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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

'Truth is one : sages call it by various names'

गायन्ति त्वा गायत्रिणोऽर्च्यकर्मणिः ।
ब्रह्माणस्त्वा शतक्रत उद्वंशमिव येमिरे ॥

1. Through the songs of the songsters,
through the hymns of the worshippers,
O Śatakratu,¹ thou art held aloft like a flag-
staff by wise men.

Rg-Veda 1.10.1

तमित्सखित्व ईमहे तं राये तं सुवीर्ये ।
स शक्र उत नः शक्रिद्रो वसु दयमानः ॥

2. Him alone we approach for friendship,
for wealth and spiritual power. He, the
Lord, will support us and grant us riches.

Rg-Veda 1.10.6

इन्द्रं विश्वा अवीवृधन् समुद्रव्यचसं गिरः ।
रथीतमं रथीनां वाजानां सत्पतिं पतिम् ॥

3. All the sacred hymns praise the Lord
who is vast as the ocean, the greatest of
heroes and the Lord of the strong.

Rg-Veda 1.11.1

सख्ये त इन्द्र वाजिनो मा भेम शवसस्पते ।
त्वाममि प्र णोनुमो जेतारमपराजितम् ॥

4. Strong in the friendship of thee, O
Lord of power and glory, we have no fear
whatsoever. We adore thee, the never-
conquered conqueror.

Rg-Veda 1.11.2

* These hymns are addressed to Indra, who occupied a pre-eminent position among the Vedic gods, with more than three hundred hymns (more than a fourth of the whole collection) dedicated to him. A Superman endowed with the highest virtues and powers, he was the fullest manifestation of Divine glory and grace in man, and must be regarded as the prototype of the Avatāra. Indeed, as the Avatāra doctrine developed fully in later Hinduism, Indra was reduced to the position of an ordinary king of minor gods.

1. According to Sāyana, the word Śatakratu means 'one who is connected to many rites'. The word kratu also means thought, will-power and intuition.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

In all religious paths Viveka or discrimination finds an important place, though not always under the same name. Even in normal social life it plays an important part as a check on our instinctive drives and as a goad to strive for excellence. This month's EDITORIAL discusses what true discrimination is and four types of it which correspond to the four stages of man's spiritual development.

Other than a vague memory of the glory and grandeur of their immemorial past engraved in their collective unconscious, Indians as a race never maintained a historical perspective or record as the Chinese, the Greeks and the Arabs did. Taking full advantage of this weakness, the British developed a history of India prejudicial to its culture and solidarity, and this is still popular. Swami Sakhyananda of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trichur, who is a distinguished scholar and thinker, has for some years been working on a massive project of rewriting the history of India in the light of the country's religious traditions, and the linguistic and astronomical data provided by the Purāṇas and the epics. In the article INDIAN HISTORY IN ITS TRUE PERSPECTIVE, the Swami gives us just a glimpse of the new trail that he has blazed in historical research.

In FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA, Swami Prabhananda of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Purulia, unfolds the inspiring story of the life of Yogin Ma, one of the foremost woman-disciples of Sri

Ramakrishna. It is the story of the transformation of an ordinary life filled with misfortune and sorrow into the divine life of spiritual fulfilment. No one can read it without feeling uplifted by a new hope and strength to face the problems of domestic life.

Though Bertrand Russell and many other thinkers regard Marxism as a kind of religion, it is a sworn enemy of all religions. In A CRITIQUE OF THE MARXIST VIEW OF RELIGION, Prof. Ranjit Kumar Acharjee of the Department of Philosophy, R. K. Mahavidyalaya, Kailashahar, takes a fresh look at the century-old conflict between religion and Marxism.

Prabuddha Bharata offers its homage to the memory of Albert Einstein whose centenary is now being celebrated all over the world. A great scientist and indomitable seeker of Truth, he was equally great as a humanist and lover of mankind. Outside the domain of religion such a combination of the luminous qualities of the head and the heart has rarely been met with. In this month's feature PROFILES IN GREATNESS, Swami Tathagatananda of the Vedanta Society, New York, gives an engaging account of the human side of this scientist-sage.

Some valuable spiritual maxims culled from the talks and letters of Swami Shivananda (Mahapursh Maharaj), a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, are presented in this month's HINTS TO SEEKERS OF GOD.

VIVEKA OR DISCRIMINATION

(EDITORIAL)

Importance of discrimination

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya in his celebrated commentary on the *Gītā* writes : 'Man remains as man only so long as his mind retains the capacity to discriminate between right and wrong. When this capacity is lost he ceases to be a man.'¹ This trenchant statement implies that discrimination is not something to be done once in a while. Every moment of our life we are face to face with a choice—to be good or bad, to be happy or unhappy, to remember God or forget Him. One wrong decision, one false assumption, one careless step is sometimes enough to ruin a man's career or peace of mind for the rest of his life. Even when major disasters are averted, few people are uniformly happy, and one reason for this is that they either make wrong decisions, or make no decisions at all and find themselves perpetually lodged on the horns of a dilemma.

Coming to spiritual life, we find Viveka or discrimination enjoined as an unavoidable adjunct of every type of discipline or yoga—Jñāna, Bhakti, Dhyāna, Karma. Spiritual life is an adventure into the unknown. Until he gets true spiritual illumination, the aspirant has to find his way with the help of the lamp of discrimination. Buddha's last advice to his disciples was *ātmadīpo bhava* ('Be a lamp unto yourself'). A young man inclined to the practice of Jñāna Yoga joined one of our Ashramas a few years ago as a novice. He soon found that he had a lot of work to do and there was not much time

left for his spiritual practice. He therefore complained to his superior, a senior monk of the Order : 'Sir, I need six hours a day to practise self-analysis.' The monk told him : 'Why only six hours? You are expected to practise self-analysis all the twenty-four hours.' A spiritual aspirant has to be always alert and discriminating. This is, however, as difficult as trying to keep a lamp burning in a windy place. The wind of worldly desires is constantly blowing, and every time the flame of knowledge flickers out, we have to light it again. Not to do so is to remain in darkness. Late Maharaj, an illiterate disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, used to say that to keep the lamp of Viveka constantly burning was the greatest Tapas (austerity).

The opposite of Viveka is *pramāda*, carelessness, which the *Gītā* lists as one of the characteristics of Tamas. Śaṅkarācārya in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* says that carelessness is death itself. 'If the mind strays from the Ideal even a little and becomes outgoing,' he warns, 'then it goes down and down just as a play ball carelessly dropped on the staircase comes down bouncing from one step to another.'² The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says spiritual life is as difficult as walking on the edge of a razor. Hindu Purāṇas and Itihāsas contain a number of stories of ascetics who fell down from their high ideals owing to inadvertance or indiscretion.

1. तावत् एव हि पुरुषो यावद् अन्तःकरणं तदीयं
कार्याकार्यविषयविवेकयोग्यं, तदयोग्यत्वे नष्ट
एव पुरुषो भवति ।

Śankara, Commentary on the *Gītā*, 2.63,

2. लक्ष्यच्युतं चेद्यदि चित्तमीषद् बहिर्मुखं

संनिपतेत्ततस्ततः ।

प्रमादतः प्रच्युतकैलिकंदुकः सोपानपंक्तौ पतितो

यथा तथा ॥

Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, 326,

What true discrimination is

It is therefore important to know what true Viveka or discrimination is. Every kind of reasoning or cogitation is not discrimination. Doubting, vacillation, and shilly-shallying often bear the semblance of discrimination. Hamlet's famous soliloquy, 'To be or not to be : that is the question', is an example of this. True discrimination is the process by which the mind makes correct value judgements and arrives at right conclusions. It was this capacity that Arjuna had temporarily lost in the battlefield, and the task of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was to restore it to him. Arjuna was not a coward, but a mighty hero. Like all great men, however, he could not act on the spur of the moment. Before taking a momentous step he wanted to be sure of the path. Great men tread only the path well lit by the light of discrimination. In them the power of wisdom is always greater than the power of muscle.

There are three points which distinguish Viveka or discrimination from ordinary thinking and reasoning. One is *śraddhā* or faith in the superiority of virtue and the primacy of Spirit. Discrimination is always a movement from a lower value to a higher value, from vice to virtue, from matter to Spirit. And this movement is possible only if the aspirant has an unshakable *śraddhā* in the higher value. A man who has no faith in virtue cannot practise discrimination between virtue and vice; for him vice appears to be the only logical course of action.

Secondly, discrimination is possible only when both the objects of discrimination are known. Discrimination is not airy speculation. It is a movement between two *known* poles of experience. In order to know that what you saw in the dark was not a snake but a rope, you must see the rope. Here comes the importance of the scripture and

the teacher. Discrimination must always be based on true knowledge gained either from direct experience or from these two sources.

Thirdly, discrimination is not just a movement of thought. It is a process of determining the right choice, fixing the right end and means. This determination is a function of Buddhi, which according to Hindu psychology is both the faculty of intuition and the faculty of will. Discrimination always involves the operation of both these faculties. In ordinary thinking Buddhi rarely comes into operation. It comes forward only when the soul is at a crossroads and a vital decision has to be made. True discrimination is the continual exercise of Buddhi.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* classifies Buddhi, the discriminating faculty, into three categories : Sāttvic, Rājasic, and Tāmasic. That Buddhi is Sāttvic which knows the distinction between action and inaction, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, what is bondage and what is liberation. Rājasic Buddhi is unable to determine clearly what is virtue and vice, action and inaction. Tāmasic Buddhi is enveloped in darkness, mistakes vice for virtue and takes a perverted view of everything.³ Evidently, it is only the Sāttvic Buddhi that can exercise proper discrimination.

The Buddhi becomes Sāttvic when the mind is pure. Impurity, egoism and ignorance make it Rājasic and Tāmasic. The main purpose of observing Brahmacharya or continence is to develop the Sāttvic Buddhi. In a continent person the Buddhi remains clear and luminous, and he learns many spiritual truths. An incontinent person finds his Buddhi clouded, and he is unable to practise higher forms of discrimination.

3. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 18.30-32,

Another name for Sāttvic Buddhi is *dhī*. The famous Gāyatrī of the Vedas is a powerful prayer for the awakening of *dhī* which normally remains dormant in the vast majority of people.

Discrimination operates at different planes of existence. Depending upon the level of consciousness and the objects involved, it may be classified into four different types which are briefly discussed below.

Kāryā-akārya viveka

This is discrimination between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. In the course of our daily activities innumerable paths open before us, and time and again we have to decide which path to follow. Our success and happiness depend upon the right choice. This is, however, not an easy task. Mere common sense alone is not enough to take important decisions in life. So-called common sense is often tainted by one's desires and past tendencies, and life is too serious a matter to be left to it. One has to practise careful discrimination between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. There are two guiding principles which are of great help in determining the right course of action.

One is *sukha-duḥkha viveka* or discrimination between happiness and sorrow. This may appear to be an easy thing to do because it is the natural tendency of all beings to avoid pain and seek happiness. The difficulty arises only when we find that what we had mistaken for happiness often leads us to sorrow. Therefore we should know what true happiness is.

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* tells the story of Naciketas, a boy who is tempted by Yama, the god of death, with various celestial pleasures. The boy rejects them all on the ground that they are transitory and only wear out the power of the senses. Commenting on this episode, the *Upaniṣad* says : 'Both *śreyas* (the good) and *preyas* (the

pleasant) present themselves to man. The wise, having examined both, distinguish the one from the other and choose the good. Foolish people, driven by fleshly desires, prefer the pleasant to the good.'⁴ Does this mean that there is no happiness in *śreyas*, the good, as the Stoics of ancient Greece maintained ?

The truth is that happiness is of different types, of which the lowest is *viṣaya sukham* or sense pleasure. This is what the *Gītā* calls *rājasika sukham*. (The *Gītā* also mentions a still lower type of happiness called *tāma-sika sukham*, which arises from sleep and indolence.)⁵ Higher than this is *śama sukham*, the joy of self-control. Higher still is *ātma sukham*, the joy of realizing the Atman or higher self. According to the *Gītā*, these two types of happiness are Sāttvic. The highest form of happiness is the infinite and everlasting bliss of Brahman known as *brahmānanda*.

We have thus different types of happiness before us. What is called *śreyas* or the good is associated with the highest form of happiness. The main difficulty in choosing the right type lies in the fact that the higher forms of happiness are not immediately obvious or available to us. As the *Gītā* points out, the Rājasic type of happiness appears like nectar in the beginning but turns out to be poison in the end. On the contrary, Sāttvic happiness appears like poison in the beginning though it turns out to be nectar in the end ; moreover, it is the result of purity of mind and Buddhi, and a taste for it can be acquired only after prolonged effort.⁶ The senses are so powerful that they drag the mind to the immediate pleasure. It is only by God's grace and the company of holy men that we come to know of higher forms of happiness. We must

⁴ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.2.2.

⁵ *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 18.38, 39.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.36, 37.

develop a liking for higher forms of happiness and must accept them as the goal of our striving. Then only can we properly discriminate between happiness and sorrow, for to a person who seeks higher forms of happiness even lower forms of happiness give only sorrow. This is the first type of discrimination that all spiritual aspirants must practise.

The second guiding principle is *dharma-adharma viveka*, discrimination between virtue and vice. This is the central theme of the two great Hindu epics, *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. The lives and actions of the characters of these epics teach us that this kind of discrimination is not so easy as it is popularly thought to be. In fact, Vyāsa, the author of *Mahābhārata*, laments at the gloomy end of that great book, 'With uplifted arms I am shouting : it is from Dharma that wealth and enjoyments of life arise, and so why not follow it first? But alas! nobody listens to me.'⁷ The natural tendency of the human mind is to tread the path of ease and comfort and avoid restraints and responsibilities. As a popular Sanskrit verse puts it, 'People are eager to get the fruit of virtuous actions but do not do virtuous actions. Nobody wants the fruit of sinful actions, but people go on committing sin with much effort.'⁸

It is therefore important to know what Dharma (virtue or duty) is. Yet this is difficult to define precisely, and from the times of Socrates, Moses and Manu, sages and thinkers have debated about its true nature. However, social life would be impossible if it were not based on virtue, and if virtue were a fluid and constantly

changing concept. So all the great religions have fixed for their followers certain laws of conduct as the basis of virtue. Living in conformity with these rules, and what Bradley called 'the ethos of the people', is generally supposed to be virtue or duty.

