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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.

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 88 NOVEMBER 1983 No. 11

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

कृषन्नित्फाल आशितं कृणोति
यन्नध्वानमप वृंक्ते चरित्रैः ।
वदन् ब्रह्मावदतो वनीयान्
पृणन्नापिरपृणंतमभि ष्यात् ।।

1. The ploughshare furrowing [the field] provides food for the [ploughman]. A person who travels acquires wealth [for others] by his movements. A Brahmin who expounds scriptures [benefits others and so] is better than one who remains silent. Similarly, let the man who can give [in charity] become the friend of him who has no means of giving.[1] *Ṛg-Veda* 10.117.7

एकपाद्भूयो द्विपदो वि चक्रमे
द्विपात्त्रिपादमभ्येति पश्चात् ।
चतुष्पादेति द्विपदामभिस्वरे
संपश्यन् पंक्तीरुपतिष्ठमानः ।।

2. He who has only one foot[2] takes a longer time on a journey than he who has two. He who has two feet comes after him who has three. He who has four feet overtakes the two-footed [and the three-footed] by observing the traces they have left.[3] *Ṛg-Veda* 10.117.8

समौ चिद्धस्तौ न समं विविष्ठः
संमातरा चिन्न समं दुहाते ।
यमयोश्चिन्न समा वीर्याणि
ज्ञाती चित् संतौ न समं पृणीतः ।।

3. The two hands look alike, but differ in their work. Two cows, born of the same mother, do not yield the same quantity of milk. [Two children even though born as] twins do not have the same strength. Likewise, though born in the same family, two persons are not equally charitable. *Ṛg-Veda* 10.117.9

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* *Bhikṣu-sūktam*, a hymn in praise of charity, is concluded here.

1. Sāyaṇa comments: Just as all those people by doing their duties bring good to others, so let the wealthy man help the poor man selflessly.

2. The term *pāda* here is explained by Sāyaṇa as a metaphorical expression for 'a portion of wealth'. Griffith and several other Western scholars by following the literal meaning of the word ('foot') have interpreted the stanza in a fanciful way.

3. According to Sāyaṇa the main idea is this. Every one is, comparatively speaking, lower and higher to one another ; therefore let the wealthy man give up the delusion of being the wealthiest, and let him liberally give wealth to others.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

This month's EDITORIAL discusses the search for self-identity in non-Indian religions and philosophic thought.

Swami Chetanananda, spiritual head of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, gives an informative and interesting account of the life of RANI RASMANI who built the famous Kali temple at Dakshineswar.

In BLISS AND PLEASURE Hans Elmstedt adds much to our understanding of the connection between pleasure and feeling and how these derive their motivational power from an ultimate principle of Reality known as *ananda* or bliss. A creative thinker and writer, the author leads a simple life as a school teacher at Lancaster, California.

VIVEKANANDA INTERPRETS VEDANTA TO THE WEST is the second instalment in Swami Jitatmananda's projected series on Neo-Vedanta and the challenge of modern science.

BANKIM CHANDRA, THE INSPIRER OF NATIONALISM, a short profile of one of the greatest Bengali writers of the nineteenth century, is by Sri Bimal Kumar Ray who is doing doctoral research in political science at Burdwan University.

In EARTH COMMUNITY Dr. Thomas Berry places in poignant perspective the sacredness of every form of life on earth. The author who is a distinguished Catholic historian and linguist, is Associate Professor of Asian Religions at Fordham University, New York.

THE SEARCH FOR SELF-IDENTITY

(EDITORIAL)

Self-alienation at two levels

Man is a unique being occupying a special niche in nature. Biologically, however, he shares several common characteristics with animals and even plants. What then constitutes his uniqueness ? His self. The self endows him with some special faculties, capacities and talents ; makes him enter into a unique relationship with the world around him ; and produces in him the creative urge to change himself and his enviroment.

Man's relationship with the world is not like that of animals and plants. He is capable of entering into a direct person-to-person relationship, which Martin Buber has termed 'I-thou' relationship. Man encounters other men not as objects but as selves. It is not a subject-object relation but an intersubjective one. Human beings are not treated as objects to be made use of. Human life is valued for its own sake ; to abuse it is a sin ; to destroy it (to destroy even one's own life through suicide) is a crime. When a thing is valued for its own sake it becomes sacred. What gives sacredness to human life is the self.

The self relates itself to the world around it in two ways: through experience and through expression. At the level of experience man's life is not restricted to sense experience. Over and above that he has an awareness of values—truth, goodness, beauty, freedom, etc.—and even some intimations of immortality and divinity. This awareness belongs to the self. Beyond the body and the mind the

human soul is jutting into the realm of Infinite Consciousness, like the tip of an iceberg. When you travel and reach a strange country your first effort will be to orientate yourself in the new place. Similarly with the experience of the emergence of the self in him, man feels the need to orientate himself to universal life. When he is unable to do this, he experiences loneliness and insecurity. He asks ultimate questions, not out of intellectual curiosity, but out of a deep existential need. In order to find answers to these fundamental existential questions and to orientate himself to reality man must gain self-knowledge. The more he identifies himself with external objects and seeks solution in the external world, the more he moves away from his true self. This is one form of alienation which is one of the natural limitations experienced by ordinary people. However, in modern times it has assumed the form of a crisis owing to the destruction of religious faith and values by science, atheistic philosophy and socio-economic theories.

The relation of the self to the world around it is not restricted to experience alone. Man wants to express himself through action. He wants not merely to participate in the activities of larger life but wants to make original contributions to it. If there is joy in experiencing, in receiving, there is equal joy in expressing, in giving. There is a tremendous creative urge in man. He cannot remain satisfied with experience alone. He wants to create new things, new ideas, new ways of living. This creative urge comes from the self; it is the soul of man that is seeking self-expression through various creative activities. It is a part of the universal evolutionary elan sustaining all beings and originating from the primordial creative impulse of the Divine which created this universe. The creativity of the human self is an expression of the creativity of the Supreme Self, the indewelling, immanent spiritual principle sustaining the universe. The individual self wants to participate in the universal creative activity of the Supreme Self.

When the creative urge is not given expression through proper channels, through self-chosen activities, the individual's life will remain unfulfilled and will lose its meaning. This is now happening on a large scale in modern society. In order to express itself through creative work the self must have the freedom to choose its own vocation and develop according to the law of its being. Modern society denies this freedom to man. Economic necessity and social forces compel people to sell their bodies and minds to others and engage themselves in monotonous mechanical work for long hours. Life becomes unsatisfying and meaningless to a person whose soul has no freedom for creative self-expression and remains hidden, estranged from the body, mind and faculties which have become a part of the external mechanical world that controls them. This is the second type of alienation plaguing modern society.[1]

So then, self-alienation takes place at two levels. At the level of experience the self gets separated from the ultimate Reality, and this produces insecurity and loneliness. At the level of expression the self gets separated from the external world, and this produces unfulfilment and meaninglessness. These two forms of self-alienation are interconnected, and one leads to the other. Without a true understanding of one's place in Reality, it is not possible to express oneself creatively. Similarly without self-expression in the real world, mere understanding will not bring fulfilment.

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1. For a detailed discussion of the problem of self-alienation see last month's Editorial.

Experience and expression must go hand in hand in every man's life. Scientific experience (which is the experience of the logical connection between two facts), aesthetic experience or ethical experience must find expression through some creative work. Even spiritual experience can bring total fulfilment only when it is expressed through sharing and service. According to Sri Ramakrishna, the highest degree of perfection lies not in merely attaining the highest form of non-dual spiritual experience (which he called *jñāna*), but in seeing the Supreme Spirit expressing itself in and through the physical world, participating in the divine *līlā* or creativity (which he called *vijñāna*) and serving the Divine in all beings.

The search for self-identity

Whether at the level of experience or at the level of expression, self-alienation is a problem which each individual has to solve for himself. Social factors may serve as secondary causes by preparing the ground for it and by catalyzing it, but the ultimate cause of self-alienation lies in the depths of the individual's consciousness. In order to solve this problem man must first of all recover his true self-identity, the true centre of his consciousness, and reorganize his whole personality around it, and then attain harmony with the Cosmic Self. Psychologists call this process 'integration' and sociologists call it 'de-alienation'. It is the search for the self-identity that is the dominant concern of modern man, the chief undercurrent in present-day social life. The eminent psychologist of the humanistic school Carl Rogers says:

> Below the level of the problem situation about which the individual is complaining—behind the trouble with studies or wife or employer or with his own controllable or bizarre behaviour or with his frightening feelings—lies one central search. It seems to me that at bottom each person is asking: 'Who am I, really? How can I get in touch with this real self, underlying all my surface behaviour? How can I become myself?'[2]

The Swiss theologian Emil Brunner who (along with Carl Barth) tried to reinterpret Protestant orthodoxy in terms of modern man's problems, points out that this question of the self is not just one problem among many. According to him,

> Other problems may seem to us to be greater or more important, but they are still *our* problems. It is *we* who probe into the remote recesses of the world's existence; it is for *us* that the phenomena of the universe become questions. All our problems are focussed in this one question: Who is this being who questions—the one behind all questions? Who is this who is tortured by all life's problems—whether in human existence or outside it? Who is this being who sees himself as a mere speck in the universe, and yet, even while so doing, measures the infinite horizon with his mind? We are here confronted by the problem of the *subject*, separated by a great gulf from all problems of the objective world. What is this to which things are objects, which they are 'set over against?'[3]

Two ways of seeking

The search for self-identity has been one of humanity's dominant concerns from time immemorial, and is not peculiar to the modern age which has only intensified it into the form of a crisis. In ancient times this quest proceeded along two ways. One was to seek God first in or through the external world and then to discover one's soul as a special creation of God. The other way was to enquire into the nature of human consciousness and then to discover the self as the inseparable part of an

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2. Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961) pp. 16-17.

3. Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt* (Westminister, Maryland: The Westminister Press, 1947) pp. 17-18.

infinitude of consciousness forming the Supreme Self of the universe. In his lecture *The Methods and Purpose of Religion* Swami Vivekananda speaks about this historical process:

> In studying the religions of the world we generally find two methods of procedure. The one is from God to man. That is to say, we have the Semitic group of religions in which the idea of God comes almost from the very first and, strangely enough, without any idea of the soul. It was very remarkable amongst the ancient Hebrews that, until very recent periods in their history, they never evolved any idea of a human soul. Man was composed of certain mind and material particles, and that was all. With death everything ended. But on the other hand, there was a most wonderful idea of God evolved by the same race. This is one of the methods of procedure.
>
> The other is through man to God. The second is peculiarly Aryan, and the first is peculiarly Semitic. The Aryan first began with the soul. His ideas of God were hazy, indistinguishable, not very clear; but, as his idea of the human soul began to be clearer, his idea of God began to be clearer in the same proportion. So the inquiry in the Vedas was always through the soul. All the knowledge the Aryans got of God was through the human soul...'[4]

These two methods of enquiring into the nature of the soul led to the development of two different views about the nature of human personality. The view that man consists of soul (*psyche*) and body (*soma*) is known as dichotomy. Here 'soul' is synonymous with 'mind' (*nous*) and 'spirit'. This is the dominant view in all non-Hindu religious traditions. The view that man consists of body, soul (*psyche*) and spirit (*pneuma*) is known as trichotomy. This view, occasionally found in a crude form in some non-Indian systems of thought, is fully developed in Hinduism where the three divisions are known as *sthūla-śarīra* or gross body, *sūkṣma* or *linga-śarīra* subtle body, and the Atman.[5] Every school of Hinduism regards the Atman as separate not only from the body but also from the mind.

Regarding the origin of the self there are four views. The doctrine that it is derived from the souls of parents is known as Traducianism : it was upheld by some Greek and Christian philosophers. The view that each soul is created by God individually is known as Creationism, which is the most widely accepted doctrine in Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions. Almost all the schools of Hinduism hold that the soul is uncreated, beginningless and coeval with God. Buddhism developed the unique theory known as Dependent Origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*).

Hebrew conception of self

The earliest Hebrew (and Egyptian) conception of soul was that of the ghost-soul. At death the soul leaves the body and lingers at the place of burial visiting familiar scenes or (according to later thought) may travel on to the gloomy and empty existence of Sheol, the dark and desolate underworld.[6] The Hebrew term for soul *nefesh* was used by Moses (13th century B.C.) signifying an 'animated being' and applicable equally to non-human beings. It was originally used to mean the entire personality. Later on developed the concept of *ruah* (spirit) denoting mind and occasionally 'heart', and *nefesh* became the seat of appetites and desires. The spirit was regarded as the breath of God which was breathed into the human body when it was created out of dust, and was reabsorbed into God when the body

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4. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1978) vol. 6, p. 3.
Also see, Swamiji's paper 'Reincarnation' in the *Complete Works* (1978) vol. 4, pp. 259-265.

5. This shows that it is misleading to translate the word Atman as 'soul'.

6. cf. Isaiah 14:9-17.

perished.[7] By the beginning of the Christian era the Zoroastrian idea of the resurrection of the physical body and its reunion with the soul on the Day of Judgement had penetrated into the Old Testament (Book of Daniel) and some Jewish sects like the Pharisees. During the Middle Ages Jewish philosophers like Maimonides adopted the Aristotelean doctrine of the soul.

Greek conception of self

In ancient Greek religion, as found in Homeric epics, the soul was conceived to be a shadowy image inhabiting the body and, after death, descending into Hades devoid of its powers. The Eleusinian and Orphic mystery cults of the 7th and 6th centuries B. C. and the Pythagorean communities developed, probably under the influence of Indian thought, the doctrines of the pre-existence and transmigration of the human soul (but not the resurrection of the physical body) its redemption and mystic union with gods. Some of these doctrines were taken over by Plato (428-348 B. C.). For Plato the soul is intelligence, immortal, self-moving and is independent of the body and the fluctuations of the senses. It is the divine element in man and is more real than the body in which it is temporarily imprisoned. By cultivating pure thoughts the soul rises to the world of eternal Ideas which is its true abode.

