no real existence of its own.... Space exists only in relation to our particularizing consciousness.⁵

Time and space are born in mind. The perceiving mind can register anything that is offered to it according to these two card-indexes, time and space. This means that the event which happens in a well-defined temporal order of 'before and after', and spatial order of 'here and there', is not a quality of the world that we perceive, but pertains rather to the perceiving mind. The notions of 'before and after' (time) and

4. *Madhyamika-Karika Vrtti*, quoted in T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London : Allen & Unwin, 1955), p. 198.

5. Ashvaghosha, *The Awakening of Faith*, trans. D. T. Suzuki (Chicago : Open Court, 1900), p. 107.

'here and there' (space) rest on the cause and effect relation (causation). All our knowledge about the world around us, both that gained in everyday life and that revealed by the most carefully planned laboratory experiments, rests entirely on immediate sense-perception, even though the scientific views of natural processes formed through experiment lack all sensual qualities. The outer world of sense-objects has an existence only in relation to the corresponding sense-organs and the synchronizing mind behind them all. 'The dynamic and rhythmic world-of-objects is the creation of the mind.... Time and space are contained in the human mind; outside the human mind, these have no existence'.⁶ This suggests that time, space and causation are properties of the mind and not characteristics of the real world. Philosophically this results in the dethronement of time as a rigid tyrant imposed on us from outside, a liberation from the rigid rule of 'before and after' and 'here and there'.

The level of perception of an observer is a function of his point of observation, or frame of reference, in the one continuum of mind. When the point of observation is at the lowest level of the conscious mind continuum, the naturally homogeneous mind continuum appears as heterogeneous with infinite dimensions solely by the act of observation.⁷ The different points of observation in the continuum represent different levels of perception, and with a change in the level of perception, one sees a qualitatively different universe. It is the observer who

imposes a structure on the universe by virtue of his conceptual framework. Therefore, as every man has his own unique point of observation in the mind continuum, he has a unique level of perception, and a unique mental picture of the universe. As the conscious mind evolves towards the superconscious state of mind, the conceptual framework also evolves and he will experience the universe as evolving. A totally concept-free observer cannot see phenomena, for such an observer sees a universe without any material structure; he sees the 'within' and perceives the permanence behind each object or event. In the superconscious state of mind perception becomes the finest, or objectless (it is called objectless perception or objectless awareness), and consciousness shines in its own nature and in its own pristine glory. In the superconscious state, the mind is totally silent; so it does not take part in events or things and thereby loses its nature as an observer. The universe then appears as undifferentiated and dimensionless. That is to say, a conscious mind perceives the universe as differentiated, having infinite dimension, so it perceives multiplicity and is governed by time, space and causality. But the superconscious mind perceives the universe as undifferentiated and dimensionless, so it perceives Oneness, the Eternal Reality, the Supreme Truth, which is beyond time and space and causality.⁸

In the highest state of the superconscious mind, the ultimate value of the object, which is infinite and unmanifest, is enlivened by the mind which enjoys the unbounded value of awareness; that is, the object is cognized in terms of the pure subjective value of unbounded, unmanifest awareness, and hence the level of perception rises to its infinite value. The experiencer and the

6. Sampooran Singh, *The Song of the 'Khalsa' or the Song of the 'Pure Man of God'* (Jodhpur: Faith Publishers, 1978), p. 5.

7. An example of a variable time-relation is a dream. Time appears to be stretched; events seem to occur in long sequences and yet the dream may have taken no more than a few seconds of physical time. It is possible to have variable time-relations of different statuses and co-existence of different time-movements.

8. Cf. Sampooran Singh, *Dynamic Interplay Between Science and Religion* (Jodhpur: A Jainsons Publication, 1978), pp. 224-25.

object of experience have both been brought to the same level of infinite value, so the gulf between the knower and the object of his knowing has been bridged. When the unbounded perceiver is able to cognize the infinite value of the object, then the perception can be called total, or of supreme value, and the knowledge is the Supreme Knowledge, or Supreme Truth. This is the ultimate realization of the Infinite in the finite, the realization of that Reality behind every little bit of the finite. This suggests that an evolving mind subjectively perceives an evolving universe; the unmanifest, infinite and unbounded value of life is all-pervading as the substratum of every object; the knower is fulfilled by the Supreme Truth, which means that the knower in his unbounded awareness finds the object of knowing to be the same unbounded Infinite.

This view attributes a role to the observer, or participator, in determining the nature of the observed phenomena. It abandons the common interpretation of our experience in terms of an external world with a given structure, evolving according to fixed laws of time-evolution and an observer who can observe, think and discover these fixed laws and the given structure. Phenomena (the participatory universe) and the observer (participator) are inextricably interrelated, depending on the state of mind of the participator;⁹ and this introduces the concept

9. In subjective science (study of the mind by the mind), the scientist (seeker) cannot play the role of a detached subjective observer, for he becomes involved in the internal world he observes to the extent that he influences the state of the observed thoughts. Therefore, in subjective science it is suggested that the word 'observer' be replaced by the word 'participator' and the 'internal world' by the 'participatory internal world'. Subjective knowledge can never be obtained just by observation but only by full participation with one's total mind, a silenced mind, and by going beyond (transcending) the body-mind-intellect equipment where one's individuality dissolves into an undifferentiated oneness,

of a continuum of perception. The participator imposes a structure on the participating universe; a participator sees a qualitatively different universe, with a change of the frame of reference; or an evolving mind perceives an evolving universe; or the changing structure of the participating universe implies evolution in the participator. This also suggests that time is not built into (or is not the substratum of) the physical participating universe; rather it is the state of the participator's mind that builds the arrow of time (as Eddington called it) into the universe. If we show the evolution of mind by an equation, 'conscious mind→superconscious mind', then the corresponding parameters are shown as 'differentiated universe→undifferentiated whole', and 'time-dependent→timeless entity'. The evolution of mind is the progress towards 'unification in differentiation', or 'oneness in multiplicity'. At the highest superconscious state of mind, the subject and the object, or the observer and the observed, or the participator and the participatory universe, become inseparable and indistinguishable; both fuse together into a unified undifferentiated whole. A totally concept-free participator sees a universe without any structure; or in other words, he does not perceive the superficial structure of objects-processes, but perceives the substratum or the Reality. In this state of mind, the individuality dissolves into an undifferentiated oneness, wherein the world of the senses is transcended. In the words of the ancient Chinese sage Chuang Tzu:

My connection with the body and its parts is dissolved. My perceptive organs are discarded. Thus leaving my material form and bidding farewell to my knowledge, I become one with the Great Pervader. This I call sitting and forgetting all things.¹⁰

10. *Chuang Tzu*, trans. James Legge, arranged by Clae Waltham (New York: Ace Books, 1971), chap. 6,

The universe is seen as an interconnected web of physical and mental relations, whose parts are defined through their connections to the whole, so the universe is integrated into the undifferentiated oneness. In the words of the Tantric Buddhist, Lama Anagarika Govinda :

The Buddhist does not believe in an independent or separately existing external world, into whose dynamic forces he could insert himself. The external world and his inner world are for him only two sides of the same fabric, in which the threads of all forces and of all events, of all forms of consciousness and of their objects, are woven into an inseparable net of endless, mutually conditioned relations.¹¹

The religious meaning of the perception of the universe as undifferentiated, dimensionless and One by the superconscious mind is to experience God:

A saint, who has been blessed with the knowledge of Ultimate Reality, sees God for himself and that exceeds all proof. He is a co-worker with Christ, 'Behold the Lord'; or with Guru Nanak, 'The Lord of Nanak is visible everywhere'; or with Sri Ramakrishna, 'I see Him just as I see you—only very much more intensely'.¹²

The Role of Participator in a Participatory Universe: The role of the participator in a participatory universe or the interaction between the subject and the object, is thus summarized:

(a) What we see as time and space depends on our frame of reference in the continuum of mind. The homogeneous space-time continuum becomes heterogeneous space and time solely by the action of observation; without a participator it is undifferentiated. The participator, by

virtue of his conceptual framework, imposes a structure on the universe.

