Editorial Office
P.O. Mayavati, Via Lohaghat
Dt. Pithoragarh 262 524, U.P.

Publication Office
5 Dehi Entally Road
Calcutta 700 014
Phone : 44-2898

[*Rates inclusive of postage*]

Annual Subscription

India, Nepal & Bangladesh	Rs. 15.00
U.S.A. & Canada	$ 10.00
Other Countries	£ 4.00

Life Subscription (30 *years*)

Rs. 300	$ 200	£ 60

Single Copy

Rs. 1.50	$ 1.00	50 P.

Information for contributors, publishers, subscribers, and advertisers overleaf.

Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

JULY 1983

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 88 JULY 1983 No. 7

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS

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

यत् पुरुषं व्यदधुः कतिधा व्यकल्पयन् ।
मुखं किमस्य कौ बाहू का ऊरू पादा उच्येते ॥

1. When the Virāt Puruṣa was offered as a sacrifice[1], into how many parts did they divide him ?[2] What became of his mouth, what of his arms, what of his thighs ? What were his feet called ?

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.11.

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः ।
ऊरू तदस्य यद् वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥

2. His mouth became the Brāhmaṇa, his arms became the Kṣatriya, his thighs became the Vaiśya ; the Śūdra was born from his feet.[3]

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.12.

चंद्रमा मनसो जातश्चक्षोः सूर्यो अजायत ।
मुखादिन्द्रश्चाग्निश्च प्राणाद् वायुरजायत ॥

3. The moon was born from his mind ; the sun was born from his eye ; Indra and Agni were born from his mouth, Vāyu from his breath.

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.13.

नाभ्या आसीदन्तरिक्षं शीर्ष्णो द्यौः समवर्तत ।
पद्भ्यां भूमिर्दिशः श्रोत्रात्तथा लोकाँ अकल्पयन् ॥

4. From his navel came the atmosphere, from his head the sky was produced, the earth from his feet, the quarters of space from his ear. Thus they fashioned the world.

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.14.

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1. by the devas who are, according to Sāyaṇa, manifestations of the Prāṇa-Śakti of the Primal Puruṣa.
2. According to Sāyaṇa, the Sacrifice was a mental one, and so the dividing of Puruṣa does not mean an actual cutting up but a form of mental classification.
3. In the whole of *Ṛg-Veda* the four castes are directly mentioned only in this stanza.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

Some salient aspects of sacrifice in the Vedic period are dealt with in this month's EDITORIAL.

In the first instalment of GIRISH CHANDRA GHOSH Swami Chetanananda, head of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, gives a vibrant account of the early life of the great Bengali writer and actor Girish Chandra Ghosh.

In the second instalment of AESTHETICS IN RAMANUJA'S PHILOSOPHY Prof. S. S. Raghavachar, former head of the department of philosophy in Mysore University, discusses the secular and sacred aspects of art and the place of the theory of rasa in Viśiṣṭādvaita.

This month's Forum for Inter-religious Understanding presents an insightful paper on PRAYER IN A CHRISTIAN CONTEXT by Dr. Beatrice Bruteau who is the Director of Philosopher's Exchange, Winston-Salem and also lectures in the university. The central idea of this strikingly original thesis is that prayer is a two-way movement taking place in two stages, which the author calls 'insight' and 'manifestation' respectively. The first is a process of interiorization by which the soul draws nearer to God; the second manifests the divine light acquired by the soul in its own life and in loving service to others. Together, these two movements constitute the essence of Christian prayer.

Prof. Ranjit Kumar Acharjee of Ramakrishna Maha Vidyalaya, Kailashahar, North Tripura, has drawn an authentic profile of two of the less well-known founders of Bengal Vaisnavism in his article TWO VRNDAVANA GOSVAMINS.

MEDITATION AND SACRIFICE—III

(EDITORIAL)

Yajña as the yoga of Vedic Age

Spiritual life is conscious life. In fact, spiritual life is nothing but a struggle for higher consciousness, and this is what distinguishes it from ethical life and ordinary conventional religious life. The central process in spiritual life is the transformation of human consciousness. All spiritual disciplines, all yogas, are special techniques which transform the unconscious into the conscious and the conscious into the superconscious. This was what *yajña* did for the Vedic man. *Yajña* was the yoga of the Vedic Age. In the hands of unworthy people any spiritual endeavour may undergo degeneration. As yoga was misused for the acquisition of occult powers, as the Tantras were misused for the enjoyment of sense pleasure, so too *yajña* was in later years degraded by ignorant people into a ritual for the attainment of heaven. But during the early Vedic period it served primarily as a spiritual discipline, a yoga, a technique for the transformation of consciousness.

In order to know how *yajña* brings about the transformation of consciousness we have to understand three principles on which it is based: ritualism, symbolism and the connection between thought and action.

Vedic *yajña* was centred on the external fire ritual performed every day in every

home. It was a simple rite of offering milk or ghee or cakes into an altar containing one or three or five fires. The whole life was regarded as a *yajña*, and the ritual was only meant to serve as an aid in the concentration of mental energies and in understanding the nature of the universe. The fire altar acted as a physical frame of reference for the working out of certain mental concepts. It was a kind of *maṇdala* or *yantra*. In his autobiographical work the great psychoanalyst Dr. Jung mentions how he came to an understanding of *maṇdalas*.[1] In his own personal life he used to visualize his mind as a circle and, whenever a conflict or tension arose, he would diagram it as a projection or distortion of the circle. In due course he found that this diagrammatization of his mental life had assumed a complex symmetric pattern which, as he later on discovered to his astonishment, had a striking resemblance to the Chinese and Tibetan *maṇdalas*. A *maṇdala* is thus an externalization of a person's intuitive understanding either about his own psyche or about the nature of the universe.[2] A *yantra* is a specific type of *maṇdala* associated with a deity—a pattern of the deity's power-structure.

The Vedic altar was a three-dimensional *maṇdala* or *yantra*. It was the external projection of a mental construct or paradigm of Reality, which the ṛṣi had developed through deep contemplation. The inner mental construct was called *vidyā* and the external physical construct was called *yajña* (In later upanisadic literature *yajña* came to be designated *avidyā*[3]). The external ritual was only an acting out and reinforcement of the inner meditation. By externalizing our inner thoughts we can study and control our mental life and our relationship with the world around us more easily. The fire alter served the same purpose to the Vedic ṛṣi—it enabled him to anchor his life in the real world, to concentrate his mind and energies, and to orientate himself to life and reality. Above all, it served to remind him of the unity and dynamism of life—that all life is one, that the entire universe is alive as one organism throbbing with divinity, that life is a constantly self-renewing steady-state system which every living being has to maintain through constant giving up and self-sacrifice.

In fact, the Vedic altar was the concretization of Vedic meditation. The real power lay in meditation, not in the external ritual—in the mind of the ṛṣi, not in the altar.

The second principle connected with *yajña* is symbolism. The most widely used symbols of the Vedic period are Sūrya (Sun) and Agni (Fire). In understanding the relation between these two and their symbolism lies the key to understanding the spiritual meaning of the entire Vedas. There are several passages in the *Ṛg-Veda* which describe Agni as a power residing in all human beings. It is referred to as Vaiśvānara ('belonging to all men') and Jātavedas ('all-knowing'). It is said to be located in the heart where the seer offers his hymn as an oblation to Agni.[4] Seated in the heart, Agni inspires mystic mantras[5]. Agni is the 'one ocean, the

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1. Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflection* (London: Collins and Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963).

2. When a schoolboy draws a triangle in order to study the Pythagorean Theorem, he is making a most elementary form of *maṇdala*.

3. Here *a-vidyā* does not mean 'ignorance' but 'not-*vidyā*', that is, something *different from* meditation.

4. आ ते अग्न ऋचा हविर्हृदा तष्टं भरामसि ।
Ṛg-Veda 6.16.47

5. विदन्तीमत्र नरो धियंधा हृदा यत् तष्टान्
मन्त्राँ अशंसन् ।
Ṛg-Veda 1.67.2.

source of riches, shines forth from our hearts'[6]. These passages clearly indicate that in the Vedas Agni means not the external fire, but the power of intuition and will in man. It is the symbol of the power of the *Jīvātman*, the individual Self, which the Tantras call *kuṇdalini*.

The Sun, Sūrya, is the symbol of spiritual illumination, the supreme Reality, the Cosmic Self,[7] the Primordial Puruṣa, the Hiraṇyagarbha, the Prajāpati, the Lord of all beings. Agni is the revealer, the means; Sūrya is the revealed, the goal. When Agni is called the 'priest, the divine sacrificer'[8] or the 'primary mouth of gods'[9], and when the vedic sage prays to him for guidance along the right path[10], what is implied is that the inner Self is the connecting link between man and God. Agni is only a special manifestation of Sūrya, and in the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* the two are identified. It is this identity that the Upaniṣads explicitly state as the identity of the individual Self and the Supreme Self.