For Aristotle (384-322 B. C.) the soul is not something separate from the body: they are two aspects of the same reality. Every object in the sense world is a union of two ultimate principles: matter (*hyle*) and form. Matter is a vast ocean of substance; it is the form that gives rise to different beings. The form is the soul, hence the soul is considered the formal cause. Everything in the universe has a soul (its form) and, from the mineral to men and gods, the whole nature is a graded series of existence. Aristotle recognizes three dimensions of the soul: the vegetative (concerned with nutrition, growth and reproduction), the sensitive (concerned with sensation, desire and locomotion) and the intellective (concerned with reason, enquiry and judgement). Plants have only the first, animals have the first and the second, and man has all the three. The soul being the 'form' of the bodily substance, is inseparable from it and yet, Aristotle holds, the rational part of the soul may survive death and remain immortal (like the soul in Plato's conception). Further, Aristotle speaks of the rational soul as having two levels: passive intellect which is almost like a blank writing tablet on which sensory experience is imposed, and an active intellect which is the rational, enquiring and theorizing intelligence in man.

The Stoic philosophers developed the doctrine of cosmic reason called logos, which maintains the physical and moral order of the universe, and of which the soul is an offshoot. They divided the soul into *pneuma* and *psyche,* regarding the former as a refined and pervasive spirit. Thus a trichotomy was re-introduced into Greek thought.

By the third century B. C. Greek and Hebrew thoughts had begun to converge especially among the Jews of Alexandria. Philo, a contemporary of Jesus, combined Platonism, Stoicism and the Pentateuch. He took over the Stoic pneuma and identified it with the breath of the Hebrew God and the reason of Plato and Aristotle in a kind of trichotomous doctrine. Again, he regarded the logos as an intermediary between the transcendent God and the mundane world, and looked upon the birth of the soul (which he believed to be pre-existent) in human flesh as an unfor-

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7. cf. Genesis 2:7.

tunate descent into evil. Philo's ideas were further developed by Plotinus (A. D. 205-270) who conceived the human soul as a divine spark and the whole creation as a series of emanations from one supreme attributeless Reality.

Christian conception of self

In the New Testament Jesus emphatically contrasts the spirit with the flesh. The Gospels use the word 'psyche' and 'pneuma' almost synonymously. In St. Paul's teachings the human personality is sometimes regarded as dichotomous, sometimes as trichotomous.[8] The most important concepts regarding the soul stressed in Christianity are resurrection and salvation. By resurrection is meant the resurrection of the physical body ; it may decay in the tomb but, on the Day of Judgement, it will be miraculously resurrected, made incorruptible and reunited with its soul. Souls are created but are immortal. According to the Protestant view only those souls which are saved by Christ will go to heaven and enjoy God's company, whereas the rest will suffer in hell for ever. The more moderate Catholic view holds that all souls will ultimately return to God.

Early Christian fathers continued to mix Hebraic and Hellenic ideas of the soul in different ways. St. Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria distinguished between a perishable psychic 'breath of life' from an eternal animating 'spirit'. Origen (c. 185-254 A. D.) stressed 'will' as the important characteristic of the soul. The trend finally culminated in St. Augustine (354-430) who constructed his system on Origen's hypothesis of will and Plotinus' theory of self-consciousness to which he added human love (*amor*) as an expression of God's love (*agape*). One of the several important ideas of Augustine is to seek God through self-knowledge, to know God through His image in the soul. According to him a true knowledge of the soul's nature can be based only on the immediate awareness of self-consciousness ; and the soul's awareness of itself is of a trinity in unity that reflects 'as in a glass darkly' the being of its Maker. However, self-knowledge does not mean freedom of the soul, for the soul is completely dependent on God. Owing to 'original sin' the so-called free will in man always chooses evil, unless God's grace turns it to the moral path. Augustine upheld the Platonic (and Neo-Platonic) view that the soul is divine in its origin and is different from the body in which it is imprisoned for a short time. This view still remains strong in Eastern Christendom.

In the West St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) took Christian theology back to Aristotle and revived the doctrine of the inseparable body-soul unity. He made reason the most important faculty. Duns Scotus (1266-1308) made will superior to reason. After the Reformation, Protestant theology moved closer to Augustine and St. Paul. Even in Catholic thought, in spite of the dominance of Aristotelian naturalism, the soul came to be regarded more and more as a separate entity. Christianity became dramatized by the Church as a redemptive religion in which the soul sought release from mundane connections. Contempt for worldly enjoyments (*contemptu mundi*) and the quest for salvation characterized man's outlook on life during the Middle Ages. Later on, success in this world and material prosperity came to be looked upon as an evidence of God's grace and a reflection of divine glory. After the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, Western mind became more and more

8. cf. I Thessalonians 5:23 ; Hebrew 4:12.

preoccupied with humanism, materialism, science and worldy enjoyment.[9]

The self in Western thought

The so-called Modern Period in Western philosophy opened with Descartes (1596-1650). He made the immediate experience of the soul (in the form of *cogito ergo sum* 'I think, so I exist') the basis of all philosophical enquiry. He also revived Plato's concept of the complete separation of soul (mind) and body. Spinoza (1632-1677) tried to introduce unity again by viewing reality as one ultimate substance with infinite attributes. Leibniz (1646-1716) spoke of ultimate realities consisting of centres of consciousness called 'monads'. Locke (1632-1704) conceived the soul not as consciousness (as Leibniz did) but as the substratum of all states of consciousness and of all ideas regarding the real objective world. Berkeley (1685-1753) denied objective reality to the world and reduced all things, including the soul, to ideas of which God is the source and cause. Hume (1711-1776) denied the existence of self as a permanent substance; what appears as the self is nothing but a series of sense impressions. Kant (1724-1804) regarded the self as the unity of all experiences. He recognized two kinds of self, the empirical and the transcendental. The former is ever changing and knows the world in manifold ways with the help of a-priori categories possessed by it. The transcendental self is immutable, incomprehensible through the categories, and is the source of morality in man. The self is always the subject and can never be objectified. Hegel (1770-1831) looked upon the whole universe as the product of a continuously evolving absolute self, the human mind being only a higher evolute of this supreme spirit. Marx (1818-83) reversed the position of Hegel by hodling matter to be the only reality, mind being a higher evolute of it. Among contemporary schools of Western philosophy, the Existentialists have once again made the self the focus of all human endeavours including philosophical enquiry, but they have not arrived at a uniform conclusion regarding its nature.

Medieval Christianity had given the Western world a set of values based on theree doctrines: the absoluteness of a personal God, contractual nature of life and man's spiritual destiny. God is the supreme Being, everything else is His creation. All humanity is one and is united to God, but this unity has been lost through the 'original sin' of Adam. Secondly, not only individual life but the whole history of mankind is the working out of God's contract or covenant (wrongly translated as 'testament') with His creation. The creation of the world, the promise of the holy land to Abraham, the giving of moral codes to Moses and the final descent of the Incarnation (the 'new' covenant)—all these events are the expressions of the divine contract. Morality is man's honouring this contract; sin is the violation of it. Man has an ultimate spiritual destiny, namely, reunion with God through Christ and the enjoyment of everlasting peace.

This system of values gave the Western man a unitary and absolute view of the world and made his life and activities meaningful. It is this unitary vision and meaning that have been eroded by modern thought. Descartes' attempt to discover the nature of reality through the thinking process and Kant's attempt to trace the source of morality to the human self made scriptural revelation unnecessary. Darwin's theory of evolution, the Copernican view of the cosmos and the advancement of

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9. The conception of the self in Islam is, mutatis mutandis, more or less the same as that in the medieval Judeo--Christian tradition, and is therefore not treated separately.

physical sciences made the doctrine of Personal God inadequate to explain the nature of the universe.

The development of modern thought has been a movement away from the Absolute to man. This in itself would not have posed a serious existential problem had Western culture been built upon a deep understanding of the real nature of the human self. But the Judeo-Christian tradition did not build such a foundation. Alienation and the consequent meaninglessness and discontentment that modern man is experiencing are not the direct result of the development of science and technology. Their root cause lies in the inadequacy of the Western view of man to meet these changes.

It is in removing this inadequacy that Vedanta could play an important role in modern life. The problem of alienation could be solved only by developing a philosophy of life and a system of values based on a direct realization of the higher dimensions of the self, and by restructuring human society in accordance with them. Vedanta provides such an integral view of life and an integrating system of values. All that the modern world needs is to accept this ancient philosophy and apply its life-giving principles in social life. This was one of the basic convictions of Swami Vivekananda and the spring-board of his mission in life.

They Lived with God

RANI RASMANI

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

God often plays in mysterious ways. Rani Rasmani, a famous wealthy woman of Calcutta, had for a long time planned a pilgrimage to Varanasi. When all arrangements had been made and she was finally ready to start, she had a dream of the Divine Mother who commanded her to build a temple instead of undertaking the pilgrimage. Thus the Dakshineswar temple came into existence.

Sri Ramakrishna once said: 'Rani Rasmani was one of the eight *nāyikās* (attendant goddesses) of the Divine Mother. She came down to the world to spread the worship of the Divine Mother.' In the middle of the last century, this great woman of India provided a setting in which Sri Ramakrishna enacted his divine drama for thirty years. The whole story began in that beautiful temple garden on the Ganga, four miles north of Calcutta. As Sister Nivedita pointed out, 'Humanly speaking, without the Temple of Dakshineswar there (would have) been no Ramakrishna; without Ramakrishna, no Vivekananda; and without Vivekananda, no Western mission.'

Rani Rasmani was born in September 1793 at Kona, a small village on the eastern bank of the Ganga, about thirty miles north of Calcutta. Her given name was Rasmani, but her mother nicknamed her Rāṇī (literally 'queen') when she was a year and a half old. Her father, Harekrishna

Das, and her mother, Ramapriya Dasi, were pious and simple, but very poor. Her father maintained the family by farming and by repairing the roofs of cottages in the village.

The children of poor families live through sun and rain as well as cold and lack of nourishment. They must struggle from their very birth; they are labourers from their childhood. When Rasmani was very young she carried food to the field for her father, helped her mother with the household work, and picked vegetables in the garden. Like other poor children she was never demanding, and no one ever heard her say, 'I cannot'. Her favourite pastime was to swing with her friends on a hammock which her father had tied to a branch of a mango tree in their garden.

Harekrishna, though a farmer, knew how to read and write Bengali, and this he taught to his daughter. He also had a gift for narrating stories from the traditional religious literature. Like every village story teller he played a vital role in spreading mass education, and the villagers took advantage of his talents. In the evenings they would gather at his home and listen to his melodious and dramatic readings from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the Purāṇas. Rasmani would also listen to those tales and her childhood imagination would carry her mind high.

Rasmani's parents were devout Vaiṣṇavas (followers of Viṣṇu, one of the Hindu Trinity), and it was their custom to put special religious marks on their foreheads before practising spiritual disciplines. Rasmani liked to imitate them. Sitting in front of a mirror she would also paint her face with religious marks. Thus the seed of religion was planted in her mind, which later grew to an immense form. She had spontaneous faith and love for God, and her character was a blend of strength, truthfulness, uprightness, contentment, and other noble qualities.

Rasmani was only seven years old when her mother, Ramapriya, died from a high fever. It was a great shock to the little girl. Her relatives tried to console her by saying, 'Your mother has gone to recover her health and she will be back soon.' But eventually she understood that her mother had died, and only time, the great healer, could wipe out the sorrow from her heart.

Besides his daughter, Harekrishna also had two sons and one sister in his household. Grief and poverty tormented his heart, but his faith in God helped him to survive. Four years passed and then another problem crept in. Harekrishna began to worry about Rasmani's marriage; it would require a great deal of money. Although Rasmani was only eleven years old, she looked older, and she was also a very beautiful girl.

One day in the spring of 1804, Rasmani went to bathe in the Ganga with a few other villagers. She did not know that some people on a boat were watching her from a distance. It was the large pleasure boat of Rajchandra Das, son of Pritaram Das, the great landlord of Jan Bazar, Calcutta. Rajchandra had married twice but both of his wives had died, so he was not willing to marry again. His father, however, wanted him to remarry so that his lineage might continue. Pritaram's eldest son, Harachandra, had died earlier without any children.

Rajchandra often went to Triveni, near Rasmani's village, by boat with his friends for a pleasure trip as well as for a holy bath in the confluence of the three rivers. When Rajchandra's friends showed him Rasmani from a distance, he was impressed. With Rajchandra's consent his friends anchored the boat and made enquiries about her. They then returned to Calcutta. Pritaram

was delighted to hear the news, and he immediately sent a messenger to Harekrishna with a proposal of marriage. Harekrishna took it as a godsend and gave his approval. The marriage was held at Rajchandra's Calcutta residence in April 1804.

Rasmani's father-in-law, Pritaram, was an intelligent, self-made man. He was born in a poor family in 1753. His parents died when he was young and he was brought up by his aunt. He began his career as a clerk in a salt distributing agency in Calcutta and then became the manager of a large estate in Natore, East Bengal (now in Bangladesh). Later he started his own business in Calcutta. Among his many enterprises was the supplying of various commodities to the ruling English people, and in this way he developed a close relationship with them. Eventually he bought many estates and became a renowned landlord. When Pritaram died in 1817, his son, Rajchandra, inherited Rs. 650,000 in cash and a vast amount of property.

Wealth begets wealth. It is said that Rajchandra earned Rs. 50,000 in one day through an auction. Like his father, Rajchandra was a very successful man, but he always consulted his intelligent wife, Rasmani, before making any decisions. Although she had very little education, Rajchandra greatly admired and appreciated his wife's perception, common sense, tactfulness, and humility. Wealth generally makes a person proud and haughty, but the simple village girl, Rasmani, remained unchanged. Her quiet nature conquered the hearts of the whole household. She served her husband, supervised the kitchen work and other household activities, and performed worship and spiritual disciplines just as she used to do at her village home.

