



Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 86

JULY 1981

No. 7

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

अहं मनुरभवं सूर्यश्चा-
हं कक्षीर्वा ऋषिरस्मि विप्रः ।
अहं कुत्समार्जुनेयं न्यूजेऽ-
हं कविरुशना पश्यता मा ॥

1. I was Manu and Sūrya.¹ I am the wise sage Kakṣīvat.² I am the friend of Kutsa, the son of Arjuni. I am the far-seeing Uśanas.³ [O men !] behold me.⁴

Rg-Veda 4.26.1

अहं भूमिमददामार्याया-
हं वृष्टिं दाशुषे मर्त्याय ।
अहमपो अनयं वावशाना
मम देवासो अनु केतमायन् ॥

2. I gave the earth to the venerable [Manu]. I send down rain to men who perform sacrifices. I am the thunderer. The gods follow my will.

Rg-Veda 4.26.2

गर्भे नु सन्नन्वेषामवेदम-
हं देवानां जनिमानि विश्वा ।
शतं मा पुर आयसीररक्षन्नध
श्येनो जवसा निरदीयं ॥

3. Being still in the womb, I have known all the births of all these gods in their order.⁵ A hundred iron cages had confined me.⁶ But [now] like a kite I have come out with speed.⁷

Rg-Veda 4.27.1

* Three important Mantras which speak of the soul's oneness with the Cosmic Soul. It is surprising that such a lofty conception, which forms the very foundation of later Vedāntic thought, was so forcefully expressed at the very dawn of Hindu civilization. The Upaniṣadic tradition (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.10) holds that these Mantras were uttered by the great sage Vāmadeva while he was still in his mother's womb.

1. Cf. Śamkara's detailed discussion on Br. Up. 1.4.10.

2. Sāyaṇa believes that Kakṣīvat was the son of the sage Dīrghatamas.

3. Cf. *kavīnām usanā kavīh* (*Gītā* 10.37).

4. That is, explains Sāyaṇa, you too can attain this Self-knowledge and feel your oneness with the whole universe.

5. All gods originate from and are parts of the Supreme Self (Sāyaṇa).

6. The meaning is, before I had Self-knowledge I used to identify myself with my body and so had to be born again and again (Sāyaṇa).

7. But after Self-realization I have become free.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

This month's EDITORIAL shows that meditation is a unified discipline combining self-knowledge, inner activity and devotion.

You read about Golap Ma, one of the foremost woman disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, in the FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA serial by Swami Prabhananda, formerly Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Purulia.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION OF SOME GREAT EDUCATORS by Prof. Ranjit Kumar Acharjee of the Ramakrishna Mahavidyalaya, North Tripura, is a lucid summary of

the views of some of the well-known educators of the West and the East.

In THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL TILlich Dr. David C. Scott, Associate Director, Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, discusses some of the important existentialist-religious ideas of Paul Tillich, one of the most influential thinkers of the present century.

With the fifteenth and last instalment of IS VEDANTA A PHILOSOPHY OF ESCAPE? we conclude the brilliant, meticulously researched and documented thesis of Dr. Vinita Wanchoo, former professor at Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow.

UPASANA—A UNIFIED DISCIPLINE

(EDITORIAL)

The word *upāsana* literally means 'sitting near'—sitting near an object, usually a deity. It comes from the roots *upa* 'near' and '*ās*' to sit. This 'sitting near' is done mentally. *Upāsana* is a purely mental discipline. It is objective meditation.

It is therefore to be distinguished from external worship which is also often popularly termed *upāsana*. According to Vedānta these two are different disciplines and lead to different results.¹ The immediate result of external worship, done without selfish desires, is purification of mind (*citta śuddhi*), whereas the immediate result of *upāsana* is concentration of mind (*cittaikāgryam*). Hindu scriptures declare that the ultimate result of external worship is the attainment of *pitṛ-loka*, which corresponds to the heaven of popular con-

ception. The ultimate result of *upāsana* is said to be attainment of *deva-loka* or *satya-loka* from where one may or may not return to transmigratory existence.² This is a widely accepted belief in Hinduism.

For our purpose it is enough to understand that *upāsana* is a form of meditation which aims at direct experience of God. It begins with ordinary empirical knowledge and ends in supersensuous knowledge. Knowledge is an important aspect of *upāsana* and so the aspirant must have a clear understanding of the nature of knowledge and the meaning of supersensuous knowledge.

Upāsana as knowledge

In Western philosophy there are three theories of knowledge. According to the 'relation theory' held by realists like Meinong, C. D. Broad, G. E. Moore and

1. Cf. अन्यदेवाहुर्विद्ययाऽन्यदाहुरविद्यया ।

Isa-Upaniṣad 10. According to Śaṅkara, *vidyā* here means meditation and *avidyā* here means ritualistic Karma.

2. कर्मणा पितृलोको विद्यया देवलोकः ।

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 1.5.16

Bertrand Russel, knowledge is a relation among three terms : the mind, an object and a datum or content. According to the 'quality theory' of Descartes and his followers, knowledge or thought is an essential attribute of the mind, just as extension (property of occupying space) is the essential attribute of matter. According to the 'act theory' held by Herbert Spencer, Croce, Gentile, voluntarists and behaviourists, knowledge is a kind of activity.

In India the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas and the followers of Śrī Rāmānuja uphold the quality theory. According to them knowledge is a quality of the Ātman, the Self. Bauddhas and Mīmāṃsakas accept the act theory. According to the latter, knowledge is a mental action (*kriyā*) directed towards an object. The Tantric concept of *śakti* (creative power) as an aspect of *cit* (consciousness) may also be included in this group. Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Advaita schools reject both these theories. According to them knowledge is essentially self-luminous, and its function is only to reveal things just as light reveals objects. Knowledge does not act on an object or change it ; it only reveals it. Nor is it only an attribute of the self ; it is rather its very nature and essence.

Advaita makes a distinction between two types of knowledge : absolute and relative. Absolute knowledge is pure contentless consciousness without any division into subject and object. This is the real nature of the Ātman. Relative knowledge is objective knowledge which is the result of a relation between the self and an object established through the mind. It is this second type of knowledge that is involved in *upāsana*.

According to Vedānta the Ātman alone is conscious. The mind is separate from it and, being a part of Prakṛti, is unconscious. Knowledge always originates in the Self. The mind only acts as a reflector ; it reflects the light of the Self onto the objects. So in

studying relative or objective knowledge we should keep in mind two points : (1) knowledge proceeds from the inner to the outer, and (2) even in objective knowledge there is a revelation of the Self.

This view of knowledge is quite different from that held in the West. Western philosophers do not recognize the self as different from the mind which itself is regarded as the soul and the seat of consciousness. The eighteenth century empiricist philosophers regarded perception as a passive act, like rays entering a camera and affecting the photographic plate. It was only much later that Franz Brentano (1838-1907) showed that behind every act of seeing there is an 'intention'. Man does not merely see but *looks*. If you have lost your door key or fountain pen, you will be seen going round the place looking for it. Your seeing now assumes an intentional character ; it has a purpose behind it. Most of our normal perceptions are in fact intentional acts. The Vedāntic view of perception is that it is not a mere passive reception of sense-data, but is the result of an impulse originating within us. The discovery of this fact is ascribed to Kapila, the founder of the Sāṃkhya system of philosophy. His psychology has been accepted with slight modifications by most schools of Vedānta.

How do we see an object, say a tree or a pot ? By directing the light of Ātman upon it with the help of the mind. The process of perception is described by the school of Advaita as follows. Impelled by the mind, the sense-organ (*indriya*) comes into actual contact (*sannikarṣa*) with the object in question. The mind (*antaḥkāraṇa*) now moves out through the sense-organ and takes the form of the object.³ This modifi-

3. The movement of mind towards an object and assuming its form is compared to the flow of water from a pond into a field and taking the form of the field. Cf. *Dharmarāja Adhyarindra, Vedānta Paribhāṣā* 1.

cation of the mind is called a *vr̥tti*. The function of the sense-organ is only to guide the mind to the object. The *vr̥tti* removes the ignorance covering the object.⁴ But it does not reveal the object, which can be done only by the Self. While the mental change is taking place, the light of the individual Self (known as *cidābhāsa*) simultaneously issues out through the mental channel and illumines the object or, rather, the *vr̥tti* (that part of the mind modified into the form of the object). The reflection of *cidābhāsa* on the *vr̥tti* is called *phala* or fruit in Advaita;⁵ this is the knowledge of the object.⁶

What we have described above is external perception. There is also internal perception, as for example in the experience of happiness, sorrow, etc. Here also the mental processes involved are the same except that the mind does not go out and the sense-organs do not operate. The experience of happiness and sorrow comes directly through a *vr̥tti* of the mind without the help of any sense-organ. Thus while external perception is sensuous, internal perception is non-sensuous. Most of our feelings and emotions come under internal perception which is therefore as important as external percep-

tion. This kind of ordinary internal perception is natural to all human beings.

There is, however, another type of internal perception which is extremely rare and extraordinary. It is known as *alaukika-pratyakṣa* or *yogi-pratyakṣa*. The vision of gods, goddesses and Avatars vouchsafed to a few advanced aspirants comes under this category. Though orthodox Hinduism regards this as a special kind of perception,⁷ all types of true spiritual experience may be included in it. If ordinary internal perception is 'non-sensuous', this kind of extraordinary internal perception is 'super-sensuous'. But the cognitive processes involved are basically the same in both, for both are directly produced by *vr̥ttis*.

The purpose of *upāsanā* is to purify and sharpen the mind to such an extent as to make it an instrument of supersensuous perception. A highly qualified Advaitin may not care for the vision of gods and goddesses, but even he needs a highly refined mental instrument. That is why even in the path of Jñāna, *upāsanā* is included as an intermediate discipline. In the case of the majority of aspirants who follow the path of Bhakti, the main purpose of *upāsanā* is to gain a direct vision of their favourite deities.

These deities are not creations of human imagination. They are all different aspects of one supreme Deity. They cannot be perceived by the ordinary gross mind but only by the subtle intuitive mind known as *buddhi*, *dhī*, heart, etc. This faculty lies dormant in the heart. Without its awakening *upāsanā* will not become fruitful.

Another important concept is that knowledge leaves behind an impression, called *samskāra*, in the mind. This impression sprouts into memory which is a mental reproduction of the earlier experience. So Hindu philosophers have classified relative or objective knowledge into two groups :

4. According to Advaita everything in the universe is covered by ignorance. Before you cognize an object (directly or indirectly) you cannot know of its existence. This kind of individual ignorance is called *tūla-ajñāna*. It is only a product of the primordial cosmic ignorance veiling Brahman which is called *mūla-ajñāna*, or *Māyā*. Ordinary perception removes the former. Super-conscious perception alone can remove the latter.

5. फलं वृत्तिप्रतिबिम्बित चिदाभासः ।

Ramakṛṣṇa, Commentary on *Pañcadāsī* 7.90

6. ज्ञातत्वं नाम . . . चिदाभासफलोदयः ।

Vidyāranya, *Pañcadāsī* 8.10

The above account of perception is based on *Pañcadāsī* 8.1-21. This is the view of those who accept the theory known as *abhasa-vāda* (a modification of *pratibimba-vāda*). Those who accept the other theory known as *avaccheda-vāda* hold a slightly different view of perception.

7. Cf. *Bhāṣā-Pariccheda* 63, 64.

memory (*smṛti*) and experience (*anubhava*).⁸ Experience has again been divided into perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) and verbal testimony (*śabda*). Of all these types only in perception a direct contact is established between the self and the object. This kind of knowledge is therefore called direct or immediate (*aparokṣa*). In external perception the senses operate, while in internal perception they do not. In either case the object is directly presented to the self. In the other two types of experience the object is not directly presented to the self. In them a modification of the mind (*vṛtti*) which corresponds to the object takes place but does not come into actual contact with the object. When you see smoke on a distant hill, you can guess there must be fire over there without actually seeing fire. This kind of knowledge is called indirect or mediate (*parokṣa*). *Smṛti* or memory also comes under this category, for in memory knowledge is reproduced without the actual object.

In *upāsanā* the aspirant begins with *parokṣa* or indirect knowledge. Take the case of an ordinary person who meditates on Viṣṇu. His knowledge of the deity is not based on direct experience. He has got it from books and the words of other people and, of course, he has seen a picture of the memory of that picture. All this is indirect knowledge. But it is not false. Viṣṇu. When he closes his eyes for meditation what he does is to try to bring back Even a great Advaitin like Vidyāraṇya says : 'One may have knowledge of Viṣṇu from scriptures as having four arms etc. But if one does not have a direct knowledge of Him, he is said to have only indirect knowledge, since he has not seen Him with his eyes. This knowledge because of its

defect of indirectness is not false, for the true form of Viṣṇu has been revealed by the scriptures which are authoritative.'⁹

It is only when the aspirant gets a direct vision of the Deity that *parokṣa* knowledge gets changed into *aparokṣa* experience. But till that happens should the aspirant have to remain satisfied with mere imagination? The popular notion is that a meditator can do nothing more than doing a little concentration and waiting (not very hopefully) for the dawn of the true vision at the end of what looks like eternity. The path of meditation is no doubt long and difficult. But it does not mean chasing an ever receding goal. Even if the Deity appears to be beyond one's reach, even if you have no faith in the reality of the image you are concentrating on, *upāsanā* can still bring you an experience of undeniable validity and immense spiritual benefit. It is the experience of your own higher Self, the Ātman.

We have seen that in perception the light of the Ātman goes and strikes the object giving us the knowledge 'I know this'. This means that all knowledge involves a reference to the self. This was first pointed out by the great Mīmāṃsaka philosopher Prabhākara. The object is not important, for whatever be the object, even if it be an illusory one, the cognitive process involved is the same. And in every act of cognition the Self reveals itself. But in ordinary life we hardly notice it. Our objective knowledge is so varied and vast that it overshadows Self-knowledge. Our minds are usually so restless, constantly flitting from one object to another, and our attachment to objects is so strong that we are hardly able to recognize the constantly occurring Self-revelation within us.

But through *upāsanā* when the distractions are to a great extent eliminated and

8. सर्वव्यवहारहेतुगुणो बुद्धिर्ज्ञानम् । सा द्विविधा
स्मृतिरनुभवश्च ।

Tarkasamgraha 3.16

9. *Pañcadāsī*, trans. Swami Swahananda (Madras : Ramakrishna Math, 1975), 9.16, 17.

the light of the self is fixed upon a single object, it becomes possible for us to be aware of the true Self within us. As concentration deepens, the light of the Ātman emerges more and more. As a result the mind becomes more and more luminous. Even if the aspirant is not able to meet the Deity directly, he is able to feel His presence through this inner light. Once he begins to see the inner light he has only to focus it in the right direction—and wait. The rest is all in the hands of the Divine.¹⁰

Thus Self-knowledge is an important by-product of *upāsanā*. In the path of Jñāna, this is all that the aspirant cares for. In the path of Bhakti Self-knowledge—*ātmāvalokana* as Śrī Rāmānuja calls it—is regarded as the first step towards the realization of the Supreme Self or God.

What we have discussed so far is the knowledge aspect of *upāsanā*. We now turn to the other aspects of it.