Religious symbols are not mere signs but are the *saṁskāras*, dynamic impressions, of divine Reality produced in the minds of illumined sages. Just as the light of the sun produces the rainbow in the pure white cloud, so the light of the Divine gives rise to symbols in the purified minds of ṛṣis. When reactivated, these symbols produce great changes in the mind and recreate the original experience of the ṛṣi—just as the seven colours of the rainbow can be reconstituted back into the pure white radiance of the sun. The purpose of both meditation and ritual is to reactivate the archetypal symbols. This was what *yajña* did for the Vedic man.

The third point in understanding the spiritual significance of *yajña* is the connection between meditation and work. How do thoughts influence action, and how do actions influence thoughts? What is the connecting link between consciousness and activity? This is an important question for a spiritual aspirant, for without finding an answer to it he cannot resolve the conflict between meditation and karma yoga.[11] But for this it is necessary to study in detail the fundamental psychological processes which interlink thought and action. This is beyond the scope of the present discussion but, considering its importance, will be dealt with in a subsequent editorial.

How yajña evolved into upāsanā (meditation)

Few people are aware of the fact that Vedantic meditation known as *upāsanā* evolved out of the Vedic *yajña*. During the early Vedic period the two constituted one single discipline, *yajñopāsanā*. Gradually *upāsanā* became *angāvabaddha*, that is, distinct from but dependent on the external sacrifice. By the time the Brāhmaṇa and Āraṇyaka portions of the Vedas were composed, the external rite had been internalized and meditation had become a mental sacrifice, *mānasa-yajña*. During the period of the Upaniṣads *upāsanā* became a completely independent discipline using its own symbols and

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6. एक: समुद्रो धरुणो रयीणामस्मद् हृदो
भूरिजन्मा विचष्टे ।
Ṛg-Veda 10.5.1.

7. सूर्य आत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च ।
Ṛg-Veda 1.115.1.

8. अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजं ।
Ṛg-Veda 1.1.1.

9. अग्निर्मुखं प्रथमो देवतानां ।
Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa 1.4.8.

10. अग्ने नय सुपथा राये ।
Ṛg-Veda 1.189.1; *Isāvāsya-Upaniṣad* 18.

11. This is one of the basic conflicts of Arjuna in the Gita.

techniques. This transformation of *yajña* into *upāsanā* had a profound effect on the development of religious life in India, and some of the great philosophical concepts regarding the nature of Reality came out of it.

The earliest form of *yajña* was the offering of milk or ghee into a single domestic fire every day. This in due course developed into the cult of the *treta,* the three fires, called *dakṣina, āhavanīya* and *gārhapatya.* Oblations for one's forefathers were offered in the first fire and oblations for the gods in the second fire. These oblations were supposed to lead the soul to the path of manes (*pitṛyāna*) and the path of gods (*devayāna*) respectively. The third fire was meant to receive oblations without any motive. It symbolized the earliest form of Karma Yoga or selfless work, and gave rise to the concept of *mukti,* liberation from transmigratory existence as a direct path.

From the cult of the three fires developed several meditations. One was the *upakosala-vidyā* which led to identification of prāṇa, *kam* (bliss) and *kham* (space) with Brahman.[12] Another was the three-stage meditation taught by Uddālaka Āruni to his son Śvetaketu. In the first stage the origin of mind, Prāṇa and speech is traced to the three elements earth, water and fire ; in the second stage these elements are traced to their common source, *sat* or pure being ; in the third stage the individual soul is identified with *sat* through the famous equation *tat tvam asi.*[13] Meditations on the three fires also led to important discoveries like the doctrine of the three worlds (*bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, suvaḥ*), the doctrines of the three states (waking, dream and deep sleep), the three parts of cognition (knower, knowledge and the object), etc. Mystic and psychic truths and experiences, like those connected with the three channels of *idā, pingalā* and *suṣumnā,* also evolved out of the cult of the three fires.[14]

Later on two more fires—*āvasathya* and *sabhya*—were added to the three fires, and thus developed the cult of the Five Fires which became the standard form of fire-sacrifice (*agnihotra*) during the later Vedic period. From this fire cult developed several meditations and concepts. One of the most well known of these meditations is the *pañcāgnividyā* in which the heaven, the cloud, the earth, man and woman are regarded as five fires which represent the five stages through which the soul passes before it is reborn. Important psychological concepts like the five *kośas* or sheaths (the material, vital, mental, intellectual and blissful) of the soul, the five sense organs as powers of mind, the five vital airs and their control through Prāṇāyāma and other important principles of yoga are all products of the *pañcāgnividyā.*

The development of *upāsanā,* which began as an internalization of the fire-sacrifice, continued in the post-Vedic period. Two important changes took place during this period. One was the introduction of the concept of self-surrender. The three parts of a Vedic sacrifice were: the material things offered (*dravya*), the deity (*devatā*), and the act of giving (*tyāga*) which was mostly done as an obligatory duty.[15] In the *upāsanā* of the post-Vedic period the Self (Atman) was substituted for *dravya,* and *tyāga* gave way to *samarpaṇa* or surrender. As a result, *upāsanā* became an act of self-surrender. Self-surrender developed into *bhajana,* loving service to the

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12. Cf. *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* 4.10.4.

13. Cf. *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* 6.5.4.—6.8.8.

14. It was perhaps some such mystic knowledge that the boy Naciketā sought as his second boon in the *Kathopaniṣad* 1.13-17.

15. द्रव्यं देवता त्यागः ।

Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra 1.2.12.

Lord, in the Bhakti movement of the Middle Ages.[16] The next significant change took place several hundred years later in modern times when Swami Vivekananda gave a new turn to Hindu religious life by linking individual spiritual practice to service (*sevana*) of humanity. The transformation of *yajana* (*yajña*) into *bhajana* and of the latter into *sevana* has had its parallel effect in the form and content of *upāsanā*.

In the meantime, under the influence of Patañjali's Yoga, *upāsanā* was undergoing a second type of change to which we now turn for a detailed study.

Difference between Vedic meditation and post-Vedic meditation

When we study meditation in the Vedas[17] we find that it differs from the prevalent notions regarding meditation in three ways.

1. *Emphasis on awakening of intuition rather than on suppression of thoughts.* Every thought has behind it two powers: the power to convey meaning known in the Vedas as *vāk,* and the power of will known in the Vedas as *kratu.* Both these powers have their source in the *dhī* (or higher *buddhi*), the intuitive faculty located in the heart.[18] When *dhī* is awakened, thoughts acquire great power and luminosity and reveal subtle or hidden truths. The Vedic seers knew this, and so everywhere in the Vedas we find prayers for the awakening of the *dhī* (like the celebrated Gāyatrī) and for the union of thoughts to *dhī*. This was what yoga meant to the Vedic ṛṣi—the 'yoking' of thoughts to *dhī* and the deployment of thoughts to understand the true nature of life and reality.[19]

In striking contrast, the emphasis in Patañjali's Yoga is on the control or suppression of thoughts, *citta-vṛtti nirodhah.* Of course, yogic control is a fully conscious self-directed process, but for this some prior awakening, gained through intense prayer or self-analysis or Karma Yoga, is necessary. When suppression of thoughts is attempted with an unawakened impure mind in a mechanical way, it becomes what psychologists call 'repression', and much mental energy is wasted. People try to suppress thoughts because of the mistaken notion that all thoughts are evil and are obstacles to spiritual realization. Thoughts cause distraction, conflict and suffering only when they are left to the mercies of lower impulses without the light and guidance of an awakened *dhī.* When *dhī* awakens, it takes charge of the whole mental life, frees thoughts from the hold of instincts, brings them under its control, and endows them with power and luminosity. Instead of straining every nerve in the futile attempt to suppress thoughts, if spiritual aspirants spent at least a fraction of their time and energy in awakening the *dhī* first through intense prayer and selfless karma yoga, meditative life would not appear so difficult and frustrating as it does to many of them.

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16. Derived from the root *bhaj*—to divide share, serve, the original use of the word *bhajana* in the *Ṛg-Veda* is not much different from that of *yajña.* cf. महस्ते विष्णो सुमतिं भजामहे ।

Ṛg-Veda 1.156.3.

17. For an insightful study of Vedic meditation see. Jeanine Miller, *The Vedas* (London: Rider and Company; also, New Delhi: B.I. Publications, 1974).

18. Cf. 'Varuṇa has implanted *kratu* in the heart'.

हृत्सु क्रतुं वरुणो . . . अदधात् ।

Ṛg-Veda 5.85.2.

19. Cf. 'Seers, who have known the Great Seer, unite their minds to *dhī*'.

युंजते मन उत युंजते धियो विप्रा
विप्रस्य बृहतो विपश्चितः ।

Ṛg-Veda 5.81.1.

