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उत्तिष्ठत
जाग्रत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत

Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 88 JUNE 1983 No. 6

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

तस्माद्यज्ञात्सर्वहुतः संभृतं पृषदाज्यं ।
पशून्तांश्चक्रे वायव्यानारण्यान्ग्राम्याश्च ये ।

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

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.8.

तस्माद्यज्ञात्सर्वहुत ऋचः सामानि जज्ञिरे ।
छंदांसि जज्ञिरे तस्माद्यजुस्तस्मादजायत ॥

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

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.9.

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

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

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.10.

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* *Puruṣa-Sūkta* continued.

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

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

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

This month's EDITORIAL discusses the Law of Sacrifice and how it operates in spiritual life.

Swami Budhananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, concludes WILL-POWER AND ITS DEVELOPMENT by pointing out the importance of cultivating a sound sense of values, prayer and surrender.

In AESTHETICS IN RAMANUJA'S PHILOSOPHY Prof. S. S. Raghavachar, former Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Mysore, has painstakingly brought together Ramanuja's views and influences on art and aesthetics and knit them into a coherent philosophical pattern—with that insightful mastery so characteristic of the professor's writings.

In an earlier article published in the December 1982 issue of this journal Hans Elmstedt had shown how the *sat* or Existence aspect of Reality influences the relative world as power. In the article KNOWLEDGE AND MEANING contributed to the present issue he shows how the *cit* or Knowledge aspect of Reality influences the relative world as meaning. The author teaches at a school in Lancaster, California.

Swami Muktinathananda of Belur Math gives a clear and authentic account of the inspiring life of SWAMI NISCHAYANANDA, a unique disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

MEDITATION AND SACRIFICE—II

(EDITORIAL)

Harmony and joy

According to the integral vision of Vedic sages, the whole cosmos is in a state of dynamic harmony, *ṛtam,* instinct with life and pulsating through the phases of creation, maintenance and destruction. Behind the apparent diversity and disharmony is the unity and harmony of *ṛtam,* supporting and controlling every atom of the universe in an all-inclusive, all-pervading embrace. God, souls and the universe constitute an integral Reality which functions as one vast living organism called Puruṣa or Cosmic Person, and appears structurally as absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. The Personal and the Impersonal are only the functional and structural aspects of one and the same Reality.

The basic experience of life is happiness. Existence itself is bliss; to live is to be joyful. Joy is not merely one of the experiences of life; rather, it is the only true experience. But this pure intrinsic happiness manifests itself only in the experience of Reality, and Reality is a multi-dimensional harmony of *sat, cit* and *ānanda* (Existence, Consciousness, Bliss). When we see nothing but contradiction and disharmony everywhere, what we experience is not Reality but its shadow, and the shadow of happiness is sorrow. Happiness is alone real and Reality is happiness. Sorrow is unreal, a distortion of Reality.

The cause of sorrow is the separation of happiness from human existence. What causes this separation? The fragmentation of consciousness. It is *cit* or consciousness that connects *ānanda* or bliss to *sat* or existence. When consciousness gets

fragmented, this connection is lost and happiness does not manifest itself in life. What causes the fragmentation of consciousness? The separation of the individual self from the Supreme Self, from universal consciousness, from the cosmic stream of life, as the ego. Egoism is the sole cause of human suffering and sorrow.

The Law of Sacrifice

The great mistake we almost always commit is to forget the larger life. We limit life to our own individuality forgetting that all life is one and that our little lives are only parts of the infinite life of the cosmos. Our personal needs, fears, likes and dislikes, and actions and reactions are only small ripples in the boundless ocean of cosmic life. But we remain so much engrossed in them that we are seldom aware of the mighty currents carrying us forward. We are in the grip of gigantic forces, and our individual lives are governed by the great laws of universal life.

It is by obeying these laws that we attain harmony with universal life, and experience happiness. Ignorance or disobedience of the universal laws produces disharmony and sorrow. One of the most important of these laws is the Law of Sacrifice, *Yajña.*

The microcosm (individual being) is entirely dependent on the macrocosm (universal being). The two are built on the same plan, and are in dynamic contact with each other. There is a constant exchange going on between them at all levels; any change in the microcosm affects the macrocosm and vice versa. This exchange is governed by the Law of Sacrifice.

The Law of Sacrifice was established at the beginning of creation by the Divine Himself, says the Gita.[1] And God, being the perfect Exemplar, the highest ideal Person, Himself follows this law which He has set. Out of His own inexhaustible Self-existence He is unceasingly pouring forth matter and energy and love and knowledge, as an act of sacrifice. Creation of the universe is the result of divine *tapas*, says the upaniṣads,[2] and divine *tapas* is God's Self-sacrifice. It is in accordance with the Law of sacrifice that the Divine creates the universe out of Himself and, after creating it, enters into every particle of it.[3] It is in accordance with this Law of Sacrifice that God descends periodically into the mundane world as the Avatar, submits Himself to superhuman disciplines, takes upon Himself the sins of others, and distributes His spiritual wealth to impoverished humanity.[4] The life of an Avatar is a life of sacrifice, here and hereafter. It is, however, only a special manifestation of the eternal cosmic Self-sacrifice of the supreme Lord of the universe.[5] Through His glorious life the Avatar teaches mankind how to convert an individual's whole life into one unbroken sacrifice and attain harmony and unity with the Divine.

God descends so that man may ascend. God descends through His Self-sacrifice; man must ascend through his self-sacrifice. This is the eternal Law of Sacrifice. It

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1. सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
Bhagavad-Gītā 3.10

2. स तपोऽतप्यत, स तपस्तप्त्वा, इदँ सर्वमसृजत ।
Taittirīya-upaniṣad 2.6.1.

3. तत् सृष्ट्वा, तदेवानुप्राविशत् । *ibid*

4. This is an idea common to Hinduism and Christianity. But whereas Hinduism considers the sacrifice of the Avatar a *līlā*, a joyful free self-giving, Christianity has made it an act of suffering through its doctrines of 'kenosis' and 'passion'.

5. In Christianity only Catholicism accepts the mystical, timeless and cosmic dimension of Christ's self-sacrifice. The Protestant doctrine of 'justification' rejects this higher dimension and emphasizes the historical and human aspects of the crucifixion.

operates between two poles: the Divine and the human.

A universal law has three characteristics: it is based on truth; it is unaffected by time and place; it is independent of human knowledge and action. The principle of *yajña* fulfils all these conditions; that is why we call it the Law of Sacrifice. But few people have heard of this law. If a person is not aware of a law how can he obey it? The answer is, the operation of a law does not depend upon his knowledge. The law does not depend on man; man depends on the law. He does not fulfil the law; the law fulfils itself through him. His ignorance of the law does not free him from the obligation of following it. The man who does not follow the law is dragged into it by the imperative power of the law itself. His disobedience does not affect the law; it only affects him, for the law breaks the person who breaks it. This is true of all physical, moral, social and spiritual laws.

Nature compels everyone to follow the Law of Sacrifice knowingly or unknowingly— or perish. Indeed living beings survive only because they obey this law even unknowingly or imperfectly. Every plant, animal and man receives all its sustenance from its environment, but this inflow can be maintained only if there is a corresponding outflow. A full cup cannot be filled unless it is emptied. Every living being is a centre from which matter and energy in different forms are streaming out on all sides. Every person adds something to the collective life through his work. Without being aware of the Law of Sacrifice millions of people are enriching human life through countless little and big acts of sacrifice. Even the wicked things that a wicked person does are based on sacrifice—perhaps the sacrifice of his own happiness and well-being.

Though the Law of Sacrifice is binding on all, it is not a harsh Draconian code of conduct. It is only an indication of the natural way of attaining harmony and peace. The law appears harsh only to the person who wants to go against it. But to a person who follows it with knowledge and faith it ceases to be a law, and becomes a way of life, a habit, an attitude, a part of his being. In his book *Outlines of Ethics* the great American philosopher John Dewey points out that, as man evolves, moral codes change from 'Do not' to 'Do' and from this to 'Be'. The Ten Commandments given to Moses ('Thou shalt not') mostly pertain to the first category, whereas Christ's teachings ('*Be* ye perfect', 'Blessed *are*') belong to the last category. Great men are those in whom the spirit of sacrifice has become a basic element of their personality and character.

Functions of the Law of Sacrifice

'This Yajña is the hub of the universe', declares the *Ṛg-Veda*.[6] What does this statement mean? In the first place, it means that the Law of Sacrifice is a symbol of the basic unity of the universe. The universe has a divine Centre which controls all existence, all life, all laws. The Gita says, 'Seated in the hearts of all beings the Lord impels them around with the power of His Maya, as if they were mounted on a machine.'[7] Man is not the centre of the universe, and cannot manipulate even his own life as he pleases, let alone the universe. This is not a terrifying prospect, but a consoling one. For it assures us that we are not alone in this

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6. अयं यज्ञो भुवनस्य नाभिः ।

Ṛg-Veda 1.164.35

7. ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

Bhagavad-Gītā 18.61

universe; all life is one and there is a Supreme Being who controls and guides individual lives.

Secondly, the Law of Sacrifice is the most fundamental law of the universe. All moral codes and social laws are ultimately derived from it. Even physical laws, like the laws of thermodynamics and the biological laws of evolution and homeostasis, are only expressions of the basic law of *yajña.*

It is this law that determines the place of each being in universal time. It is the great law of life and death. A rice plant is allowed to grow for a few months and, when it has borne fruit, it is sacrificed so that another rice may grow in its place. Childhood is sacrificed for the sake of youth, youth is sacrificed for the sake of old age, and old age is sacrificed for a new birth.

The Law of Sacrifice also determines the place of each being in universal space. It governs the course of evolution. Less adapted plants and animals are sacrificed to give place to those with greater powers of adaptation and evolutionary elan. Less capable men have to give way to more capable persons in all walks of life.

Social life is entirely dependent on the Law of Sacrifice. It is the fire of sacrifice burning in the altar of human heart that manifests itself outwardly as fidelity in marital life, as affection between parents and children, as fraternity in a monastery, as cooperation in social organizations, as morale in the army, and so on. It is the neglect or violation of the inner sacrificial altar through selfishness that is the root cause of divorce, quarrels and failures in individual and collective life.

It is the Law of Sacrifice that determines the limits of human experience. One may love coffee but if one drinks more than two or three cups, satiety will set in. One cannot sleep for more than a few hours at a time. Every experience, including even spiritual experience, has its limit. Says Schopenhauer, 'To have all one's wants satisfied is something intolerable—the feeling of stagnation which comes from pleasures that last too long. To overcome difficulties is to experience the full delight of existence.'[8] This limitation of experience is a part of the divine economy of the universe. It creates diversity of experience, and enables more people to enjoy more goods. A break or limitation in experience is a necessary condition for the renewal of joy, and happiness can be experienced only by continually renewing it. It is through sacrifice that this continual renewal is maintained.

Nature is not trying to suppress us. Her purpose is, first of all, to protect us from error, from suffering. 'Dharma (the Law) protects its protector': this is the key-note of the *Mahābhārata.*[9] In the second place, since the universe is evolving and all natural laws are parts of this evolving process, the basic purpose of the Law of Sacrifice is to lead us to greater life and higher levels of consciousness and fulfilment. Sacrifice is not a one-sided affair. Every act of sacrifice produces a corresponding divine response. When we sacrifice attachment we gain freedom, when we sacrifice impurity we gain purity, when we sacrifice lower pleasures we gain higher joy.

Nowhere else does the Law of Sacrifice operate with greater rigour than in the life of a Sannyāsin, monk. Sannyāsa is not a licence for wandering and begging, but is a life of intense self-sacrifice. It is a mistake to think that only the life of a householder involves sacrifices of all kinds

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8. Quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1952) p. 346.

9. धर्मो रक्षति रक्षित: ।

and that the life of a monk, who is free from all social obligations, does not require any sacrifice. The sacrifices of the householder are of one type, symbolized by the external fire altar. The sacrifices of the sannyāsin are of a different type, and his fire-altar is in his own consciousness. When he finally renounces all worldly ties after performing the last external ritual called *virajā-homa* the Sannyāsin symbolically transforms his higher Self into a fire-altar. Henceforth his whole life becomes a sacrificial living and he continually offers every thought, every action, every experience, the ago itself, as an oblation into his inner altar. 'Establishing the fires in the Atman, let him give up his home'—this is the injunction of the Hindu law-giver Manu to the Sannyāsin.[10] The flame colour of the clothes that a Sannyāsin wears is a symbol of the inner altar and reminds him constantly of the sacrificial nature of the monastic vocation. Hence a Sannyāsin is called an *ātma-yājin*, a Self-sacrificer. Without the spirit of sacrifice it is impossible to maintain the loftiness of the Sannyāsa ideal.

The most important function of the Law of Sacrifice, however, is the transformation of consciousness. It is this law that unites Karma and *upāsanā*, work and meditation, and thus plays a vital role in spiritual life. This point will be discussed in greater detail later on.

Stages in sacrifice

As man's life evolves, his attitude towards life changes, and as a result he develops higher and higher conceptions of sacrifice. Broadly speaking, his response to the sacrificial demands of life passes through three stages.

We have seen that sacrifice is not a one-sided process. It is a constant exchange between the two poles of universal Existence—the human and the divine. Most people are seldom aware of the immensity and importance of this exchange. Their lives are mostly spent in a sort of semi-conscious, dream-like existence. They are interested only in getting their needs satisfied, and do not bother about the cosmic processes involved in it. Given the choice, they would like to accumulate and enjoy things endlessly. But Nature does not permit this, and forces them to part with what they acquire. Says Swami Vivekananda:

> You come into life to accumulate. With clenched hands, you want to take. But nature puts a hand on your throat and makes your hands open. Whether you will it or not, you have to give. The moment you say, 'I will not', the blow comes; you are hurt... It is because we dare not give, because we are not resigned enough to accede to this grand demand of nature, that we are miserable.[11]

The divine spark hidden in the soul does make people undergo sacrifices—the husband for the sake of his wife, parents for the sake of their children, friends for the sake of one another. But they usually do this out of a blind compulsive urge which they do not understand. Moreover, these sacrifices are self-centred and are restricted to a narrow circle, and are undertaken with the hope of receiving something in return.