Upāsanā as activity

Though knowledge per se is neither a quality nor an act, *upāsanā* is a form of mental activity. Śrī Śaṅkara has pointed this out in his works.¹¹ However, it should be remembered that though meditation is a mental activity, it is not ordinary Karma. Rāmānuja completely rejects the idea that *upāsanā* is Karma. Karma is of two types : positive (*pravṛtti*) and negative (*nivṛtti*). The first one leads to more Karma and bondage. The second one is of the nature of restraint and produces knowledge. *Upāsanā* belongs to the second type.

10. *Śrīmad Bhagavad- Gītā* 11.4 and 8.

11. Cf. Śrī Śaṅkara, Commentary on *Brahma-Sūtra* 1.1.4.

12. उपासनं नाम यथा शास्त्रम् उपास्य अर्थस्य
विषयीकरणेन सामीप्यम् उपगम्य
तैलधारावत् समानप्रत्ययप्रवाहेण
दीर्घकालं यद् आसनं तद् उपासनं आचक्षते ।

Śrī Śaṅkara, Commentary on the *Gītā* 12.3

In meditation a single stream of the same thought moves towards a mental object uninterrupted by alien thoughts. This movement has been compared to the flow of oil. Says Śaṅkara : '*Upāsanā* is [mentally] going near the object of meditation after fixing it in the mind according to scriptural teaching and thus maintaining for a long time a current of the same thought like the unbroken flow of oil.'¹²

In work what really matters is not the amount of time spent on it but the intensity with which it is done. Intensity is a state of mind. It means concentration of mind, increased awareness and control of the psychophysical energy system. These are precisely the qualities which meditation induces in man. Doctors, engineers and technicians can work round the clock during times of emergency. When examinations are imminent, students learn in two weeks what they had not learned in a whole year. In other words, in critical situations man intensifies his mental life which greatly improves his work efficiency. Meditation is a systematic way of intensifying one's mental life. A person who practises meditation properly is perhaps more active than most people who are doing work.

Work, external or internal, entails expenditure of energy. It is well-known that a sizeable part of the oxygen that the human body takes in is used up by the brain. Thinking is an energy-consuming process. Wrong ways of thinking like worries, conflicts, distraction, etc. can leave people tired and exhausted more quickly than hard physical labour does. In fact, neurasthenia or psychosomatic fatigue is becoming a major health problem in modern societies. Though meditation is also a form of mental activity it liberates far more psychic energy than it uses up, and thus acts as an antidote to neurasthenia.

Meditation enhances mental energy in different ways. In the first place, it reduces

the waste of energy by checking the restlessness of the mind and by effecting an all-round integration of personality. Secondly, it sublimates lower forms of energy, especially sex energy, which are otherwise lost through the passions. The more you meditate, the more you convert lower energy into spiritual energy which gets stored in the psycho-spiritual system. Thirdly, meditation activates dormant regions of the mind and taps hidden sources of psychic energy. Modern researchers have found that only a part of the cerebrum is really used in normal life. And with the help of 'biofeedback' techniques they are trying to get an ingress into the hidden regions of human consciousness and bring automatic responses under control. It is now being increasingly recognized that the average person utilizes only a fraction of his creative intelligence or energy potential. Meditation enlarges one's consciousness by opening its unused chambers.

There is another important point which distinguishes meditation from all other activities. It is a fully conscious, self-directed activity. The normal daily actions of most people are done more or less unconsciously. This kind of drifting, dreamy existence makes people helpless victims of their environment and their own instincts and emotions. To make life purposeful, goal-oriented and meaningful we must have self-direction; and for this, self-awareness is important. Meditation controls all mental automatisms and enables the higher Self to emerge out of the unconscious stream of life.

Above all, unlike other worldly activities meditation relaxes body and mind and fills the soul with peace. Thousands of people in the West are now taking to yoga and meditation for its relaxing and tranquilizing effects. With the help of electroencephalographic (EEG) techniques scientists have discovered what are called 'brain waves' (weak neuro-electric pulses in the brain)

which are correlated to the psycho-physiological life of man. During normal activities the brain produces beta waves. Alpha waves indicate a relaxed state of body and mind. Deep concentration and creativity induce theta waves. During deep sleep very low frequency delta waves are produced. The discovery that meditation induces the production of more alpha and theta waves and leads to 'altered states of consciousness' without the help of drugs has created considerable interest among scientists. Many of them look upon it as the only way to peace and sanity in this age of atheism, anxiety, drugs and other problems.

Thus we find that meditation is a higher form of mental activity characterized by intensity, increase of energy, self-direction and relaxation. When a person who is advanced in meditation directs his concentrated mind towards another person, it becomes a prayerful benediction. This is how yogis and spiritual men render spiritual service to others. Meditation can thus be used as a form of mental Karma-yoga. This is the Karma aspect of *upāsana*.

All this shows that the notion of some people that meditation is a form of escapism, laziness and waste of time is unrealistic, anachronistic and wrong.

Upāsana as devotion

Whatever be the modern man's conception regarding meditation, for a devotee of God *upāsana* is an attempt to establish an intimate, everlasting relationship with the Deity. The fact that the Deity is unseen does not bother the true devotee. Love is not mere seeing or knowledge. It is essentially the union of wills. When two people love each other, their wills get united. When this union is broken love ceases, even though they may continue to see each other. So *upāsana* is not mere knowledge or activity; it is the extension of the individual will towards the divine Will in the depths of consciousness.

Advaita recognizes three types of relation. One is *samsarga* or *samyoga*, contact, conjunction, like the relation between you and the chair you sit on or that between the cart driver and his bullocks. The second type is *akhaṇḍa* or indivisible oneness, like the relation of the water in a lake with every particle of water in it. According to Advaita the relation between the individual Self and the Supreme Self is of this type. In neither of these relations is love possible. Love needs a closer relation than the first and a subject-object relationship which is absent in the second.

So Advaita posits a third type of relation known as *tādātmya* or identification in which the subject identifies itself with the object. This may be of two types: lower and higher. The lower type is caused by ignorance, like a worldly man's identifying himself with his body. The higher type of identification is based on knowledge of oneness. This is what takes place in *upāsana*. The soul knows that the Deity he is meditating upon is the Supreme Self of whom the individual Self is an eternal and inseparable part. Yet the Supreme Self is objectified as one's Father, Mother or Beloved for the sake of love and adoration. So Śrī Śaṅkara defines *upāsana* as a form of identification: 'Upāsana is mentally approaching the form of a deity etc., as described in the eulogistic portions of the Vedas dealing with objects of meditation, and concentrating the mind on it uninterrupted by worldly thoughts, till one is completely identified with that deity just as worldly people identify themselves with their bodies.'¹³

13. उपासनं नाम उपास्यार्थवादे यथा
देवतादिस्वरूपं श्रुत्या ज्ञाप्यते तथा
मनसोपगम्य आसनं चिन्तनं
लौकिकप्रत्ययाव्यवधानेन यावत्तद्देवतादि
स्वरूपात्माभिमानाभिव्यक्तिरिति
लौकिकात्माभिमानवत् ।

But for Śrī Rāmānuja the relationship between the worshipper and the Worshipped is not one of *tādātmya* but something direct and absolute. God is not only the Soul of all souls, the Supreme Self, but also the all-pervading and eternally present Supreme Object. Devotion is the realization of the eternal relationship between the eternal soul and the eternal God.

Śrī Rāmānuja's concept of *upāsana* is based on his theory of perception. According to him, in perception it is not the mind that goes out and takes the form of the object. Rather, it is the light of the Ātman that streams forth and directly reveals the object. The mind only helps in categorizing this knowledge. *Upāsana* is a higher form of perception. So it is also not a mere activity of the mind but the establishment of a direct contact between Ātman and God. Since, owing to the presence of impurities in the mind the light of Ātman remains contracted, ordinary people are not aware of this eternal relation. But as *upāsana* proceeds, this light (called *dharmabhūta-jñāna*) expands and the vision of God becomes clearer and clearer. So for Rāmānuja, *upāsana* and Bhakti are synonymous.¹⁴

Whether we follow Śaṅkara or Rāmānuja, what is important to note is that *upāsana* is not mere *manana*, thinking or reflection, but the establishment of a loving relationship with God. This is the devotional aspect of *upāsana*.

A loving relationship with God can be established in three ways. One is by asking God for help, grace. The soul waits for God, opening itself to grace. This asking, waiting, opening is prayer. It is a move-

Śrī Śaṅkara, Commentary on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.3.9

14. स्मृतिसन्तानरूपं दर्शनसमानाकारं
ध्यानोपसनादि शब्दवाच्यं . . . तदेव
भक्तिरित्युच्यते ।

ment from God to the soul. In the next stage the soul starts offering all that it has, all that it does, and itself, to God. This offering is worship. It is a movement from the soul to God. Through these two movements the soul draws closer to God. This 'mentally approaching' God is meditation. *Upāsana* includes all the three steps. It

begins as a prayer, grows as worship and matures into contemplation.

We thus see that *upāsana* is a unified discipline which includes aspects of Jñāna, Karma and Bhakti. As knowledge it reveals the Self, as activity it impels the Self Godward, as devotion it unites the Self with the Supreme Self.

FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA : GOLAPSUNDARI DEVI

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

It was the latter part of 1912. Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, was living at Lakshminivas at Ramāpurā, Varanasi. Her immaculate purity, her all embracing compassion and utter selflessness endowed her with the delicacy and tenderness of a maiden, a subtle grace and quiet dignity, and yet the guilelessness and simplicity of a child. One day a few women came to see her. Impressed by the dignified figure of Golapsundari who was also present, the leader of the visitors took her to be Sarada Devi and went to prostrate before her. (As Sarada Devi carried no air of authority, people used to mistake her at first for a simple woman; indeed, Sri Ramakrishna had once described her jokingly as 'a cat hidden under ashes'.) Understanding the woman's mistake, Golapsundari pointed out to her the Holy Mother. Going over to the Holy Mother she was about to prostrate in salutation when the Mother, in a spirit of fun, said, 'No, no, she herself is the Holy Mother.' Now completely confused, the woman decided to follow her first impulse and went again to Golapsundari. Annoyed, Golapsundari finally said to the stranger in her characteristically sharp manner: 'Can't you distinguish a divine face from a human one!'¹ Such was Golapsundari: regal of bearing and spiritually illumined, yet

humble and simple, but with a straightforwardness which could be crushing.

Sister Devamata (Laura Glenn) once observed, 'Golap-ma — tall and powerful in build, conservative, orthodox and uncompromising — acted as gendarme to Mother, protecting her against intrusion, guarding her safety, even scolding her when she thought Mother was growing careless in caste observance and too indulgent towards her foreign children.'² Strongly built, with warm but alert black eyes, she had an appealing manner, though with a touch of apprehension in her conduct.

Born about 1864 of an orthodox brahmin family in north Calcutta, Golapsundari Devi was brought up in the orthodox tradition, though she also learned to cherish liberal ideas. Her family name was Annapurna Devi³ but she became popularly known as Golap. Her married life was not happy, and her husband died young, leaving her a son and a daughter. To fill the cup of

1. Swami Gambhirananda, *Sri Ma Sarada Devi* (Calcutta : Udbodhan, 5th edition), p. 322.

2. Sister Devamata, *Days in an Indian Monastery* (La Crescenta, Calif. : Ananda Ashram, 1927), p. 278.

3. Brahmachari Akshayachaitanya, *Sri Sri Saradadevi* (Calcutta, 1st edition), p. 25, footnotes.

her misery, the little son also died shortly thereafter. Her only daughter Chandi, an exquisitely beautiful girl, had been married to a very aristocratic man, a landlord with the title of Raja named Sourindra Mohan Tagore of Pathuriaghata, Calcutta. Happily she was able to move in with this son-in-law, who took good care of her.⁴ Whenever the daughter visited her she was escorted by liveried footmen, at which the mother's heart swelled with pride. Then the daughter also died and Golapsundari was beside herself with grief. She had practically none left to call her own. Weighed down by this succession of shocking bereavements, her faith in herself eroded and the absence of a bright future made her life miserable.

Significantly, these bereavements forced Golap to turn her attention to her inner life. In utter helplessness she looked to Providence for some relief, and she prayed arduously. It seems her prayer did not go in vain, for while seeking solace she met Yogindramohini Biswas, who lived in the neighbourhood of Baghbazar. A distant relation of Balaram Bose, Yogindramohini had had the fortune to meet Sri Ramakrishna in 1883 at Dakshineswar. She now talked to Golap about Sri Ramakrishna, the God-intoxicated man of Dakshineswar; and to bring solace to the unfortunate lady she decided to take her to Sri Ramakrishna. They set out expectantly on a pleasant morning sometime in the first part of 1885.

As was his wont Sri Ramakrishna cordially received the newcomer. In fact, Golapsundari discovered to her great surprise that he had apparently been expecting her, strolling along the path of the temple garden. After a formal exchange of greetings Golap gave vent to her pentup sorrows. She burst into tears and lamented the loss of her dear daughter Chandi. Sri Ramakrishna fathomed the depth of her suffer-

ings. All his features expressed deep sympathy for her. Then the pathos of her grief threw Sri Ramakrishna into a unique mood. He laughed, danced, and said that she was lucky in having none but the Lord to engage her attention, that the Lord was her real saviour, that the series of her bereavements were blessings in disguise inasmuch as they opened up for her the possibility of a life exclusively given to spiritual practices. Just as a snake-bite victim is resuscitated by a magic spell, so the aggrieved brahmin lady was startled to her very core. Now she could throw aside her griefs. Almost enchanted she followed him into his room, where he began singing in divine ecstasy :

Dwell, O mind, within yourself;
Enter no other's home.
If you but seek there, you will find
All you are searching for.
God, the true Philosopher's Stone,
Who answers every prayer,
Lies hidden deep within your heart,
The richest gem of all.
How many pearls and precious stones
Are scattered all about
The outer court that lies before
The chamber of your heart.⁵

The import of the song as expressed through Sri Ramakrishna's melodious voice sank deep into her heart. It blew away the clouds of her grief. It lighted up a deep, long-hidden chamber of her heart. Golap then entreated him to grant her refuge from the snares of Māyā. More than that, she prayed for real devotion to God. This pleased Sri Ramakrishna. He could easily recognize her spiritual potential and aspirations. Now his inspiring counsels acted as a silent force animating to life her who had been half-dead. And through his grace the window of her heart's chamber opened up, giving free access to the 'southern breeze'

4. Akshay Kumar Sen, *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Punthi* (Calcutta : Udbodhan, 7th edition), p. 411.

5. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 6th edition), p. 172.

of devotion.⁶ Introducing her to Sarada Devi at the Nahabat he advised, 'Give her a lot of food to fill her stomach. That will assuage her grief.' He also told the Holy Mother, 'Keep your eyes on this brahmin woman. She will follow you like a shadow throughout your life,' a prophecy which was later proved abundantly true.

In later life Golap recounted her blissful experience when she met Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar for the first time. As soon as she had related to him the story of her woes, he patted her on her back, thereby absorbing all her sorrows, as it were. It had a most salutary effect on her. She laughed away all her grief like one illumined. It suddenly struck her that human life on earth was like a theatrical performance on the world-stage. Besides, in the ultimate analysis who was a mother and who her daughter? Why should she weep for her so-called loss? The real marvel was to weep for God.⁷

The next few days found her repeatedly at Dakshineswar, where she had been running from her home at Baghbazar like a mad woman in expectation of some relief. On Sunday, June 13, 1885, she was seen standing near the north door of Sri Ramakrishna's room. From there she listened to Sri Ramakrishna's description of Ram Mallick's grief for his deceased nephew. The Master in his unique manner said :

The truth is that God alone is real and all else unreal. Men, universe, house, children—all these are like the magic of the magician.... But the magician is real and his magic is unreal. The unreal exists for a second and then vanishes.... God alone is real and all else unreal. Water alone is real; but its bubbles appear and disappear. They disappear into the very water from which they rise. God is like an ocean, and living beings are its bubbles.

