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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or all of these the Vision of the Paramatman is Obtained.

ADVAITA ASHRAMA

MAYAVATI, HIMALAYAS

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Prabuddha Bharata

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

तस्माद्यज्ञात्सर्वहुतः संभृतं पृषदाज्यं ।
पशून्तांश्चक्रे वायव्यानारण्यान्ग्राम्याश्च ये ।

1. From that [Virāt] Puruṣa[1], in whom the universal oblation was offered, the mixture of curds and butter was produced. [Then] he created[2] those animals which move in the air (birds), those which live in the forest (deer, etc.) and those which are in the village (cows, etc.).

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.8.

तस्माद्यज्ञात्सर्वंहुत ऋचः सामानि जज्ञिरे ।
छंदांसि जज्ञिरे तस्माद्यजुस्तस्मादजायत ॥

2. From that victim, in whom the universal oblation was offered, were produced *ṛks* and *sāmans*. From him the metres were born. From him was born *yajus*.

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.9.

तस्मादश्वा अजायंत ये के चोभयादतः ।
गावो ह जज्ञिरे तस्मात्तस्माज्जाता अजावयः ॥

3. From him were born horses and all those animals which have two rows of teeth (*ubhayādataḥ*). From him were born cows, goats and sheep.

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.10.

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* *Puruṣa-Sūkta* continued.

1. Sāyaṇa interprets *sarvahut* as 'the Purusa who is the self of all and who was sacrificed'. MacDonell interprets it as 'sacrifice completely offered', and Griffith, as 'great general sacrifice'.

2. According to MacDonell, the animals were manufactured out of *pṛṣadājyam* (clotted butter). But Sāyaṇa only says that *pṛṣadājyam* (mixture of curds and ghee) is the primary material for sacrifices.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

This month's EDITORIAL discusses how one's whole life could be converted into a *yajña*.

With the third instalment of GIRISH CHANDRA GHOSH, Swami Chetanananda concludes his inspiring biographical account of one of the most important and colourful members of the circle of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples.

In THE CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL FATHER/MOTHER Fr. Basil Pennington O.C.S.O. stresses the importance of personal direction in spiritual life and explores the possibility of introducing something like the Guru tradition into Catholic monasticism. The author is a widely-travelled, liberal-minded senior monk of the Cistercian Abbey of Spencer, Massachusetts, U.S.A., and has several books on prayer and monastic life to his credit.

STORY TELLING AND THE THEOLOGIAN'S CRAFT by Belden C. Lane is not only an interesting study of storytelling, but also provides a brilliant insight into the subtle processes involved in the formulation and communication of religious experience. The author is Associate Professor and Director of Historical Theology at St. Louis University, Saint Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.

Dr. Ramakrishna Rao Vetury, former Professor and Head of the Department of Applied Physics, Andhra University, discusses the relation between will and desire in the first instalment of his study THE WILL ACCORDING TO THE UPANISADS AND SCHOPENHAUER.

MEDITATION AND SACRIFICE—V

(EDITORIAL)

All life is yajña

To the Buddhist life is a soulless flux of sorrowful experiences; his goal is to overcome sorrow by extinguishing desire. To the Jñani life is a great illusion; his goal is to attain the transcendental Reality by destroying ignorance. To the lover of God life is the Lord's *lilā*, sport; his goal is to attain supreme Bliss by participating in the divine sport. To the Yogi all life is yoga; his goal is to attain supreme Consciousness by transforming his individual consciousness. To the worker all life is a *yajña*; his goal is the attainment of *ṛtam* or supreme harmony through self-sacrifice. Each of these views leads to certain experiences, provides a particular solution to the problem of life, and is true within its own conceptual framework. Each represents a unique philosophy of life developed by great sages. A spiritual aspirant may follow any of these paths which fits in with his temperament and capacity.

To attain success in any path one must transform one's whole life into it. In the path of Karma Yoga the main discipline is *yajña*. The meaning of this term has already been explained. The next question is how to convert one's whole life into a *yajña*.

Conversion of one's whole life into yajña

In order to convert one's whole life into *yajña* the following conditions are to be fulfilled.

First of all, one should understand the true nature of life.

Secondly, one should find one's actual place in life.

The third condition is the unification of work and meditation into an integral spiritual discipline.

The fourth condition is the opening of the individual life at all levels to the universal Life through the constant practice of meditative self-sacrifice.

The Philosophy of Yajña

From very ancient times philosophical speculation regarding the nature of life and the universe has taken two forms : one which regards the ultimate reality as an unchanging, undifferentiated substance or Being, *vastu* ; and the other which regards the ultimate reality as an ever-changing flux or Becoming. In Greek philosophy Parmenides represented the first view and Heraclitus represented the second view.

In India the distinction between Being and Becoming was never very clear during the Vedic period. But in the Upaniṣads the primary search is for the ultimate Being, Brahman, knowing which everything else is known. This search proceeded along two ways : the way of negation known as *'neti, neti'*, and the way of affirmation known as *'iti, iti'*. The former regards the world as the illusory transformation of Brahman whereas the latter regards it as a real transformation of Brahman. But according to both the ways, behind all change there is the primary unchanging substance, Brahman.

When we study the early parts of the Vedas, namely, the Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas, we find that the emphasis is more on understanding reality as an eternal flux, a process of Becoming. But the Vedic concept of flux differs sharply from that of the Greeks and of the Buddhists. The ancient Vedic seers looked upon the structure of reality as consisting of the macrocosm (*samaṣṭi*) and the microcosm (*vyaṣṭi*), and it was the constant exchange between these two that was regarded as Becoming. The paradigm or model that the Vedic seers used to describe this dynamic nature of reality was *yajña*, inadequately translated as 'sacrifice'. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (3.9.4.23.) derives the word *yajña* from *yan-ja*, 'that which is born or stretched out or going on'.

If everything were nothing but a flux, there would be nothing but chaos. But beneath all the change and transformation there is a fundamental harmony. There is a universal moral order governing the universe ; the Vedic seers called it *ṛta*. Its centre in the individual (microcosm) is the *dhī*, the spiritual heart. Man's present life is full of conflicts and suffering because he does not live in tune with *ṛta*. Man can recover harmony by awakening *dhī* and connecting it to *ṛta*. The primary purpose of *yajña* is to establish this contact—to open the individual spiritual centre to universal consciousness. Thus *yajña* was the Yoga of Vedic seers.

After the Vedic period, the doctrine of flux or Becoming was revived by Buddhism which replaced the concept of *ṛta* with that of *dharma*. But Buddhism denied the validity of the Vedas and the sacrificial nature of life, and that was why it lost its hold in India. With the decline of Buddhism, the Mimamsakas tried to rejuvenate the Vedic doctrine in a modified way. Though Śaṁkara's Advaita is supposed to be built on the Mimamsaka foundation, the two views never got properly integrated.

What Swami Vivekananda tried to develop through his philosophy of service was an integral view of life which combines the Upaniṣadic and the earlier Vedic views. Its main tenets are three : divinity of life, the Law of Sacrifice, and levels of consciousness.

The Vedic sages regarded the whole universe as a single living organism, a vast and intricate and unceasingly changing and interacting system of vital energy known as Prāna, continuously streaming forth from Brahman but is also pervaded by it, the two

being related to each other like body and soul. The universe as the living body of Brahman is called Virāj, and Brahman as the immanent Self and informing Spirit is called Antaryāmin. What we call 'life' is only a special way these two are interrelated.

When we accept the divinity of all life, our whole attitude towards it changes. First of all, we realize that it is intensely real, and not an illusion, for illusion cannot come out of reality. The positive way to ultimate Truth is not from illusion to reality, but from lower reality to higher Reality. Secondly, we realize that all life is one. Beneath the apparent diversity and contradictions there runs the stream of universal Life, and all physical and mental activities are only ripples of the main stream. When we understand this, the sacred and the secular, work and meditation, and other polarities of life get harmonized. Thirdly, we realize that the essential nature of life is goodness. The fundamental aim of life is to sustain living beings and lead them to the highest perfection through a series of stages. What appears as evil is only the manifestation of the essential goodness of life at a lower level, a necessary adjustment in the overall economy of universal Life.

Lastly, we realize that life is a self-perpetuating, self-sustaining, self-regulating power. We do not either create or maintain life. All work is done by universal Life. Hence egoism, that is, the claim of the individual to be the doer is a form of illusion. It is the unnecessary struggle for the existence of the ego, manifesting itself as greed and competition that is the main cause of conflicts, stress and worries. Egoism prevents us from opening ourselves fully to the power, joy and plenitude of universal Life. This limitation is what is known as bondage. Universal Life is egoless and hence free. When we sacrifice egoism, universal Life will flow freely through us, transforming our consciousness and leading us to freedom.

The second doctrine of the Vedic philosophy of *yajña* is the Law of Sacrifice. It is essentially the law of duration. Experience is constantly changing; everything received from universal Life must be refunded to it. It is the inexorable Law of Sacrifice that determines the duration of everything. It operates in two directions: the horizontal and the vertical. The horizontal dimension of *yajña* is the relation between the individual being (*vyaṣṭi* or microcosm) and the universal Being (*samaṣṭi* or macrocosm). Every living being depends upon the universal Life for its sustenance and can maintain its individuality only by constantly renewing this contact. Renewal means exchange. To be filled up we must empty ourselves first.

Life is a closed-circuit, a homeostatic equilibrium of forces. Every action has its reaction; what we give to universal Life comes back to us as *karma-phala,* the fruit of action. The first, the individual action, is governed by the Law of Sacrifice; the second, the cosmic reaction, is governed by the Law of Karma. We receive many things from universal Life. A part of these is used for the maintenance of our individual life; the rest is returned to universal Life. We do not merely refund things as they are, but change them, modify them and create new things. This process of modifying things and refunding them to universal life is called work. Work is a form of creativity; indeed, it is the human expression of God's creativity. God's creativity, work, is selfless, a *yajña,* and He does it for the sheer joy of Self-giving. If we too do our work as a creative act without egoism, our work will become *yajña* and we will partake of pure divine bliss. Everything must be surrendered to universal Life, and so everyone must work constantly. But when work is done as *yajña,* it will produce neither sorrow nor bondage. Hence the Gita says: 'Work causes bondage to the world only when it is not done as *yajña.* Therefore you should

do well all work as *yajña* without attachment.'[1]

What we give to universal Life through work comes back to us according to the Law of Karma. But this return is only a gift of universal Life, grace of God; we cannot claim it as a matter of right, nor do we get back in the way we choose or when we choose. That is why the Gita says: 'You have only the right to work, never (the right) to receive its result.'[2] Therefore it is the Law of Sacrifice that is more important and should be the true basis of morality, as indeed it was during the Vedic period. But during the post-Vedic period Hindu law givers tried to base morality on the fear of the Law of Karma. Faith in the power of sacrifice gave way to fear of *karma-phala*. As a result, fear of work and the tendency to escape from work became a common feature of Hindu culture.

As there is a mutual sacrificial relationship between the individual and the universal Life, so also there exists a mutual sacrificial relationship within the individual itself. This is the vertical dimension of *yajña*. The human personality is described in the Upaniṣads as consisting of several *kośas* or sheaths. These sheaths are not like empty boxes. Each is filled with consciousness and acts as a distinct self with its own demands, ways of operation and law of growth. Every person is an aggregate of several selves— the physical self, the prāṇa-self, the mind-self, the intellect-self and the bliss-self. Each self is constantly performing a kind of *yajña* for the welfare of the whole personality. Success in spiritual life depends to a great extent on the proper performance of these internal *yajñas* and their coordination. Physical illness is the result of the violation of the sanctity of the *yajña* of the body through overindulgence or neglect of nutrition, sleep and exercise. When the *yajñas* of the prāṇa-self, the mind-self and the higher selves are not done properly, the result will be restlessness, boredom, depression and other troubles. In the path of Karma Yoga spiritual progress is an ascent from lower *yajñas*, to higher *yajñas*, but it is attained not by neglecting the lower ones but by fulfilling them.

If life is divine why is it that many people do not feel it and lead a materialistic life? How comes it that all people do not recognize the sacrificial nature of life? Why is it that a large number of people see only evil, conflict and suffering in life? The answer is that a person's experience depends upon the state of his consciousness. This leads us to the third principle of the Vedic philosophy of work, namely, the theory of levels of consciousness. The *kośas* mentioned above stand for different levels of consciousness, and these are not equally developed in all people. Though life is one and divine, it is consciousness that manifests it. In order to experience the divinity of Life one must have divine consciousness. Divine consciousness is present in all human beings as the Jivātman, the individual Self, but it lies hidden or dormant in the *vijñānamaya-kośa*, the sheath of intellect, also known as the *dhī, buddhi* and spiritual heart. Before we try to attain harmony with the external world we should discover the centre of harmony in the *dhī* or spiritual heart. Happiness is inseparable from consciousness, and in order to get higher happiness and peace we should attain higher degrees of consciousness.

In order to convert our whole life into a *yajña* we should first of all awaken the sacrificer, the arch-priest, within us. Who is he? The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.5.1.) identifies him as the *vijñāna*-self, the intellect-self. We have seen that the activity of each *kośa* is a form of *yajña*. In many people there is not much coordination among these internal sacrifices with the result that the same person's physical life, emotional

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1. *Bhagavad-Gītā* 3.9.
2. *Gītā* 2.47.

life, intellectual life and spiritual life are found to follow unrelated or contradictory courses. To coordinate the different internal *yajñas* and to achieve integration of different *kośa*-selves we must awaken *dhī*, the centre of divine consciousness in us. It is not enough to live in harmony with our environment by letting things happen in the natural way and living like animals. It is important to do everything with higher awareness. It is Self-awareness that converts the natural activities of the body and mind into a *yajña*, a spiritual discipline.

Finding one's place in life

After accepting the reality of life and understanding its real nature we should try to find our place in it. Finding our place in life means three things : self-acceptance, choiceless living and goal orientation.

Before we attempt to realize the ultimate Truth we must learn to accept the truth about ourselves. We should understand where we stand and what our own path is. We can never find our own path if we try to hide our defects or feel discouraged by them. What appear as defects are only intermediate stages or processes in the manifestation of the potential divinity of the soul. They have their own functions to perform in our spiritual evolution. They can be used as fuel to kindle the fire of self-sacrifice in the altar of the heart. This inner fire purifies our mind and enables us to find out our own path to Reality.

It is not enough to accept ourselves : it is equally necessary to accept the world as it is. What is the meaning of 'as it is' ? Some people see nothing but evil, disharmony and suffering in life. Others see life as a mixture of good and evil. Men with deeper vision see goodness, love and joy as the main undercurrent of life. They, however, accept change and impermanence as unavoidable attributes of life, but look upon every new experience and situation as something good, as a positive help. A true Karma Yogi does not waste his time and energy in changing his environment according to his whims and fancies. He does not choose or change his work of his own accord, he neither seeks nor avoids– all is grist that comes to his mill. This is choiceless living. This is the way to live in harmony with the stream of universal Life.