If a man's moral life is not to get reduced to religious chicanery and casuistry, it should be based, not on codes of outer conduct which vary from religion to religion and from time to time, but on certain eternal and universal ethical principles like truth, non-violence, chastity, charity and so on, which constitute the moral order of the universe. Discrimination between Dharma and Adharma should be guided by these fundamental virtues. Is there one universal standard for the judgement of moral conduct? Moral philosophers in the East and the West hold different opinions about it. According to Swami Vivekananda, selflessness is the touchstone of morality. He says, 'The only definition that can be given of morality is this : that which is selfish is immoral, and that which is unselfish is moral.'⁹ Discrimination must be practised in such a way that it makes us more and more selfless. For it is only on such a firm moral foundation that a stable spiritual life can be built.

Discrimination between happiness and sorrow, and discrimination between Dharma and Adharma—these then, are the two principles which should guide us in practising *kārya-akārya viveka* and choosing the right course of action.

Nitya-anitya vastu viveka.

The second kind of discrimination is discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent. When we speak of impermanence or change we refer to two poles of

7. ऊर्ध्वबाहुर्विरौम्येष न च कश्चित् शृणोति मे ।
धर्मादर्थश्च कामश्च स किमर्थं न सेव्यते ॥
Mahābhārata, Svargārohaṇa Parvan, 5.62.

8. पुण्यस्य फलमिच्छन्ति पुण्यं नेच्छन्ति मानवाः ।
न पापफलमिच्छन्ति पापं कुर्वन्ति यत्नतः ॥

9. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1977), vol. I, p. 110,

our experience : the objective and the subjective.

Nothing strikes a thoughtful man more forcefully than the constant changes going on in the external world. Seasons come and go ; plants grow, bloom and decay ; clouds billow across the sky to their unknown destination ; rivers wear down the hills and hurry away to the ocean ; the ocean itself does not remain the same, but ceaselessly heaves and buckles and breaks into millions of waves which lash against the shore in interminable caprice. In the midst of this eternal flux man stands alone facing the unknown on all sides.

Along with the perception of all these changes of the objective world, there is in man an awareness of the changes occurring in his own life and inner world of experience. From time immemorial mankind has been haunted by the spectre of doom and destruction. Life from childhood and youth through old age seems to be a relentless march towards the grave. While there seems to be no end to the mind's craving, all sense enjoyments prove to be transitory. There is hardly a man whose life has been an unbroken chain of happy experiences. Unfulfilment, frustration, sorrow and fear trot out in an endless procession from the dark caverns of our mind to blackmail our contentment.

These two types of impermanence—that of the external objects and their enjoyment—may not strike all people as forcefully as they did the Buddha. To many this awareness may come in the form of a vague yearning, a nostalgia, a feeling of emptiness and rootlessness. This has now become a common phenomenon among the youth, especially in the West. The 'search for meaning' and 'identity crisis' of which we hear so much nowadays are only the outer signs of an inner search for permanence. This means that a crude type of *nitya-anitya vastu viveka* is going on at the un-

conscious levels in the minds of these people, of which they are not fully aware. Owing to ignorance and lack of proper guidance, this incipient and unrecognized discrimination is seldom brought to the conscious level and developed into a spiritual technique. As a result, it may often produce only pessimism and melancholy and, in extreme cases, may drive young people into hippyism, drug addiction and other self-destructive habits.

But for a few fortunate souls this unconscious discrimination may open the door to spiritual life. It may take them to the company of holy men from whom they learn how to convert the unconscious discriminative process into a powerful spiritual tool to tear the veil of *Māyā*. Indeed, discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent marks the beginning of true spiritual life, for it turns the soul away from the struggle for existence and urges it to struggle for higher consciousness. The danger of backsliding can be avoided only by practising this discrimination constantly and making it a habit.

All true spiritual aspirants find that one of the most effective ways of checking the impetuous rush of the mind towards objects of enjoyment is to practise this kind of discrimination. How does this work ? What makes the mind pause when it is told of impermanence and destruction ? There is in all human beings a basic urge for immortality and the experience of everlasting bliss. The soul cannot forever remain satisfied with fleeting little pleasures. When, however, it learns that all sense enjoyments are transitory and life on earth itself does not last long, it tries to seek the source of boundless and everlasting bliss within. This automatically withdraws the mind from sense objects and reduces its gyrations.

A devotee of God finds this discrimination a great aid in intensifying his yearning for God. Finding all forms of human love limited and unstable, he loves God alone ;

finding all forms of enjoyment transitory, he lives for God alone; finding all worldly supports impermanent and unreliable, he depends upon God alone. A famous prayer of Śaṅkarācārya poignantly expresses the mood of a true devotee of God: 'O Lord, with the passing of days the duration of life shortens and youth decays. The days that are gone never come back. Time devours the whole world. Fortune is as fickle as the ripples on the surface of water, and life is as momentary as a flash of lightning. Therefore, O Thou refuge of all, do Thou even now protect me who have taken refuge in Thee.'¹⁰

Discrimination between the permanent and impermanent has another important use for spiritual aspirants: it reminds them of the value of time. In the epic *Mahābhārata*, at the end of eighteen days of terrible carnage and destruction, the poet asks: 'With the soul sitting like a bird [ever ready to fly away] in this bubble-like body, and knowing that the company of beloved ones does not last long, how can you, my son, sleep?'¹¹ No man who has understood the evanescence of life can remain in the sleep of ignorance and go on drifting with the unconscious stream of life. He becomes keenly aware of the value of time and tries to make good the lost time by intensifying his practice. In the case of Sri Ramakrishna this awareness was so intense during his early youth that when he heard the peal of

bells in the evening announcing the close of day, he would burst into tears and cry aloud, 'Another day has passed in vain, Mother, and I have not realized Thee.'

Thus *nitya-anitya vastu viveka* has four important functions to perform in the life of a spiritual aspirant: it turns his mind away from sense-enjoyments, controls its restlessness, directs it towards God, and reminds it of the value of time.

However, one important point is to be mentioned here. It should be clearly understood that this discrimination gives us only knowledge of the transitoriness of the world and its enjoyments, but it does not give us knowledge of the eternal Reality. It can take us away from *anitya*, the impermanent, but it cannot itself lead us directly to the *nitya*, the immutable Brahman. For this we have to practise the third type of discrimination to be discussed next. In the same way, it should be remembered that discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent should be practised only by a person who has already practised the first type of discrimination, namely *kārya-akārya viveka*, and who through that has attained equanimity and maturity of mind. Otherwise, it may lead to pessimism and inertia, and breed a philosophy of escapism or even nihilism. The general decadence and loss of creative power that came upon India after the Middle Ages may at least partly be attributed to the neglect of the above fact.

Dr̥k-dr̥śya viveka

This is the third type, which means discrimination between the seer and the seen. As already mentioned, discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent does not give us direct knowledge of the permanent—the unchanging ultimate Reality or Brahman. But when it is practised with thoroughness, the aspirant soon discovers that, though everything in the external world and in the mental world undergoes constant

10. आयुर्नश्यति पश्यतां प्रतिदिनं याति क्षयं यौवनं
प्रत्यायान्ति गताः पुनर्न दिवसाः कालो जगद्
भक्षकः ।

लक्ष्मीस्तोयतरङ्गभङ्गचपला विद्युन्मलं जीवितं
तस्मान्मां शरणागतं शरणद त्वं रक्ष रक्षाधुना ।
Śankara, *Śivāparādha-kṣamāpāṇa-stotra*, 13.

11. फेनमात्रोपमे देहे जीवे शकुनिवत् स्थिते ।
अनित्ये प्रियसंवासे कथं स्वपिषि पुत्रक ॥

Mahābhārata, Śāntiparvan, 321.7.

change, there is in him a region which does not change. It is the centre of his consciousness, the seat of his 'I'-awareness. It is the notion of 'I' that gives continuity to his life as an individual inspite of his passing through the stages of childhood, etc. It is, again, the common denominator of all his thoughts and gives continuity and meaning to them. Just as the constable who guides the traffic remains safe in his place unaffected by the movement of vehicles whirring all around him, in the same way the centre of our 'I'-consciousness remains unaffected by the thoughts and emotions spiralling all around it. This is the *dr̥k*, the seer, the witness in us. All the external and internal objects are *dr̥śya*, the seen. Discrimination between the seer and seen is an important spiritual discipline.

The purpose of this discrimination is twofold. In the first place, it helps the soul to detach itself from external objects and thoughts. It thus acts as a method of controlling thoughts, a better and more advanced one than the second type of discrimination described above. Secondly, it helps us in locating the divine centre in us which is the doorway to spiritual illumination. It points to the direction in which our real self, the Atman, lies. As Śaṅkara has pointed out, though the 'I' is self-evident, its real higher nature as Atman is not so; otherwise the materialists and the Buddhists would not have denied it.¹²

The immediate goal of all spiritual techniques is to discover the light of the Atman, the higher spiritual dimension of the self. *Dr̥k-dr̥śya viveka* cannot itself take us to this divine centre in us, but it can point out the way to it. By practising it we can know that our 'I' is separate from our thoughts, but it cannot reveal the real luminous nature of this 'I'. In order to discover

our luminous spiritual centre we have to practise prayer, *dhyāna* (meditation), *nīdī-dhyāna* (self-enquiry), or some other spiritual technique.

With the spread of Taoism and Zen Buddhism a sort of false Advaita is nowadays becoming popular all over the world. Confusion between life and self-awareness has made even some scientists regard everything from atoms and molecules to Atman as 'one', and has led to a wrong understanding and interpretation of Vedānta. The main cause for this mistake is the lack of practice of *dr̥k-dr̥śya viveka*, which is the starting point for a right understanding of real Advaita.

There is, however, one danger in the practice of this discrimination. It is to mistake ordinary ego-awareness, which is only an attitude of mind, for the higher witness-consciousness of a Jīvanmukta (liberated soul). Nowadays it has become a fashion to talk about 'choiceless awareness' and 'remaining a witness'. Regarded as a mental attitude, it is no doubt a good practice, but to mistake it for a true spiritual experience is nothing but self-delusion. The cause of this mistake is ignorance about the true nature of Reality and the nature of genuine spiritual experience. This takes us to the fourth type of discrimination.

Sad-asad vastu viveka

This means discrimination between the Real and the unreal. What is popularly understood by this term is usually only a guesswork. For unless we have a direct supersensuous experience of 'the Real' how can we practise discrimination between the Real and the unreal? Once Sri Sarada Devi, the divine consort of Sri Ramakrishna, was asked about the nature of God-realization. She replied: 'What does a man become by realizing God? Does he get a pair of horns? No. What happens is, he develops discrimination between the Real and the

¹². Śaṅkarācārya, Introduction to his Commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

unreal, gets spiritual consciousness, and goes beyond life and death.¹³ Here the Mother is speaking of the highest type of discriminative awareness which dawns on an illumined soul.

Why then do we hear so much about discrimination between 'the Real and the unreal'? This phrase is only a popular translation of the terms '*nitya*' and '*anitya*', based on the premiss that whatever is *anitya* (impermanent) is *asat* (unreal). As the world is impermanent, it must be unreal or illusory. As Gauḍapāda says, 'What does not exist in the beginning and the end, cannot be said to exist in the middle.'¹⁴ This is one of the foundational doctrines of Advaita. The other schools of Vedānta do not, however, accept it. According to them the world is no doubt impermanent, but that does not mean that it is illusory.

13. Swami Tapasyananda and Swami Nikhilananda, *Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1969), p. 331.

14. आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा ।

Māṇḍūkya Kārikā, 4.31.

The point on which all schools of Vedānta agree is that the true Self or Atman is self-luminous, uncreated, immortal, and is separate not only from the body but also from mind. So it is better to rename this fourth type of discrimination as *ātma-anātma viveka*, discrimination between the Self and the not-Self. It can be practised only by those who have had a direct vision of the light of Atman.

The four types of discrimination we have spoken of form a graded series and, as the aspirant progresses in spiritual life, he must take up higher and higher types. A true spiritual aspirant always practises discrimination. A part of his mind is constantly engaged in sifting, analysing, classifying and judging every idea and emotion that passes through it. Even while engaged in work, play, conversation and other normal daily activities, the inner sleuth carries on his work. It goes on uninterrupted even in sleep. Indeed, a disciplined mind well-trained in discrimination acts as a guardian angel, protecting the spiritual aspirant day and night, and under all conditions and circumstances.

INDIAN HISTORY IN ITS RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

PART I : NATIONAL METHOD OF INDIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ENVISIONED BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

SWAMI SAKHYANANDA

Beneficial knowledge of history

Purāṇvṛttam or history, in the context of Indian culture, is known as 'Itihāsa-Purāṇam', which is often classified as the 'Fifth Veda' (Pañcama Veda).¹ Itihāsa-

1. इतिहासपुराणः पञ्चमो वेदानां वेदः

Chāndogya Upaniṣad, 7.1.4.

इतिहासपुराणं च पञ्चमो वेद उच्यते ॥

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 1.4.20

Purāṇam is one of the eighteen branches of Indian wisdom (*aparā vidyā*), developed by the ancient Ṛṣis of India for the enlightenment of humanity. Indian civilization is built upon the foundation of these eighteen *vidyās* (branches of true knowledge beneficial to humanity). According to those great Ṛṣis who built up our civilization, history (*purāṇvṛttam*) means the reliable account of the past experiences relating to the socio-political, educational and cultural

life of a civilized society or nation, handed down as traditions through generations in the march of time. These traditions were recorded in the literature of the 'Fifth Veda' by our R̥sis for the light and guidance of future generations. These literary records are to be considered the most valid source of knowledge regarding the ancient history and culture of India.