Instead of hoarding their vast wealth, Rajchandra and Rasmani undertook many charitable projects. Their hearts cried out for the poor, the miserable, and the distressed. In 1823, when many places of Bengal were devastated by flood, Rasmani spent money liberally to feed and house the afflicted. In that same year her father died. When she went to the Ganga to perform certain religious rites in connection with his death, she noticed the terrible condition of the bathing ghat. She then requested her husband to construct a new ghat and also road for the people. Lord Bentinck, Governor General of India, gave Rajchandra permission for the project, and thus Babu Ghat and Babu Road (now Rani Rasmani Road) were built. Rajchandra had another bathing ghat constructed at Ahiritola, in the western part of Calcutta, in memory of his mother, and a home for the dying at Nimtala at the request of Rasmani. They also donated Rs. 10,000 for the improvement of the government library, arranged for a free ferry to cross the Beliaghata canal, and in Talpukur, a village fourteen miles north of Calcutta, they had a large pond dug to alleviate the water scarcity.

Rajchandra was known for his truthfulness as well as his generosity. Once, at the request of his brother-in-law, he promised to lend Rs. 100,000 to an English merchant. That night he heard the news that the company was going to be liquidated and the merchant would therefore have to return to England. But in the morning when the merchant came to him for the money Rajchandra gave it to him. Someone asked him why he did not refuse when he knew of the merchant's insolvency, and Rajchandra replied, 'I have not learned to say no after having said yes.'

In 1833 Rajchandra was honoured by the British rulers with the title 'Rai Bahadur' (Leader among Men) for his integrity, generosity, and philanthropic

activities. Truly, he was one of the elite of Calcutta society in his day. Prince Dwarakanath Tagore (grandfather of Rabindranath Tagore), Akrur Dutta, Kaliprasanna Sinha, Sir Raja Radhakanta Dev, Lord Auckland (Governor General of India), John Bebb, and many other distinguished members of the East India Company were his close friends.

Rasmani and Rajchandra had four daughters—Padmamani, Kumari, Karuna, and Jagadamba. They trained their daughters in a traditional Hindu manner in spite of the fact that they were surrounded by affluence and Western influence.

In 1821 Rajchandra had a new home built for his family in Jan Bazar, Calcutta, at a cost of two and a half million rupees.. It has seven sections with three hundred rooms, and it took eight years to complete. This palace is now known as 'Rani Rasmani Kuthi'. The first section of the palace was dedicated to Lord Raghunath (Ramachandra), the family deity. One hot summer day Rajchandra was taking an afternoon nap when a monk with a robust body and matted hair came to see him. The gatekeepers at first tried to ignore the monk, but he finally persuaded them to let him meet the owner of the palace. When Rajchandra was informed that a monk had come to see him, he came to the parlour. The monk presented him with an image of Lord Raghunath and said: 'Please serve the Lord. It will do good to you. I am going to a distant place for a pilgrimage and I don't know whether I shall be back or not.' Rajchandra offered something in exchange, but the monk smiled and said, 'I am not a beggar monk.' He then quickly left. Rajchandra installed the image of Raghunath in the shrine with great festivity.

One day in 1836 when Rajchandra was travelling in his carriage, he suddenly had an attack of apoplexy and fell unconscious on the seat. The driver rushed home, and Rajchandra was carried to his room. All the best doctors of Calcutta were brought in, but to no avail. Rajchandra died at the age of forty-nine.

Rasmani was stricken with grief. It is said that she lay on the floor for three days without taking any food or drink. Afterward she performed all the rituals according to the injunctions of the scriptures for her departed husband. In addition, she weighed herself against silver coins and had them (6,017 coins) distributed among the brahmins. She also fed the poor and gave them various gifts. At the conclusion of the ceremonies, the monk who had given her husband the image of Raghunath came. Rasmani offered expensive gifts to the monk, but he smiled and asked for only two things: a small water pot and a blanket. Tears fell from Rasmani's eyes when she saw the monk's nonattachment and lack of greed. He wanted to pay his homage to Raghunath. So Rasmani accompanied him to the shrine. The monk then blessed Rasmani and left. Later this image of Raghunath was stolen from the shrine.

Rasmani now began to manage the vast estate with the help of her three sons-in-law, but she mostly depended on the youngest, Mathuranath Biswas, who was intelligent, tactful, and well versed in English. Her third daughter, Karuna, had been married to Mathur, but had died in 1833. Rasmani then asked him to marry her fourth daughter, Jagadamba.

One day Prince Dwarakanath Tagore came to Rasmani and said, 'It would be nice if you could engage an efficient manager to look after your vast estate.'

Rasmani was too shy to speak directly to her husband's friend, so she sat behind a curtain and gave her replies through Mathur. She said, 'Yes, you are right.

But it is very difficult to get such a faithful person.'

'If you want I shall be your manager.'

'That would be nice. But at present I do not know how much money and property I have, and how much money has been given out in loans. I know that my husband lent you two hundred thousand rupees. If I could get back that money now, it would be very helpful to me.'

'Yes, I shall repay that money soon. Tomorrow I shall let you know about it.'

The next day Prince Dwarakanath said, 'I do not have any cash now, but I shall hand over one of my estates to you in exchange.'

'What is the annual income from that property ?' asked Rasmani.

'Thirty-six thousand rupees, but the value is over two hundred thousand rupees.'

Rasmani accepted the property, and when the transaction was over she said to the prince: 'I am a widow and my property is not large. It would be discourteous of me to request a venerable person like you to be my manager. My sons-in-law are the heirs of this estate and they will manage it.' Prince Dwarakanath then understood that Rasmani was a tactful, highly intelligent, and far-sighted woman.

In spite of her responsibility now as owner and custodian of such immense wealth, Rasmani remained as unattached as ever. According to the Hindu custom widows do not remarry. They lead a pure and unattached life like a nun. Rasmani also followed the ancient custom. Early in the morning she would get up and repeat her mantra in the shrine. Then in midmorning she would sit in her office and sign official documents, appoint officers, check accounts, and discuss various problems and projects with Mathur. At noon she would partake of the food which had been offered to the Lord, and then she would rest. Later in the day, after supervising the office work, she would attend the vesper service. She was fond of inviting Brahmin scholars and listening to their discourses on the scriptures.

In 1838 Rasmani had a desire to celebrate the Car Festival of the Lord and asked Mathur to order a silver chariot for that purpose. In this festival the image of the lord is placed in a chariot, which is pulled by the devotees. Mathur suggested the name of the Hamilton Company, a famous English jewelry firm, to make the chariot, but Rasmani disapproved. She advised him to have it done by local silversmiths so that their talents could get an opportunity to be recognized. When the celebration took place, thousands of people joined the procession and pulled the chariot through the streets of Calcutta. Rasmani's sons-in-law joined the procession barefooted. Rasmani also arranged a banquet at this time for the foreign dignitaries of Calcutta, who later remarked, 'Our eyes have never seen such a gorgeous, extraordinary celebration as this.'

There is a saying among the Hindus, 'Thirteen festivals in twelve months.' Without festivals life is very dull. As Rasmani led a God-centred life, so her palace was the abode of God and the scene of constant religious festivals. Every year Rasmani celebrated the Durga Puja (worship of the Divine Mother), spending fifty to sixty thousand rupees. At this time she would give food and other gifts to the needy. Her devotion for God and love for the poor were manifest side by side. Other festivals—such as Janmāṣṭamī (Kṛṣṇa's birthday), Lakṣmī Pūjā, Jagaddhātrī Pūjā, Kārtik Pūjā, Saraswatī Pūjā, Bāsantī Pūjā, Dol Yātrā, and so on—would follow, one after another. On these occasions also the poor were fed and clothed, offerings were given to Brāhmins for maintaining the religious traditions, and singers and musicians were rewarded

and appreciated; in addition, weight-lifters and wrestlers were encouraged to show their feats, and the winners would receive expensive gifts from Rasmani.

Rasmani was highly regarded for her courage and public spirit. Once, on the day preceding the worship of the Divine Mother Durga, her priests went in a musical procession to the Ganga to perform a particular ritual. It was early in the morning and the music disturbed the sleep of an Englishman. He ordered the musicians to stop, but no one paid any attention to him. He then complained to the police and sought immediate action But Rasmani engaged even more musicians for the next day and, without caring for the protest, the ritual was performed with great enthusiasm. As a result a case was brought to the court against Rasmani, which she lost, and she was fined fifty rupees. Rasmani was infuriated that the government had acted against a religious observance. She paid the fine, but at the same time she ordered barricades to be put up at both ends of Babu Road, from Jan Bazar to Babu Ghat, so that no traffic could pass through. When the government protested, Rasmani replied in a letter: 'The road is mine. Without receiving compensation I shall not allow anyone to pass through it.' The government was helpless to do anything against Rasmani's challenge because legally she was the owner of Babu Road. The news spread quickly all over the city, and the people composed a couplet about this brave woman:

When the Rani's horses and carriage roll down the street, they say,
None, not even the English Company, dares to stand in her way.

At last, when the British Government reimbursed her fine and earnestly requested her to open the road for the public, she had the barricades removed.

(To be concluded)

BLISS AND PLEASURE

HANS ELMSTEDT

Introduction

We all seek pleasure and for most individuals it is a normal, natural drive that gives meaning and direction to our activities and even to life itself. Can we build our lives upon and around this experience alone as the main reason or purpose for our existence? Do we really know what pleasure is and the role it plays in our lives? The aim of this paper is to present ideas that, it is hoped, will add to our understanding of pleasure and the reason for its pre-eminent role in helping to define and thus understand motivation, the purposeful goal-oriented activity of all living organisms. An attempt will be made to offer a real alternative to its commonly accepted importance as one of the most meaningful sought after aspects of human experience. Pleasure will be seen as one aspect of a more general capacity for feeling that humans are known to have and which we attribute to animals and other living things because of certain observed states and behaviour that they manifest. Feeling will be further seen to have its real basis in Bliss, one of

the aspects of the Absolute, which, as the ground of all experience, includes Being and Consciousness.

Conceptual difficulties

Pleasure is one aspect of feeling, just as pain, love, anger, anxiety, envy, joy, and fear can be included as other aspects, but by no means exhausting the list. What each of these has in common is that they are all feelings that we have. Feeling is an important but vague concept that denotes a group and range of experiences which can be divided into those that we actively seek and those that we try to avoid. In the West, feeling can be taken as synonymous with the psychological concept of affection, which also includes the emotions, moods, and temperaments. Affection, along with cognition and conation, makes up the mind, part of the whole of human existence that includes the body. Some theorists in psychology do not take affect to be a separate state but consider it to be a part of a cognitive state or process. One reason for this is that a feeling, in order to be an experience, must be an object of knowledge, it must be known by the knower, i.e., cognized. Thus we can understand this position where affect is taken to be an aspect of cognition. Cognition is here taken to be that experienced state in which the affect is not only knowable, but is actually a definite part of the state or process.

It is difficult to distinguish or differentiate between the concepts of feeling, affect, emotion, and pleasure because these are names that we give to experiences that have both a physical and a mental component, often impossible to separate and thus to categorize individually. The difficulty seems to lie in the cognitive need we have, as reasoning beings, to categorize and to classify by defining objects and events. When the events are inside ourselves and experienced as feelings or emotions we lack the categories needed to meaningfully denote the differences between them. Many feeling that we have are indescribable because we lack the concepts, and thus the words, needed in order to communicate them to others, and sometimes even to ourselves. We resort to various linguistic devices, including simile, metaphor, analogy, and parable to convey the individual subtleties of thought and feeling that we experience. Poetry, art, music, and dance are among the important means that all cultures have developed and use to evoke feeling and to communicate it to others.

The pervasiveness of feeling

So much of our behaviour is based on and concerned with feeling, its pursuit and expression, because it is such a basic part or aspect of our existence. It is inconceivable that we could not possess feeling and still consider ourselves to be human and to have a meaningful and worthwhile existence.

So pervasive is the concept of feeling that we use it to describe any state or condition we are in at the moment or at another time—I feel bad, I feel tired, I felt better yesterday and I hope to feel better tomorrow. We can feel good or bad, better or worse, happy or sad, pain or pleasure, and even thoughtful or thoughtless. In the above we often substitute 'am' for 'feel' and can thus say, I am tired, I am good, I am thoughtful. We make no distinction between the state we are in, no matter how temporary, and what or who we take ourselves to be. These may only be verbal expressions but they indicate either that we lack a more precise means to convey the real state of affairs or they indicate a deeper and more meaningful sense of identity, of who or what we think we are.

Part of the experienced dynamics of the mind involves words, ideas, and concepts that are framed in terms of dualities, the opposite ends of continua that represent all possible expressions or states of that which we seek to know. We know light because we also have the experience of dark, we know good because we also have the experience of bad, and we know soft because we also have the experience of hard. Our ability to cognize categories is partly based on these qualitative and quantitative continua that lie between these very definite and clearly known or experienced opposites. We must be careful to avoid placing two cognitive-feeling states on the same continuum that do not really belong there. Different continua can be postulated using different criteria, including verbal, logical, behavioural, or physiological. We may think that love and hate are opposites, and they may be, but only as a verbal device that sets them apart for dramatic purposes. There may be no real identifiable physiological or experiential states that would justify placing them on the same continuum. For example, the opposite of love is non-love and this could just as easily be taken to mean indifference as it is hate. Pain and pleasure are often placed on the same continuum as opposites, but they might not be. The difficulty stems from the nature and purpose of the continuum we are using, whether it is physiologically, conceptually, or behaviourally based. Confusion results when we do not specify, making explicit the nature of the continuum we are using in any particular instance. This is evident in the concept of feeling. The essence of all affective states is feeling and there seems to be no duality in different feelings that the mind can use to distinguish and thus mark the ends of a continuum, let alone the grades and shades of feeling that lie between. Yet there appears to be a quantitative continuum that allows us to make a distinction in feeling by classifying it as more or less, i.e., when the feelings are strongly or weakly felt. There may be no qualitative continuum for essential feeling because it is a primary experience that is not analysable into components, and thus the limited mind is baffled as it struggles to deal with it as an object of knowledge. Since we can't know it as an object we find ourselves identifying with it even as it changes under the influence of inner and outer circumstances.