2. *Integration of personality.* One of the most obvious characteristics of post-Vedic spirituality is the compartmentalization of spiritual endeavour into Jñana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma each of which gives importance to the cultivation of one of the three faculties of reason, feeling and will. Following only one path neglecting the others leads to a lop-sided development of personality. On the contrary, spiritual life in the Vedic period was holistic which allowed the full development of all the faculties. There was no division of it into Jñana, Bhakti, etc., for an individual's entire life was an undivided consecration and sacrifice to the Divine.

3. *Openness to Reality at all levels.* The goal of Vedic man's life was the attainment of harmony with *ṛtam*, the cosmic order. Life was treated as an integral whole without any distinction between the sacred and the secular, the individual and the cosmic, the inner and the outer. Man encountered the Divine at all times everywhere, and every activity was a sacrifice to the Divine. The purpose of meditation was to establish as many points of contact with the divine Reality as possible. Through meditation the Vedic man learnt how to open up every part of his personality—the physical, vital, mental and the superconscious—to the light and power of the Divine. Meditation was essentially a technique for the expansion of consciousness and for the experience of divine joy at all levels. It was not an exclusive activity but an integral part of the everyday life of the common man.

This openness to experience, expansion of consciousness and multidimensional contact with Reality which characterized Vedic meditation was lost during the post-Vedic period. Meditation got progressively divorced from everyday life, and became a specialized activity needing withdrawal from practical life, chiefly meant for ascetics and monks.

With the advancement of science and technology the human situation has been rapidly changing in modern times. On the one hand, the discoveries of science and psychology have opened up hitherto unknown dimensions of Reality and, on the other hand, industrialization, wars and socio-political changes have created problems of disbelief, discontentment, alienation, insecurity and meaninglessness. There is an enormous increase in man's access to nature's power but there is a corresponding decrease in man's ability to face himself and solve his problems. What the world now needs is an integral view of the universe and multidimensional experience of Reality. It is this need that is prompting thousands of people in the East and West to practise meditation. If meditation is to fulfil this need, it should be freed from its narrow doctrinal framework and ascetic shell and integrated into the life of the common man in every walk of life. The best way to do this is to revive and re-establish the Vedic principle of meditation. And the Vedic principle of meditation, we have seen, is inseparable from the principle of *yajña*, sacrifice.

(To be concluded)

GIRISH CHANDRA GHOSH

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

It is often very difficult for people to understand the actions and behaviour of the great teachers of the world. People judge these great ones according to their own mental make-up and sometimes criticize them without understanding the motive behind their actions. The life story of Buddha tells how the rulers of *Vaiśāli* were disappointed when Buddha accepted a dinner invitation from the courtesan Ambāpāli and refused theirs. Jesus' disciples were surprised when they found their Master talking with the socially scorned Samaritan woman near Jacob's well; and again, Simon could not understand why Jesus would let a fallen woman anoint his feet. Similarly, the charge was levelled against Sri Ramakrishna that he did not show 'sufficient moral abhorrence' toward prostitutes and drunkards. On the contrary, we find that one of the marked characteristics of these great souls is that they love the virtuous and the sinner alike. In fact, just as a mother may show more affection to her handicapped child than to her healthy one, so the great teachers of the world are in some ways more sympathetic toward the wayward children of God than toward the virtuous ones. After all, what glory is there in making a good man good? Buddha, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, and other God-men paid special attention to the fallen, the downtrodden, and the destitute, and by their redeeming power they lifted the lowly to the highest state. They transformed sinners into saints.

Girish Chandra Ghosh is just such an example of the transforming power of Sri Ramakrishna. Before he met Sri Ramakrishna, Girish Ghosh had led a reckless, hedonistic life. He was a self-proclaimed libertine and a rebel against God. Yet he had a strong mind, and was a man of tremendous heart. The turn that Sri Ramakrishna gave to Girish's life is epitomized in a conversation that took place between them on December 14, 1884:

Ramakrishna: 'Have faith in the Divine Mother and you will attain everything.'

Girish: 'Bnt I am a sinner.'

Ramakrishna: 'The wretch who constantly harps on sin becomes a sinner.'

Girish: 'Sir, the very ground where I used to sit would become unholy.'

Ramakrishna: 'How can you say that? Suppose a light is brought into a room that has been dark a thousand years; does it illumine the room little by little, or all in a flash?'

A little later Girish asked, 'Tell me what I should do.'

Ramakrishna: 'Give God your power of attorney. Let Him do whatever He likes.'

The life story of Girish is very interesting. It gives hope to the hopeless, faith to the faithless, and inspiration to the seekers of God. Girish was born of pious parents in Calcutta on February 28, 1844, and grew up a lively, carefree soul. He inherited from his father a sharp intellect and a pragmatic approach to life, and from his mother a love for literature and devotion for God. But it was his grandmother who introduced him to the rich heritage of India's epics and mythology. In the evenings she would recount to him some of those ancient stories, and he would listen with rapt attention. Once she was describ-

ing the episode of Kṛṣṇa's departure from Vrindaban, one of the moving scenes of the *Bhāgavatam.* Kṛṣṇa's uncle, Akrūra, was sent to bring Kṛṣṇa to Mathura, much to the despair of the shepherd boys and girls of Vrindaban. When Kṛṣṇa sat in the chariot, the boys began to cry, and they pleaded with him, 'O Kṛṣṇa, do not leave us!' The girls held the wheels of the chariot, and some of them grabbed the reins of the horses. But Akrūra would not pay any heed to them. He left Vrindaban with Kṛṣṇa, and thus the days of joy that Kṛṣṇa's playmates had known in his company came to an end. Girish was listening intently and, with tearful eyes, he asked his grandmother, 'Did Kṛṣṇa ever return to Vrindaban?' 'No', replied the grandmother. Girish asked the question three times and each time got the same answer. He then burst into tears and ran away. The story upset him so much that for the next several evenings he refused to listen to any more tales.

When he was only eleven years old his mother died. Although his father was very loving and indulgent toward Girish, he wanted the boy to learn to stand on his own feet and depend on none but God. Once Girish went with his father by boat to visit Navadwip, the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya, which is several miles up the river Ganga from Calcutta. On the way their boat was suddenly caught in a crosscurrent. As it whirled around in imminent danger of sinking, Girish clung tightly to his father's hand. Luckily the boatman was able to navigate the boat to safety. When they reached the shore, Girish's father said to him: 'Why did you hold my hand? Don't you know that my life is dearer to me than yours? If the boat had started to sink, I would have snatched my hand from you and tried to save my own life. You would have been forsaken.' 'My father's cruel words hurt me terribly, but I learned that there is no one but God to hold to at the time of danger.' Three years after his mother's death, Girish lost his father.

From his boyhood Girish was a voracious reader and a free thinker. With his father's permission, he enrolled in one school after another, yet he was not happy in any of them. He found the discipline confining, and their methods of teaching did not satisfy his thirst for knowledge. A year after his father's death he was married, and he then left school completely without matriculating. He never went to college.

Girish was born in a transitional period of Indian history when, in Calcutta particularly, Western education and culture were being thrust upon Indian society, challenging the traditional Indian culture and religions. Consequently, the youth of his generation grew up in an atmosphere of doubt, atheism, and cultural chaos. At the threshold of maturity, with little stability either in his family or in society to guide him, Girish started drifting into drunkenness, debauchery, waywardness, and obstinacy. He became the leader of a group of mischievous youths in his locality. Sometimes he would even desecrate images of Hindu gods and goddesses. Within a few years he became a neighbourhood menace. Yet side by side with his perverse behaviour, Girish would raise money to help the poor secure food and medicine, or arrange for the cremation of those in his community who had died. After studying homeopathic medicine, he was able to treat people himself.

Girish would often watch the people in the street through a small opening in his door. One afternoon, when the men of the neighbourhood were at work, he observed a hypocritical astrologer, in the guise of a monk, collecting information from a maidservant about the women of

the household where she worked. The man then entered that house as a fortune-teller, and the simple, curious women came to him to have their palms read. Girish could not tolerate it. He grabbed a branch of a flower tree in the courtyard, broke it off, and ran and attacked the astrologer. He did not stop chasing him until the astrologer was out of the locality.

Although Girish was no longer in school, he did not give up his studies. He eventually became a member of the Asiatic Society and other well-known libraries of Calcutta. His reading included the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the Purāṇas, and Bengali literature. In this way he gradually became well versed in history, logic, philosophy, zoology, and English literature. He also studied science and medicine. He did not care for superficial knowledge. His capacity for deep penetration into any subject, plus his keen observation of human character and wonderful imagination, are what later made him a natural poet and playwright.