'*Vidyayā vindate amṛtam*', says *Kena Upaniṣad*.² That is, we attain immortality by '*vidyā*'—true, beneficial knowledge gained by *pramāṇas* (valid means). Immortality is the highest good we aspire to attain in our life on earth. What do we gain by acquiring historical knowledge? What is the benefit of studying Itihāsa-Purāṇam? Swami Vivekananda, the great R̥si of our age, gives the answer in his edifying address to modern India: 'It is out of the past that the future has to be moulded: it is the past that becomes the future. Therefore, the more the Hindus study their past, the more glorious will be their future, and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of everyone is a benefactor to his nation.'³

The value of historical knowledge is clear from these words of Swamiji: it is beneficial to humanity inasmuch as it dispels ignorance, the root-cause of all weakness, and gives strength to build up a glorious future; it gives light to see the dangers on the way and helps mankind to avoid them.

According to Professor Arnold Toynbee, the celebrated historian of this century, a 'civilization rather than the traditional nation-state, ought to be the unit for study of history'. By the term 'civilization' we have to understand the image of India found in the edifying classical literature of the

nation which symbolically represents its civilization by reflecting the nation's age-old traditions and culture. In the context of India, it is the Purāṇa and Itihāsa literature that is symbolic of our nation's culture and civilization. Hence that literature ought to be the source for the beneficial study of our nation's history. Knowledge gained by such a study will enlighten our minds and strengthen our wills to build a glorious future. Historical knowledge gained through other means which are foreign to the spirit and traditions of the Itihāsa literature, cannot and will not prove beneficial to us. Such knowledge is sure to prove a failure in our national life by hindering our progress and welfare; it will drive us on to degradation and enslavement.

A knowledge that brings national degradation and enslavement is surely not *vidyā*, not true knowledge beneficial to human welfare, however scientific or 'objective' it may be. Any knowledge that is inimical to our progress and welfare, is called '*avidyā*' in Sanskrit, meaning thereby perverted or false knowledge. Unfortunately, the modern trend of historical study is towards that end—to acquire knowledge detrimental to our national progress and welfare. Our scholars of today are following certain methods which are anti-national, and diametrically opposed to Indian tradition and culture. What are their methods of historical research?

Defective methods of modern historical research

There are two methods of historical research and education adopted by the scholars of modern India, namely: (1) dependence on contemporary foreign records, and (2) archaeological studies. They are the legacy of the European Indologists of the nineteenth century who started the work of rewriting India's history in their own fashion, using their own

2. *Kena Upaniṣad*, 2.4.

3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, in 8 vols. (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972-78), vol. IV, p. 324.

standards of historical knowledge. What are they?

The most valid source of Indian history in the Western view is the contemporary records, by which are meant the scraps of diary-notes said to have been written by foreign travellers like Megasthenes, Ptolemy, Pliny, Huen-tsang, Albirunī and others who visited India between the third century B.C. and thirteenth century A.D. Granted that the so-called diary-notes are reliable and valid, we may ask about the history of other periods before and in between the visits of these foreign travellers. The scholars answer that those periods are pre-historic, dark, gloomy, and hence unknowable. This is, in a way, virtual negation of the fact that India had a civilization and history prior to the visits of Megasthenes or Alexander.

Here it must be noted that the European scholars of the nineteenth century alone are not responsible for this distortion and mutilation of India's ancient history and civilization. They were but mercenaries of the British rulers whose aim it was to establish by false propaganda that India became civilized for the first time in history by contact with the West, and that this country should ever remain under Western (British) domination, if at all the Indians were to become civilized. Thus, at the behest of the British masters, these mercenaries introduced a negative system of education advancing all sorts of false assumptions, pseudo-historical theories and methods of research suited to their purpose. Unfortunately this system has become 'scientific' and 'up-to-date' for our modern Indian historians. The textbooks of history taught to the children of this country for the last 150 years are the products of this Western method of research and speculation.

Men of pure, unbiased understanding know that human civilization had its dawn

here in India, the land of enlightened R̥ṣis; it is from here that knowledge and culture flowed to different parts of the world.⁴ India's glorious history really belongs to those remote periods before the third century B.C.; we have our valuable records of the 'Fifth Veda' to prove this fact. But alas, they are not acceptable to scholars of the Western school; they deny the validity of those records on the plea that the Itihāsa-Purāṇas are mythical legends and fictions clothed in poetic imagery.

In fact, all the ancient historical records, not only of India but of Egypt, Greece and all other old nations, are clothed in poetical flourish. So what should be done? We have

4. Listen to the words of Swami Vivekananda:

'Amongst all the races of the world, from the earliest time in history, India has been called the land of wisdom.' (*Complete Works*, vol. IV, p. 196).

'When the real history of India will be unearthed, it will be proved that, as in matters of religion, so in finearts and sciences too, India is the Primal Guru of the whole world'. (*Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 421).

'Those of you who think that the Hindus have always been confined within the four walls of their country, are entirely mistaken: you have not studied the old books, you have not studied the history of the race if you think so. Each nation must give in order to live. When you give life, you will have life ... and that we have been living for so many thousands of years is a fact that stares us in the face, and the solution that remains is that we have always been giving to the outside world, whatever the ignorant may think. But the gift of India is the gift of religion and philosophy, of wisdom and of spirituality.' (*Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 273).

'Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world. Silent, unperceived, yet omnipotent in its effect, it has revolutionized the thought of the world; yet nobody knows when it did so.... There are evidences accumulating every day to show that Indian thought penetrated the world before Buddhists were born.... Before Buddhism, Vedānta had penetrated into China, into Persia, and the Islands of the Eastern Archipelago.' (*Ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 274-75).

to analyse those myths and legends on logical grounds and sift the historical facts underlying the poetical imagery, if we want to know their true spirit. This sort of analytical study requires earnest effort along right lines which, of course, is not in the habit of modern scholars. Hence their pathetic adherence to the negative methods of speculation taught by their Western masters, who have not imbibed India's cultural heritage and who, purposely or otherwise, have brought down or reduced the antiquity of our history and civilization to the times of Alexander.

The other valid source of Indian history, in the modern view, is the study of archaeological findings unearthed from different parts of the country. They include pieces of bones, pottery, stone implements, coins, epigraphs and such other materials capable of indicating the antiquity of human life and civilization on earth to some extent. They are, no doubt, valid; we admit them. But it must be remembered that these materials, by themselves, cannot yield any valuable information regarding their origin and historical evolution, unless studied in the light of the traditional literature which keeps in record their history. We have to probe deep into that literature (Itihāsa) carefully in order to have a satisfactory explanation about their relation to national life. Unfortunately such deep and careful study of our national Itihāsa literature is beyond the purview of modern Indian archaeologists and historians. Like the blind following the blind, they are following the footsteps of their Western masters, sticking to foreign methods of speculation, often advancing ridiculous and queer theories which have no relevance to Indian national life and culture.

In our view all these various historical speculations and theories advanced by the modern scholars are defective, and hence we cannot accept them as valid sources for

acquiring a true beneficial knowledge of our ancient history and civilization, however 'scientific' or 'objective' they may be. Many of our enlightened teachers and eminent scholars raised their note of warning against these corrupt forms of modern historical speculation and anti-national methods of education, even at the dawn of this century. The first and foremost among those great souls who realized the dangers of modern historical speculations and writings was Swami Vivekananda, the great apostle of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. With the true insight and farsight of a Rṣi, he envisioned a new method of historical research and education suited to the progress and welfare of our nation, which may be learnt from his enlightening words quoted below :

A nation that has no history of its own has nothing in this world. Do you believe that one who has such faith and pride as to feel, 'I come of noble descent', can ever turn out to be bad? How could that be? That faith in himself could curb his actions and feelings, so much so that he would rather die than commit wrong. So a national history keeps a nation well-restrained and does not allow it to sink so low. Oh, I know you will say, 'But we have not such a history'. No, there is not any, according to those who think like you. Neither is there any, according to your big university scholars; and so also to those who after having travelled through the West in great rush, come back dressed in European style and assert, 'We have nothing, we are barbarians'.... [But] we have our own history exactly as it ought to have been for us. Will that history be made extinct by shutting our eyes and crying, 'Alas! we have no history'? Those who have eyes to see will find a luminous history there, and on the strength of that history, they know that the nation is alive. *But that history has to be rewritten.* It should be restated, suited to the understanding and ways of thinking which our men have acquired in the present age through Western education.⁵

Study Sanskrit, and along with it study Western sciences as well. Learn accuracy, my boys! Study and labour, so that time will come when

5. *Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 365.

you can put your history on a scientific basis. For, now Indian history is disorganized. The histories of our country written by English writers cannot but be weakening to our minds, for they tell only of our downfall. How can foreigners, who understand very little of our manners and customs, or of our religion and philosophy, write faithful and unbiased histories of India? Naturally many false notions and wrong inferences have found their way into them. Nevertheless they have shown us the way how to proceed making researches into our ancient history. *Now it is for us to strike out an independent path of historical research for ourselves, to study the Vedas and Purāṇas and the ancient Annals [Itihāsa] of India, and from them make it your life's Sādhana [‘Tapasyā’ or ‘disciplined endeavour’] to write accurate, sympathetic and soul-inspiring histories of the land. It is for Indians to write Indian history.* Therefore set yourselves to the task of rescuing our lost and hidden treasures from oblivion. Even as one whose child has been lost does not rest until one has found it, so do you never cease to labour until you have revived the glorious past of India in the consciousness of the people. That will be true *national education*, and with its advancement, a true national spirit will be awakened!⁶

A new range of vision

Swami Vivekananda gives us here a new range of vision, a new method of historical research, in order to bring into clear perspective the vistas of our glorious past. First of all, we have to study the Vedas, the sublime literature embodying the highest spiritual doctrines in the most ancient and refined (*samskr̥ta*) form of human speech, handed down by tradition through generations of Ṛṣi-teachers and disciples. Next comes the study of ‘Pañcama Veda’ or Itihāsa-Purāṇam, the highly enlightening literary record of our nation’s history and civilization. No doubt, our ancient history as recorded in the Purāṇic literature is

mixed with poetical flourish and rhetoric. It is but natural; the historical literature of all ancient nations is abundant in poetical beautifications. We have to analyse and extract the truth by application of *anvikṣiki vidyā*, the wisdom of Indian logic. This process of sifting truth by the wisdom of logic is imperative in the study of Scriptures, especially of ‘Pañcama Veda’. Our great Ṛṣis like Manu, Dattātreyā, Kapila, and Vyāsa are the masters of this original method of sifting truth by *anvikṣiki vidyā*.

Then, the historical facts thus collected have to be arranged in time-scale in order to get a chronological account of the events in the past. This can be achieved to some extent with the aid of astronomical science and ancient Indian Vedāṅga calendars developed by our Vedic Ṛṣis. They furnish us with the principles of time-reckoning and necessary astronomical data to help us determine the dates of ancient historical epochs referred to by them. Our Brāhmaṇa and Pañcama Vedic scriptures contain abundant astronomical data with regard to events recorded in them. With the aid of these data and astronomical methods of calculation we can work out the dates of events to some extent, without much error.⁷

This method of ascertaining dates of events by astronomical principles, is known by the term ‘Aryan’, since it belongs to the line of enlightened, cultured Ṛṣi-teachers of ancient India. In course of time this science concerning the motion of astral bodies underwent great developments through repeated experiments and observations by sages both in the East and the West. It is still in vogue among the wise

6. Instructions given to a group of university students of Rajputana in 1891; see *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1974), pp. 213-14.

7. In the next instalment a chart prepared by the author for astronomical calculations will be given.—Ed.

men in all civilized nations. As such we can safely apply this method for the purpose of ascertaining the dates of past events wherever found relevant. To ignore and dismiss it as primitive or outdated is a sure sign of *avidyā* (nescience) on the part of modern professional historians.

This is in short the national method of

historical research bequeathed to us by Swami Vivekananda for acquiring beneficial, worthy knowledge of our past for the regeneration and welfare of future India. It is indeed an arduous and uphill task to follow this original path of research. Still we have to do it for the good of the nation.

(To be continued)

FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA : YOGINDRAMOHINI BISWAS

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

It was during one of those many visits of Sri Ramakrishna to the house of Balaram Bose¹ that Yogindramohini came to see him for the first time. It was sometime in the last part of 1882.² Sri Ramakrishna was the topic of frequent discussion in Calcutta, particularly in the locality of Baghbazar where Yogindramohini lived. Besides, being a distant relation of Balaram Bose, the great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, she perhaps had heard of the saint from her own relations; for once her grandmother, who had a religious disposition, had visited the Dakshineswar temple to meet the saint. It is told that the unorthodox dress and

demeanour of Sri Ramakrishna had befooled her. She had met Sri Ramakrishna unknowingly and had asked him, 'Where is the Paramahansa?' It seems that the latter was in an indrawn mood and did not disclose his identity.

Yogindramohini, thirty-two, 'possessed exceptional beauty and uplifted dignity which told of rare nobility of character'.³ 'She was regal in appearance and dignified in deportment'.⁴ 'She had ... big lotus-like sparkling eyes.... She was of short-stature, heavily built, bright-complexioned, very sagacious, well-balanced in her judgement....'⁵ That day at Balaram's house, Sri Ramakrishna, then forty-five, was reeling like a drunkard in a state of spiritual ecstasy. It was difficult for a newcomer to distinguish this God-intoxicated person from a tipsy fellow. Later she recollected her first impression of Sri Rama-

1. According to Akshay Kumar Sen's *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Puthi* (Calcutta : Udbodhan Office, fifth edition), p. 304, and the *Disciples of Sri Ramakrishna* (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1955), p. 471, the first meeting took place at the Kali Temple of Dakshineswar.