(b) It is the phenomenal ego that differentiates the undifferentiated space-time continuum, which is dimensionless, into multiple dimensions. The individual ego perceives this as space and time; the ego differentiates the universe into subject and object; thus the ego creates multiplicity out of Oneness.

(c) Each frame of reference in the continuum of mind has its own space and time. Each human being, depending on his frame of reference in the continuum of mind, perceives an object within a different frame of space and time. In each object is embedded, so to say, multiple spaces and times, and each human being perceives one particular space and one particular time in that object at any given moment.

(d) The frame of reference at the highest superconscious state of mind reveals the universe as a unified, undifferentiated whole. Although all events are interconnected, the connections are not causal. So in transcending time, one also transcends the world of cause and effect.

(e) The different frames of reference refer to different levels of perception, and this introduces the concept of a perception continuum. A totally concept-free participator perceives a homogeneous, undifferentiated participatory universe (space-time continuum).

The participator is each individual being; and the dimensionless, undifferentiated, homogeneous space-time continuum (where the subject and object are not only inseparable but also become indistinguishable) sustaining the participatory universe is the Supreme. This suggests that each individual being has a direct and unique relation with the Supreme and he lives and expresses this unique relationship in his daily life; everyone is alone with the Supreme.

A totally concept-free participator per-

11. Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* (London: Rider, 1973), p. 93.

12. Sampooran Singh, *The Song of the 'Khalsa'*, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

ceives the homogeneous space-time continuum ; hence the frame of reference of the participator must represent the totally silenced or quiet mind. In more poetical language, the Supreme Truth lives in the calm wordless Light of the eternal Spaces ; He does not intervene in the noise and cackle of logical debate, for He is beyond our intellect ; when the mind is silent, the Supreme gets His chance to be heard in the purity of that silence. When Truth manifests in a mind, it is called Superconscious Mind ; so a Superconscious Mind is not a means of arriving at Truth, but a way of expressing it. From a practical angle, the Truth is defined as the point

where all the pairs of opposites meet and coalesce in unity. The path to Truth is the jettisoning of the ego, I-ness, my-ness. Supreme Truth (the Active Reality or Causal Consciousness) is something living, moving, manifesting Itself each moment, expressing Itself each moment ; the Truth has to be translated in life, in time and in the movement of time. So one who is wholly consecrated to Truth, who wants to live the Truth, serve the Truth, must know at each moment the Truth ; we may call it intuition or revelation ; and this is the goal of the psycho-social evolution of mind.

(To be concluded)

THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

In considering the place of women in society two things are to be taken into account : (i) the constitution—physical and psychological—of women ; and (ii) the ideals which the society wants to realize. The role of anything in this universe is determined by its constitution, function, status, age, etc. A pair of scissors and a typewriter both are useful. But their functions are different. Similarly flower and fruit, teacher and student, architect and engineer, householder and sannyasin : all have their respective places and important parts to play. But they need not be the same. Similarly the place of man and woman in society is determined by the important part they have to play in the shaping and well-being of the society as a whole. Each is great in his or her own place. One does not have to imitate or try to do the function of the other.

At present, we do not have a single human society for the whole world with

common conceptions and ideals. There are different societies with different grades of extrovert materialistic tendencies and hedonistic ideals, and those with reflective and idealistic tendencies and spiritual ideals. We may say broadly that the former type is represented by the Western societies and the latter by the Eastern societies, especially those influenced by Indian culture.

In Western societies, there was no high spiritual conception of womanhood. Due to the materialistic and hedonistic conceptions woman was valued as a wife for her youth, beauty, etc. ; she was relegated to the background ; and her position in society became very much constricted. But with the onset of the modern era and spread of education, woman in the West has awakened to her position and is fighting for her liberation as she conceives it, and striving for equality with men on the same platform. Without a proper high ideal of womanhood to instal on the pedestal of society

for veneration, the Western woman in general is trying to compete with man in his own field by imitating him, throwing her womanly dignity to the wind, and thus declaring unwittingly her own inferiority complex. She has given up the protective walls of society and come into the open. But the effects of this 'liberation' on society have not been healthy. She has also lost the traditional chivalrous attitude of men towards her as a result of her standing in competition with them.

The Western woman is fighting for her liberation in a wrong way. Liberation is attained by gaining freedom for self-fulfilment. And self-fulfilment is attained when we can express best our inherent potentialities. The tree expresses its fulfilment in one way, a man in another way and the woman should do it in her own way according to her own nature and aptitude.

Man and woman are two halves of society. They are equal but not the same. Their functions and roles are different though both contribute equally to the shaping and well-being of society. Perhaps woman plays a more important role in the shaping of society by working at its foundations. Hence equality does not lie in both doing the same things, but in the recognition of their equal importance and worthiness of mutual respect and regard.

The Western idea of equality is not sound. It has only fed the ego and brought conflict into society, making both men and women unhappy. Woman is seeking her equality with man by giving up her womanliness. Anything which loses its identity loses its soul. She has lost what is due to her as woman, as the mother of man. It is no more equality between man and woman, but woman imitating man. When man himself is not free and happy but is in bondage of different kinds and is ridden with struggle and strife, how can woman become free and liberated by imitating him? Her duty

is to liberate man by working at the foundations—home and family life—and to assert her dignity as the mother of man. Thus she will not only be liberated but loved and respected. By entering the fray, she is not adding to the well-being of society but only extending the field of unhappiness to the home as well.

However, whatever be the Western conception of women's liberation within the framework of its own social ideals and conception of human personality, it is wrong and calamitous for our Eastern sisters to blindly follow Western women and entrust leadership to them. The Eastern social ideals and spiritual goal, based on the conception of the human personality as divine at its core, are different from the hedonistic and materialistic ideals. It is rather meet that the Eastern sisters show the light to the West and teach them the grace and dignity of woman as the mother of mankind, bestowing pure love, self-sacrifice and service. If you water the tree at the root, don't you nourish the whole tree and enable it to bear flowers and fruits for the benefit of all? What will one achieve by trying to water the leaves? By neglecting her status as the mother of man, and trying to assert herself only as a woman and a wife, woman will bring unhappiness to herself and to all her children—humanity.

In Eastern thought every being—man, woman, animal, or tree—is divine at the core. The divinity in all is equal and sexless. Its manifestation varies according to the medium through which it manifests. Electricity is neither light nor fan, but it supplies power to both. Each instrument functions according to its structure; and in doing its work properly it fulfils itself and receives approbation. Each is to manifest the potency of electricity in its own way. Similarly, human beings also should manifest the potential divinity within by functioning in life and society according to their

psycho-physical make-up, aptitude and ability. This is called one's Svadharma—the duty that devolves on a being according to its nature. By fulfilling one's Svadharma one is able to manifest the divinity within and attain perfection in life. By trying to imitate others, not only does one lose life's goal, but one becomes unhappy as well. Each is great and essential in its own place. A typewriter should not try to do the work of a clock, nor the clock of a typewriter. But both are necessary for an office. Similarly, if we have in view the total well-being of the society, and are not merely interested in asserting our own egoistic claims on it, treating it as a sponge to wring for our own enjoyment, then we should accept the division of labour in society and perform our duties conscientiously, dedicating them to the well-being of the whole. Even as the limbs of the body perform their respective functions for the satisfaction of the total individual personality, the limbs of society should also perform their respective functions for the satisfaction of the societal personality as a whole. By that the limbs also will be automatically nourished and prosper. Societal personality is the reflex of the Divine, the Virāt.

In Eastern thought, man and woman are considered complementary aspects of human personality and not competitive. Each is incomplete without the other. They are like the two pods of a pea, say the Upaniṣads; they are like Śiva and Śakti say the philosophies; they are like Ardha-nārīśvara say the Purāṇas. The Divinity behind both is the same Self or Atman, beyond sex, beyond caste, creed, race or nationality. All these relate only to the circumstances of the body. And the goal of mankind is to rise above these and assert the inner divinity by recognizing the unity in diversity in the functioning of the different limbs of society towards a common ideal.