This, then, is the first stage in the evolution of the conception of sacrifice. It has three characteristics: 1. it is mostly an unconscious, automatic process; 2. it is done out of Nature's compulsion; and 3. it is centred on the ego. This kind of

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10. आत्मन्यग्नीन् समारोप्य ब्राह्मण: प्रव्रजेद् गृहात् । *Manu-Samhitā* 6.38

11. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976) vol. 2, p. 5

sacrifice has very little spiritual value. It only brings material benefits and helps the smooth running of the machinery of social life.

The second stage in the evolution of man's attitude towards life is characterized by three changes. The first is the dawn of Self-awareness, the realization that his real nature is the Atman, a spiritual entity separate from his body, mind and ego which belong to the stream of life. The second change is the awareness of cosmic forces. Man realizes that all individual lives are only parts of the boundless cosmic life and are governed by universal laws, the most important of which is the Law of Sacrifice. The third change is the withdrawal of the soul from the stream of universal life. Knowing that all work is done by the Divine, he remains a mere witness of the cosmic processes going on all around him. He does not own any sacrifice ; he just lets the Divine work, unimpeded by the resistance of his ego. In other words, sacrifice in the second stages moves to the other pole—the divine centre. Sacrifice is entirely God's affair.

The third stage in the ascent of sacrifice is reached when the individual Self realizes its oneness with Brahman, the infinite supreme Spirit. The ego, mind and body get divinized and become channels of divine Power, Śakti. Sacrifice becomes a full cooperation with the universal Will of the Divine, a free and loving exchange between the human centre and the divine Centre, a participation in the divine sport, *līlā*, a joyful self-giving.

Thus, if in the first stage man's attitude to sacrifice is unconscious, unwilling, ego-centred ; and in the second stage it is conscious, detached, God-centred ; in the third stage it becomes super-conscious, a total joyful self-giving, and a free movement between the individual and divine poles of Existence.

These three stages can be seen in the spiritual life of Arjuna as it unfolds itself in the Gita. A great hero of many a battle, Arjuna had undergone many sacrifices. But these were all egoistic and based on a compulsive urge to follow Dharma. The confrontation at Kurukṣetra created a sudden awakening in him, and lifted him to the second stage described above. He wanted to withdraw from the entanglements of collective life. It was not an act of cowardice but the result of a profound inner transformation, a progressive step in his spiritual evolution. Śrī Kṛṣṇa made use of this inner change in Arjuna and taught him, first of all, the real nature of the soul, the universe and God, and how they are inter-related. Then followed the terrifying apocalypse the vision of the *viśva-rūpa*, which was nothing but the vision of the mighty processes of cosmic sacrifice. The divine Voice told Arjuna that all the soldiers, generals and princes were about to be sacrificed at the divine altar, and that he had only to become an instrument for this ineluctable eventuality. This experience and the subsequent teaching of Kṛṣṇa took Arjuna to the third stage mentioned above. He returned to the battle field to offer himself freely as an oblation in the cosmic sacrifice, to participate fully in the divine *līlā*. The whole war of Kurukṣetra is a symbol of cosmic *yajña*, and the entire teaching of the Gita is built on the foundation of the Law of Sacrifice.

Types of sacrifice

Sacrifice is the only test of love, the only credible sign of wisdom and reliable proof of strength. Without sacrifice human relationships become mere barter and adjustments for exploitation and self-interest. This is true also of man's relationship with God. What you give and how you give

reflect the nature of your relationship. Depending on this, sacrifices have been divided with three groups: *dravya-yajña* (material sacrifice), *jñāna-yajña* (knowledge sacrifice) and *ātma-yajña* (Self-sacrifice).

For the vast majority of mankind the only possible way of expressing their devotion to God is through material gifts. The Gita calls the devotional offering of material goods *dravya-yajña.* This giving is not a form of charity (*dāna*) because all that we give have come from, and really belong to, the Divine alone. Nor is it a form of exchange or barter because it involves self-denial. It is not what we give that sanctifies the act and takes us closer to God, but the degree of sacrifice, self-denial, involved in the act. When Jesus saw a poor widow dropping two mites (small brass coin) into the treasury of the Jerusalem temple, he remarked: 'Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.'[12] Śrī Rāma ate with relish the half-eaten fruits offered by the tribal woman Śabari, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa snatched away and ate the small quantity of rice-flakes that Sudāma had brought for him but had hesitated to offer. An offering made to God becomes a *yajña,* sacrifice, only when it is based on self-denial.

The simplest expression of this kind of sacrifice was the fire ritual performed by the Vedic Aryans. Every man maintained a fire-altar at home into which he offered milk, ghee or cakes every day. As the symbol of divine Śakti, Fire was considered the mediator between man and God. The fire ritual enabled the Vedic man to orientate his life to universal life and live in harmony with the rhythms of cosmic Existence. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's assurance in the Gita that God accepts direct a leaf or flower or water or fruit offered with devotion made the fire ritual unnecessary. In the post-Vedic period the offering of food and acts of service to images of gods replaced the fire ritual. But though the outer form changed, the inner meaning and purpose of the ritual remained the same, namely an expression of self-denial and the soul's solidarity with the Divine.

Self-denial is giving up the feeling of *mama,* 'mine', with regard to material goods. It is releasing one's egoistic hold on things which belong to universal life. It is a way of detaching the will, the first step to the attainment of real freedom. It is a painful process only to a person who is ignorant of the laws of universal life. Clinging to material things is a part of man's struggle for existence, which he shares with other living beings. But this struggle is unnecessary or, at any rate, over-exaggerated. For all individual lives are parts of the universal life, are maintained by it, and are governed by its laws. One of these laws is the law of impermanence of created things. Everything that has a beginning must have an end. No man can hold on to an object for ever. Another is the law of Karma which states that what a man receives is the cosmic reaction to what he has given. Both the laws are only extensions of the fundamental Law of Sacrifice.

Dravya-yajña is the application of the Law of Sacrifice at the plane of *sat,* Existence. It is the only means of attaining harmony at the plane of *sat,* the physical universe. The more we give up our quarrels over fishes and loaves and our rat race for fame and power, the more our life moves in harmony with the rhythms of universal Existence and the greater the peace we attain.

Spiritual life begins with man's withdrawal from the struggle for existence. It

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12. Mark 12:43.44

is a struggle for higher consciousness, a higher harmony. This calls for a higher form of sacrifice, the sacrifice of 'I', the ego, *aham*. What is called the ego is a complex network of the body, senses and mind which hides the light of Atman and separates it from cosmic consciousness. The Atman can be realized only by transcending the ego. This may be done by offering the ego as an oblation into the light of Atman. Every thought, life-movement and karma can be converted into an inner sacrifice by connecting them to the centre of our consciousness, the Atman. How this is to be practised is taught in the fourth chapter of the Gita.[13] It calls this kind of internal sacrifice *jñāna-yajña*, knowledge-sacrifice. It is the application of the Law of Sacrifice at the plane of *cit*, Consciousness. Through *jñāna-yajña* man realizes his true nature as the Atman, attains harmony with cosmic consciousness and remains unaffected by the changes and sorrows of the world around him.

There is a still higher harmony possible. Over and above *sat* and *cit*, Reality has another dimension, namely, *ānanda*, Bliss. The highest form of fulfilment is the attainment of this supreme bliss. *Ānanda* is an inseparable aspect of the Atman, but is of limited extent in the individual Self, Jīvātman. To experience boundless bliss the Atman must attain absolute oneness with Brahman, the Infinite. This calls for the third type of sacrifice known as *ātma-yajña*, the oblation of the individual Self into the Supreme Self.[14] It is this highest form of everlasting Self-sacrifice that is called Parā Bhakti, supreme devotion. Through it the illumined soul sees the whole universe as a manifestation of the glories (*vibhūti*) of God and enjoys the bliss of Brahmán in every experience.

(*To be concluded*)

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13. cf. *Gītā* 4.25-30

14. The second type of sacrifice (*Jñāna-yajña*) may also be called *ātma-yajña*. In it the individual Self is regarded as the altar and the ego and everything connected with the ego are offered into it. In the third type of sacrifice, Brahman, Supreme Self, is considered the altar and the individual Atman itself is offered into it.

WILL-POWER AND ITS DEVELOPMENT—II

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

(f) To live in the living present wisely, we require the guidance of a sound sense of values.

We should be able to persuade ourselves that we are not fooling around. We must be able to tell ourselves, in and through whatever we may be doing, that we are gradually but surely proceeding to the fulfilment of our destiny. This sound sense of values must be ascertained with due regard for our physical, mental and spiritual needs. Indian sages have ascertained such values to be four: wealth, righteousness, pleasure and liberation of the spirit.

For the generality of mankind, physical and emotional starvation is not conducive to the cultivation of will-power or development of higher life. As starvation is bad, surfeit is also disastrous. For the

fulfilment of our physical and emotional needs, we require wealth. But if we earn wealth unrighteously, we release some forces which will eventually jump upon us like tigers and that will not be good for our will-power at all. Hence, both the values of pleasure and wealth have to be obedient to the laws of righteousness or dharma. But this righteousness, again, shall be inspired by a higher motive which is the attainment of the liberation of the spirit.

When we function in our daily life in accordance with this sound sense of values, we stay protected within a fire-ring of wisdom, as it were, which the evils of life cannot easily penetrate. Then we live in the forceful conviction of living rightly without a trace of guilt sense. It is this guilt sense with or without reason that eats away the roots of will-power. When we live not only without a guilt sense, but positively with a sense of living rightly, we get hold of a power of conviction which releases a new force within us. And this force immensely helps the development of will-power.

Cultivate one power of conviction at least, if you want to develop the will-power. Believe with your whole soul you are on the right path ; do not doubt everything all the time. This is not intelligence. Believe in Vedanta, in Ramakrishna, or in your own Atman, with all your might, and you will see how the will-power grows as if from nowhere. One thing rightly and powerfully done somewhere within oneself will help doing other things also.

(g) Now, this sound sense of values requires to be zealously guarded for we are being constantly assailed by chaotic winds of various contrary ideas.

How do we guard the sense of value? We can do so by doing three things: (i) by constant discrimination between the real and the unreal ; (ii) by keeping ourselves busy doing those things that we have decidedly accepted as beneficial ; and (iii) by avoiding idle curiosity about things which do not concern our main pursuit in life.

What through proper scrutiny and discrimination we decided to be beneficial, we must just force ourselves to do, if necessary by putting our own knee on our own chest, and boldly face the consequence. The hardest task in the world is not 'bringing up father' or bringing up children, but bringing up oneself! To one who knows how to discipline oneself, his other tasks will become easy. There is a case for doing some sort of a careful rough-handling of oneself, in order to break down the barriers which impede the flow of the will-power. 'Do the right thing right now', should be our day's order to the mind. That should be the principle. Instead of doing the wrong things hurriedly and repenting at leisure, is it not better to do the right thing promptly and enjoy the blessings of such actions at leisure?

If we ourselves are unable to decide what is right or wrong, counsel should be sought from the teacher. If the teacher is not available, guidance may be taken from scriptures. But even when we have decided upon a right action, many considerations will try to oppose its prompt execution. 'All are acting differently': will be one plea. Then there will be considerations of what they call 'worldly wisdom'. Much of the 'worldly-wisdom' stuff is but a rationalization of our weaknesses compounded with the idea of what is supposed to be self-interest. And these considerations will be manipulated by our own mind. We have to carefully discern here the attempted sabotage of our good efforts to develop the will-power by the unregenerate or wicked part of our mind. We should then firmly slash down this opposition by that part of the mind which has already allied itself with

truth. On the other hand, what we have known to be definitely wrong and harmful, we must as promptly stop doing that and boldly face the consequences.

Thoughtless people may ridicule us for standing apart, selfish people may torment us for not doing wrong things, even our friends may regard our behaviour as strange. Yet we must follow what we have realized to be true and right. However, we must be extremely cautious, circumspect and also deep-seeing in ascertaining what is right, and what is wrong. We must not impulsively jump into conclusions and then move ahead in a fanatical manner. That will harm the development of will-power. If, left to ourselves, we are unable to determine what is right and what is wrong, we should take the help of those who know the answer, and then act upon what we have learnt.

On the basis of whatever we have thus learnt and determined, we should ourselves plan a simple routine for our daily life. This routine should be planned keeping in view that we are seeking daily self-preservation and self-improvement on all levels, physical, mental and spiritual. It should be so planned that our human relations, recreational needs, ideals and aspirations —everything could be actualized through that routine. No matter what happens, we should then follow that routine. In the preliminary stage this is a very helpful method to get a firm grip on the mind. Our senses will have to obey our decisions made with due circumspection.

Exceptional cases may arise when the routine will have to be set aside—as for instance, when there is serious accident in the house, or a friend has died—but as soon as possible we should again return to our routine. At a later stage when we have made up sufficient leeway by succeeding in controlling the vagaries of our mind, we may adjust the routine according to the higher needs of our self-development.

(h) It is extremely important to remember that in developing will-power the greatest help will come from the power of concentration we have already attained. In fact these two always go together. The power of concentration helps the growth and development of will-power, and will-power helps the power of concentration.

How can we increase the power of concentration? The simplest way to do it is to pour our whole mind into the work on hand, whether it is cooking, polishing shoes, playing basket ball, watching birds, experimenting in the laboratory or praying in the chapel. In other words, when you are meditating, you must not be seeing the movie!

(i) And for this we require a sufficient reserve of mental energy. That is to say, in order to develop the will-power we must stop all squandering of our mental energy. This squandering of mental energy is done through uselss talks, purposeless work, futile controversies, wild fantasies, back-biting, day-dreaming, lewd thinking, concern for things which is none of one's business, hypothetical fears and finding fault with others. To build up a sufficient storage of mental energy, which is so necessary for motoring the will-power, we must stop doing things which drain our mental energy.

We will notice that men of powerful will are men of few words. People always wait to attentively listen to what they have to say. They are not pining to be interesting or exciting. They live with a purpose, for an ideal. They are immensely dynamic, but they are poised, intense but not tense. They are not easily shaken by anything.

(j) The conservation of mental energy in its turn will depend on the conservation of physical energy especially sex energy. Those who thoughtlessly or deliberately squander their physical energy are bound

to have shallow minds. And shallow minds have poor will-power. Therefore in the educational system of ancient India supreme importance was attached to the practice of *brahmacarya*, continence, so much so that the period of studentship itself was called *brahmacarya*. The main secret of developing will-power lies in the proper practice of *brahmacarya*. Therefore, for developing the will-power we must conserve our physical energy. Physical energy is conserved by living a moral life of purity and moderation. In moderation is suppleness; in suppleness is strength.