When we want to categorize or label a feeling qualitatively we do so in conceptual terms that we are familiar with, emotions and moods that we know as love, fear, anger, joy, and so on. But these include physical and mental components that comprise an experience complex whose parts are potentially identifiable. The underlying feeling that has been built upon, by the joining of these physical and mental components, is hidden, for the most part, since our limited powers of conceptualization can't make it an object of knowledge, and thus knowable.

Physical and mental aspects of feeling

Feeling can be understood as being manifested in both areas of experience, the mental and the physical. Again, the mental and the physical aspects can be further divided into those that we seek because they give us pleasure, generally considered to be positive, and those that we tend to avoid because they do not give us pleasure, and thus negative, especially if that non-pleasure is experienced as painful. An example of a pleasurable mental experience is pride. We experience it when our regard for a particular ability we have or of our status in the eyes of the public gives us a heightened sense of our own worth and importance. A painful mental

experience is jealousy. Here, resentment is directed toward others because of some real or imagined quality or possession they may have that we want for ourselves.

Feelings of physical pleasure can be aroused in an almost infinite number of ways, as we all know. One way is in savouring a particularly desired food or drink. Physical pain, equally abounding, is felt when we touch a hot object and it burns some part of our body.

One very important, but conceptually difficult area, that will be dealt with later in this paper, is that of the reason for the seemingly opposite nature of pleasure and pain and how the difference can be reconciled by seeing them as manifestations of a higher unitary state of experience.

Motivation

A large area of Western psychology has been concerned with the concept of motivation, why a human or animal behaves or acts in a certain way. Here both the inner state or condition of the organism and the nature of the outer object or event that elicits or satisfies it are studied.

The concept of motivation is so abstract and general that it has led to many theories and controversial ideas based on which aspect of it is considered the most important. Needs, goals, and drives are among the most basic concepts that have been developed and used to describe and explain the general idea of motivation. Other specific terms are used in a more circumscribed manner and include the following: attitude, set, desire, instinct, urge, preference, interest, habit, and libido. Any psychological theory that claims to systematically describe or explain behaviour must include the concept of motivation in some manner or other, formulating the conditions within and without the organism that leads to activity.

One of the more important modern theories is that of Abraham Maslow. His ideas involve a hierarchy of needs. These range from basic physiological needs of hunger, affection, security, self-esteem, and so on, to those of a higher order that are growth or actualizing needs such as beauty, justice, and order. When an individual meets these higher needs, peak experiences, such as awe, understanding, and rapture are enjoyed. Maslow identifies different kinds or degrees of self-actualizing people who vary in their experiences of transcendence, 'the very highest and the most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos.'[1]

Maslow's theory views man's most important needs as motivating him to realize his highest potentialities, with spiritual values and ends an important part of it. This was in sharp contrast, at that time, to the dominant schools of psychoanalysis and behaviourism. These will now be considered as they deal with the important concept of motivation.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, formulated a unique group of structural, dynamic, and developmental concepts into an integrated system that attempted to explain behaviour in terms of the dynamics of unconscious motives. Freud postulated a pleasure principle that was a state of reduced tension where a lower level of psychic energy prevailed. Instincts were inborn psychological representations of bodily conditions, where 'wishes' were the psychological aspect and the source, the bodily excitation, was termed the 'need.' Thus the wish acted as a motive for behaviour. The instincts are of two kinds, life instincts and death instincts.

1. Maslow, A. H. *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1971), p. 279.

Life instincts served to ensure individual survival and the propagation of the species. These instincts depended on libido, the form of energy that enabled them to function. Death instincts created a wish to die in the individual and led to aggression. Freud had no use for religion, forsaking spiritual forces and a spiritual destiny that would serve to give a higher direction to man's motives and behaviour. He based his methods on natural science and saw man and the relationship between mind and body in the naturalistic terms of a monistic, evolutionary reality.

Behaviourism has developed into a broad theoretical system of concepts and methods having a biological and mechanistic basis much as Freud's pointed toward a physiological explanation for mental states and experience. Behaviourists approach the idea of motivation by interpreting it as part of a stimulus-response framework, avoiding mentalistic concepts by seeing them as unnecessary. They seem to have solved the problem of man's higher needs and aspirations by not discussing them.

B.F. Skinner, a leading spokesman for current behaviouristic psychology, has carried these ideas to a clearly drawn conclusion. He attacks the traditional ideas and theories about man, as stated in mentalistic and autonomous words and concepts, that have been used to describe and explain man's individual and social behaviour. He states, 'Almost all our major problems involve human behaviour, and they cannot be solved by physical and biological technology alone. What is needed is a technology of behaviour, but we have been slow to develop the science from which such a technology might be drawn. One difficulty is that almost all of what is called behavioural science continues to trace behaviour to states of mind, feelings, traits of character, human nature, and so on. Physics and biology once followed similar practices and advanced only when they discarded them.'[2]

Skinner, in his operant approach, emphasizes the environment as the shaper of man's behaviour through his consequent responses to the contingencies of that selecting environment. He also rejects our traditional conceptualizing disposition toward personification, that attributes motives and behaviour to indwelling agents. Skinner seems to be at war with words and language. But language is a tool, not a weapon and thus can't fight back. When used properly, words serve the same relative and practical purpose that manual tools do, to build and not to destroy. Specialized words, denoting specialized concepts, built up into a systematic framework of ideas based on logic and experience, are abstracted from and help to further understand different aspects of the objective and subjective worlds. The many different conceptual frameworks are founded on the multitudinous dimensions of man, experienced through his senses, feelings, intellect, and his higher motives and aspirations. We often misuse words and concepts, defined in terms of a particular framework, by applying them to conceptual and experiential schemes other than the ones that gave the original concepts their meaning. Just as we misuse a hammer when we use it to drive a woodscrew into a piece of wood, we misuse the physiological concept of body hormones to fully describe the mental pleasure experienced by a talented musician as he or she plays a beautiful composition. 'Misuse' means here that the user's intention or purpose is important and that it is lost or confounded when a word or concept is used in a manner or form that is out of context with its determining conceptual framework and thus does not convey the appropriate intent

2. Skinner, B. F. *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Alfred A. Knof, Inc., 1971), p. 24.

of the user or have meaning for the listener. Words are tools of the mind and can be used to give us greater understanding of both the objective and the subjective worlds. 'Real' and 'ideal' are complementary philosophical viewpoints and equally valid and useful as conceptual tools for the mind as man struggles to know the world around and within himself. Words can find their meanings and use in conceptual and experiential schemes that reflect both viewpoints, not one or the other.

The problem is not that man views himself as primarily autonomous and uses mentalistic terms when he attempts to define and understand himself, but that he has not come to grips with his own inner nature, that reality that lies within, as equally and diligently as he seeks to know and accept the reality that lies outside himself, irrespective of the words or concepts he uses.

Pleasure and feeling

Our daily behaviour is dominated by approach and avoidance, seeking out that which gives us pleasure and evading that which gives us pain. When we try to define pleasure and pain, two important determinants of that behaviour, we encounter difficulties because there are so many aspects of the environment that evoke them and so many individual variations experienced as responses to those aspects. Yet pleasure and pain have a common source, they are both aspects of feeling. If we understand what feeling is we could better understand the different aspects or manifestations of it, such as pleasure and pain, and the myriad of others that are possible. Can we ever know what pure feeling is ? We can know the experience of feeling, but can we analyse it to find its source ? In order to know something we must objectify the thing known, i.e., create a subject-object relationship in our mind where an object is known by a knower. But if feeling is a fundamental aspect of the knower himself, it can never be made an object. How then can we say that pleasure is a feeling, because this involves knowing, specifically, that pleasure is an aspect of feeling ? The situation is due to a cognitive-affective state, where feeling of pleasure and the knowing of that feeling as pleasure are experienced simultaneously. We normally are not aware of this fact or situation because our minds are so conditioned to objectify its contents and because we are not capable of separating the cognitive and affective elements in the experience. We objectify the source of our feelings of pleasure or of pain, i.e., that object or event that served as the outer source of the feeling that we have within ourselves. We do not understand that we are simultaneously knowing that we are feeling. There are two sources to the feelings of pleasure and pain, the source in the outer world and the body itself. We all know the outer source of our experiences, but is it possible for the mind to perceive the body as an object, specifically, as the source of our feeling ? Yes, and this is what happens each time we experience pleasure that comes from the body, such as the pleasures of food or sex. What of the pleasures that come from the mind such as pride or vanity ? In this case the ego is the object and the knower experiences the pleasure in it rather than the body, and so we experience mental pleasure. If we can experience pleasure in the body by attaching our mind to it we will experience pain in the same place because the body can also be injured and so by having the one we must also have the other. It is not possible to attach the mind to the body only for pleasurable experiences and withdraw it for those that are painful. We must have both, or neither. Similarly,

if we accept the ego pleasure of praise, we must also accept the ego pain of blame. If we accept the sensory pleasure of delighting in sweet foods, we must also accept the possible sensory pain of suffering a toothache. Swami Saradananda, a learned, enlightened holy man, concerning man's pursuit of sensuous enjoyment, states, 'But, ah, how few people can ascertain that all pleasure is connected for ever with pain and that if one wants to enjoy pleasure one will have to be simultaneously ready to suffer pain also.'[3]

Feeling as bliss

An aspect of feeling that can lead us to an understanding about the source of feeling is love. Those who are fortunate enough to have had this experience understand that no other feeling can compare to it, both in its compelling force and feeling of fulfilment and that it begets the desire to have it completely and permanently. Those not so fortunate must content themselves with searching for it and experiencing it vicariously in romantic novels and motion pictures. For those who have experienced it, love is difficult to define because it is a unique and profoundly emotional experience, having little cognitive content. The only thing that can be said is that only when you have the experience will you know what it is like.

Swami Saradananda, speaking of the nature of three types of love that a woman can have for her lover, said, 'The woman who forgets herself under the influence of love and keeps a perfect eye on the good and the happiness of her lover is called in the devotional books the *samarthā* the 'excellent' and her love is the best. All other kinds of love, tarnished with a tinge of selfishness, have been assigned to two other classes, viz., *samañjasā* 'the balanced' and *sādhāraṇī* 'the common'. The woman of the former class minds her own happiness to the same extent as her lover's and she of the latter class regards her lover as dear for the sake of her own happiness only.'[4] It is needless to say that a man can exhibit these kinds of love also.

As love becomes purer, i.e., more unselfish, it approaches the highest aspect of feeling that anyone can experience as a limited and conditioned mind in a limited and conditioned body. The mind projects the feeling into the body or the ego less and less, until there is very little body or ego identity in the experience. When we love another person we are drawn closer to him or her and as our unselfish and undemanding love grows, the closeness grows until there is no distance between us and the person we love. We approach a oneness or identity with the object of our love. We unite in an experience of unity and oneness and this transcends the limitations of the conditioned body, mind, and ego.

Love is the highest possible experience we can have as a feeling, limited being. As the experience approaches that of oneness or identity, it can only be described as 'bliss', where no limited mind, body, or ego can go. This experience of bliss becomes more perfect as we draw nearer to the Absolute and we ultimately manifest the aspect of Bliss.

We seek pleasure because we seek this Bliss of the Absolute. The reason we do not find that Bliss is because we search in the wrong places. We either search for it in the phenomenal world, or in our bodies or in our mind and ego. Since bliss increases as the mind detaches itself from the

3. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna—The Great Master* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1963), p. 407.

4. Ibid., p. 228.

body and the ego, then the opposite process, where the mind increases its attachment to the body and the ego, would bring less and less bliss. Less and less bliss, it seems, would mean more and more pain. It is plausible to think that when the body is injured or strongly stimulated and the mind, normally attached to the body, concentrates its energy even further on the injury or extreme sensory stimulation, the mind interprets this experience as painful. Similarly with mental pain, the ego attaches itself to some outer object, event, or person, such as a relative or friend, because of the pleasure that the ego experiences in doing so. When that outer object, event, or person is lost, taken away, or denied for some reason, the mind interprets this as painful and experiences grief or anguish.

If the above ideas have any validity then pain, physical or mental, is not the opposite of pleasure, but of bliss. Pain is felt because the mind strongly attaches itself to the body and the ego, bliss is felt because of detachment from the body and the ego.

Swami Vivekananda, a great teacher of spiritual psychological laws, states, 'Every action of our lives—the most material, the grossest as well as the finest, the highest, the most spiritual—is alike tending towards this one ideal, the finding of unity. A man is single. He marries. Apparently it may be a selfish act, but at the same time, the impulsion, the motive power, is to find that unity. He has children, he has friends, he loves his country, he loves the world, and ends by loving the whole universe. Irresistibly we are impelled towards that perfection which consists in finding unity, killing this little self and making ourselves broader and broader. This is the goal, the end towards which the universe is rushing.'[5]

We seek the highest human pleasure in love and when pure love is found and we intensify it we enter the higher realm of bliss, where the distinction between lover and beloved, and even love itself, vanishes.

Swami Vivekananda states again, 'The mind brings before us all our delusions—body, sex, creed, caste, bondage ; so we have to tell the truth to the mind incessantly, until it is made to realize it. Our real nature is all bliss and all the pleasure we know is but a reflection, an atom, of that bliss we get from touching our real nature. *That* is beyond both pleasure and pain, it is the 'witness' of the universe, the unchanging reader before whom turn the leaves of the book of life.