In such collective functioning woman has her important role. Man and woman are endowed with different physical and psychological constitutions by nature, because they have different functions to fulfil. It is woman who bears and rears the children. She is endowed with softer and protective emotions of love, grace, patience, self-denial and service, without which children cannot be brought up. Though she has her other aspects, she is supreme as the mother. The very conception of mother is spiritual. There is no give and take here, no bargaining; it is all one pure act of giving without any consideration of return, love transformed into self-sacrifice and service. This is the motherhood ideal. When it is extended to the whole of human society, and not confined to the family, the motherhood ideal is at its highest. And that is what Sri Sarada Devi manifested in her life—the universal Motherhood ideal.

Woman conceived merely as wife, seeks her own pleasure and self-importance. She is self-absorbed in her own youth and physical beauty and seeks all attention on herself. This is selfish and materialistic. She is afraid that if she loses her beauty and youth, she loses her power of attraction. So the ideal of woman as wife has to be spiritualized as the Saha-dharminī, partner with her husband in spiritual progress. With her inner sensitivity and intuitive power she must help and direct the husband towards the spiritual goal. Man in his outward struggles is apt to forget the spiritual ideal. It is woman who can keep a constant watch and direct life's boat towards the spiritual haven. She must not seek man's attraction, but his veneration. She can do that by her instinct of pure self-sacrificing love and service. She is sublime and graceful by nature; why should she struggle in the mire of worldly existence, competing with man, instead of ruling the home as a queen shaping society from its very infancy:

The Indian sages recognized the importance of woman, with her great qualities and inner dignity, in shaping men and society. Manu declared :

*Upādhyāyān daśācāryāḥ
ācāryāṇāṃ śataṃ pitā;
Sahasraṃ tu pitrūn mātā
gauraveṇātiricyate—*

‘One Acarya or professor is equal to ten teachers; a father is equal to a hundred professors, and a mother is equal to a thousand fathers in the importance of shaping man and society.’ For mother is all in all, the highest ideal for the child. It absorbs all that the mother is and does. The mother thinks of and prays for the child from the very time of conception. A true mother will discipline herself and her thoughts in such a way that no unwanted things go to the child. Hers is the greatest status and most important position, and so her self-control and self-discipline also must be the greatest.

Woman is the pillar of the home and of the larger home called society. Homes are the units of society. Unless our homes improve and children are trained and shaped there to become worthy members of society, how can society improve? The social and spiritual ideals of society are inculcated and nurtured at home. If they are neglected there, nothing can improve society. Society is the arena wherein we try to manifest the ideals on a larger scale. Women are the teachers in this respect. So Manu says :

*Yatra nāryastu pūjyante
ramante tatra devatāḥ;
Yatraitāstu na pūjyante
sarve tatrāphalāḥ kriyāḥ*

‘Where women are honoured and respected, there the gods rejoice; where they are not, all activities become fruitless.’

Woman has her roles as a girl, as a wife, as a mother and as a member of society.

Her education and training must be such that she can properly fulfil all these roles. Manu says girls, like boys, must be carefully brought up and with great effort must be educated according to their needs. First of all there must be a thorough grounding in common moral and spiritual ideas and ideals for both boys and girls. Then there must be a general education to understand the world and the environment in which we live, to learn proper social etiquette and behaviour.

Girls, being endowed with fine sentiments and emotions, must be given proper training in aesthetics, fine arts, domestic arts, proper rearing of children, health and hygiene, and general knowledge of social sciences. Those with special talents and surplus energy can specialize in suitable subjects so that they may intelligently help their husbands in their profession as well as guide their children. In these days of economic stress and strain—brought about by selfishness, greed, exploitation, egoistic individualism, and the lack of proper social organization directed to the realization of common welfare and a spiritual goal—there may arise the necessity for women to take to money-earning. In such cases, they may take to those professions where they can maintain their womanly dignity and which are in harmony with their nature. They can take to pedagogic and aesthetic activities. It is not in competition with man that woman should enter public life, but when necessity arises all women must be able to come forth to defend society and its moral and spiritual ideals. If some women are endowed with special talents and have surplus energy as also suitable circumstances which enable them to make special contributions to the advancement of society in the spiritual, aesthetic, social and other fields, without forfeiting the dignity of womanhood and earning the respect of society, it should be welcomed.

In India, for example, we have had many great women who are honoured for their contributions to society. To mention only a few, the names of Gārgī and Maitreyī in the philosophic field; Sītā and Sāvitrī in death-defying purity and conjugal loyalty; Bijjaka and Ubhayabhārati in scholarship; Kannaki and Padmini in self-sacrifice; Āṇḍal, Avvaiyyar and Mīrabāi in devotion; Jījabāi and Ahalyabāi in state craft; Chāṇḍ Bībī and Jhānsī Rānī Lakshmibāi in military heroism; and the several great women of recent times; are justly famous for having laid before other women the Eastern ideals of womanhood in various capacities as wives, mothers, members of society and sannyasinis. These ideal women clearly show that women as women, preserving their modesty, purity, and honoured status as devoted wives and loving and self-denying mothers, can yet fill a great place in society. Even silently they can shape society for good by influencing their husbands to great and noble endeavour and by building up the character of their sons and daughters through their own noble example. Woman is the Gr̥halakṣmī; through her alone can the home and society prosper. She is the regulator of the character and conduct of society. In spite of her softness, she has the necessary spiritual strength and resources to change man by her holiness, purity and devotion, when she takes her stand on the motherliness in her. By her noble character, she can inspire and inculcate in the children a respect for woman as the mother of man.

Woman is soft but that does not mean she is weak, for she has more self-control. She has more of emotion, but she has more of devotion and intuition as well. It is wrong to suppose softness to be weakness. The *Mahābhārata* says softness is the sharpest weapon, for :

*Mṛdunā dāruṇam hanti
mṛdunā hanti adāruṇam ;*

*Nāsādhyam mṛdunā kiñcit
tasmāt tīkṣṇataram hi mṛduḥ—*

‘By softness harshness is vanquished, by softness is vanquished softness too; there is nothing impossible for softness; as such softness is the sharpest.’

In recent times Sri Sarada Devi embodied in herself to the greatest extent the ideals of Eastern womanhood: immaculate purity, devoted wifeness, universal motherhood, pure love, sacrifice and service. She was a great householder and a sannyasini in one, setting up the highest social and spiritual ideal for womanhood. By fulfilling her role in a quiet way, she rose to the acme of greatness. Even great world-movers like Vivekananda and other illustrious disciples of Sri Ramakrishna took her counsel and blessings in all their undertakings. She inspired them to great and noble activities. Her quite life was so intensely dynamic that even a person like Sister Nivedita respected her silent but life-giving spiritual qualities and liked to sit at her feet like a small child. Nivedita exclaimed about her: ‘To me it has always appeared that she is Sri Ramakrishna’s final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood. But is she the last of an older order, or the beginning of a new?’* Sri Sarada Devi is both. She has gathered up the old ideals as in a dynamo to send them forth again with added force to revitalize society in this new age.

The role of women inspired by her life and ideals lies in bringing the dynamic message of her great life and character to illumine the ideals of womanhood all over the world. Thus will emerge a new society with proper division of labour and worthy social and spiritual ideals. It is not that woman has no capacity to achieve what man can achieve. She may even do better. But ordinarily it is not necessary. When there

* Pravrajika Atmaprana, *Sister Nivedita* (Calcutta : Sister Nivedita Girls’ School, 1967), p. 257.

is no full employment even for men and there is so much stress and strain and unhappiness everywhere, what good will result to society or to the women themselves by their joining the fray? By merely coming onto the open field, one does not get liberty. One only exposes oneself to the play of more vicious forces and exploitation. Do women wish to compete with their own husbands and children under the mistaken notion of liberty and thus destroy their own homes? The home-world is as important as, if not more than, the outside world. All efforts should be for the growth and development of the total personality of humanity. In this an enlightened and happy home has a great part to play, where mutual love, regard and service are cultivated and character is moulded and children are sent out as worthy members of society. And woman is the presiding deity of the home, which is the basic unit of society.