(k) Lastly, to develop the will-power we must never take our failures seriously. We must not lose heart in the face of repeated failures. For there is no other way to success except through repeated failures. Failures should be accepted as a part of the whole game, as steps to mount the pedestal of success. These steps when followed rightly, will surely help us in developing the will-power.

'Goodness gracious', some of us are apt to think, if it takes all that for developing the will-power, let the Swamis have them all, we better go for a snack! Well, this is not all, there is more to it. Snacks have a place in life. But it may not be forgotten that will-power has no substitute whatsoever. We cannot get any worthy thing without paying for it.

Remedies for failure of will-power

A situation may, however, arise when we discover that after doing all these to the best of our supposed ability, our will-power is not yet sufficiently strong. What should we do in such a situation? We should stop, think and analyze the whole situation. And we will most certainly discover that the failure of the will is taking place in a subtle way through a wrong thought process. It is thought that gets translated into action. If the thought is wrong how can the action be right? Therefore to strengthen the will-power to the expected degree we should work on the thought process.

How to work on the thought process, or control thought? This by itself is a major subject for discussion. For our present purpose it will be sufficient to know that 'working on the thought process' here means prevention of wrong movements of thought.

In one sermon Buddha specially instructs on thought control. In the conclusion of that sermon, summarizing his precepts, the Buddha said:

> Remember, Bhikkhus, the only way to become victorious over wrong thoughts is to review from time to time the phases of one's mind, to reflect over them, to root out all that is evil, and cultivate all that is good.
>
> When at last a Bhikkhu has become victorious over his wrong thoughts... he becomes the master of his mind, conquering desire and thus ending evil for all time.[10]

One who has become victorious over wrong thoughts cannot but have that will-power which will never fail. Now, when we proceed to practise the precept, '...root out all that is evil and cultivate all that is good', we find that it is something more than what we can do. What should we do when we discover our utter inner helplessness and shameful weakness? If we realize our true weakness, we should then humbly do the easiest thing. We should pray to God for will-power. It is an infallible method.

There are problems of both fulfilled and unfulfilled prayer. But in regard to the prayer for will-power we have a definite imperative of Sri Ramakrishna. Among the few things Sri Ramakrishna has

10. Sudhakar Dikshit. *Sermons and Sayings of the Buddha,* pp. 42-43.

definitively asked us to pray to God for, will-power is one. His precept in this regard is that we should earnestly pray to God for will-power, so that we may be able to do what is right, and desist from doing what is wrong, so that we may be able to devote ourselves to the practice of spiritual disciplines. Moreover he has asked us—and this is very important— to also pray that our entire will with all its power may be united with God's will.

Caution needed for properly directing will-power

There is, however, one important point to be noted in the development of will-power: the will must be given a right direction. All the notorious evil geniuses in history who inflicted on humanity unspeakable suffering, such as Hitler and his tribe, also had a kind of powerful will. That kind of will-power can only create bondage for oneself and miseries for others. We are not trying to develop that kind of malevolent will-power. But we are trying to develop the benign will-power from which no evil can ever come, but only good. The perfection of such will-power is attained only when one is able to say with all joy and spontaneity: 'Lord, Thy will be done, not my will!'

At a certain stage when the will-power is taking shape, great care and caution should be taken to direct it entirely to God. And this is done through prayer as taught by Sri Ramakrishna. What could be a simpler method of developing the will-power than prayer? Along with prayer, ideally goes repetition of Lord's name. Many Indian mystics and saints are unanimous in their teachings that, spiritually speaking, there is nothing we cannot attain by mere loving repetition of Lord's name. Who is there so weak, so unfortunate as cannot even take the Lord's name?

In any case, whether we are weak or strong, prayer and repetition of Lord's name will always help us in developing will-power, for these two practices remove all evil thoughts and purify our mind. We must take all care to hunt out all our inner blemishes from their hide-outs and acknowledge them to ourselves and to God within us. We will gain a whole world of strength by doing so.

But we must not go about speaking about our weaknesses to all and sundry. That way no one is helped. We should, however, without reservation, speak about them, in case of need, only to our personal teachers and to no one else. Be sure there are many unscrupulous people in the world who will take every advantage of your uncalled for confessions. Consciousness of our utter helplessness leads us to self-surrender. Self-surrender, when true and complete, shatters all our inner bondages which cause failure of our will. Then suddenly the prostrate-person springs up as the very picture of inner power. No one understands whence has come so much power within him. Says Jesus Christ, 'Without Me Ye can do nothing.' How true! Without God's grace we can do nothing. In other words, with God's grace we can do everything.

When we practise prayer, meditation, repetition of Lord's name, God is already with us. And this fact expresses itself as the purity of mind. This is becoming strong in God's strength. It is the will of the pure mind that is invincible. Through the help of such a will one can attain even the highest, which is God.

Behold the triumph of will-power

The most magnificent story of the triumph of will-power is that of a man who did not ask from God a thing, who did not even acknowledge God. He is

Buddha. And this proves the potency of the human will per se. It is inspiring to know this.

You all know the story of his life. After renouncing the world, his home, throne, wife, a newly born son and all, Siddhartha became a monk. Then went in search of a teacher. He studied under several teachers, learnt from them whatever they had to teach, but was not satisfied with anyone's teaching. All the teachers loved and respected him. But Siddhartha, not yet Buddha, stayed dissatisfied. He now realized 'that all these classical teachers had not the answer for his search which was to find a way out for the cessation of *dukkha* or miseries inherent in human life. So he decided to blaze his own path. Alone, homeless, this leonine seeker of truth came to Rajagriha and began to stay in Ratnagiri. There he became acquainted with king Bimbisara (who, after Siddhartha's enlightenment, became his disciple). It was at Bimbisara's court that Siddhartha offered his life in exchange of that of a lamb which was going to be sacrificed. From Ratnagiri for the convenience of quiet practice of spiritual disciplines he came to Uruvela, which is now known as the famous Buddha-Gaya. At Uruvela, for six long years Siddhartha [illegible] skin and bone, his resolution being: either I realize the truth or the body falls.

One day when, after bathing in the river Niranjana, he was returning to his cottage, he fell down out of sheer exhaustion! He was taken for dead. But he regained consciousness. Then Siddhartha realized this was not the path to enlightenment, this extreme austerity. One village maiden who had come to worship gave him rice-milk and he accepted the gift. When he had partaken of the rice-milk all his limbs were refreshed, his mind became clear again and he was strong to receive the highest enlightenment. As he reduced his austerities, firmer became his resolution for realization. Then on one full-moon night of the month of Vaiśākha, he took his seat under the now famous Bo-tree with this resolution: 'Let my body dry out on this seat, let my skin, bone and flesh wither away, but before attaining illumination which is rarely ever found even in many ages, I am not going to move from this seat.'[11]

The rest of the story may be narrated in the words of Ashvaghosha's Life of the Buddha. Expressed in the language of legends though, the narration brings home the triumph of the will-power with a marvellous impact on human civilization itself. It is said:

> The Holy One directed his steps to that blessed Bodhi-tree beneath whose shade he should accomplish his search.
>
> As he walked, the earth shook, and a brilliant light transfigured the world.
>
> When he sat down, the heavens resounded with joy, and all living beings were filled with good cheer.
>
> Māra (the evil spirit) alone, lord of the five desires, bringer of death and enemy of truth, was grieved and rejoiced not. With his three daughters, the tempters, and with his host of evil demons, he went to the place where the [illegible] Śākyamuni minded him not. Māra uttered fear-inspiring threats and raised a whirl-storm so that the skies were darkened and the ocean roared and trembled. But the Blessed One under the Bodhi-tree remained calm and feared not. The Enlightened One knew that no harm could befall him.
>
> The three daughters of Māra tempted Bodhisattva but he paid no attention to them. and when Māra saw that he could kindle no

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11. इहासने शुष्यतु मे शरीरं
त्वगस्थिमांसं प्रलयञ्च यातु ।
अप्राप्य बोधिं बहुकल्पदुर्लभां
नैवासनात् कायमेतश्चलिष्यते ।।

desire in the heart of the victorious *Shramana,* he ordered all evil spirits at his command to attack him and over awe the great muni.

But the Blessed One watched them as one would watch harmless games of children. All the fierce hatred of the evil spirit was of no avail. The flames of hell became wholesome breezes of perfume, and the angry thunder-bolts were changed into lotus blossoms.

When the Māra saw this, he fled away with his army from the Bodhi-tree. Whilst from above a rain of heavenly flowers fell and voices of good spirits were heard:

Blessed the great muni! his mind unmoved by hatred; the host of the wicked one has not over-awed him. He is pure and wise, loving and full of mercy.

As the rays of the sun drowns the darkness of the world, so he who perseveres in his search, will find the truth, and the truth will enlighten him.[12]

Siddhartha having thus put to flight Māra, gave himself up to meditation. And that very night seated on the same seat, he attained illumination and became Tathā-gata, the Buddha. Such is the magnificent story of the world's greatest triumph of human will-power.

The great option open to all

None of us is absolutely devoid of will-power. Otherwise, we could not have been what we are right now. But it remains a fact, that whatever may be the varying qualities of our already attained degrees of will-power, the more the will-power directed Godward, the nobler human beings we shall become. And those adventurous souls who will not stay content being noble human beings, will realize the Truth, extending further their will-power.

By God's grace so much always stays open to man. How much are we going to take?

12. Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha* (New York: The Open Court Publishing House Company, 1921) pp. 38-39.

(Concluded)

AESTHETICS IN RAMANUJA'S PHILOSOPHY

PROF. S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

Introduction

It has been long noted by competent students of Viśiṣṭādvaita, that it abounds in ideas that can go into the making of a full philosophy of beauty and that it can claim to be, both by implication and explicit statement, uniquely aesthetic in its central philosophical content. It is a wonder that traditional scholars simply note this characteristic and do not pause to gather up the basic asethetic ideas into a coherent and comprehensive formulation. Modern scholarship, conversant with general aesthetics as a major branch of philosophy, has hardly entered into this core of Rāmānuja's philosophy. There is not a single treatise either in Sanskrit or in English working out the aesthetic philosophy of Rāmānuja in its requisite dimensions and a fair degree of thoroughness. The only distinguished exponent who emphasises this aspect of the philosophy in question is Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari and even he just throws up pregnant suggestion in his brilliantly eloquent exposition. There is still a need for something like a solid and patient consideration of Rāmānuja's aesthetics. The present paper has the modest aim of bringing

together the elements of aesthetic thought in the writings of Rāmānuja in some kind of an analytical tabulation, and these elements are to go into the fully formed aesthetic doctrine of Rāmānuja, when that comes to be propounded in the context of general aesthetics. Hence the present attempt is of the nature of a prolegomena.

Aesthetic character of the Divine

It is worthwhile putting first things first. On the basis of the abundantly repeated declarations in the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Smṛtis*, *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas* and the Āgamic literature, Rāmānuja affirms that *Brahman*, the Ultimate Divine Reality, has an aesthetic character. This, according to him, is the unambiguous contention of the seventh *adhikaraṇa* of the *Brahma-sūtras*. The number of text adduced is truly impressive. The entire question is discussed fully in the *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*. In the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*, the statement of the beauty of God enjoys a priority over the enumeration of the major *guṇas*, and both Vedānta Deśika and Periya Vāccān Pillai note the significance of this sequence. In the *Jijñāsādhikaraṇa* of the *Śrībhāṣya*, the concept of *śubhāśraya*, adumbrated in the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, receives specific elucidation to the effect that the sublime form of the Lord, with its aesthetic splendour, is both an *āśraya*, as being accessible to perception, and *śubha*, as having the potency to work out the spiritual elevation of the percipient. In the *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*, the *prima facie* thesis that the beauty of Divinity is just an artificial expedient or a benevolent illusion, is mentioned and categorically repudiated on the strength of the venerable authority of the *Vākyakāra* and *Dramiḍa-bhāṣyakāra*. It is maintained in the scriptures that the beauty of God is perceptible through the instrumentality of a purified mind, *manasā tu*, *viśuddhena*, implying that what is apprehended through such a pure instrument must be objectively real. Sudarśana Sūri says: *Mithyābhūtaṁ duṣṭendriyagrāhyaṁ, aduṣṭakāraṇagrāhyatva-śravaṇāt paramārthabhūtaṁ ityabhiprāyaḥ*. There can be no going back on this position of Rāmānuja and no explaining of it away. Rāmānuja puts together all the aesthetic glories of the Supreme Being recorded in sacred texts in a grand passage in *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*.[1]

This aesthetic characterisation of God is a fundamental element in Rāmānuja's outlook.

Nature as God's vibhūti

Coming down from this height of Divine Beauty, we may consider the attitude to the beauty of the mundane and empirical order of existence. This is the familiar category of the natural beauty, and we have to understand that Nature in this connection consists of the *aparā prakṛti* and *parā prakṛti* of the *Gītā*, the physical universe and the universe of the living and conscious existence. If this Nature is taken as an independent and closed system, its beauty has no transcendent significance. If it is thought of as a deceptive show of what is intrinsically an annulment of Nature, its beauty, whatever it be, is a part of the vesture of decay and unreality. These two conceptions of Nature are discarded by the *Gītā* in its concept of *vibhūti*.

Rāmānuja is totally committed to the *vibhūti* concept of Nature. For him *prakṛti* in all its aspects constitutes a power of God, and through it the radiation of divine effulgence takes place. The aesthetic

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1. योऽसावादित्यमण्डलान्तवर्ती, तप्तकार्तस्वर-
गिरिवरप्रभः, सहस्रांशुशतसहस्रकिरणः . . .

Vedārthasamgraha of Śrī Ramanujacarya, 220.

splendour of Nature is a manifestation of the Divinity inhabiting and enveloping it. The naturalistic conception of Nature and the illusion-hypothesis concerning Nature can offer no account of Nature's beauty as an intimation of the Supreme Presence. The *vibhūti* view links Nature's aesthetic glory as evidence of the Divine permeating it.