6. *Ramakrishna Punthi*, pp. 412-13.

7. *Sri Ramakrishna Smriti*, Memories of Lakshmimani Devi and Yogindramohini Biswas (Calcutta : Udbodhan, 3rd edition), p. 32.

They are born there and they die there. Children are like the few small bubbles around a big one. God alone is real. Make an effort to cultivate love for Him and find out the means to realize Him. What will you gain by grieving?⁸

Sri Ramakrishna's words had a sobering effect on Golap. In fact, her whole being was stirred by the living reality of his words. She recomposed herself and wanted to leave for home. It was 3 p.m., in the month of June. Sri Ramakrishna said tenderly, 'Do you want to go now? It is very hot. Why now? You can go later in a carriage with the devotees.' Such kind treatment by Sri Ramakrishna touched her heart.

Her urge to get away from the confines and constraints of family life to the peace and quiet of a place of pilgrimage was satisfied now at Dakshineswar. Soon she became an intimate companion of the Holy Mother and oftener than not stayed with her in the Nahabat. Sarada Devi's ingenuity in household management led Golap to reflect on the numerous things for which she paid exorbitantly, assuming that there was no other option, when they could very well be solved by much simpler means. Golap derived inspiration even for her household management from the unostentatious life of Sarada Devi.

The negative desire to free herself from grief gradually gave place to positive attraction and appreciation for Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi. Being repeatedly requested, Sri Ramakrishna paid a visit to her old, dilapidated brick house in Nebubagan, Baghbazar, on July 28, 1885. She had a sister who was a widow too, and their brothers also lived in the house with their families. Golap had been terribly busy all day making arrangements for receiving Sri Ramakrishna. As it was getting rather late, Golap went to Nanda Bose's house to inquire about the visit.

8. *Gospel*, p. 769.

Soon thereafter she returned home and found Sri Ramakrishna, who sat smiling, surrounded by devotees. Golap came and saluted the Master. She was so overwhelmed with joy that she didn't know what to say or do. 'This joy is too much for me. Perhaps I shall die of it,' she said. 'Tell me, friends, how shall I be able to live? I did not feel such a thrill even when Chandi, my daughter, used to visit the house accompanied by liveried footmen, with armed guards lining both sides of the street. Oh! Now I have no trace of my grief at her death.... Let me go and tell everybody how happy I am....' Being beside herself with joy, she continued, 'A labourer won a hundred thousand rupees in a lottery. The moment he heard the news he died of joy. Yes, he really and truly died. I am afraid the same thing is going to happen to me. Please bless me, friends, or else I shall certainly die.' Indeed, Golap was as blessed as Mary of the Bible had been, for both of them had chosen the 'better part': to sit at the feet of the Master. Sri Ramakrishna was delighted to hear later from Mahendranath Gupta of the close parallel between these two women devotees.

To further assuage her sorrows Sri Ramakrishna asked Golap one day to bring his night meal. Now, this service was one of the few prerogatives enjoyed by the Holy Mother, but the fact never struck Golap. She often spent long hours in serving Sri Ramakrishna and would return to the Nahabat quite late. The Holy Mother thus had to wait for a long while with Golap's meal. This perhaps annoyed Holy Mother. When Sri Ramakrishna pointed out the fact to Golap she innocently remarked, 'No, Mother loves me much and regards me as her own daughter. She calls me by my first name,' thus displaying a curious mixture of simplicity and insensitivity which always characterized her.

The tender plant of Golap's spiritual life which grew into a big tree, developed silently

in the congenial environment of Dakshineswar. Here she found Sri Ramakrishna the Godman, who, though living in the world, was completely detached from it, who was constantly absorbed in God-consciousness, and who sang, danced and forgot himself in divine ecstasy. No less significant than her coming under the care of Sri Ramakrishna was the fact that she became very intimate with Sarada Devi. Referring to her one day, Sri Ramakrishna said to Golap, 'She is Saraswati. She has assumed a human body to impart wisdom to men; but she has hidden her celestial beauty lest people, by looking at her, should befoul their minds with sinful thoughts.'⁹

Sri Ramakrishna took Golap's entire responsibility.¹⁰ The inner light of his words pierced to the very depths of her soul, settled there and wrought a transformation as unique as it was complete. Spiritual instruction apart, some mysterious incidents too forged in her deeper bonds of faith. One day while attending on Sri Ramakrishna as he was taking his noon meal, she was stunned to see distinctly the hood of a snake which was devouring every morsel of food put into Sri Ramakrishna's mouth. The latter's confirmation and clarification of the incident brought her all the more spiritual light.¹¹ In the scriptures such eating is called an offering to the coiled-up power of Kuṇḍalinī.

Another day she noticed Sri Ramakrishna strolling along the northern veranda of the temple courtyard in an ecstatic mood. She

9. Swami Nikhilananda, *Holy Mother* (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1962), p. 79.

10. Vaikunthanath Sanyal, *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lilamrita* (Calcutta: S. N. Sanyal, 2nd edition), p. 366.

11. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 6th edition), pp. 580-81; and Swami Arupananda, 'Sri Sri Golap-mata', *Udbodhan*, vol. 27, no. 1, p. 49.

clearly saw that it was not Sri Ramakrishna but Mother Kālī who was walking. The experience was thrilling.¹²

To live in the holy company of Sarada Devi was to take lessons in practical spirituality. Golap took many responsibilities of the household upon herself out of devotion and a sense of consecration. By her outward manner Sarada Devi was the most obscure of all in the household, yet beneath the veil of simplicity which enveloped her there was lofty majesty of bearing. Love and an atmosphere of sanctity pervaded the household. Perceptive aspirants who lived therein soon learned that religion was a sweet, natural, joyous thing; that purity and holiness were tangible realities; that sanctity like a sweet perfume was overpowering the foulness of their selfishness. Thus, living a typical householder's life, struggling on the battleground of conflicting interests, Golap learned to perform her duties so that they did not conflict with her love for God. She was like the mudfish, which lives in the mud but is not stained by it, or like the waterfowl who, though diving under water, shakes off all trace of it by fluttering its wings but once. This skillfulness in work was testified to by no less a person than Sarada Devi, who said of Golap, 'When Golap performs any work she does it with undivided attention, as if she were absorbed in meditation and *japa*—so deep is her mental application.'¹³

An adept in meditation, Golap reached the heights of spiritual realization. Once Sarada Devi observed: 'What a tremendous amount of meditation and *japa* Golap and Yogen have done! Golap has become illumined through *japa*.'¹⁴ Golap herself admitted: 'By the grace of Sri Thakur I

have been blessed with the direct vision of the living goddess Tārā, my Iṣṭā, during meditation.'¹⁵ And Sarada Devi said of her: 'This is her last birth.'¹⁶

Even aside from such arduous efforts, some free and unmerited favours of Sri Ramakrishna came to her in an unexpected manner. One such rare grace was granted her on December 23, 1885, at the Cossipore Garden House. Overwhelmed by love for the devotee Sri Ramakrishna in a state of *samādhi* touched Golap's heart with his feet. She shed profuse tears of joy, and her spiritual life was intensified.¹⁷

Golap was with Sarada Devi at Shyampukur and the Cossipore Garden to help her serve Sri Ramakrishna during his last illness. The fatal disease of cancer ended his life on August 16, 1886, though his spirit still nourished and protected the devotees. Golap now clung to Sarada Devi more closely than ever before. As Sarada Devi's ideal was complete identification with her husband and his divine mission, the spiritual training of Golap continued undisturbed.

In fact, Golap served Sarada Devi with unflagging zeal and unquestioning loyalty for thirty-six years, till the latter passed away in 1920. She was a constant and watchful attendant of Sarada Devi, protecting her from the unreasonable importunities and idiosyncrasies of devotees. Whether at the Belur Math or at the Baghbazar residence or at Jayrambati—everywhere Golap was to be found guarding her as her devoted companion. The Mother would hold like a child to the corner of Golap's cloth while going on foot from one place to another. 'I cannot go to any place without Golap,' Mother said, 'I feel assured when she is with me.'

Life at the Udbodhan convent, Calcutta, circled round the shrine of Sri Ramakrishna

12. Swami Saradananda, *Bhagavan Sri Sri Ramakrishna* (Calcutta: Udbodhan), p. 10.

13. *Vedanta Kesari*, July 1954, p. 70.

14. Swami Madhavananda and R. C. Mazumdar, eds., *Great Women of India* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1954), p. 451.

15. *Sri Ramakrishna Smriti*, p. 32.

16. *Great Women of India*, p. 452.

17. *Gospel*, p. 924.

and his living representative Sarada Devi. Though Indian saints and seers have a clear, broad grasp of the infinitude and oneness of the impersonal Supreme Being, a devotee like Golapsundari, in her daily intercourse with the divinity, does not hesitate to make Him personal and concrete. That is how she maintained a point of contact between the outer and inner, between the material and the spiritual; the service offered to the concrete was as real and genuine as would be the care of a dear father or mother. Her household duties were thus sublimated into worship.

Her daily life was of the simplest sort, springing as it did from a profound spirit of renunciation which had been impressed on her heart by Sri Ramakrishna. Once she had gone by boat from Calcutta to Dakshineswar in the company of Sri Ramakrishna, Gopaler Ma and a few other devotees. Gopaler Ma was carrying some provisions gifted by the family of Balaram Bose. Sri Ramakrishna said to Golap, 'One who is a person of renunciation realizes God. One who after taking food in people's houses comes away empty-handed, sits leaning against the body of the divine Lord, that is, can exert force, so to say, on the Lord because of renunciation and dependance on Him.'¹⁸ Though meant for Gopaler Ma these words impressed Golap deeply.

Unsophisticated, frank and outspoken, Golap-Ma, as she was called among the devotees, was sometimes misunderstood. But underneath that rough exterior was her relentless perfectionism and loving urge for service. Appreciating her pragmatism, liberality and broadmindedness, Sarada Devi once said of her: 'Golap's mind is very pure; it is never ruffled. She does not know what pride or vanity is.'¹⁹ Sarada Devi said on another occasion:

Golap's mind is very pure. Once, while at Vrindaban, we found the floor of the temple of

Madhavji dirtied by some child. Golap, seeing the inconvenience of all visitors, at once tore a portion of her new cloth and with it cleansed the spot. Some amongst the bystanders misjudged her, while others truly appraised this voluntary service.... Mental purity is the outcome of a good deal of austerities practised in previous lives.²⁰

Sri Ramakrishna as well as Sarada Devi would not, however, hesitate to chastise an erring Golapsundari for her senseless chatter, her tactless handling of a situation or her garrulous comments inspired by her over-concern for the Holy Mother, or when she became critical of the Mother's 'sons'—monastic or non-monastic. Sarada Devi tried to restrain Golap by saying, 'How can I help it, Golap? I can't contain myself when one draws near me and calls me Mother.'²¹ She repeatedly tried to correct Golap's harshness, saying that an unpalatable truth should always be avoided. In spite of this sometimes annoying trait, Golap's unquestioning submission to the Master and the Mother when they would reprimand her was exemplary. And her deep love and sympathy for the poor and distressed revealed a soft heart. Half of the small allowance she received from her daughter's son she spent in charity to the poor. Her gentleness, humility, and above all her dedicated service impressed all who had the occasion to see her closely. Her life was indeed 'characterized by non-attachment, love, service and inwardness of devotion.'²²

Sarada Devi sometimes referred to Golapsundari as her Jayā.²³ So deeply did

20. *Great Women of India*, p. 452.

21. Swami Gambhirananda, *Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 2nd edition), p. 366.

22. *Prabuddha Bharata*, February 1925, p. 93.

23. Jayā and Vijayā are the two attendants of Jagaddhātṛī, the Mother of the Universe. Sarada Devi sometimes referred to Golapsundari and Yogindramohini as her Jayā and vijayā respectively.

18. *Great Master*, p. 652.

19. *Holy Mother*, pp. 61-62.

she participate in Sarada Devi's day-to-day life of holiness that the latter once remarked, 'People call me goddess, and I too am led to think so; or how could you explain all the strange things that have happened in my life? Yogen and Golap know much of this.'²⁴ Moreover, she like other companions of Sarada Devi 'who were touched by the hand of Sri Ramakrishna' developed to a wonderful extent 'the instant power to penetrate a new religious feeling or idea.'²⁵ This helped her overcome social and religious prejudices, making her quite liberal and catholic in her outlook. Even when annoyed or overwrought by others' conduct she could rise above her emotion in no time and forget about it completely.²⁶

Such attributes of her character apart, the life and words of the Master as also of the Mother, reached down to the deepest roots of her being, so that there seemed to be no limit to her utter self-surrender and trust till she became a living conduit for the

spread of the Master's and Mother's holy influence. Like other illumined souls her mind radiated compassion, devotion and joy all about her. In addition to the deep insight into the spirit of the Ramakrishna Movement she developed, she enthused monastic and lay members with courage and faith, hope and illumination.

Whenever time permitted her, particularly in the afternoons, she used to read the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, *Mahābhārata*, as well as the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.²⁷ To the younger generation of devotees she felt proud to be a granny who charmed them by her fresh, fascinating stories. Like Yogin-Ma she used to narrate tales from Paurāṇik literature to Sister Nivedita.²⁸ She also enjoyed the pranks sometimes played by others, particularly Swami Brahmananda.

Golapsundari outlived Sarada Devi by four years. Except for brief pilgrimages the saint's life was one of continuous *tapasyā* and spiritual fulfilment within the household, which finally ended by her merging in the Light of Ramakrishna-Sarada Devi on December 19, 1924.

24. Swami Tapasyananda, *Sri Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 5th edition), p. 110.

25. Sister Nivedita, *The Master as I Saw Him* (Calcutta: Udbodhan), pp. 107-08.

26. Swami Arupananda, 'Sri Sri Golap-mata', *Udbodhan*, vol. 27, no. 1, p. 54.

27. *Women Saints of East and West* (London: Ramakrishna-Vedanta Centre, 1955), p. 132.

28. Sankari Prasad Basu, *Nivedita Lokamata* (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers), vol. 1, p. 200.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION OF SOME GREAT EDUCATORS

PROF. RANJIT KUMAR ACHARJEE

The philosophy of education is that field of philosophical enquiry which looks at education as a whole and tries to make a consistent and sensible idea of that whole. It seeks broadly to define the values that constitute the ultimate aim of education.

But the necessity of philosophical examination of education has not been universally recognized. A little reflection will, however, make it clear that such an examination is a prerequisite for the formulation of educational schemes and policies. Education

without a philosophical orientation is just like undertaking a journey before deciding the destination. It has been rightly observed that 'philosophical thinking serves to guide action, to call to attention features that might be overlooked, to enrich and unify vision and thus strengthen the professional sentiment. Attachment to such thinking is its own reward.'¹

According to Prof. J. S. MacKenzie, education has both wider and narrower connotations. In its wider sense, education is a process which goes on throughout the life of an individual, almost unconsciously, by enriching his experience. Education in the narrower sense is, however, a consciously directed process for the realization of some definite ends. In the philosophy of education, we are principally interested in the narrower sense; that is, education as a conscious and well-controlled process. Needless to say, the aim of education, or for that matter philosophy of education, is determined by the philosophy of life, the conception of man's essential nature as a conscious and creative being and his destiny upon earth.