2. A spiritually advanced young man, Vishnu of Ariadaha, had committed suicide; and this matter was being discussed by Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar on 14 December 1882. From Holy Mother's remarks it would appear that Yogindra was then present at the Nahabat at Dakshineswar. Many, however, hold the view that the meeting took place in 1883. See *At Holy Mother's Feet*, by Her Direct Disciples (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1963), p. 264.

3. Sister Devamata, *Sri Ramakrishna and His Disciples* (La Crescenta, California : Ananda Ashrama, 1928), p. 118.

4. Swami Nikhilananda, *Holy Mother* (New York : Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, 1962), p. 60.

5. Swami Nirlepananda, 'Yogin-Ma', *Pra-buddha Bharata*, July 1942, p. 341.

krishna in the following words : 'One day Thakur [Sri Ramakrishna] came to Balaram Bose's and we went to see him. This was my first meeting. To one side of the hall on the first floor Thakur was standing filled with divine emotions. Merged in deep *samādhi* he had lost outward consciousness. Everybody was making obeisance to him from a distance. We too followed them. Till then I did not know anything about *samādhi*, nor could I decipher its significance. This much I could comprehend, that he was perhaps a devotee of Kālī. But he looked as though tipsy ! ... First, an idea flashed across my mind : I thought, well, one drunkard ruined my family life ; now should my religious life too be ruined by another? This was like getting frightened at the sight of a crimsoned cloud.'⁶ Since her unhappy experiences of life had shattered her self-confidence and liberal attitude, faith and hope, she had practically forgotten to see good intentions and happy tidings in the people and events around her. Obviously she could not appreciate the saint's divine ecstasies, much less when they took the form which had already created unhappiness in her life. She returned home rather disappointed.

Yogindra was not aware that Sri Ramakrishna's influence had begun working on her ; it was working more deeply than she could even imagine. This first contact with Sri Ramakrishna had made a far reaching impact on her life. Sri Ramakrishna's appearance, particularly his face glowing with divine emotion, kept appearing on the screen of her mind. She was gradually seized with the desire of visiting the saint again ; and after her second visit, she started visiting him again and again. Frequent and closer contacts with the saint dispelled the misapprehension she had had

during her first meeting. She discovered to her joy and surprise that Sri Ramakrishna's character, bereft of airs and pretensions, was as simple as that of a child, but at the same time as deep as the ocean.

Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual perception was so keen that at the very first glance he could see through and through the newcomer and discern her spiritual status and her future spiritual development. Sri Ramakrishna's later remark that 'Yogin is not an ordinary woman—she is like the bud of a thousand-petalled lotus which slowly blossoms and delights all with its beauty and fragrance', tells in a nutshell the story of the unfoldment of the spiritual grandeur that was to come in the life of Yogindramohini under the guidance of the great Master Sri Ramakrishna.

An adept in cooking, she would sometimes carry some sweetmeats or some cooked preparations for him, and he would partake of them with the joy of a child. Every time she took leave of him he would quietly tell her, 'Come again, please.'

Under the guidance of the Master Yogindramohini gradually rose to such stature that she was pointed out as a true Jñānin⁷ (enlightened person) among the women devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. Coming as it did from the lips of Sri Ramakrishna, it should be taken as the most reliable measure of her spiritual status.

The daughter of a well-to-do medical practitioner of Baghbazar and lecturer in the Calcutta Medical College, Prasanna Kumar Mitra, who had earned a reputation in midwifery, she was born on January 16, 1851, at her father's house at 59 Baghbazar Street, Calcutta.⁸ Though Yogindra was born with a deep strain of mysticism running

6. Lakshmimani Devi and Yogindramohini, *Sri Ramakrishna Smriti*, Bengali (Calcutta : Udbodhan Office, third edition).

7. 'Among women devotees Yogin is a Jnanin.' See 'Yogin-Ma' by Swami Arupananda, *Udbodhan*, vol. XXVI, no. 6, p. 370.

8. Swami Nirlepananda, 'Yogin-Ma', *Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1942, pp. 294-5.

through her personality, her upbringing under the living guidance of her pious mother, the second wife of Dr. Mitra, cannot be ignored. In keeping with the social custom, at the age of only six and a half she was given in marriage to Ambika Charan Biswas, the adopted son of the Zamindar family of Khardah, 24-Parganas, reputed for its charity. To the utter disappointment of all, particularly to the young Yogindra, Ambika turned out to be a very indolent, pleasure-seeking and extravagant person; and he could not give anything but neglect and refusal in response to the love and care of his devoted wife. She failed to bring any effective change in Ambika. He became a moral wreck and a pauper; the family was ruined. She had given him a son who lived not more than six months, and a girl who was lovingly called 'Ganu'. A striking contrast to her debauchee husband, Yogindra was calm and majestic in her bearing. She practised righteousness and lived on frugal fare in her husband's household. All around her there reigned dissipation and moral laxity. As soon as her only daughter 'Ganu' was given in marriage, however, she took a bold decision: instead of compromising with disgrace and dishonour any further, she left her in-law's house for good and took shelter again in her father's house at Baghbazar. Her father, Dr. Mitra, had already passed away; but her dear mother welcomed her. Once having lost its moorings, her life had all these years drifted on a river of agony and humiliation. Now, however, the tide was to turn, and it came most unexpectedly.

Atop the new tide was Sri Ramakrishna, the God-man of the age, whose brilliant intellect and wonderfully expansive heart brought a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart, into existence for the present age and a glorious assurance for the future. He demonstrated in his life

that whatever be the approach according to individual differences in taste and temperament and the differences in social heritage, the one and the same spiritual truth reveals itself in infinite lustre and supreme bliss to men of all ages and of all climes. Though his mind's natural tendency was to rest in the transcendental experience of oneness with the Truth, he always tried to come down and live like a great swan in the lake of divine bliss so that he might help the devotees around him share the same spiritual joy with him as his partners. He had the wonderful capacity to put himself into another man's very soul, and it helped him approach the distant reaches of their mental spectrum. In the words of his great disciple Swami Vivekananda, he was 'the latest and the most perfect [of Incarnations]—the concentrated embodiment of knowledge, love, renunciation, catholicity, and the desire to serve mankind.'⁹

Sri Ramakrishna laid stress on the need to look upon all women as representations of the Divine Mother. It was the Divine Mother who played through the body and mind of Sri Ramakrishna. He had married Sarada Devi, who herself experienced God as the Divine Mother and who experienced Her in her 'husband'. They saw the Divine Mother in each other.

Amidst all her worldly trials and tribulations Yogindra battled to hold on to the thought centred round this holy man. When she began to open her heart to his influence, subtle and quiet, it helped her in disciplining her inner life and to bring some order and peace into it.

However, exasperated by worldly problems Yogindra one day became so restless that she decided to rush to Dakshineswar and tell her secrets and problems

9. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, in 8 vols. (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972), vol. VII, p. 483.

to the saint. Early next morning she walked all the way to Dakshineswar but, strangely enough, as soon as she met Sri Ramakrishna all her agonies seemed to vanish. After a while she plucked some flowers from the garden and collected them in the apron of her sari. Moved by spiritual compassion, Sri Ramakrishna, who at that time was abstractedly leaning against a wall of the northern porch of his room, noticed her as she was passing by and softly asked her, 'What are you carrying, dear?' She showed him the flowers; and then approaching him she placed the flowers at his feet. This act of devotion served to transport Sri Ramakrishna's mind to a lofty region; he became engrossed in spiritual emotion and in that mood he placed his feet on her head. At the suggestion of Gopal's mother, who was then waiting upon Sri Ramakrishna, she held his feet on her chest. She experienced some spiritual exhilaration and came to believe that Viṣṇu Gadādhara's footprints had been enshrined in her heart.¹⁰

She registered later one of her typical experiences during her visits to Sri Ramakrishna. She writes, 'Often I noticed that I had gone to him with certain questions in mind; strangely, such or similar questions I would hear someone else asking and in response he would resolve all my doubts directly or indirectly. He was indeed the Indweller [*antaryāmi*].'

Following a few visits she was introduced to Sarada Devi, who was almost of her age. They developed a deep liking and affection for each other. Recollecting her experiences of those days Yogindramohini said: 'Whenever I went to the Mother, she took me into her confidence and even sought my counsel. I used to visit Dakshineswar at intervals of seven or eight days and some-

times spent nights there. The Mother would not allow me to sleep separately. She would drag me to her side and make me sleep with her at the Nahabat.'¹¹

To Yogindramohini, Sarada Devi was the ideal of harmony between mystical intensity and dedication to worldly duties. Wonderfully joyous were their days at Dakshineswar. Sarada Devi and her companions would stand for hours behind the matting partition around the Nahabat, gazing at the joyous scenes centred on Sri Ramakrishna. She used to help Sarada Devi in her household duties. Sarada Devi liked so much the way Yogindra braided her hair that she often waited three or four days for Yogindra's return to have it done again. At the same time she sincerely practised spiritual disciplines in seclusion. Yogindra developed such power in plunging her mind in deep meditation that Sarada Devi once remarked, 'And look at Yogen. In those days she would fall into such deep meditation that if a fly settled inside her eye, she was not aware of it.'¹² They were days of bliss indeed for Yogindramohini, and in later years she used to say: 'Such happiness cannot be put into words. Even to think of it today moves my heart.'¹³

Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi, like the sun and moon, cast their influence on Yogindramohini, gradually transforming her being, drawing out the divinity within and causing it to manifest in various ways. Sri Ramakrishna confirmed and revitalized the spiritual *mantra* Yogindra had received from the family priest of her in-laws. The *mantra* which had been insipid once, now worked wonders. It brought unspeakable joy. A new vista of life opened up before

10. Swami Saradananda, *Bhagavan Sri Sri Ramakrishnadev*, Bengali (Calcutta: Udbodhan Office, B.S. 1352), p. 7.

11. Swami Madhavananda and Sri Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, eds., *Great Women of India* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1953), p. 443.

12. Direct Disciples, *At Holy Mother's Feet*, p. 304.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 289-90.

her. One day Sri Ramakrishna, in an ecstatic mood, said to her while pointing to his own bodily form, 'Look, your Iṣṭa [chosen deity] is within this. Think of this form; it will lead to the thought of your Iṣṭa.'¹⁴ And actual experience testified to the truth of this guidance of Sri Ramakrishna. He taught her also the method of counting beads, meditation, etc. One day while she was accompanying Sri Ramakrishna in a boat to Dakshineswar, the latter advised her: 'Why not surrender yourself to Him? One should live in the world like a leaf before the wind—a leaf thrown out after food has been eaten out of it, cast off to be blown by the wind whithersoever it likes.... One should live one's life depending on Him, and the mind should move as the wind of divine consciousness moves it.'¹⁵

She too in her turn served obsequiously both Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi. She would consider it imperative to obey their errands without any questioning. A trickle of their goodwill was considered a great favour by her. And ever since she was instructed in the course of a vision by Sri Ramakrishna, she accepted Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi as one undifferentiated being.¹⁶

Encouraged by Sri Ramakrishna she began to study devotional literature. Her prodigious memory helped her to get by heart a number of Purāṇas, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the life of Sri Caitanya. So reliable were her studies that Sister Nivedita wrote in the preface to her book *Cradle Tales of Hinduism* that her (Yogindra's) 'deep and intimate knowledge

of the sacred literature is only equalled by her unfailing readiness to help a young student' (like Nivedita). Yogindra also took classes on such religious subjects as the *Gītā* in the women's section (opened on November 2, 1903) of Nivedita's school at Baghbazar.¹⁷

The spiritually surcharged lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi naturally spurred Yogindra to deeper and more arduous spiritual practices. She subjected herself to manifold austerities and spiritual disciplines, resulting in rapid progress towards life's goal. Sri Ramakrishna smilingly drew her attention to the efficacy of genuine faith, saying, 'What more is left to be attained by you? You have seen, fed and served this body [referring to himself].'¹⁸ In fact, she had developed an abundance of such faith in Sri Ramakrishna. When he paid a visit to her home on July 28, 1885, she begged him to enter her bedroom, for she believed that the dust of Sri Ramakrishna's feet would make the place as holy as Benaras, and that if she died there she would attain liberation.¹⁹ Nevertheless, in order to saturate her with spiritual fervour so that all doubts and wrong ideas about life's goal might cease altogether, Sri Ramakrishna instilled in Yogindra the strong desire for austerities, as well as steadfast devotion for life's ideal. Thus equipped she made steady progress in the spiritual path. Simultaneously, he trained her to practice selfless service to help her strengthen her moral fibre as well as to enable her to serve the cause of suffering humanity, particularly womankind, under

14. Swami Gambhirananda, *Sri Ramakrishna Bhaktamalika*, Bengali, in 2 vols. (Calcutta: Udbodhan Office, second edition), vol. 2, p. 458.

15. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master*, trans. Swami Jagadananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1970), p. 626.

16. Swami Gambhirananda, *Bhaktamalika*, vol. II, p. 459.

17. Pravrajika Atmaprana, *Sister Nivedita* (Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1963), p. 153; and Sankari Prasad Basu, *Nivedita Lokamata*, Bengali (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers), p. 234.

18. *Disciples of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 472.

19. 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), p. 808.

the loving guidance of Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother.