Let us get a clear idea of the *Gītā* concept of *vibhūti*. Nature as a whole is an integral part of the Divine Spirit. Within Nature itself, whatever exhibits superior powers and striking radiance, does so because the immanent Divine presence finds in it a higher measure of transparency for self-disclosure. In answer to Arjuna's question as to what could function as a fitting object of contemplation to a seeker of God in order to reach the final vision of that Reality of Realities, Śri Kṛṣṇa opens up the vast kingdom of Nature in its outstanding phenomena and holds out prospects of the supreme vision through a contemplation of these proximate revelations of the Divinity. Even in the ultimate realization of the Supreme, Nature figures as an inseparable dimension of It. So, both as a means and a part of the goal itself, Nature in its splendour gets assimilated to the Divine.

Art and religion

The study of art forms a major branch of Aesthetics. It is noteworthy that the arts enter deeply into the Viśiṣṭādvaita pattern of worship, and worship in its totality is the crux of spiritual life in the tradition. Even the useful arts, such as gardening, are mobilized in the service of worship. Rāmānuja draws up a fine picture of an ideal garden in his *Vaikuṇṭha-gadya*. Architecture plays a vital role in the religion of temples. No wonder, some of the finest architectural monuments have sprung up in the principal places of pilgrimage. Parāśara Bhaṭṭa in his *Śrirangarājastava* pays enthusiastic tribute to the temple architecture of Śriraṅgam, of the period prior to its desecration at the hands of the Muslims. The *Āgama* literature abounds in directions for the construction of the houses of God. Imposing structures bear testimony to the engineering and artistic excellences that were fostered in profusion by the religious spirit of Rāmānuja. Auxiliary sculpture and the making of the principal icons have created immortal masterpieces. Time and troubled history may have destroyed much, but what remains furnishes enough evidence of the summit of the artistic consciousness attained. Stone and bronze images, sacred and secular, people the Rāmānujite temples in amazing quantity and variety, reflecting an outlook for which the beauty of Godhead was a genuine reality. Music, dance and sacred poetry flourished under the canopy of *bhakti* as indispensable parts of worship. All the arts were thus consecrated and carried the uplifting quality of adoration.

It is to be noted that temple-worship under Rāmānuja's influence, was no static routine, but a dynamic and thrilling procession of festivals throughout the year with marked variations and attunement to the seasons and occasions. Superb planning and trained skill in execution marked the life of temples in their best days. The best aesthetic education was provided in the glowing atmosphere of Godly fervour. The aesthetic standards that were operative could be gathered from Parāśara Bhaṭṭa's account of the transforming power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute in his *Śrīraṅgarājastava*, and the captivating power of the great idols worshipped can be glimpsed in the annals of saintly devotion. Worshipping Varada rāja in all His glory, says Vedānta Deśika, makes him disinclined to crave for even

Vaikuṇṭha. Lokācārya holds that of all the manifestations of God, the *arcā* form is the best, in view of its perfect accessibility and the revelation in it of all that the Deity is, without any diminution, to the ecstatic worshipper. He points to Śrī Raṅganātha of Śrīraṅgam as radiating all the perfections of Godhead.

Art as the medium of divine truths

There are two philosophical points connected with the arts and their divine import. Can the media of artistic creation which are all physical and sensuous, taken over from the world of *nāma-rūpa,* carry transcendent and divine truths? Will they not corrupt and distort the burden of meaning entrusted to them? In answer, it is to be contended that the entire world of physical reality from which the media of the arts are derived is itself divine and the realm of *nāma-rūpa* is an attribute or aspect of God Himself. As a particular instance thereof (it is urged by Sudarśana Sūri on the strength of the *Gītā* and *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*), sound, the medium of poetry and music, is itself said to be a *mūrti* of the Supreme Being, *śabdaḥ khe* and *śabdamūrti-dharasya.* The latter passage is adduced by writers on poetics also in defence of poetry. Thus, the media of the arts, being parts of the body of the Lord, are eminently fitted to reveal Him and His message. Rāmānuja asserts in the *Śrībhāṣya* that *prakṛti* and her products are intrinsically divine, however they may stand misconstrued in a godless perspective.

In common parlance, the arts may signify what is mundane and finite. But that is not final import. They must be interpreted in accordance with the doctrine of *aparyavasānavṛtti,* posited in relation to language, but requiring an extension of application to the media of all the arts—that all the arts, philosophically conceived, bear a transcendent signification. This is not an artificial and secondary mode of interpretation, but the real and primary manner of understanding all forms of sensuous expression. The truncated commonsense interpretation not soaring to the Divine, is secondary and unnatural. Here, we have something like the theory of *dhvani,* but it is heightened and deepened beyond the contentions of that theory in the light of the Vedāntic doctrine of the *Paramātman* animating all existence. It is not that art should be didactically coerced to bear a religious sense. When it is true to its own nature and destiny, fulfilling itself in its spontaneous creativity, unarrested by materialistic censorship, it cannot but inevitably soar to the Ultimate Soul of all Nature and all life. The divine import of art is not a destruction, but a completion of the basic spirit of art: *pūryate na tu bādhyate.*

We are not to misunderstand that expression, through the arts, exhaustively bodies forth the divine import. It just 'reaches' it, but cannot 'grasp' it in its totality. This is the only legitimate sense of the Vedāntic declarations such as *avacanena provāca, yato vāco nivartante* and *neti, neti.* The Infinite Reality exceeds the utmost powers of human utterance, artistic or otherwise. The confession of this inadequacy is itself an effective mode of conveying the abundance of the intended theme. Art, when it reaches this glorious failure, is accomplishing its perfection.

Schools of aesthetics

With the standpoint of Rāmānuja thus gained, concerning the metaphysical authenticity of attributing beauty to God, the philosophical interpretation of the beauty of Nature and the movement of the entire stream of human arts towards self-consecration, we may proceed to derive guidance

from his philosophy in the treatment of some common issues of aesthetics.

(a) *Symbolism* is one such issue. There is plenty of symbolism in temple architecture and sculpture. In the poetry of *stotras*, hundreds of *mantras* are incorporated. Even in the ritual of worship, many gestures and movements have symbolic meaning. But the interpretation of the symbols should follow the instructions contained in the *āgama* literature, which has much esoteric Vaiṣṇavism: and authoritative teachings of qualified preceptors a desideratum. The value of the symbols is said to lie in their spiritual efficacy, and one is to be properly inducted into them for reaping the benefits. This is what may be called extrinsic symbolism, which is not natural and intrinsic. It falls within a specific conventional body of precepts. No religion is entirely free from such symbols. In the aesthetic products incorporating symbolic elements, they are masterfully converted into features of beauty. Some symbols are particularly fascinating. For instance, Viṣṇu's *cakra* is said to represent the cosmic cycles, *kālacakra* and *jagat-cakra.* His conch from which sounds are to emanate, is said to represent divine wisdom imparted by God Himself. The gem, *kaustubha,* adorning His chest is said to symbolize the finite soul, the object of the tender care of the Lord. Ananta, the primordial serpent on whom He reposes, is a representative of the *jiva*, whose proper vocation is to be the *śeṣa* to the master. To be a *śeṣa* is to be subsidiary and to acquire value thereby, and this is the fundamental character of the *jiva.* Garutmān is said to be *Vedātman,* evidently meaning that he concretises the wisdom of the *Vedas*, and it is fitting that he should be the vehicle of Nārāyaṇa, the ultimate subject-matter of the *Vedas.* Some of the leading symbolic features of the Viṣṇu icon are explained in special sections in the *Āgamas* and also in the *Purāṇas* such as *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and *Śrīmadbhāgavata.* The cosmic and philosophical imports of the symbols do not seem to be afterthoughts and may have been the original seed-thoughts behind them. For those to whom this conventional symbolism appeals in relation to individual spiritual progress, there is plenty of it in Rāmānuja's Vaiṣṇavism and the arts in service of the creed.

(b) *Realism* is one of standard theories in Aesthetics. True art must be, it is held, a representation of the real, 'holding the mirror up to Nature'. The view dominates the representative arts such as sculpture, painting and poetry. There is nothing in Rāmānuja's philosophy that goes against this doctrine. It would only insist that reality in the context must be truly conceived as including the divine Principle in its core. The theory of *vibhūti* requires this expansion, and finite reals have no substance by themselves. Art, on this view, is not realistic enough, if it stops with the derivative and adjectival entities. Accordingly, beauty in the finite is ultimately by virtue of the immanence of the Divine in it. As Browning would say, 'the sunset touch, a fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death and a chorus-ending from Euripides' shatter one's atheism. What may be termed Higher Realism is a part of Rāmānuja's philosophy.

(c) *Formalism*, like Realism, is one of the persistent trends in Aesthetics. It gets support from the non-representational arts like architecture and music. But these arts are a creative manipulation of reality itself, so that its aesthetic potentialities could stand unveiled. They are revelations rather than artificial constructions. Formalism, so interpreted, ceases to be anti-realistic. The philosophy of Rāmānuja does not accept the reality of abstract form, apart from concrete embodiment. In the technical language of the school,

'*jāti*' is nothing other than '*saṁsthāna*', and the latter is the inseparable configuration of 'matter' itself. A Formalism divorced from reality cannot form a part of Rāmānuja's aesthetics. Form, in and through matter as its structural organisation, is well within his circle of epistemological ideas. The nature of this Form is that it integrates diverse factors into an internally co-ordinated system, wherein each constituent lives in the whole and the whole pervasively sustains the parts. When the concept of Form is thus elucidated it is easy to see that there cannot be a plurality of isolated forms. All of them must be integral to a single Form, wherein the maximum diversity stands animated and harmonised by the single spirit of the whole. Having gone so far, we cannot stop going further and seeing in the Supreme Form, *Brahman*, holding within Itself the entire expanse of finite reality.

There is a clear distinction in the school, as expounded by Parāśara Bhaṭṭa, Sudarśana Sūri and Vedānta Deśika, between *lāvaṇya* and *soundarya*. *Soundarya* stands for the beauty of components, *avayava-śobhā*, and *lāvaṇya* is the beauty of the totality, the *samudāya-śobhā*. This two-fold concept of beauty, perhaps, sums up the reaction of the school to the narrowly conceived Formalistic aesthetics.

(*To be concluded*)

KNOWLEDGE AND MEANING

HANS ELMSTEDT

Introduction

The highest reading or understanding possible, that we in the conditioned state, can make of the Absolute, must involve one of Its aspects, Existence, Knowledge or Bliss. This paper deals with the Knowledge aspect and will specifically seek to relate the difficult, elusive concept of 'meaning' to that aspect.

An attempt will be made to introduce some ideas about what 'knowledge' is, as we normally experience and understand it in relation to the material, phenomenal world. Then 'meaning' will be discussed, similarly, as it takes its significance from that same world. 'Meaning' will be shown to be more understandable if viewed as an aspect of 'knowledge', and finally that this 'knowledge' will attain its greatest significance when recognized as a reflection of the transcendental Knowledge of the Absolute.

Western tradition of knowledge

What we ordinarily consider as 'knowledge', from the traditional Western viewpoint, really consists of two things; one is process, the 'how', and the other is content, the 'what'. Simply stated, we know the known.

Western psychology recognizes three mental processes, cognition, conation, and affection, and regards 'knowledge', its process and content, as an aspect of cognition. Broadly defined, cognition embraces all forms of knowing and thinking and thus includes perceiving, reasoning, judging, conceiving, imagining, remembering, abstracting, and anticipating. We undergo a dynamic sensory-mental process whereby things and events become objects perceived, and manipulated in a world that is separate from us, but paradoxically, of which we are an important part.

The psychologist and the philosopher tend to deal with process and the physical and biological scientists with content, although the distinctions are not rigid and inseparable. At times the psychologist and the philosopher must deal with the object, the 'known', in order to further pursue and to evaluate their understanding of 'knowing'. The scientist, likewise, must, at times, delve into 'knowing', or process, if he wants to better understand the 'known', especially when he begins to see himself as an active participant in the determination of what he has previously taken to be knowable. Research physicists working today in the area of sub-atomic particles are seeing a great need to confront and deal with this important problem because the former mechanical model of matter and energy is proving inadequate to deal with the data of experience.

Any object or event, that is, the 'known', is the result of a process, 'knowing'. Due to this fact, process will be emphasized hereafter, since the 'what' of our experience will invariably lead to or be reduced to the question or problem of 'how'. Any real understanding of the phenomenal world and of ourselves must peel away the layers of the objective to expose the background of the subjective, and this basically involves process, the 'how'.

The greatest difficulty the psychologist, the philosopher, and the scientist encounters is to be consistently aware of the difference between process and content, and if aware, to understand when that difference is relaxed, ignored, or forgotten. The awareness is necessary because many problems that we face today, individually and collectively, are a result of the neglect of this important consideration. We do not realize that many of the hidden assumptions we all have, influence our beliefs and attitudes and finally determine how and what we perceive and react to in the phenomenal world and in ourselves. We do not see that they manifest themselves in content, by way of process. These assumptions are not usually bad in themselves, only that we would benefit by bringing them into our awareness. Some assumptions are no more important than our individual and cultural affinities for food, clothing, entertainment, and other necessities of life. Other assumptions are more basic and involve the way we view the world and our place and purpose in it. The multiplicity of religious beliefs and aspirations that exist or have existed in the world, are related to these assumptions, both as causes and as effects. Science, using reason, experimentation, and guided by a strong empirical approach, has exposed many of these assumptions. We have gone from a geocentric to a heliocentric view of the planetary system, from animistic beliefs about life to an evolutionary conception of human and organismic development. The assumptions influence the content of our knowledge of the external world and of ourselves, accomplished through the process of knowing, and it is exactly in the dynamics of this process that the assumptions must be recognized and dealt with.

Approaches to process—psychology and philosophy

Historically, psychologists and philosophers have taken different approaches to the problem of process, the knowing aspect of knowledge. Both seek to understand how we can know anything. The psychologist has tried to maintain an objective, pragmatic, empirically oriented approach to the problem, and this has resulted in an emphasis on learning and thinking. How the individual learns generally, acquires skills, and thinks, have become the major focus for many psychologists. Various schools have grown out of the theoretical emphases that shaped and guided their efforts. A comparative approach, given credibility by Darwinian evolutionary theory, has led to active experimentation using ani-

mals and lower forms, with the expectation that results obtained would help to explain learning in higher forms, including humans. The whole area of conditioning, classical Pavlovian and Skinnerian instrumental, operant learning and conditioning have evolved from this approach to learning behaviour.

It must be understood that learning is a very general term and that it involves only one aspect of 'knowing'. Learning theory can hardly begin to penetrate into the essential nature of knowing as long as it avoids the subjective, which includes experience and awareness. In fact, two theoretical positions in the area of learning, led to schools of psychology which differed as to the admittance of experience of a cognitive nature to explain learning. Some psychologists allowed for thinking and awareness, other psychologists avoided them as explanatory concepts.