Different philosophers and educators, beginning from Plato and Aristotle, have advocated different aims of education, seldom distinguishing between the proximate and ultimate aims. But we feel that this distinction should not be overlooked in any philosophy of education. Keeping in view both the proximate and ultimate aims, let us have a look at the basic principles of educational philosophy of some great educators of both the West and the East.

Historically speaking, Comenius (1592-1671), a Moravian bishop, may rightly be regarded as the earliest of the eminent educational thinkers of Post-Renaissance Europe, who dedicated his long life almost entirely

to the cause of education. His first work, *The Great Didactic* which appeared in 1632, contained the main principles of his educational philosophy. In his later works, *The Way of Light* and *The School of Infancy*, he further elaborated his ideas on education. Probably the most significant contribution of Comenius to the cause of education consists in his introduction of vernacular as a medium of teaching and his recognition of the national importance of education. He said, 'Let none therefore be excluded unless God has denied him sense and intelligence.' He recognized the special importance of all kinds of schools, from village schools up to the university, which of course must be well-organized and well-disciplined. A methodical approach to learning, internal discipline in the educational institutions and specific planning were some of the basic features of his educational scheme. For the development of mental capacities and physical capabilities, he suggested different stages of education and their corresponding courses of study. The purpose of education, he asserted, was to prepare pupils for life and give them practice in living. Instead of looking upon education as a purely intellectual training. Comenius enlarged its scope to include all the needs of all the children.

In Rousseau (1712-1778) we find a most daring and revolutionary thinker. Rousseau in his pedagogical story of *Emile* presented what is probably the most influential work on education that has been written in the modern period. His theory of education was a plea for natural education, for the free and unimpaired development of the child's natural impulses. He believed that man was by nature good and had been corrupted by civilization. Hence he advocated that education be negative, consisting in the removal of artificial and unfavourable conditions which disturbed the normal and natural expression of inherent impulses and capacities of a child. Rousseau called his theory 'negative education' as against the

1. Bereday and Lauwels, eds., *Education and Philosophy* (the Year-book of 1957 issued by the University of London, Institute of Education), p. 13.

existing system of 'positive education'—'one that tends to form the mind prematurely and to instruct the child in the duties that belong to man.' He therefore disapproved the scheme of formal education. Rousseau's passionate indignation against all sorts of artificialities and impositions in the sphere of education originated from his famous slogan 'Back to nature'. Rousseau's theory exercised considerable influence on modern education. Basedow, Pestalozzi and Froebel accepted some of the principles of Rousseau's doctrine of education and earnestly put them to practical test. Dr. Montessori has also been greatly influenced by Rousseau's theory.

However, due to his emotional temperament and impractical approach, some contradictory ideas found place in Rousseau's educational philosophy. His theory overlooked the social perspective and underestimated the social significance of education. As a matter of fact, no society can progress unless its members are imbued with the consciousness of the common good. And this social consciousness has got to be infused in the mind of the child during the formative period of life by imparting the appropriate type of education. This received no recognition in Rousseau's theory. Moreover, his overinsistence on the efficacy of nature is obviously onesided. Notwithstanding all this, it must be admitted that Rousseau for the first time placed the child at the centre of education and emphasized the necessity of imparting educational lessons in the free and open natural environment.

In direct succession from Comenius comes the Swiss educationist Pestalozzi (1746-1827) who made substantial contributions to educational theory and practice. His first work *Evening Hour of a Hermit* dealt with his ideas on education. Education for him was the all-round development of the child; as he said, 'Education is the natural, progressive and harmonious development of all the powers and capacities of the human being.'

Pestalozzi stated his views in the familiar plant metaphor :

Sound education stands before me symbolized by a tree planted near fertilizing water. A little seed, which contains the design of the tree, its form and proportion, is placed in the soil. See how it germinates and expands into trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit! The whole tree is an uninterrupted chain of organic parts, the plan of which existed in its seed and root. Man is similar to the tree. In the newborn child are hidden those faculties which are to unfold during life.²

By implication it follows that the 'harmonious personality' was considered by Pestalozzi to be the aim of education, and by 'harmonious personality' he meant the all-round development of the physical, mental, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral, in short all aspects of life. His great principle was, as he maintained, to psychologize education. He tried to raise some of Rousseau's principles on a sound psychological basis. And modern educational psychology is to a great extent indebted to Pestalozzi.

Among the great educational philosophers of the modern age, J. F. Herbart (1776-1841), a German philosopher, deserves special consideration. As a student of philosophy, he was impressed by the idealistic philosophy of Fichte and Schelling, but his rationalistic temperament prevented him from accepting idealism in its entirety. Meanwhile he came to realize that the educational practices in order to be meaningful must be founded on sound psychological ground. Gradually he came under the influence of Pestalozzi's theory of education which he sought to perfect by removing its contradictions. Herbart did not visualize any conflict between philosophy and education and, as a matter of fact, he sought an intellectual rapport between the

2. Quoted in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960), vol. 5, p. 166.

two. As an educational philosopher, he rendered an ethical orientation of the aims of education and this secured for him a place of prominence in the history of modern philosophy of education. A close study of the lectures he delivered on education in the Göttingen University and his treatises on education published during this period makes it abundantly clear that he considered morality to be the sole aim of education. His system of education implied the possibility of manmaking not only on the intellectual but also on the moral side. He therefore laid utmost emphasis on knowledge for the attainment of moral character and the means of realizing a moral character through 'manysidedness of interest' which the teacher should create in the students.

Herbart, it seems, assigned a special role to the teacher in his theory of education. The teacher, he held, instead of presenting some lifeless and incoherent mass of facts, must play the role of a co-ordinator of knowledge, thereby assisting and guiding the students towards the attainment of integrated knowledge. Herbart distinguished between mere instruction and 'educative instruction'. Those subjects that touched human life at the greatest number of points formed the best kind of educative instruction. He realized the importance of discipline in the different spheres of education but said that it must not be imposed from outside. By creating interest in a variety of subjects, the teacher should help the educand develop spontaneously a sense of discipline. The emphasis he placed on instruction, the importance he ascribed to interest and apperception, were the salient features of Herbart's philosophy of education. But the whole value of instruction, from Herbart's point of view, consisted in its moral bearings.

John Dewey (1859-1952), the great American philosopher and educationist, was one of the most outstanding thinkers who

greatly influenced educational theories and practices in the twentieth century. Dewey wrote a large number of important works on education where he delineated his views in a broader social perspective. He appeared on the scene with his doctrine, 'Education is life itself.' Dewey's theory of education should be viewed in the light of his philosophical conviction, which was dominated by the pragmatism of William James, whose doctrine of practical verifiability as the criterion of truth had impressed him immensely. Nevertheless, instrumentalism is the title generally given to his philosophy according to which everything is provisional, nothing ultimate. Knowledge is always a means, never an end in itself; it is purely instrumental. The world is dynamic and so also is education. Education, Dewey therefore asserted, should not be guided by a set of predetermined principles; on the contrary, the principles and practices of education must be formulated 'by observing the way they work, by their practical consequences. He objects, therefore, to all authoritarianism in school and to a body of authoritative knowledge which is to be taught by the school. The school, like the world, must be experimental, testing its results one by one as they are obtained, and retaining or ruthlessly rejecting according to the result.'³

According to Dewey, education must not be divorced from the needs and requirements of life. It must be thoroughly practical. But the idea of growth is the key to his educational theory. Education is a process of having the 'degree and kind of growth' from the present. Accordingly Dewey said, 'Education is the reconstruction or reorganization of experience which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience.'⁴ As the potentiality for growth

3. Sir G. Thomson, *A Modern Philosophy of Education* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1957), p. 97.

4. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York, 1916), p. 89.

does not stop with the close of adolescence, education should not be regarded as a preparation for life. It is itself a process of living. In fact, 'the educational process has no end beyond itself; it is its own end.'⁵

Dewey was fully convinced that all-round social progress could be possible and effective through a meaningful education. Hence he formulated his theory of education with social efficiency as the principal aim. Education should promote the development of the child's capacity to participate in the life of the society in general. Evidently education should not be simply instruction in various subjects but a coherent unified effort to foster the development of citizens capable of promoting the further growth of society by employing intelligence fruitfully in a social context. But it is to be noted that Dewey's firm faith in democracy enabled him to seek a happy reconciliation between individual and social needs.

It is not possible to present a fair picture of Dewey's educational philosophy within a brief compass. It contains many important and illuminating ideas which due to their practical utility have exercised considerable influence on the system of education of the present century. Dewey's influence on the educational systems of America, the Far East and Russia is enormous.

In the context of these ideas of modern educationists of the West, we may discuss the educational principles as expounded by some of the great educational philosophers of modern India, such as Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. One common feature of their theories of education is that they developed a scheme of education consistent with their spiritual conception of man. Swami Vivekananda, the patriot-monk of modern India, who had direct and intimate knowledge of the appalling conditions of the Indian

masses, came to realize the importance of education for the uplift of the masses. As he said, 'My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves.'⁶ The key-idea of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of education lies in his famous definition of education: 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' The implication of this definition is that a child has the innate impulses, predispositions, capacity to assimilate and grow; and education as a conscious and well-directed process must enable him to manifest these latent abilities and talents in a coherent manner. He further added, 'The ideal of all education, all training should be man-making. Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making and character-building assimilation of ideas.'⁷ The entire passage is so illuminating that it requires no elaboration. It gives a definite direction to our system of education. Thus far Swamiji's view is almost identical with the views expressed by many modern educationists.

But Swamiji did not stop there; he went deeper into the problem and linked up education with the concept of man's essential nature. Swamiji did not consider man to be a psycho-biological unit. Man, he believed, is essentially a spiritual being and his real nature is pure consciousness. He therefore held that education should not remain blind to the spiritual needs of man. It should help him in his attempt at self-realization. With this end in view, Swamiji came to look upon religion as the core of education. He observed: 'I look upon

5. Ibid., p. 59.

6. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1964), vol. 5, pp. 28-29.

7. *Complete Works*, vol. 3, (1960), p. 302.

religion as the innermost core of education. Mind, I do not mean my own or anyone else's opinion about religion.'⁸ At first glance Swamiji's idea of education with religion as its core subject may appear to be somewhat impracticable. But if we dive deep into the problem, it becomes abundantly clear that it is a perfectly practical ideal, provided we are willing to bring about an overall reform of our system of education.

Tagore's educational philosophy as creative self-expression resulted from the concept of man as given in Upaniṣadic idealism. Besides, his own poetic temperament acted as the most powerful force in shaping his general as well as educational philosophy. According to Tagore, the chief aim of education is to produce 'a moral and spiritual man, the complete, the whole man' through creative self-expression. Tagore advocated freedom for the natural inclinations of the child. His abhorrence of all sorts of artificialities made him insist that teaching should be imparted under the open sky and in the midst of natural surroundings. Through education we must establish friendly relations with our natural, social and cultural environment.

Gandhi was not an academic philosopher. He had neither studied philosophy nor investigated philosophical problems in an academically disciplined manner. As a leader of India's freedom movement, he was well aware of the limitations and unsuitability of the system of education introduced by the foreign rulers. Keeping in view the total picture of Indian civilization and its predominantly rural character, Gandhi formulated his theory of basic education as a programme of national education. By education, Gandhiji means 'all-round drawing out the best in child and man'; and the 'best in man' signifies 'a harmonious personality, an ideal character full of vitality, courage, intelligence and spiritual freedom'. His basic

education is an effort to give a practical scheme to realize this ideal.

Basic education for Gandhiji is not a technique, but a way of life. 'It aims at integrated, all-round development of the individual and also at building up a society on truth, justice and nonviolence.' Basic education attempts to foster a spirit of co-operation in place of conflict, a sense of understanding against ill-will. Basic education was conceived by him to spearhead a silent social revolution which would 'provide a healthy and normal basis of relationship between the city and the village,' thereby laying the 'foundation of a more just social order' in which there would be no 'unnatural division between the haves and have-nots.'

In Gandhiji's educational scheme due provisions in addition to theoretical lessons have been made for children so as to enable them to participate in various types of social utility works. This offers them an opportunity of working in close cooperation with other fellow-students, thereby awakening in them social consciousness and solidarity. It also satisfies their inner urge for creative activity. Thus it is found that in basic education both 'theory and practice are accommodated in a balanced way.

Though Swami Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi formulated their principles of education mainly with a view to determining the ultimate aim of education, yet they were not devoid of the scientific and pragmatic approach. Vivekananda's call for utilization of education for mass uplift bears clear evidence of his pragmatic outlook. Tagore's educational experiments in Santiniketan and Sriniketan amply show that he was as much pragmatic as any other Western pragmatic educationist. Evidently Gandhi's educational schemes and methods are out-and-out pragmatic.

A brief review of the educational philosophy of some great educators of both East and West brings into focus some important

8. *Complete Works*, vol. 5, (1970), p. 231.

needs of present-day education. An outline of a general philosophy of education having contemporary relevance can be drawn on the basis of the real nature of man and our idea of the social order which we wish to usher in, for education has both individual and social significance. Keeping in view the social nature of man and his obligations to the community, a harmonious development of his latent capacities and qualities to the extent these are socially useful may be considered to be the proximate aim of education. Again, a child should be morally and intellectually well-equipped and must be familiar with the wider culture of the community. Education is the medium of transmission of cultural heritage and 'socialization', as the social scientists call it, is another form of it. Evidently socialization is not identical with the politicizing of an individual. And the politicizing of education is even more pernicious in the life of an individual and community. But the supporters of totalitarianism and some socialist thinkers with the veiled motive of mass indoctrination advocate total and exclusive State control over education on the express plea that education is not wholly a social function but a State function as well, and hence the State should formulate its educational policies so as to produce the type of citizens it likes to have. Superficially the plea sounds quite innocent and cogent. But the politicizing of education means indoctrination in a particular political ideology, and this amounts to the complete sacrifice of academic freedom. It will certainly hamper the free and spontaneous manifestation of man's latent qualities and capacities. Eminent thinkers like Adam Smith, J. S. Mill, Spencer and many other scholars expressed grave concern about the evil consequences of indoctrination. Suspending a full-scale consideration of the issue, we express our agreement with the view of Professor Brubacher when he says :

The State must guard itself against a monopoly in the education of children. . . . The pupil will be assured of being educated as an individual and not exclusively as a citizen. He will be educated as an end and not just as a mouthpiece or instrument of the State.⁹

Education must therefore be life-giving and liberating.