Once a friend of Girish's, who later became a judge of the Calcutta High Court, said to him, 'It is impossible to translate the conversations of the witches of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into Bengali.' Immediately Girish decided to translate the whole play. It was his nature to rise to any challenge or to do just what he was told not to do. If anyone said, 'Don't go there. There is a ghost,' he would immediately run to that place to see the ghost. He was fearless, independent, and proud of his strength. No one could make him begin work or quit work through pressure or intimidation. He used to say, 'A beast can be tamed by the whip, but not a human being.' His attitude was: If I do not enjoy my work, why should I do it? What he considered right he did, without caring whether others criticized him or not.

Meanwhile, Girish's recklessness and debauchery continued. His father-in-law finally decided to introduce some kind of discipline into Girish's life and secured for him a job as a bookkeeper in his own office. It was while working there that Girish translated *Macbeth* into Bengali. Unfortunately, that manuscript was lost when the company went out of business, because Girish was then away from the office taking care of his sick wife. However, he later retranslated *Macbeth*, and it was staged at the Minerva Theatre in Calcutta. Girish worked in various capacities in different businesses during the next fifteen years. He had indomitable energy, and was becoming increasingly more involved in the theatre. Thus it was common practice for him to work all day at the office and then go to the theatre in the evening to act in a play, returning home at three or four o'clock in the morning.

That person is indeed unfortunate who loses his mother in childhood, his father in boyhood, and his wife in early manhood. In 1874, when Girish was just thirty, his young wife died, leaving him with one son and one daughter. Shortly thereafter he lost his job. A thick, dark cloud of despair seemed to hover over him. As God created grief to subdue man, so man created wine to subdue grief. Again Girish drifted, trying to forget his sorrows with the help of alcohol. But, at the same time, his pent-up emotions found an outlet in a series of exquisite poetical compositions.

During this period he went to Bhagalpur, in Central India, for a short while on some business. One day while he was there he went for a walk with some friends and in a boisterous mood, jumped into a deep ravine. When he tried to climb out he found he was unable to do so. His friends then attempted to rescue him but they also failed. One of them commented: 'Now we are in real trouble. You are an

atheist, and yet no one can save you now but God. Let us all pray together.' Girish found himself joining wholeheartedly in the prayer, and strangely, just then he found a way out of the ravine. After he was safe he said to his friends: 'Today I have called on God out of fear. If I ever call on Him again, it will be out of love; otherwise I will not call on Him, even at the cost of my life.'

After returning to Calcutta Girish remarried and also found another job. His new supervisor was an Englishman who introduced the practice of summoning his employees by ringing a bell. One day he rang for Girish. Girish heard the bell but did not respond. The supervisor sent an attendant to ask Girish whether he had heard the bell or not. Girish simply replied, 'No, I didn't hear the bell,' and continued with his work. The supervisor became angry when he heard the report and went to Girish himself. 'I am calling you. Why don't you respond?' 'I did hear the bell', answered Girish. 'Even so, how am I to know that the bell is calling me? The bell never said, "Girish, Girish."' Then more seriously he said: 'Listen, sir. So far I have spoken to you as a gentleman; now I shall be frank. I am not your servant or bearer. I am not accustomed to standing and sitting according to a bell. I feel it is humiliating for a subordinate to be summoned by a bell. And when its employees are humiliated, a company loses its reputation.' The owner of the company came to know of the incident and supported Girish. Later the supervisor apologized to Girish, and they eventually became close friends.

Six months after his second marriage Girish became ill with a virulent type of cholera, and physicians gave up hope for his recovery. Girish was lying on his bed in a semi-conscious state, surrounded by weeping relatives, when he had a vision: A resplendent female form, wearing a red-bordered cloth, appeared before him. Her face was full of compassion and love. She sat near him and, putting something in his mouth, said, 'Please eat this prasad [sanctified food] and you will be cured.' Girish slowly regained consciousness, and from that moment his recovery began. He later recounted this mysterious vision to his brother disciples and added, 'Sixteen years later (in 1891) when I first went to Jayrambati to see the Holy Mother, I found to my surprise and delight that the woman who had saved my life with the holy prasad was none other than the Holy Mother herself.'

Disease, the death of a loved one, an accident, or untold suffering invariably leads to a turning point in one's life. Girish was experiencing all of these and, in spite of his proclaimed atheism, he began to wonder if in fact a greater Reality did exist. He wrote in his memoirs:

> At such a crisis I thought, 'Does God exist? Does he listen to the prayers of man? Does he show him the way from darkness to light?' My mind said, 'Yes.' Immediately I closed my eyes and prayed, 'Oh God, if thou art, carry me across. Give me refuge. I have none.' I remembered the words of the Gita, 'Those who call on Me alone in the days of affliction, to them too I bring succour and refuge.' These words sank deep in my consciousness and gave me solace in sorrow. I found the words of the Gita to be true. As the sun removes the darkness of the night, so the sun of hope arose and dispelled the gloom that had gathered thick in my mind. In the sea of trouble I found the harbour of repose. But I had nurtured doubt all these years. I had argued long, saying, 'There is no God.' Where would the impressions of these thoughts go? I began to reason in terms of cause and effect and argued that such and such a cause had produced such and such an effect, which was instrumental in bringing release from this danger. It is said that doubt dies hard. Again I fell victim to doubt. But I had not the courage to say boldly, 'God does not exist.'

Desire for inquiry came. Looking into the current of events, sometimes faith, sometimes doubt, emerged. Everybody with whom I discussed my problem said unanimously that without instruction from a guru doubt would not go and nothing could be achieved in spiritual life. But my intellect refused to accept a human being as a guru; for one has to salute the guru with the words, 'Guru is Brahma, Guru is Viṣṇu, Guru is the Lord Mahesvara (Śiva), the god of gods, etc.' How could I say this to a man who is like me? This was hypocrisy. But the tyranny of doubt was intolerable. Terrible conflicts pierced my heart through and through. That condition can better be imagined than described. Suppose a man, all of a sudden, is forcibly dragged to a dark, solitary room with his eyes covered, and kept confined there with no food and drink. What will be the state of his mind? If you can picture his mental condition, you will be able to understand something of my own. There were moments when I was breathless with emotion. Thoughts of despair bit through me like a saw. At other times the memory of the past was revived and the darkness of my heart knew no bounds.

Girish had read about Sri Ramakrishna in the *Indian Mirror*. He also came to know how the famous Keshab Chandra Sen and his followers, of the Brahmo Samaj, had been influenced by Sri Ramakrishna. He then became curious to know more about this holy man of Dakshineswar. Most probably Girish first saw Sri Ramakrishna in 1877 at Dinanath Basu's house in Calcutta. In his reminiscences Girish recorded his first several meetings with Sri Ramakrishna. As he described his first meeting:

It was dusk. Lights were lit and they were placed in front of Sri Ramakrishna. But he began to make repeated inquiries, saying, 'Is it evening? Is it evening?' At this I thought to myself, 'What pretension! It is dusk. Lights are burning in front of him. Yet he cannot tell whether it is evening or not.' Thinking I had seen enough of him, I came away.

A few years later, Girish saw Sri Ramakrishna for the second time at the home of Balaram Bose. Many people had been invited that day to meet the Master. A dancing girl named Bidhu was seated next to Sri Ramakrishna in order to sing a few devotional songs for him. Girish observed Sri Ramakrishna talking to people and receiving them with the utmost humility, bowing down to the ground. Girish wrote in his reminiscences:

An old friend of mine, pointing at him, said sarcastically, 'Bidhu must have had a previous intimacy with him. That's why he is laughing and joking with her.' But I did not like his insinuations. Just at this time Sisir Kumar Ghosh, the well-known editor of *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* arrived. He seemed to have very little respect for Sri Ramakrishna. He said, 'Let us go; enough of him!' I wanted to stay and see a little more. But he insisted and made me go with him.

In August, 1884, Girish's drama on the life of Śrī Caitanya was creating a sensation in Calcutta. Sri Ramakrishna heard about the play and wanted to see it, but some devotees objected because several of the roles were played by women of bad reputation. In those days girls from good families did not become actresses in the theatre. Sri Ramakrishna told the devotees: 'I shall look upon them as the Blissful Mother herself. What if one of them acts the part of Caitanya? An imitation custard apple reminds one of the real fruit.'

Girish wrote in his memoirs for September 21, 1884:

My play, *The Life of Caitanya,* was being enacted in the Star Theatre. I was strolling in the outer compound of the theatre when Mahendra Nath Mukhopadhyaya, one of the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, came and said to me: 'Sri Ramakrishna has come to see the play. If you will give him a free pass, well and good. Otherwise we will buy a ticket for him.'

I replied: 'He will not have to purchase his ticket. But the others will have to.' Saying this, I proceeded to greet him. I found him alighting from the carriage and entering the

Then the talk drifted to the theatre, and he said, 'I liked your play very much. The sun of knowledge has begun to shine upon you. All the blemishes of your heart will be washed away. Very soon devotion will arise to sweeten your life with profuse joy and peace.' I told him that I had none of those qualities and that I had written the play only with the idea of making some money. He kept quiet. Then he said, 'Will you take me to your theatre and show me another play of yours?' I replied, 'Very well. Any day you like.' He said, 'You must charge me something.' I said, 'All right, you may pay eight annas.' Sri Ramakrishna said, 'That will allow me a seat in the balcony, which is a very noisy place.' I answered, 'Oh no, you will not go there. You will sit in the same place where you sat last time.' He said. 'Then you must take one rupee.' I said, 'All right, as you please.' Our talk ended.