Through practice comes Yoga, through Yoga comes knowledge, through knowledge love, and through love bliss.'[6]

Any feeling or action or thought that decreases individual selfish concerns, thoughts, and behaviour, correspondingly increases unselfish concerns, thoughts, and behaviour. This wonderful balance is powered by or has as its motive this inexorable need to find the oneness or identity of Existence in Knowledge and Bliss. We lose everything and gain nothing by ignoring this fact, we lose nothing and gain everything by accepting it and making it our own.

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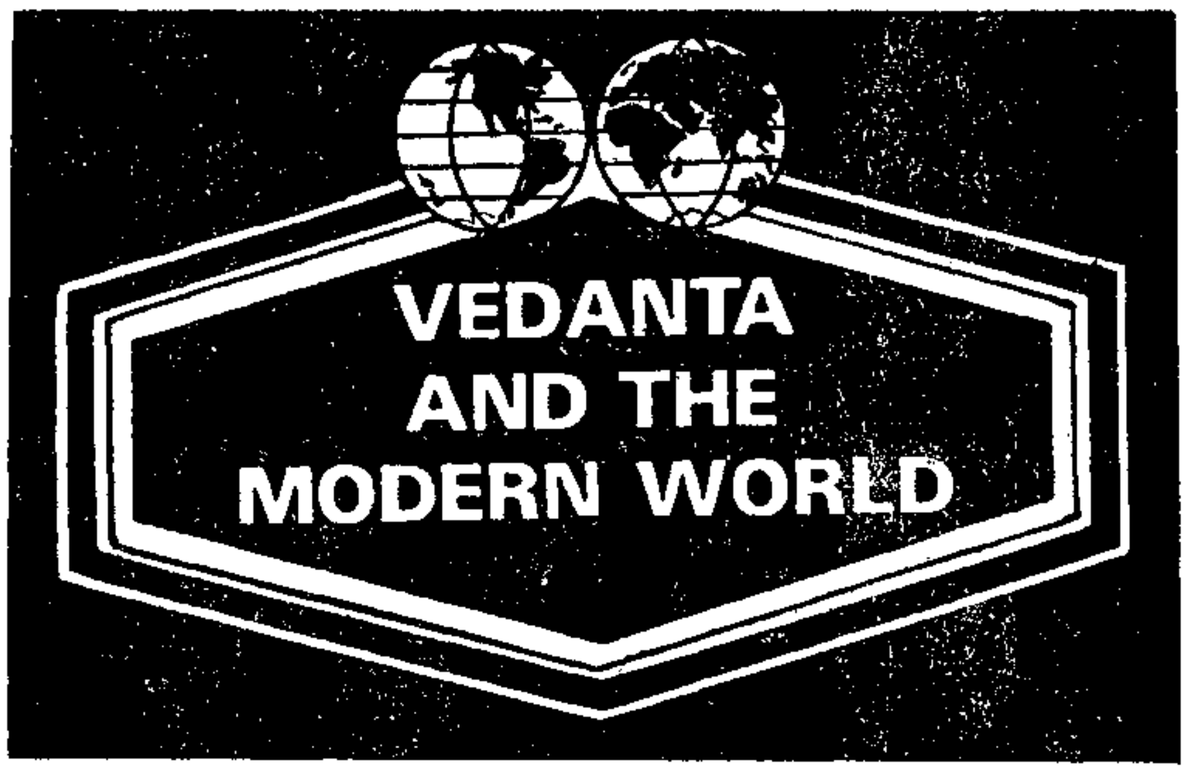
5. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1963), vol. 6, pp. 4-5.

6. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1959) vol. 8, p. 7.



VIVEKANANDA INTERPRETS VEDANTA TO THE WEST

SWAMI JITATMANANDA

When, as an unknown monk, Swami Vivekananda left the shores of India in 1893 on his historic travel to America, neither the West nor the East was conscious of the new chapter that this unidentified prophet was going to open in the history of mankind. Even today nearly a hundred years after his first landing in the West, the nature and extent of Vivekananda's impact on Western thought and life are hardly clear to us. History says that a Pauline type of spiritual invasion takes at least a few centuries to receive acceptance from the world. The Roman Empire which crucified Christ in 33 A.D. had, in the long run, to surrender to His message of Love, and by 300 A.D. Christianity became the state religion of Rome. Here now, for the first time in the history of mankind, a prophet from India was carrying the message of the Orient to the far West, to the continents of Europe and America.

Why did Vivekananda go to the Western people and preach the ancient message of India in their language, English, using their frames of thought like science and logic? He only fulfilled the divinely ordained purpose, the divinely chosen mission, that the forces of history had imposed upon him. To put it plainly, like Paul carrying the message of Christ from the world of Jews to that of Gentiles, Vivekananda was born to carry the ancient message of India to the West. That was, and still is, the need of the West, and he was born to satisfy that need. Vivekananda was fully conscious of the historic role he was destined to play. At the Brooklyn Ethical Society, U.S.A., when someone pointed out that Hinduism was not a proselytizing religion, he replied: 'I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East.'[1]

He made the people of the West feel that here was a prophet who came not to proselytize but to help, not to convert but to transform, not to subdue but to elevate, not merely to preach but also to live the great philosophy and also to help them live it. He came not with the jingoistic pride of a particular national culture with its rituals and symbols but as a worshipper of the undeniable divinity in man, the ever present infinity of knowledge, bliss and life which Vedanta finds at the core of every living being. He came not to a foreign land, but to his own 'sisters and brothers' who had for centuries remained bound by the dogmas of 'original sin' and 'hell-fire', deprived of the knowledge that they themselves contained the infinity of Godhead. Vivekananda's passionate plea at the Chicago Parliament of Religions is unforgettable—'Allow me to call you,

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1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1973), vol. 5. p. 314.

brethren, by that sweet name, heirs of immortal bliss.' Among Englishmen he found the best specimens of humanity with great integrity of character and unflinching devotion. Among Americans he found 'living Vedantins', not just talkers of Advaita. Of the nine active years of his life he spent more than five in the West. He knew the parched soil of the West was waiting for a shower. He brought the shower of love and sacrifice and sowed the seeds of Vedanta—the omnipotence, the omniscience, the ever-present holiness and divinity in all beings.

He went without the least trace of ego, floating on the mercy and guidance of the Lord. He went as a messenger of God. He went with the intellect of Śaṁkara, the heart of Buddha and the burning power of God-realization of his master Ramakrishna. His watchword was— 'The goal is to manifest the divinity within...Books and temples and churches are but secondary details.' For him the world was not, only God was, and all that was, was permeated with God. One of his admirers, the great psychologist and philosopher of the 19th century America, Dr. William James found in Vivekananda 'an honour to humanity'.

In the late 90s of the 19th century none was more conscious or concerned than Vivekananda with the clouds of storm that were gathering on the horizon of the West which was dreaming of making the earth a materialistic heaven. In 1897 after his triumphal return from the West he pointed out to Indians, 'The whole of Western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation...And what will save Europe is the religion of the Upaniṣads.'[2] Vivekananda entered the Western arena when the old order was yielding place to a new one. It was a period of a great transition in the worlds of both science and religion. With Darwin's discovery that man came not from Adam and Eve but from apes, the entire theological edifice of orthodox Christianity was shaken to its foundations. In the later half of the 19th century Western civilization was passing through an agonizing period of incertitude. A new life-giving philosophy of reason was yet to be born, while the old faith in a Church-dominated religion and an extra-cosmic God had lost credibility for the ever-growing number of rationalistic people. It was a time, as Vivekananda said, 'When the sledge-hammer blows of modern antiquarian researches are pulverizing like masses of porcelain all sorts of antiquated orthodoxies, when religion in the West is only in the hands of the ignorant and the knowing ones look down with scorn upon anything belonging to religion.'[3]

In short, it was a period of intellectual ferment and spiritual crisis in the West. While the 'ignorant ones' tried to cling fanatically, even in the wake of iconoclastic and rationalistic sciences, to the old order, the 'knowing ones' began to search for peace and consolation in other philosophies. Scepticism became the go of the day with the Western intellectuals. Millions left the Church which failed to satisfy scientific reason. Many surrendered themselves to Schopenhauerean pessimism and waited in utter existentialist morbidity for an end to life which was ruled, according to Schopenhauer, not by a providential God, but by a 'blind will' that created both good and bad alike with an irrational indifference. Many, again, surrendered themselves to Kantian agnosticism which rested complacently on the assumption that the ultimate Reality was unknown and unknowable to the mind of man. But the

2. *Complete Works* (1973), vol. 3, p. 159.

3. *Complete Works* (1973), vol. 3, p. 110.

large majority of Western people went straight to the new glittering world of material wealth and prosperity which the age of Newtonian science and Industrial Revolution promised to them. The emerging technology became synonymous with science. Technological advancement which brought unprecedented industrial wealth for the first time in both Europe and America arrogated to itself the sanctity of science. Its object of worship was matter or, more precisely, gold and worldly enjoyments. Its crowning title became scientific materialism. The true spirit of Science, which is essentially a search for truth and reality, was for the time being relegated to a secondary position. Vivekananda foresaw the tragic end of dollar-worshipping science and cautioned the West in California, 'Thinkest thou of matter; matter thou shalt be.'

Vivekananda knew fully well that traditional religious sentiments would not hold water with confirmed materialists and rationalists. What they wanted was reason. In his speech on *The Absolute and Manifestation* delivered in London, in 1896, Vivekananda declared openly:

> Materialism prevails in Europe today. You may pray for the salvation of the modern sceptics, but they do not yield, they want reason. The salvation of Europe depends on a rationalistic religion, and Advaita—the non-duality, the oneness, the idea of the Impersonal God—is the only religion that can have any hold on any intellectual people. It comes whenever religion seems to disappear and irreligion seems to prevail, and that is why it has taken ground in Europe and America.[4]

But the task was not easy. It was in 1896 that Swamiji met Nikola Tesla, the most successful electrician-scientist of America in those days. In a letter to E.T. Sturdy dated 13 February, 1896 Swamiji wrote:

> Mr. Tesla was charmed to hear about the Vedantic Prāṇa and Akasa and the Kalpas which according to him are the only theories modern science can entertain... Mr. Tesla thinks he can demonstrate mathematically that force and matter are reducible to potential energy. I am to go and see him next week, to get this new mathematical demonstration.[5]

But Tesla failed to keep his promise, and Western science had to wait for ten more years for the rise of Albert Einstein to realize the oneness of matter and energy and the formulation of the 'Field' concept of force.

Vivekananda was persistent in his attempt to preach Vedanta in the language of Western science, although 'it had been a terrible struggle', as he said. The West looked upon the slumbering India, quietly suffering under foreign domination for hundreds of years, as a heathen land where religion and philosophy were synonymous with snake-charming, widow-burning, arrant superstitions and unimaginable idolatory. Moreover the largest majority or so-called Western intellectuals were not even acquainted with the bare principles of Indian thought like Ātman, Māyā, Jīva, Karma, Dharma etc. The establishment of the experiential truths of Vedanta in such a totally different society and culture demanded the back-breaking labours of a spiritual Hercules endowed with superhuman powers of the intellect and will. Four days after meeting Tesla, Swamiji wrote to his Madras disciple Alasinga:

> Then you see, to put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and intricate mythology and queer startling psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple popular, and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest minds—is a task only those can understand who have attempted it.'[6]

The main difficulty was the straight-jacket thinking of the scientists of those days who

4. *Complete Works* (1976), vol. 2, p. 139.
5. *Complete Works* (1973), vol. 5, p. 101.
6. *Complete Works* (1973), vol. 5, p. 104.

were almost totally reluctant to accept anything unless it came from their own stalwarts. In January 1896 Vivekananda openly exposed the scientific dogmatism of the West in his speech on *Microcosm* delivered in New York:

> When a great ancient sage, a seer, or a prophet of old, who came face to face with the truth, says something, these modern men stand up and say, 'Oh, he was a fool!' But just use another name, 'Huxley says it or Tyndall', then it must be true, and they take it for granted. In place of ancient superstitions, in place of old Popes of religion they have installed modern Popes of Science.[7]

The worship of scientific materialism was being safely conducted by the modern priests of science. Vivekananda's real struggle was to make a dent in the adamantine walls of this great scientific bastion which 19th century Western thought had regarded as invincible and infallible.

But cracks began to appear in the same bastion, firstly as a sheer reaction to dollar-worshipping acquisitiveness and, secondly, as an effect of a series of revolutionary scientific discoveries from Michelson and Morley's experiment in 1893 to the latest findings of Particle Physics. And today the same Advaita Vedanta which the Oriental prophet gave them almost a century ago stands as the only solution to the enigmatic problems of modern physics. Within twelve years after Vivekananda's passing away came the first explosion from the First World War. After the First World War Europe's savant philosopher Romain Rolland, coming out of his imprisonment for anti-war propaganda, finally stumbled on the message of Ramakrisrna-Vivekananda, and found it to be the only 'key to life', the only balm to a feverish Europe 'which had murdered sleep'. Even Rolland's upholding of Vivekananda's message failed to quieten the rising tumult of war and acquisitiveness—the two natural passions of a purely materialistic society. In 1939 came the much more devastating Second World War. In 1945 the first atom bomb was experimentally exploded at Alamogordo and then successfully dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the shock and horror of millions of people. When the celebrated physicist and chief coordinator of the Manhattan Project, Robert Oppenheimer, went to attend a party hosted to celebrate the great occasion, he found, to his dismay, that the party was a 'dismal flop' and 'people later disagreed' about the bomb-explosion. In this state of confusion Oppenheimer saw an otherwise cool-headed scientist going out of the party to vomit. 'The reaction had begun' wrote a stupified Oppenheimer.[8]

On July 16, when the first bomb was experimentally exploded in the desert area of Alamogordo, and as the stupendous dazzling conflagration lit up the entire sky, Oppenheimer, standing ten thousand yards away, began to hum spontaneously the lines from the *Gītā*:

> If the radiance of a ten thousand suns
> were to burst into the sky
> that would perhaps be like
> the splendour of the Mighty One.[9]

That was a moment of great significance when Western science converged towards Eastern Vedanta, as A.D. Reincourt says in his book, *The Eye of Shiva.*[10]

This convergence became more and

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7. *Complete Works* (1976), vol. 2, p. 218.