One day news reached her that her drunkard husband Ambika Charan had been bitten by a rabid dog. He was brought to Yogindra's parental home. Medical treatment and the best services offered by the devoted wife could not keep him alive long. Overly preoccupied with bitter memories of the past and now overwhelmed at this bereavement, Yogindra perhaps did not realize the seriousness of the Master's failing health. For she decided to visit Vrindaban and undertake rigorous spiritual austerities while Sri Ramakrishna was lying seriously ill at Cossipore. When she approached Sri Ramakrishna for permission, he encouraged her. Pointing to Sarada Devi, who was standing nearby, he emphatically advised Yogindra, 'My dear child, you go after obtaining her consent—you will get everything.' Next morning Yogindra came to Cossipore and received the blessings of the Master and the Holy Mother and left for Vrindaban.²⁰

Busy as she was with her spiritual practices at Vrindaban, she was nevertheless rudely shocked to hear of Sri Ramakrishna's passing away at Calcutta. She was soon joined by Sarada Devi. While they were mourning Sri Ramakrishna's death, one day Sri Ramakrishna appeared in a vision and assured them: 'Here I am. Where have I gone? It is just like passing from one room to another.' Now, intense aspiration for higher illumination led Yogindra to valuable spiritual experiences. One day she attained a state of *samādhi* at Lala Babu's temple, referring to which she admitted, 'Then my mind had plunged so deep into meditation that I had totally forgotten the existence of the world.... I could see the presence of my Iṣṭa everywhere. This lasted for three

days.'²¹ In fact, her life was full of fasts and vigils. She did *pañcatapā* in the company of the Holy Mother, and took the vow of sannyasa from Swami Saradananda at Puri, though she used to put on ochre cloth only at the time of worship. One day while meditating she was blessed with frequent visions of Balarām and Kṛṣṇa; but soon thereafter, particularly after the death of her only daughter Ganu, these visions ceased; then she had to spend much of her time caring for her three grandsons. In spite of such worldly duties and responsibilities she maintained the spirit of austerity with single-minded devotion almost to the last day of her life.

Joys of spiritual experiences apart, the major part of her life was perhaps a story of sorrows and sufferings. In 1906 her only daughter became a widow and three years later lost one of her sons; soon thereafter the daughter herself died. The upbringing of three grandsons and serving her own old mother engaged much of her time. She also saw her old mother die in 1914. Bereavements of close relations, one after another, purged her mind of the dross of worldly attachments that might have been lurking in its deep vaults. They gave her not only infinite forbearance and unsullied strength of mind, but also helped her to cultivate deeper divine fervour and attain the highest illumination.

One of the best spiritual diamonds that Sri Ramakrishna, the expert jeweller, had discovered and gathered round him was Yogindramohini, whom devotees lovingly called Yogin-Ma. She was unique in the swiftness of her comprehension, in the depth of her sympathy for suffering people, and above all in her role as 'Jayā'²² of the

²⁰. Swami Gambhirananda, *Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, third edition), p. 132.

²¹. *Women Saints of East and West* (London: The Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, 1955), p. 131.

²². Sarada Devi referred to Yogindra as 'my Jayā'. Jayā is one of the two attendants of the Divine Mother Durga; the other is Vijayā.

Holy Mother. Holy Mother held her in such love and regard that she used to consult her 'even about *mantras* and spiritual matters, not to speak of many other knotty problems she was confronted with in her daily affairs'.²³ Her purity, humility, compassion, intense spiritual practices, calm steadfastness and motherly affection towards the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, made her dear to all. Though a zealous Hindu, she was quite liberal in her attitude. Sister Nivedita appreciated much the 'instant power to penetrate a new religious feeling or idea' in her.²⁴

A worldly woman turned into a mystic of a high order, Yogin-Ma attained the dizzy heights of spiritual development. She had the experience of *samādhi* once again at her Calcutta residence.²⁵ Pleased with her one-pointed devotion, Sri Ramakrishna the great Master had blessed her with the boon of passing away in *samādhi*.²⁶ Swami

23. Swami Nirlepananda, 'Yogin-Ma', *Prabuddha Bharata*, July 1942, p. 341.

24. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, in 4 vols. (Calcutta : Sister Nivedita Girls' School), vol. I, p. 107.

25. Swami Arupananda, 'Yogin-Ma', p. 367.

26. Baikunthanath Sannyal, *Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Lilamrita*, Bengali (Calcutta : Basumati Sahitya Mandira, B.S. 1343), p. 365.

Vivekananda, too, predicted, 'Yogin-Ma, you will pass away in *samādhi*, for once a person experiences this blessed state, the memory of it is revived at the time of his death.' Yogin-Ma was one of the striking examples of the fulfilment of Swami Vivekananda's hope about Hindu women. The latter wrote in a letter, 'Mother [Sri Sarada Devi] has been born to revive that wonderful *śakti* in India, and making her the nucleus, once more will Gārgīs and Maitreyīs be born into the world.'²⁷ Much earlier than this Sri Ramakrishna himself had declared about Yogin-Ma, 'She is a Gopī perfected by God's grace.'²⁸ And this perhaps explains how she attained such great success in her spiritual practices.

She survived the Holy Mother by four years and passed away in *samādhi* on June 4, 1924. The halo of glory that surrounds the charming life and deeds of Yogin-Ma will be a source of solace and inspiration to all those who have sought shelter at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi.

27. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. VII, p. 474.

28. Swami Saradananda, *The Great Master*, p. 650 ; and also Swami Saradananda, *Bhagavan Sri Sri Ramakrishnadev*, p. 4.

A CRITIQUE OF THE MARXIST VIEW OF RELIGION

PROF. RANJIT KUMAR ACHARJEE

Marxism is the offspring of Hegelian dialectic and Feuerbach's materialism, and is also known as dialectical materialism and scientific socialism. Marxism is not a system of philosophy according to the common usage of the term. What Marx really expounded was a new system of economics, a new political ideology which, he claimed, would usher in a new social system. Never-

theless, materialism, as it was understood during Marx's time, acts as the philosophical basis of scientific socialism. 'The philosophy of Marxism is materialism.... The enemies of democracy therefore exerted all their efforts to refute, undermine and defame materialism and advocated various forms of philosophical idealism which always in one way or another

amounts to an advocacy or support of religion,'¹ says Lenin.

It was Marx's firm conviction that economic factors constituted the basic driving force of social evolution, and that the social consciousness of any particular stage revealed the economic condition obtaining at that stage. All our ideas—political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophical—are the products of economic forces operative in the society. In other words, our intellectual life is a super-structure raised on the economic foundation. Capitalism is the arch enemy of mankind, for it is an instrument for the oppression of the 'wage-earning proletariat'; so it must be done away with. Establishment of a classless society free from all sorts of exploitation and oppression—establishment, that is, of socialism—is the ultimate goal of Marxism. But Marx contends that capitalism will not evaporate by pious wish, and hence a bloody revolution is an imperative necessity for destroying the capitalist system of economy so as to establish a classless society.

For a proper appreciation of Marx's attack on religion, we must cast a cursory glance at the Marxian hypothesis of consciousness, which may be stated in Marx's own language thus: 'Our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the products of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter.'² By implication, it follows that man's consciousness is completely controlled by the laws of matter and, on the social level, by economic factors. So man is incapable of any free and spontaneous activity; and the moral, religious and cultural values which he creates have no intrinsic significance.

In Marx's opinion, 'religion is the opium of the people'; and this simple but significant statement, according to Lenin, is the 'corner-stone of the whole philosophy of Marxism with regard to religion'. Religion, Marx alleges, makes the exploited masses inactive and indifferent about earthly affairs, about their miseries and misfortunes resulting from the capitalist system of economy, by painting a bright and imaginary picture of life hereafter. Thus religion is a 'delightful device for an imaginative escape' from economic oppression and slavery in a capitalistic structure. Consequently, religion renders support, both direct and indirect, to the capitalist class in its perpetuation of exploitation and oppression of the deprived and the down-trodden. In short, Marx thinks that religion is an ally of capitalism. It arises from primitive man's utter ignorance of the natural laws and helplessness before the mighty forces of nature by which his life is environed. And Marx fondly and passionately believes that religion, like most of our social institutions and values, will vanish with the establishment of socialism, which will be the harbinger of an era of peace and prosperity. So, according to Marxists, it is the holy duty of every conscious individual to fight against religion effectively and create such social conditions which will declare the death-warrant of religion.

That there is something apparently very grand and impressive in the Marxian ideal cannot be doubted. Poverty is a great evil and it undoubtedly creates stumbling blocks in the way of the harmonious development of man, in so far as his physico-biological existence is concerned. In different stages of human history, the privileged class, particularly the priestly class, exploited the common masses in the name of religion; and this is responsible for some of our social maladies and injustice. But from this

1. Lenin, *Selected Works*, vol. I, p. 76.

2. Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, vol. I, pp. 430-31.

one should not jump to the conclusion that religion is condemnable and religious consciousness is illusory. So it may be reasonably asserted that Marx misunderstood and misinterpreted religion and confused it with rites and rituals, cults and creeds, doctrines and dogmas, fanaticism and prejudice, which, however, do not constitute the essential core of religion. These constitute 'religionism' as Sri Aurobindo puts it. Religion has its roots in our consciousness, which is not a by-product of some dead material particles. Matter may be temporally prior to mind or consciousness, but consciousness cannot be reduced to matter without residue; and it is now an admitted fact that consciousness heralds the emergence of an entirely new quality in the evolutionary process. Further, psychology as a mental science admits different levels of consciousness, like sleeping, dreaming, waking, etc.; and spiritual consciousness is a higher level of consciousness which implies an awareness of the unity of life, a belief in the universal brotherhood of man, a firm faith in the values of truth, beauty and goodness. Religion is rooted in this spiritual constitution of man; it is an expansion of life far above his animal existence. Marx failed to trace the real spring of religion. Again, if religion is condemned because it has been misused by some people as a means of oppression, then what about Marxism? It is being interpreted and put into practice differently in different socialist countries of the world, indicating a misuse of Marxism; and hence Marxism stands self-condemned on this score. Science, to which Marx owes his allegiance, is now being misused by mighty powers for making deadly weapons of war. Should we therefore discard it, as Marxists advise us to discard religion for *its* misuse?

It seems, therefore, that Marx's crusade against religion is not only unjustified but also unwarranted. In spite of his vast

erudition in different social sciences, one may legitimately question his competency in the matter of maligning religion. His cryptic, cut and dried utterances against religion do not bear any evidence that he ever cared to unearth its inner depths. He profusely poured venom against religion without advancing proper logical demonstration. In fact, religion, whose origin can be traced to the early periods of human history and which is inextricably interwoven with our culture and civilization, cannot be dismissed so easily as Marx has sought to do. Religion too has troubled itself with the problems of food and shelter and devised elaborate schemes concerning different problems of our social life and mundane existence. This shows that religion is not indifferent to man's worldly needs and desires. All that religion seeks to emphasize is that man is not merely a physico-biological entity. In his inner life he is a spiritual being who enjoys freedom and hence cannot be fully understood in terms of biology, politics or economics. Once man realizes his inner nature, the rest will take care of itself. It is a pity that Marx, who is acclaimed as a great humanist, should portray such a poor picture of man, whom he describes as no better than a social tool, or an item in the objective world, or a slave of an economic system.

Religion can act as a corrective to this dehumanizing tendency of Marxism. Dr. Radhakrishnan rightly remarks that 'man is a strange creature, fundamentally different from other animals. He has far, far horizons, invincible hopes, creative energies and spiritual powers. If they are left undeveloped and unsatisfied, he may have all the comforts which wealth can give, but will still feel that life is not worth while.'³

3. S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), p. 23.

Karl Marx, who cherishes kindest regards for the findings of the natural sciences, accepts the materialistic metaphysic without offering any proof for it. But the world is not still where Marx left it. It has advanced a great deal since Marx's time, and in recent years physical scientists themselves repudiate materialism in the sense in which Marx understood it. So materialism as a metaphysical creed deserves little consideration. In this connection Sir James Jean's statement is significant: 'In brief, modern physics is not altogether antagonistic to an objective idealism like that of Hegel.'⁴

That human life is not for bread alone is clearly borne out by the fact that man does not consider his life worth while even when all his physical and biological needs are met. Man moves towards an El Dorado, an untrodden horizon, an unknown frontier; and this accounts for the march of civilization, and this again is the mother of all our creative activities like science, art, literature, religion and philosophy. The problem of food and shelter, however important it may seem, is never the central problem of human existence. Nevertheless, religion will certainly not stand in the way if Marxism seeks to solve it. But religion will humbly declare that the formula of 'economic determinism' is not the panacea of the present crisis of civilization. A partial and incomplete truth can never be raised to the status of a whole truth. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says, 'Social revolution, by itself, is powerless to struggle against the chaotic decay of our society. It cannot save us from the dehumanization of life.'⁵

Though religion is mainly concerned with man's moral and spiritual excellence, it does not mean that religion is indifferent to social ills and injustice. Marx's famous

dictum 'religion is the opium of the people' betrays a pathetic ignorance of the real import of religion and man's inner life. Religion, for obvious reasons, does not recommend violent means for ameliorating social injustice and inequality, and presumably this is one of the reasons why religion has been stigmatised as the 'opium of the people'. But is Marx's assertion that violent armed struggle is the only means of establishing a classless society, based on sound objective evidence? Is social change at all impossible by peaceful means? It should be remembered that true religion, instead of fostering inactivity, infuses vigour and vitality, courage and hope into the mind of man and inspires him to fight against all ills and evils of life. Religion makes man aware of moral obligations and impels him to the task of promoting the good of humanity at large. Religion is not escapism or quietism as Marx erroneously thinks it to be.

Marx fondly fancies to impose equality on human society, and the struggle of Marxism is against all injustice, oppression and exploitation. But in the absence of some sort of higher moral and spiritual consciousness it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to fight against this injustice. Again, in view of the psychical peculiarities of man, real equality in the sense of universal brotherhood cannot be enforced unless it springs spontaneously from the inner life of man. Marx proposes to transform human nature by creating congenial social conditions, since man is a creature of external conditions, 'a product of the circumstances, especially social and economic'. Religion, however, entertains a contrary opinion, and suggests that social change for betterment can be meaningful and enduring only when there is a real change in the inner life of man. In spite of the tremendous scientific and technological development in modern times, there is

4. Sir James Jeans, *Physics and Philosophy* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1948), p. 204.

5. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*, p. 67.

a good deal of international conflict. There is hatred and ill will between man and man; ugly competition between one nation and another for political supremacy. And rivalry for political prominence is not absent even amongst the socialist countries. This results from the 'sickness of spirit', as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan calls it. This again clearly indicates that a real change of human heart, a profound spiritual awareness of the universal brotherhood resulting from the recognition of the common fountain-head of all creation, alone can save human civilization from a man-made catastrophe. And it is religion alone which can bring about a real change in the inner life of man. This aspect of religion has been clearly brought out by Swami Vivekananda when he says: 'Religion is realization, not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole human soul becoming changed into what it believes.'⁶ Dr. S. Radhakrishnan echoes the same sentiment and assigns a similar role to religion: 'Religion as an inward transformation, as a spiritual change, as the overcoming of the discords within our own nature—that has been the fundamental feature of it from the beginning of history.'⁷

Furthermore, mere undoing of 'economic oppression' by establishing socialism is not enough; there is 'cosmic oppression', the dread of disease and death, the nightmare of natural calamities such as earthquake, devastating flood, severe wind and the like. Though we cannot set them at naught, we still require the courage to bear this 'cosmic oppression'; and this courage and

strength come from the inner region of our mind which can only be tapped by religion.