Girish was a proud man, very much opposed to the idea of bowing down to anyone. But through the influence of Sri Ramakrishna, his haughtiness, rudeness, and pride gradually began to melt. Girish described his thoughts at his fifth meeting:

I was sitting in the dressing room of the theatre when a devotee came to me in a hurry and said with some concern, 'Sri Ramakrishna is here in his carriage.' I replied, 'Very well. Take him to a box and offer him a seat.' But the devotee answered, 'Won't you come and greet him personally and take him there yourself?' With some annoyance I said, 'Does he need me? Can't he get there himself?' Nevertheless, I went. I found him alighting from the carriage. Seeing his serene and radiant face, my stony heart melted. I rebuked myself in shame, and that shame still haunts my memory. To think that I had refused to greet this sweet and gentle soul! Then I conducted him upstairs. There I saluted him, touching his feet. Even now I do not understand the reason, but at that moment a radical change came over me and I was a different man. I offered him a rose, which he accepted. But he returned it again, saying, 'only a god or a dandy is entitled to flowers. What shall I do with it?'

Girish took Sri Ramakrishna and some of his devotees into the hall of the Star Theatre, where the following conversation took place:

Ramakrishna: 'Ah! You have written nice plays.'

Girish: 'But, sir, how little I assimilate! I just write.'

Ramakrishna: 'No, you assimilate a great deal. The other day I said to you that no one could sketch a divine character unless he had love of God in his heart...'

Girish: 'I often ask myself, "Why bother about the theatre any more?"'

Ramakrishna: 'No, no! Let things be as they are. People will learn much from your plays.'

After the drama, which was on the life of the great devotee Prahlada, Girish asked Sri Ramakrishna, 'How did you like the performance?' Sri Ramakrishna replied: 'I found that it was God himself who was acting the different parts. Those who played the female parts seemed to me the direct embodiments of the Blissful Mother.'

On this occasion Sri Ramakrishna said to Girish, 'There is some crookedness in your heart.' Girish thought to himself, 'Yes, indeed. Plenty of it—of various kinds.' Then he asked the Master, 'How shall I get rid of it?' Sri Ramakrishna replied, 'Have faith.'

One afternoon Girish went to the theatre and found a note saying that Sri Ramakrishna would be visiting Ram Chandra Dutta's house in Calcutta that day. Girish suddenly felt an irresistible desire to see the Master. He left the theatre for Ram Dutta's house, even though he did not know him and had not received a formal invitation. He later wrote in his memoirs:

It was evening. Sri Ramakrishna was dancing in ecstasy in the courtyard. There was singing accompanied by a drum. The devotees were dancing in a circle around Sri Ramakrishna. The words of the song were, 'Nadia is shaken by the surging waves of divine love emanating from the heart of Gauranga.' The courtyard seemed a sea of bliss. He was absorbed in

samadhi. The devotees began to take the dust of his feet. I wanted to do the same, but I could not, as I was shy. I was thinking of what others might say if I went to Sri Ramakrishna and took the dust of his feet. No sooner had this thought crossed my mind than Sri Ramakrishna, coming down from samadhi, began dancing again. While dancing he came in front of me and stood still, once more absorbed in samadhi. Now there was no longer any hesitation on my part to touch his feet. I took the dust of his feet.

After the music Sri Ramakrishna came and sat in the drawing room. I followed him. Then he began to talk to me. I asked him, 'Will the crookedness go out of my heart?' He said, 'Yes, it will go.' Again I asked him the same question, and he gave the same reply. I repeated it once more, and he said the same thing.

A great change was coming over Girish. He felt as if Sri Ramakrishna was his own close relative. The Master's loving care and concern made Girish understand that he would not condemn him for his shortcomings. Girish wrote:

I went to Dakshineswar. I found Sri Ramakrishna seated on the southern porch of his room. He was talking with a young devotee named Bhavanath. I prostrated myself before Sri Ramakrishna and mentally recited the verse. 'Guru is Brahma, Guru is Viṣṇu, Guru is the Lord Mahesvara, the god of gods.' He said, 'I was just talking about you. And if you don't believe me, ask Bhavanath!'

After a while he started to give me some spiritual advice. I stopped him, saying: 'I won't listen to any advice. I have written cartloads of it myself. It doesn't help. Do something that will transform my life.' Hearing these words, Sri Ramakrishna was highly pleased. Ramlal, his nephew, was present. Sri Ramakrishna asked him to recite a particular hymn, which ran thus: 'Go into solitude and shut yourself in a cave. Peace is not there. Peace is where faith is, for faith is the root of all.' I saw a smile playing on the lips of Sri Ramakrishna, and I felt at that moment that I was freed from all impurities. And at that moment, my arrogant head bowed low at his feet. In him I found my sanctuary and all my fear was gone. I prostrated myself before him and was about to return home. He followed me as far as the northern porch. There I asked him, 'Now that I have received your grace, am I to continue the same kind of work that I have been doing?' Sri Ramakrishna replied, 'Yes, why not?' From his words I understood that my connection with the theatre would not hurt my spiritual life.

My heart was filled with joy. I felt as if I was born anew. I was a totally changed man. There was no more doubt or conflict in my mind. 'God is real. God is my sanctuary; I have found my refuge in this God-man. Now I can easily realize God.' Thonghts like these cast their spell on me night and day. In waking or in dreaming, the same mood persisted: 'Fearless am I! I have found my very own. The world can no longer bind me, for even the greatest fear, the fear of death, is gone.'

(To be continued)

AESTHETICS IN RAMANUJA'S PHILOSOPHY

PROF. S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

(Continued from the previous issue)

(*d*) *Expressionism.* A view of beauty ancient in origin, but formulated as a theory in recent times, is that it consists 'expression'. On this view, it is not a self-existent principle of aesthetic value, but is what it is by virtue of the revelation or expression of an inner or spiritual content.

The view accords well with the nature of the kingdom of arts. What is to be expressed is an inner vision and, in the process of expression, it acquires self-definition. The expression, we have seen, must fulfil itself in capturing the highest form or reality, of which the focal point of significance is

the Supreme Being. In all moods of their highest expressiveness, the artists of real creative genius confess to their being the passive vehicles of an inspiration, descending, as it were, from above, and appropriating them as its instruments of self-articulation. All great art takes shape, not as something man-made and artificial, but as the veritable self-utterance of the Highest Reality. The artist has the blessed status of an instrument, through whom Reality communicates itself. Thus, art at its best is Nature's own self-expression at its best. Vedānta Deśika, in one of his peak confessions, owns to being a mere *viṇā* on which the Lord (Veṅkaṭeśa) is playing with delight. This passivity is a state of exaltation to the poet.

While thus art passes out of the realm of the work of man to that of God Himself, natural beauty, to which also the theory of Beauty as Expression has to apply, takes on the aspect of artistic creation. It is not something 'out there' by itself, solidly self-existing, but something projected and set up by the Creator's self-display. Parāśara Bhaṭṭa uses the self-display of a peacock as a simile. It is not unusual to speak of the Creator as a poet, dancer and musician, and Vedic literature uses the carpenter's analogy also. Creation as the art of the Divine Spirit is a valid picture on many counts. Vedānta Deśika, in a memorable poem, speaks of the Creator as a painter, He Himself constituting the canvas, with His creative joy as brush and compassion as the paint. Instead of merely art being expression, beauty in all forms and levels, produced or discovered by man, comes, in the last analysis, to be viewed as the self-expression of Divinity.

Thus Realism, Formalism and Expressionism, properly stretched to their ultimate height of significance, converge towards a *Brahman*-centred aesthetics.