It is not only women, but also men who are in bondage everywhere. The root of bondage is the soul's identification with the body. By realizing the Divine Self, which is beyond the body, beyond all sex and inequality, humanity can attain equality and freedom. On the plane of nature, there is no equality anywhere. There can only be harmony and co-operation. As such, both men and women must co-operate towards evolving a harmonious society wedded to the spiritual goal of equality and freedom. Sri Sarada Devi and Sri Ramakrishna have illustrated it in their sublime lives on the individual plane. The duty of those women

who are followers of Sri Sarada Devi is to bring to fulfilment the ideals of Sri Sarada Devi and Sri Ramakrishna on the social plane.

It is wise to remember that society is not an end in itself, but only a means to the realization and manifestation of Divinity which is neither male nor female. The Upaniṣads declare :

*Naiva strī na pumāneṣa
na caivāyaṁ napuṁsakaḥ ;
Yad yaccharīramādatte
tena tena sa yujyate—*

‘The Divine is neither woman nor man, nor is It neuter ; It animates the different types of bodies with which It is associated.’ (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 5 : 10.)

Electricity is neither fan nor bulb. But it gives power to both and makes them perform their functions for which they have been devised. Also, from another point of view, the Divine Being alone is manifesting as everything in the universe :

*Tvaṁ strī tvaṁ pumānāsi
tvaṁ kumāra uta vā kumārī ;
Tvaṁ jīrṇo daṇḍena vañcasi
tvaṁ jāto bhavasi viśvato mukhaḥ—*

‘Thou art the woman, Thou the man, Thou the boy and the girl too ; Thou art the old one tottering with the staff in hand ; Thou it is that art manifesting everywhere.’ (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 4 : 3.)

Let us all strive to attain this common Divine goal, by performing our due functions in society in a spirit of dedication.

THE EQUANIMITY TAUGHT IN THE GITA

DR. B. K. SAHAY

The ideal of equanimity is the cornerstone on which the edifice of spiritual life is built. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* this ideal occupies the central place in the course of the exposition, and is taken up for discussion several times. Not a single opportunity is lost for such a discussion, but every time the idea recurs with a new dimension added to it. On the ontological plane, it is the identity of the self with Brahman; on the epistemological plane, it is the knowledge of unity in diversity; and on the ethical plane, it is the virtue of treating all alike. The ontological sameness also assumes different forms—subjective sameness, objective sameness and transcendental sameness.

Being absorbed in worldly pursuits, one is afflicted by the events of the world. But having attained the true knowledge of the self, a person's attachment to worldly objects is destroyed. All desires subside in him, even as the water subsides in the ocean, which, though ever being filled by the rivers flowing into it, never overflows.¹ Freedom from desire leads such a person to the attainment of subjective sameness or equanimity of mind. Hence, he is not overjoyed on attaining something good, nor dejected when something evil comes.² He casts off his likes and dislikes.³ Gain and loss make no difference to him.⁴ He is indifferent to honour and dishonour.⁵ He thus remains no more a creature of circumstances. Such a person is, therefore, known as *dvandvātīta*.⁶

All pairs of opposites arise when the senses come in contact with desirable and

undesirable objects. When the eye comes in contact with a beautiful object, a pleasurable sensation arises, but when it comes in contact with an ugly object there arises an unpleasant sensation. In the same way, the contact of each sense-organ with its objects gives rise to happiness or unhappiness as the case may be. But the senses cannot do without the co-operation of mind. So the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*⁷ says, 'My mind was elsewhere, I did not see; my mind was elsewhere, I did not hear. It is clear that one sees and hears through the mind.' The mind, therefore, not only receives the sensation but also interprets and gives it meaning. Thus, the mind, the internal organ, is the experient. The internal organ, though originally unconscious, appears to be conscious because the Self is at its back. The *Gītā*, following the Sāṃkhya philosophy, seems to consider the phenomenal self as the reflection of the transcendental Self on the intellect. It is the phenomenal self which comes under the sway of the pairs of opposites, but the real Self remains unperturbed. The higher and the lower *puruṣas*, of whom the latter enjoys and suffers while the former remains unchanged and unperturbed, naturally remind one of the Upaniṣadic simile of the two birds in the same tree, of which the one eats tasteful fruits while the other remains contented without them.⁸

Having destroyed craving and attachment, the aspirant's life becomes one of abiding in the Self. He becomes indifferent to the objects of the senses in which all ignorant persons are constantly absorbed. He does not react differently to objects and people

1. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā*, II.70.

2. *Ibid.*, II.56; vi.7, 32; xii.13; xiv.24.

3. *Ibid.*, XIV.24.

4. *Ibid.*, II.38.

5. *Ibid.*, XII.18, XV.25.

6. *Ibid.*, IV.22, V.3, XV.5.

7. *Ibid.*, I.v.3.

8. Surendranāth Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1952), 2:647.

as is done by ordinary men. He sees all with an equal eye. This attitude of considering alike all things valuable and invaluable, or friends and foes, may be called objective sameness.

The wordly-minded person grades the values of a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold, but the detached person views them with an equal eye by considering them all as the modifications of one and the same substance. Not being under the spell of affection and hatred, he does not consider anybody as a friend or an enemy. 'He who has equal regard for friends, companions, enemies, neutrals, mediators, the hateful, relatives, saints and sinners, stands supreme.'⁹ 'Sages look with an equal eye on a learned and cultured brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcaste.'¹⁰ Jñāneśwar commenting on verse 18 of chapter XII points out: 'One (who) never harbours differential feelings in his mind between his possessions and those of others, like the all-pervading sentience: just as the earth never knows to sustain only the superior and to reject the inferior, or just as the life-breath does not know to abide only in the king's body to the exclusion of the plebian's, or just as the water never thinks of quenching the thirst of only cows, turning itself into poison to kill tigers—in that way one who befriends the entire class of living beings, and is kind evenly to all; one to whom the thought of me and mine is ever foreign; one who is never affected by happiness or sorrow; and one who in point of forgiveness is like the earth which has made itself the abode of happiness for all,' such a man is dear to the Lord.¹¹ Differences remain only so long as the aspirant has not realized the true nature of the Self,

just as the difference between ordinary wood and sandalwood exists so long as the fire has not touched them. With the dawn of true knowledge, the feeling of duality disappears completely and he sees only unity and identity in the world.

The attainment of unity and identity is not possible by merely reconciling the dualities or pairs of opposites but by transcending them, because however balanced one may be, one remains an individual. Dualism is inherent in ethical life, and by balancing the polarities we cannot get rid of them any more than by running towards the horizon can we reach it. Duality whether balanced or imbalanced has got meaning only in the imperfect world and it always refers to a unity beyond itself. Hence the real and final stage is the transcendental equanimity, which is the state of Self-realization. It is attained only when the soul is lifted up and established firmly in absolute Spirit. This is the stage where the individuality is dissolved in the infinity of God. 'He who is equipped with yoga sees the Self in all beings and all beings in himself; he sees the same everywhere; he who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me, is not lost to Me nor am I lost to him,'¹² declares the Lord Himself.

The transcendental equanimity is not only the supreme equipoise but also the ground of all equalities. Subjective and objective types of sameness are merely expressions of the Self-abiding state. The *Gītā* therefore says, 'The Self-abiding one takes sorrow and joy alike, regards a clod of earth, a stone and gold alike, receives the agreeable and disagreeable in the same spirit and views censure and praise alike.'¹³

The *Gītā* equates equanimity with the highest knowledge, and so it states: 'That by which one sees an immutable oneness in all existences, undivided in the divided,

9. *Gītā*, VI.9.

10. *Ibid.*, V.18.

11. Saint Jñāneśwar, *Bhavārthadīpikā*, trans. R. K. Bhagawat (Poona: Dhyaneshwari English Rendering Publishing Association), nos. 144-150.

12. *Gītā*, VI.29-30.