Once we learn to live in harmony with universal Life, all that we have to do is to give a Godward turn to the stream and allow it to carry us forward. We must constantly try to connect all our activities, experiences, ideas and relationships to the supreme goal. This can be done through intense aspiration and discrimination.

Integration of work and meditation

One of the chief obstacles to goal orientation is the conflict many people feel between inner life and outer life, between meditation and work. Life is a single stream, and dividing it into disconnected compartments will impede its progression. Spiritual life is the unfoldment of divine consciousness and the transformation of the whole personality. It may take very many years for these changes to take place if we restrict spiritual practice to one or two hours of meditation or prayer done haphazardly and with little intensity. Spiritual practice will gain intensity and concentration only when the gulf between inner and outer life is bridged. In effect this means unifying meditation and work into a single discipline.

Can this be done ? It can certainly be done provided we learn to outgrow our limited and immature ideas about meditation. Meditation is generally regarded as a process of fixing the mind on an object– usually a divine form or a divine name. This is quite right as far as it goes. But the difficulty comes when we over-emphasize the *object* and neglect the *process* of meditation. We think that any type of concen-

tration without the chosen name or form in the mental field is not meditation. It is not the object that transforms our consciousness but the mental processes involved in meditation that do it. If the mental object is given too much importance, meditation will lose its dynamism and flexibility, and the aspirant will get stuck in a rigid conceptual framework.

What exactly are we expected to do in meditation? In Vedantic practice the fundamental meditative process is the focussing of consciousness on the inner Self. We know and experience everything with the light of the Atman. In ordinary secular life this light is focussed outward, away from its source. Meditation is an attempt to focus it inward upon its source. Any method by which the stream of consciousness is turned back to its source is to be regarded as a form of meditation. In the path of Jñāna this is done by tracing the source of 'I' through *nididhyāsana* or self-enquiry. In Patañjali's Yoga the method is to withdraw consciousness by focussing it at deeper and deeper levels. The Bhakta turns his consciousness inward through prayer and love. The chief method taught in the Tantras is the awakening of the *suṣumnā* through the control of the *idā* and the *piṅgalā*, the central and the two side channels of psychic energy. All these methods of interiorization of consciousness are techniques of meditation which emphasize the *process* of meditation more than objects of meditation like mental images or divine names.

The Karma Yogi's method for the interiorization of consciousness is to offer his lower self as a sacrifice into the higher Self. The tendency of the lower self is to go outward towards objects of enjoyment. By continually offering the lower self as an oblation into the higher Self, consciousness gets turned back to its source and becomes a meditation. This kind of self-oblation practised as a meditation is called *jñāna-yajña*, knowledge-sacrifice. Unlike the other techniques of meditation, *jñāna-yajña* does not need a special time or place or sitting alone in silence. It goes along with work. Ordinary activities are done by the lower self, and so when the lower self is continually offered as an oblation into the higher Self, all activities get connected to the centre of consciousness. As a result, work becomes a help in the interiorization of consciousness, rather than a distraction or obstacle. Work done with meditative awareness is in itself a technique of meditation. This unification of work and meditation into a single discipline is called *karma-samādhi* or 'work-meditation' in the Gita.[3] A person who practises it is called *yukta* 'the united'.[4]

However, the number of people who actually practise it is very small. For it needs extraordinary courage and aspiration to free oneself from a comfortable fixed-pattern, time-bound meditation to seek God at all times everywhere. For many people meditating for one or two hours is just an excuse for forgetting God the rest of the day! Another reason is that the inward focussing of consciousness at all times is difficult unless there is a strong pull from the centre, that is, unless at least a partial awakening of the *dhī* or *buddhi* has taken place.

One of the mistakes we often commit is to try to practise this work-meditation, without prior preparation, in difficult situations, as for example, when we have to discuss serious matters with our colleagues or while attending to some important work which needs much intellectual work. We should rather begin the practice of interiorization of consciousness while engaged in simple life-activities like breathing, looking at objects and eating. We should start with a limited field of awareness connected with the body before launching out into complex social encounters.

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3. *Gītā* 4.24.
4. *Gītā* 5.12.

How to practise *karma-samādhi* by converting ordinary bodily activities into knowledge-sacrifice has been taught in the Gita. In its fourth chapter some twelve types of *yajña* are mentioned of which five deal with bodily processes. The first of these five sacrifices is *indriya-saṁyama yajña.* In this method sense-control is regarded as the fire, and the experiences of hearing, seeing, touching, etc. are regarded as oblations poured into that fire.[5] The second sacrifice is *viṣaya-bhoga yajña.* Unlike the first method, here no attempt is made to control the senses ; rather, they are allowed to come into contact with the objects of enjoyment freely. But every experience is regarded as an oblation of the object into the fire of sense organs.[6] The third method is *ātma-saṁyama yajña,* which means bringing all activities– including those of the senses, mind and prāṇas– under the control of a centralized will. The heart illumined by the light of Atman is regarded as the altar, self-control is the fire burning there, and all activities are imagined to be oblations into that fire.[7] The fourth type of sacrifice is *prāṇāyāma-yajña.* This is a method of looking upon Prāṇāyāma as an inner sacrifice, by offering inhalation (*pūraka*) and exhalation (*recaka*) as oblations into the fire of breath-restraint (*kumbhaka*).[8] The fifth type of bodily sacrifice is the well-known *prāṇāgnihotra.* Here eating becomes an offering of food as oblation into the five vital airs (prāṇa, *apāna, vyāna, udāna* and *samāna*). It is to be practised only by those who have control over their food.[9]

These *yajñas* are actually meditations. So they are called *jñāna-yajña,* knowledge-sacrifice. Whereas in ordinary Yogic meditation one sits still, in *jñāna-yajña* meditation is directly linked to life-activity and goes on simultaneously with it. When actually practised for short periods every day, these *yajñas* bring about many inner changes. To begin with, they create a right type of body awareness which reduces the impulsiveness and automatism of our life and gives us a sense of control and alertness. Gradually, our consciousness gets more interiorized, and develops into an undercurrent of meditative awareness of the Self flowing at all times. This undercurrent unifies meditation and work into a single integral discipline, *karma-samādhi.* To a person who has reached this stage every activity becomes a meditation as well as a sacrifice.

Work-meditation is practised in several other religious traditions, especially in the Vipassana school of Southern Buddhism and the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism. Christian monks are taught 'ora et labora' (pray and work) and Brother Lawrence has shown a simple way of doing this in his famous little book *The Practice of the Presence of God.* What distinguishes the Vedantic practice of *karma-samādhi* is its sacrificial nature– the continual oblation of the lower self into the higher Self.

Opening to larger life

Everyone wants to live happily, but few people understand that happiness is inseparable from consciousness. A person's life which is limited to physical and mental levels is incomplete and so is his happiness. For full development of personality and higher happiness he must transcend or transform his limited consciousness.

Furthermore, few people realize that the individual is entirely dependent on universal Life at all levels. Just as the body is dependent on the physical universe for its sustenance, so also the mind and the spirit are dependent on the cosmic mind (*mahat*) and the Supreme Spirit respectively. It is the inability to open ourselves fully to universal Life at all levels that is the basic

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5. *Gītā* 4.26.
6. *Gītā* 4.26.
7. *Gītā* 4.27.
8. *Gītā* 4.29.
9. *Gītā* 4.30.

cause of all human suffering, conflicts and impoverishment. How to open ourselves to universal Life? By expanding our consciousness.

According to Vedanta, the soul has in it the power of infinite consciousness but this power lies veiled or contracted owing to the presence of ignorance, in the form of egoism. The more egoism is removed, the more consciousness expands. Says Swami Vivekananda : 'All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark. Know that there is no darkness around us. Take the hands away, and there is the light which was from the beginning.'[10] Like an octopus the ego extends its tentacles of ignorance into the body to produce attachment, into the Prāṇa to produce illness, into the mind to produce hatred and fear, into the heart to produce self-ignorance, and into the sheath of bliss to produce sorrow.

The fundamental problem in spiritual life, therefore, is how to eliminate egoism and ignorance at all levels. The Jñāni does it through self-analysis. The Bhakta does it with the help of divine grace which he gains through self-surrender. The Raja Yogi does it through self-control. The Karma Yogi does it through self-sacrifice.

The Karma Yogi converts his whole life into an unceasing oblation into universal Life. At the physical level his *yajña* takes the form of giving food, clothes, etc. and rendering physical service like nursing to those who are in need of them. At the mental level *yajña* takes the form of sharing knowledge and love with others. At the spiritual level *yajña* takes the form of a perpetual oblation of the individual spirit into the universal Spirit.

The Vedas stipulate the following five great sacrifices (*pañca-mahā-yajña*) as the daily obligatory duty of every man.[11] *Deva-yajña* : worship of gods and goddesses. *Ṛṣi-yajña* : acquiring and spreading spiritual knowledge. *Pitṛ-yajña* : service of one's parents and maintaining the family traditions and lineage. *Nṛ-yajña* : providing food, clothes and shelter to needy people. *Bhūta-yajña* : looking after animals and plants and protecting the eco-system. There is a great need to revive this ancient scheme, if not as an obligatory duty, at least as a social institution.

It should, however, be remembered that the Vedic practice of *yajña* was not a mere social institution but a spiritual discipline. What we have to do now is to combine all the three elements of *yajña*— self-sacrifice, spiritual discipline and social institution. The age of individual spirituality is coming to an end. Collective awareness is growing rapidly at the social, national and international levels. Through collective spiritual effort the psycho-social evolution of the human race could be considerably accelerated and the life of the entire humanity could be raised to a higher spiritual level. This is the ideal of spirituality that the modern world needs, and it can be realized only by establishing *yajña* as a universal spiritual discipline.

We have already mentioned that *yajña* is of two types : human and divine. The whole universe and all life-activities are maintained by the Divine as an act of Self-sacrifice. As a matter of fact, there is only one *yajña*, the great cosmic sacrifice of God known as *Brahma-yajña*. Our individual efforts become *yajña* only in so far as they are consciously coordinated with the divine *yajña*. Like little wheels impelled by a huge flywheel, our individual lives should be geared to the mighty *yajña-cakra*, the wheel of sacrifice, of the Divine. Everything in the universe is a part of *Brahma-yajña*, the cosmic sacrifice of Brahman. This seems to be

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10. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976) Vol. 2, p. 295.

11. cf *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 1.7.2.1-6; *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* 1.4.16.; *Manu-Smṛti* 3.70.

the actual meaning of the famous verse in the Gita : 'The act of offering is Brahman, the thing offered is Brahman, the fire is Brahman and the sacrificer is Brahman. One who thus understands work-meditation as (an expression) of Brahman will attain Brahman itself.'[12] We have here in these lines a vibrant description of *Brahma-yajña*.

It is by coupling individual *yajña* to *Brahma-yajña* that we open ourselves to universal Life. This coupling is actually a process of consciousness ; it is the union of individual consciousness with divine consciousness. For this we must first of all discover the centre of our awareness known as *dhī*, and connect it to the centre of divine harmony known as *ṛta*. All this is done through meditation. Meditation is thus an integral part of *yajña*. It is not possible to do work as *yajña* without a heightened meditative awareness.

Just as meditation is an inseparable part of *yajña*, so the spirit of *yajña*, self-sacrifice, is an inseparable attribute of meditation. Without the spirit of sacrifice, meditation may convert a person into a spiritual Narcissus. The Upaniṣads teach several types of meditation called *vidyā* (as for example, *madhu-vidyā*, *upakosala-vidyā*, *paryṅka-vidyā* etc.) for opening individual consciousness to universal consciousness. But they have all for their foundation the Vedic spirit of *yajña*.

Yajña integrates the personality by uniting work and meditation, and transforms into a channel of divine power and consciousness by opening it to universal Life. It enables us to accept life as it is and convert it into a means of attaining supreme freedom and peace. It sanctifies and glorifies life. In some of the Śiva temples you see a pot kept hung above the sacred *liṅga* and through a small hole at the bottom of the pot water dripping drop by drop on the *liṅga*. It is a symbolic reminder that every moment of our life must be an oblation of the self into the Supreme Self, that every life-activity must be converted into a sacrifice to Śiva, the Lord of sacrifice. When our whole life thus gets attuned to the consciousness of Śiva, we will gradually acquire the transcendental stability and peace of Śiva. Regarding this Swami Vivekananda says :

> Let us be at peace, perfect peace, with ourselves, and give up our whole body and mind and everything as an eternal sacrifice unto the Lord... 'In search of wealth in this world Thou art the only wealth I have found ; I sacrifice myself unto Thee.' Let us repeat this day and night, and say, 'Nothing for me ; no matter whether the thing is good, bad, or indifferent ; I do not care for it ; I sacrifice all unto Thee.' Day and night let us renounce our seeming self until it becomes a habit with us to do so, until it gets into the blood, the nerves, and the brain, and the whole body is every moment obedient to this idea of self-renunciation. Go then into the midst of the battlefield, with the roaring cannon and the din of war, and you will find yourself to be free and at peace.[13]

(*concluded*)

12. *Gītā* 4.24. Also cf. a strikingly similar passage in the Atharva-Veda, 19.42.1-2.

13. *Complete Works* (1977) Vol. 1, p. 102.

GIRISH CHANDRA GHOSH

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Sri Ramakrishna passed away on August 16, 1886. A devotee brought the sad news to Girish, but Girish would not believe it. He said to the man : 'This is a lie. The Master cannot die.'

'Sir, I have come from that place.'

'You had better go back there.'

'But I have seen him with my own eyes.'

Girish covered his eyes with his hands and retorted : 'You say whatever you want. I have not seen with my eyes, so I do not believe it.'

Girish later said :

> I heard of the Master's passing away, but I did not go to Cossipore to see him. I knew it would be hard for my weak mind to maintain faith in the Master's immortal nature if I were to see his dead body. Moreover, my eyes would stand against my faith and would tell me: 'Sri Ramakrishna is dead. Did you not see it with your own eyes ?' For this reason I intentionally kept a conflict between my eyes and my ears about the Master's passing away. If my ears tell me, 'Sri Ramakrishna is dead,' I shall tell them, 'You have heard so many rumours about the Master. Are you going to believe everything you hear ?' Let people say whatever they want. I did not witness the Master's death, so I do not believe it.

Girish had the firm conviction that the Master was God himself, and that his body was eternal and full of pure consciousness. Disease or death could not touch his body. Because he was born as a human being, he acted as a human being, and death was also a part of his acting.

Soon after the Master's passing, misfortune again hovered over Girish. He lost his two daughters. His second wife died in 1887, and a few years later a young son, who had been very devoted to the Holy Mother, also passed away. In the words of one of his dramas, Girish summed up his feelings : 'Life is painful. The world is empty. A beautiful flower garden has withered away.'

A blazing fire of renunciation was growing in Girish's mind, burning up all his attachments, desires, and impurities. The garlic cup was being heated and the odour was disappearing. One day Swami Niranjanananda, a monastic disciple of the Master, said to him : 'The Master made you a monk. There is no need for you to stay at home.' Girish took the advice of his brother disciple as an order from the Master. He left home barefoot, wearing only a single cloth, and went to the Baranagore Monastery. However, his other brother disciples sent him home again because they knew his body would not be able to bear the austerities of a monk's life.