(*e*) The problem of ugliness is a seemingly intractable one in aesthetics, as is that of error in epistemology, and that of evil, moral and physical, in theism in general. It is a specific instance of the problem of imperfection, which is no problem for a materialistic or illusionistic metaphysics. The frame-work for treating it may be roughly indicated. Ultimately, imperfection is incidental to finite life; neither Nature nor the Supreme Spirit can be the basis of it for an unclouded vision. *Apuruṣārtha* can happen to a *jīva*. Objective Nature can have no ugliness in itself, except in a misreading of its nature by a finite mind. The misreading must be in the nature of an arrested vision, wherein there is obscuration of Nature being the embodiment of the Divine. Nature's supreme integration by the immanent Divine presence must be missed, and that it is a self-revelation of the Primordial Artist must stand provisionally annulled. Such an arrested, fragmented and partially annulled perception on the part of the finite percipient, creates the impression of objective and ontological ugliness, whose locus in reality is the percipient himself. It is a malady incidental to his finitude. With his development of God-awareness, the possibility of the perception of natural ugliness must get transcended. The proneness to ugliness is much more conspicuous in the realm of art, wherein the finite soul expresses itself. It may be egoistic, subject to the opaqueness of *tamas* and misdirection of *rajas*, and may put forth forms of aesthetic creation embodying finite meanings, depleted of all transcendent reference. Art, with no intimation of the *Paramātman* in what it depicts, would be genuine ugliness. Just as the essence of evil is the life of God-negation, and of error the apprehension of the finite divorced from the sustaining presence of God in it, even so artistic creation untouched by the Infinite is aesthetic frustration and ugliness. Sudarśana Sūri and Vedānta Deśika assert that in the liberated perception of the emancipated, evil, ugliness and all such antecedent imperfections stand

transmuted into integral elements of ecstasy.[1]

There is no such thing as 'invincible', objective ugliness, and all forms of ugliness are man's own making by virtue of his *jñāna-saṅkoca*. Redemption from this proneness and predicament is an assured possibility.

(*f*) Modern aesthetics in recent centuries makes a distinction between the beautiful and the sublime, and all reputed writers on the subject dwell on the theme. Bosanquet suggests an alternative pair of terms for the two classes of aesthetic excellence, 'easy' and 'difficult' beauty. Easy beauty is what can please aesthetically, without requiring much strain and effort on the part of the spectator, and is formed of simple forms of aesthetical quality. Difficult beauty or the sublime calls up all the mental resources of the spectator and presents spectacles of great width, intricacy and tension, producing awe as well as amazed admiration. There is no doubt that some kind of synthesis requires to be attempted, and aestheticians are not wanting who have put forth the attempt without minimizing the value of the distinction. The sublime can pass imperceptibly into what Rudolph Otto names the 'numinous', evoking fascination as well as awe. The 'numinous' is the unique category of the religious consciousness according to Otto. It is interesting to note that he considers the eleventh chapter of the *Gītā* as a magnificent presentation of the 'numinous', with all the terrors of mysterious majesty and also the basic element of attraction. In one of the Rāmānujite definitions of *bhakti*, we have a combination of both. It reads, *Mahanīyaviṣaye prītiḥ*, love directed to what is grand. The point is that the distinction between the two aesthetic qualities of beauty and sublimity is not absolute, and they can be seen in fusion in the highest mystic experience. In the Viśiṣṭādvaitic idea of the Supreme Being, there is a combination of the two ideas of *saulabhya* and *paratva*, accessibility and over-powering greatness. The two aspects of the Divine are fundamental. What cannot be easily reconciled on the purely aesthetic plane seems to be synthesized in religious experience. The *Upaniṣads* abound in paradoxical declarations of this profound intimacy and infinity of the Divine. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in His mighty self-revelation in the eleventh chapter of the *Gītā*, is pictured as having the sun and moon as His two eyes. Arjuna exclaims, *Hṛṣito'smi dṛṣṭvā bhayena ca pravyathitaṁ mano me*.[2] Rāmānuja explains the sun as signifying blazing powers, *pratāpa*, and the moon as representing *prasāda*, condescending grace. This seems to be a happy amalgamation of the two paradoxical attributes of God. The aesthetic dichotomy is resolved in Rāmānuja's idea of God and his interpretation of the *viśvarūpa*. The root of this elaboration is already contained in the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* description of the form of Viṣṇu as *śubhāśraya*.

Two types art

An aesthetic patterned on the basis of Rāmānuja's philosophy cannot but be heavily loaded with Vedāntic thought. A legitimate question arises and whether such a line of thinking leaves room for the autonomy of the aesthetic consciousness and the cult of 'Art for Art's sake', needs consideration.

Some elementary principles must be noted before the question can be properly discussed. Aesthetic experience is primarily a state of pleasure. But the pleasure is of a contemplative nature. It is pleasure arising on the contemplation of a perceived or imagined object. As it is said, it is a

1. *Śruta-prakāś'ikā* 4.10.ad.1.
Tattvamuktā-kalāpa 2.65

2. *Bhagavad-Gītā* 11.45.

'relevant pleasure' with an 'objective correlate'. Hence it stands different from pleasures of escape and pleasures accompanying the satisfaction of unaesthetic desires. In the classification of pleasures given in the *Gītā,* it comes under *sāttvika* pleasure. It is because of this *sāttvika* character that even tragic situations, depicted in literature, can be sources of aesthetic enjoyment. It affords the required 'psychic distance'. It is contemplative in the sense that it is not an action-conditioned satisfaction. The executive work of the artist is for purposes of securing a full vision of the aesthetic object, and thus subordinate to the 'full seeing'. In being contemplative, it is akin to intellectual or theoretical satisfaction. But there is a vital distinction, that its motivation is not the propounding of a true or objectively tenable view of things. It seeks a vision of the beautiful as an end in itself, be it perceptual or imaginative, with a 'willing suspension of disbelief'. The concern with truth, metaphysical or scientific, does not enter into the approach here. The fundamental interest is to contemplate on a thing of beauty, irrespective of its objective existence or otherwise. Fiction is not excluded from the realm of the aesthetic object, provided it is artistically convincing in the sense of being possible.

In this background of general aesthetics, we have to construe what would be the stand of Rāmānuja's philosophy on the autonomy of art. It is necessary to distinguish two levels of art, that which is manifestly secular, with no spiritual motivation, and that which is integrated as a factor within the practice of *bhaktī.* Something definite can be conjectured on these two levels.

(*a*) Art may be secular in conscious intention; but in so far as it depicts real beauty and sublimity, according to the general view of *vibhūti,* it must carry suggestions of the Immanent Infinite. If it is a source of real joy, as all joy flows from *Brahman,* the only source of joy according to the *Upaniṣads,* it must be in some way an unknowing experience of *Brahman.* It cannot be cut off from that fundamental principle of beauty and joy. For carrying this touch of *Brahman,* all that is required of the work of art is that it should be true to its nature and accomplish its final purpose of contemplative pleasure. It should be free art for its own sake and, by virtue of its perfection, it inevitably establishes an unintended communion with the Divine. Thus, there is no jeopardy to the maxim of 'Art for Art's sake', but still at its height of triumph such art carries a self-transcendent message.

(*b*) At the second level, art participates integrally in the wholeness of the spiritual pursuit characteristic of *bhakti.* The cognitive aspect of personality seeks the Divine through *śravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana* and *sākṣātkāra.* The volitional or active nature expresses itself in *karma-yoga* in the preliminary stages and flows into loving service called *kaiṅkarya* or *sevā* in the advanced stage. The emotional and imaginative nature takes shape as love, *prīti* and *dhyāna* filled with *prīti.* It is the last aspect that manifests itself in the aesthetic life of *bhakti.* Now, spiritual art that is the materialisation of *bhakti,* is not independent of *jñāna* and *sevā.* It cannot be brought under 'Art for Art's sake', but is art impelled by the devotional zest and contributing to the fullness of Godward endeavour. The question is whether the art-factor suffers diminution in this fusion. Does it lose its innate rapture, because it includes in itself *jñāna* and *sevā*? Does *jñāna,* in its turn, lose its truth-value because it is fused with love of God and work dedicated to God? Does righteous endeavour become less righteous, because it is governed by the understanding of God and saturated with love of God? In general, do the three ultimate values of truth, goodness and beauty lose the elements of intrinsic value posses-

sed by them in their severalty, when they enter into a process of joint realisation ? It seems to be that they could not reach their full stature when pursued in mutual isolation, as they were provisionally in their initial realisation. They acquire enhancement in this supreme synthesis. For truth to be alienated from beauty and goodness is a privation. For beauty, to rest on mere 'suspension of disbelief' and not on the certitude of authentic insight, and for it to be divorced from the life of holiness, is to lose a part of its vital substance. For goodness, not to be founded on the reality-factor and not to have the benefit of the aesthetic contemplativeness, is to be just preparatory to fuller actualisation. The conclusion may be hazarded, in the light of these considerations, that art that is spiritualised, though losing its autonomy, gains in the scale of values. Well may Vedānta Deśika spurn the mess of earthly pottage and cast aside trivial themes and opt for the inexhaustible riches of God. Good art may flourish in its autonomy, but great art finds its fulfilment in what is more than mere art.