Marxism is called scientific socialism. But is the attitude of Marx really scientific all through? The scientific attitude must be impartial, unbiased, objective and free from rancour and hatred. But it seems that he could not maintain impartiality and detachment in his attack on religion. Is it not very strange and unusual that he could not find anything worthy in religion, which is interwoven with the life and existence of man? 'Religion, as Comte admitted, embraces the whole of existence and the history of religion resumes the entire history of human development. We should not be far wrong in saying with Max Müller that the true history of man is the history of religion.'⁸ Religion, which survived the ravages of time through so many centuries, has not continued so long only to be dismissed by Marx in such a casual manner. Moreover, the Marxists in general, and Lenin, in particular, believe that religion can be liquidated by science. But when they find that some famous scientists, like Jeans, Eddington, Einstein and others, advocate religion, socialists—from their personal predilection—call them bourgeois scientists. A queer logic indeed! 'Science supports modern materialism as expounded by Karl Marx. Only that science is valid which is in conformity with Marxist thought'; that is, 'Marxism is supported by science, which must be based on Marxism': is it not a case of circular reasoning? 'A scientist who supports Marxism is a scientist; if he does not, he is a bourgeois, a reactionary, an agent of imperialism': this dogmatic fanaticism betrays an unscientific temperament and arises from the utter

(Continued on page 350)

6. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, in 8 vols. (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976), vol. II, p. 396.

7. S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Culture* (Delhi: Orient Paper-backs, 1968), p. 55.

8. Dr. Miall Edwards, *The Philosophy of Religion* (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1960), p. 9.



ALBERT EINSTEIN

SWAMI TATHAGATANANDA

'Get out! Don't argue with me. Don't try to tell me what can and what cannot be done! I tell you no one will ever use my formula to make an explosive. It cannot be done.' Einstein, in Berlin, was shouting in an animated voice raised in anger. He was always soft-spoken and suave and never raised his voice. This was unusual behaviour which manifested when he was confronted by a certain person seeking his help in releasing the energy locked in the atom. It was 1919.

From the beginning of his university career, Einstein was seized by a desire to become 'a citizen of the world'. He was a staunch pacifist. Having been born and brought up in Germany and having had bitter experience with military despotism in Munich, he dreaded military power and its wanton violence. Although as a scientist it was his duty to go on exploring the possibilities of atomic power, he felt that as a civilized man who despised militarism and longed for permanent peace for the world he should carry his atomic studies no further. He dreaded this awful power, this tremendous capacity for destruction which waited to be unleashed. Since 1919 he secretly bore some kind of strain within himself and never shared it

with anybody. Possibly it was brought about by the premonition that through his formula atomic energy might be released before the world was prepared for it. He refused to make experiments, gave up his own laboratory work, and gradually shifted his interest to other matters—politics, government, peace and the increase of tolerance throughout the world.

He shared the noble agony of Alfred Nobel. In order to atone for his destructive invention, dynamite, in order to relieve his tortured conscience, Nobel established his awards for the promotion of peace. It almost seemed as if Einstein were driven by a feeling of guilt for the indirect help he had given to the release of the destructive power of the atom. From then onwards he was determined to devote more time for furthering the peaceful use of atomic energy. Later, after the actual explosions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the old man said: 'Our generation has brought into the world the most revolutionary force since prehistoric man's discovery of fire.' Einstein was deeply shocked. After the war, he gave vent to his pent-up emotions by expressing his deep regret. To the visiting Japanese physicist, Hideki Yukawa, he expressed apology personally with tears. In passing

it may be recalled what he told Linus Pauling : 'I may have made the mistake of my life when I signed the letter to President Roosevelt recommending that atom bombs be made. But there was some justification—the danger that Germany would make them.' On another occasion he said, 'Had I known that the Germans would not succeed in developing an atomic bomb, I would have done nothing for the bomb.'

Einstein was an enigmatic personality in science. 'He is the only scientist who has become a cult figure, even among scientists.' He was the great genius of integration in the field of natural science. Bertrand Russell wrote in 1924 that the theories of relativity are 'probably the greatest synthetic achievement of the human intellect up to the present time.' They 'sum up the mathematical and physical labours of more than 2,000 years. Pure geometry from Pythagoras to Riemann, the dynamics of astronomy of Galileo and Newton, the theory of electromagnetism as it resulted from the researches of Faraday, Maxwell and their successors, are all absorbed with the necessary modifications in the theories of Einstein.'

Greatest scientist though he was, he did not keep himself absorbed in the Olympian heights of pure theoretical research. He was very much concerned with burning human problems. His human aspect—his profound love for democracy, his sympathy for all mankind, his ideal of pacifism, his lively interest in solving pressing human problems, his unassuming simple life, and above all his mystical bent of mind—won over the hearts of people all over the world. They may not have comprehended the theory of relativity or the implication of $E = mc^2$, but they had an instinctive sense that he dealt not just in scientific truths but in moral truths. He was one of the first to point out to the world of medicine that the

atom might be of use in curing disease. The Swiss claimed him as a Swiss, the Germans claimed him as a German, the Jews claimed him as a Jew, others claimed him as a scientist or a humanitarian. Common people all over the world recognized in him a great friend and humanist.

'What is the meaning of human life or, for that matter, of the life of any creature? To know an answer to this question means to be religious.... The man who regards his life and that of his fellow creatures as meaningless is not merely unhappy but hardly fit for life.' This statement of Einstein speaks of his mystical bent of mind. He visualized the universe as a rational entity which displays extraordinary intelligence of a higher order. The universe was, to him, a unified whole of matter and mind full of grandeur and beauty. The mystic in him saw that the entire gamut of creation is rooted in deep mystery. Lincoln Barnett says in his *Einstein and the Universe*, 'The philosopher and mystic, as well as the scientist, have always sought through various disciplines of introspection to arrive at a knowledge of ultimate, immutable essence that undergirds the mutable, illusory world.'

In his conception of cosmic religion Einstein found harmony in the laws of nature. The universe is shrouded in a mantle of mystery. In an oft-quoted and famous passage he gave articulation to this feeling : 'The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead ; his eyes are closed.... To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is at the centre

of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men.... It is enough for me to contemplate the mystery of conscious life perpetuating itself through all eternity, to reflect upon the marvellous structure of the universe which we can dimly perceive, and to try humbly to comprehend even an infinitesimal part of the intelligence manifested in nature.'

'The true value of a human being is determined primarily by the measure and the sense in which he has attained liberation from the self.' This statement of Einstein is profoundly significant. The ideals which inspired him to live a cosmo-centric life were 'kindness, beauty and truth'. His conception of religion was rooted in his cosmic outlook. It is beyond all creeds, dogmas and determinate ideas. It does not involve an anthropomorphic conception of God; it cannot be reduced to any theological system. 'The individual', says Einstein, 'feels the vanity of human desires and aims, and the nobility and marvellous order which are revealed in nature and the world of thought. He feels the individual destiny as an imprisonment and seeks to experience the totality of existence as a unity full of significance.'

Hence fulfilment of life depends upon its successful unfoldment. Impediments to spiritual evolution stem from egotism. 'The trite objects of human efforts', he says, '—possessions, outward success and luxury—have always seemed to me contemptible.' And in this sense he 'never looked upon ease and happiness as ends in themselves'. Our impulsive nature is rooted in sense-bound life. The shackles of this bondage do not allow us to develop a cosmic outlook free from egotism. He was 'absolutely convinced that no wealth in the world can help humanity forward, even in the hands of the most devoted worker in this cause. The example of great and pure individuals is the

only thing that can lead us to noble thoughts and deeds. Money only appeals to selfishness and irresistibly invites abuse. 'Can anyone imagine Moses, Jesus or Gandhi armed with the money-bags of Carnegie?' This spiritual evolution from within after having controlled the lower nature, this estimation of human worth on the basis of expansion of spiritual consciousness, is the ideal of the mystics.

'I maintain that cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest incitement to scientific research', he said. His dedication to scientific work and constant search for the source of mystery were sustained by his deep spiritual convictions about the harmony of nature. This is not just a sentiment but a very deep emotion that stirred his entire being. He gave articulation to his feeling: 'His (the scientist's) religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence....' 'My religion consists of humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds....'

His modesty and simplicity are found in the words he used in accepting the Copley Medal from the Royal Society of England. With deep humility and human warmth he said: 'The man who has discovered an idea which allows him to penetrate, to whatever degree, a little more deeply the eternal mystery of nature, has been allotted a share of grace. If, in addition, he experiences the best help, sympathy and recognition of his time, he attains almost more happiness than one man can bear.'

Only with respect to his powerful cosmic religious feeling did Einstein claim himself to be a deeply religious man. He remained ever a humble votary of Truth at the altar of the supreme mysterious Entity pervading the universe. He did not believe in the existence of a personal God who controls

our destiny and is looked upon as a glorified man. But unlike other scientists, he did use the word 'God'. His absolute faith in Principle or Order has been stated beautifully in the following words : 'The great scientists of all centuries of our civilization have paid tribute in some measure to the power or principle back of the universe—the titanic First Cause which still mothers creation.'

His deep spiritual convictions, his utter unselfishness that spurned name and fame, his dedication to human welfare, remind us of a typical Indian sage's plain living and high thinking.

HINTS TO SEEKERS OF GOD

SWAMI SHIVANANDA (MAHAPURUSH MAHARAJ)

(Continued from the previous issue)

20. A true devotee asks nothing of God but pure love for Him. Even as a child depends entirely upon its mother, so the devout soul depends entirely upon God.

21. When the mind is overcome by a feeling of monotony, one should resort to scriptural study, repetition of the Name of God, prayer and holy company. But of all means of purification and realization, meditation is the highest. Constant remembrance of God makes us 'whole'.

22. Kindle the fire of renunciation in your heart, dive deep in the ocean of His love, then alone will spiritual experiences come.

23. When you have succeeded in enshrining God within your heart you will see Him everywhere.

24. Everything depends upon the grace of God—even the desire for spiritual practice. Eventually His vision, too, comes as a result of His blessing.

25. Dreams of holy men and holy places are very auspicious. One should shun all evil associations by all means.

26. If you sincerely adhere to your spiritual exercises with faith, purity and devotion, you will surely be illumined.

27. Spiritual life must be lived in absolute secrecy; publicity hinders our attempts. To give expression to our emotions is to lessen them, and it is unwholesome. The more they are concealed, the more they are intensified.

28. Be ever prayerful, then evil thoughts, even if they come to the mind, cannot linger long. A prayerful man is ever peaceful.

29. The power of a Divine Incarnation is infinite. Unflinching reliance on the Chosen Ideal is the religion of the devotee. For him the veil of ignorance is quickly removed.

30. To think of a divine Form within the heart is a kind of meditation.

Imagine that the form is very gracious and is looking at you with deep affection and kindness. Such thoughts will fill the soul with love, hope and peace, and you will be blessed.

31. It is the nature of the mind to become restless and unsteady at times. But we must not allow ourselves to be unsettled or upset by this. When the mind is restrained, such occasional reactions will strengthen rather than weaken it.

32. Patient and regular practice is the whole secret of spiritual realization. Do not be in a hurry in spiritual life. Do your utmost and leave the rest to God.

33. Past tendencies will be uprooted and obliterated by the constant remembrance of God, and the heart will be filled with peace. The mind is stilled by His grace alone.

34. The building of a pure life and character is the sole concern of the spiritual aspirant. It is the primary object of his life; everything else is secondary.

35. The more you call upon God the nearer will you be to Him. Overflowing devotion is the only condition of His grace.

36. A pure and spotless life is a source of real welfare to the world. When such a life is actually lived, there is no need for oral teaching. Example is more potent than precepts.

37. The Lord gives us difficulties only to test and strengthen our faith. Look to Him for help and guidance. Love all equally. Do not wound the feelings of others.

38. It is difficult to turn the course of our mind towards God after it has been steeped in worldliness for so long, but if you are resolute never to abstain from thinking of Him, it will change. The Lord is most merciful. He rejects no prayer. Be regular and sincere in your meditation, and never allow despair to overwhelm your mind.

39. If you believe in me, then light the fire of knowledge that is Ramakrishna, and mentally pour your mind and heart to the Master.

(Continued from page 345)

ignorance of the possibility of a different civilization is at a crossroads. Only religion version of things and events. with its eternal message of universal brother-

The present age is troubled by chaos and hood can save mankind from colossal confusion, disorder and disunity. Human ruination.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*—XVII

To Mrs. G. W. Hale

7

Detroit
16 March 1894

Dear Mother,

Since my last, there has been nothing of interest here. Except that Mr. Palmer is a very hearty, jolly, good old man and very rich. He has been uniformly kind to me. Tomorrow I go back to Mrs. Bagley because I am afraid she is rather uneasy at my long stay here. I am shrewd enough to know that in every country in general, and America in particular, 'she' is the real operator at the nose string.