In the area of human learning, we especially need a subjective approach because it is here that process can be most significantly affected or influenced. The failure of psychology, in the early part of the 20th century, to encourage and pursue the work of the structuralists and their techniques of introspection, caused it to deny itself the opportunity to seek and to develop a better understanding of what thinking and learning are, and what consciousness itself essentially is. Swami Satprakashananda writes, 'Most thinkers recognize that introspection is the direct approach to mental states while the study of behaviour is an indirect method. An individual can observe his mental condition directly from inside, while others can know it indirectly through its physical expression. Indeed, the proof of such mental traits as joy, love, guiltiness, and so forth, is inner experience and not the outer behaviour, which may even belie the internal state.'[1]

Philosophers aren't so much under the empirical, restrictive demands that science places on its practitioners and so are able to pursue a more subjective approach to the problem of 'knowing'. A distinct area of philosophy developed, in which the origin, nature, and limits of knowledge is studied. Epistemology, most importantly, studies the classes of objects of knowledge, the nature of the external world, whether real or ideal, and the assumptions made regarding space, time, causation, our own existence, and that of other beings. Dr. E. S. Brightman writes, 'In epistemology fundamental questions are asked about knowledge in all its forms and applications. What is meant by knowledge? Does man really possess knowledge? How is knowledge of what is absent possible? And, what is the nature of knowledge of what is present?'[2] He continues, 'Epistemologists are concerned with a number of questions regarding knowledge, including especially that of the criterion or test of knowledge, that of the source of knowledge, and that of the nature of knowledge or of the ways in which our ideas are related to their objects.'[3]

The philosopher, if he is anything, is a verbal animal. He must, of necessity, formulate his ideas and conclusions in a system of symbols, usually words. In the act of doing this he sets limits on himself and his efforts because words, by their very nature, encapsulate experience with difficulty and with considerable loss. No philosophical system that seeks to describe and explain knowledge, its process and content, can be really meaningful, as long as it fails to point and lead beyond the linguistic formulation it builds itself on and within.

Advaita Vedanta epistemology

Indian philosophy has also grappled with

1. Swami Satprakashananda, *Methods of Knowledge* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1965), p 41.

2. Brightman, E. S. and Beck, R. N. *An Introduction to Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963), p. 10.

3. Ibid., p. 49.

epistemology. Swami Satprakashananda, regarding the methods by which we acquire knowledge, writes, 'The Advaita school of Vedanta admits six distinct means of valid knowledge : perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, postulation, and non-apprehension.'[4]

These are but the methods of knowing, and are only part of the ideas he offers. He also states, 'In all relational knowledge four distinct factors are involved—the knower, the object known, the process of knowledge, and the resultant knowledge. Among them the knower is primary. Process is the method that relates the knowing self with the object and brings about the knowledge. The knower and the object known are the two poles of knowledge, so to speak.'[5]

Finally, he tells us, 'It is with the mind that a person knows all that he knows—from the lowest to the highest. In the attainment of any knowledge perceptual, non-perceptual, or transcendental—mind is the principal instrument. In every act of cognition there is a mental mode corresponding to the object. The more the mode corresponds with the object, the more correct and distinct is the knowledge.'[6]

Concept of meaning

Meaning, a most difficult concept for Western minds to deal with, is often taken to be synonymous with intent, aim, import, sense, or significance. Each of these words and their related concepts convey subtleties that different contexts require. Yet the essence of the concept underlying the all slips past our minds. Perhaps this is because 'meaning' is a relative concept, just as the concepts of 'truth', 'beauty', and 'goodness' are relative. It seems that the main reason for our difficulty in accepting these concepts as being essentially relative in nature, is that we fail to understand that they are experiences that we have. Beauty, truth, and goodness do not reside in the object or event. They are experiences that the knower has, and because these experiences can vary between different knowers and even within the same knower as circumstances dictate, they must be seen as essentially relative in nature. Meaning is an experience also, and does not reside in the object or event eliciting the experience. Meaning belongs to the knower and has its basis in knowing. An object or event takes on meaning through the reaction or experience it elicits or evokes in the individual. Any single object or event will probably have different kinds and varying degrees of meanings for different individuals, and even for the same individual at different times. One hundred dollars to a poor man is a small treasure, but to a rich man it is a paltry sum, hardly adequate for the purchase of a pair of new shoes. A glass of water has one meaning to a thirsty individual but quite a different meaning to that same person when he is not thirsty.

We all know that beauty is an experience conditioned by the needs and circumstances of the individual. A sunset is beautiful to a person admiring it while standing on the beach on a summer evening, but an entirely different experience to a person clutching a flimsy piece of wood in the middle of the ocean, having been ship-wrecked.

The relativity of truth can be easily seen in the child. Try to convince a child that Santa Claus does not exist. The child's conviction is adamant, until growth, maturity, and cognitive development allows the child to have a different attitude toward and experience of truth.

Meaning as knowledge

Of the four distinct factors in relational knowledge, mentioned previously, 'meaning' can be best categorized as the 'resultant

4. Swami Satprakashananda, op. cit., p. 35.
5. Swami Satprakashananda, op. cit., p. 16.
6. Swami Satprakashananda, op. cit., p. 17.

knowledge' that the knower has. Meaning is thus the experienced knowledge that the knower has and this is distinct from the object known because that object is really only the outer stimulus that triggers the process of knowing. Swami Vivekananda, the great interpreter of Vedanta to the West, states, 'What is external nobody knows; when I try to know it, it has to become that material which I furnish. I, with my own mind, have furnished the material for my eyes. There is something which is outside, which is only the occasion, the suggestion, and upon that suggestion I project my mind; and it takes the form that I see. How do we all see the same things? Because we all have similar parts of the cosmic mind. Those who have like minds will see like things, and those who have not will not see alike.'[7]

Projection

Science, especially physics, is today being confronted by questions and answers that involve a new awareness of and attitude toward the process of knowing because content has become increasingly complex and elusive. One possibly useful change would involve altering the viewpoint we have regarding the phenomenal world, from one of 'objectification' to that of 'projection', seeing the world not as objects and events separate and distinct from the knower-observer, but as a projection, wherein the relationship between knower and known is accepted and understood as one of dependence, not independence, and of reciprocity, not detachment. This 'projection' would not involve the extreme position of an idealistic 'creation' whereby the phenomenal world would be seen as a creation or manufacture of our minds, being but ideas that we invent or construct. Whatever the world really is, beyond our ability to sense, and thus perhaps unknowable, as objects and events in an outer, mysterious world of matter and energy, would be seen as a mixture of contributing elements provided by the knower and by the outer world, forming something that we experience as the known, the objects and events we are aware of. The elements that the knower contributes underlie the hidden assumptions spoken of earlier, and being aware of this fact can be enormously helpful in bringing a better understanding of ourselves and the phenomenal world.

One argument against the position that we create our own world is that if this was so, then there would be no such things as eyeglasses or hearing aids. We would 'create' a perfect world for ourselves with perfect perception of it. This perfection being absent, indicates the inadequacy of the creator position.

Since meaning is basically an experience we have, it can elicit good or bad, pleasurable or painful responses. We create the meaning in our own minds, and we gain or lose in how we do it, and what we do with it. We in the West have assumed, for so long, that meaning exists in the object or event, and that our mind merely facilitates the extraction of that meaning from the object or event. We couldn't believe otherwise because we didn't know of any other possibility.

Continuum of knowledge

The Eastern mind has known of other possibilities, and today, we in the West, can benefit by seeking to understand and assimilate them to produce a unique combination of views, ideas, and ideals. Swami Vivekananda wrote the following in the year 1899 :

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7. Swami Vivekananda *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati, Almora Himalayas: Advaita Ashrama, 1963) Vol. II, p. 441.

Generally, all knowledge is divided into two classes, the Aparā, secular, and the Parā, spiritual. One pertains to perishable things, and the other to the realm of the spirit. There is, no doubt, a great difference between these two classes of knowledge, and the way to the attainment of the one may be entirely different from the way to the attainment of the other. Nor can it be denied that no one method can be pointed out as the sole and universal one, which will serve as the key to all and every door in the domain of knowledge. But, in reality, all this difference is only one of degree and not of kind. It is not that secular and spiritual knowledge are two opposite and contradictory things; but they are the same thing—the same infinite knowledge which is everywhere fully present, from the lowest atom to the highest Brahman—they are the same knowledge in its different stages of gradual development. This one infinite knowledge we call secular when it is in its lower process of manifestation, and spiritual when it reaches the corresponding higher phase.[8]

This profound statement about the relativity of knowledge should encourage each of us to raise our minds up and reach for the higher manifestations of knowledge, and finally for the highest, the Absolute.

Swami Satprakashananda states, 'Fundamentally, knowledge is Pure Consciousness beyond the relativity of the knower and the known. Consciousness is prior to every form of existence. But for this nothing can be affirmed or denied. It illuminates all objects. It has no illuminator. It is self-luminous and self-existent. It shines even when there is no object to illuminate. Non-relational, nondual Pure Consciousness is the ultimate Reality. Being is identical with Pure Consciousness. Relational knowledge is an expression of non-relational Pure Consciousness through a mental mode of the cognizer, the knowing self.'[9]

Conclusion

Can we ever know anything totally, completely, absolutely? Yes, but the price we must pay is to give up our nominal lower forms of identity so that we may identify with the more expansive higher forms which we seek to know. Ancient Indian sages sought to find that knowledge, knowing which, all things would be known. They found it within themselves, not outside, and it was a unity of identity, where there was no separation between the knower and the known. How many of us are prepared to do this? Until we are prepared, ready and willing, we will continue to flounder upon the ocean of the world, most of us barely able to swim, and even if we do learn, not knowing the direction we must go. Absolute knowing is absolute identity with the object of knowing. In the Absolute there is unity of existence and experience and this unity draws the knower and the known together in the blessed embrace of Absolute Knowledge.

8. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas: Advaita Ashrama, 1962) Vol. IV, pp. 433-434.

9. Swami Satprakashananda, op. cit., p. 15.

SWAMI NISCHAYANANDA

SWAMI MUKTINATHANANDA

Once Swami Vivekananda told Swami Nischayananda, 'Look Nischay, it is not proper for a Sādhu to be a burden on others. If one accepts food from another, one must return it in some form or other. The community of monks has become inert due to continually receiving food from others. Instead of advancement they are undergoing deterioration as a result of constantly depending on others. You should never do that. If you cannot accomplish any great deed, at least beg a pice, purchase an earthen pitcher, sit at the roadside and give drinking water to the thirsty passers-by. Offering drinking water to the thirsty is also a noble act. It is extremely contemptible to remain inactive and eat the food offered by others.'[1] Nischayananda regarded these words as a special message from his Guru and so attuned his life around this central note. In fact, his whole life was a wonderful demonstration of this new gospel of his beloved master.

Swami Nischayananda's pre-monastic name was Suraj Rao, but he was known among his acquaintances as Raoji. He was born in a Kṣatriya family around 1865 in a small village near Janjira in Maharashtra. He studied for a few years in an English school but could not continue long on account of poverty. However, he knew Marathi and Tamil very well. In his later life he learnt Bengali and could speak fluently in it. Non-attachment, selfless love for others and sweet behaviour were some of the noble virtues he possessed from his very childhood.

After leaving school Raoji was in search of a job. Being unable to find any other vocation, he entered military service in the South Karnataka Regiment. Raoji had a keen interest in travelling, especially in visiting temples and holy places. His job provided him ample opportunities to fulfil this desire as his regiment had to camp at various places. Whenever convenient, he used to take leave and set out for pilgrimage. Later he would relate his pilgrimage experiences in a picturesque way. Once he said: 'We went to see the lake mentioned in the Ramayana. We saw two lakes amidst the mountain ranges. One of them is named "Pampā" while the other is known as "Jhampā". As I recalled the incidents connected with these lakes in the Ramayana, a surge of emotional current arose in the heart inundating the channels of memory. Rarely have I tasted such bliss in my life.' He used to visit the huge temples of the South and would later on say that each of them looked like a fort or a city. His keen powers of observation and memory enabled him to describe vividly the minute details regarding these temples including the prevalent customs and behaviour of the people.

Raoji's life in the army provided him the opportunities of visiting several foreign countries as well. With his regiment he went to participate in the battle of Burmah. At this time he was working in the telegraphic division and was promoted to the rank of lance-corporal. After the war he had to stay in Burmah for some more

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1. Swami Abjajananda, *Svāmījir Padaprānte* (Bengali), (Belur Math: Ramakrishna Mission Saradapith, 1964) pp. 245-6.

time. During this period he used to visit the Buddhist temples of that country. Owing to his keen interest in religion he would attentively watch the worship, rituals and other customs followed in them.

While in Burmah Raoji had the desire to make a trip to the Andaman Islands and meet the tribal people. After acquiring the necessary permission from the authorities, he sailed with a few baskets of sweets in the company of a few friends including an interpreter. It took their ship a few days to reach the island. The tribal people were highly delighted to receive the sweets from these strangers of the 'other world'. They in turn gave their guests bananas and coconuts. Raoji with the help of the interpreter conversed with them and collected much information regarding their ways of life untouched by the culture and education of the so-called civilized world. He was amazed to see their skill in archery. Raoji himself was a first-class shot, and in his military life he always secured a high rank in shooting competitions. An eye-witness observed that even in his later life his bullets never missed their target.

From Burmah Raoji went to Siam, and a few years later he was sent to Gibraltar. After completing his assignment there he returned to Bombay via Malta. Thereafter their regiment camped at Raipur. It was in Raipur that Raoji had the blessed privilege of meeting Swami Niranjanananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. This meeting changed the course of his life. Raoji's inborn fervour for renunciation was set ablaze when in rapt attention he listened to Swami Niranjanananda speaking about the wonderful lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. He now felt a strong urge to see Swami Vivekananda.

Swamiji was still in the West at that time. The news of his lectures on Vedanta and other topies used to appear in the newspapers of the day. Raoji went through every one of them and tried to imbibe the ideas. This increased his attraction to Swamiji all the more. At last in February 1897 the news flashed that Swamiji had landed on Indian soil, and that from Ramnad he was proceeding towards Madras stopping on the way at Paramakudi, Manamadura, Madura, Kumbhakonam etc. Fortunately, Raoji was residing at that time in a village not very far from Madras city.