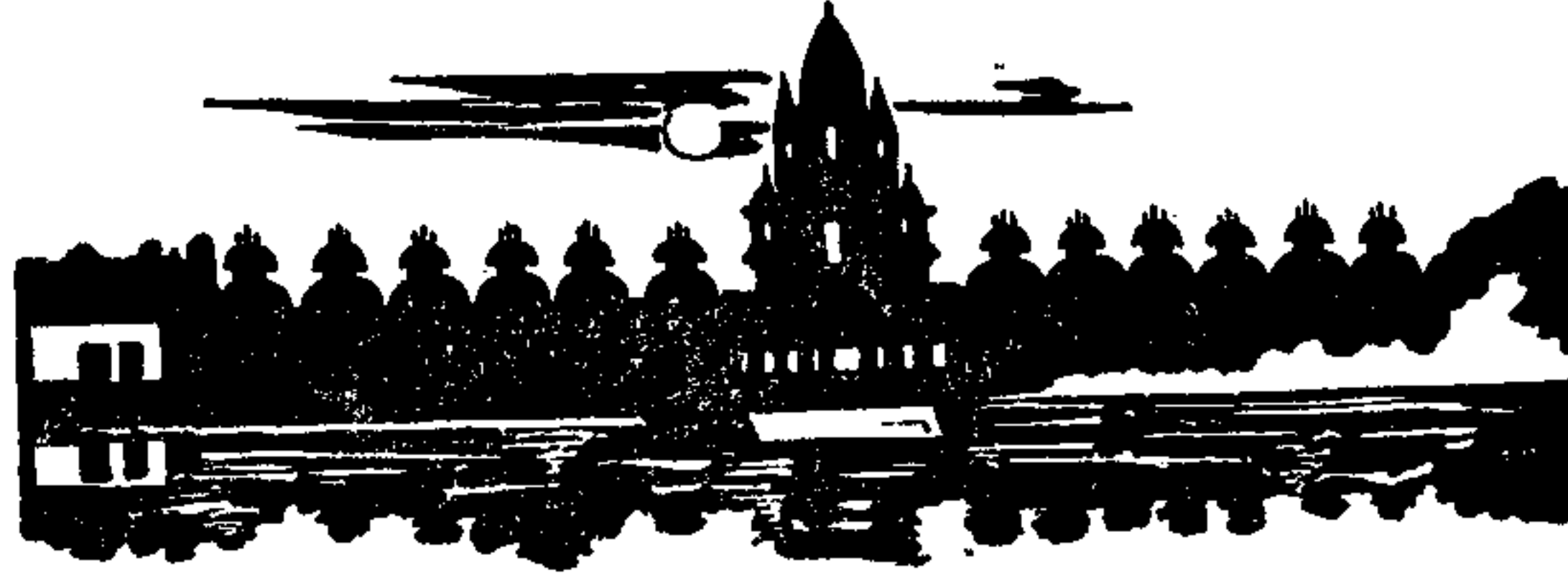
That society needs men and women of character is obvious, and education must answer to this social need. The real progress of the country is not judged by the percentage of literacy of the people or by political awareness in correctly exercising franchise or by the construction of massive industrial and technological installations. It is character that counts, it is character on which the destiny of a nation depends. Further, we want our future citizens to be hardworking, liberal, scientifically minded, tolerant, having respect for the values cherished by mankind. We also want our country to make substantial progress in commerce and industry, science and technology. Our educational system must therefore offer avenues so that such progress may become a reality. Taking all these aspects into account, Mr. Thorndike has very beautifully summarized the proximate aim of education. He says, 'Its proximate aims are to give boys and girls health in body and mind, information about the world of nature and men, worthy interests in knowledge and action, a multitude of habits, of thought, feeling and behaviour, and ideals of efficiency, honour, duty, love and service.'¹⁰ This shows that education should provide a coherent picture of the universe and an integrated way of life.

Needless to say, the system of education must be in conformity with the essential nature of man. And the essential nature of

(Continued on page 306)

9. *Modern Philosophies of Education*, p. 149.

10. Quoted by Sir G. Thomson, *A Modern Philosophy of Education*, p. 66.



THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL TILLICH

DR. DAVID C. SCOTT

Paul J. Tillich, one of the most distinguished Protestant theologians and religious philosophers of our times, was born in Prussia in 1886. His father, a pastor of the Prussian Territorial Church (Lutheran), was a man of intellectual distinction and strong character who rose to occupy an important place in local church affairs. His mother came from the Rhineland; she too with a different religious tradition, possessed a strong personality. When he was twelve the boy was sent to a humanistic *Gymnasium*, where he studied until the family moved to Berlin.

To his early environment Tillich traces the beginnings to what he calls the 'romantic' trend in his feeling and thinking, his 'aesthetic-meditative' attitude toward nature and his sense of history. These influences were intensified, Tillich believed, by his 'actual communication with nature' throughout his life; by the 'impact of [German] poetry ... full of expressions of nature mysticism'; and by his Lutheran background, where a certain 'nature mysticism was possible', as it was not in Calvinism.¹ This early bias apparently remained potent throughout his life and contributed to what

some critics have regarded as the pantheistic strain in his philosophy.

In 1900, with the family's move, Tillich transferred to the Friedrich Wilhelm Gymnasium in Berlin and four years later he matriculated in the theological faculties of Berlin, Tübingen and Halle. Receiving his doctorate of philosophy in Breslau in 1911 and his theological degree in Halle a year later, he was ordained minister in the latter year, and served briefly as vicar in Moabit. Then came the First World War.

Though the war and its aftermath were crucial in Tillich's life, time and space do not permit us here more than to note that in this period he defined his attitude to Marx as a 'dialectical Yes and No' corresponding to the 'dialectical Yes and No' directed to Nietzsche, despite the 'use and abuse' of the former by the Communists and of the latter by the Nazis.

Meanwhile, Tillich pursued his academic life as *privat-dozent* of theology in the University of Berlin from 1919 to 1924 where he became interested in a 'theology of culture'; as professor of systematic theology at Marburg in 1924, where he came face to face with theological neo-orthodoxy in its 'radical effects' and with M. Heidegger's existentialism; as professor of religion at the technical *Hochschule* in Dresden in 1925; as professor of theology at Leipzig

1. Paul Tillich, 'Autobiographical Reflections', in Charles V. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, eds., *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (Macmillan, 1952), pp. 4-5.

in 1928; and finally as professor of philosophy at the University of Frankfurt-am-Main from 1929 to 1933. His interests throughout were as much philosophical and cultural as theological. The coming to power of Hitler drove Tillich to the United States where he joined the faculty of Union Theological Seminary as professor of philosophical theology and where he remained until his retirement in 1954. Even after his retirement he continued the lecturing, teaching and writing that made him such a powerful intellectual force in Europe and North America right up to the time of his death in 1965.

Tillich is very often seen as an 'existentialist theologian',² and indeed his theology has an existential starting point, but he goes on from existential concepts to explore the ontological structures of theology. Perhaps, before proceeding further, it is well to offer a few comments about what is generally meant by 'existentialism' in the West.

Like logical empiricism, existentialism is not a body of doctrines but a way of doing philosophy. It is the way which begins by interrogating existence, where by 'existence' is understood the kind of being that belongs to each individual in his concrete living, acting and deciding. This human existing is contrasted with the being of everything that has a fixed essence. According to existentialists the peculiarity of human existence is that every person is always on his way, he is always standing before possibilities of decision. His being is always fragmentary and incomplete, so that he has no fixed essence, or as some would put it, his essence is to exist.

Unlike the earlier philosophers of personal being, among whom men like Martin Buber, M. de Unamuno, Nicolas Berdyaev,

*et al*³ are most well known, later existentialists were for the most part interested in the form and structure of existence and sought to find categories to describe it. Many of them used the method of phenomenology. They looked with disfavour on speculative metaphysics, as a kind of philosophy which deals in rational essences and disregards concrete existence. Yet this did not hinder some of them from becoming ontologists, and from moving beyond the understanding of human being to an understanding of being itself. Indeed, it could be argued that one cannot properly understand human being without already having some conception of being as a whole.

Since existentialism is, as we have said, not a body of doctrines but a philosophical attitude, it issues in very diverse points of view, and this is particularly noticeable with regard to existentialists' views on religion. At one end of the scale, J. P. Sartre identifies existentialism with atheism; at the other we find Catholic existentialists, J. Maritain, G. Marcel, L. Lavelle, *et al*.⁴ Karl Jaspers' philosophy is compatible with liberal Protestantism while Heidegger's thought is definitely religious and mystical in tone, though it would not coincide with any of the commonly accepted forms of Christianity.

Perhaps it is not surprising that existentialism has made its influence felt very powerfully in Christian theology. No more

3. In these men we find an anti-intellectualist strain, an insistence that the human being is more than a cognitive being, that philosophy has to take account of the whole experience of being a person and that truth is to be sought not so much in ideas as in life itself. Not only striving and willing, but also suffering, guilt, finitude and all the pathos of human life are brought to the fore. They might have been called 'existentialists', and some of them often are, but it is perhaps better to regard them as precursors of the later, full-flown existentialism.

4. Ironically, existentialism was one of the philosophies singled out for unfavourable mention in the encyclical *Humani Generis* of 1950.

2. Cf. for example, Will Herberg, *Four Existentialist Theologians*, a reader from the works of Jacques Maritain, Nicolas Berdyaev, Martin Buber and Paul Tillich.

than the philosopher can some theologians be content with 'telling a story', as Plato suggested, and the categorical structures worked out by the existentialists offer a way of expressing in a formal manner the insights which the Bible expresses in its concrete historical or mythical stories. Thus Christian theologians saw an opportunity to pass beyond the stage to which G. Aulen and R. Niebuhr had brought the discipline. The most famous case was Bultmann's use of the Heideggerian *existentialia* for his project of demythologizing the New Testament, but other Christian theologians also worked along similar lines, while Tillich went on from existential to ontological analysis in his treatment of theological problems.

Tillich describes his theological method as one of 'correlation'. He takes the Christian existential situation of the human individual on the one hand and the message of the Christian revelation on the other, and 'tries to correlate the questions implied in the situation with the answers implied in the message.'⁵ The answers are not derived from the questions, that is to say, Tillich would agree with Karl Barth that there is no way from man to God and that God must from his side reveal himself. But the questions are not derived from the answers, that is to say, Tillich would disagree with Barth's absolute denial of natural theology. Only if man is asking the question of God and therefore has some idea of God can the revelatory answer have any meaning for him. 'Natural theology was meaningful to the extent that it gave an analysis of the human situation and the question of God implied in it.'⁶

The question of God arises out of the human awareness of its own finitude. To be aware of finitude is already to have some idea of the infinite, the unconditioned, the

absolute. Finite being, surrounded, as it were, by non-being cannot escape the quest for the ultimate ground of being. This is the ultimate human concern. Of course, men and women have many concerns, and some of them may be elevated to false ultimates; the nation, or even success may be the thing which concerns an individual or group of individuals ultimately. But these ultimates are not genuinely ultimate, and to treat them as ultimate is a kind of idolatry. Tillich suggests that we can judge any pretention to ultimacy by asking if that which claims to be ultimate can be an object to us. If it can, it is not the genuine ultimate. The genuine ultimate must be something in which we ourselves participate, something which transcends the subject-object relationship and rises infinitely above all existent objects. This ultimate, which we can alone call 'God', is being itself.

In equating God with 'being itself', the 'ground of being', or the 'power of being', Tillich makes it quite clear that God is not any particular being or entity, not even the highest being, if by this is meant one being among others.⁷ Tillich's idea of God is therefore of the same order as Heidegger's idea of being, and Tillich would escape the

7. Tillich's usage is not always clear. For instance, when it is said that God is 'being itself' and also the 'ground of being', the word 'being' must be employed in two different senses; for 'being itself', as an ultimate, can have no ground, and the 'ground of being' must be interpreted as the 'ground of entities, or of particular beings', that is to say, the 'being itself' by participation in which any entity is. Still more obscure is the expression 'power of being'. Here there is a double ambiguity. The word 'being' has the ambiguity already noted, and in addition the genitive may be either subjective or objective, that is to say, it may mean either the 'power exerted by being' or the 'power to be'. Thus the expression could bear at least four different senses, though it is doubtful if they are all intelligible. Which sense is intended by Tillich the present writer will not venture to say.

5. *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, p. 8.

6. *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 15.

charge which Heidegger levels against Christian theology in general—that of making of God an entity.

Tillich's use of the idea of being has been repellent to many persons who otherwise find much to admire in his theology. For example, A. Garnett,⁸ who thought of Tillich as one of the more enlightened theologians of our time, took him to task for trying to find a philosophical basis for his theology by claiming that God is 'being itself', where 'being is taken to be some mysterious power to be'. Garnett suggests that had Tillich taken an elementary course in linguistic analysis he would have seen that his argument rests on a failure to understand the logic of the verb 'to be'—a verb which has, according to Garnett, a purely logical function, and refers to nothing even when used existentially. But surely this attack can be answered, in the same kind of way as Heidegger answered the similar attack on him by R. Carnap. When Tillich and Heidegger talk about 'being' and 'nothing' or 'non-being', these terms are not to be understood in their abstract logical signification. If they were, we would indeed land up in nonsense. The terms, rather, are to be understood in relation to the significance which they bear in human existence; in the experiences of anxiety and finitude, which bring the shock of possible non-being; and in the wonder for being which this shock awakens, the wonder that there is something and just nothing.

To say that God is being itself is the only univocal statement that can be made about God. 'After this has been said, nothing else can be said about God as God which is not symbolic.'⁹ We are not to despise symbolic language, which has a power of its own. It can open up new levels of reality by

pointing beyond itself to that in which the symbol participates. Since God is the ground and structure of being, and things finite participate in this being, they can serve as symbols for God. Yet even the most adequate symbols fall short of the reality which they symbolize, and must be both affirmed and denied at the same time, in the clear understanding of their symbolic character. Otherwise the symbols themselves can be made ultimate, and in that case they are idolized and given a demonic character. We can speak of God as personal, living, just, loving, but in each case the being of God transcends the symbol employed.

Symbols occur in the context of myths or stories of the gods. Myth is in fact the language of ultimate concern, and Tillich states that 'Christianity speaks the mythological language like any other religion.'¹⁰ Just as symbols are to be understood in their symbolic character, so myths are to be deprived of their literal significance and understood as myths—they are to be 'broken', in Tillich's expression. In this sense he agrees on the need for demythologizing, but he claims that we cannot dispense with the mythical form or substitute some other kind of language for it. The important thing is that we should not take our symbols literally, so making ultimate something less than ultimate.

In revelation, being itself grasps us and manifests itself to us. Revelation does not work against reason, but rather raises reason to an ecstatic level on which the subject-object relationship is overcome. Tillich recognizes a wider revelation which, for the Christian, is preparatory to the final revelation in Jesus as the Christ. Jesus sacrifices himself, the particular manifestation, to become the Christ, interpreted by Tillich in typically ontological fashion

⁸. Born in Australia and lectured in Adelaide before proceeding to the U.S.A. where he was professor in the University of Wisconsin.

⁹. *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, p. 265.

¹⁰. *Dynamics of Faith*, p. 54.

as the 'new being'. The new being is the power from beyond man that heals his existential conflicts and overcomes his sin, understood as his estrangement from himself, from others, and from his ground. Thus the new being manifested in Christ answers the human ultimate concern and man's quest for the ground of being.