13. *Ibid.*, XIV.24.

know that knowledge to be *sāttvika*.'¹⁴ The Supreme Self is the basis of the varying universe. Objects and persons seem to be different from one another because of the limiting adjuncts (*upādhis*). But these limiting adjuncts are born of ignorance; hence, diversity is the product of ignorance. When these limiting adjuncts are eliminated, there remains the Supreme Being alone. The imperishable Being is the substratum behind all diversity. He who realizes 'all this is Vāsudeva'¹⁵ sees the Supreme Being in everything, just as in looking at a piece of cloth, one finds threads in it everywhere. Thus, to see unity in diversity is the real knowledge. When such knowledge is attained, all inequalities come to an end. The high and the low, friend and foe, value and disvalue, joy and misery—all these differences vanish altogether in that state.

The attitude of equanimity is considered to be the foundation of the ethical principle of treating all creatures like oneself. This principle is the logical corollary of equanimity. Hence, the *Gītā* says: 'He who judges the pleasure and pain of others by the same standard as he applies to himself, that yogi, O Arjuna, is regarded as the highest.'¹⁶

Sri Kashinath Upadhyaya points out in this context: 'Thus, the principle that one should not do unto others what one does not wish others to do unto oneself, is not derived by Buddha from any metaphysical or theological assumption but is considered a simple inference derived from one's own experience The same teaching of treating all like oneself in promoting happiness and refraining from inflicting injury to others is taught by the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as well. But it does so on the basis of its metaphysical and theological concepts of the all-pervading Self

and God. The perfect yogin of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* is said to look upon the happiness and suffering of others like his own. The *raison d'être* of it is that the same Self (speaking metaphysically) or God (speaking theologically) is found by the yogin to pervade all the multiple creatures of the world.'¹⁷

With regard to the above observation, we can say without hesitation that the ethical principle of treating all like oneself in Buddhism is based only on individual experience and is devoid of an ontological foundation. Whereas the *Gītā* gives a sound metaphysical foundation to it by positing an *a priori* principle: God or the Self. B. G. Tilak therefore observes: 'When one realizes that (i) religions other than the Vedic religion have not logically justified this generally accepted canon, though they have mentioned it, and (ii) that this canon cannot be logically justified in any way except by the metaphysical principle of the identification of the Brahman with the Atman, one will clearly see the importance of the Metaphysical Ethics preached in the *Gītā* or the Karma-Yoga.'¹⁸

The ideal of equanimity has been emphasized again and again in the *Gītā*. It is considered to be the hallmark of a liberated saint and the touch-stone of perfection. Although this virtue of sameness has been discussed in many religious treatises, yet nowhere else has it assumed such comprehensiveness and importance. What is more, the characteristic feature of the *Gītā* is this, that in it this ideal has been made socially oriented and has been taught in such a clear way that even the common man can understand and practise it.

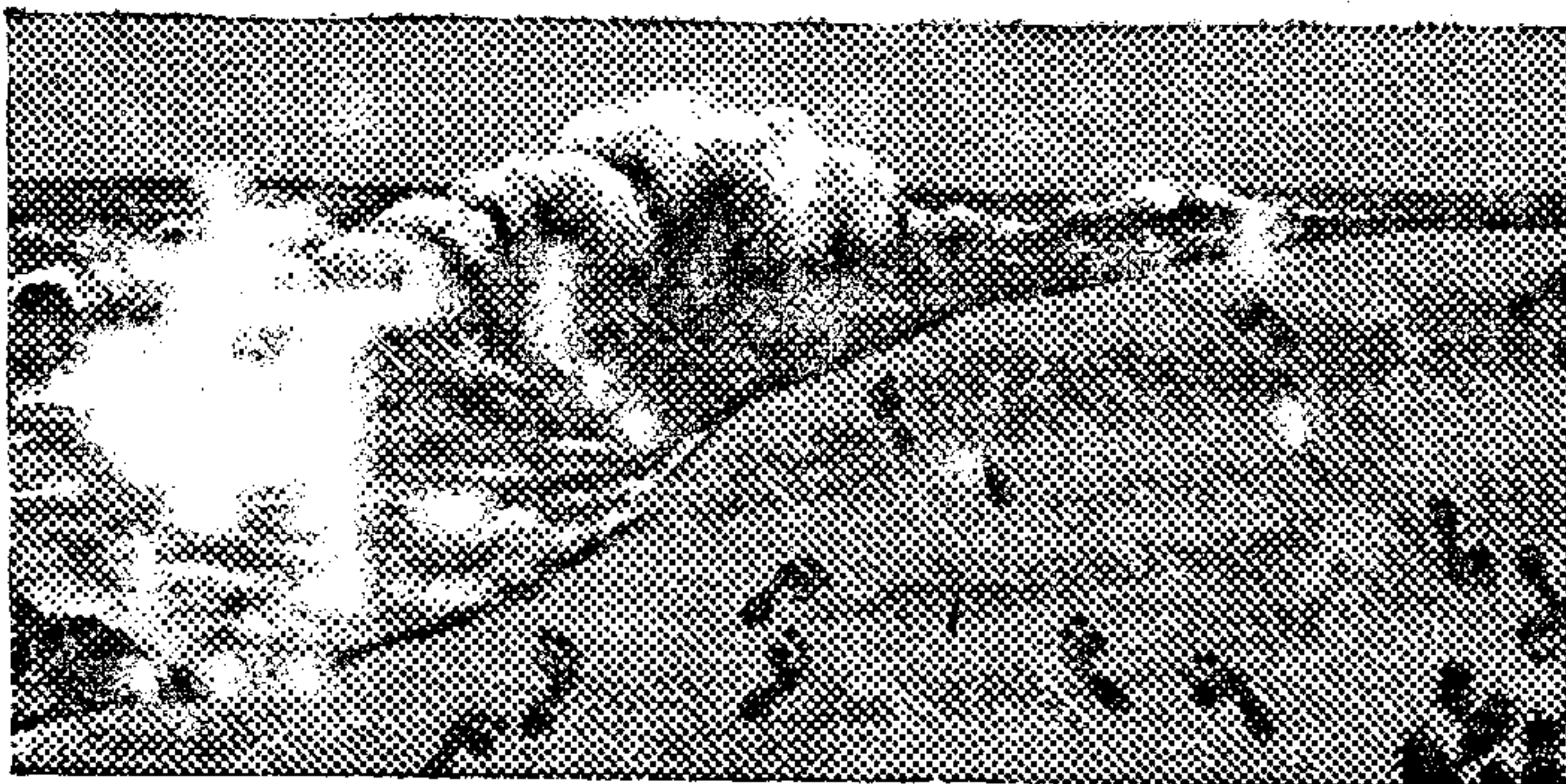
14. *Ibid.*, XVIII.20.

15. *Ibid.*, VII.19.

16. *Ibid.*, VI.32.

17. Sri Kashinath Upadhyaya, *Early Buddhism and Bhagavadgita* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), p. 417.

18. B. G. Tilak, *Gita-Rahasya*, trans. B. S. Sukthankar (Poona: Tilak Bros., 1935), p. 543.



HUMAN TRENDS

THE NEW BLACK PRESENCE IN BRITAIN

BRIAN G. COOPER

Since the late 1940s Britain has become a multi-racial society. The immigration of 'New Commonwealth' citizens, particularly from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean islands, and to a lesser extent from Africa, Cyprus and the Near East, has made Britain itself now a racial microcosm of its former Empire. Consequently, Britain has also become a multi-religious and multi-cultural society. The settlement of substantial numbers of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus; the presence of small but important groups of Asian and African Christians; the influx of Greek Cypriots, making Orthodoxy a recognizable feature of the British religious landscape; above all, the development of hundreds of West Indian congregations—the 'Black Churches'—with a membership running into tens of thousands, have together produced a new and challenging situation for the historic Churches of Britain.

The challenge is not solely in religious and cultural terms, though the awkward question of whether the 'White Churches' should undertake missionary-style evangelism among the non-Christian immigrants, or give priority to fostering harmonious race and community relations within society

generally, has raised real heart-searching among church people. Officially at national denominational level, and through a variety of local programmes, the Churches are largely taking the latter option, and doing so as the socio-political dimensions of living in a multi-racial Britain become daily clearer and more urgent.