I am going to lecture here on Monday¹⁸ and in two places near the town on Tuesday and Wednesday.¹⁹ I do not remember the lady you refer me to,²⁰ and she is in Lynn; what Lynn is, where on the globe its position is, I do not know.²¹ I want to go to Boston. What good would it do me by stopping at Lynn? Kindly give me a more particular idea. Nor could I read the name of the lady at whose house you say I met the lady. However, I am in no way very anxious. I am taking life very easy in my natural way. I have no particular wish to go anywhere, Boston or no Boston. I am just in a nice come-what-may mood. Something should turn up bad or good. I have enough now to pay my passage back and a little sightseeing to boot. As to my plans of *work*, I am fully convinced that at the rate it is progressing I must have to come four or five times back to put it in any shape.

As to informing others and doing good that way, I have failed to persuade myself that I have really anything to convey to the world. So I am very happy just now and quite at my ease. With almost nobody in this vast house and a cigar between my lips, I am dreaming just now and philosophising upon that *work* fever which was upon me. It is all nonsense. I am nothing, the world is nothing, the Lord alone is the only *worker*. We are simply tools in His hands etc. etc. etc. Have you got the Alaska information? If so, kindly send it to me c/o Mrs. Bagley.

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18. On Monday, March 19, Swamiji spoke at the Detroit Auditorium on 'Buddhism, the Religion of the Light of Asia'.

19. On Tuesday, March 20, Swamiji delivered a lecture on Hinduism at Bay City, Michigan; and on Wednesday, March 21, he spoke on 'The Harmony of Religions' at Saginaw, Michigan.

20. Mrs. Francis W. Breed, a social leader of Lynn and the wife of an extremely wealthy boot and shoe manufacturer.

21. Lynn, Massachusetts; a small seaport town on the Massachusetts Bay, ten miles from Boston.

Are you coming to the East this summer? With eternal gratitude and love,

Your son,
VIVEKANANDA.

8

Detroit
Tuesday, 27 March 1894

Dear Mother,

Herewith I send two cheques of \$114 and \$75 to be put in the banks for me. I have endorsed them to your care.

I am going to Boston in a day or two. I have got \$57 with me. They will go a long way. Something will turn up as it always does. I do not know where I go from Boston. I have written to Mrs. Breed but as yet heard nothing from her.²² His will be done. Not I but Thou, that is always the motto of my life.

With my eternal gratitude, love, and admiration for Mother Church and all the dignitaries,

I remain your son,
VIVEKANANDA.

9

C/o Dr. Guernsey
528 Fifth Avenue
New York
2 April 1894

Dear Mother,

I am in New York. The gentleman [Dr. Guernsey] whose guest I am is a very nice and learned and well-to-do man. He had an only son whom he lost last July. Has only a daughter now. The old couple have received a great shock, but they are pure and God-loving people and bear it manfully. The lady of the house is very, very kind and good. They are trying to help me as much as they can and they will do a good deal, I have no doubt.

Awaiting further developments. This Thursday they will invite a number of the brainy people of the Union League Club and other places of which the Doctor is a member, and see what comes out of it. Parlour lectures are a great feature in this city, and more can be made by each such lecture than even platform talks in other cities.

It is a very clean city. None of that black smoke tarring everyone in five minutes; and the street in which the Doctor lives is a nice quiet one.

²². Soon afterward he received a telegram from Mrs. Breed inviting him to Lynn to be her guest for a week; he accepted and spent a week at her home in mid April.

Hope the sisters are doing well and enjoying their music both in the opera and the parlours. I am sure I would have appreciated the music at the opera about which Miss Mary wrote to me. I am sure the opera musicians do not show the interior anatomy of their throat and lungs.

Kindly give brother Sam my deep love. I am sure he is bewaring of the Vidders [?]. Some of the Baby Bagleys²³ are going to Chicago. They will go to see you, and I am sure you would like them very much.

Nothing more to write. With all respect, love and obedience,

Your son,
VIVEKANANDA.

PS—I have not to ask now for addresses. Mrs. Sherman has given me a little book with A. B. C. etc. marks and has written under them all the addresses I need; and I hope to write all the future addresses in the same manner. What an example of self help I am!!²⁴

V.

10

New York
10 April 1894

Dear Mother,

I just now received your letter. I have the greatest regard for the Salvationists; in fact, they and the Oxford Mission gentlemen are the only Christian missionaries for whom I have any regard at all. They live with the people, as the people, and for the people of India. Lord bless them. But I would be very, very sorry of any trick being played by them. I never have heard of any *Lord* in India, much less in *Ceylon*.²⁵ The people of Ceylon and northern India differ more than Americans and Hindus. Nor is there any connection between the Buddhist priest and the Hindu. Our dress, manners, religion, food, language differ entirely from southern India, much less to speak of Ceylon. You know already that I could not speak a word of Narasimha's language!! Although that was only *Madras*. Well, you have Hindu princesses; why not a Lord, which is not a higher title.

There was a certain Mrs. Smith in Chicago. I met her at Mrs. Stockham's. She has introduced me to the Guernseys. Dr. Guernsey is one of the chief physicians of this city and is a very good old gentleman. They are very fond of me and are very nice people. Next Friday I am going to Boston. I have

²³. The daughters of Mrs. Bagley of Detroit.

²⁴. At the end of the letter Mary Hale has added the following note: 'Dear Sam [Hale], be sure not to lose any of these letters, and return them as soon as possible. We miss you, awfully. Hope you are well and happy and bewaring of the Vidders as Swami says. Love to all. Affectionately your sister, Mary.'

²⁵. Now Sri Lanka.

not been lecturing in New York at all. I will come back and do some lecturing here.

For the last few days I was the guest of Miss Helen Gould—daughter of the rich Gould—at her palatial country residence an hour's ride from the city. She has one of the most beautiful and large green-houses in the world, full of all sorts of curious plants and flowers. They are Presbyterians and she is a very religious lady. I had a very nice time there.

I met my friend Mr. Flagg several times. He is flying merrily. There is another Mrs. Smith²⁶ here who is very rich and pious. She has invited me to dine today.

As for lecturing, I have given up raising money. I cannot degenerate myself any more. When a certain purpose was in view I could work; with that gone I cannot earn for myself. I have sufficient for going back. I have not tried to earn a penny here, and have refused some presents which friends here wanted to make to me. Especially Flagg—I have refused his money. I had in Detroit tried to refund the money back to the donors, and told them that there being almost no chance of my succeeding in my enterprise I had no right to keep their money; but they refused and told me to throw that into the waters if I liked. But I cannot take any more conscientiously. I am very well off, Mother. Everywhere the Lord sends me kind persons and homes; so there is no use of my going into beastly worldliness at all.

The New York people, though not so intellectual as the Bostonians, are, I think, more sincere. The Bostonians know well how to take advantage of everybody. And I am afraid even water cannot slip through their closed fingers!!! Lord bless them!!! I have promised to go and I must go; but Lord, make me live with the sincere, ignorant, and the poor, and not cross the shadow of the hypocrites and tall talkers who, as my Master used to say, are like vultures who soar high and high in their talks but the heart is really on a piece of carrion on the ground.

I would be the guest of Mrs. Breed for a few days and, after seeing a little of Boston, I would come back to New York.

Hope the sisters are all right and enjoying their concerts immensely. There is not much of music in this city. That is a blessing(?) Went to see Barnum's circus²⁷ the other day. It is no doubt a grand thing. I have not been as yet downtown. This street is very nice and quiet.

I heard a beautiful piece of music the other day at Barnum's—they call it a Spanish Serenada. Whatever it be I liked it so much. Unfortunately, Miss Guernsey is not given to much thumping, although she has a good assortment of all the noisy stuffs in the world—and so she could not play it—which I regret ever so much.

Yours obediently,
VIVEKANANDA.

²⁶. Mrs. Arthur Smith, who later became a member of the Vedanta Society of New York.

²⁷. The most renowned circus of the time, started by P. T. Barnum, a famous American showman (d. 1891).

PS—Most probably I will go to Annisquam as Mrs. Bagley's guest. She has got a nice house there this summer. Before that I will go back to Chicago once more if I can.

V.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE WAY BOOK. Publishers : Vantage Press, 516 West 34th Street, New York, N. Y. 10001. 1978. pp. 50. \$ 4.95.

This is a fine piece of poetry composed by an anonymous poet on 21 December 1976. (The date has no other significance than being the day of the poem's conception.) The poem runs over 2,000 lines and is presented in five units subtitled 'Approaching the Way', 'Heaven and Earth', 'The Great Unification', 'The Great Experience', and 'Living the Way'.

The get-up of the book is simple and yet meaningful. The poetry is good not so much because it is mellifluous but because it deals with the highest philosophy of life—the philosophy of Being and Becoming. The first poem opens as if with the strains of the Vedic 'Nasadiya Sukta', or rather with the Biblical theme of Genesis :

'In the beginning there was light.
Light there always was
From the beginningless beginning—
Light in utter darkness !' (p. 1)

and thus sets one thinking about the beginning and the end of the world and of the real nature of the Self. As we go further, the poet asks us to observe :

'Few people know how to observe ;
They form their ideas and opinions first.
Discard those old ideas and opinions,

.....
Open yourself to the tree you see,
And it will come flowing in.

.....
For one gains the whole universe by
losing the self,
And loses the universe by finding self.'
(p. 3).

As we move on, we are again reminded of the Upanishadic Nachiketas when we come across the words :

'Here today, gone tomorrow—
That is the way of the earth,

See how the flowers rise and bloom,
And then return to the earth?

.....
Mountains, rivers, cities and whole

civilisations—

They rise and fall like the waves of the sea.

.....
Back to stillness, back to the source.'

(p. 5)

The poet advises us to know the One. For this is the ultimate enlightenment. He says that, knowing the One, we may know the way of all things. We then do not become attached to things. We know that when they pass from being into non-being, they do not perish, they merely change shape. (p. 10)

The poems are didactic and the author seldom resists the temptation of forcing his view of life on the reader. All the same the poems, in their Taoistic style of narration, inspire the reader and encourage him to tread steadily on the tortuous path of life.

All these lines lay down the basic religion of humanity and stress the urgency of returning to the One. This is the religion, free from theology, which so many are seeking today. The mind merges in a placid pool of contentment when the reader comes to the last notes of the poem :

'There is peace.
There is contentment.
There is justice.
There is love.
There is love for wisdom,
Love for the earth,
And love for one another.

.....
Everyday is a source of enjoyment.
Life is truly full.'

DR. NARENDRANATH P. PATIL, M.A., LL.B., PH.D.

*Deputy Director of Languages,
Bombay.*

VEDANTA GLOSSARY : BY GADE ANKAYYA.
 Publisher : the Author, Lakshmipuram, Guntur-2
 (A.P.). 1978 (second edition). Pp. xx+190. Rs. 5/-.

This second edition of the glossary of Vedantic terms, revised and enlarged, is definitely a step further towards an eventual, much-needed, Dictionary of Vedanta. Apart from giving the meanings of a number of terms in the Vedanta literature arranged in alphabetical order, the author adds notes wherever necessary, bringing out the different shades of significance in different contexts. He cites references and generally provides the background knowledge for a right understanding of many abstruse concepts.

Under the entry *acarana*, for instance, after giving the usual meaning of 'observance of right conduct, practice', he goes on to state as many as fifteen sets of injunctions from the *Taittiriya Upanishad*.

Among the explanations of *prana*, occurs this helpful note : 'Prana is that function of vital airs which causes breathing in; Vyana sustains life when breath is arrested; Apana functions while breathing out and evacuating; Udana holds the joints and effects the departure of the soul from the body at death; Samana circulates in the body and assimilates food.'

Siddhas are classified under five categories : Swapna siddhas, those who attain perfection by means of dream inspiration ; Mantra siddhas, those who attain perfection by means of a sacred Mantra ; Hathat siddhas, those who attain perfection suddenly ; Kripa siddhas, those who attain perfection through the grace of God ; Nitya siddhas, those who are ever perfect.

Sri Ankayya is a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his mind is permeated by the spirit of the Master ; he adds appropriate quotations from his sayings here and there ; for example, under *ashta siddhis*, after describing the eight supernatural powers, he adds Sri Ramakrishna's warning against cultivation of such powers.

This book is more than a glossary ; it is a handbook for the philosophy and practice of the Vedanta.

M. P. PANDIT

Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry

THE SCIENCE OF BEING : BY SWAMI SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI. Publishers : Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Holenarasipur-573 211. 1978. Pp. vi+124. Rs. 5/-.

This is an English rendering of Sri Swami Satchidanandendra Saraswati's lectures in 1970

(in Kannada) expounding the deep meaning of the sixth chapter of the *Chhandogya Upanishad*. Swamiji always felt that some of the post-Shankara commentators had brought in new—and inadmissible—elements in the Teaching, and he has written and spoken largely in this context.

Dealing with the subject of Being and non-being, he points out that non-being really means the Being without any differentiation. The Being alone exists eternally. The mention of time is for the purposes of intellectual dialectics. Brahman, the Being, is both the material and efficient Cause ; as Cause it is Consciousness. The argument of the Mayic existence of the Effect is very subtle and needs to be read more than once.

One of the points that the author makes is that the orthodox tradition of the Upanishad does not mention 'hearing and reflection as means of self-knowledge'. Enquiry by the mind is not the way. To intuit by consciousness is the sole means. Commenting on the famous Mahavakya, *tat tvam asi*, the writer says : 'The Reality as the Universal Witnessing Principle is the only Atman in the real sense of the word. The individual selves in the empirical world are mere reflections, as it were, of this Real Atman. They are therefore really one with the Absolute Being even as they are.'

M. P. PANDIT

THE HISTORY OF SRI RAMA NAMA KSHETRAM : BY PROF. K. S. RAMA. Publishers : S.S.R.N.S. Sangham, Sri Rama Nama Kshetram, Guntur-4 (A.P.), South India. Pp. 9+228. Rs. 10/-.