The importance of Tillich's theology may be discerned in the context of other existentialist theologians.¹¹ The demythologizing and the existential interpretation of the New Testament story, as advocated by Bultmann and Gogarten, indeed makes sense of many things that had become unintelligible. But, as the direction in which Buri moved shows, existential interpretation by itself might lead to the transformation of the Christian religion into something hardly distinguishable from a humanistic ethic. It is here that Tillich's emphasis on ontological rather than exis-

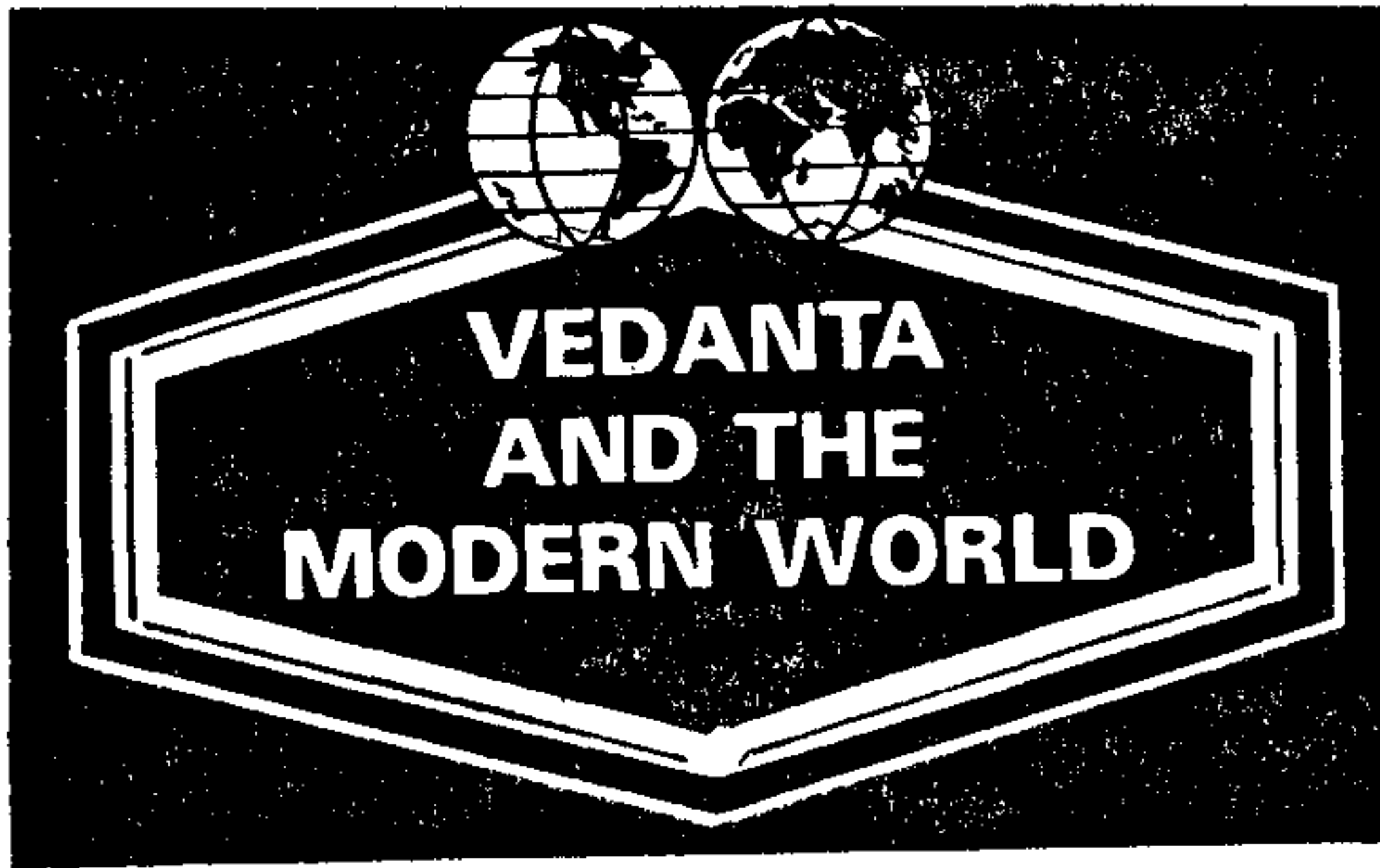
tential interpretation is important. Tillich restores what Bultmann's stress on ethical and personal categories tends to lose—the suprapersonal and suprarational depth of God, as experienced in the whole mystical tradition of religion. Ontological interpretation here does not mean the construction of a new metaphysical system, but it does mean indicating the place of the idea of God on the ontological map—namely, as the correlate of human existential awareness of finitude, as being itself beyond any possible entity. The idea of God, however, remains only an idea or a possibility until it is filled in by God's manifesting himself in a revelatory experience. By pointing out the existential and ontological connection, Tillich brings us to the point where, in the light of all our experience, we decide either that being is gracious to us—basically the religious experience, or that being is alien to us and we are cast entirely on the slender resources of humanity—the atheist or humanist experience.

11. Particularly R. Bultmann, F. Gogarten, and F. Buri.

(Continued from page 301)

man is not his psycho-biological existence; he is a living spirit. He is neither a political creature nor an economic being. He is not a slave of any system, creed or dogma; he is not a puppet or robot. Materialism, psycho-analysis and behaviourism present a distorted picture of man. Now, if we really wish to bring about a real and radical change in the patterns of thought and behaviour, so as to make our life meaningful and purposive, then our educational system must be galvanized with a conscious recognition of the spiritual end of human life. Life becomes complete only when there is an awareness of the spiritual dimension

of man. To sum up: the ultimate aim of education is the all-round and harmonious development of man's inner potentialities and capacities, so as to foster an integrated spiritual personality by training an individual in the art of civilized living and behaviour. This wholesome ideal must be infused into the principles and practices of our system of education so that we can do away with the worn-out system of education which we have inherited as a legacy of the past colonial rule. In this confused age of conflicting standards, a system of meaningful and man-making education is what is most needed.



IS VEDANTA A PHILOSOPHY OF ESCAPE?—XV

DR. VINITA WANCHOO

(Continued from the previous issue)

QUIETISM AND ITS CAUSES (continued)*

Quietism and mokṣa

The critic objects to Vedāntic *mokṣa* because it results not in the redemption of society but in the use of society as a means of fulfilling a selfish purpose. The present-day ideals of religious leaders are solidarity, collectivism, common life, so much so that the salvation of individual souls is reduced to a by-product of social welfare, in which the individual 'comes out of himself'.¹ But all religious traditions are agreed in regarding the social order as subservient to the suprahuman goal, and redemption as not being effected merely by the human means of science, socialism or even universal love of the human type. The charge of neglect of social aims and ethics does not trouble a Vedāntin. His spiritual goal of *mokṣa* takes full care of the social view. Social welfare, though not his motivating force as it is of the modern critic, is not neglected by him, being a part of his training; and minimization of social engagements is for the sake of acquiring a wider outlook. The

'individualism' of *mokṣa* is essential because the saved man of Vedānta (*sthitaprajña*, *jīvanmukta*, *jñāni*) has a direct personal relation to God, and not as a member of a group. He regards the social (institutional and ritualistic) aspect as conventional and not ultimate. But² Vedāntic history most decisively contradicts the opinion that he is a lonely soul wholly absorbed in his vertical relation to God and opposed to corporate religion. On the contrary, social life provides the environment in which he lives, though conformity to creeds and rituals is considered unimportant. Demands and restrictions of the community (*dharma*) have not been neglected and the richest and most fruitful mystical experiences have often arisen within the field of traditional religion; that is, the Vedāntic yogi is the summit of a pyramid whose base is firmly fixed on the earth. Having made the above point, it is still important to remember that Vedānta makes a clear distinction:

To be useful to society after God-realization or to desire social good for one's own spiritual advancement is one thing; to deny or to forget Him by being fired with the enthusiasm of social consciousness is another thing ... to say that society affords scope for cultivation of moral

* Under this heading in the previous instalment, the charge of quietism made by critics against Vedānta was discussed in relation to Vedānta mysticism.

1. Josiah Royce, *The Source of Religious Insight*, pp. 56-59.

2. The following conclusions of Evelyn Underhill in *Studies in Mysticism*, pp. 25-26, apply in toto to vedānta mysticism.

virtues is one thing and to say that the whole content of virtue is due to social relations only is another.³

An ancient Vedāntin's rejoinder to his modern critic could well be that the latter's obsession with the material and social instead of the spiritual and individual, his idea of work as only productive work aimed at the profit of self and others—in other words his obsession with social outlook and constant compulsive activity combined with a total incapacity for prayer, worship, meditation and recreation of the soul—is also a symptom of alienation from man's proper function.⁴

In practice, the Vedāntic *sādhaka* has not consciously sought to exceed social and personal responsibilities, and on attaining the end he could not but help all those who have come in contact with him, spiritually and socially, either actively or passively, according to his temperament.⁵ William James holds that saintly character consists in the feeling of being in a wider field than that of the world's selfish interest, a sense of friendly continuity of some ideal power within our life and willing surrender to it, an immense elation and freedom as confining selfhood melts away, a shifting of the emotional centre towards love and harmonious affections, towards 'yes, yes' rather than 'no' in regard to others.⁶ And the practical consequences of this development of character—in the form of asceticism and soul-enlargement which results in a newfound patience and fortitude, purity, charity, tenderness, brotherly love and humility—are results not only of theistic

Christianity but also of Stoicism, Vedānta and Buddhism.⁷

In the light of the above, the charges of 'individualism' against the Vedāntic conception of *mokṣa*, and of selfish enjoyment of the bliss of mystic unity at the cost of the neglect of moral and social duties against Vedāntic mysticism, are seen to be far from the truth. If such negative results sometimes occurred, this was a perversion and not the essential character of Vedāntic mysticism or *mokṣa*, and no idea should be judged by its perversions, which are really due to human weaknesses.⁸ It is not denied that abuses of the type criticized have resulted in Vedānta, but this was due to the fact that the conceptions of *mokṣa* and mysticism in Vedānta became more popular than in the West, and, hence, more in danger of being 'stereotyped and vulgarized'. But this disadvantage and defect was offset by the ideal manifestation of these ideals in the lives of a large number of leading representatives of Vedānta.

PSYCHOLOGY AND VEDANTA

We are now in a position to turn back our attention to the psychological theories of escapism.⁹ The father of psychoanalysis declares religion to be a delusional transformation of reality attempted by mankind to obtain the assurance of happiness.¹⁰ This judgement on the general character of religion, which might be extended to apply to philosophy also, has been implicitly rejected in the interpretation of Vedānta

3. V. H. Date, *The Yoga of the Saints*, pp. 6, 74.

4. Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, p. 106.

5. John Levy, *Nature of Man According to Vedānta*, p. 100; cf. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 129.

6. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 266ff.

7. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 274; we must, James says, consider these ethical monsequences not subordinate but coordinate parts of that great spiritual excitement.

8. Cf. S. N. Dasgupta, *Indian Mysticism*, Introduction, p. vii.

9. See the instalments in the March and April 1980 issues.

10. See Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 32, 42.

given in this article. The Vedāntic emphasis on the value of truth being determined by its consistency with all means of knowledge—the mutual consistency of reason, perception and revelation—which rejects denial of experienced things as totally false, is a far cry from the neurotic method of denying reality by building up a fanciful picture of a more satisfying reality. More specifically, the doctrines of karma and *punarjanma* (rebirth) operating in the context of Māyāvāda may be charged with encouraging this type of escapism; for it may be said that the misery and despair resulting from the inexorability and inescapability of these laws of *samsāra* cause the philosopher, in his impatience and desperation, to jump to the conclusion of the unreality of the world, which is nothing but escape into phantasy. However, the charge does not hold. It was shown earlier how the Māyāvādin has been theoretically and practically able to establish contact with and to cope with conventional reality, especially by the help of the doctrine of levels of reality. As for the inexorable law of karma, Vedānta does not suggest escape from it by running away physically to the end of the world, or by the despairing device of suicide, or by any neurotic process, but by a very real discipline to increase the element of spirit (Ātman) in the empirical man until all separative impulses cease. It accepts the psychological truth that all men live for the self, but its standard of judgement of man's development is the *size* of the self man lives for.

The psychologist interprets asceticism as an expression of hostility against life and self. Unable to satisfy his instincts due to the thwarting conditions of life, the individual seeks to control or to destroy his instincts and even the will to live, either literally or figuratively, and this is escape by withdrawing from or avoidance of thoughts, feelings and situations which cause pain. But this is certainly a very inadequate

explanation of the spirit and even the practice of Vedāntic asceticism. In the neurotic method of withdrawal, hostility towards life and the world is the result of a chronic sense of unfulfilment caused by adverse social and individual conditions; and such thwarting of life, in turn, results in blocking the realization of all potentialities because inner security and spontaneity are lacking.¹¹

In the Vedāntic way of life the relation of sannyāsa to the other three *āśramas* is based on the psychological truth that the social function of the individual does not wholly coincide with his human function.¹² From the standpoint of the social function, the normal person is one who fills the social role, does what society requires of him, participates in the reproduction of society. From the individual standpoint, normalcy means an optimum of individual growth and happiness. Vedāntic realism is evidenced in its accepting that in actual societies both functions do not coincide. Hence, in the three *āśramas* the 'normal' person is allowed to give himself wholly to social values. Sannyāsa, far from being the neurotic outcome of the thwarting of life's instincts by external conditions, is the logical next step following after a life fully lived, in which the individual is given the opportunity for the pursuit of individual and human (i.e. spiritual) values. Pursuit of spirituality is possible only with quiet and aloneness. Unlike neurotic withdrawal which is a perverse destruction of life, real or figurative, resulting in impoverishment of the individual, the withdrawal of sannyāsa is rendered essential by the rhythm of life required for contemplation, study, remaking of thoughts and attitudes (*śravaṇa*, *manana*), etc. Though Vedāntic asceticism requires

11. Erich Fromm, *Fear of Freedom*, pp. 154-59; cf. Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanism of Defence*, p. 111.

12. Fromm, *Fear of Freedom*, p. 118.

the fullest control of impulses and desires, its insistence on the limitation of external and internal needs and withdrawal from social relations is manifestly not dictated by desire to avoid hurt or disappointment, but by the positive ideal it pursues. This is proved by the enrichment of powers resulting in the Vedāntin's assumption of spiritual leadership in society.

There is a type of religious faith which is spurious in nature, being the outcome of the escapist attitude, and prompted by doubt or weakness; it has a compensatory quality.¹³ It has been said :

[Luther] was filled with the feeling of aloneness, powerlessness, wickedness, but at the same time with a passion to dominate. He was tortured by doubts constantly seeking for ... inner security. He hated others ... he hated himself, he hated life. His whole being was permeated by fear, doubt, inner isolation. ... Compulsive quest for certainty was not the expression of genuine faith, but rooted in the need to conquer unbearable doubt.¹⁴

Without accepting this psychological analysis of Luther's state of mind as correct or final, it can at least be said that such a description would not apply to Vedāntic mentality at all. There is no hint in the religion and philosophy of Vedānta of its faith being a 'reaction-formation' against a sense of fundamental doubt arising from the feeling of isolation of the individual. In fact, the truly representative Vedāntic faith is an expression of inner harmony and certainty and relatedness to all being, hence implicitly, affirmatory of life.

Mysticism is psychologically interpreted by critics as a method of escape in which relief from weakness is sought by reducing the self to nothingness in subjection to some power much greater than the individual. Mystical Vedānta's aim of self-mergence in

a greater entity or becoming one with Ātman or God (as illustrated in the common similes of river and sea, salt and water), while overcoming the limitations of the individual self and offering great consolation and gratification, also results, the critics claim, in loss of freedom, submission to fate, worship of the past, of what has been and will eternally be. Thus the critic would have it that the mystic lacks faith in life and denies it. But the psychological explanation of the mystic mentality as escape through the method of 'authoritarianism' does not do justice to its spiritual dimension. No doubt from the point of view of modern psychology the loss of the sense of personality is a grave defect, amounting to abnormality. But it is possible to argue that the 'liberation from *principium individuationis*' which psychology fights shy of, is, in the spiritual sense, the precondition of a new and deeper sense of freedom. Far from adopting the method of escaping responsibility for deciding the meaning of life and personal existence, the Vedāntic mystic is engaged in the very arduous task of discovering this truth for himself.