This growing sense of urgency, rather than any detached ecclesiastical motivation for inter-religious dialogue, prompted a distinctive study under the auspices of the Community and Race Relations Unit of the British Council of Churches, entitled *The New Black Presence in Britain*. The repercussions of this disturbing report continue to reverberate through church councils and congregational study groups, and among black and white clergy alike. For its central thesis is uncompromising: 'The basic issue is not a problem caused by black people (but) concerns the nature of British society as a whole... the black communities are exposing features of the (British) way of life which may be painful to recognise.' The black community, understood by the report primarily in terms of the Caribbean experience in Britain, is acting as a mirror to complacent, insular British

society, revealing an appalling spectrum of deprivation and discrimination suffered by the under-privileged in the British socio-economic hierarchy, both black and white but especially black. Described by one experienced commentator as a 'cry of anguish from the underprivileged', it reflects articulate radical West Indian sentiment in Britain today, as personally expressed by Gus John, chairman of the Working Party responsible for the report, and professionally the Director of Youth and Race in the Inner City Project of the National Association of Youth Clubs in Britain.

The undeniable reality of racial discrimination in housing, employment, educational advancement and social status; the existence of ghetto-type immigrant areas in parts of London, Birmingham and other major British cities; tight immigration controls alongside anti-discrimination laws and a network of government-backed community relations officials; the significance of racist politicians such as Enoch Powell and neo-Nazi racist political groups; and the widespread alienation of West Indian young people from the norms and expectations of British society: all of this, and much more, is seen as evidence of a much deeper failure of British society to work out its priorities for social and economic justice. In Christian terms, it reflects a manifest failure to work out the demands of the Gospel for fulness of life for the poor and oppressed.

All of which adds up to very 'uncomfortable words'; indeed, the General Secretary of the British Council of Churches, Revd. Harry Morton, certainly a liberal-minded churchman on social issues, felt it necessary to publicly dissent from Gus John's prognosis. The quite uncompromising nature of John's statements—such as 'a pronounced and almost cynical lack of attention to history on the part of white society has accounted for a situation where black people in Britain today are being regarded as if

they are aliens from another planet', and 'I can think of few occasions in which Britain has done something in response to the black situation which was not dictated by self-interest and geared ultimately to saving itself'—has not given his radical critique any easy acceptability. But it has shaken many people in the churches in Britain out of their complacency and ignorance on the race question, highlighted the bitter reality of discrimination, and put squarely on the churches' agenda the Christian contribution to harmonious community relations.

The report drew but little on the experience of the Black Churches, an omission widely commented on. Partly as a reaction, the British Council of Churches has moved towards closer links with these congregations. Overwhelmingly Pentecostal and sect-type, though including significant Baptist and Methodist groups, these Churches (some now loosely grouped in the Black-Led Churches' Movement) are now actively considering closer ecumenical liaison with the British Council of Churches. This process will not be easy for either side. The very existence of independent black congregations is a judgement on the traditional British churches. Only a minority of Afro-Caribbean and Indian Christians settled in Britain have integrated within British churches. The vast majority have not: they worship separately, originally out of a sense of rejection, now because of the necessity for at least one sphere of cultural self-sufficiency within the overwhelmingly white environment.

One of the Black Church leaders, Bishop Malachi Ramsey of the Shiloh United Church of Christ (Apostolic) in south London, sums it up like this: 'Most of us have become Pentecostals, and organised our own churches, since we came to Britain. Pentecostalism is now one of the strongest organisations actually governed by black

people in this country. When we first came to Britain, while a few of us found a truly Christian welcome, the overall pattern was coldness, rejection, and sometimes even being told to worship elsewhere. We came expecting to find Britain a Christian country, but instead found not only that the majority of people were not Christian, but also that

those who called themselves Christians very often behaved in a very un-Christian fashion towards their fellow-Christians of a different colour. So, while Black Pentecostalism is not a separatist religious force, and we extend fellowship to all, we have become sensitive, and the wounds will take a long time to heal.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

GOD IN ADVAITA : By A. G. KRISHNA WARRIER, Publishers : Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla-171 005, 1977, pp. x+234, Price : Rs. 37.50.

The idea of God is perhaps the most popular as well as the most complex concept in the religio-philosophical realm. The objective and the ontological status of God is affirmed as well as rejected, with equal vehemence, by the believers and the non-believers respectively. In the Advaita Vedanta of Shankara it is usually assumed that the idea of God enjoys a secondary position as compared to Brahman (the Absolute).

Dr. Warrier has taken up the concept of God in the Advaitism of Shankara and attempts to handle it in an original form, showing that God has a formidable role to play in the scheme of Shankara Vedanta. He emphasizes that God in Advaita is bound up with the true self of man. Therefore, an inquiry into God is at the same time an investigation into the basic nature of man. The Jiva is not an isolated sinful individual condemned to suffer. He is God-man (as Swami Vivekananda has described him). The author of the book refers to the Western movement of the death of God in radical theology which has developed the declaration of Nietzsche that God is dead and man is now responsible for all his deeds. The author rightly notes that a God born in time (or in history) will, of necessity, die. But the Upanishadic view regarding God is not a historical actualization. God, Atman or Brahman, is the being that is not born in time. It is unborn (*aja*) and eternal (*sanatana*). The *Mahavakyas* affirm the identity between man and the Absolute on the one hand and between the Absolute and everything else on the other. The Biblical assertion that no man has seen God does not make much sense in this context. It is the

solemn duty and the destiny of man to discuss God who is dwelling incognito in himself (*atma va are drastavyah*).

The author deals with the problem from various angles. God as cause, as the goal of *sadhana*, as realized by the Jivanmuktas, as related to the world and also as associated with man, all these phases have been discussed by the learned writer. Some leading Western thinkers like Hegel and Bradley have been compared with the Upanishadic and Shankarite standpoints. The author agrees with Dr. Radhakrishnan's remark that the view that the representation of Brahman as Ishvara is a concession to the weakness of the human mind, as some Advaitins hold, is not supported by the *Brahma-Sutras*; and he also adds that the alleged view violates Shankara's own doctrine clearly set forth in his commentaries on aphorisms like *parattu tacchruteh* (*Brahma Sutras*, II.iii.41), hymns like the *Bhaja-govindam* and the *Saundarya-lahari*. The author finds overwhelming support for this doctrine in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He tries to define God in his words as the one who drives the Jiva through all levels of reality to ultimate Reality. God-realization, for him, is the *raison d'être* of man and the world.

The book has been written with confidence and immense scholarly background. It is hoped that the reader will get several points clarified by reading the pages of it and that his view regarding Shankara's stand-point concerning God will be clearer and less confusing.

DR. S. P. DUBEY
Dept. of Postgraduate Studies and
Research in Philosophy
University of Jabalpur, Jabalpur, M.P.

THE SADHANA OF SELF DISCOVERY :
 BY K. SESHADRI, Publishers : The C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation, 'The Grove', Teynampet, Madras-600 018, 1978, pp. vi+34, Price: Rs. 4/-.

Substantially, the title contains a course of three lectures delivered by Prof. Seshadri (b. 1905) at the Centre for Studies in Tradition, Thought and Culture of India, the C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation, Madras, of which he happens to be the Director. The learned speaker concentrates his reflections on the problem of self-enquiry and self-discovery as presented in Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950), especially in the Maharshi's well-known book *Who Am I?*

The self-discovery of Sri Ramana has been compared with the French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650), who tried to establish the existence of the self because of the *cogito* (the act of cognition or thinking). The act of thinking or doubting about the self implies the existence of the thinker or the doubter, whose existence, therefore, cannot be doubted. According to the author, Descartes and Ramana are travelling in the same path but the former could reach only half-way, that is, presumption regarding the existence of the self; his conclusions are the starting-points for Ramana, who exposes the emptiness of the discovery by focussing our attention on the question as to who the doubter was. Ultimately the doubt vanishes and only the pure Self exists and shines by its intrinsic effulgence.