Girish then went to visit the Holy Mother in Jayrambati, her village home. He loved the spiritual atmosphere of Jayrambati and also nearby Kamarpukur, Sri Ramakrishna's birthplace. The charming beauty of the meadows, the quiet evening sunsets over the open fields, the touching simplicity of the villagers, and especially the affection and grace of the Holy Mother, all conspired to console his bereaved heart. Girish asked her permission to embrace the monastic life,

but the Holy Mother persuaded him to remain a householder, devoting himself to writing plays depicting the Master's life and teachings. After some time Girish returned to Calcutta with new hope and inspiration. Later, when Holy Mother was staying in Calcutta, she went to see his acting a few times and she enjoyed it immensely.

Girish's hedonistic spirit had been subdued by the spiritual touch of Sri Ramakrishna. His life style was now changed. He completely gave up drinking the last twenty years of his life. And yet his previous life style no doubt contributed greatly to his success as an actor and a dramatist. The intensity with which his gigantic heart had felt grief, joy, despair, and hope made it possible for him to portray the characters of his drama vividly. He used to say that the poet and the playwright could imbue their writings with life and feeling only if they had had first-hand experience of all facets of life themselves. He once said: 'Who can criticize the portrayal of characters in my plays? I have studied the lives of all types of people, from the prostitute to the paramahamsa (illumined soul).' His power of imagination was so strong that he could actually visualize the characters of his dramas. Once he asked Swami Saradananda to visit him every day so that he could talk with him about the Master. He said: 'I need a little diversion. I am now writing a drama on Mir Kasim (a Muslim ruler of Bengal who was betrayed by his own people). Oh, what a conspiracy! I cannot bear it any more. I see Mir Kashim even in my dreams— his bearded face moves before my eyes.'

There have been many books and articles written about Sri Ramakrishna's influence on Girish's plays. Girish himself acknowledged the fact: 'When I wrote the play *Vilvamangal,* several of his (the Master's) devotees questioned me about it. I told them I had learned the art of play-writing from Sri Ramakrishna.' Swami Vivekananda read Girish's *Vilvamangal*[2] many times and said that each time he got new light from it.

In one drama, *Rūpa-Sanātan,* Girish portrayed Śrī Caitanya touching the feet of the devotees in salutation. This shocked some followers of Śrī Caitanya, and they challenged Girish on its authenticity. Girish replied:

> I saw with my own eyes that Sri Ramakrishna touched the feet of the devotees. I do not write about anything I have not experienced. Once there was a religious meeting with devotional singing in the house of a devotee, and Sri Ramakrishna took the dust of that place and smeared it on his body. When the devotees tried to stop him he said: 'Look! Don't you know this place has been sanctified by the presence of the devotees, by spiritual talk and devotional singing? God comes to listen where his devotees glorify his name. The very dust of this place has become pure by the footprints of the devotees.'

Girish's writing career began when he was thirty-five and continued for thirty years. He was a prodigious writer and produced during that time seventy-nine works, including dramas, poems, and songs. His dramas dealt primarily with religious, social, his-

2. The plot of *Vilvamangal* is adapted from a short story of the *Bhaktamala,* a collection of stories about devotees and saints. Vilvamangal, a rich libertine, fell in love with a courtesan named Cintāmaṇi, who lived on the other side of the river. Vilvamangal was so infatuated with her that he would visit her every night. One stormy night, no boatman dared to ferry him across the river, so he jumped into the rapid current. Holding to a floating corpse, which he mistook for a log, he crossed the river. It was late and Cintāmaṇi's gate was closed, so he grabbed the tail of a poisonous snake, thinking it to be a rope, and scaled the wall. Cintāmaṇi was dumbfounded when she came to know of everything. She said to him: 'We do not know what love is. But, my friend, why do you give your heart to a woman like me? Why do you not give it to God? You would be illumined.' This was the turning point of Vilvamangal's life. He later became a saint,

torical, mythological, and patriotic subjects. His innovative spirit had a lasting effect on theatre in Bengal— in fact, he became known as the father of the Bengali theatre. He avoided the traditional flowery language of the theatre because of its heaviness and artificiality, and introduced irregular blank verse in the conversations of his dramas. This eventually became known as *Gairish Chhanda*, that is, Girish's metre. The language of his plays is natural, forceful, colloquial, and poetic. He felt that action and interaction create the life force of the drama, and the spirit of the drama is carried along in its language.

Girish's mind worked so fast and prodigiously that he required secretaries to take down his words; he could not write them fast enough himself. Absorbed in the flow of ideas, he would pace back and forth in his room and dictate all the dialogues of the drama in a loud voice, as if he was acting each role himself. His secretary always kept three pencils ready at hand. He could not use a pen and inkpot because there was never enough time to dip the pen into the pot. Once the secretary could not keep up with the speed of the dictation and requested Girish to repeat what he had just said. Girish became angry and asked him not to break his mood. He told the secretary to put dots where he had missed words, and he would fill them in later.

There are many stories about his writing talent. It is said that he could write one drama in a couple of days. *Sītār Vanabās* (The Banishment of Sita) was written in one night. He also wrote twenty-six songs for *Sadhavār Ekādaśi* in just one night. Sister Devamata mentioned in *Days in an Indian Monastery*, 'One of the greatest, a six-act drama entitled *Vilvamangal, the Saint*, was written in twenty-eight hours of uninterrupted labour.' Swami Subodhananda said, 'We have seen Girish dictating three different dramas to three secretaries, one after another.' On another occasion Girish dramatized *Kapālakuṇḍalā*, a famous fictional work by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, in one night by dictating it to four secretaries.

Girish was his own greatest competitor. When one of his dramas was particularly well received, he felt that he had to work harder on the next in order to surpass the previous one. He was fond of defeating himself.

Sometimes the monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, in order to bring a response out of Girish, would tease him: 'You are writing and acting prompted by your own desires, and yet you say that the Master gave you the task of saving the fallen people of the world. Don't you feel ashamed to talk like that?' But Girish would boldly reply: 'Wait, brothers! When I meet Sri Ramakrishna again I shall tell him that I won't act in the role of a villain any more. The next time let his monastic disciples play the villains and I shall act the part of a noble character.' Truly, Girish believed that it was the Master who brought these devotees to the world to act in different roles in his divine drama.

In the early days of his career Girish had very little money and, because of his bad reputation, it was difficult for him to find financial backing for his ventures. However, in 1879 he founded the Baghbazar Amateur Theatre, and shortly thereafter a rich man invited the theatre company to enact *Sadhavār Ekādaśi*, a social drama, in his house on the occasion of the worship of the Divine Mother Durga. In this drama Girish played the role of a drunkard. His portrayal was so realistic that through this role he first made a name for himself in the theatre. This is not surprising when one learns that he said to the stage manager before the performance: 'I cannot portray a drunkard if I have to drink coloured water from a bottle on stage. I want genuine wine.' The result was that even the writer of the drama, who was present, was overwhelmed by Girish's acting. He told

Girish, 'This role seems to have been written for you, and without you the play would not be a success.'

Girish soon moved to the Star Theatre and became its manager. His brilliant and creative mind always found ways to overcome the inevitable managerial problems. There was not sufficient money to buy expensive costumes, so he wrote *Caitanya Līlā*, the drama on the life of Caitanya which Sri Ramakrishna saw, because it required only a few ochre robes and rosaries as costumes.

Girish was actually the moving force behind the establishing of several theatres in Calcutta, including the Baghbazar Amateur Theatre, the National Theatre, and the Star, the Emerald, the Classic, and the Minerva Theatres. He was himself a superb and versatile actor, and wherever he performed crowds would come to see him. Once he played five different roles in the same play, *Kapālkuṇḍalā*, and proved by his performance the importance of each of the five characters.

In *Days in an Indian Monastery* Sister Devamata wrote :

> I enjoyed meeting the noted Bengali dramatist, Girish Chandra Ghosh... A gifted actor also, he is called the Garrick of the Bengali stage as well as the Shakespeare of the Bengali drama.
>
> The measure of his gift as an actor is given in this incident. Vidyasagar, the scholar and philanthropist, was at Girish Babu's theatre one night when the actor was depicting a profligate. In a scene where he was abusing a woman, Vidyasagar became so stirred by the vividness of the portrayal that he took off his slipper and threw it at the actor. It struck him and rebounded on the stage. Girish Babu picked it up, placed it on his head, and with a bow to the audience, declared he had never received a more gratifying tribute.

As would be expected, Girish's innovations in the theatre were met with some opposition. His irregular blank verse was criticized by traditional writers. He was also vehemently attacked by puritans for engaging prostitutes to play women's roles in his dramas. Before this, men had enacted women's roles. Often these women proved to be dedicated and talented actresses. They were poorly educated, but Girish trained them and wrote his dramas in simple language so that they could portray the characters with naturalness. The famous star Tinkari said : 'I was an unlettered girl. It was through his (Girish's) kindness that I am now an actress.'

Girish had a great feeling for art. He knew that the artistic faculty does not manifest itself properly if there is fear, uncertainty, pressure, or exploitation. He later donated sixteen thousand rupees to the authorities of the New Star Theatre to complete its construction, and said to them : 'Please do not humiliate or exploit the actors and actresses. Let them act freely.'

Contrary to his reputation, Girish was actually very serious-minded and steady, and because of this he was able to overcome obstacles and criticisms and eventually gain the respect and attention of the public. In fact, Girish's waywardness has been somewhat overemphasized by some. Dhan Gopal Mukherji revealed another side of him in *The face of silence* :

> Not only was he our greatest modern playwright, he was also a great actor and producer. It was he who revealed to the women of the underworld that they could change their lives for the better by taking up acting as a trade. Many wretched souls he saved by training them to act. Not only that, he also lifted up and revealed to the eyes of the public at least half a dozen actresses of the highest rank, who had hitherto been condemned to a life of vice, while boys played the parts of women on the stage. Since Girish, all that has been changed. The other day in India when one of his star actresses, now an old woman, called on my wife and myself, she told us how Father'—that is what she called Girish, worked. 'He brought about a revolution in the life of womanhood in general. Women in terrible penury, instead of being forced down into the abyss of vice, were now rescued by the stage. But Father did not stop there. He brought us

all in touch with the teachings of Ramakrishna. He wanted us to come to the monastery during the hours of worship and pray to God. Some of us were afraid lest we soil the sacred grounds. Father answered: 'If Ramakrishna were living, he would teach you and me himself. He loves us. Didn't he come to earth for the fallen like ourselves ?'

Our talks with many other old actors and actresses convinced us that Girish, by staying with his old bohemian companions, did more spiritual good than if he had left them. After his soul's second birth, he did not act like a moral parvenu; he repudiated nothing of his past. Instead, he slowly permeated his friends and his writings with the spirit of Ramakrishna. And as for the Power of Attorney that he gave his guru, Turiyananda and others testify that he never violated it. All of them affirm, 'Girish was the most religious of us all; he lived, as he said he would, by the promptings of the Indweller.'

Girish introduced among the performers a custom which is practised even today. Before making an appearance on the stage, each actor and actress bows down to a picture of Sri Ramakrishna. Thus, Sri Ramakrishna has become, in a sense, the patron saint of the Bengali theatre, and his photograph can be found hanging backstage in nearly every theatre of Calcutta.

Girish's self-surrender was truly unique and phenomenal. Swami Vivekananda once remarked : 'In G. C. (Girish) alone I have seen that true resignation— that true spirit of a servant of the Lord... I have not met his parallel. From him have I learnt the lesson of self-surrender.'

During the later part of his life, many monks and devotees would visit Girish to learn more about Sri Ramakrishna from him. When he spoke about the Master, his face would flush with emotional fervour. Even Swami Vivekananda, while he was in Calcutta, would say to the devotees, 'Let us go to G. C. and have some "false talk".' What the Swami meant was that he would intentionally criticize Sri Ramakrishna so that they could listen to Girish defend the Master with all his faith, vigour, and sincerity. This would create a tremendous spiritual atmosphere. Girish was highly respected by the devotees. Durgacharan Nag remarked : 'If a person sits near Girish for five minutes, he will be uplifted from worldly pain and suffering. He is a great hero— the guardian angel of Siva.'

Once Swami Vivekananda was giving a class on the *Ṛg-Veda* and was in the process of explaining how creation evolved from sound when Girish arrived. Turning to him, the Swami said : 'Well, G. C., you do not care to study all this. You pass your days with your adoration of this and that god, eh ?'

Girish said : 'What shall I study, brother? I have neither time nor understanding enough to pry into all that. But this time, with Sri Ramakrishna's grace, I shall cross the ocean of maya, bidding farewell to your Vedas and Vedanta. The Master takes you through all these studies because he wants to teach many things through you. I don't need them.' Saying this, Girish touched the volume of the *Ṛg-Veda* with his head and exclaimed, 'Victory to Ramakrishna in the form of the Veda !'

Then Girish said to Swami Vivekananda : 'Brother, you have read enough of the Vedas and Vedanta. Did you find anywhere in them a way for us out of these profound miseries in this country— all these wailings of grief, all this starvation, all these crimes of adultery, and other horrible sins ?'

Girish continued narrating graphically the painful picture of Indian society while Swami Vivekananda remained silent. Tears began to flow from his eyes. He rose and left the room.

Then Girish said to Swamiji's disciple : 'Did you see ? What a great, loving heart ! I respect your Swamiji, not as a Vedic scholar, but for that great heart of his which made him retire weeping just now at the thought of the sorrows of his fellow beings.'

Even in his old age Girish would fast as a religious observance during the Śiva-rātri

celebration (a yearly festival in honour of Lord Śiva). Once someone asked him : 'You are old and not well. Why should you fast ?' Girish replied, 'I get something.' 'What ?' 'A vision'. 'A vision of whom— Lord Śiva or Sri Ramakrishna ?' 'I get a vision of the Master.' 'Does he talk to you ?' 'No.' And then Girish added, 'That is the last wish of my life.'

During the last few years of his life, Girish suffered terribly from asthma. Yet he had attained such a state of mind that disease, pain, and grief could not subdue his spirit. Even during his asthma attacks he would say with a smile : 'Look, I have no sympathy for this ungrateful body. I have given it good food for its nourishment, taken care of it with comforts and all sorts of things— yet this very body has courted this terrible asthma ! Truly speaking, I don't want this disease to be cured. Every attack of asthma reminds me of the impermanence of the body.' Then he prayed, 'Lord, you are gracious. May I have this faith until death.'

Once, while he was pondering his own death, he thought: 'Well, death is slowly approaching. What will happen after death ? I do not know where I shall go.' Girish was thinking in this way when M. (Mahendra Nath Gupta, the recorder of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) came to visit him. M. started to talk with Girish about the Master. Suddenly, in an inspired mood, Girish said to M. : 'Brother, could you beat me with your shoes ? I am not joking. I am serious.' M. smiled and asked the reason for such a request. Girish replied : 'To tell you the truth, I deserve a shoe-beating. Sri Ramakrishna is sitting within my heart and is always protecting me. Yet I wonder what will happen to me after death !'