Psychology itself supports this possibility. It admits that the 'normal' individual has really ceased to be his real self by conforming to the pattern of culture personality.¹⁵ By conformity to the social norm the discrepancy of the self and the world is made to disappear, the individual loses his sense of isolation and resulting fear. The proof of this is the rarity of true individuality, or free thinking and acting and feeling in the majority of people. The process by which this socialization or 'loss of individuality' or 'loss of ability to think, act and feel' occurs is education, example, injunction and subtle suggestion. The 'normal' individual, as the psychologist admits, has really replaced his original self by a pseudo self,

13. Ibid., p. 56.

14. Ibid., p. 66.

15. Cf. Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Times*, p. 14.

leading to the loss of identity.¹⁶ Here we have not only psychological evidence for the Vedāntic doctrine of *adhyāsa* of the object over the true subject, but also for the doctrine of Ātman or the true self, the mystic realization of which alone constitutes true selfhood and freedom.

In conclusion, it may be repeated that to disentangle the theoretical cause of the alleged escapism of the Indian mind from the other causes is no easy task. The seeming truth of the charge of 'escapism' constituted by passivity, impracticality, asceticism, may be explained by the lack of strong and successful organization of social and

political life in India during recent centuries, by the failure to make full use of her material resources, and by her backwardness in science and technology as compared to the West, as well as by the failure to meet the needs of changing times by social and political reforms.¹⁷ If these failures and defects constitute 'escapism' then it must be remembered that the influence of Vedāntic philosophy, throughout this long period of depression, has in fact served to keep the emotion, intellect and spirit of the Indian people from sinking too low.

(Concluded)

¹⁶. Erich Fromm, *Fear of Freedom*, pp. 159ff.

¹⁷. S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, p. 105.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

To Mrs. G. W. Hale

28

Hotel Bellevue
Beacon Street, Boston
19 September 1894

Dear Mother,

The huge packet received. It was a few pamphlets sent over to me from my monastery in Calcutta. No news at all about the phonograph. I think it is high time we make them inquire into it.

The two volumes of Todd's history of Rajasthan have been presented to me by Mrs. Palmer.⁵⁹ I have asked her to send it over to your care. The babies will like reading it very much, and after they finish I will send it over with my Sanskrit books to Calcutta.

I did not ask you to send me the typewritten news clippings at all, but a little slip I sent over some time ago from the *Indian Mirror*. Perhaps it did not reach you at all. You need not send the typewritten thing at all.

I do not require any clothes here; there are plenty of them. I am taking good care of my cuffs and collars, etc. I have more clothes than are necessary. Very soon I will have to disburse myself of half of them at least.

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

⁵⁹. A society woman of Chicago who had been active at the Parliament of Religions, where she had first made the Swami's acquaintance.

I will write to you before I go to India. I am not flying off without giving you due intimation.

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA

P.S.—My love to Babies and Father Pope.⁶⁰

29

Hotel Bellevue
Beacon Street, Boston
24 September 1894

Dear Mother,

I have not heard from you a long while. I am still in Boston and will be a few days more.

I am afraid the phonograph has not reached India at all, or something is the matter with it. Kindly ask Mr.—— [sic] to inquire. The receipt is with you on which they will inquire.

Ever affectionately yours,
VIVEKANANDA

30

Hotel Bellevue
Beacon Street, Boston
27 September 1894

Dear Mother,

The bundles all came safely. One was newspapers from India. The other was the short sketch of my Master published by Mr. Mazumdar long ago. In the later bundle there are two sexto or pamphlets. One, my Master's sketch; the other a short extract to show how what Mr. [Keshab] Chandra Sen and [Pratap Chandra] Mazumdar preached as their 'New Dispensation' was stolen from my Master's life. The latter therefore you need not distribute, but I hope you will distribute my Master's life to many good people.

I beg you to send some to Mrs. Guernsey, Fishkill on the Hudson, N.Y.; Mrs. Arthur Smith and Mrs. Phillips, 19 West 38th Street, New York, both. To Mrs. Bagley, Annisquam, Mass., and Prof. J. Wright, Professor of Greek, Harvard, Mass.⁶¹

The newspapers you may do whatever you like, and I hope you will send any newspaper scrap you get about me to India.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA

⁶⁰. 'Babies' refers to Mary and Harriet Hale, the daughters of Mrs. Hale, and 'Father Pope' was the nickname Swamiji had given to her husband George W. Hale.

⁶¹. All of those named in this paragraph were close friends of the Swami who had helped him in various ways during different periods.

31

c/o Mrs. Ole Bull
168 Brattle Street
Cambridge, Mass.
5 October 1894

Dear Mother,

I have not heard from you long. Have you received the huge packages I sent over to you? Have you heard anything about the phonograph from the express office?

I will be with Mrs. Ole Bull⁶² a few days and then I go to New York to Mrs. Guernsey.

Yours ever affly.,
VIVEKANANDA

32

c/o Mrs. Ole Bull
168 Brattle Street
Cambridge, Mass.
10 October 1894

Dear Mother,

Received two letters from you and a large number from India but none from Khetri.

I am sorry the sisters⁶³ have got bad cold and more sorry for your getting worried over it. Nothing can make a Christian worry. I hope Narasimha⁶⁴ will be a good boy this time forth. Sister Mary is coming to Boston, good. I am going off from here tomorrow to Baltimore. I had enough to pay all my expenses here, and since I am living with Mrs. Bull there is no expense. She is a rich and highly cultured lady. She has given me \$500 for my work or anything I like. As I am not going west very soon, I will have a bank account here in Boston. From Philadelphia I go to Washington and then I will run between New York and Boston. So I do not think I will be able to see you, except perhaps Sister Mary. I want so very much that Mary will see Mrs. Bull and others of my friends here. I have the fat of the land as usual and my dinner is cooking very well both here and in India. Do not make it public, Mother, that is between you and me and the babies, and do not worry yourself about anything. All things come to him that waits. I am going to send greater part of the money I have got to India and then money will come faster. I have always found that the faster I spend the faster it comes. Nature abhors a vacuum. I am in very good spirits, only you must not stop keeping me informed about yourself, Babies and Father Pope from time to time. Perhaps

⁶². Mrs. Sara Thorp Bull, widow of the famous Norwegian violinist Ole Bull, who became one of the Swami's staunchest friends and supporters in the West.

⁶³. Mary and Harriet Hale.

⁶⁴. A luckless South Indian gentleman who had made the Swami's acquaintance at the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893, since which time he had called on the Swami for help—mainly financial—whenever he got into trouble.

you remember the two letters that came from Mysore—I want one of those envelopes with the Mysore King's seal on the outside, to be sent to Miss Phillips, 19 West 38th Street, New York.

I cannot go to New York now nor to Chicago, although I had a number of invitations and offers from both the places. I must see now the capital and the other cities. I am in His Hands. If Miss Mary be in Boston sometime I may hope to see her.

I am glad that Narasimha was never fast. Hope he will never be.

From India they always write me to come, come, come. They do not know the secret. I am acting more from here than I will ever do from there.

Kindly send my letters to this address and they will reach me safe wherever I be. This will be one of my homes when I am in Boston.

Lord bless you all, dear Mother:

Yours ever affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA

33

[Washington, D.C.]
[27 October 1894]

Dear Mother,

I received your very kind note and all the India letters just now. I will make it a point to see Mrs. Whitland. I have been very kindly treated by Mrs. Totten.

Will you kindly [order] for a 100 photographs to Harrison and send them over to India to Ramdayal Chakravarty, c/o Swami Ramakrishnananda, Varahanagar Math, Alambazar, Calcutta? I will pay it when I come to Chicago.

I have nothing especial to write except I had good treatment everywhere. How I long to give up this life of weariness and blazoning day and night.

I will go from here to New York and will come back to see you in Chicago before I start for England.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA

34

Baltimore, Md.
3 November 1894

Dear Mother,

I do not know what to say about this phonograph business. It takes six months to go to India!! and the company cannot get an inquiry in another six months!!! American express indeed!! Well, however, they are bound to make good my money. Mother, do not lose the receipt of the express company.

I am going to New York as soon as possible.

Yours affly,
VIVEKANANDA

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

REBUILD INDIA : BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. Published by The Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission Convention 1980, Belur Math, Howrah, West Bengal, 711 202. 1980. Pp. vii+57. Re. 1.

Swami Vivekananda had a definite plan for the rejuvenation of India. His deep study of history, firsthand knowledge of the masses and his prophetic intuition about the future enabled him to diagnose correctly the causes of India's degeneration and suggest remedial measures. These socio-cultural ideas of Swamiji lie scattered in his works. The present compilation brings together most of these important ideas. Its value would have been greater if it had carried an introduction knitting together the different ideas into an outline for a cogent philosophy of work. However, the Foreword by Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj fulfils this need to some extent. This little book should be in the hands of every Indian student and social worker.

THE MAN-MAKING GOSPEL OF VIVEKANANDA : COMPILED BY SWAMI JYOTIRMAYANANDA. Published by the author. Distributor: V. Rangarajan, Director, Sister Nivedita Academy, 118 Big Street, Madras 600 005. 1980. Pp. xvi+87. Rs. 3.

The core of this book consists of two chapters entitled 'The Rousing Call' and 'His Message of Practical Spirituality'. The former brings together some of the life-giving ideas of Swami Vivekananda on the potential divinity of man and the need for manifesting it in one's own life. The other chapter contains some thoughts of Swamiji on religion and society. To this the author has added a brief introduction and a very short vignette on Swamiji. A choice of tributes paid to Swamiji by some eminent men has also been appended. A handy little book for mass distribution.

P.B.

THE FOUR YOGAS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : CONDENSED AND RETOLD BY SWAMI TAPASYANANDA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 600 004. 1979. Pp. 273. Rs. 10.

Students of Swami Vivekananda are inspired and elevated by his classical formulation of the four Yogas and accept it with deep fervour. But they are apt to miss their philosophical substance, for the very grandeur of the presentation does not lend itself to an easy intellectual grasp of the logical cogency and power of the revelation imparted. The matchless orations of the great Swamiji enshrine a gospel of action which could

enliven the contemporary society, a psychological training matching the requirements of modern mysticism, a devotionism that could deepen and foster all religious traditions and a version of Vedanta that could overshadow any philosophy of modern idealism. In short, in the four Yogas of Swami Vivekananda Hinduism ceases to be merely a matter of anthropological interest but takes on the vitality of a living doctrine capable of leading the modern man to an immensely enriched future and spiritual creativity.

An analysis and clear exposition of the philosophical substance of the four Yogas of Swami Vivekananda have been a long-standing need. The work of Swami Tapasyananda meets this demand magnificently. It condenses the Yogas into their philosophical essentials, exhibiting the links of thought and rounding them off into coherence and completeness. It abounds in extracts from the profoundest and most telling passages from Swamiji. It is both a selection and an elucidation. We are face to face with the spiritual personality of Swami Vivekananda in his intellectual dimension. It is to be hoped that the book will be received as well as it richly deserves and make Swami Tapasyananda come out soon with the other promised volumes in the projected 'Studies in Swami Vivekananda' series. The book is underpriced.

DAKSHINAMURTI STOTRA OF SANKARACHARYA. Published by Samata Books, 10 Kamaraj Bhavan, Madras 600 006. 1970. Pp. 223. Rs. 25.

The book under review is a revised and enlarged edition of what was first published in 1899, almost a hundred years ago. It contains two minor works of Sri Sankaracharya, *Dakshinamurti Stotra* and *Panchikarana*, and an Upanishad called *Dakshinamurty-upanishad*. The first two have verse commentaries by Sri Sureswaracharya. The publication carries an illuminating and ample Introduction and the three texts and the two commentaries are translated accurately in very elegant English, with short explanatory notes where necessary. The scholar who brought out this publication was Sri Alladi Mahadeva Sastry, who had to his credit the translations of Shankara's commentary on the *Gita* and that on *Taittiriya Upanishad*. He was a great pioneer in Vedantic studies and his works stand to this day as unrivalled authorities. It is a commendable service to republish this inestimable book. The new edition is a solid volume, very neatly and faultlessly printed. Our abundant thanks are due

to the publishers, for giving us a book so nourishing in philosophy and so lovely in its format.

ADVAITA BODHA DEEPIKA (LAMP OF NON-DUAL KNOWLEDGE). Published by Sri Ramanasram, Tiruvannamalai, South India. 1979. Pp. 115. Rs. 4.

Sri Ramana Maharshi was the greatest Advaitin of recent times in the realm of realization. His Ashram has been bringing out valuable books containing his teachings, the works of the devotees on him and compact treatises on Advaita. The book under review belongs to the last category. It is an English rendering of the eight chapters of a Tamil translation of a Sanskrit manual of Advaita by Sri Karapatraswami in twelve chapters, in which he condensed the pure doctrine of Advaita. The remaining four chapters of the original work have not been traced. It seems Sri Ramana Maharshi had a special liking for this book. The available eight chapters deal with such important topics as *adhyāropa*, *apavāda*, *śravaṇa*, *manana*, etc. The whole treatise is in the form of a series of questions and answers. The work is short but it compresses within itself the entire wisdom of nondualism. The English work is captivating in its style and method of discourse. The book is well-produced and deserves popularization.

PROF. S. S. RAGHAVACHAR
Head of the Dept. of Philosophy (Retd)
Mysore University

MUSIC OF THE SPHERES: BY GUY MURCHIE. Published by Rider and Company, 3, Fitzroy Square, London W1P 6JD. 1979. Pp. xi+644. £ 8.75.

This is Rider and Company's reprint of Guy Murchie's popular book on modern physical science. Many others, including great scientists like Eddington, Jeans and Gamow, have distinguished themselves in the field of popularizing physics and astronomy. Their attempt is mainly to simplify and make intelligible and interesting to lay readers the abstruse principles of modern physical science. Guy Murchie differs from them all. He is a writer with a distinct genre and a holistic view of life. His purpose is to expound a philosophy in which stars and planets, atoms and molecules, waves and particles, matter, mind and spirit, all get mashed into a homogeneous Reality pulsating through time and space. A kind of nature-mysticism flavours Murchie's treatment of his subject and this is what makes this book unique.

The contents of the book have been divided into two sections: (1) 'Moons of rock and suns of fire' and (2) 'Fields in space and deeps in time'—the author's characteristic way of describing the macrocosm and the microcosm respectively. In the first section the reader is first of all taken out from the breathing earth 'into the stomach of space' and introduced to the history of space travel. The third chapter is devoted to the moon and the fourth to the other planets—'those mystic sibling worlds called Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn'. The next chapter deals with those 'gadflies of the void'—asteroids, comets and meteors. Then the sun, 'the ancient father of our world', is introduced in another chapter. The next two chapters survey the stars of the Milky Way and the other galaxies.