From Kumbhakonam Swamiji boarded a through train bound for Madras. There was to be no stop at Mayavaram on the way. But hundreds of villagers under the leadership of Raoji thronged the small Railway Station to get a glimpse of the great teacher and greet him.

> The crowds importuned the station master to flag the train to stop if only for a few minutes, but to no avail. At last, seeing the train coming in the distance, hundreds of people fell flat upon the railway line, determined by this extreme course to stop the train! The station master was panic-stricken. The guard of the incoming train realized the situation and at once ordered the train to be stopped. The people crowded round the swamiji's carriage and sent forth shouts ot triumph in his honour. The Swami, visibly stirred by this display of emotion, appeared for a few moments before them extending his hands lovingly in blessing, and briefly thanked them with all his heart.[2]

This momentary meeting with Swamiji, however, could not satiate Raoji's thirst. In order to meet him again he at once decided to proceed to Madras. He had to travel on foot since he did not have enough money with him. As he was walking along the seashore, he noticed the houses of the fishermen adorned with rows of lamps. On asking the reason for the illumination, he

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2. *Life of Swami Vivekananda*, by his Eastern and Western disciples (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974), 8th edition, p. 466.

received the reply, 'What, don't you know? The Jagadguru (world teacher) has arrived.' Raoji was astonished to find that even the illiterate fishermen were aware of Swamiji's triumphal return from the West and were celebrating the occasion considering him their own representative. Raoji continued his march with renewed vigour, although the night was fast approaching and he was not sure of the way to Madras. Suddenly, on enquiry, he realized that he had gone about seven miles away from the city. Feeling exhausted, he sat down beside a way-side tank and quietly spent the rest of the night there. Next day he resumed his journey before dawn, and around 7 a.m. arrived at Biligiri Iyengar's 'Castle Kernan' where Swamiji was staying. There was a huge crowd waiting to see Swamiji and Raoji joined them. Without a murmur he patiently waited for five long hours till his turn came. On coming before Swamiji he was overwhelmed with joy. With eyes brimming with tears and throat choked with emotion he offered his salutation and quietly sat at his feet. One by one all the visitors came and went, but Raoji sat there motionless. Swamiji noticed this and enquired who he was, his purpose in coming there, and whether he had taken food etc. Raoji answered all the questions. Then Swamiji instructed one of the monks standing near by to arrange for his meal. Raoji became refreshed after food and rest. Then he approached Swamiji, and expressed his desire to accompany him and become a monk. Swamiji, however, dissuaded him saying, 'No, not now. See me later in Calcutta.' Raoji had to return home with a heavy heart. Of course, before returning he did not fail to listen to the brilliant lectures delivered by Swamiji in Madras.

Days and months rolled by, but Raoji could not fulfil his desire of renouncing the world owing to his service commitment in the army. According to the military code, it is a punitive crime for a normal person to voluntarily quit his job prior to the completion of his term. But the constant thought of Swamiji was piercing his heart, and he could no more concentrate on his daily duties as before. Noticing his increasing indifference, the senior officers suspected some defect in his brain and accordingly arranged for his mental treatment. The military doctors became highly perplexed with this strange patient and, after much deliberation, prescribed that a large ice pack be kept on his head everyday. Indeed, the prescription was no less strange than the disease! Raoji bore patiently all these tortures, pretending to be an insane person. At last his disease was declared incurable, and he was discharged from service. Raoji too heaved a sigh of relief and immediately set out for Calcutta bag and baggage.

It was the year 1901. Raoji went straight to Belur Math where Swamiji was staying. Swamiji was in indifferent health, and he was then taking rest after lunch. When someone informed Swamiji that a Marathi youth wanted to see him, Swamiji replied, 'Well, ask him to take his bath and food. I shall see him later on.' This was communicated to Raoji, but he humbly said, 'I have not come here in search of bath or meal. I have come from a long distance to meet Swamiji. I will not take bath or touch food till I offer my salutations to him. Rather, I will sit here and wait.' On hearing of this firm resolve of the young man, Swamiji came down and enquired, 'What do you want?' Bowing down before him, Raoji humbly replied, 'I don't crave anything. All I want is to be your servant.' Swamiji was fascinated with this frank reply. He permitted Raoji to stay in the Math.

Raoji's joy knew no bounds because his long-cherished dream was at last

materialized. He was assigned the duty of doing some work in the shrine and also of attending on Swamiji. He would perform these duties with great zeal and love. A few days later, Swamiji blessed him by initiating him into the sacred order of Sannyasa. Raoji's new name was Swami Nischayananda—meaning one who finds bliss in firm conviction and resolution. Evidently, Swamiji must have chosen this name noticing his strength of determination and resolve.

Nischayananda would give hemself heart and soul to the work at hand, thinking that it was a service to his Master. Perhaps owing to the influence af his past military training, he would do only one work at a time. He would never leave a job half done to take up another work. He was very thorough-going in every work assigned to him. How sincere his devotion to his Guru was and how resolute he was in discharging his duty will be clear from the following incident.

Once it was decided to buy a milch cow for the Belur monastery from Ariadaha, a village near Dakshineswar across the Ganges. For this purpose Swamiji sent two of his disciples—Nischayananda and Nirbhayananda—along with another monk to Ariadaha, a village near Dakshineswar. Before they started Swamiji instructed Nischayananda, 'Always hold the rope of the cow, then it won't be able to run away.' On the way back the monks had to cross the Ganges by boat. As they reached the middle of the river, the river became rough and the boat started rocking heavily. The cow got terribly scared and jumped into the river which was in spate, as it was the rainy season. All the passengers cried out seeing this mishap. But Nischayananda remembered the words of his Guru and dived into the river still holding the rope. Both he and the cow were carried away by the strong tide. Without becoming nervous Nischayananda started splashing water on the face of the cow, and tried to bring it gradually to the shore. After a lot of struggle he finally succeeded in reaching the western bank of the Ganges near Salkhia. But as ill luck would have it, the bank was covered with thick mud, and so he could not lift the cow from the water. Undaunted, he looked around and found several pieces of broken planks. Putting these together to form a kind of wharf, he somehow pulled the cow up. Thereafter he walked back to the Math leading the cow. During all this time, in strict obedience to his Guru's instruction, he did not give up his hold on the rope even once. In the meantime Swami Nirbhayananda and his companion had returned to the Math, and everyone including Swamiji was greatly perturbed to hear about the accident. Now on seeing Nischayananda returning with the cow, they all became happy. Swamiji called Nischayananda to his side and rebuked him saying, 'Why did you foolishly risk your life for the sake of the cow?' The disciple humbly replied, 'Maharaj, you sent me to bring the cow. How can I come leaving it behind?' Highly pleased with the reply, Swamiji blessed him, saying, 'Right, right! I told you to bring the cow, and so how will you leave it behind? It is never possible for a man like you!'

Being a Maratha, Nischayananda had a deep love and regard for Shivaji from childhood. Whenever Shivaji's name was mentioned he would be beside himself in praising the bravery, fortitude, patriotism, piety and strength of character of that great king who had fought the Mugal emperors all his life. Nischayananda also had a deep regard for the great patriot and scholar Balgangadhar Tilak. In 1901 when the conference of the Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta, Tilak came to Belur Math and met Swamiji. Nischay-

ananda later said regarding this visit, 'Swamiji was conversing with Tilak while walking on the field south of the Math building. None of us was allowed to go near them. From a distance we only noticed that Swamiji was talking excitedly with repeated movements of head and hands while Tilak was calmly listening to him.' Nischayananda was convinced about Swamiji's lasting influence on Tilak. He used to say, 'Tilak had till then been working only for the Brahmins of Maharashtra. Swamiji explained to him that a nation could not rise by raising only one portion of it. It cannot advance until the poor and the downtrodden masses were uplifted. Tilak's outlook was changed after he came in contact with Swamiji. He started working in various ways for the lower sections of the society.'

Towards the end of 1901 Swamiji was invited to go to Japan to participate in the Congress of Religions being organized there. Two learned and influential men from Japan—Mr. Oda and Mr. Okakura —met Swamiji in order to induce him to accept the invitation. Seeing their earnestness, Swamiji became enthusiastic about going to Japan in spite of his ill health. One day several distinguished Japanese came to the Math and informed Swamiji that the Japanese Government was eager to take him to that country, and would not only bear all his personal expenses but also help him financially for his Indian work, provided he acted according to the directions of the Japanese Government. Swamiji was very much annoyed with this proposal and forthwith replied, 'I won't go.' Later he told Nischayananda, 'They came to allure me! Is Vivekananda a market commodity that can be purchased by money?'

The happy days of Nischayananda in the company of his illustrious Master finally came to an end. When Swamiji gave up his mortal body on the 4th July 1902, Nischayananda felt a deep void within him. After a couple of days he approached Swami Saradananda and said, 'I don't want to stay here any more, since the person for whose association I had come here is no more. I have decided to leave this place and travel freely.' Swami Saradananda, himself immersed in grief, tried to persuade him in various ways to change his decision, but to no effect. Finally, he requested him to stay for at least one more month, for otherwise his sudden leaving might be misunderstood by others. Nischayananda consented and, just after 30 days, left the Math never to return there.

Nischayananda started visiting the various holy places as a wandering monk. He would beg his food and spend most of his time in meditation, Japa and other spiritual practices. Thus moving, he arrived at Hardwar in 1903 to participate in the Kumbha Mela (a great religious fair). There he met a spirited young monk and discovered that he too was a disciple of Swamiji. He was very happy to find a like-minded person at this distant place of pilgrimage. He spent long hours with this new friend talking about Swamiji. This young monk was no other than Swami Kalyanananda.

As a wandering monk on the Himalayas Swami Vivekananda had been moved to see the sad plight of the ascetics who had fallen ill. He himself had to suffer from serious illness while practising austerities at Rishikesh in 1890. Since then he had cherished the desire to do something to help these ailing monks of the Hardwar and Rishikesh areas. Later on he had entrusted Swami Kalyanananda with this task. Kalyanananda had opened a home of service in June 1901 at Hardwar in a small rented house in Kankhal. Coming

to know of all this, Nischayananda found a unique opportunity to put into practice his Guru's counsel: 'Even if you cannot accomplish any great deed... distribute water to the thirsty passers-by. Offering drinking water to the thirsty is also a noble act.' Nischayananda followed Kalyan-ananda, joined the home of service and dedicated the rest of his life to the service of God in man.

From the rented house the two brothers moved to another area known as Sekhpura where they acquired a small plot of land and erected three sheds. One of the sheds housed the patients while the other two were used as the monks' living quarters, kitchen and for storing medicines. They used to beg money from the pilgrims to meet the expenses of medicines and food for the patients; but for their own food they would go to the Chatras (where food is offered free to monks). Since there was no other attendant, they themselves had to nurse the patients, clean their bedpans and lavatories, wash their clothes and do all sorts of menial service. When a patient died they would carry the dead body and immerse it in the river. Just imagine two poor monks carrying a corpse all by themselves, walking barefooted on the rugged stony path under the scorching sun. That was not all; Nischayananda would get up early in the morning and, carrying a medicine box and a bundle of other necessary articles on his shoulders, would walk to Rishikesh 28 kilometres up the hill. There he would go from place to place, enquire about the well-being of the sadhus, treat the sick and even feed the disabled monks. As for his own food, he would beg it from the Chatras. After completing his round in the afternoon he would walk all the way back to Kankhal. Thus everyday he travelled 56 kilometres undeterred by rain or sun, heat or cold. This only illustrates how dedication to the noble ideal of service generates superhuman power.

In those days the community of monks used to regard serving the poor and the sick as beneath monastic dignity and against the monastic tradition. They would say, 'Once we have taken Sannyasa by performing *virajā homa*, we are beyond all actions.' However, being unable to devote all their time to the study of scriptures and meditation, they would idle away their time either in useless wranglings or in seeking palatable food. They could not appreciate the social orientation given to monasticism by Swami Vivekananda and so, would denounce his disciples by calling them 'Bhangi Sadhus' (scavenger-monks). Fortunately, however, a few monks understood the significance of practical Vedanta as taught by Swamiji. Swami Dhanaraj Giri, a reputed scholar and Mandaleshwar (abbot) of Kailash Math, being one among them.

One day Dhanaraj Giri invited Nischay-ananda to Kailash Math and became charmed to hear the detailed account of loving service rendered by the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Kankhal. He had met Swami Vivekananda before and had a high regard for him. He now requested Nischayananda to take his *bhikṣā* (alms) daily at the Kailash Math. Nischayananda agreed to this proposal. Once Dhanaraj Giri had to go elsewhere for some days. Before leaving he instructed the newly appointed *kuṭhāri* (manager), 'Receive the monk who comes daily from Kankhal and feed him with due honour.' As a rule unknown persons were not given food at the Kailash Math. When Nischay-ananda in his humble attire and carrying the medical box arrived the next day, he was not recognized by the *kuṭhāri* as the one he had been asked to treat with honour. So he told the Swami, 'There is no provision in this Math for feeding

outside monks.' Unperturbed by the rebuff, Nischayananda quietly went away and took his *bhikṣā* from the Kali Kamli-wala Chatra. From that day he stopped going to Kailash Math. On his return to his Math, Dhanaraj Giri noticed the absence of Nischayananda and, learning about the whole situation, scolded the *kuṭhāri* and ordered him to go immediately and bring the Swami back. Greatly scared, the *kuṭhāri* went to the Kali Kamli-wala Chatra and waited at the gate till Nischayananda arrived there. Then he fell at his feet and apologized for his folly. Nischayananda did not possess the least tinge of vanity, and so he at once pardoned him and started taking his *bhikṣā* from the Kailash Math as before.

Nischayananda had a natural tendency for meditation although he led a very active life. After finishing his daily duties he would be deeply absorbed in Japa and meditation. Perhaps due to this trend he had a special affinity to Swami Turiyananda (a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna), and looked upon him as if he were his own guru. In the year 1906 when Turiyananda was performing austerities in Uttarkashi, Nischayananda went there on foot via Dehradun and Mussorie. He served this great soul to his heart's content and spent the days in ecstatic joy by performing spiritual practices in his holy company. The following incident reveals his deep love for this venerable monk.