Theory of rasa in Viśiṣṭādvaita

The poetic theory of *Rasa* seems to be favouring a kind of pseudo-Advaitism for a long time, and some critical clarification in the light of Rāmānuja's thought needs to be made on the subject. The theory is founded on Bharata's treatise on Dramatics. It describes eight fundamental emotional propensities of man and depicts how these evolve into eight enjoyable states of emotion, called *rasa,* in the spectators of drama. These emotions are evoked by the appropriate objects, *vibhāvas,* presented in an idealised manner (*alaukika*) on the stage with all the accessory and associated factors. Vedānta Deśika points out in his *Nyāya-siddhāñjana* that the basic emotional potentialities, *sthāyibhāvas,* are all forms of *dharma-bhūta-jñāna,* consciousness adjectival to the self, and are not a bundle of distinct faculties. He also asserts that the list is not complete as it does not provide for *śānta-rasa,* the enjoyment at the spectacle of a spiritual life. That such a life is not one of inert quietude but an active exercise of Godward energy, renders it suitable for dramatic reproduction.[3] The locus of the *rasa,* the aestheic delight, is certainly the spectator, and it lies in an imaginative 'empathy' with the feelings represented in the play on the stage. The spectator's emotional identification with the feelings displayed in his state of *sattva,* overcoming inertia and ego-centric preoccupations does bring out the final aesthetic joy. These are the well-known tenets of the *Rasa*-theory.

It is to be remarked that the identity of the feeling of the spectator with what is depicted by the actor and with that of the poet and even of the character presented, does not lead to *Advaita.* The aesthetic object, *vibhāva,* is there in the dramatic presentation, and no identification with it is required or posited. It is only identification with the feelings it evokes that is involved in the enjoyment of *rasa.* No fusion of the subject and object is there in the experience. There is just a duplication of the feelings arising in reaction to the object in the poet, the character, the actor and the spectator. Such a community of feeling is actually invoked by Vedānta Deśika in explanation of the *bhogasāmya* between the *jivātman* and *Paramātman,* in the stage of *mokṣa,* in spite of the distinction between the two in that *jagadvyāpāra* is uniquely characteristic of the Supreme *Ātman.*[4] The *vibhāva,* the aesthetic object, stands in undiminished objectivity, on which rests securely the unfoldment of the subject's *sthāyibhāva* into

3. See also his *Sankalpa-sūryodaya,* Kanchipuram edition, 10.4.

4. Cf. *Virodha-parihāra,* Kanchipuram edition, p. 382.

the *rasa*-state. Jagannātha regrets this necessity for an objective support for *rasa*, but for which *rasānubhava* would be straightaway the same as *Brahmānubhava* of the Advaitic School.

Neither the subject of *rasa*, nor its object, is lost in the other. There is just a unification of the emotions of the subject in response to the object. This is all that seems to be the essential fact of the situation according to the *Rasa* theory. It stands incorporated in the Viśiṣṭādvaitic theory in the hands of masters like Vedānta Deśika.

Something more can be naturally said from Rāmānuja's standpoint on the subject-object relation in the stage of joy or *ānanda* of which aesthetic experience is a good instance. In the *Bhūmādhikaraṇa* of the *Śribhāṣya*, (1. 3. 7–8) the related *Chāndogya* (VII) passage is interpreted as representing the joy arising in the experience of the all-inclusive Infinite. The passage does not signify for Rāmānuja the elimination of the object, nor is it understood as propounding the joyous nature of the subject resting in itself, bereft of the object. In the same way, the *Daharādhikaraṇa* (1. 3. 13-22) speaks of the individual subject as growing into its fullness of natural splendour on its approach to *Brahman*, the Supreme Light. Thus, the subject too remains in the supreme experience. Rather, it attains in it to the fullness of its individual stature. Only pleasure of a *tāmasa* kind induces self-oblivion, as Sudarśana Sūri remarks.[5] The *Ānandamayādhikaraṇa* (1. 1. 13-20) has a strong and categorical pronouncement on the issue of the difference or identity between the subject and object in the state of *ānanda* : *Yallābhāt yaḥ ānandi bhavati, sa sa eveti anunmattaḥ ko bravīti* ? (Who but a mad man will say that by attaining whichever being whoever becomes blissful, —he is himself that same blissful being ?)[6]

There is one necessary addition to be made. The *jīva* who meditates on *Brahman* must not look upon his object of adoration as outside his self, but as located in the interior of his own spiritual personality. This is brought out well in the *Śribhāṣya* (4. 1. *Adhi.* 2). Again, in the state of *mokṣa*, he is said to realise the Divine Infinite as immanent in his own soul (4. 4. *Adhi.* 2). These fundamental propositions must govern our understanding of the subject-object relation in the experience of aesthetic joy. The reality of the individual subject, the reality of the Supreme Object and Its determining immanence in the former are the three relevant aspect of the highest state of *ānanda.*

(*Concluded*)

5. *Śruta-prakāś'ikā* 4.1.1.
6. *Śrībhāṣya* 1.1.20.

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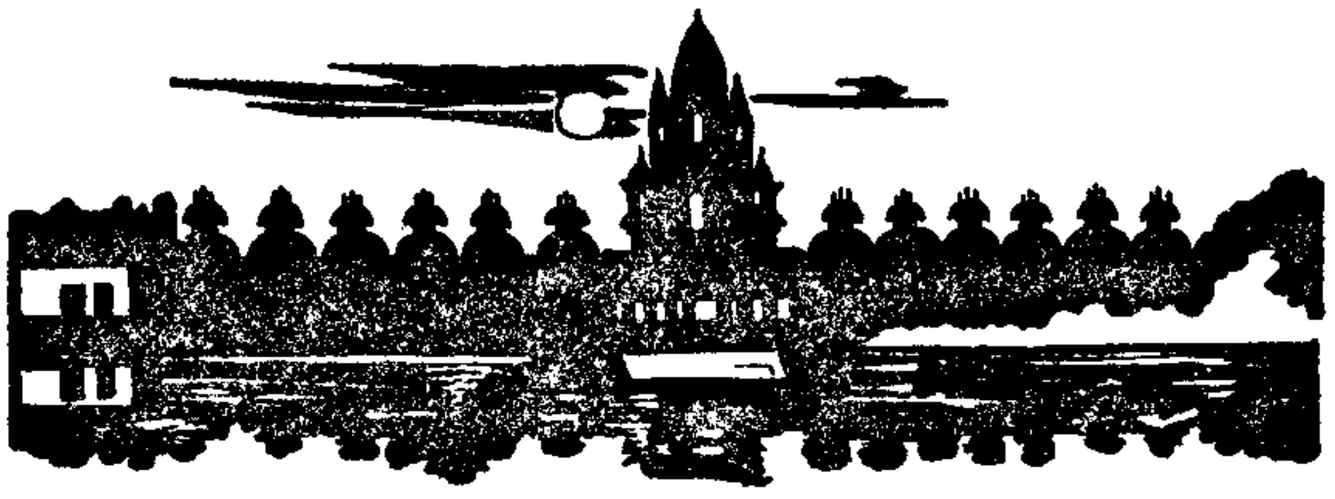

INSIGHT AND MANIFESTATION: A WAY OF PRAYER IN A CHRISTIAN CONTEXT—I

Dr. BEATRICE BRUTEAU

One of the most popular and general definitions of prayer is that it is a 'lifting of the mind and heart to God'. But perhaps we may also say that it is a matter of coming to know and to coincide with, or to play one's full role in, The Reality. Even though I am going to describe one particular way of prayer in one particular context, I feel it is valuable to situate the discussion in the widest context that still seems relevant. And in the present case I am interested not to be bound to the dualism implicit in theism or to a purely internal and subjective exercise of only the mental and affective faculties.

I like to think that prayer involves *all* our faculties, directed toward the *whole* of Reality and the *totality* of meaning: all of me toward and in all of It. This will mean that prayer includes expression and action (manifestation) as well as interiorization and transcendence (insight). The way in which these seemingly opposed motions are reconciled will also, I hope, help us to overcome a division of prayer attitudes into those which are dualistic and those which are nondualistic.

Prayer 'in a Christian context' is prayer that has something to do with Jesus: either he is the object of it, or the example of it, or in some other way he mediates or enables it. In fact, I will argue, the theology which identifies Jesus as Logos Incarnate gives us a very good base from which to develop a description of prayer mediated through him as both insight and manifestation.

The Logos, or Word of God, is the single unitary principle (the 'only begotten Son') through which the Absolute One (the 'Father') expresses or manifests itself in the world.[1] It is therefore also the single and unitary principle through which realization of the One can be attained[2] and through which alone participation in the divine manifestation is possible.[3]

Thus the Logos is the Mediator, or Interface, between the Absolute One to which insight aspires and the universal flux of the Many in which the One is manifest in the world. It is the will of the One to manifest itself through the Many, and it is the will of the Many to gain insight into the One. The Logos is the 'level' of Reality on

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1. 'All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.' John 1:3. 'No one has seen God at any time; but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has manifested him.' John 1:18.

2. 'No one comes to the Father but by me.' John 14:6.

3. 'He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.' John 15:5,

which this insight takes place and from which this manifestation originates. The meaning of Christian prayer, therefore, according to this line of thought, is to realize oneself as situated, or 'located', on the level of the Logos Interface, or put in traditional mystic terms, to be united with the Son of God.