After wandering in the wilderness of macro-space, the reader is then taken, through the second section, into the womb of the micro realm. He is first allowed a hurried look at atoms, the strange emptiness of their interior, the electrons whirling there, the nucleus, etc. Then follows a startling jump into 'energy is matter is energy' with the sacrosanct Mantra of modern physics: $E=mc^2$. One sees there the subatomic zoo of elementary particles. The inescapable quantum now enters the scene, and there unfolds the exciting story of fields, fission and fusion. In chapter 11 the reader listens to 'waves and music'. The next chapter is devoted to light and colour where, among a variety of interesting topics, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle is introduced. The immemorial question of 'space and time' is taken up in the thirteenth chapter which contains a very readable account of basic relativistic principles. The concluding chapter (14) or 'Sinews of Reality' is indeed a fitting finale wherein the author speculates with gay abandon, throwing calculation and caution to the winds, which is perhaps an important way to stumbling upon truth.

Guy Murchie deserves to be congratulated on the richness of the book's contents. Indeed, it is amazing how so much matter could be squeezed into a book of this size. The reviewer has only two negative comments to make. One is that the author should have provided extensive references, and should have more liberally acknowledged his indebtedness to other writers, especially Eddington. Secondly, some of the more recent milestones in the conceptual revolution of this century should have found their place in a book of this magnitude. Einstein's attempted Unified Field Theory, Quantum Field Theory (QFT) and the concept

of field quantization, non-linear physics and Einstein's belief that this would provide a viable alternative to the QFT, the concept of internal symmetries (quarks with colour, charm, flavour, etc.) in the context of elementary particles, unification of weak and electromagnetic interaction by Glashow-Salam-Weinberg, relativistic quantum mechanics, some of the fascinating relativistic paradoxes like the twin-paradox, the apparent visual shape of relativistically moving bodies (about which Weisskopf, Terrel and other eminent physicists are excited), the Indian-born scientist E. C. G. Sudarshan's speculations on faster-than-light particles (the 'tachyons'), the hotly discussed magnetic poles and black holes—the inclusion of these topics would have made the book more fascinating, useful and relevant in the rapidly changing contemporary world.

However, the book as it stands contains enough material to engage the attention of even a specialist in theoretical physics, while the non-specialist reader will find the book a fascinating introduction to physical science. All alike will feel thrilled as Guy Murchie like a strange magician unravels layer after layer of the mysterious laws of this vast universe. Throughout the book the reader can hear the echo of Pythagoras' words: 'There is geometry in the humming of the strings. There is music in the spacing of the spheres.'

DR. JAYPEE, M.Sc., Ph.D.
Madras

THE TRIANGULAR PATTERN OF LIFE :
BY DONNA HITZ. Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016. 1979. Pp. xi+51. \$ 6.95.

Each of us is born, not into a harmonious world, but into a systemless chaos, a chaos of unrelated and uncomprehended sensations. Very soon, however, we learn to recognize certain sets of sensations as forming a whole, and in time we even learn names for these wholes: mama, papa, tree dog ... Thus come order and comprehension, which in turn bring a feeling of security and control. This learning process continues throughout the life of a human being. From the primitive man who asks of his elders about their tribe's crude mythology to the scientist inquiring into the secrets of atoms and galaxies, all men are seeking the same thing: standing in the midst of a confusing and seemingly chaotic world, they seek some order, some system on which the world is patterned, for order gives comprehension and comprehension gives power.

In its quest for comprehension, modern science

begins by accepting diversity as revealed by the senses, and slowly approaches unity by forming larger and larger generalizations. Another approach is the intuitive: to begin with the faith that there is a simple, basic pattern governing all the infinitely diverse phenomena; a pattern which, when known, will give us knowledge of nature in all its particularity. In China this type of inquiry led to the beautiful principle of yin-yang polarity and the *Book of Changes*; it led in India to the profound Samkhya cosmology and the *triguna* doctrine.

Donna Hitz has followed the second or intuitive approach in *The Triangular Pattern of Life*. She looked at the regular alternating pattern of our breathing, the rotation of the earth and its revolution about the sun, the cycling of the seasons ... and found that 'all are identical in character—all occur in rhythms originating in polarity.' Thus she discovered that all truths of life are written in two eternal laws: the laws of polarity and rhythm. She gives graphic structure to these two laws in the form of a triangle, the two sides of which are the positive and negative poles of any given polarity, and the base (which is broken in the middle) representing rhythm, that is the rhythmic interaction between the two poles.

'Approached from any direction, from any point of view or from any level—from the densest matter to the rarest intuitive qualities of mind—the triangular life pattern remains the same; only the point of reference changes.'—This is the main theme of her small book, and she proceeds to demonstrate it by exposing the triangular pattern as it underlies atoms and energy, mind, emotions, self, God, life and death, eternity and time, unity and diversity ... and even the polarity of the very laws of rhythm and polarity. Her discussion of the triangular life pattern carries over into a discussion of its ethical and religious ramifications.

Donna Hitz's treatment of the triangular pattern of life, though reminiscent of China's age-old yin-yang doctrine, is significantly fresh and original. However, we cannot accept all of her statements and claims. For example, she says that an understanding of the two laws of polarity and rhythm will bring us 'liberation'—that is using an awfully big word for what one can actually expect from such understanding. She also moves further and further away from the safe ground of observation on which she began, into more and more airy speculations, but speculations to which she gives the form of undeniable absolute truths; and thus her 'pattern'—which she indeed calls the 'Absolute Truth'—begins to resemble a triangular Procrustean bed.

However, the book is sincere, and it does give insight into life and its basic structure. It makes a new contribution to man's quest for order and comprehension.

SWAMI ATMARUPANANDA
Mayavati

BENGALI

BHAKTI RATNAVALI: TRANSLATED BY SWAMI VEDANTANANDA. Published by Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ramakrishna Avenue, Patna 800 004. 1979. Pp. vi+170. Rs. 4.,

Bhakti Ratnāvali or 'the Necklace of Devotional Gems' is an anthology of devotional verses culled from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* by the ascetic poet Śrī Viṣṇupuri. He had selected these precious 'gems of devotion out of the ocean of the Bhāgavata' for 'the delectation of the Vaiṣṇavas'. He also wrote a commentary on the anthology known as 'Kantimala'. The date and details of the life of Śrī Viṣṇupuri cannot be easily ascertained. Some say that he was a contemporary of Śrī Caitanya. Others opine that he lived at least one and a half centuries before the saint of Bengal. Regarding his native place we find mention of Tirhut and Tarauni in the district of Muzaffarpur. He was a sannyasin of the Dasanāmi Order. According to Bengali tradition Viṣṇupuri was initiated by one Jaya Dharma of the Mādhva sect of Vaiṣṇavas. He intensively studied the *Bhāgavata* at Puri and compiled the *Bhakti Ratnāvali* either at Puri or Varanasi.

Bhakti Ratnāvali comprising about four hundred verses is divided into thirteen chapters or *viracanas* devoted to different aspects of devotion. These are : Bhakti Mahimā, Satsanga Mahimā Navadhā Bhakti, Śravaṇa, Kīrtana, Smaraṇa, Pādasevana, Arcana, Vandana, Dāsyā, Sakhya, Atmanivedana and Bhagavat Śaraṇāgati. It commences with five benedictory verses from the *Bhāgavata* and four verses by the compiler himself narrating the purpose of the anthology.

The volume under review is a Bengali translation of the anthology with Sanskrit text in Bengali script. No other Bengali edition is available at present. The *Bangabasi* edition published long back is out of print. Hindi and English editions were published from Vrindaban and Allahabad Panini Office respectively. The latter, a pseudonymous work originally published in 1918, has been reprinted from Delhi. Recently, a valuable English translation by Swami Tapasyananda has been published from Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

The translator of this Bengali version of *Bhakti Ratnāvali* is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, and is well known for his translation of *Vivekacūdāmani* and *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras*. The Bengali rendering follows the commentary of Śrīdhara Svāmī. It is lucid, faithful and highly readable. There are short introductory words before each *sloka* which help the reader to grasp the context. The Appendix containing the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna on *bhakti* is an additional attraction of this volume and is quite relevant to the context. Prose-order and word-for-word meaning of the *slokas* would have enhanced the value of the book. The 'Kantimala' commentary by Viṣṇupuri has not been included in this edition. There are some printing errors.

Printing, paper and get-up of the book are satisfactory. Price is moderate. The publication will be a valuable addition to our Bengali scripture catalogue.

SRI UDDHAVA GITA : TRANSLATED BY SWAMI VEDANTANANDA. Published by Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ramakrishna Avenue, Patna 800 004. 1979. Pp. vi+370+ii. Paper : Rs. 8 ; cloth : Rs. 10.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the *magnum opus* on devotion, is one of the most authoritative of the sacred books of the Hindus. Devotion as depicted here is not divorced from *jñāna*. It may be called *jñāna-misrā bhakti*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the central figure of this work. In the Eleventh Book (Skandha), the Lord on the eve of his departure from the world gives his last message to his beloved devotee Uddhava. This is known as *Uddhava Gītā*. The teachings 'comprise a variety of subjects but in and through all, the necessity of seeing the Lord in everything and living a life of self-surrender and non-attachment is passionately inculcated.' Within a short span of about one thousand *slokas* Śrī Kṛṣṇa gives Uddhava a complete epitome of the philosophy of *bhakti* in a synthetic as well as analytic way.

Uddhava Gītā corresponds to chapters six to twenty-nine of the Eleventh Book of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. It may be regarded as a companion volume to *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*.

This Bengali edition has been translated by Swami Vedantananda, renowned for his scriptural translations. Here the Bengali rendering, though not literal, is valuable, being based on the commentary of Śrīdhara Svāmī. It helps the reader to follow the meaning of the rather difficult *slokas*. Introductory notes and comments at the end of verses, wherever necessary, though short are very useful. The language is precise

and simple. The Appendix giving details of some Puranic characters, etc. is very useful. Printing and get-up are satisfactory. Prose-order with word-for-word meaning of the verses would be more useful to common readers, but the translator has dropped this method lest the volume should

become bulky. The errata is not complete.

The book is a valuable addition to the devotional literature of Bengal and certainly deserves the attention of religious-minded people.

SRI DULAL CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY
Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL REPORT FOR APRIL 1980 TO MARCH 1981

The Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, was started on 19 March 1899 by Swami Vivekananda in the Kumaon Hills of the Himalayas. In 1903 a small dispensary was started by the Ashrama in response to the dire need of the local villagers in sickness. Since that time the dispensary has developed into a fairly well-equipped, small rural hospital. The hospital stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is under the charge of a monastic member. A resident allopathic doctor treats the patients with the help of his assistants, and earnest efforts are made to maintain a high standard of efficiency in service. Moreover, all patients receive prompt and sympathetic treatment completely free of charge.

The hospital has 23 beds in the indoor department, but sometimes arrangements have to be made for more. There is also a small operation theatre. The total number of patients treated in the indoor department during the year was 347. In the outdoor department the total number of patients treated was 9,819, of which 5,316 were new and 4,503 were repeated cases.

Urgent requirements : (1) Utensils for the use of patients : Rs. 5,000. (2) Equipment for the operation theatre: Rs. 5,000. (3) Construction of a dormitory for the patients' attendants: Rs. 30,000. (4) Endowment for the purchase of medicines: Rs. 1,00,000. (5) Repayment of a Rs. 32,000 loan, which is mounting up year by year. Our appeal to charitably disposed individuals and institutions is to lend us their helping hand in a big way, so that the accumulated loan can be wiped out soon, and we shall have sufficient funds at our disposal to meet future requirements, particularly for the purchase of medicines which we wish to improve both qualitatively and quantitatively. Cheques and drafts may be drawn in favour of *Mayavati Charitable Hospital* and sent to the President, Mayavati Charitable Hospital, P.O. Mayavati, via Lohaghat Dist. Pithoragarh (U.P.), 262 524, India.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIVEKANANDA ASHRAMA, RAIPUR, M.P.

REPORT FOR APRIL 1979 TO MARCH 1980

Spiritual and cultural : Large crowds attended the Secretary's Sunday discourses and Ram-Nam Sankirtan on Ekadashi. The annual celebration of the Ashrama lasted for three-weeks around the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, and included various competitions for school and college students and public meetings with discourses by learned and eminent scholars. The celebrations drew a large crowd, ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 every day. During the year there were in all 70 public programmes, and the Secretary delivered 110 public lectures, both inside the Ashrama and outside on invitation.

With about 1,200 members, the library has approximately 23,000 books, and the free reading room makes available 112 periodicals and is used by nearly 200 readers daily. The number of books issued during the year was 26,699.

Vivek-Jyoti, a Hindi quarterly, is published by the Ashrama to spread the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda among the Hindi-knowing public. By the end of June 1980 the number of life-subscribers was 1,620 and annual subscribers more than 4,500.

Medical : The Ashrama runs two well-equipped charitable dispensaries, one allopathic and the other homoeopathic. More than 300 patients are treated daily by 13 eminent doctors in these dispensaries. During the year the allopathy branch treated 56,186 (19,073 new) cases, and the homoeopathic branch treated 29,084 (4,360 new) cases.

Needs : (1) Mobile Dispensary: Rs. 2,25,000. Permanent funds for the maintenance of: (2) temple, 1,50,000; (3) dispensaries, Rs. 2,00,000; (4) library and reading room, Rs. 1,00,000; (5) dairy, Rs. 50,000. Contributions may be sent to: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Ashrama, Great Eastern Road, Raipur 492-001 (M.P.).

LAST PAGE : COMMENTS

Protection of Himalayan Forests

Swami Vivekananda was fond of reciting the opening stanza of Kālidāsa's *Kumāra-saṁbhavam* :

अस्त्युत्तरस्यां दिशि देवतात्मा
हिमालयो नाम नगाधिराजः ।
पूर्वापरो तोयनिधी वगाह्य
स्थितः पृथिव्या इव मानदण्डः ॥

Ensouled by divinity stands the Himālaya, the king among mountains, in the northern direction. Encircled by two seas on the east and the west, there it stands as if it were the earth's measuring rod.

The Himalayas are not merely the 'abode of snow' but the abode of the gods. From time immemorial these mountain ranges have also served as a vast retreat ground for thousands of monks and holy men. And the glory of the Himalayas is not a little due to the magnificent forests that cover their foothills. But unless strong measures are taken on a massive scale, this glory will soon depart.

Reckless logging, overgrazing and human encroachment on forest land have considerably reduced the total area under actual forests. This has created serious ecological problems. Many people believe that the increase in the occurrence of floods in the plains of North India in recent years is linked to the destruction of mountain forests. In the Himalayan region itself deforestation is causing much hardship to the inhabitants of the area who depend on the forest for their livelihood. Landslides have now become more common. Firewood has become scarce. Water for drinking and irrigation is becoming less abundant. Many species of wild animals have almost disappeared. The worst problem of course is erosion. Everywhere in this area you can see barren brown hills deeply furrowed by gullies and canyons and other telltale signs of the havoc caused by erosion.

Fortunately, there are hopeful signs of awakening among the people of Uttarakhand. One of these is the *chipko* (hugging the trees) movement. Under the leadership of Chandi Prasad Bhatt and his Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh the hill people have started offering stiff resistance to the felling of trees in several places in Garhwal. From there the movement is slowly spreading to the Kumaon region. A noteworthy feature of the movement is the involvement of local women and college students in it.

However important these people's movements are, unless the Government takes drastic steps the present pace of destruction of forests cannot be checked. Reforestation programmes should be based on a multiple-use (forest products, wildlife preservation and watershed and erosion protection) concept of a 20- to 50-year rotation pattern for logging. It is also necessary to educate hill people regarding the importance of protecting trees (especially oaks) and help them turn to other sources of income like fruit culture.