The self-enquiry (or the *atma-vicara*) of Ramana is close to the thinking of another Indian mind, J. Krishnamurti (b. 1895), for whom it is a state of 'awareness' or pure perception where the mind is not distracted by its own thought, a state of total communion, perfect peace and tranquility. For Ramana it is suspension of all thinking. The author points out that the similarities between the two minds are several, but the differences also cannot be overlooked. For instance, whereas Ramana would assert the reality of the Self eloquently, in Krishnamurti's writings it is neither explicitly affirmed nor rejected. Ramana would give due respect to the scriptures and to the guru as well as to the grace of God. But Krishnamurti would not consider these to be essential for 'awareness'.

The work of Prof. Seshadri gives within very few pages suggestions for further studies in the philosophy of the sage of Arunachala and comparisons of his thought with other great minds. It tells us many things briefly but very clearly

and adds to the studies of Sri Ramana, which are not many in number.

DR. S. P. DUBEY

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY FROM THE ONTOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW : BY DR. N. V. JOSHI, Publishers : Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 172 Mumbai Marathi Granthasangrahalaya Marg, Dadar, Bombay-400 014, 1977, pp. ix+290, Price: Rs. 60/-.

The book is a sequel to the author's earlier book *Three Foundations of Indian Philosophy* in which he had made a serious attempt, from the stand-point of the Metaphysics of Individuation, to show that the ontological point of view has found its best expression in Indian Philosophy in its three source books : the Upanishads, *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Brahma-Sutras*, collectively called Prasthanatrayi. In this new book he has faithfully and powerfully represented the ontological stand-point by taking recourse to the principle of individuation. In the opinion of the author, 'the so-called systems of Indian Philosophy whether orthodox or heterodox have shelved it aside by conceding autonomy to logic in philosophy. This has issued into a chaotic multiplicity of metaphysical views, none of which is capable of leading to a satisfactory solution of the ontological problem.' It is here that the author happily conceived the idea of making the right approach to philosophy by conceding primacy to ontology by subordinating logic to it. He made the principle of individuation the main point of his own ideology which was later worked out in specific details in his many philosophical works; and he has applied the same approach in this book to the classical systems of Indian philosophy, both orthodox and heterodox.

This book represents the culminating phase of Dr. Joshi's long-sustained and integrated career as a philosophical writer. In this book, 'once again he seeks to vindicate the truth that any departure from the ontological point of view disrupts all philosophical speculation. Whatever be the repercussions of such truth in other spheres of life—and they are quite momentous, particularly in the cultural sphere—it has at least posed a grave issue before the philosophical conscience of the world, namely, that if philosophy has to prove its bona fides in our times as a sound and autonomous discipline, then it will have to adopt a point of view of its own in order to organize to its conceptions.'

His book *Three Foundations of Indian Philosophy* was a breakthrough, and the author has discussed its major issues in the first chapter of the present book. This is followed by a very interesting consideration of what the author rightly describes as the 'Post-Upanishadic Thought-Ferment'.

In the present book the author has made a case for four philosophical systems grounded mainly on the basically divergent view-points of Realism and Idealism. In each of these systems it is found possible to distinguish between the extreme and the softer forms.

Part I deals with the Realistic schools. It consists of extreme naive Realism as found in Charvaka and in the Purva-Mimamsa of Prabhakara, and softer or Critical Realism found in Nyaya-Vaisheshika, classical Samkhya-Yoga, Jainism, and Purva-Mimamsa according to Kumarila Bhatta. Part II expounds the Idealistic schools in three chapters: two schools of Buddhist origin—(1) the Svatantra Vijñānavāda of Dinnaga which is nothing but Subjective Idealism, and (2) the Absolute Idealism of Nagarjuna's Shūnyavāda and the Vijñānavāda of Asanga and Vasubandhu—; and the Advaita Vedānta of Gaudapada and Shankara.

The work is rigorously metaphysical in the sense that the author defends the autonomy of metaphysics as speculative knowledge, irreducible to epistemology, natural science, or analysis of language. Its theme is an extended elaboration of the stand-point that the only legitimate basis for philosophy is ontological, and on this alone can be founded a philosophy of individuation capable of satisfactorily explaining the relation of the One to the Many, which is the central problem of all philosophy. This theme forces the author to a critical evaluation of Indian philosophy from the existentialist point of view. But in the West as well as in the East, the dominant rationalistic tradition has been obsessed by theory of knowledge, while the fundamental problem—that of the existence of Being—has been side-tracked.

Dr. Joshi has displayed scholarship and keen critical acumen in discussing the difficult issues involved in the field of Indian philosophy. The book is important not because of its contributions to Indian Philosophy, but because of the insight it gives to us; and for this reason it deserves wide recognition.

PROF. K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO
Head, Dept. of Philosophy
Government College for Women
Mandya, Karnataka

FIVE WINDOWS TO GOD : By K. P. BAHADUR, Publishers : Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 172 Mumbai Marathi Granthasangrahalaya Marg, Dadar, Bombay-400 014, 1977, pp. xii+95, Price : Rs. 22/-.

Five Windows to God is a beautifully written book, which might well pass for 'a layman's handbook on Religion'. Sri Bahadur has addressed himself to the task of answering two questions raised in the Preface : (1) Is there a God? and (2) Why should we seek Him, and how? It is from the author's affirmative answer to the first question, substantiated by five testimonies or five windows to God, that the second question arises at all, and is answered. To be able to share with Sri Bahadur his deep religious convictions, it must be remembered that throughout the book, he has used the word God, Reality, Self, etc., unhampered by doctrinal blinders. The entire work has been based on the Vedantic revelation that 'Reality is one, (though) variously expressed by the sages.'

The five 'windows' to God are opened in five chapters, each answering the two questions referred to above. A section titled 'The Quest', preceding these five chapters, points out why these questions must rise in the human mind which cannot rest until an answer is found. The succeeding chapters are intended to help the searching mind come to a true rest at the feet of God. Chapter One, 'The Transcendental Approach : The Testimony of the *Katha Upanishad*', is a free rendering of that Upanishad's message. Chapter Two, 'The Scientific Approach : the Testimony of Gaudapada', is a résumé of the purely rational arguments of Gaudapada in his *Karika* on the *Mandukya Upanishad*, affirming the Supreme Reality of Brahman. Incidentally, a sketch of Sri Shankaracharya's life has been included. The third chapter is, 'The Theistic Approach : The Testimony of Faith'. This chapter presents some important events from the lives of Yamuna, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Chaitanya, and Jiva Goswami, which have served to inspire and convince thousands to love a Personal God—utterly resigning to His will, and seeking no personal gain. This chapter also includes points of essential difference between Shankara and Ramanuja regarding Knowledge, God, and the means to emancipation. Chapter Four, 'The Testimony of the Saints Shri Ramakrishna and Shri Ramana Maharshi', gives in brief the lives of these two saints of recent times. Numerous events are cited from their lives where devotees, and even skeptics, after being in the

presence of these saints, returned with their spiritual doubts resolved—that there is a God who can be directly seen by one and all. The fifth chapter titled 'The Testimony of Miracles', records a number of wonders performed by certain God-men. Properly speaking, this chapter ought to be called not a 'window', but a 'back-door' into the mansion of God. Miracles form no part of true religion, and above all, mislead an aspirant away from God and true love for Him. In view of the author's own observations, and also in keeping with the warnings given by Sri Ramakrishna and Lord Buddha, quoted in the chapter, regarding miracles, this chapter might as well be deleted from the next edition. Nobody would notice it.

In his conclusion, however, Sri Bahadur recaptures the true perspective and scope of all religious question—love of God and love of Man; What Vivekananda summarized as *atmano moksa* and *Jagad-hita*.

There are a few printing errors, and the price of the book is a bit above the reach of the common man, for whom it has evidently been written. On the whole almost every page of the book is sure to evoke in its readers that deep faith in the fact of God, with which it has been written.

BRAHMACHARI APURVA CHAITANYA
Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta

METAPHYSICS OF PERPETUAL CHANGE :
BY PRATAP CHANDRA, Publishers : Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 172 Mumbai Marathi Granthasangrahalaya Marg, Dadar, Bombay-400-014, 1978, pp. xii+275, Price : Rs. 55/-.