Another time Girish said to his brother disciples, with his usual vigour :

> Do you think I cannot get rid of this ordinary disease ? I can. I can prove it to you. If I roll on the ground of the panchavati at Dakshineswar and forcefully pray to the Master, this disease will go away. But I know the Master is all-merciful. It is his will that I am undergoing this disease, grief, pain, and suffering. Everything is for my good. This feeling, by his grace, is so strong in my mind that I have no inclination to pray that my disease be cured. Sri Ramakrishna is a wish-fulfilling tree. Whenever I have prayed for anything, I have gotten it.'

Sri Ramakrishna's touch had awakened the God-consciousness in Girish, and Girish's great faith and devotion made it even stronger. Once he said, referring to the Master : 'I find that it is not difficult to obey him, love him, or worship him. But indeed it is *difficult to forget him.*'

When people would lament their ill luck at not having been given the chance to meet Sri Ramakrishna, Girish would reply, 'As Mother Ganga flowed in a hundred streams in order to redeem the Sagara dynasty,[3] so the exuberant love of Sri Ramakrishna is flowing through hundreds of devotees in order to eventually redeem the world.'

Sri Ramakrishna had asked Girish to continue acting and writing dramas, and he did so until the end of his life. On July 15, 1911, he gave his last performance at the Minerva Theatre in Calcutta. It was a cold, rainy day. He was suffering with

(*Continued on page* 388)

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3. In ancient times, King Sagara wanted to perform a horse sacrifice in order to attain supremacy and merit. This involved setting a horse free, but heavily guarded, to wander around at will for a year. If in that time no one had defeated the soldiers and stolen the horse, all the lands that it had wandered in would belong to the king performing the sacrifice. King Sagara's sons were guarding the horse, but it got away from them. They later found the horse at the hermitage of a sage. Sagara's sons accused the innocent sage of stealing the horse, and that accusation brought about their ruin. Bhagiratha, the great-great-grandson of Sagara, brought the Ganga down from heaven to earth in order to save his departed ancestors.

धर्म समन्वय
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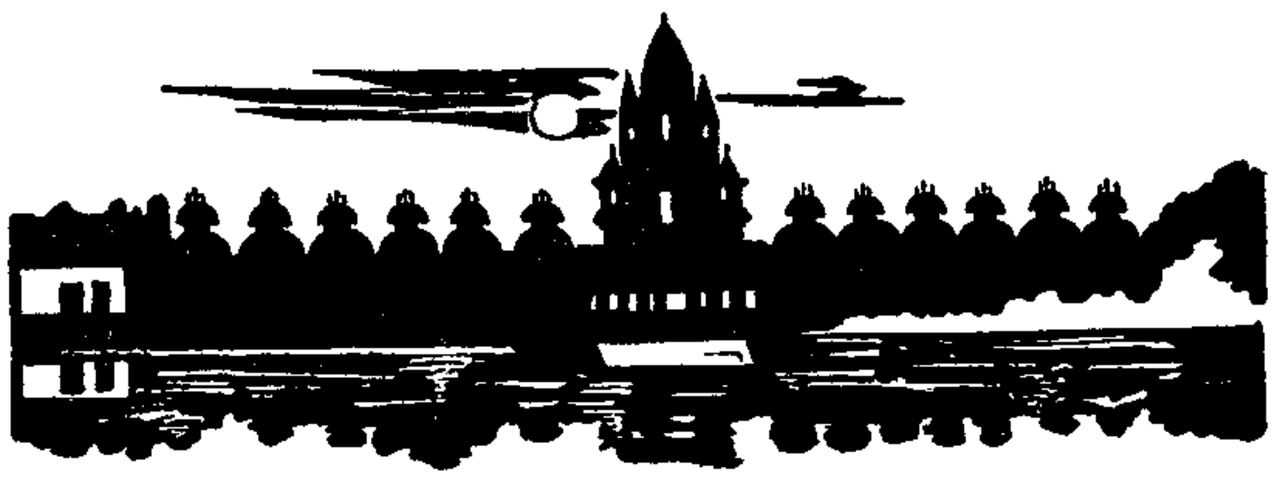

THE CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL FATHER/MOTHER

FR. M. BASIL PENNINGTON O.C.S.O.

One of the most interesting and stimulating meetings I have participated in in recent years was the Fifth Cistercian Studies Symposium held at New Clairvaux Abbey, Vina, California, June 12-16, 1978, to explore the theme : *Spiritual Father : West and East.* The meeting brought together some fifty monks and nuns, active religious and laity, married and single, from fifteen or more nations. These were joined by spiritual masters from various eastern traditions and well qualified international scholars. Background papers had been distributed in advance so that the Symposium could be devoted to informed exchange. The blending of first rate scholarship and practical pastoral concern made for an unusually rich dialogue.

Throughout the meeting and in writing about it now there is a keen awareness of our pressing need for an 'utrum' vocabulary. Not a neuter which sets aside both genders and reduces all to an it, but an 'utrum' which embraces the fullness of *both* femininity and masculinity. For what is said of the spiritual father applies totally and equally to the spiritual mother. Moreover, as the papers and discussions well brought out, our Christian tradition has insisted that the spiritual father must indeed also be a spiritual mother, following the archetypes of Mary and the Church. Indeed all Christians are to be spiritual mothers : 'Who are my mother and my brother ? ... Whoever does the will of God is brother and sister and mother to me' (Mark 3 : 33-35). As Christians we are all called to mother the Christ life in ourselves and in others.

A Need

The concern that lay behind the Symposium was true renewal within the Cistercian tradition, as the sponsoring body, but also within the Christian community at large. The Jesuit theologian, Daniel O'Hanlon of the General Theological Union at Berkeley had spent a year on pilgrimage in Asia. He was on the point of undertaking a return journey, sponsored by the Centre for the Study of New Religions, to try to ascertain why Americans have turned to the East in search of spiritual masters. He had already interviewed a number of Americans who had returned from the East. His findings thus far indicated a common response : seekers were able to find in the churches and synagogues of the West men of learning and organization but not men or women of *spiritual quality* with the ability to teach *concrete, practical ways* to enter into a deeper spiritual life.

These findings were confirmed by a number of interventions made during the very personal, honest and open sharing. Brother David Steindle-Rast gave a synthetic report on the various 'New Age' communities with which he has been involved. In these

groups community has commonly held a central place—a community that is warm and supportive, yet is in fact a by-product and not something directly sought. Groups that have come together primarily to find community have rarely succeeded. For the successful communities in most cases it has been a question of gathering around a master, whether it be the San-Francisco Zen Centre, the Integral Yoga Institute of Swami Satchidananda or the Love Centre in Denver gathered around a Roman Catholic tertiary. Always it seems to be a common unifying goal that produces a truly monastic environment that fosters spiritual growth. These 'New Age' groups are dynamically flexible, yet have a remarkable stability. They are made up of seekers and rarely is there any distinction made on the basis of sex.

A very moving moment came in the closing session of the Symposium when a hitherto silent young man, a student from the Institute of Cistercian Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, spoke up. He had been in a Catholic monastery for fourteen months — a disappointing experience for him — and was now in search of one where he could find a true spiritual father. He made an eloquent plea to each of the spiritual fathers and mothers present to make a commitment to being true spiritual fathers and mothers, men and women of personal holiness, embodying the Gospel in their lives, willing to respond to the frequently unspoken pleas of even unwanted children, willing to find and call forth the fullness of the universe of God's love to be found in the individual who comes before them.

The young man indicated that sometimes those who ought to fulfil this pastoral service in the Christian community are taken up with 'greater and more universal' concerns, so that they are unwilling to give the time to father the individual. But more precisely he pointed to the fact that very many of those who fulfil roles in the Church in which one can rightly expect to include spiritual paternity (superiors, pastors, counsellors, directors) are hesitant to accept this admittedly burdensome service. Exchanges during the Symposium bore this out.

It is true that the early monastic literature does show the spiritual father very reluctant to accept his role. And yet he repeatedly does, and sometimes with an audacious fullness. The hesitancy today seems sometimes to arise from the same sort of humble dispositions. But when these are the true source of the hesitancy, the humble man, when he realizes God wants him to serve in this way, does so with generosity. In fact, more often the hesitancy today seems to arise from a certain confusion about the role, a sense of inadequacy — which unfortunately all too often has some basis in fact — a false sense of egalitarianism, and sometimes a projection of one's own hang-ups in regard to paternalism.

Christian Spiritual Paternity Today

There was a certain amount of very legitimate and necessary questioning about the precise understanding and practice of spiritual paternity for our times and whether this would really represent a continuation, degradation or mutation of the practice of earlier times. Indeed, and rightly, it was questioned whether 'father' is the best archetype for this relationship today. Others were suggested : friendship, midwife, wounded healer. But none seemed to capture the significance of this traditional term so fully. Our difficulties with the word seem to arise from the connotations coming from natural paternity and the problem surrounding the exercise of fatherhood in families today. But the Christian has to keep hold of the fact that all fatherhood descends ultimately from above and is named after that of the Father of Lights (Ephesians 3 : 14-15, James 1 : 17). The spiritual

father's role calls for him to be like Christ, making the Father present—'I and the Father are one' (John 10 : 30); 'He who sees me, sees the Father' (John 14 : 9); and forming disciples to be sons of the Father in the likeness of Christ.

Friendship is certainly an important part of this paternal role: 'I no longer call you servants ... but friends, because I have made known to you all I have learned from the Father' (John 15 : 15)—but in itself it does not seem to express all that is involved here, all that the disciple legitimately seeks and expects when coming to a spiritual father.

Certainly there is within this relationship a handing on of teaching, and handing it on in a living way, out of the fullness of one's own lived experience. Yet this is not the sum total of the paternal role, nor even the most important part of it. What is desired and ... needed is that the father, drawing on his own lived experience, can guide the son to realize and actualize his true self. By baptism the Christian has been made in some very real sense a true son of God, one with Christ, the only Son—'I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me' (Galatians 2 : 20) — and he has been given Christ's Spirit as his own spirit — 'The Spirit has been poured out in our hearts whereby we cry "Abba" ("Father")' (Romans 8 : 15). The Christian needs simply to learn how to be who he truly is, to appropriate his divinization and live out of its fullness. The spiritual father is one who in the fullness of the Spirit knows how to do this and how to help others to do the same. The gifts of wisdom, understanding and counsel are active in him.

Light from the East

A most interesting and enriching dimension of this meeting was the involvement and contributions of masters of the Asiatic countries. It was stressed that we do not turn to our brothers from the East in order to try to incorporate elements of their practice into ours. Above all, we do not want to continue a sort of colonialistic mentality that would now attempt to take possession of the spiritual riches of the East and exploit them in such a way that mysteries bearing life would be treated as mere techniques. Rather the hope is that our encounter with other religious traditions will lead to a mutual fecundation which will stimulate the growth of values that lie hidden within our own traditions.

How far the human family has progressed toward an enriching global spiritual culture was vividly portrayed in the presence of Maezsumi Rochi and his disciple. This Japanese Zen Master considered the young Jew from Brooklyn, on whom he had recently conferred the 'transmission,' to be his first and principal disciple. The student in his turn showed how Zen had led him into a fuller understanding of his Jewish heritage and its Revelation.

Seeing how spiritual masters from the East were fulfilling in greater or lesser degree the many needs many young Christians were not finding fulfilled by spiritual fathers and mothers in their own tradition, we sought to bring some of these masters into our dialogue and to listen to them. It was truly profitable. We heard them, with humility, simplicity and compassion, unhesitatingly take on the responsibility of master. Some of the descriptions of their role could certainly enliven us in our efforts to refined and reassess this role in our own tradition :

> The guru is the dispeller of darkness and the revealer of light. He is the destroyer of the sins of the disciple. He makes the disciple like himself. He is a man of vision, one who destroys ignorance and who gives knowledge. He imparts grace, bestowing joy and peace on the disciple. In a more simple manner, he must be a man of good conduct, without sin, firm in mind. He must be imbued with *sat* character that is real and truthful, because he has experienced truth.

He is God-oriented and an indefectible friend of the disciple.

* * *

The shaikh is the guide on the Path of Love. He is an exemplary being who lives according to the Quran and the Hadith, what the Prophet Mohammed—may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him—said, did or approved. He does not say one thing and do another. He leads to God according to the openness of the murid (disciple). The shaikh can be very close to God. If you take a glass of water from the sea, what is in the glass is not the sea, yet it is the sea. This is how the shaikh is to God. The shaikh has the medicine which can cure the doubt and hesitation of the murid. He is generous with his secret and is concerned more for his murid than he is for himself. He knows when to remove the spiritual cataracts which prevent his murid from reaching the Highest Station.

I think we rightly hesitate to undertake a role in the life of another that is fraught with such expectations. Certainly the man who thinks he has all these qualities and sets himself up — puts out his shingle, as it were — as a spiritual father, is much deceived. We hesitate to think of anyone being formed in our own likeness. We are all disciples of Christ. We are to be formed only in his likeness. Yet Paul, who honestly admitted his weaknesses (e.g. 2 Corinthians 12 : 5, 9) and the alien law in his members (Romans 7 : 23), did not hesitate to call himself a spiritual father (1 Corinthians 4 : 15 ; 2 Corinthians 6 : 13, 16), and to urge his disciples to be imitators of himself even as he was of Christ (1 Corinthians 4 : 15). The shaikh, the spiritual father, 'is more concerned for his murid than he is for himself.'

A Universal Need

It is true, in Western Christianity (not in Eastern Christianity, where the spiritual father is still central in monastic and parochial life) through the development of institutions and structures, the community has to some extent taken on some of the formative office that a spiritual father or master fulfilled in the patristic age or in other cultures. It was also argued that in practice at least we can find in Christianity as in other religious traditions certain levels of spirituality. The shaikh, the master, is found only among the Sufis and not among Moslems in general. The master belongs to Zen and is not a common figure in popular Buddhism. All Christians are called to live a life of faith and the experience of faith, but not all are called to 'mystical' experience. It is these latter who need the special ministrations of the spiritual father. So the argument went. But there was not much readiness to accept this assertion in regard to Christianity. Indeed, various reasons were marshalled to argue for the universal value of spiritual paternity in Christianity. Christian life is a communion, a giving and receiving, modelled on the inner life of the Trinity revealed to us. Christianity is a sacramental religion ; the Christian ordinarily needs another human person to be for him or her a sacrament of the Father's love and provident care—a fact to which the New Testament gives ample witness. We are called upon to exercise in regard to others something of that unique mediatorship of Christ into whom we have been baptized. In actual fact, the richness of the theological content of the Christian concept of spiritual father goes far beyond any description of the role of guru, Zen Master or shaikh. Rightly, then, do we hesitate and fear to take on this demanding role, even though its response to our need for generativity makes it in some ways very attractive. But as an Orthodox spiritual father noted, while in natural paternity it is the father who makes the decision to become father, it is not initially thus in spiritual paternity. It is rather the son who comes and calls forth the father. Indeed one might not realize he has fathered a spirit-filled life in a particular son until some time after it has actually taken place.