8. Robert Oppenheimer, *Letters and Re-collections,* Edited by Alice Kimball Smith and Charles Weiner (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1980) p. 292.

9. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā,* 11.12.

10. Amaury De Reincourt, *The Eye of Shiva* (New York: William Marrow & Company Inc., 1981) Pp. 13-14.

more accentuated in subsequent years. Nobel physicist Schrodinger, writing on the growing importance of consciousness in Quantum Physics, declared:

> In all the world there is no kind of framework within which we find consciousness in the plural. This is simply something we construct because of the temporal plurality of the individuals. But it is a false construction... The only solution to this conflict, in so far as any is available to us at all, lies in the ancient wisdom of the upanishad.[11]

In his presidential address at the All-World Science Congress held in Washington in 1973 on the 500th anniversary of Copernicus, Nobel physicist Werner Heisenberg declared:

> What is really needed is a change in fundamental concepts. We are probably forced in our concepts to abandon the atomic materialism of Democritus... We cannot exclude the possibility that after some time the current themes of science and technology will be exhausted, and a younger generation will turn for rationalistic and pragmatic attitudes towards an entirely different approach.[12]

In his well-known book *Physics and Philosophy* Heisenberg anticipates 'an entirely different approach' to today's physics which is in keeping with the Eastern traditional philosophy.

> The great scientific contribution in theoretical physics that has come from Japan since the last War maybe an indication of a certain relationship between philosophical ideas in the tradition of the Far East and the philosophical substance of Quantum Theory.[13]

New writers on modern physics and Eastern thought in the late 70s of the twentieth century are turning more to Neo-Vedanta, the ancient philosophy of India as interpreted and adapted to modern thought by Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Amaury de Reincourt in his brilliant book on modern physics and Eastern philosophy entitled *The Eye of Shiva* stresses the paramount importance of the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda:

> ... Can a connection between the scientific and mystical frames of reference be established over and beyond a certain metaphysical parallelism? The answer lies in the fact that Indian mysticism, at least as far as its leading representatives are concerned, has evolved as much in the past hundred years as the science of physics itself, in a direction that points towards an inevitable convergence of the two. From its modern awakening with Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda Eastern mysticism has begun to adapt its revelations to the entirely different cultural framework provided by science and technology, without in any way sacrificing what is valid in its traditional understanding of the phenomenon itself.[14]

Reincourt points out what would perhaps be considered the most significant aspect of Vivekananda's interpretation of Vedanta. With Swami Vivekananda Vedanta has in fact 'evolved' into a science which is interchangeable with the 'science of physics itself'. Religion is a matter of language, as Swamiji once pointed out to his British disciple Nivedita. It was Śaṁkara's mission to establish and resuscitate Advaita Vedanta by ending the dominance of the Buddhist intellectuals and atheists of his time. And therefore Śaṁkara's way was primarily intellectual. His gigantic intellect dwarfed the philosophical adversaries of his time leading to the triumph of Advaita Vedanta all over India.

Vivekananda's mission was both

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11. Erwin Schrodinger, *My View of the World* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1964), Chapter 4.
12. *American Review*, Summer 1974, Pp. 48-55.
13. Werner Heisenberg, *Phvsics and Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1958) p. 173.
14. *The Eye of Shiva*

Buddha's and Śamkara's. Both Buddha and Vivekananda were motivated by one pivotal reason—alleviation of human suffering. Vivekananda always reaffirmed that Buddha preached nothing but Vedanta in his simple ethical way which even Upali, the barber, or Chanda, the *caṇḍāla,* could grasp and practise. Vivekananda was absolutely clear about his mission. And this is how he expressed it to Nivedita:

> My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.[15]

The language and reason of modern science and physics that Vivekananda used for preaching Vedanta was just an instrument. His real mission was not merely the intellectual awakening, but also the spiritual elevation, of mankind, especially in the materialistic West. The profound simplicity of his exposition sounds sometimes too simple to the ear of orthodox scholars. But it is the same ancient philosophy restated in modern language. A prophet is born primarily for the salvation of suffering humanity, not for teaching or entertaining scholars. And he does not rest until that philosophy becomes living, practical and dynamic in all spheres of life. Vivekananda came not just to preach a theoretical Vedanta, but also to demonstrate how to make it practical and solve the problems of life. Yet Vivekanand's intellectual brilliance in the new exposition of Advaita Vedanta is just phenomenal. He was preaching Vedanta like Ācārya Śamkara, but he was not preaching it to Hindu pandits or Buddhist scholars who were thoroughly soaked in the tradition of Sanskrit learning and the Upaniṣadic teaching. Vivekananda was speaking to the curious West neither acquainted with nor believing in the Upaniṣadic ideas which had till then remained hidden in cryptic books written in an archaic language, accessible only to a few scholars and specialists. His job was to bring Vedanta from the ivory tower of pandits to the doors of hard-core materialists and the laboratories of modern physicists, and finally to the arena of everyday living for common people. He wrote to his Madras disciple Alasinga:

> The dry, abstract Advaita must become living—poetic—in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical psychology—and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work.[16]

Vivekananda, whose approach combined both Buddha's passionate feeling for human suffering and Śamkara's brilliant exposition of the nature of the ultimate Reality, had a more humanistic and practical approach. In fact it was the mission of his life to make the mystical and intellectual Vedanta 'practical'. By 'practical' he meant attainable by all people in all walks of life. It is this practical Vedanta that we find in Vivekananda's final summarization of Vedanta in five sentences:

> Each soul is potentially divine.
> The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal.
> Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.
> This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.[17]

Now compare these lines with the aphoristic single-line statement by Śamkara of the essentials of Vedanta: Brahman

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15. *Complete Works* (1972), vol. 7, p. 501.
16. *Complete Works* (1973) vol. 5, Pp. 104-105.
17. *Complete Works* (1977), vol. 1, p. 124.

alone is real, the world is unreal; and the individual soul is nothing but Brahman. Vivekananda takes the latter half of Saṁkarācārya's line, and gives it supreme importance—the essential Divinity of life. Swamiji's five lines are an expression of this central theme of Vedanta which considers humanity to be 'heirs of immortal Bliss' (amṛtasya putrāḥ). Of the first half of Śamkara's line, Swamiji emphasized the reality of Brahman more than the unreality of the world. He saw Brahman everywhere, in all people; he saw nothing else. The unreality of the world was subsumed in the tangible, ever-present reality of Brahman. The new profile given to the ancient Vedanta by Swami Vivekananda has come to be known as Neo-Vedanta.

There is yet another special feature in Vivekananda's interpretation of the ancient Vedanta Philosophy. Till then Vedanta philosophy had remained divided into three watertight systems: the Dvaita philosophy of the school of Madhva, the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja, and the Advaita philosophy of Śaṁkara. The exponents of each of these three streams of Vedanta philosophy always tried to eliminate the other two and to establish its own validity. Vivekananda, following the footsteps of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, interpreted Vedanta philosophy for the first time in history in a comprehensive way which included all these three streams of thought. By Vedanta, Vivekananda always meant all the three schools of Vedanta: dualism, leading naturally by the process of reason to qualified monism, and qualified monism culminating in the same way in the Advaita. Dualism, qualified monism and non-dualism are only three gradually ascending stages of vision which unfold themselves as man develops finer and finer intelligence.

This was not only a historic achievement in the field of Indian philosophy but it was also the beginning of a far more comprehensive philosophy of life, for Vivekananda's interpretation of Vedanta negated nothing, either of heaven or earth, but made a bridge between the two. 'The old idea was', said Vivekananda, 'to develop one idea at the expense of all the rest. The modern way is "harmonious development"! ...He who gets the whole must have the parts too. Dualism is included in Advaitism (monism).'[18]

The 'modern way' of Vivekananda-Vedanta related ordinary life to spiritual sadhana, science to religion, action to contemplation, matter to mind, immanence to transcendence, the World to God, and man to Brahman, the supreme Reality. The far-reaching consequences of Vivekananda's interpretation of Vedanta are yet to be fully understood and realized in the different levels of world culture today. Nivedita has expressed the profound uniqueness of Vivekananda's Vedanta in a few lines of unparallel clarity and depth:

> It is this which adds its crowning significance to our Master's life, for here he becomes the meeting-point, not only of East and West, but also of past and future. If the many and the One be indeed the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realization. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion.[19]

Like Buddha speaking in Pali to the commoner, or Christ speaking common Hebrew, Vivekananda was the first oriental prophet who preached Vedanta in the commonest language of the West—English. 'The Vedas, however, has to come down to our level', declared Vivekananda, 'for if they told us the highest truth in the

(*Continued on page* 476)

18. *Complete Works* (1972), vol. 7, p. 87.
19. *Complete Works* (1977), vol. 1, p. xv.

BANKIM CHANDRA, THE INSPIRER OF NATIONALISM

SRI BIMAL KUMAR ROY

Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya was born on 26 June 1838 in the village Kānthāl Pārā belonging to the district Twenty-four Parganas. At the time of his birth his father Yadavachandra was the deputy collector of Midnapore district. After primary education in his native village he entered the Presidency College, Calcutta, to study law at the age of eighteen. He got his B.A. degree in 1856 and B.L. degree eleven years later. Like his father he too entered the civil service and rose to the position of a district magistrate. After thirty-three years of Government service he retired. Three years later, he died at the age of fifty-six on 8 April 1894. He is best known for his contributions to modern Bengali literature of which he was one of the creators. His published works number thirty-four, mostly novels. He was however, a great patriot and thinker, and his work under British officers roused in him the spirit of nationalism.

The purpose of the present article is to show the contribution of Bankimchandra to the growth of nationalism in India. The main point stressed here is that he 'Indianized' the basically European concept of nationalism by giving a new look to it.

Nation, nationhood and nationalism—all these are Western concepts which found expression in the first half of 19th century. The young men of Bengal in the 19th century imbibed the ideal of nationalism along with that of liberalism from their study of Western history and literature. In a sense, Indian nationalism as an urban phenomenon was a direct outcome of the penetration of British political authority and colonial economy into the country and the slow but inevitable transformation of the Indian society and economy. On the other hand, nationalism in Europe, also an urban phenomenon, was brought about by a national bourgeoisie which happened to be the product of a highly developed mercantile and a fast industrial economy.

The best, and creatively the most significant, spokesman of nationalism in Bengal in the 70's and 80's of the 19th century were Keshabchandra Sen and Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya. Between them, they seemed to have absorbed and articulated the total ambitions and aspirations of the age. Keshabchandra presented the liberal aspect of constitutional protest and agitation marked by a moderation, whereas Bankimchandra delivered the aggressive and even militant aspect of the same, characterized by an intense self-

searching, passionate self-criticism, passionate exhortation to his people to acquire more knowledge, more power and more love for the country.

Bankimchandra knew that nationalism had been transported to and implanted in the Indian soil from Europe. Neither the vague desire of a few educated men, nor the philosophical discussions of the learned people would make it grow and flourish in India. He made a careful analysis of the constituent elements of nationalism to show at which stage did it stand in India. The first element is the close identification of interests of the individual with those of the community. The other is the clash of interests, between nations, leading a nation to promote its own interest even by doing harm to other nations. Such a spirit may be good or bad, but it has been proved that a nation, inspired by such a spirit, acquires supremacy over other nations which lack it. Bankimchandra referred to the unification of Italy and Germany to show the effectiveness of the spirit of this kind of nationalism.

Bankimchandra showed that these two elements of nationalism seen in Europe had never been present in India. When the Aryans first came to India, they had solidarity among themselves, but in course of time as their number increased, they spread to different parts of the vast subcontinent of India and became divided into various states and communities. Consequently, though they belonged to the same religion, same language, same race and same country, there developed no national unity in them. Such deficiency in unity was clearly witnessed among the Bengalees.

Moreover, the masses in India, Bankimchandra felt, had never been actuated by a strong desire for independence. They wanted a government and not independence. They had never identified their interests with those of the governmental political power which had always been the monopoly of a particular caste, the Kṣatriyas. The ideas of independence and nationalism were new to India and were learned by the Indians from the British.

The aggressiveness and hatred towards other nations, the other element of nationalism, was also absent in India. This lack of aggressiveness was, according to Bankimchandra, the result of the unique Hindu attitude towards God. The Hindus believe that devotion to God cannot exist apart from the love of humanity. Owing to such a view, they did not consider the people of other nationalities to be enemies and did not even mind their subjugation by other nationalities such as the Turks, Mongols and the British.

Having shown that the feeling of nationalism was alien to the Hindu mind, Bankimchandra went on to give a new look to nationalism. The chief task of Bankimchandra in this respect was to raise nationalism to the dignity of religion. He was perfectly aware of the fact that nothing could move the heart of Indians so much as religion. So he preached patriotism as the greatest religion. The innate feeling of indifference towards nationalism could be overcome only by placing new religious ideals before the people of India.

Bankimchandra in his masterpiece of poetic philosophy, *Kamalākānter Daptar* identified the Goddess Durga with Baṅgabhūmi, the land of Bengal. He addressed the motherland as 'the Mother' and 'the Goddess'. These words stirred the imagination of young Bengal and converted them into staunch nationalists. The concrete image of the motherland—her peerless and immense beauty—was vividly drawn by Bankimchandra in his immortal song, *Vande Mātaram*. The song not only

inspired but also instilled vigour in the hearts of his countrymen.