The book deals with the metaphysical doctrines of early Buddhism, particularly its views concerning the nature of the Self, which has given rise to intense debate among the learned scholars of both East and West. How can one reconcile the Buddhist faith in the transmigration of the soul and the appeal of Buddhism as a world religion, it is asked, if the Buddha denied the very existence of 'Self'? Responses to this question vary from accusing Buddhism of illogicality to attempts at portraying the Buddha as a follower of the Upanishadic metaphysics, who never really denied the truth of the Self, though the monastic interpretations lead us to think he did.

The present work attempts to show how the doctrine of Anatta can be combined with that of karma. The research is based entirely on primary sources, and takes into account all the significant modern views on the subject. On the basis of a cumulative, synoptic study of the original Pali records the author argues that the difficulties of interpretation arise only when the point of view of perpetual change is abandoned. All the doctrines of Early Buddhism form a logically coherent system when approached from the viewpoint of dynamic change. The Buddha did deny the soul as an entity, but it is equally certain that he accepted the reality of the psychophysical continuum, which moves on from one incarnation to another according to the laws of karma. This could hardly have been otherwise, for the Early Buddhists cherished empirico-realist-epistemological values, accepted perpetual change, and as a result of this, were socially responsible preachers who did not deny moral retribution and were imbued with matchless religious fervour. If all these basic axioms are kept in view, the controversy can be laid to rest. The author argues his point on the strength of the relevant Pali records, including those yet to be translated.

Prof. Pratap Chandra seems to have pondered for many years over the fundamental ideas of Buddhism. He has tried to visualize its early evolution, and discusses in this book some of the crucial problems, adding his own reflections. Nowadays Buddhist research has become very complex due to the many problems it raises. The main points of Buddhist philosophy are still obscure to us because of the multiplicity of thought-currents and of sects whose main principles or ideas we still insufficiently know.

But Buddhism is a living religion—not only a living religion, but one that gives signs of a fresh vitality and impulse. The interest it arouses in the West is not merely scientific, but also spiritual; it appears that Buddhism has something to say in these troubled times when so many moral and religious values are collapsing.

The book is throughout good and pleasant reading, for which the author deserves our congratulations; and the publisher deserves our praise for the neat production of the book.

PROF. K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA CHANDIGARH

REPORT : APRIL 1977—MARCH 1978

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Chandigarh, is the only accredited branch of the Mission operating in the region covering Chandigarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. Started in 1956, it moved to its own present premises (Madhya Marg, Sector 15-B, Chandigarh-160 061) in 1958, and since then has been rendering service to the people of the area, without distinction of caste, class or creed. The activities of the Ashrama, conducted by the monastic members of the Ramakrishna Order, in co-operation with the citizens of Chandigarh and with the help of generous friends and devotees, were as follows during the period 1977-78 :

SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL : A Shrine was maintained which provided the atmosphere and opportunity for devotees seeking to meditate and pray and participate in the shrine-services. Rama Nama Sankirtana was conducted fortnightly. The birthdays of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Sri Buddha, Jesus Christ and Guru Nanak were observed, as well as Durga Puja and Shiva Ratri. There was special worship on the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda.

The Combined Public Celebrations of the birth-anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda were held during the month of March. The programme included lectures in English and Hindi ; special discourses on 'Ramacharita-Manas' ; devotional music ; and distribution of fruits, sweets and garments to handicapped children (as part of Narayana Seva). The general theme for the celebrations was 'The Life and Message of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda, with special reference to "Living and Positive Religion"'. One day was specially set apart for children and youth who presented a special feature, 'Anandalok', consisting of appropriate Vedic chanting, devotional songs, acting-narration of the humorous wisdom tales of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, a symposium on the theme 'My Cherished Dream' and a humorous yet thought-provoking play 'New Education' by college and high school boys.

Regular weekly lectures and classes were conducted by the Secretary Swami and others at the Ashrama : on Saturday evenings, Guided Medi-

tation and Class on the Hindi Sri Ramakrishna Vachanamrita (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) ; Sunday mornings, a musical exposition of Ramacharita-Manas in Hindi by Sri Bansilal Chhibber and others ; Sunday evenings, discourses in English.

Other weekly sessions were conducted for particular groups seriously interested in spiritual practice and service, and for youth and children to help in character-building. On invitation the Secretary addressed public meetings, educational and cultural institutions, and other groups in Chandigarh and other parts of India. Devotional Satsangs were held on request at different places in and out of Chandigarh.

The Library continued its home-lending service for members. The total number of books was 1,634, and the number of books issued was 341. The Book-Sales Section provided the publications of the Ramakrishna Order in English, Sanskrit, Hindi and Punjabi, more intensively than ever. Two special booklets, *Prarthana* and *Bhajan Malika*, consisting of prayers and devotional songs frequently used in the Ashrama during worship and prayer meetings, were brought out for the benefit of the members of the congregation.

Personal Interviews were given to several people interested in spiritual life.

EDUCATIONAL : The Vivekananda Students' Home (for college boys) was started in 1960 to provide wholesome accommodation and living conditions for local college students and to help them develop into decent persons. The calm environment, homely atmosphere and the personal care of the supervising Swamis have made the hostel an attractive place for earnest students, where they can study and develop their character free from political, communal or social narrowness. Accommodation is available for 40 students.

MEDICAL : The free Homoeopathic Dispensary could work only for a very limited period as there was no physician. From April 1, 1978, however, the dispensary was due to resume work.

RELIEF FUND : In response to the urgent appeal issued by the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission for funds to carry on relief work among the people hit by the recent devastating cyclone and floods in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the friends and devotees of the Mission in Chandigarh, as well as in Punjab and Haryana, responded promptly and generously, so that a sum of Rs. 15,120/- could be remitted to the Headquarters for the purpose.

COMMENTS

Escape From Freedom

History has recorded several cases of mass suicide. When Roman legions invaded Israel in the first century A.D., about a thousand Jewish zealots chose suicide to capture and slavery. In medieval India thousands of Rajput women committed 'johar' by leaping into flames when their fortresses fell to the cohorts of Mohammedan adventurers. In the Second World War hundreds of Japanese soldiers killed themselves before their country surrendered to the allied army. The halo of chivalry surrounding these events and the pride with which they are cherished by millions of people are to some extent justified by the nobility of the sentiments that prompted these heroic acts: love of freedom in the first case, honour and dignity of womanhood in the second case, and patriotism in the third case.

But the cheap and wanton self-destruction of more than nine hundred American blacks and whites belonging to the ill-fated cult of the Peoples Temple in an isolated clearance styled 'Jonestown' in a distant Guyanese jungle in November 1978 will long remain not only as a blot on the image of humanity, but also as a warning signal for the future of civilization. It shows that the psychosocial evolution of man does not always proceed in a straight line but contains streaks of dangerous retrograde tendencies. That a paranoid, megalomaniacal religious charlatan could so easily dupe hundreds of educated people and elicit their unquestioning allegiance shows that the wall separating culture from barbarism is after all not impermeable. This macabre tragedy raises two questions: what makes people join such pseudo-religious cults? and how can we distinguish true religion from counterfeit?

Psychologists have found that many of these cultists are mentally distressed people. But most of them are victims of the modern industrialized living conditions. Science and technology have given man not only more wealth but also freedom to his mind and instincts by destroying the foundations of moral authority and spiritual support provided by religion, social traditions and family life. But it has not given him wisdom and strength to control this new-found freedom for the attainment of the goal of life. As a result, freedom itself produces insecurity and anxiety, boredom and meaninglessness. Man wants to escape from his intolerable freedom by seeking a new identity. It is this attempt at escape that finally drives him into the arms of a false religious leader and to surrender himself to his hypnotic spell.

This takes us to the test of true religion. True religion gives man the strength to face the realities of life. It does not hold out false promises but asks the seeker to first base his life on a foundation of *dharma* or morality. True religion is the product of a great historical movement which has stood the test of time. It gives back to man his lost freedom through Self-knowledge.