In any case, one can only humbly respond to this call for service, painfully aware of his own inadequacies—which in their time may prove important assets in his compassionate service of his sons—and hopefully confident that the Father whose Spirit has inspired this son to look to him for this service will supply all that is needed because of the expectant faith of the son. The role for the Christian spiritual father, although greater, is yet easier, because he does not carry the burden alone. He can depend fully on the all-powerful Christ, the one who is ultimately master and father, with whom he is one.

Not only in the initiation of the relationship but throughout its duration, discernment and docility to the leading of the Spirit are paramount. He, and he alone, is the director. He is the one whom both father and son obey. What the father wants the son to imitate him in is in learning to listen to the Spirit. The father needs always to be aware that true obedience—a listening, *ob audire*—which is meant to be a school leading to evangelical freedom can easily degenerate into some kind of immature and even infantile dependence, an abdication of human freedom and responsibility. As our Lord said, one must judge the tree by its fruits (Matthew 7 : 20). Is the relationship leading to the development of the fruits of the Spirit : love, joy, peace, patience, long-suffering, kindness, chastity (Galatians 5 : 22) in the life of the disciple ? The father must always take care not to crush a bruised reed nor quench a smoldering flax (Matthew 12 : 20). Yet there is a time to bring a certain pressure to bear, not ordinarily by manufacturing artificial trials but by uncovering the exigencies of the Father's very particular love for this son. But even in the midst of such times of trial there should abide in the depths a certain peace and joy, a sense of confidence in the presence of love.

Towards a Renewal

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, we very much need an 'utrum' vocabulary, one that comprises 'both' male and female. Wherever I have said 'father, son, he, him,' I would also want to say 'mother, daughter, she, her.' The call to spiritual maternity—paternity is beyond sexual distinction, to a fullness that is sacramental of the Divine Fatherhood—Motherhood of Him Who Is, being neither he nor she.

Whether we say, then, 'spiritual mother' or 'spiritual father', we speak of a role that is found in some form in all great religious traditions, and in an especially meaningful and rich way in our Christian tradition. If we perceptively attend to what is happening on the religious scene today we will see that it is a role that we very much need to refind and reintegrate into Christian life if we are adequately to respond to what the Spirit is evoking in the hearts of the rising generations and if we are to make our proper contribution to the rapidly evolving world spiritual culture.

STORYTELLING AND THE THEOLOGIAN'S CRAFT

PROF. BELDEN C. LANE

'There are only two or three human stories,' Willa Cather wrote, 'and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before.'[1] This quality of recurring transcendence has been the experience of every good fireside or bedside storyteller. How many times have the walls and furniture of my daughter's room gradually dissolved into forest growth under the spell of Maurice Sendak? How often have we hearers and tellers of good stories found ourselves caught up in a tale which altogether told itself, which indeed told and moved and recreated us ourselves?

> There are great stories afoot in the world. They have a life in themselves, and from time to time historical people find their way into these stories. They contribute to the story and are in turn enriehed by it. Tolkien says there is a kind of Hungarian Goulash of stories, a great cauldron of tales, stewing and steaming through the centuries...[2]

This ability of stories to carry on a life of their own, to seek out their own hearers and tellers, and to be the bearer, now of judgement, now of redemption, is at the heart of the Judeo-Christian story itself. Believers commonly experience the mixed terror and serendipity of encounter with God through the power of story and metaphor. Children have always been able to tell us this. Recent proponents of narrative theology, therefore, have not been plotting new ground so much as recovering the old.[3] They seek to retrieve the primitive power of a unified experience of the world, known perfectly well to children but often lost to the post-Cartesian world of adults. Narrative theology, in short, is concerned to discover the meaning of Jesus' words: 'Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.' (Mt. 18.3)

In this attempt to touch on the significance of storytelling for a reevaluation of theological method, the best I can do is relate part of my own recent experience and share some stories that have created new directions for my theological understanding. There is no better place to start than with a story itself, especially one about the Besht—the Baal Shem Tov—an eighteenth century Hasidic Rabbi and one of the greatest storytellers of all time. It is a long story, but one that underscores

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1. John Shea, *Stories of God: An Unauthorized Biography* (Chicago: Thomas More Press, 1978) p. 57.

2. Robert P. Roth, *Story and Reality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), p. 30. The reference to Tolkien is taken from his essay 'On Fairy Stories,' found in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966).

3. In addition to the writings of Shea and Roth, recent studies in narrative theology include John Navone's two books *Towards a Theology of Story* (1977) and The *Jesus Story: Our Life as Story in Christ* (1979), both with excellent bibliographies, and Sallie McFague TeSelle's *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology* (1975). The significance of metaphor in biblical studies is emphasized by Walter Wink (most recently in an article, 'Letting Parables Live,' in *The Christian Century,* Nov. 5, 1980), by Dan Via (*The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension,* 1967), and by David J. A. Clines (in his narrative study of *The Theme of the Pentateuch,* 1978). Slightly earlier works by Robert W. Funk and Amos Wilder on language and hermeneutics probe deeper into the biblical use of language. Still further, in the field of literary criticism, works such as Brian Wicker's *The Story-Shaped World: Fiction and Metaphysics* (1975) offer creative insights for theology. Finally, Frederick Buechner and Richard A. Jensen are among those who ask how storytelling may be used in more effective preaching today.

the redemptive quality of storytelling like no other.

On the day the Baal Shem Tov died, he called his followers around him to give each of them his future task. The last was Rabbi Yacob. He was told to go wandering all over Europe telling the stories he knew of the Besht. Understandably he was disappointed, having hoped for an assignment of some honour and distinction. A life of wandering and poverty was not what he had expected. But the Baal Shem Tov told him that he would receive a sign when he was to stop, and the rest of his life would be lived in ease.

After years of wandering and telling stories, Reb Yacob heard one day of a nobleman in Italy who lived for nothing but to hear new stories of the Besht. In fact, he paid a gold ducat for each new one that he heard. So the rabbi set out for Italy with great anticipation. He found the nobleman and was warmly received by him, but after dinner when he sat down to tell his stories, he could not remember any of them. As hard as he tried, they all escaped him. For the next three days he could remember nothing. Fianlly, as he was preparing to leave in embarrassment, he suddenly remembered a story. It was not an important one—he had never thought of it before—but it would at least prove to the nobleman that he had known the Besht, because no one else had been present to witness this particular story. Only Reb Yacob could tell it.

This is what he told the nobleman. Once, during Passover, the Besht had told Yacob to come with him on a journey. They travelled for some distance and came to a city in Turkey where the streets were all decorated for the Easter festival. They found the street where the Jews lived, noticing that all the doors and windows were tightly closed. (Jews always took precautions not to provoke the Christians at such a time.) The Baal Shem Tov and Reb Yacob knocked on the door of the largest house, were brought in very quickly and fearfully, and scolded for being out in the street. But the Besht horrified everyone in the house by throwing back the curtains, opening the window, and standing in front of it, looking out onto the town square.

There the festival was about to begin. A wooden cross had been erected in the middle, with faggots ready to burn the victim (the archetypal Jew who had been the killer of Christ). When the procession began, the bishop was at the head, arrayed in the finest clothes, holding a staff studded with diamonds. At that moment the Besht told Reb Yacob to go out and order the bishop to come to him immediately. Terrified at the thought of going to his death, Reb Yacob nevertheless did as he was told. He was amazed when the bishop seemed frightened at hearing his message and he was even more amazed when the bishop returned with him. The Baal Shem Tov spoke with the bishop for three hours alone in a back room, then the Besht came out and told Yacob they were ready to return home.

That was the story. Reb Yacob said he could remember no more. Then he suddenly noticed the enormous effect his inconsequential story had had upon the nobleman. The man had dissolved into tears. He was tremendously moved. He said to Reb Yacob:

'Your story has saved my soul. You see, I was there that day. I was that bishop. I had descended from a long line of distinguished rabbis, but the Evil One had come upon me one day and I had abandoned the faith and converted to Christianity. The Christians, of course, were so pleased that they eventually made me a bishop and I enjoyed the splendour of the office myself. I always felt guilty about the killing of the Jew each year, but I did nothing to stop it. Until that one year. The night before the festival I had a terrible dream of the Day of Judgement and the peril of my soul. So when you came with the message from the Baal Shem Tov the very next day, I knew that I had to go with you. For three hours we talked alone. He told me that he thought there might still be hope for my soul. If I were to sell my goods and retire on what was left to live a life of good deeds and holiness, there might still be hope. His last words to me were these: "*When a man comes to you and tells you your own story, then you will know that your sins are forgiven.*" So I have been asking everyone for stories of the Besht. I recognized you immediately when you came three days ago. But when I saw that all the stories had been taken from you, I knew it was the judgement of God. Yet now you have remembered *one* story—*my* story; and I now know the Baal Shem Tov has interceded on my behalf and God has forgiven me.'[4]

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4. Adapted from an account in Meyer Levin, ed., *Classic Hassidic Tales* (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), pp. 165-176.

Few stories express so well the power of story itself. The whole mystery of the Gospel is summarized in that central experience of hearing someone tell you your own story and thereby knowing your sins to be forgiven. When we hear a story that strikes us as our own—that 'tell us' even more than it is told by us—then we are radically shaken out of the world as we have perceived it and opened to new possibilities of what we might be. We are saved by God's use of the story as a vehicle of redemption.

Too often in our culture, and in theological circles particularly, the idea of story is robbed of this significance. The story is portrayed as a shallow illustration, a gimmic or contrivance used to 'spice up' the truth. The 'story teller' is frequently viewed in a pejorative sense as at best a stretcher of truth and at worst a prevaricator. Underlying this response is a conception of truth as something incapable of being stretched, something rigid and unpliable, essentially propositional. Story, therefore, serves only to make decorative that which is most perfectly expressed in discourse.

But this idea misses altogether the mystery and fullness of revelation in the divine-human encounter. When story functions as a vehicle of redemption it embraces the hearer in a vividly judging and saving way. In this sense, then, story must not be seen as merely a more or less artificial means of conveying truth. Story *is* the truth. As New Testament scholars observe, a parable does not simply 'have a point' or teach a lesson ; it is itself what it is talking about. 'The meaning cannot be read off conceptually ; we only get at the meaning through the metaphor.'[5] The wholeness of the story, within the storytelling process, is the primary way in which saving knowledge is communicated.

One of the best-known illustrations of this redemptive value of stories is found in the 'frame story' of *A Thousand and One Nights.* Here King Shahriyar, a victim of his wife's cuckoldry, determines never again to be deceived by a woman. To ensure this, he marries a new wife every day and has her put to death the following morning. After some time has elapsed and a diminishing supply of young women in the kingdom, the beautiful and clever Scheherazade is chosen to marry the king. She intends to stop the cycle and become a 'means of deliverance' in the situation. Hence, on the night of her marriage, as the king has trouble falling asleep, Scheherazade tells him a story. It is a fascinating story, one that conveniently she is unable to complete by the next morning. So the king puts off her death until she can finish the tale the following night. To the delight of all, the ploy continues for a thousand and one nights. In the process, Scheherazade not only saves her life and the lives of others by telling stories, but both she and the king are changed. The stories have a therapeutic way of helping him to work through his disgust with life and hatred of women. She, in turn, falls in love with the king, discovering through him another part of herself. Bruno Bettelheim, in his brilliant study of fairy tales, uses psychoanalytic categories to suggest that the figures in this story represent the id, ego, and superego as they are integrated into the wholeness of a personality. The king and Scheherazade, through the telling and hearing of stories, help each other grow into the fullness of themselves.[6]

Metaphor, the body, and holistic theology

What I want to suggest is that the use

5. Sallie TeSelle, *Speaking in Parables* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 5, 16.

6. Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1975), pp. 86-89.

of stories and metaphor in theology offers an even greater possibility of this same kind of integration—of body and spirit, id and ego-superego, right and left sides of the brain, academic theology and lived experience—in a way that our usual theologizing will never permit. Christian theology, to the wholeness it desparately needs, will have to recapture the essential nature of Christianity as story—the Gospel story that still lives and creates its own hearers and tellers. Traditionally, much of our theology has been a very academic and bloodless affair—a highly cerebral exercise concerned with rational analysis, dissection, and systematization. The use of metaphor in theology, however, let us get in touch with the wholeness of ourselves as persons as well as with the fullness of God's truth. It gives us an embodied theology making use of the sensuous, the imaginative, and poetic side of our perception—once again, balancing the right and left sides of the brain.

Let me try to develop this by sharing a story out of my own experience recently. Last week I went rock climbing for the first time in my life. The teenage son of the departmental secretary needed someone who was an adult to go along with him on a school outing and, half as a favour, half as an excuse for living out some of my own fantasies, I went. During the day we climbed four rock faces (40-60 feet each) and then rappelled down one of them. The rappelling was exciting. The climbing was spiritual experience. It is not nearly as death-defying and brave a thing as it sounds. We were hooked by carabiner (or steel ring) to a sturdy rope that was held from the top by the belayer (a person ready to stop our fall at any time). Yet we very much had the sense of a desperate loneliness between ourselves and that rock face. From the bottom it looked impossible, but as we worked our way slowly up, feeling in every direction and testing hand or foot holds, gradually we found that a plain rock face is really a whole geography of possibilities we never imagined before.

What impressed me most was the concentration and intensity of awareness that the experience evoked. Motivated by fear and excitement and the crucial importance of making right judgements, I found my mind and body integrated in a much more creative way than usual. There was no peripheral vision, no opportunity for concentration to waver. Finding my tenuous way up that rock face very much involved my mind's letting my body take the lead. My body communicated in its own way with the rock, while my analytical mind wisely stood back and followed its direction. (Actually my analytical mind was telling me to escape the whole idiocy as fast as possible.) But my body spoke its own language, offered its own direction. At the time, it was all right side of the brain, nonverbal, sensing perception that was needed for the task. Only now, as I sit safely in the ground in front of a typewriter, does left-brain analytical thinking take over and enable me to spin webs of meaning over the whole experience.

Somehow that story—that whole experience—says something to me about the way I need to be doing theology. My theologizing needs to involve my physical existence as well as my mind; and it does not often do that. Theological exercise may have to include the way my body senses as well as the way my mind reasons.[7] Therefore, the method appropriate to expressing the fullness of such truth will require the use of metaphor much more

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7. This insight of the 1960's, as seen in Sam Keen's *Apology for Wonder* (1969) and *To a Dancing God* (1970), as well as Norman O Brown's *Love's Body* (1968), can still reach beyond the unfulfilled greening of America a decade ago.

than it has in the past. This is because metaphor enables me to keep in touch with the physical reality in which I exist and in which I am encountered by God. There is a physical, material basis of metaphor that makes it a vivid and earthy part of language. Metaphor, by definition, is the use of the familiar, commonplace and down-to-earth as a way of describing or imaging the *unfamiliar*. That, after all, is what we are always trying to do in theology. That is entirely the way Jesus taught in his use of parables. Through parables he drew sensory pictures of a truth which could be captured in no other way. His was a language that thrived on living, earthy images. Sallie TeSelle asks, then, why it is that theologians so often step out of their skins when they think ?[8] Why, in the tradition of classical Christian theology, have we so often been dependent upon discursive reasoning alone ? Our theologizing is frequently an ethereal, cerebral, and a historical thing, afloat with abstract deflnitions and practically unrelated to our selves as whole being rooted in history.