This profusely illustrated book is a record of the wonders that faith and devotion worked on a group of people who formed in 1927 an organization named 'Sri Sita Rama Nama Samkirtan Sangham' under the inspiring leadership of Sri Rangam Anjaneyulu. Ten years later a beautiful temple of Sri Rama was built in a place called Sri Rama Nama Kshetram in Guntur which is now attracting a large number of pilgrims. The organization is now actively engaged in spreading devotion among the people of the locality through discourses, festivals, Bhajans and distribution of religious literature. We hope that the book which is a record of these activities will inspire many others to start similar activities in a spirit of service to the Lord in other parts of the country.

P.B. Editorial Staff

AQUARIAN UNIVERSOLOGY : BY MEL E. WINFIELD. Publishers : Aquarian Universology Institute and Association, P.O. Box 3811, Georgia Street P.O., Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3Z1, Canada 1977, Pp. 383. Price not mentioned.

'An atom is a cloud of "etherons" (basic particles) with a tornado-like nucleus sending out waves of energy through the rest of the cloud.... The mind can be thought of as a magnetic field of the brain. God has the physical universe as the body and the Universal etheric and magnetic fields as the mind.... Above the electromagnetic spectrum, there is an octave of frequencies or 'dimension' with which the frequencies of matter of our dimension cannot interact. If a human being, by drawing in etheric waves of energy, were to have his entire atomic structure raised in frequency to that of the next dimension, he could disappear from this dimension and emerge in the next dimension in a new environment.... There is only one religion which allows the mind to expand further and further, so as to tune in to the knowledge and understanding of the higher frequency levels, and thus be in communication with the universal cosmic flow of energy. This is a religion that should grow during the coming Aquarian age, and so we label it Aquarian Universology. The Aquarian age begins in the year 2160.'

The above is a sample of some of the tenets of Aquarian Universology—a knowledge 'unifying science, theosophy and philosophy'—acquired 'inspirationally' by the author, whose astrological sign is Aquarius and whose initials are homonymous with Mu, the legendary lost continent in the South Pacific where man supposedly first appeared over 200,000 years ago (see James Churchward, *The Lost Continent of Mu*, New York, 1932). The author feels that the source of his knowledge is Quetzacoatl (the 'Feathered Serpent', a major deity of the Mexican pantheon, circa third to eighth century A.D.) who, with Osiris and Jesus, was among the sixteen saviours who came down from the next dimension in each era to teach man the original religion of Mu, the Motherland. The records of this religion were discovered by a British officer, Churchward, on 70,000-year-old tablets in a Himalayan monastery. According to the author, the religion spread from Mu to other parts of the world including Atlantis (see Plato, *Timaeus*, *Critias*) till Mu and Atlantis were both submerged 12,000 years ago when the earth captured the moon in its orbit.

The 'original' religion taught, among other

things, that man was created by a Supreme, Infinite Being, that the spirit or soul of man never died, that its task was to rule the material body by overcoming desires (by keeping the mind on higher frequencies), and that the spirit returned to the Great Source after accomplishing its task through several reincarnations—to live forever in perfect joy and happiness.

The original religion is not, however, the principal theme of the book : the bulk of it is an original discourse on atomic physics, relativity, cosmology, historical geology, U.F.O.s, the Bermuda Triangle and various parapsychical phenomena. The author calls this 'Omni-Science', but it is a moot point whether readers who have learnt science will accept some of its inferences, namely, 'We are not prevented from travelling faster than light', 'The curvature of the stars' light around the sun has nothing to do with gravity', etc. Readers who have studied philosophy, on the other hand, may find in Omni-Science faint echoes of Thales of Miletus who said that the magnet had a soul, and of Descartes who held that colliding atoms set up vortices. The book concludes with a mundane topic : how to save the common man from the crisis of ever-decreasing purchasing power and how to govern a nation in a businesslike manner.

All in all, the book is interesting—though by no means easy—reading, with its curious blend of science and inspired knowledge, history and legend, spiritualism and worldly wisdom.

A. C. PALIT

Electronics Consultant, Calcutta

WHO AM I REALLY? BY SURENDRA SHIVA RAO DESAI, M.A. Publisher : S. S. Kurbar, M.Sc., Lecturer in Zoology, J.S.S. College, Vidya-giri, Dharwar-4, Karnataka. Pp. xxi+174. Rs. 4/-.

This moderately priced book is a compilation of the teachings of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, a few other scriptures, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Swami Vivekananda and two or three sages of Karnataka. Its main theme is the realization of the Self as the source of all bliss. The existence of 'I' is a self-evident truth. What is not immediately self-evident is its real nature. The real nature of 'I' can be intellectually known from scriptures, but it can be experienced only through self-realization. As a means for this realization, the author prescribes the method of self-enquiry popularized in recent times by Ramana Maharshi.

The book will be found helpful by spiritual aspirants who follow the path of knowledge.

However, as the original passages quoted in it are all in Kannada script, its use is likely to be restricted to those who are familiar with Kannada language. The incongruous combination of Sanskrit and Kannada in the so-called Mantra *Om namo nānave* jars on the ears and is of questionable validity.

P.B. Editorial Staff

BENGALI

BAIBEL : NATUN DHARA. Publishers : Living Bibles India, 15 Camac Street, Calcutta-700 017. 1978. Pp. 357.

In our country, owing to all knowledge being recorded in Sanskrit from antiquity, there exists a big gulf between the learned and the common man. But it is significant that all the great prophets of the world from Buddha and Jesus to Chaitanya and Ramakrishna, who came for the well-being of mankind, taught in the language of the common people. Scholarship is certainly an excellent thing, but it cannot be gainsaid that communication of spiritual verities is best done through the spoken language.

The mother tongue of Lord Jesus was Palestinian Aramaic, a north-west Semitic language which is related to Hebrew. The Aramaic language was a lingua franca for all South-west Asia and was the everyday speech of Palestine, while Hebrew was the language of the rich and the priests. Jesus imparted his teachings to the people in Aramaic, as Buddha did in Pali. Later on, of course, the Gospel was written in Greek.

The Bible, the world's best-seller and most widely circulated classic, has been translated into most of the languages of the world. The Bengali rendering, so far as I know, was first brought out by the Serampore Mission Press in 1800. But during this vast span of one hundred and seventy-eight years considerable changes took place in Bengali literature, prose in particular. Incorporation of new words into the existing vocabulary and the change in the style of writing are inevitable in a living language. In comparison with the modern colloquial speech the language of the erudite of olden times appears to be somewhat stiff and artificial. Time was therefore ripe for the publication of the Holy Bible in the modern idiom. In order to fulfil people's expectations, I presume, the Living Bibles India has brought out this new edition of the New Testament. The translators have been faithful to the original work of the Lord's life and teachings. Their simple and literal

translation has made the teachings of Jesus living and penetrating. In all conceivable ways they have tried to meet the demand of the age through their simple and lucid language, keeping in view the real meaning and spirit of the original Bible. The reader will be able to appreciate the literary elegance and beauty of the Bible. This prolific contribution will assuredly enrich Bengali literature.

India is a land of religion. Here Gods and Goddesses are many, Incarnations are in abundance. People of this land have always respected the lofty teachings of Christ, though they never accepted that He is the only Saviour. The Bible is no doubt a cherished treasure of the Christian world, but the life-giving and burning words of Jesus have cast a tremendous spell over the afflicted hearts of many non-Christian men and women as well. While reading this book the Hindu reader will hear in it the echo of the teaching of the *Bhagavad-Gita*—'Give up all dharmas and follow me'—over and over again. The best expression of devotion as a servant or a son is imprinted on every line of this great book. For those who under the influence of a parochial outlook may endeavour to belittle the Bible, I quote one aphorism of the Nyaya system of Indian philosophy : '*Aptopadeshah shabdah*'—which means that the teachings of the perfected souls have a probative force and this is technically called *verbal evidence*. Jaimini, the author of the aphorisms, says that such *Apta Purushas* may be born among the Aryans and the non-Aryans.

I hope and sincerely believe that this book will be widely read and well appreciated by Bengali readers.

The cover and the printing of the book are excellent. The coloured illustrations of the holy places associated with Jesus and His Apostles have enhanced the value of the book.

SWAMI SHANTARUPANANDA
Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta

BOOKS RECEIVED : We have received the following small booklets.

LEARN TO LIVE WITH GOD : By DR. MOHAN SINGH DIWAGA. Published by the Author, Premjit Niwas, 310 Sector 15-A, Chandigarh.

UTTARA RAMA CHARIT (Hindi) : By MANORANJAN JYOTISHI. Publishers : Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad, 34 Professors' Colony, Modinagar (U.P.).

SRI RAMAKRISHNA VANDANA (Hindi) : BY VIRENDRA. Publishers: Sri Ramakrishna

Ashram, Tilak Road, Begam Pul, Meerut (U.P.).
ANURADHA (Hindi): BY B. R. GAUTAM.
 Publishers: Swachhyaya Kendra, Guru Mahal,
 Amritsar.

KIRTANA SAMGRAHAMU (Telugu). Pub-

lishers: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore,
 Madras-4. This is a collection of popular devo-
 tional songs and hymns on Ganapati, Shiva,
 Vishnu, Sri Krishna, Sri Rama, Devi, Sri Rama-
 krishna, and Sri Sarada Devi.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BOMBAY

REPORT FOR APRIL 1977 TO MARCH 1978

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA

Spiritual and Cultural: Daily worship and prayers were held in the Sri Ramakrishna temple, and on Ekadasi days Rama-Nama Sankirtanam was conducted. Two weekly religious classes were conducted at the Ashrama, one in Hindi and the other in English. Classes and lectures were also given in other parts of the city, beyond the city, and even outside the state. Regular classes were conducted in Marathi at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre (Dadar, Bombay).

Durga Puja was performed in an image; the Pujas of Ganesha, Lakshmi, Kali and Siva were also conducted. The birth anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda were publicly celebrated at the Ashrama, as well as the birthdays of Sri Krishna, Bhagavan Buddha, Sri Sankaracharya and Jesus Christ.

Recitation competitions were held in January 1978, which were open to all school students of Bombay and its suburbs. Passages from the speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda dealing with nation-building and character-building were recited by school children of classes six to ten. They were divided into four language-groups: Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi and English. A total of 334 students participated, and 51 prizes were won.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Educational: The Students' Home for college boys had 56 students. The Free Reading Room and Shivananda Library had more than 23,700 books on various subjects, 88 dailies and other periodicals in several different languages. A large number of people utilized the reading

room everyday, and 20,335 books and periodicals were lent out from the library.

Medical: A Charitable Outdoor Dispensary and an Indoor Hospital lie within the Mission premises, with both allopathic and homoeopathic sections. The allopathic section is equipped for surgery, pathology, gynaecology, dentistry, E.N.T., ophthalmology and radiology. During the year 1,46,626 patients were treated.

Philanthropic: Donations in cash and kind were collected and utilized for flood relief, and for Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu cyclone relief.

Rural Health and Welfare: In order to carry expert medical aid to the rural population, the Mission runs a medical unit at the village Sakwar. This Adivasi village is surrounded by several similar villages, with a total population of about 30,000. A team consisting of medical and para-medical staff visits the village on Sundays and distributes medicine, vitamins, protein foods, biscuits and garments. Serious cases are helped to get admitted into the proper hospitals in Bombay. During the year this programme served 15,000 patients (about 350 patients per trip) on 46 Sundays.

Immediate Needs: The generous public is requested to contribute liberally to the following causes and thus enable the Mission to carry on its activities: (1) additional facilities at the hospital, both for in-patient and out-patient services and diagnostic facilities: Rs. 5,00,000; (2) additional equipment for the indoor hospital: Rs. 1,50,000; (3) additional medical, educational and hygienical facilities at Sakwar: Rs. 1,50,000; (4) new furniture and equipment for the library: Rs. 1,00,000.

All donations are exempt from Income-tax. Cheques may be drawn in favour of either 'Ramakrishna Ashrama' or 'Ramakrishna Mission', and sent to either the Ramakrishna Ashrama or the Ramakrishna Mission, Khar, Bombay-400 052.

LAST PAGE COMMENTS

War and Silence

After a war comes, not peace, but silence. When a war is over, all that we can say is that the guns are silent. This, however, does not mean peace. With trigger-happy armies confronting each other at their countries' borders, nations of the world know no peace.

Formerly, wars were fought either for territorial gain or for plunder and loot. No such earthly profit seems to accrue from modern wars. When the Chinese invaded India in 1962, they boasted that it was all being done so that a 'peaceful settlement of the boundary question could be worked out'. The same nation again invaded another small Asian country recently, this time calling it a 'punitive action'. Most of the wars waged in modern times are of this type. Which only shows that humanity as a whole is not far removed from the prehistoric head-hunting age.

In Robert Southey's poem 'The Battle of Blenheim' about the famous battle in which a British-Austrian alliance under the Duke of Marlborough defeated the French, a little boy named Peterkin asks his old grandfather, 'Now tell us all about the war, and what they fought each other for.' The old man replies, 'But what they fought each other for, I could not make out.' 'But what good came out of it at last', quoth little Peterkin. 'Why that I cannot tell,' said he, 'But 'twas a famous victory.'

Each 'famous victory' destroys thousands of healthy young men and leaves behind a trail of sorrow for thousands of others. Sacredness of human life is a universally accepted law. War is a violation of this law and puts back the clock of human progress. The great civilizations of Carthage, Greece, Rome, Egypt and Babylon were wiped out by marauding hordes. There is hardly any doubt that but for the incessant battles and wars that darkened the all too brief history of man's existence on the earth, humanity would have reached a higher level of culture, perhaps centuries ago.

Understood in this light, the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and the strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT) concluded between the heads of the U.S. and the Soviet Union recently are to be regarded as great civilizing acts. The future survival of humanity depends upon the courage of politicians to sacrifice pride and hatred and take such bold steps. The time has come for people to pay as much attention to culture and coexistence as to science and technology. There is now a lull in armed conflicts all over the world. During this breather, which may not last long, let people think deeply over the words of the great Chinese philosopher Lao Tse : 'When the great armies go to war, sorrow is the sole winner.'