Further, he developed the idea of nationalism as a religion in his famous novel, *Ānanda Maṭh*, which soon became the Bible of Bengali patriotism. In that work he gave an original interpretation of the image of Goddess Kāli. He viewed Kāli as the symbol of the degradation of India and the image of Durgā as the realization of the future greatness of India. The mother country would reveal herself as Durgā when all the children of the mother country would call her Mother. Bankimchandra thought that the recognition of nationalism as the religion of India was the only way for India to attain the status of a sovereign.

The full import of Bankimchandra's efforts in this direction can be grasped only if we remember the mental block that he had to overcome before being successful in his venture of re-orienting nationalism via religionism. Anglophilism dominated the mind of Bankimchandra in his youth. In his address to the Bengal Social Science Association entitled, 'A Popular Literature for Bengal', Bankimchandra himself testified to his own intellectual preferences and attitudes in 1870. He said emphatically that English-educated Bengalis were disinclined to write books in their mother tongue and that intelligent Bengali youth considered it undignified to write anything in Bengali. This explains why he started his literary career with an attempt to write a novel in English (*Rājmohun's Wife*).

But afterwards he overcame his psychological inhibition, abandoned the attempt to write in English and urged other Bengalis to do the same. His own realization apart, he might have been influenced by the poet Rangalal Bandyopadhyaya's exclamation, 'Who wants to live if not in independence?' or by his friend Dinabandhu Mitra's play, *Nīl Darpaṇ*, or by the work of Rajnarayan Bose who founded the *Jātīya Gaurava Sampādanī Sabhā*. Be that as it may, Bankimchandra gradually left anglophilism behind and felt an urgent desire to regain the national identity.

Nationalism was generally promoted in European countries through romantic idealism in literature. Bankimchandra, however, based the principle of nationalism on a philosophical foundation. His *dharmatattva*, religious principle, was the outcome of this desire. For the regeneration of the country he looked forward to its spiritual revival. To him religious advancement was also the root of political advancement. This explains why he gave a religious significance to the idea of the motherland by declaring that in the image of the benign Goddess Durgā could be seen the future greatness of the motherland.

The basic concept in Bankimchandra's *dharmatattva* is that there can be no devotion to God without love for Humanity. God is in every animate being; the whole living world should, therefore, be the object of as much love as the individual self. The protection of society is more important than the protection of the self, because there can be no welfare for an individual outside the society.

Bankimchandra did not find any contradiction between nationalism and internationalism. Love of humanity or internationalism does not imply that one should allow one's conntry to be ravaged by others. It means equal regard for all. One should not do harm to others but at the same time should not allow others to injure his self, family or country. If patriotism is cultivated in the spirit of disinterestedness and as an integral part of the love of man, there will be no conflict between nationalism and internationalism. However, as the whole world was too wide to be conceived in terms of love by an individual, he recommended that the individual should at first direct his love only to

his country.. Bankimchandra's teaching on nationalism, then, is that it is necessary for the self-realization of the individual, and therefore, it is the highest spiritual ideal

Bankimchandra knew from his reading of European history that nationalism flourished in Europe because national languages were fostered, the holy scriptures were translated into them, native literature and art were encouraged, and because those brilliant eras of the past were recalled in which national qualities and characteristics had found expression. His sense of history led him to make efforts towards bringing about a similar renaissance in India with a view to promoting nationalism.

Bankimchandra tried to impart literary grace to the Bengali language. The epoch-making journal *Baṅgadarśan* did more to make the Bengali language popular with the educated classes than probably anything else. In this journal Bankimchandra showed the necessity of cultivating the Bengali language as a means of promoting national solidarity. The journal operated on the premise that unless and until the gulf between the English-educated and the uneducated was bridged, national progress could never be attained. So long as the thoughts of the educated classes did not find their echo in the hearts of the masses, there could be no success in the movement for social uplift.

Bankimchandra was also fully aware of the value of history in rousing national consciousness. He wrote several articles in the *Baṅgadarśan* to show the importance of making diligent researches into the history of the Bengali people. Moreover, his thought-provoking articles like *Bānglār Kalaṅka* and *Bāṅgālīr Bāhubal* clearly indicate his urge to infuse a sense of national superiority in the Bengali people. He thus provided nationalism in Bengal with its own native medium.

Critics sometimes observe that Bankimchandra's religious nationalism was essentially rooted in 'Bengaleeness'. His novels and essays, of course, awoke in the people of Bengal a rising consciousness of power, a pride in their language, in their literature, in their religion and, most of all, in themselves. From Bankimchandra's pen came the *mantra*, the slogan of swarāj, 'Vande Mātaram', and he might have thought of the possibility of establishing a United States of India on the basis of provincial nationalism, though he never stated that in explicit terms It should however be emphatically pointed out that though Bankimchandra expounded nationalism in terms of Bengal only, his ideal transcended the petty boundary of provincialism and embraced the whole of India. The influence of 'Vande Mātaram' on the history of modern India has been no less important than the influence of Rousseau's Social Contract on the history of France in the latter half of the 18th century.

Some have sought in his writings the source and justification of militant nationalism or political extremism. Aurobindo described Bankimchandra as the 'inspirer and political Guru' of the new spirit which is leading the nation to resurgence and independence. However, there were striking differences between Bankimchandra's philosophy and the cult of the extremists. Patriotism was never for him a substitute for religion as it was for many of the extremists. He was not for parochial nationalism either. He stressed the utter futility of such nationalism at the end of his book *Ānanda Maṭh*. Despite his occasional characterization of Muslims in unfriendly terms in some of his novels, it is not accurate to regard him as anti-Muslim. In one of his writings, he portrayed the character of a Muslim fakir and gave it universal significance.

In brief, Bankimchandra's love for the

country and the nation was a partial manifestation of his zeal and all-pervasive love for humanity which transcended the artificial barriers of race and geography.

THE EARTH COMMUNITY

DR THOMAS BERRY

It is important that we think somewhat about the earth, the planet out of which we are born, by which we are nourished, guided, healed; the planet, however, which we have abused to a considerable degree in these past two centuries of industrial exploitation. This has reached such extremes that presently it appears that some hundreds of thousands of living species will be extinguished before the end of this century.

It is indeed true that species become extinct in the natural processes whereby the great variety of life forms have developed over the centuries, for there is a violent as well as a benign aspect of nature. Yet in the larger pattern of life development over hundreds of millions of years new species have appeared in ever greater florescence. There is reason to believe that the earth was never more resplendent than it was when human consciousness awakened in the midst of the unnumbered variety of living forms that swim in the seas and move over the land and fly through the air.

When the agricultural civilizations began some ten thousand years ago the human disturbance of the natural world was begun in a serious way. It may be said in general that these early neolithic and the later classical civilizations had some deleterious effects on the regions they occupied. The extent varied. But in the larger perspective the damage was sustainable.

In our times, however, human cunning has mastered the deep mysteries of the earth at a level far beyond the capacities of earlier peoples. We can break the mountains apart, we can drain the rivers and flood the valleys. We can turn the most luxuriant forests into throwaway paper products. We can tear apart the great grass cover of the western plains and pour toxic chemicals into the soil and pesticides onto the fields until the soil is dead and blows away in the wind. We can pollute the air with acids, the rivers with sewage, the seas with oil. All this in a kind of intoxication with our power for devastation at an order of magnitude beyond all reckoning. We can invent computers capable of processing a billion bits of information per second. And why? To increase the volume and the speed with which we move natural resources through the consumer economy to the junk pile or the waste heap. Our managerial skills are measured by the competence manifested in accelerating this process. If in these activities the topography of the planet is damaged, if the environment is made inhospitable for a multitude of living species, then so be it. We are creating a technological wonder-world.

It is not easy to know how to respond to this attitude, its order of magnitude is so great. We must, however, reflect on what is happening. It is an urgent matter. Especially for those of us who still live within a meaningful humanistic-spiritual context. We have not yet spoken. Nor have we even seen clearly what is happening. The issue goes far beyond economics, or

commerce, politics, or an evening pleasantries as we look out over a scenic view. Something is happening beyond all this. We are losing splendid and intimate modes of divine presence. We are, perhaps, losing ourselves.

Some years ago in 1975 in the great cathedral of John the Divine, I presided over a public discussion on Technology and the Natural World with Edgar Mitchell the Astronaut, Eido Roshi the Zen Master, and Lame Deer the Sioux Indian. When Lame Deer spoke he stood with the sacred pipe in his hands, bowed in turn to the four directions, west, north, east and south. Then, after lifting his eyes to survey this vast cathedral, he turned to the audience and remarked on how over-powering a setting this cathedral was for communication with the divine reality. But then he added that his own people had a different setting for communion with the Great Spirit, a setting out under the open sky, with the mountains in the distance and the winds blowing through the trees and the earth under their feet and surrounded by the living sounds of the birds and insects. It is a different setting, he said, a different experience, but so profound that he doubted that his people would ever feel entirely themselves or able to experience the divine presence adequately in any other setting.

It made an overwhelming impression on me and lingers in my mind still and causes me often to reflect on what we have gained and what we have lost in the life style that we have adopted, on the encompassing technocratic, manipulative world that we have established, even on the sense of religion that we have developed. We must not over-romanticize primitivism as this has been done on occasion; yet when we witness the devastation we have wrought on this lovely continent and even throughout the planet and consider what we are now doing, we must reflect We must reflect especially on the extinction of species we are bringing about. It is estimated by serious biologists that between now and the year 2000, in less than twenty years, in our present manner of acting, we will probably extinguish between 500,000 and a million species out of the five to ten million species that we know of.

Extinction is a difficult concept to grasp. It is an eternal concept. It is not at all like a killing of individual life forms that can be renewed through normal processes of reproduction. Nor is it simply diminishing numbers. Nor is it damage that can somehow be remedied or for which some substitute can be found. Nor is it something that simply affects our own generation. Nor is it something that could be remedied by some supernatural power. No, it is an absolute and final act for which there is no remedy on earth or in heaven. A species once extinct is gone forever. The passenger pigeon is gone and will never return. However many generations succeed us in coming centuries none of them will ever see a passenger pigeon in flight or any of the other living forms that we extinguish.

There is a list available from the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, a list of some 800 species of the higher animals that are presently imperilled, a list that includes some of the most gorgeous expressions of life that have ever been present on the earth; the great whales, the Asian Elephant, the magnificent Snow Leopard, the Polar Bear, the Grizzly Bear, the Brown Bear, the Jaguars, the Cheetah, the California Pronghorn Antelope, the Giant Ibis, the California Condor, the Black-Necked Swan, the Whooping Crane, the Mississippi Sandhill Crane, the Peregrine Falcon, the Golden Eagle, the Southern Ball Eagle, the Paradise Parrot, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. So the list could go on and on merely among the vertebrates but then we

would need to begin the list of those splendid insects upon which so much of life depends; and then the plant-world, especially the flowering plants that are threatened, and the woodlands.

Not only are we bringing about the extinction of life on such a vast scale, we are also making the land and the air and the sea so toxic that the very conditions of life are being destroyed. As regards basic natural resources not only are the non-renewable resources being used up in a frenzy of processing, consuming and disposing but we are also ruining much of our renewable resources such as the very soil itself on which all terrestrial life depends. A long list of particular statements could be made concerning this assault of the earth, the sea and the air, but much of this you already know about and further emphasis on these details is not exactly what is needed.

What is needed and what can appropriately be considered here is the deeper meaning of the relationship between the human community and the earth process.

Most often we think of the natural world as an economic resource or as a recreational context after a wearisome period of work, or as something of passing interest for its beauty on an autumn day when the radiant colours of the oak and maple leaves give us a moment of joy. All these attitudes are quite legitimate yet in them all there is what might be called a certain trivializing attitude. If we were truly moved by the beauty of the world about us we would honour the earth in a profound way. We would understand immediately and turn away with a certain horror from those activities that violate the integrity of the planet.

That we have not done so reveals that a disturbance exists at a much more basic level of consciousness than we like to admit or think about. A pathology exists in the human psyche on an order of magnitude that we cannot yet admit to ourselves. This pathology is not merely in those more immediate forms of economic activity that have done such damage; it is even more deeply imbedded in our cultural traditions, even in our religious traditions, in our very language, in our entire value system.

The ultimate impact of these conditions was restrained so long as our power was limited. But no longer is our power limited or our cunning thwarted. We have subverted the basic biological law that every life form shall have other life forms or conditions that limit its expansion, so that no single life form or group of life forms should suffocate the other life forms. But we now have such powers that nature cannot prevent us from doing whatever we decide in diminishing the splendour and vigour and variety of life upon the earth.

Yet we should be clear about what happens when we destroy the living forms of this planet. The first consequence is that we destroy modes of divine presence. If we have such a wonderful sense of the divine it is because we live amid such awesome magnificence. If we have such refinement of emotion and sensitivity it is because of the delicacy and fragrance and indescribable beauty of song and music and rhythmic movement in the world about us. If we have strength and grow in vigour of body and soul it is because the earthly community challenges us, forces us to struggle to survive; but in the end leads us to a conviction that we live in an ultimately benign universe. But however benign, it must provide that absorbing drama of existence whereby we can experience the full thrill of being alive in a fascinating and unending sequence of adventures.

If we have powers of imagination, these are activated by the magic display of colour and sound, of form and movement, such as we observe in the clouds of this sky, the

trees and bushes and flowers, the waters and the wind, the singing birds, and the movement of the Great Blue Whale through the sea.

If we have words to speak and to think and commune with, words for the inner experience of the divine, words for the intimacies of life, if we have words for telling stories to our children, words that we can sing with, it is again because of the impressions we have received from the variety of beings about us.

If we lived on the moon our minds and emotions, our speech, our imagination, our sense of the divine would be limited to the lunar land-scape.

The change that is taking place on the earth and in our minds is one of the greatest changes ever to take place in human affairs, perhaps the greatest, since what we are talking about is not simply another historical change or cultural modification but a change of geological and biological order of magnitude. We are changing the earth on a scale comparable only to those great changes in the structure of the earth and of life that took place during some hundreds of millions of years of earth development.