Ur-story and the Nature of Language

Linguistic philosophers and writers on hermeneutics suggest that all our forms of theological expression must be understood in terms of the very nature and origins of language. Ernst Cassirer, for example, observes that human beings apparently have come to their proficiency in abstract thought only recently in the evolution of human consciousness and language. So-called 'primitive man learned first to speak in metaphor—trying to describe the dissimilar and unfamiliar by means of the earthy and ordinary. His/her language was very much an embodied and dynamic affair, lacking the precision of our language today, but able much better to stir the imagination. For example, he or she used a concrete, somatic word like *pneuma* (meaning 'breath' or 'wind') to speak in a groping, metaphorical way about the spiritual and immaterial as it relates to human experience. What happens in the aging of language, however, is that such rich, corporeal images gradually degenerate into dead metaphors. They lose their physical root and instead become definitive terms we use to talk abstractly about the spiritual and metaphysical while no longer at all taking into account our experience as breathing selves. As a result, we no longer participate in the truth. What we gain in precise definition we lose in personal meaning. Dead metaphors form the stock-in-trade of classic theology.

What we need is a theological method that also goes back to the roots of language and restores metaphor to its important role in groping after truth. 'Ur-story', with its original, imaginative linking of the strange with the ordinary, gives us a basis for doing theology that takes seriously both body and soul. It makes possible God's encounter of us in the wholeness of our existence. Theologically, Ur-story is fully apprehended in the mystery of the incarnation—in Jesus Christ, the Metaphor of God. This is the primal story in which we discover the meaning of our full humanity. It prevents us from denying the integration of our created selves as physical and spiritual being. Seen in this light, therefore, storytelling may function, in part, as the Christian's hedge against the heresy of docetism, the perennial tendency toward a disembodied theology.

This helps to relate so many things which previously have been dichotomized in my thinking. It offers a new way of

8. TeSelle, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16. She quotes Dan Via's argument that 'The human organism is *a body that thinks*, and in all thinking the mind unites with a figure-language—of its own devising.'

appreciating the novels of Nikos Kazantzakis, for example, novels that have always held me entranced by their use of the most earthy images to speak of the transcendent. Kimon Friar once captured the genius of Kazantzakis when he admitted:

> Even words, the tools of his trade, were barriers to communication, and despairing ever of refining them, he hacked them out like building blocks into crude but towering images. Like the painter who turns to collage for a more immediate replica of life, and in desperation glues or rivets on his canvas sand, iron, fur, flowers, bits of string, or fragments of newsprint proclaiming the world's catastrophes or its trivialities, Kazantzakis longed to glue on the blank pages of his despair sections from his own flesh, bits of his skin and bone, splinters from his fingernails, all ensanguined and smeared with his life's blood.[9]

That describes my ideal of theological method as well as anything of which I can think. And if this is right, if this attention to the fullness of human experience restores to theology much of which it has lost, then the use of metaphor, the telling of stories will be an integral part of the theologian's craft.

Stories attach themselves to the imagination and soar. They grasp the hearer at every level. Ignatius Loyola fully recognized this when he made the imaginative reflection on Gospel stories the heart of his *Spiritual Exercises*. He knew that stories by their nature evoke the reconstruction of place and application of the five senses. Stories invite the exercitant to visualize his/her own mental and physical participation in another reality. In an example taken from Ignatius' contemplation of the story of Christ's birth, I am urged to

> form a mental image of the scene and see in my imagination the road from Nazareth to Bethlehem. I will consider its length and breadth, and whether it is level or winding through valleys and over hills. I will also behold the place of the cave of the Nativity, whether it is large or small, whether high or low, and what it contains.[10]

In this manner the story begins to be re-enacted. Its physical sphere of action is mentally reconstructed in my experience. Then it is that I am encouraged to apply the five senses of the body to my further recreation of the Gospel birth narrative. I touch, I smell, I hear, and even taste the experience. Through my imagination both body and mind are engaged in a process of identifying with the truth of the story. I am invited to make *that* story (then and there) become *my* story (here and now), through my physical, metaphorical participation in it. That is an exciting possibility.

There is a world communion of stories which offers the theologian a fascinating resource far beyond the limits of his or her own tradition. From the metaphors of the Tao as taught by Lao tzu and Chuang tzu in ancient China to the stories of Rumi, the thirteenth-century Sufi mystic or the stories of Mullah Nasruddin; from the use of stories for spiritual therapy in the ancient Vedic tradition to the Hasidic tales of the Baal Shem Tov and Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, the appeal of the story has been the same. It seeks to engage the whole person. At its best the storytelling process can offer healing and integration of both body and mind. Martin Buber tells of a rabbi whose account of his grandfather illustrates exactly this reality.

> My grandfather was lame. Once they asked him to tell a story about his teacher. And he related how the holy Baal Shem used to hop and dance while he prayed. My grandfather rose as he spoke, and he was so swept away by his story that he himself began to hop and

9. Nikos Kazantzakis, *The Saviours of God: Spiritual Exercises* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 17.

10. *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, translated by Anthony Mottola (New York: Image Books, 1964), p. 71.

dance to show how the master had done. From that hour on he was cured of his lameness. That's the way to tell a story.[11]

Not only is it the way to tell a story, but it is also a pointer for theological method. What I am trying to suggest here is a more holistic way of talking about God. The use of stories rooted in human experience will certainly never approximate the systematic precision with which much of classic theology has operated. But it contributes immensely to our knowledge of God, if we are to think of that 'knowing' in the way that the Hebrews used the word *yada*. This kind of knowing involves a surrender of the whole self, whether in terms of Adam's 'knowing' his wife in sexual intimacy (Gen. 4:1) or the children of Isreal 'knowing' their God (Ex. 6:7). It demands the commitment of one's body as well as mind.

On the way back from rock climbing last Saturday I had a feeling of having discovered this again—a sense of being in touch with something important. The experience had been for me a metaphor of far more significant things yet to be learned in my life. Driving home, I rolled down the windows of the car, noticed the wind and scenery more keenly than usual, and began to feel the aches of the day settle into my shoulders and legs. It was a sensuous moment of truth. Only a poet like George Herbert could have described so well what I felt and what I had learned, when he wrote:

Love is that liquor sweet and most divine
Which my God feels as blood, but I as wine.

It may take more trips to the rock wall to help unpack all this for me. Learning to think—to theologize—with one's body is a painfully slow process for beginners. It is almost like learning as a child to talk again. Happily it was said of the Baal Shem Tov that he gradually learned to speak in twenty-six different languages—not the languages of nations, but of silence, of animals, trees, the clouds, of his own body. Most of us have not even started the novitiate for such a training. We are still too far removed from our childhood. But perhaps simply hearing and repeating the story may be the place to begin.

11. Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim: The Early Masters* (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), pp. v-vi.

(*Continued from Page* 376)

asthma, and his role required that he should come on stage several times bare-chested. People were concerned about his health and asked him not to perform, but he argued that he should not disobey the Master, who had asked him to act. Moreover, he knew many people would be disappointed if he did not appear. The strain and the weather combined to aggravate his disease. Thereafter his health declined rapidly. To those who were anxious about him he would say : 'This body does not belong to me. It is the Master's. It will remain as long as he keeps it.' He breathed his last on February 8, 1912. His last words were : 'Master, you have come. Please destroy my worldly intoxication. Victory to Sri Ramakrishna ! Let us go.'

Girish left the stage of the world as he had left the stage of the theatre— with the flourish and heroism of a seasoned actor. Like a drama in itself, the story of his miraculous transformation had travelled from person to person, place to place, and country to country. His acting, writing, love for art, feeling for the poor and the fallen, and above all, his faith in his guru, have made him immortal.

(*concluded*)

THE WILL ACCORDING TO THE UPANISADS AND SCHOPENHAUER

DR. RAMAKRISHNA RAO VETURY

'After two centuries of introspective analysis philosophy found behind thought, desire; and behind intellect, instinct; — just as, after a century of materialism physics finds behind matter, energy,' says Will Durant.[1] The credit for this profoundly significant discovery of the role of will in human behaviour goes to Schopenhauer. He established the doctrine of the primacy of will, according to which, will is considered to be the essence of man and the universe. The conscious and unconscious desires are the only motive force behind all action, thought, intellect and even memory. The concrete world is only objectified will at various grades of objectification. Man is not really such a rational animal as has been made out so far but actually is a pawn in the hands of will. According to Bertrand Russel, the ground work for downgrading knowledge and elevating will had been 'prepared by Rousseu and Kant, but was first proclaimed in its purity by Schopenhauer.'[2] The purity of the doctrine can be gauged by the aphorism of Schopenhauer, 'No will; no idea, no world.'[3] In establishing this doctrine of will, Schopenhauer paved the way for Nietzsche on the one hand and Freud on the other.

Schopenhauer's philosophy is admittedly influenced by Kant, Plato and the Upanisads. His admiration for the Upanisads is very well known. In the preface to his magnum opus, *The world as will and idea,* Schopenhauer writes: 'If it does not sound too vain, I might express the opinion that each one of the aphorisms which make up the Upanisads may be deduced as a consequence from the thought I am going to impart, though the converse that my thought is to be found in the Upanisads, is by no means the case.'[4] In view of this statement, it is of interest to study what the Upanisads say about the will and its relationship to man and the Universe. This might enable us to ascertain the extent to which the Upanisads influenced the philosophy of Schopenhauer.

The will is a composite faculty which includes desires, wishes, instincts, determination and self-control with follow-up action The corresponding word in Sanskrit seems to be *kāma*. The word *icchā* is also used with not so wide connotation. Radhakrishnan writes: '*Kāma* becomes defined later as *icchā,* desire and *kriyā*, action. It is the creative urge.'[5] Another common word for will is *saṁkalpa.* Explaining this word Dr. Radhakrishnan says, 'It has also reflective aspects besides the volitional. What is mechanical process in the inorganic world and stimulation in the organic, is motivation in human beings.'[5a]

The following correlation may be helpful:

Will = desire + action

Kāma = icchā + kriyā

Saṁkalpa = kāma + reflection

We shall now take up the Upanisadic[6]

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1. Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967). p. 350.

2. Bertrand Russel, *History of Western Philosophy,* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1961). p. 727.

3. *ibid.*, p. 726.

4. Schopenhauer, Arthur, *The World as Will and Idea,* translated by R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. 1923). Vol. I, p. xiii.

5. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanisads* (New York: Humanities Press Inc. 1978). p. 37 (foot note).

6. The Upanisadic quotations are from the translation by Robert Ernest Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanisads,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). (Except where otherwise stated in the article).

account of will and compare it with that of Schopenhauer.

Will and creation

The Upaniṣads very clearly state that the whole of creation is the outcome of desire or will. The *Chāndogya*, which usually sums up elegantly the philosophical speculations of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, states :

> 'All these, verily, centre in the will, have the will as their soul, abide in will. Heaven and earth were formed through will, air and ether were formed through will, water and heat were formed through will. Through their having been willed, rain becomes willed. Through rain having been willed, food becomes willed. Through food having been willed, living creatures are willed. Through living creatures having been willed, sacred hymns become willed. Through sacred hymns having been willed, sacred works become willed. Through sacred works having been willed, *the world becomes willed. Through the world having been willed*, everything becomes willed. Such is will.'[7]

This is a very categorical statement that the will is at the root of all natural phenomenon, living beings and all activity, in this phenomenal world. In fact, this serves as a good annotation on Schopenhauer's assertion 'No will; no idea, no world.' Only, chronologically speaking, we will be more correct if we say that Schopenhauer summarised the Upaniṣadic thought in this respect. We shall trace the line of thought that led to this conclusion in the Upaniṣads.

Sat, Asat and desires

The Upaniṣads considered both Sat and Asat as the starting point of this world.[8] They associated desires to account for the products of creation. 'In the beginning nothing whatsoever was here ... Then he made up his mind : "would that I had a self." So he went on praising : water was produced. "While I was praising I had pleasure" thought he."[9] This means that in the beginning was Asat, which desired to have a self, and took the necessary action (here praising) and as a result, water was created in this world as the first element. During the action for the fulfilment of the desire there was also pleasure for the desirer. More desires and action lead to the creation of other items, like fire, sun, wind, and life. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* describes how time was created as a result of the desire of this Asat (death, hunger). It is specifically mentioned there that 'previous to that there was no year', indicating the starting point of the time consciousness of man in this causal world. The story is continued to account for the various items of creation on the basis of desire. If we take the Asat as the potential condition of the world, the transition from the potential to the actual, from Asat to Sat, (from field to matter) is all based in *kāma* or will. The desire of the Asat is to be understood as the cosmic will, which crystallizes into individual desires and different objects in the phenomenal world. (Schopenhauer's objectification of will in various grades). The story has introduced all the essential elements for the doctrine of will : desires, action, pleasure, fructification of the desires, and the mind. Thus the will is the root cause of this world.

While in the above story, creation was started with the first desire of Asat, 'would that I had a self', in the next story is described how the world came out of the desires of Sat, the Soul (*Ātman*) in the form of a person.[10]

Here the Soul (*Ātman*) in the form of a person is the starting point. Looking around, he saw nothing else than himself. At this stage, to account for a second, the

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7. *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* 7.4.2. Trans. Dr. Radhakrishnan.
8. *ibid* 3.19.1. and 6.2.1.
9. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 1.2.1.
10. *ibid* 1.4.1-17.

philosophers tried one of the instincts of man, namely 'fear'. They found it illogical, 'Since there is nothing else than myself, of what am I afraid'. One is generally afraid of something, and when that something is not there, obviously, fear is not there. So they dismissed this hypothesis and tried an alternative. When one is alone, one has no delight and so, *Ātman* 'desired a second'. So here comes desire and it is introduced logically. With this desire he took the necessary action and created a woman out of half of him. 'He copulated with her. Therefrom human beings were produced.' So man is born out of the desire of the cosmic Soul. Again the same ingredients of desire, copulation, delight and reproduction. The story continues. The woman questions the propriety of the incestuous relationship between him and herself, and to escape from him she becomes a cow and hides herself. He becomes a bull and repeats the performance and we have cattle. Then horses, asses, goats and sheep. 'Thus, indeed, he created all, whatever pairs there are even down to the ants.' Finally he surveys all his output and proudly declares 'I, indeed, am this creation, for I emitted it all from myself.' The story is summed up with the remark 'Thence arose creation.' The story is extended to include Gods also in this creation : a super-creation by Brahma. The starting point for all this is that the Soul desired a second (companion, mate). The story is closed with the statement : 'In the beginning the world was just the Self (*Ātman*). He wished : "would that I had a wife : then I would procreate : would that I had wealth, then I would offer sacrifice," so great indeed is desire.' The great will for reproduction, family and wealth are emphasized here by the last remark '*so great indeed is desire*', describing the driving force of desire. The dominant nature of the instinct for reproduction and the predominantly acquisitive tendencies of man are both brought out here prominently, and we find this is true in the modern world also without exception.