One day Swami Turiyananda and Nischayananda were washing their clothes on the bank of the Ganges. Suddenly the chaddar (a cotton wrappar worn as an upper garment) of Turiyananda slipped from his hands and fell into the river. He blurted out, 'Look Nischay! the chaddar is gone.' No sooner had he uttered these words than Nischayananda jumped into the ice-cold river. In a trice he was dragged away by the powerful current which tossed him among the rugged stones of the river-bed. By the grace of the Lord, Nischayananda returned from the jaws of death and, in addition, managed to restore the chaddar. When he returned, bruised and wounded, Turiyananda scolded him saying, 'Why did you put your life at stake for that trivial thing? Nischayananda boldly replied, 'Hearing your call I could not but respond. As long as I am here I can never let you lose anything.' Turiyananda blessed him heartily noticing his deep affection. Nischayananda concealed his severe wounds by covering his blood-smeared limbs with mud so that Turiyananda might not feel regretful. Next day he felt terrible pain all over his body, but he did not disclose it to anyone for the same reason. Indeed, only a son of Vivekananda can demonstrate his devotion in such an incredible way! Nischayananda served Swami Turiyananda again in 1922 when the latter was in his death-bed in Benares. It may be mentioned that these were the only two interruptions in his thirty-year long stay in Kankhal.

Once Sri Mahendra Nath Gupta or 'M', the renowned recorder of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, was staying in the Kankhal Sevashrama practising austerities. He noticed that Nischayananda was busy during the whole day in treating the patients, supervising house construction, gardening, keeping accounts and such other occupations. He, however, did not observe that Nischayananda was also carrying on his Japa, meditation etc. in private. So one day he called Nischayananda to his side and remarked, 'What is the use of all these dispensaries and hospitals? The Master (Sri Ramakrishna) used to say that the aim of life is to realize God. Prayer, worship and divine contemplation are the only means to attain the goal.' Hearing these words from M., a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna,

Nischayananda was deeply hurt; but he kept quiet. After several days when M. repeated this counsel a third time, Nischayananda could not check his emotions. With tears in his eyes he humbly stated, 'You see, I am a slave of Swamiji. I know nothing of religious practices. To do his work is the vow of my life.' M. was amazed to see Nischayananda's peerless devotion to his Guru; he blessed him and said, 'You need not worry about religious disciplines. You shall attain everything by the grace of your Guru.' Later, M. became fully acquainted with the entire personality of Nischayananda and repented for his inappropriate advice. He formed a high opinion about this disciple of Swamiji, and would often relate to others the latter's wonderful spirit of service.

Nischayananda was older than Kalyanananda by several years; nevertheless, he would regard him as his elder brother. Kalyanananda and he were known to all as 'Bara Swami' (senior monk) and 'Choto Swami' (junior monk) respectively. The love and understanding between them were so remarkable that many people used to compare them with the Aśvinikumāras, the twin divine physicians of Indian mythology.

Nischayananda identified himself with the Kankhal Sevashrama. Addressing the young monks he would sometimes say, 'Every brick of this Sevashrama is, as it were, a rib in my chest, and belong to Thākur and Swamiji. Thākur (Sri Ramakrishna) and Swamiji are present here through and through. This is why we feel tremendous pain in our hearts when we find you wasting something or behaving carelessly.' He was himself very perfect in his actions. Once while checking the accounts of the Ashrama, he noticed a surplus of half a pice and he repeatedly questioned the bursar about this half pice. His devotion to the ideal, power of discrimination and austere life were a source of inspiration to the younger generation. A blanket and a coir bedstead were all that he used for his bed. The bedstead was full of bugs, but he would not kill them since they were dependent on him! Moreover, he never used mosquito-curtains. As soon as he got up in the morning, he would coverhis face with a towel and walk straight to the portrait of Swami Vivekananda. There he would uncover his face to see Swamiji before looking at anyone else. Swamiji occupied the foremost place in his heart; his work had only secondary importance.

Excessive labour and austerities told upon his health. Nevertheless, he would not accept the service of anyone, nor would he reduce his work. During the rainy season of 1932 he became fatally ill with gastric ulcer. Then he was in charge of the Ashrama temporarily, as Kalyanananda was away on a short visit to Mayavati. Despite the complications of his ailment, he discharged all his duties with his usual spirit of dedication. Thus he continued until 1934 when his health deteriorated beyond repair. Even during this period of suffering he would be in the constant company of God. Sometimes he would speak about his visions.

Once he called the Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Sevashrama and said, 'Light lamps and burn incense-sticks all around me. Also, keep a decorated chair in front of the yonder big building (T.B. Department). Burn incense there also. My master will come to the Sevashrama today. I shall go to see him.' The assembled inmates got scared and took this as a presentiment of his final departure. However, they obeyed his commands, whereupon he made salutations to all with folded hands. After a while he said, 'Now take me there, where the chair is placed. Swamiji is waiting there for me.' When

the attendants slowly led him near the chair, he prostrated before it. A few minutes later he got up and sat in meditation. After a long time he opened his eyes and said, 'Swamiji has left. I shall now return to my room.' Then the attendants brought him back to his room.

Another day around 2 or 2.30 a.m. he was seen rushing towards a mango tree with a blanket in his hand. Suddenly he shouted, 'Bring a chair, bring a chair, Swamiji has come.' One of the attendants took a chair and started running after him in the dark. Meanwhile Nischayananda arrived below the mango tree and swiftly spread the blanket and covered it with his own chaddar. He fell on the ground murmuring, 'Please wait a little, let me offer my salutations.' Fifteen minutes were over, but he did not get up. Then Swami Jagadananda, who was present there at the time, told one of the attendants, 'What are you doing? Lift him slowly and take him to his room.' The attendants carried him and laid him down in his bed. He did not wake up until 10 O'clock the next morning. Even when he got up he was so grave that nobody dared to ask him anything.

The disease took a bad turn in the month of October, 1934. But Nischayananda was bold as ever. Even fifteen days prior to his death he was seen sitting up with his feet covered with a thick blanket and going through the Ashrama accounts. If anyone admonished him for not taking rest even in such illness, he would reply with a sweet smile, 'This is nothing but service to Ṭhākur (the Master); it is Swamiji's work. All our *saṁskāras* (past impressions) are not yet exhausted. The mud cannot be removed if it is wet, but it itself drops off when dry.' At last Nischayananda became completely bedridden. Kalyanananda came to the bedside of his dear brother and prayed with wet eyes, 'Brother Nischay, may you recover soon by the grace of the Lord!'

The *kojāgari pūrṇimā* (the full-moon day on which goddess Lakṣmī is worshipped in Bengal) of that year fell on the 22nd October, 1934. Nischayananda was specially alert on that day. Suddenly at noon he indicated to the attendant to make him sit up. When seated, he raised his hands and tried to say something to the portrait of Swamiji hanging on the wall. So the portrait was brought and kept near him. With the image of his Guru close to his heart he entered into deep meditation never to return anymore. The soldier Nischayananda bade good-bye to the battlefield of this world at the call of his beloved General, Vivekananda.

About his dearest colleague, Swami Kalyanananda remarked, 'It is rare to find in the history of the world such a person who served up to the last day of his life without taking a single day's rest during a long span of 30 years. The Gita speaks of selfless work: "Do not be attached to the fruit of work nor desist from work." The wonderful life of Nischayananda was a practical demonstration of that. The yogi that he was, he passed away while sitting in the lotus-posture and meditating on God.' Sri Mahendranath Datta (a brother of Swami Vivekananda) wrote: 'It is said that in the ancient age the saint Dadhīci helped the gods by donating his own bones. These workers of the Ramakrishna Mission too have built the mansion of the Mission with their own bones, marrow and heart's blood in lieu of bricks, mortar and water respectively. Judged impartially, these workers inspired by Swamiji are no less than the ancient sage Dadhīci.'[3]

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3. Mahendranath Datta, *Śrīmat Svāmi Niscayānanda Anudhyāna* (Bengali), (Calcutta: Mahendra Publishing Committee, 1362 B.S.) second edition, p. 38.

Let us conclude our account of this illustrious disciple of Swami Vivekananda with the tribute paid by the *Udbodhan* after his demise: 'The Kankhal Sevashrama would not have grown so big but for his untiring diligence, tremendous zeal and extraordinary dexterity. His wonderful spirit of service, renunciation, purity, excellence of character, perseverance and, above all his unflinching devotion to his Guru will be an object of lesson to all for ever. By serving God in man as preached by Swamiji, he has attained to that abode which is attained by the Jñānis through knowledge, the devotees through devotion and Yogis through meditation.'[4]

4. *Udbodhan*, Agrahāyan 1341 B.S., pp. 629-30.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

HINDU SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY: BY DR. S. GOPALAN. Published by Wiley Eastern Ltd., 4835/24 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002. 1979. Pp. 294. Rs. 48.

Philosophical study of social sciences might be a recent phenomenon, but every society has been cultivating a philosophy of its own from the very early days of its formation. The major civilizations could develop mainly because of their formidable social philosophy. Hindu society is a good example of a society having a social philosophy which was made explicit even in very ancient times, which could survive the onslaughts of the medieval ages and has been able to adjust with the modern challenges. In a sense it is having a perennial social philosophy.

Dr. S. Gopalan of the Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy at the University of Madras has made a study of the four-fold aspiration of man (the *puruṣārtha*) in the book under review which is a revised edition of his doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Madras. In fact the four *puruṣārthas*, the four *varṇas* and the four *āsramas*, along with the doctrine of *karma*, form the basic tenets of the social constitution of the Hindu tradition. The author has taken up the study of the *puruṣārthas* as representing the axiological aspect of the man-in-society, and proposes to take up the institutional perspective in some other study.

In the introductory chapter the author has made attempts to distinguish between the two disciplines of sociology and social philosophy. For him the essential difference between the two is one of difference in viewpoint. Sociology enquires into the origins of human communities and studies their various forms, laws, customs, institutions, languages, beliefs, ways of thinking, feeling and acting. Social philosophy, on the other hand, is a normative study. Instead of describing facts, it prescribes the ideals. It is not a positive science that concerns itself with what 'is'; it concerns itself with what 'ought to be'. It is a reflective study of man arising from his experience and life in society. It is also closely connected with ethics.

Making a survey of the discussions on the four aspirations of man in the standard Indian texts, the author brings out the salient features of each one of them in separate chapters. He compares the corresponding Western concepts as well, wherever possible. In a couple of long footnotes he compares the classical Sanskrit versions of the Hindu value-scheme with that found in the ancient Tamil classic, *Tirukkural*.

Discussing the idea of *artha* (property) the author notes that economists consider man to be an economic being. The Hindu tradition is not unaware of the important role that is played by physical possessions. The *Mahābhārata* (12.8.22) clearly admits that the man who has no wealth has neither this world nor the next, Kautilya was opposed to widespread and indiscriminate renunciation since it interfered with economic production. He would not allow ascetics to enter villages of the kingdom for fear that they may cause disturbance in the economic activities of the villagers (*Artha-sāstra*, 2.1.). The author has also noted aptly that the renowned ancient Tamil ethical woman philosopher Avvaiyār advises men to go even across the billowy ocean to acquire wealth. As in the Hindu tradition, the Greek society prescribes acquisition of wealth as highly desirable. In

the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1.9) Aristotle maintains that happiness requires the addition of external goods.

The concept of *Kāma* (pleasure) is taken to be an eloquent expression of the deep psychological insights of Hindu philosophers. *Kāma* is the central force responsible for propelling man into action. Leaning heavily on the *Kāma-sūtras* of Vātsyāyana, the author touches upon various aspects of *Kāma* including arts and the spiritual orientation.

The principle of *dharma* (righteousness) is treated as the primary *puruṣārtha* that regulates the economic and the emotional values (*artha* and *Kāma*). It is the integration principle between the two *puruṣarthas*. The principle has been analyzed in two separate chapters by the author. In one it has been projected as an ethico-spiritual value. After giving some definitions of the concept, the *sādhārana-dharmas* have been enumerated. In the other chapter the *svadharmas* have been explicated. The *varṇāsrama-dharmas*, idealizing the institutional and the personal life, represent, in more concrete details, the philosophy of *dharma*, for the author. The two theories regarding *varṇa* (caste), the racial-purity theory and the occupational theory, have been discussed to clarify the prevalent confusion.

Mokṣa (liberation) is usually acknowledged to be the ultimate goal in life for Hindu philosophy. The author emphasizes that *mokṣa* is not a negation of life but a reorientation of man's pursuit of values. The ideal of *jīvan-mukti*, for him, marks the culmination of human efforts in the direction of securing *mokṣa* on reaching which the aspirant has only to bide his time for attaining it.

In the semi-final chapter on reply to the critics, the author examines some of the major criticisms levelled against Hindu social philosophy. The charge of John Mackenzie that Hindu thought is pessimistic in the extreme (vide his *Hindu Ethics*, London, 1922, p. 216) has been refuted on the basis of the observations of Indian and other Western scholars. In the words of A. B. Keith 'to find real pessimism in them (the Upaniṣads) apart from mild expressions of the unsatisfactoriness of the finite compared with the infinite is impossible' (cf. *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads*, London, 1925, p. 581). Mackenzie's other charge of negativism has also been refuted after John Woodroffe who states that 'the statement that Indian doctrines is a flat negation of the values of life is a flat nonsense. Life is supremely valuable both as the finite expression of the Infinite Being from which it comes and as affording the opportunity (the only one) through which man may reach it'. (cf. *Is India Civilized?*, pp. 211-12).

The work is concluded with the 'balancing of claims' of the personal and the social that is suggested in terms of promoting personality-integration. It deserves commendation from students and scholars of social philosophy.

The printing of the book is almost-flawless, except where diacritical marks are used. The author has not cared to provide the content of the footnote no. 12 in chapter 7.

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THE QUINTESSENCE OF VEDANTA

(SARVA - VEDANTA - SIDDHANTA - SARASANGRAHA OF ACARYA ŚANKARA). TRANSLATED BY SWAMI TATTWANANDA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kaladi, Ernakulam District, Kerala. 1979 (3rd edition). Pp. xiv+139+191. Rs. 24/-.