While such an order of magnitude can produce a paralysis of thought and action it can, hopefully, also awaken in us a sense of what is happening, the scale on which things are happening, and move us to a vast program of reinhabiting the earth in a truly human manner.

It could awaken in us an awareness of the need we have for all the living companions that we have with us here on our homeland planet. To lose any of these splendid companions is to diminish our own lives.

To learn how to live graciously together would make us worthy of this unique beautiful blue planet that was prepared for us over some billions of years, a planet that we should give over to our children with the assurance that this great community of the living will nourish them, guide them, heal them, and rejoice them as it has nourished, guided, healed and rejoiced ourselves.

(*Continued from page* 468)

highest way we could not understand it.'[20] And he was conscious that he was destined to speak of the Vedas not as a Hindu scripture, not as the cradle tenet of a particular religion called Hinduism, but as a statement of universal principles meant for all mankind. 'By the Vedas, no books are meant' he said. 'They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different time.'[21] And Vedanta is the quintessence or the central philosophy of the Vedas. What a stupendous task it must have been for him to speak of the highest Vedantic ideas of timeless heritage and universal appeal in the modern language of science, especially of physics and psychology, when physics itself was in an undeveloped stage during the period of Vivekananda's preaching in the West!

It is about Vivekananda's interpretation of Vedanta in the language of today's science that we will try to learn in the succeeding chapters.

20. *Complete Works* (1972), vol. 7, p. 34.
21. *Complete Works* (1977), vol. 1, p. xiii.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SADHANA OF SERVICE: BY EKNATH RANADE. Published by Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan, 3,, Singarachari Street, Madras 600 005. 1982. Pp. viii + 135. Rs. 15.

Thakur Shri Ramakrishna once said to Swami Vivekananda that one should not be so low as to seek only one's own spiritual salvation. Being a recluse and meditating only for one's own spiritual development is self-seeking in the ultimate analysis. *Self-realization* demands a transformation of the instinct of self-seeking into the spirit of service to fellow-beings in one's own society and, indeed, the whole world. As Swami Vivekananda said, 'They alone live who live for others.' It was this spirit of *living for others* that inspired Shri Eknath Ranade, the author of the book under review, to dedicate his life to the cause of moulding the lives of life-worker trainees of the Vivekananda Kendra at Kanyakumari who were to be the messengers of Swami Vivekananda. Sadhana, for Eknathji, did not entail withdrawal from the field of social action ; it meant disciplined other-regarding activity free from selfish purposes. Renunciation, for him, did not mean inaction, in the sense of withdrawal from society, but positive actions performed without egoistic motivation, and with the attitude of total surrender to God, that is, an attitude of being only a tool in the hands of God. His choice was not between renunciation and social service. He combined in his own life the twin ideals of Swami Vivekananda—Renunciation and Service. His book, *Sadhana of Service* could not, therefore, be more appropriately titled.

A builder of the national monument at Kanyakumari—the Vivekananda Rock Memorial—Shri Ranade founded later on an even more dynamic memorial to Swamiji in the form of the Vivekananda Kendra—a Service Mission based on Swamiji's famous call: 'A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breath of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up and the gospel ot equality.'

The man-making and nation-building mission of Swamiji constitutes the central theme of Shri Ranade's book. A posthumous publication (the author passed away in August 1982), the book comprises forty lectures that he gave at Kanyakumari during the years 1977-78 to the men and women trainees of the Vivekananda Kendra. He would begin by exhorting the trainees to make their urge for social service *positive*: the urge must come from within and not out of any compulsion from outside or in reaction to something, as for example, frustration. Man is both body and soul His world is both material and spiritual. While the former need not be given up, there must be steady progress from the material level to the spiritual level This will involve control over mind and checking its running after material trivialities. Why does he need to do so ? Because there is no fulfilment in mere satisfaction of one's material desires. Desires, until controlled, go on increasing. Desire by itself, of course, is not bad. After all, it is the prime mover of human activity. But desire has to be *sublimated* into a hunger for the knowledge of the Eternal, the Infinite. How would one find the Infinite ? One would find the Infinite in the finites themselves. As the Isha-Upanishad provides:

He who sees all beings
In his Self, and
Himself existing in all of them,
Who has realized
The Unity in Diversity
Through the same Entity
Manifested in all that exists,
Can have no hatred, no illusion, no grief,
For these crop out of ignorance which
Generates a sense of isolation.

In other words, all are the manifestations of the same Divinity, and as such, all are your brethren and you will find *real fulfilment* in serving your brethren.

Service rendered in this spirit becomes a vehicle for self-unfoldment. But how exactly does such unfoldment take place ? It is a case of marching forward from *kāma* to *mokṣa*, from *bubhukṣa* (desire for enjoyment) to *mumukṣa* (desire for liberation) ; a case of expansion of the self from individual to family, from family to society, from society to nation and ultimately from nation to the whole world. In the fullest climax of such march and such expansion true *Self-realization* takes place. In other words, the whole of life's journey is from selfishness to self-realization. Final liberation is the goal for all. As Swami Vivekananda said, 'Each soul is potentially Divine. The goal of life is to manifest

this Divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do it by work or worship, or philosophy or psychic control, by one or more or all of them, and be free.'

Ont of the four yogic paths shown by Swamiji, namely, Karma, Bhakti, Dhyana and Jñana, Eknathji chose for himself as well as the trainees of Vivekananda Kendra Karma Yoga—work done as service to society—as the path to be followed. Life itself is to be taken as a *sadhana*. This demands the imposition of a rigorous self-discipline. Once the mission of life (a distinction is made between the *goal* of life and the *mission* of life) is decided upon, one has to work on the principle that there is not a moment to be lost and not an ounce of energy to be wasted. Life being short and energy given being limited, bring into operation a sense of those things which are contributory to the mission and reject those which are not. 'Display the best that you possess within the short time alloted to you.. Transform yourself by being a true *sadhaka* whereby life becomes a *sadhana* for the achievement of the *sadhya*. Success is sure when there is complete harmony in the *sadhaka*, the *sadhya* and the *sadhana*.'

An able organizer, Shri Ranade provides in his book valuable insights into the art and science of organization. His discussions—on the principles and practices of Lokasamgraha (the collection of people), Lokasamaskara (the equipment of people), Lokavyavastha (the deployment of workers), on the essence of leadership as ability to inspire and persuade, on the need for a dedicated cadre as the backbone of an organization, and finally, on the importance of a congenial atmosphere in an organization—are illuminating. Rightly he observes that an organization, like the rest of the world beyond, should be looked upon as an affectionate brotherhood, where every one is for all and all for each individual.

The ultimate end of any development is to transform the nature of man by bringing about changes not only in his external condition, that is, his environment, but also in his internal condition, that is his attitudes, values and feelings. 'Man-making is the most basic of all human efforts. When man is equipped the society and the nation also become fully equipped. "Take care of the pie and the rupee will take care of itself," says an old proverb. Even if it is nation-building or world-building or international-building, man-making is the most fundamental process.' Shri Eknath Ranade's heart was ablaze with such a mission. 'Let us take up a great ideal, and give up our whole life to it', exhorted Swami Vivekananda. Eknathji imbibed the teaching of his great master and *lived* his messages himself before delivering them to other people.

This reviewer fully endorses the observation of M. Lakshmikumari, the Working President of Vivekananda Kendra, made in the foreword to the book: 'Small though the book is in size, it is great in content and powerful in its application.' The book is a storehouse of not just knowledge but wisdom in the true sense of that term and, as such, positively deserves a place on the shelf of all those who feel the necessity in life of caring for others. Let this enlightening book awake the present society which has become oblivious of its great tradition of Service set by its national heroes like Swami Vivekananda.

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RAMPRASAD, THE MELODIOUS MYSTIC: BY SWAMI BUDHANANDA. Published by Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi 110 055. 1982. Pp. 71. Rs. 5.

One of the enduring dimensions of India's rich cultural legacy is the musico-spiritual heritage left by the long, unbroken line of saint-composers. For them music was not a secular or aesthetic preoccupation dissociated from all transcendental values. It was *Sadhana*, the very breath animating their mystical quest for Ultimate Reality.

Here is the fascinating life of Ramprasad, one such melodious mystic of Bengal. For the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna his life has special appeal; an ardent admirer of Ramprasad, the Great Master derived 'abiding inspiration' from his songs, finding their 'language, mood, *bhava*, imagery and humour,' pre-eminently suited to his own 'spiritual temper.'

Swami Budhananda presents briefly but vividly the several details of this minstrel's life. Born in 1723, in Kumarhatta, a village on the banks of the Ganges, 34 miles north of Calcutta Ramprasad led a life of total dedication to the Divine Mother invoking her presence through the subtlest of all the modes of articulation known to man: *sabda*. But *sabda* was, for Ramprasad, not a mere verbal sign but a *mantra* charged with archetypal, divine power.

The songs which welled up from the depths of his being were, therefore, instinct with an existential immediacy and a spontaneity of utterance free from all artifice. The correspond-

ing plenitude of moods give us what the Swami calls 'the soul-form' of this melodious mystic. As traced graphically by the learned author, we have in Ramprasad's songs the entire gamut of a *sadhak's* moods: despair, helplessness, frustration, anger and scepticism on the one hand and faith, triumph, the ecstasy of fulfilment, renunciation and total self-surrender on the other. Transcending all these are intermittent but unblinking glimpses of the 'bizarre', terrible aspect of the Divine Mother ('Legitimised', as it were, by Sri Ramakrishna's own experience, later):

This time I shall devour Thee utterly. Mother Kali!
For I was born under an evil star,
And one so born becomes, they say, the eater of his mother,
Thou must devour me first, or I myself shall eat Thee up;
One or the other it must be.

To the modern temper poised in equal, though uneasy, measure between 'delight and dole,' between the creative and the destructive principles, Ramprasad's unified sensibility portraying both 'the benign and the terrible' aspects of the Divine Reality comes with a peculiar but satisfying poignancy.

We are grateful to Swami Budhananda for providing a fascinating insight into the life of a mystic whose melodies 'constitute an undecaying spiritual treasure.'

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NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA
SALEM 636 007

REPORT FOR 1981-82 *AND* 1982-83

Spiritual Activities: The ashrama conducted daily morning puja and evening prayer; Rama-nama-samkirtana on Ekādashī days; scriptural classes in Tamil every Saturday and in English every Sunday; and special discourses on various religious and cultural subjects by the visiting Swamijis and others. The birth-anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda were also celebrated with special puja, homa, kathā-kāla-kṣepam, bhajans and public meetings. The birthdays of the apostles of Sri Ramakrishna as also of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Buddha and religious festivals like Navarātri and Shivarātri were also duly observed. Spiritual retreats were held from time to time for the benefit of the devotees.

Cultural Activities: The ashrama library, honsed in its new building, has a select collection of books in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, English and Hindi, numbering three thousand. The recently started Balasangha inculcated cultural, social and spiritual values through non-formal education to children from seven to sixteen years of age. There is also a library exclusively meant for the use of these children.

Humanitarian work: The Charitable allopathic dispensary, started in 1933 is now housed in its own well-furnished building complete with a modern operation theatre, an opthalmic unit, a child-care unit, a dental chair and doctor's quarters. The number of patients treated was 80,154 during 1981-82 and 72,447 during 1982-83. Besides serving the people of the area, the dispensary caters to the needs of the people in the town and its suburbs as well, including the adjoining slums and villages. To fight rampant malnutrition 27,690 (1981-82) and 12,165 (82-83) babies were given milk every day from a milk distribution centre opened for the slum children. Vitamin injections, tonics and protein-food were also given to those children according to need (5,270 in 1981-82 and 4,685 in 1982-83). A dental camp organized in June served 700 people.

Needs: The ashrama proposes to raise a fund of Rs. 1,50,000 towards the construction of a children's corner and a playground with furniture, fittings etc, and create an endowment of Rs. 1 lakh for the child-care section and the milk-distribution centre.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Youngest Religion Encounters the Oldest

Among the major religions of the world Hinduism is the oldest and Islam is the youngest. These two powerful faiths have encountered each other only in India, and the unique culture and the complex socio-political situation existing in modern India owe their mystique not a little to this continuing historical encounter. In an article published in the Sunday Review of *The Times of India,* 4 September 1983, Akbar S. Ahmed, a Pakistani civil servant and scholar, has tried to sort out the Islamic aspects of this encounter. We give below the main theses of the author, in his own words as far as possible.

1. Devoid of contemporary power and still in search of his destiny, the Muslim tends to live in the past. He idealizes his past but is at the same time crushed by its burden. The result is emotional anorexia.

2. Muslims in South Asia suffer from the Spanish—more correctly Andalus —syndrome. They fear that the loss of political power would reduce them to a shrinking minority and eventually, as in Andalusia, they would be wiped out. Part of the politics of South Asia can be explained by the Andalus syndrome

3. Muslim society in India is acephalous, that is, without effective leadership. A dynamic middle class at its best has historically provided leaders, ideas, continuity, stability and strength to the community. The migration of the middle class (consisting of lawyers, doctors, civil servants, defense personnel and intellectuals) en bloc to Pakistan has devastated the social structure of Indian Muslims, and is largely responsible for their present acephalous condition.

4. Islamic revivalism raises in Hindu minds a fear which is mainly a historical atavism. The emotional identification of Indian Muslims with the fortunes of Islamic countries strengthens this suspicion.

5. Indian Muslims continue to nurse a sense of injury and neglect. To overcome this, they should shake off the hypnotism of the past and should look ahead.

6. Given enlightened leadership and organization, Muslims could become an effective force in national life and live in freedom and dignity.

7. The major socio-economic problems of Inidan Muslims are inextricably tied with those of the larger community. It is a love-hate relationship between the two communities, and Mr. Akbar Ahmed concludes his study with the hope that love will finally triumph over hatred.