This Upaniṣadic account of the basic role of will can be favourably compared with Schopenhauer's assertions, 'Certainly this world in which we live and have our being is in its whole nature through and through will' and 'therefore we called the phenomenal world the mirror of the will, its objectivity.'[11]

Mind as the seat of desires

Desires are created in the mind. This is made clear in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* : 'The mind verily, is an apprehender. It is seized by desires as an overapprehender, for by the mind one desires desires.'[12] Also, 'desire, imagination, doubt, faith, lack of faith, steadfastness, lack of steadfastness, shame, fear—all this is truly mind.'[13] Will and desire are therefore mental processes. (The Upaniṣads do not mention the brain).

Pleasure from desire

Fulfilment of desires requires action, and this action gives pleasure. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* clearly brings this out : 'Verily, while I was praising I had pleasure.'[14] While the fulfilment of desire leads to satiation, it is during the efforts for achieving the desires that one derives pleasure. The *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* says : 'Without getting pleasure (*sukha*) one is not active. Only by getting pleasure is one active.'[15] Yājñavalkya enumerates clearly the ingredients of human happiness : 'If one is fortunate among men and wealthy, lords over others, best provided with all hu-

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11. *The World as Will and Idea* Vol. I. Pp. 211, 354.
12. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 3.2.7.
13. *ibid* 2.4.11.
14. *ibid* 1.2.1.
15. *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* 7.22.

man enjoyments— this is the highest bliss of men.'[16] With this as a unit he measures in multiples of 100 and estimates the bliss of the Brahma-world as 100,000,000 times the human bliss on earth.

The unit of human enjoyment

However, the Upaniṣadic unit for worldly happiness is that obtained from sex. In stating this the Upaniṣads are quite uninhibited. The highest physical pleasure is considered to be that derived from the sex-act leading to procreation.[17]

The Upaniṣads gave a lot of importance to sex and reproduction in their speculations, almost to the point of embarrassing a modern reader. How are we to understand this extreme preoccupation of the Upaniṣadic thought with sex ? Is it their primitive level of thinking ? Or, did they anticipate 2500 years back, the trends of modern psychological and philosophical thought ? Let us see what Schopenhauer says about sex and desire :

> The will shows itself here as independent of knowledge, and works blindly, as in unconscious nature... Accordingly, the reproductive organs are properly the focus of will, and form the opposite pole to the brain, which is the representative of knowledge... The former are the life-sustaining principle—they ensure endless life—the relations of the sexes is really the invisible central point of all action and conduct, and peeps out everywhere in spite of all veils thrown over it. It is the cause of war and the end of peace ; the basis of what is serious and the aim of jest ; the inexhaustible source of wit, the key to all illusions, and the meaning of all mysterious hints... We see it at every moment seat itself, as the true and hereditary lord of the world, out of the fullness of its own strength, upon the ancestral throne ; and looking down thence with scornful glance, laugh at the preparations made to bind it, or imprison it or at least limit it and, wherever possible, keep it concealed, and even so to master it that it shall only appear as subordinate, secondary concern of life.'[18]

Is there any difference between Schopenhauer, the 19th century philosopher and the Upaniṣads in their ideas on sex, except probably the sophisticated language ? Will Durant points out some passages from Schopenhauer as the possible sources of Freud's emphasis on sex.

Will of the species and desires of the individuals

Actually the emphasis on sex is a logical consequence of Schopenhauer's main thesis : 'The will is not only free, but almighty. From it proceeds not only its action, but also its world : and as the will is, so does its action and its world become ... The will as the thing-in-itself is quite different from its phenomenal appearance. Further it is free from multiplicity, although its manifestations in time and space are innumerable.'[19]

Now, this will undergoes various grades of objectification before it makes itself tangible in this phenomenal world. This will as the Kantian thing-in-itself, at one grade of objectification is seen as the Platonic idea. 'These grades of the objectification of will, I say, (are) simply Plato's ideas.'[20]

At a similar grade of objectification, we find the forces of nature.

> It ought to be mentioned that Euler saw that the inner nature of gravitation must ultimately be referred to an inclination and desire... Thus every universal, original force of nature is nothing but a low grade of the objectification of will, and we call every such grade an eternal idea in Plato's sense.[21]

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16. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 4.3.33.
17. *ibid* 2.4.11.
18. Quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* p. 318.
19. *The World as Will and Idea* Vol. I. Pp. 351, 145, 146.
20. *ibid* p. 168.
21. *ibid* p. 165 ; 174-5.

As the objectification proceeds further, we find desires and action with a motive and still further actual organs themselves for functions.

> The whole existence of this body and the sum total of its functions are merely the objectification of that will which appears in its outward actions in accordance with a motive... The parts of the body must, therefore, completely correspond to the principal desires through which the will manifests itself; they must be the visible expressions of these desires. Teeth, throat and bowels are objectification of hunger; the organs of generation are the objectification of sexual desire; the grasping hand, the hurrying feet correspond to the more indirect desires of the will which they express.[22]

Thus the bodily organs are the foci of the corresponding will, and are merely the tools of action for different faculties. So, even human intellect is only a tool to serve the desire to know and so is a servant of will. Even memory has no independent existence apart from will, as it is selective, depending on the self-interest.

With the above sketch of the doctrine we can now examine an important grade of will, namely the will to live.

Species and individuals : will to live

It is well-known that the sexual urge is very powerful in men and animals. It is equally known that men and animals have an inordinate desire for offspring. Sex is the technique for reproduction and so the two go hand in hand. All things born must die and so the fear of death is another common instinct to all individuals. If we combine these instincts and take them to the level of the species, we find a common feature namely a strong will to live : and live for ever if possible. This will to live on the part of the species makes itself manifest in certain forms of individuation.

1. As the desire for self-maintenance in order to live as an individual ; and
2. as desire for reproduction by the individual so that the species may live for ever through successive generations of individuals ; and consequently,
3. as a desire for sex in individual to achieve the purpose of reproduction for the species.

Of these, in the life of any man (or animal) self-maintenance comes first, starting from birth and persisting upto death. The other two follow later, starting from adulthood and stopping in old age. As Schopenhauer says : 'Self-maintenance is his first effort, and as soon as he makes provision for that, he only strives after the propagation of the species ; as a merely natural being he can attempt no more.'[23] So hunger and sex are two basic instincts in man and animals.

The problem now is : how do the species plan to fulfil their will to live in the face of the inevitability of death of the individual ? The individual cannot hope to live forever.

'In the end, death must conquer, for we became subject to him through birth, and he only plays for a little while with his prey before he swallows it up.'[24] And the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* states, 'When he was born, Death opened his mouth on him.'[25] So the species, fearing death, adopted the strategy of reproduction by the individuals. Once this strategy is adopted by the species, the individuals become expendable after they fulfil their quota of reproduction. They are welcome to wither away and die or even commit suicide. In fact some insects die immediately after reproduction.

The strident cry of the species to live forever is recorded in the Upaniṣads as the desire for offspring on the part of the indi-

22. *ibid* p. 139, 141.

23. *ibid* p. 425.
24. *ibid* p. 402.
25. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 1.2.4.

vidual. A father's attitude towards his son clearly brings this out. The Upaniṣads see the son as a continuation of the father. 'This world of men is obtained by a son only—'[26] A father after death, 'enters his son with his vital breath— etc. : By his son a father stands firm in this world.'[27] The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* gives the prayer of a father on the birth of a son : 'In this son may I be increased ; and have a thousand in mine house : May nothing rob his retinue of offspring or of animals.'[28] Indeed this is the humanized version of the cry of the species. Schrodinger writes : 'The acts of propagation by which a series of genetically connected individuals proceed from one another are not really an interruption but only a constriction of both bodily and spiritual life.'[29]

(To be concluded)

26. *ibid* 1.5.16.
27. *ibid* 1.5.17.
28. *ibid* 6.4.24.
29. Erwin Schrodinger, *My View of the World,* (London: Cambridge University Press 1964) p. 23.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

RECENT TRENDS IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY: BY PROF. G. SRINIVASAN. Published by Bangalore Printing and Publishing Company, No. 88 Mysore Road, Bangalore 560 018. 1981. Pp. 152. Rs. 28.

Whether philosophy maintains a universal character like some of the sciences or has a regional structure is a matter of interesting debate amongst the meta-philosophers. Taking for granted, at the moment, the latter position that the abstract thinking of human mind is flavoured by spatio-temporal factors, Dr. G. Srinivasan of Mysore University presents a brief but authentic account of contemporary Western philosophy in the book under review.

The book deals with almost all the notable branches of modern Western thinking, like absolutism, pluralism, personalism, evolutionism, organicism, existentialism, the philosophies of sense-data, analysis, value etc., in an expository, comparative, critical and evaluative manner.

Recent trends in Western philosophy undoubtedly focus on man and his problems, as against the major emphasis of the traditional philosophy which was primarily speculative or dogmatic. But the atheistic philosophies of existentialism and linguistic analysis do not present any solace to the alienated human mind of the twentieth century. This has been made clear by the author in the essay 'The Problem of Alienation' (Appendix I). This point of view was shared by the present reviewer as well in the All-India Seminar on the subject at Madras in March, 1979.

Analytic and existentialist trends do not present a mature, satisfying system. The need of the hour is to present a comprehensive system of philosophy which overcomes the shortcomings of the partial viewpoints. The author is an advocate of the integral viewpoint. The philosophy of A. N. Whitehead, for him, fulfils this requirement by and large. It is the best-possible theistic alternative to the existentialist atheism. The concept of God in Whitehead is able to explain stability, order and progress in the universe. The primordial, the consequent and the superjective nature of God satisfies all the requirements of the contemporary society, according to the author.

The learned author presents a precise but thorough account of the phenomenal development of the modern mind in the Western hemisphere. The book is of great help to the general reader as well as to the subject students. Except for a few misprints, the production of the book is attractive, and its price is quite reasonable.

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THE QUEST FOR A LASTING PEACE: BY BERNHARD MOLLENHAUER. Published by Dr. Sukumar Bose, Interlink, 36 Bosepara Lane, Calcutta 700 003. 1980. Pp. vi + 38. Price not mentioned.

The Quest for a Lasting Peace by Bernhard Mollenhauer is a collection of five published articles of the author: 'Horizons of the Occidental Mind', 'World Order and the Dilemma of Modernity', 'The Political Philosophy of William Ernest Hocking', 'Lutoslauski and the Knight among Nations', and the 'Quest for a Lasting Peace'. Apparently looking different, these articles have one objective in common: they have all been inspired by the author's intellectual mission for making this world a better place to live in.

Is the Western civilization progressing? Does progress mean merely exploring matter—the mysteries of the physical world? Mollenhauer pointedly asks. His own answer is very clear and decisive: 'mind is much more important than matter. The progress of humanity and the rise of real civilization demands unravelling the mysteries of the unfathomed human mind, that is, the inner reality of man.' To choose freely to realize in our individual lives the beauty of spirit is the great affirmation, to refuse to do so is the great negation. (p.8). The tragedy of the Western civilization lies in the fact that 'Western man has measured the Milky Way but failed to attain self-knowledge and the inner serenity of the Orient; divided counsels shake his hold on spiritual values. His psychology seldom gives him a sympathetic insight into religion. He reverts to political tribalism in an age which above all other presents cosmic vistas and reveals a new seal of human values.' (p. 8).

If the outwardly brilliant and inwordly decadent Western civilization is to redeem itself, it must aim at 'the highest development of the cultivated individual' in 'a world order of inter-penetrating sovereignties consistent with the integrity of each national tradition.' (p. 11). Such a world order must not be 'divorced from the ancient spiritual resources of the Orient' (p. 16) and must of necessity be based on basic values common to human societies. In this connection, Mollenhauer approvingly quotes the five basic principles of any civilized society outlined by the Harvard philosopher, William Ernest Hocking.

In the new world-order, nationalism need not be discarded as outmoded. Nation conceived as a metaphysical entity and as the spiritual unity of life between man and God, as suggested by Lutoslauski, the Polish philosopher of Messianism, will add a new dimension to the individual life and give individual a divine sense of mission inspiring him to realize himself in others and others to realize in himself. Thus conceived, nationalism will be an aid, not a hindrance to the realization of the new world order.

St. Paul voiced the vital principle of his new world when he said to the Romans: 'Be of the same mind toward another.' 'This simple yet important psychological principle of like-mindedness', observes Mollenhauer, 'should underlie any plan for lasting peace' in the new world order.

It would be wrong to dismiss Mollenhauer's prescriptions and suggestions as vague idealism. The soul of man is to be aroused and the common consciousness of the nations to these suggestions must be inspired from within. The ideals prescribed must take root in the mind of the individual and become part of the enlightened public opinion. This reviewer finds himself fully in agreement with the editor of the Mollenhauer papers when he says: 'The concept of progress and advancement of the whole human race should not live in our civilization in policy but all efforts should be made to put that into practice.'

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MEDICINE: *Its Magico-religious aspects according to the Vedic and later literature.* BY G.U. THITE. Published by Continental Prakashan, Vijaynagar, Poona-30, 1982. Pp. 253. Rs. 60.

Along with other older societies elsewhere, the ancient Indian people had a keen awareness of the role played by supernatural elements in the physical life of this world. The author of this post-doctoral thesis devotes detailed attention to this aspect of Indian Medicine during the Vedic and subsequent ages. He researches into the *Ṛg-Veda, Atharva-Veda, Kausika-Sūtra* as well as the works of Caraka, Susruta, Vāgbhata and others and presents a well-knit study of the subject.

In the perception of the Indian seers illnesses and diseases are not merely the results of physical causes. Behind most such imbalances are psychological and subtle environmental factors; the role of invisible spirits—forces and beings—is considerable. Consequently measures have been devised to

enlist the aid of appropriate agencies to prevent, cure and checkmate diseases. Even the medicines that are used derive their properties from their presiding deities. Again, medicine is only instrumental. Much attention is paid to the helpful role of Mantras, Yantras and rituals. Amulets, music and dance are pressed into service. The writer incidentally draws attention to similar practices in China, Congo, Greece and other countries of the old world.

Medicine is not only for the humans. There are branches of study relating to animals and trees and plants. Again, the patient is dealt with not merely as an individual but also as a unit of the universal, subject to constant impact from events in the cosmos. Great care is given to the prevention of illness by enjoining upon human beings certain measures of mental and emotional health. Religion, mysticism and yoga enter into the Indian system of medicine at some stage or other. The subject of omens receives considerable attention in this well-documented work which covers also the astrological side of the matter. A most useful, informative and thought-provoking treatise.

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GLIMPSES OF PHILOSOPHY AND MYSTICISM: BY JOHN SPIERS. Published by C. S. Gupta, Satsanga Seva Samithi. Gandhi Bazar, Bangalore 560 004. 1981. Pp. 332. Rs. 12.