The great philosopher-saint Acārya Śankara (7th cent.) co-ordinated the profound spiritual insights and realizations of the Vedic seers recorded in the Upaniṣads and established the philosophy of Vedantic Non-dualism (Advaita) on the triple basis (*Prasthāna-traya*) of the Upaniṣads the *Brahma-Sūtras*, and the *Gītā*, answering to spiritual tradition (*Śruti*), rational investigation of Truth or Ultimate Reality (*Yukti*), and Its living verification or realization in life (*Svānubhūti*). Thus he rescued philosophy from vain speculation and religion from mere dogmatic beliefs and gave to both of them a rational, scientific, and universal basis. By bringing these together, to reinforce each other, he helped the evolution of a philosophic-religion, at once rational, comprehensive and universally realizable by every competent person according to his own religious approach. Śankara, being an Acārya (establisher of religious values), also wrote, besides his illustrious prose commentaries on the *Prasthāna-traya*, several other introductory works and epitomes of his Vedantic thought in verse form and composed a large number of soul-stirring religio-philosophic hymns on the different deities and spiritual truths. In course of time many good works of other self-effacing authors were attributed to Śankara, so much so that a large number of works now pass in his

name and it is not possible, without painstaking research, to decide which of them were not his. There having been later several Śankarācāryas, the problem becomes further complicated.

The present work under review is one such work of doubtful authorship. As the Sanskrit title of the book indicates, it is 'an epitome of the essence of the conclusions of all Vedantic thought' (of the Advaita School). It is not polemic in approach; it is a practical treatise of a religio-philosophic nature. It presents the philosophical conclusions with regard to the Ultimate Reality and the nature of God, the Soul, and the universe, which, according to the Advaita, are all phenomenal manifestations of the Infinite Non-dual Reality, beyond name and form, and hence all identical with It noumenally. The goal of man's life is to discover and realize this identity of his true being by transcending all phenomenal limitations of the body-mind complex. The various spiritual means and methods for the achievement of this goal are also delineated by following which man becomes liberated in life from all bonds (*Jīvan-mukta*) and realizes his identity with the Infinite Blissful Non-dual Reality (*Sat-Cit-Ananda*).

This work consists of 1006 verses in simple, mellifiuous Sanskrit, and presents the subject-matter with perspicuity. It seems to have gathered its ideas and expressions from several well-known Vedantic works such as the *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* (cf. verses 464-68), *Katharudra Upaniṣad* (cf. verses 109-10), *Maitrī Upaniṣad* (cf. verses 358). *Gītā* (cf. verses 431,921). and largely from *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* and *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda. This is but natural in a compendious compilation of Vedanta that the work is supposed to be. However, originality is not lacking both with regard to ideas and expression, and descriptions and exposition—for example definitions of *Satsampatti* (*Śama, dama*, etc.) and those of the eight limbs of the Yoga (*yama, niyama*, etc.). In the order of delineation of the topics, it closely follows the *Vedāntasāra*: *Anubandhas; Sādhana-catuṣtaya; Vastu-Avastu; Īsvara-Jīva-Jagat*; *Adhyāropa-Apavāda*; Interpretation of 'That' and 'Thou' in *Tat-Tvam-asi* showing their identity; Yoga as the means of realizing the identity; and *Jīvanmukti* and *Videhamukti*. In the method of exposition, it follows the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* in adding explanatory and expository couplets after the definitions of terms or treatment of a topic, interspersed with verses of poetic beauty both as to language and thought. Further, it has adopted the dialogic method of the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* between the *guru* and *sisya*.

The work is provided with a learned Introduction discussing "the Life and Works" and "The Philosophy and Religion" of Śankara by the late Swami Agamanandaji in English. An English translation by the late Swami Tattwananda is given separately at the end of the Sanskrit text. He has added useful foot-notes where needed. The translation is good, but at places seems to have missed the correct import (cf. verses 404-7). It may be useful to check and revise the translation and also place it side by side with the Sanskrit verses. The translation has detailed topical headings and there is also at the beginning a table of subject-wise analysis of the verses which are useful.

There are a number of broken types, missing letters, lapses in spelling and other printing mistakes in the text (verses 395, 396, 410, 597, 679, 699) as well as in translation (404-5). To write Sanskrit in Roman script without diacritical marks is not advisable.

The publication is very useful to the lay people for the understanding of the salient concepts of the Advaita Vedanta and its spiritual goal and to draw inspiration for spiritual life.

It may not be out of place to say a few words on the authorship of this work. Though the work is of a high order, there are enough internal grounds to doubt its authorship attributed to Adi Sankara. We may note the following:

1. Verse No. 2 is exactly the same as verse No. 1 of the well known *Vedāntasāra* (Advaita Ashrama edition).

2. In the English Translation, an additional verse (3a) is given, with the remarks that it is found in some versions, where the author salutes his Guru Advayānanda. It is to be noted that Advayānanda was the Guru of Sadānanda, the author of *Vedāntasāra*, and the verse is almost the same as the second verse in *Vedāntasāra*.

3. Verse No. 3 salutes in addition Gaṇesa, which we do not find in the works of Śankara.

4. Not only does the order of presentation follow that of *Vedāntasāra* but practically the whole of it can be found embedded in the present work, though dispersed, with almost the same words, phrases, expressions, and illustrations. We may say that this work is, as it were, a revised and enlarged poetic version of *Vedāntasāra*, with a large number of expository verses interposed. Out of the 227 items in the *Vedāntasāra*, the first 199 are reflected in 226 verses of the present work.

5. Similarly, we find in it ideas and expressions from 48 verses of *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (Advaita Ashrama edition), including five verses exactly reproduced. Even the concluding 1005th verse is the same in both (cf. *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* 578). The other four verses found in both are 924-479. 933-504, 934-505, 935-506.

It is obvious for these and other reasons that this work may not be that of the great Adi Śankara. Most likely it is a later revised poetic reproduction by Sadānanda himself for popular use. If not, it may be by a co-disciple of the same Guru, or more probably by a talented disciple of Sadānanda who versified his Guru's work with additions. The first verse where 'Govinda' is saluted as guru may be a later interpolation, or it seems more likely to be a salutation to the Lord Himself who is held to be the Guru of Gurus or *Adiguru* (cf. the words used are *Cidānandatanum gurum*), especially because, there is also a salutation to his Guru Advayānanda. This idea gains force because the next two slokas (verses 2 and 3) take refuge in the Satcidānanda Atman, beyond words and speech, and Gaṇesa. There is also more frequent emphasis on the importance of Grace of God (Śiva) for spiritual attainment than we find in the works of Śankara.

It is surprising that these similarities have not been so far noticed by scholars. This also indicates that the work is a later production than *Vedāntasāra* and was not widely known, and hence not much studied and commented upon like the *Vedāntasāra* and the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*. It is left to the research scholars to further probe into the matter.

However, the uncertainty of the authorship does not take away from the beauty and usefulness of the book.

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SANSKRIT-ENGLISH

SRI RAMAKRISHNA SAHASRA NAMA STOTRAM: BY PROFS. T. A. BHANDARKAR and PANCHU GOPAL BANDOPADHYAY. Compiled by Swami Apurvananda. Translation and notes: Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-600 004. 1980. Pp. xv+200. Rs. 20.

To find a name for the Nameless has been the eternal quest of the religious seeker all through the ages. For man recognizes all forms and feelings through names. Though the scriptures declare the ultimate Reality to be inexpressible, it has also been said by great seers that the *name* and the *named* (*nāma* and the *nāmī*) are non-different. Therefore it is through the name that the Inexpressible can be approached and brought within the field of human vision.

Remembrance of God by mentally or orally repeating a divine Name is an important spiritual practice in all the world religions. Though the Name is a simple and single one, it implies all the countless attributes and powers of the Divine. It is not possible for all aspirants to make the repetition of a single Name evoke the infinitude of divine essence or the vastness of divine splendours implied in it. To help such aspirants *sahasra-nāmas*, 'Thousand Names' have been composed by seers. Their purpose is to hold before the mental vision the unity and diversity of divine Reality. Calling the God-head by a thousand names has found favour particularly in Southern India for many centuries. Thus many *Sahasra-nāmas* came into existence: *Viṣṇu-Sahasranāma, Lalitā-Sahasranāma, Śiva-Sahasranāma* and so on. These are used both in spiritual practice and ritualistic worship.

The book under review is a welcome addition to 'Sahasranāma' literature. Sri Ramakrishna is today worshipped by thousands of devotees in India as a *yuga-avatāra*, the incarnation for this age. Indeed, the values of truth, harmony, renunciation and God-consciousness which he lived and preached in his life are not only relevant to the modern world, but are vitally necessary to bring a measure of sanity and wisdom into modern life. Moreover his life was a recapitulation of the experiences and teachings of all past Incarnations, a living *Sahasranāma* in itself. It is, however, worth pointing out here that a *Sahasra-nāma* is not a mere catalogue of divine attributes. It is the seer's vision or experience that unites and illumines the different names and gives authenticity and meaning to them.

Incidents in Sri Ramakrishna's life and his great qualities find expression in this book through the thousand names that are enumerated in 200 Sanskrit *slokas*. These are mostly in *anuṣtubh* metre as other '*sahasranāmas*' usually are, but two other longer metres have been used for a few *slokas*. They are in most cases readable, though persons with scanty knowledge of Sanskrit may find some of the verses difficult. The translation and notes by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan naturally fulfil our expectation from an eminent scholar like him. The introduction enhances the value of the book.

One special quality of this *Sahasranāma* is that instead of using abstract names of metaphysical import, the book gives a chronological narration of the main incidents in Sri Ramakrishna's life. The later verses mention his great qualities. The book will be particularly appreciated by devotees of Sri Ramakrishna with some knowledge of Sanskrit and English.

The book is produced well, but greater care should have been taken to eliminate printing errors—particularly the name of one of the authors on the title page is sadly misspelt.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BOMBAY

Report: April 1979—March 1981

Spiritual and Cultural: Daily worship and prayer were conducted in the temple of Sri Ramakrishna. Ramanama Sankirtan was conducted on Ekadasi days. There were two weekly religious classes in Hindi and English on Saturdays and Sundays respectively. Classes and lectures were delivered in other parts of the city and the State. Birth anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda and the usual annual festivals like Durga Puja and Christmas were celebrated.

Recitation competitions open to students of all schools in Bombay and its suburbs were held in five languages and 140 prizes were given away among 1174 participants in 1981.

Educational: The Mission runs a Students' Home for college boys. The free reading-room and Sivananda library had more than 27,993 books on diverse subjects, 9 dailies and a number of periodicals in different languages. 30,440 books and periodicals were lent out.

Medical: The Mission runs a charitable outdoor dispensary and an indoor hospital with allopathic and homoeopathic sections. The allopathic section is equipped for surgery, pathology, gynaecology, dentistry, E. N. T., ophthalmology and radiology. 2,13,727 patients were treated during the period under review.

Rural health and welfare: The Mission runs a medical unit at Sakwar, an Adivasi village 70 Km. away from Bombay. A team of medical and para-medical workers visits the village on Sundays. Medicines, vitamin tablets, protein food, biscuits and garments are distributed. People with serious ailments are helped to get admitted into hospitals in Bombay. It served an average of 984 patients during each trip.

Immediate needs: The generous public is requested to contribute liberally to enable the Mission to fulfil the following needs. (1) Additional facilities at the hospital both for inpatient and outpatient services and diagnostic facilities: Rs. 30,00,000; (2) Additional medical, educational. hygienical facilities at Sakwar: Rs. 12,00,000.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, BARANAGORE

Report for April 1981 to March 1982

Religious and Cultural: Weekly religious classes were held on Saturdays. There was Ramanama Sankirtan and bhajan on every Ekadasi day. Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda and other religious celebrities were duly celebrated. The Secretary of the Ashrama delivered religious discourses about sixteen times a month outside the Ashrama.

Educational: The centre runs a Higher Secondary Multipurpose School having as its feeder institutions a Primary School, two Junior Basic School units and two Junior High School units. During the year the number of students was as follows: Madhyamik School, 1,065; Junior Basic Schools, 402 boys and 13 girls; Primary School 230 boys and 7 girls. Various extra-curricular activities were provided for the students, such as drills, military style parade, physical exercise, seasonal open-air sports, annual sports competitions, and educational tours in West Bengal.

The school library had 5,344 books. The Ashrama also maintains an area-library with a spacious reading-room which had 10,509 books. The audio-visual unit had nine films of saints and sages of India which were shown 48 times during the year at different places around the centre and in remote villages.

Medical: The Homoeopathic Charitable Outdoor Dispensary treated 55,990 patients (new: 5,203; old: 50,787).

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Social Education at Home

The Indian constitution assures equality of opportunity and social justice to every Indian child and citizen as fundamental rights. Education is open to every child, and article 45 has made it a compulsory requirement. Nevertheless, even three decades after the adoption of the Constitution, millions of people are still facing the problems of caste prejudice, sex discrimination, untouchability, illiteracy, hunger and injustice. Why? Because customs and social attitudes have not changed. This is the paradox of Indian society today: ideals are accepted without abandoning customs. Kings are gone, Manu is no longer followed, new ideals are being preached, new laws have come, and yet after all, social customs reign supreme. This is the inevitable result of trying to modernize a 'closed' society in which a person's worth is determined not by his achievements, but by his birth.

There is of course a slow and steady awakening in the lower strata of society. But this has only introduced a new problem: inter-caste rivalry and hostility. Add to this the ever-increasing inter-religious conflicts and communal disturbances, and we have an alarming picture of social situation in India now. The most important problem facing the country now is social change, the creation of an all-pervasive awareness of equality, harmony and justice, and the collective will to make these a social reality. How to bring this about? In a lecture delivered at the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore, in November 1981, the late Prof. B. Kuppuswami, an eminent social psychologist, suggested three measures to solve this problem: social education in schools, social education through mass media and social education at home.

Education by itself does not bring about social change unless the system of education itself changes, and in India where education is solely oriented to economic development it is difficult to make drastic changes in the basic pattern of school education. Social norms and values are imbibed in childhood from elders at home and, unless every home in India becomes a centre of social education, it is not possible to raise a new generation of people with a new social awareness.

This has been pointed out by Prof. B. Kuppuswami: 'Social norms and values are imbedded in the personality structure. That is why it is very difficult to change social norms and values. The value of equality is accepted but the social norm of hierarchy is counter to that. So there is resistance to change ... The value of equality is learnt in the school. But the value of hierarchy is learnt at home during early childhood. The latter is more strongly implemented ... This takes us to the child-rearing practices at home... Social change to be enduring must become a part and parcel of the child's personality. This can be done only by the parents at home before the child goes to school. In other words, the new value of equality should be accepted by the parents consciously and deliberately so that it becomes a part of his personality, and this should be transmitted to the child during his upbringing.'