John Spiers, belonging to a working class family of Scotland came to India in 1930 when he was barely 23, fascinated by its rational and liberal spiritual thought to which he was introduced from an early age through the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and some writings of the orientalists. He settled in India and came under the influence of the teachings of Sri Narayana Guru (1854-1928). He became a Swami in 1952 and established his Ashrama near Kaggalipura, 13 miles south of Bangalore. He passed away in 1979 after a long life of study and *sādhanā*. He widely read the religio-philosophical works of the East and the West and developed a broad comparative outlook. He wrote articles to several journals and some of those he contributed to the *Brahmavādin*, a journal from Madras (1895-1914), which was revived in 1966, are collected here in book form under the above title.

The first article 'What India Means to Me' recounts how the author happened to come to India influenced by its spiritual thought. He delineates the universal liberal spirit of India and contrasts it with that of other civilizations. 'India means to me this wonderful forbearing spirit which breathes a principle which is universal. This appeals immediately to all the intelligent people of other lands,' (p. 9) he recalls, and adds, 'India as a place and India as a state of mind cannot be really separated. So many factors are involved here—the languages of India themselves are charged with philosophic content, with analogies and references to religion and mythology drawn from different sources and traditions, but all gathered togather to give emphasis to universal principles.' (p. 10). 'And yet for all its infinite variety, India is a sustained unity, held together by the sense of the sacred and the Paganism and Pantheism everywhere in evidence.' (p. 13). On page 169 he concludes: 'It would almost seem that God the Supreme or the Absolute had made India a Holy Land, a *Punya Bhūmi,* to be set aside as a nursery for Yogis. In a world full of darkness the light of the sages and Yogis shines bright to this day.'

The next is 'A Warrior Rishi' which deals with the sublime and inspiring life and teachings of the great Narayana Guru of Kerala who uplifted millions of lower-caste and backward people to a high status. Our Governments, politicians, and social workers can take a good and necessary lesson from his noble and successful methods in uplifting the lower classes, economically and culturally, in the context of Indian spiritual ideals without creating caste and class conflicts.

'Wisdom's Antique Home' traces the wisdom of India in a historical perspective of the various civilizations of the world. He shows that the wisdom of India originated in the South. However, some of his statements and views have got coloured by the writings of pre-independent Western archaeologists who had no real understanding of the Indian spirit or were prejudiced or often had ulterior political motives of dividing the Indian people. The author unwittingly has fallen a prey to it perhaps being unaware of the new researches into the Indus Valley Civilization.

The other articles 'Brahma Vidya: East West Approach,' 'Why Brahmavadin Confronts the Drop-out', 'Why Communication is Difficult'. 'Pagan Hinduism in the World Today', and 'The Function of Darshanas' bring out the distinctive features of Indian religio-philosophic approach to discover the eternal verities and the ultimate Truth or Reality which informs all existence, and

contrast them with the narrow, dichotomistic and fighting ideas of other civilizations.

The last article 'What shall I Read' gives very good guidance to elevating study which broadens the vision and deepens the spirit. The great works suggested cover the products of both the Eastern and Western genius.

The author writes in a racy pedagogic style comparing and contrasting Indian thought with the rest in the light of his wide knowledge in a historical perspective. Here and there, there are brilliant flashes of insight and perspicacity. It is not an academic systematic exposition of topics and is difficult to summarize. As the title of the book has rightly said, they show glimpses of the greatness of Indian philosophy and mysticism, as against narrow dogmatism, and their relevance to the modern world. Everyone can read this cheaply produced book with profit.

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RELIGION AND SPIRITUAL LIFE: BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA. Published by Ramakrishna Mission, Ramakrishna Ashrama Marg, New Delhi 110 055. 1982. Pp. 28, Rs. 1.50.

A curious paradox of the contemporary religious situation is that the decline of its institutional aspect is accompanied by a sudden leap of genuine interest in the mystical dimension of human consciousness. A new, more mystically inclined, man is emerging, thirsting for the exploration of inner space.

Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta is, admittedly, one of the most powerful progenitors of this phenomenon. Intensely experimental, with the most satisfying psycho-philosophic rationale, the Great Master's *philosophia perennis* is, above all, remarkably free from nebulous, merely cerebral, satisfaction. It maps out the spiritual quest in the most rigorously practical way. And these maps vary: from that great treasure-house of spirituality, inexhaustible to practical mining—*The Gospel*—through *Māyer Kathā*, Swamiji's *Four Yogas*, and the appropriately named *The Eternal Companion*, to the 'second' generation *Paramārtha Prasanga* and others, the range is vast, varied and uninterrupted.

Religion and Spiritual Life by the respected President Maharaj is a slender yet invaluable addition to this range. The basic Ramakrishna-Vedanta note is struck at the very outset: Maharaj draws a sharp distinction between religion as ritual and religion as realization, as 'attainment of Self-knowledge.' This attainment is no mere 'longing': without the cultivation of the qualifying virtues—dispassion, discrimination and, above all, *shraddha*—this longing is analogous to 'plying the oars' to make the boat of spiritual life move while all the time it is tied to the anchor of 'attachment to *samsāra*.'

The basic mode of 'releasing the boat' is to 'inwardize the senses,' through renunciation. The process is hard for, as Maharaj says, we are 'perpetually in an ailing condition' *without our being aware of it*. This generates several fantasies about spiritual life, a recurring one being that about 'instant' success. Aspirants fondly assume that 'the moment they shut their eyes and sit for meditation, they will have vision of God, see their Chosen Ideal, understand every mystery of spiritual life; they will be able to meditate.' And 'since nothing like this happens,' says Maharaj, several doubts seep in—about the frequency, and duration of, indeed about the need for japa, the rationale of mantra, etc. culminating often in scepticism about the very attempt itself.

Maharaj allays these doubts with clarity, a rigid sense of realism and above all, remarkable candour. He emphasizes the need to fortify the will through constant practice but he also cautions against initially exuberant but eventually self-defeating enthusiasm: 'To resolve with rash enthusiasm at the very outset "I shall practise japa for 24 hours",' he says, 'is sheer madness. You should never act that way. One has to move ahead in steady and sedate steps...'

Maharaj, similarly, warns the aspirant against dilettantism in religion manifest, for instance, in the urge to worship the entire pantheon. This not only transforms the 'shrine room into a museum' but dissipates the energy which should be preserved for Japa which, as Maharaj says, 'is of primary importance.'

Religion and Spiritual Life reflects, in effect, the authenticity and experience of a sage whose spiritual ministration, as head of one of the most dynamic spiritual movements of our time, has already touched and transformed countless lives. As such it is an illuminating guide for those setting out on a journey our scriptures rightly describe as 'dark with distance and sharp as the razor's edge.'

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MOOLA BANDHA, THE MASTER KEY: BY CHELA BUDDHANANDA (under the guidance of Swami Satyananda Saraswati). Bihar School of Yoga, Monghyr, Bihar 811 201. 1978. Pp. 102. Rs. 20.

This is an in-depth study of an important *key* in the ancient yogic techniques to unlock the huge human potential that lies hidden and unutilized in this world of ignorance. The speciality of this treatment is that it is scientific, documented and practical. The author emphasizes that this and other *bandhas,* locking technique, are not all physical though they may start at the physical level. A *bandha,* contraction and holding of the muscles, initiates a movement that renders itself in terms of mental energies and then of the psychic.

The *mūla bandha* 'on the physical level is the conscious, wilful contraction of the perineum or cervix, the uddiyana bandha of the solar plexus and the jalandhara bandha of the throat.' Together they constitute the Maha Bandha. These *bandhas* 'induce five different kinds of "retention" or immobility; retention of muscles, breath, senses, thought and consciousness. Once retention of consciousness is achieved, the yogi is prepared for the next stage of his spiritual birth, the awakening of kundalini. The bandhas act as triggering mechanisms for the activation of this powerful force residing at the base of the spine.' The book contains a detailed account of the working of this bandha and explains it in terms of neurology, psychology and physiology. The processes are different for men and for women, and due care is taken to point out the ill-effects that are likely to be caused by wrong procedures. It is interesting to follow the author in his discussion of the relevant areas of the Tantra system. He lists seven chakras which are below the *muladhara*: *atala, vitala, sutala, talātala, rasātala, mahātala, pātāla.* 'They represent evolution from basic atomic structures to mineral life, then plant, lower animals and so on (p. 35).'

He cites parallels to the conception of chakras in other traditions. He traces the correlation between the chakras and the *kyo shos* or pressure points in the Japanese *judo* (*esoteric*) as also in the acupuncture points in *shiatzu* (a therapy from Japan). So also he mentions how Kundalini is known to the Kungs in South Africa as 'n/um' 'To the Chinese it was known as "spiritual fire" and to the American Indians as "hurakan".' He quotes from *A Mythic Image* by Joseph Campbell, the experience of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa: how the activity of Kundalini feels like the various movements of an ant, a fish, a monkey, a bird or a serpent (p. 41). He adds a valuable chapter on the system of acupuncture and shows a close correspondence between their techniques and the operations of the *bandhas,* notably the *mula bandha.*

Swamiji makes a clear distinction between the therapeutic uses of the *mula bandha* and the yogic applications to bring about changes in consciousness through its perfection in three stages: physical contraction, physical and mental contraction and psychic contraction.

In a useful note he warns against mistaking the *kumbhaka* that occurs in the early stages of meditation with the *kevala kumbhaka* which is an advanced stage in the kundalini yoga. He writes: 'Many yoga students, while in meditation, will have experienced for themselves the breath becoming slower and slower... many are overcome by a sense of fear...the experience is only the suspension of the breath, *not* the actual stopping of the breath.'

This is a reliable guide to the science of *bandhas.* The focus on the *mula bandha* is set in an over-all context of the human system and helps to preserve the right sense of proportion.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, VARANASI

Report: *April* 1981 to *March* 1982

The Home was started in 1900 as an independent institution under the name 'Poor Men's Relief Association' by a few young men who were inspired by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. The work was begun with a capital of only four annas. These young men used to take care of the poor and diseased, sometimes collecting them from the roadside. Swamiji was delighted to see their dedicated service and renamed the institution the 'Home of Service.' It was affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission in 1902. From this modest inception, the Home of Service has now grown into a fully equipped modern hospital taking care of the poor and the suffering as living manifestations of God.

The activities for the year are outlined below:

Indoor General Hospital: The total number of cases admitted during the year was 5,532; of these, 2,763 cases were relieved, 1,503 cases were cured, 582 discharged otherwise, 505 died and 179 remained at the end of the year. Surgical cases totalled 2,636. From the roadside 16 patients were picked up. An average of 171 beds were occupied daily. Free treatment was given to the extent of 34.81 per cent of the total number of patients.

Outpatient Department: The number of patients treated, including those at the Shivala branch, was 2,00,428 (New cases 51,188 and repeated cases 1,49,240). Daily attendance averaged 640. Surgical cases numbered 3,765.

Homoeopathy: The homoeopathic sections at Luxa and at Shivala were attended by 10 homoeopaths and served a total of 23,226 patients.

Clinical and Pathological Laboratory: The laboratory conducted many and varied tests under the general headings of clinical pathology, serology, chemical pathology, L.F.T., and bacteriology.

X-ray and Electro-Therapy Department: A total of 3,766 X-ray exposures were taken.

Invalids' Homes: Two separate invalid homes maintained 19 men and 30 women. The men mostly comprised old retired monks of the Ramakrishna Order. The women were helpless, poor widows who had none to look after them.

Outdoor Relief to the Poor: Monthly help was given to 48 poor invalids and helpless ladies and occasional pecuniary help was given to 5 persons. The total expenditure was 2,966.37. Besides, 64 new blankets were distributed, and school text-books worth Rs. 45.87 were given to poor boys. The institution could serve only a very small number of the poor of Varanasi because of paucity of funds.

Immediate Needs: As the Home's existence depends mainly on the generosity and support of sympathetic donors, the public is earnestly requested to come forward with their help and donations. The immediate needs of the Home are as follows: (1) Funds for maintenance of the 200 beds. (2) Only a few of the 200 beds have been endowed; the cost of endowment of a single bed is Rs. 30,000, but donors may perpetuate the memories of their loved ones by making partial endowments of Rs. 10,000/- or Rs. 5,000/-. (3) To help the institution maintain the old and invalid men and women, similar endowments are essential for the invalids' homes. (4) Donations are needed to meet the accumulated deficit of Rs. 3,54,076.21. (5) The proper growth of the institution has necessitated the appointment of several qualified doctors, nurses and other staff, for whom residential quarters have to be provided; for this a sum of Rs. 5,00,000/- will be necessary. (6) The present dairy requires immediate improvement to serve the patients with sufficient milk. For this funds are required in order to purchase more high-yielding cows.

Contributions, large or small, in cash or kind, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Varanasi-211 001. Donations are exempted from Income-tax.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Need for a Scientific Community

Every year when the names of Nobel Prize winners are announced, one looks in vain for the name of an Indian scientist among them. Recently the American journal *Current Contents* published a list of 1,000 distinguished scientists of the world whose work is recognized in scientific literature during the period 1965-1978. It included only seven scientists of Indian origin, and all of them are now either foreign citizens or working abroad.

If the impact made by Indian scientists on world scientific thought is insignificant, it is none the greater on national life. It is estimated that 40 *billion* rupees have already been spent on the development of science in India. At present there are over 250 R and D laboratories all over the country employing the third largest scientific and technological manpower in the world at an annual cost of Rs. 40 million. A thousand colleges affiliated to more than a hundred universities are teaching science. And yet not even a fraction of the zest and craze for cinema and cricket that our young men feel has been generated in them for science. Science has not become a noble, inspiring, creative, self-satisfying pursuit for the vast majority of educated people in India.

We often hear learned people declaring, 'We have to make scientific research attractive to our young men both by improving facilities for work and also by providing proper social security, perks and incentives to scientists.' That sounds pragmatic, but the truth is that true scientists cannot be created through money. Scientists are the products of scientific culture, and scientific culture is the creation of a scientific community. By scientific community we mean not an exclusive township of scientists like the one at Los Alamos, Oak Bridge and Cape Kennedy, nor our own version of it at Trombay which John Grigg of the *Manchester Guardian* once described as 'the holiest shrine of the new technological brahminism.'

By scientific community is meant the existence of a large number of people all over the country who have the genuine scientific temper, who value knowledge more than money and fame, who eagerly welcome, evaluate and spread new scientific achievements. In a talk given a few years ago at the Bangalore University, Dr. S. Ramaseshan of the National Aeronautical Laboratories, Bangalore, drew pointed attention to the importance of such a scientific community. 'The existence of this invisible college of peers', he said, 'is a prerequisite for the healthy growth of science in any society. No one sets up this college, no one elects them. It is in the nature of healthy scientific activity that such an invisible group automatically forms itself and assumes the role of a watch-dog of science and its quality... In India such evaluation by fellow scientists is signally absent.'

If India once produced great philosophers and religious thinkers it was because there then existed a vast community— in fact, a separate caste— solely devoted to the pursuit of knowledge and truth. If this nation now wants to achieve distinction in the field of science, it should bring into existence a new community of truth seekers who are free from caste, linguistic and parochial prejudices and worldly ambitions.

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