That the Logos should be available to us incarnate as a human being[4] gives the prayer a concrete starting point which lies within the capacity of anyone. The one who prays may thus begin in an everyday person-to-person dualistic fashion by relating to this human being who incarnates the Logos principle. But by pursuing and pressing this relationship, one will enter more and more intimately into the interior reality of the Incarnate Logos ; and eventually, in order to fulfill the desire of the dualistic relationship really to know and to be bonded to that Person, one will have to enter so completely into the interior movements of that Person that the last stage of the relationship will take on the character of a nondualistic state. And ultimately the one who prays will be obliged, by the fulfillment of the desire for insight, to join in the activity of manifestation which is the essential occupation of the Logos.

This is, in summary outline, the idea that I propose to set forth here as a way of prayer in a Christian context. I should like to emphasize that it is 'a' way and by no means 'the' way. And it is only 'in a Christian context', not definitively 'Christian prayer'. Christianity has been a dogmatic and authoritarian religion, judging rigorously whether statements made in its name are true to its conception of itself. What follows does not pretend to be authoritative in this sense or to be concerned to accommodate itself to any system of authority that claims to speak for the Christian religion. It is simply a way of looking at the experiences that some people have in prayer, and it may therefore be useful to others.

Both Insight and Manifestation

'Insight' refers to those experiences in which I the subject see or understand or love an object. In the strong sense it means that I *see into* the inmost reality of the object, know the deepest truth of it. I am no longer ignorant or blind with respect to it. I know it ; I have spiritually assimilated its reality.

In the case of the life of prayer, 'insight' refers to the goal that is expressed as 'knowing and loving God' or 'seeing the truth' or 'being enlightened' or 'realizing the Ultimate'. The journey to Insight is often regarded as a passage from the unreal to the Real, from Samsara to Nirvana, from the Many to the One.

'Manifestation', on the other hand, bespeaks a movement in the opposite direction. The subject has the experience of being the author and origin of some reality and projecting it outward. If 'truth' is the adequation of thought and thing, this can be brought about either by making the thought match the thing, which is the case in knowledge or insight, or by making the thing match the thought, which is the case in creation, or manifestation. One who manifests coincides with the reality that one is and expresses this reality (by action, image, imitation, symbol, etc.) outwardly in the environment. It is a movement from the One to the Many, from the general to the particular, from the Absolute to the relative, from the formless to the formed or from the Form to the embodiment.

Now, it seems to me that very often the spiritual life, where it is studied as the mystical life, as distinguished from the moral or religious life (concerned with

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4. 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.' John 1:14.

creed, code, and cult), has been presented as a matter only of attaining insight. All our efforts are directed to leaving this multiform world and cleaving to the One God.

But once one is so united with God, then what? Usually this is considered the end of the story: the prince and princess are wed and live happily ever after. However, Sri Aurobindo criticized Sankaracharya for taking this attitude, saying that he had told only half the story. And I have heard that Swami Brahmananda said that 'spiritual life *begins* with samadhi'.[5] In a Christian context one would say, if one is united with God, then one must do what God does, and what God does is be endlessly self-expressive (as well as self-uniting) in the Trinity, and create the world (worlds).

We have to bear in mind that 'world' is a variable. The 'world' that God/we will create when we coincide with the deeper levels of our reality will not be the same as the world that we abandoned in order to find God. It will not be the same even though we do go back to hewing wood and drawing water in the realization that Nirvana is Samsara, because this realization will have completely changed our perception of it. And within the confines of the relative, finite, changing world, we may well do quite creative things, making the everyday world different even in our usual sense of the word. In fact, this creative relation to the world, I will say, is a central factor in the prayer that takes place 'in or through Jesus'.

The 'way of prayer' offered here, therefore, will suggest that both the insight movement and the manifestation movement are intrinsic to the prayer activity and that they are joined in the experience of union with Jesus. The insight movement leads into the reality of Jesus which turns out to be the creative action of manifestation.

The Way of Insight

People who first begin to pray in some relation to Jesus frequently start off by asking something of him. They begin with the prayer of *petition*. In the Gospel stories we see many instances of this. People bring their problems, their needs, and beseech Jesus to do something about them. Sometimes when they have gotten what they asked, they simply go off again about their own affairs without so much as a thank-you.[6]

The point is that the one who prays is more interested in getting the job done than interested in Jesus. Jesus comes into it as the one who does the job. Even if one is grateful, the consciousness may still be centered in the sense of personal need and personal gratification, the local-self experience being so intense that it is not possible to be very aware of any other perspective or larger field of meaning.[7]

But sometimes also those who have had their petitions granted find that their attention moves from their private concern to a sense of awe in the presence of anyone

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5. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Vol II Part I, chap. VI: 'Reality and the Cosmic Illusion.' (There are various editions, with different paginations, all available from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.)

'Sri Ramakrishna has shown us a higher state than nirvikalpa samādhi; and Maharaj said that spiritual life *begins* with nirvikalpa samādhi.' Reported to the writer, from a monastic diary of conversations with Swami Prabhavananda, 1950.

6. The story of the cleansing of the ten lepers, only one of whom came back to give thanks, beginning at Luke 17:12.

7. (After the feeding of the five thousand) 'Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs, but becanse you ate your fill of the loaves."' John 6:26.

who can do such great deeds.[8] Part of the interest in the one who prays, at this stage, is a sort of curiosity or fascination for an experience of another kind of reality.

This can lead to a more serious interest in Jesus and what we may call the prayer of *appreciation.* (We should not be too rigid about lining up stages and putting the life of prayer in a certain sequence. I am doing it this way in order to develop a sense of a gradually increasing penetration into the interiority of Jesus in its dynamic and personal reality.) In this prayer, the one who prays does not have some third-party job on hand, but only looks at Jesus for himself, to study and value his qualities. One does have in mind, however, to try to imitate these qualities, to try to gain similar goods for oneself. In this sense the focus is still on improving the one who prays, and Jesus is the means to this end.

What one does in this prayer is to observe Jesus carefully, study his character and action, situation and motivation, compare these with one's own situation and character with a view to making appropriate alterations in oneself. The prayer may take the form of asking 'What would Jesus do in a case like this?' or after reviewing some work of Jesus, asking 'How can I do likewise in my life?' One analyzes, tries to get a new point of view on one's life which can encourage a different attitude and outlook, and then one makes resolutions for practical action. As a follow-up, one examines oneself with respect to the resolutions and in general tries to train and discipline oneself to imitate the behaviour and the implied motivations of Jesus.[9]

This type of prayer obliges one to look very intently at Jesus, and at some point one may be distracted from one's original intention of using Jesus as a model for improving oneself and just be caught by the beauty of Jesus himself. The consciousness will forget to be concerned about itself and will be lost in admiration and joy. But Jesus is still only an object of contemplation. It is, so to speak, his picture that one looks at. He does not look back. He is thought about, but he himself is absent. In petition one had addressed oneself *to* Jesus, but one had not been really interested in *him* but only in what he could do for one. Now there is more interest in Jesus for himself but one considers him only in the third person : one says 'he is thus and so' *about* him.

The important movement from this stage is again to speak directly *to* Jesus, in the second person, saying 'you'. Jesus himself is now present. But this time one speaks *to* Jesus *about* Jesus—and about oneself in the context of a developing personal relationship. What one focuses on is the relationship itself, the growing friendship. Friends talk to each other. This is the prayer of *dialogue.*

The one who prays may speak about what was done in the previous prayer of appreciation and will note the extraordinary shift in consciousness that takes place when one moves from contemplating the beauty of a picture to communicating face to face with that beauty in person. One begins by speaking about these subjects but soon discovers that this is only 'background music' for what is really going on, which is the sense of being in living contact with Jesus. Nothing that one can talk *about* is anywhere near

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8. (After the calming of the storm at sea) 'the men marvelled, saying. "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"' Matthew 8:27.

9. (After the story of the Good Samaritan) 'Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."' Luke 10:37. After washing his disciples' feet, Jesus said, 'I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done.' John 13:15. In the Last Discourse, Jesus said, 'I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.' John 14:31.

comparable in interest and importance to *the fact of* this contact and intercommunication.[10] And so in a sense it doesn't matter what one talks of, since this is not the point. One is not trying to get answers or solutions to problems. One is experiencing *being* in a new way.

Two things happen at this point. The one who prays of course sees deeper into Jesus. This is quite different from looking at his picture, studying reports about him, analyzing his qualities, reasoning about them, and trying to draw lessons from them. The living reality of any person is always incomparably richer than any of the behaviour products that can be reported of that person. Furthermore, when one is engaged in a person-to-person relationship, the intercommunication itself is a living reality and is experienced in the moment as a living reality. There is living, energy-filled reality in it, moving both ways between the two persons.

Therefore, the second thing that happens is that Jesus sees deeper into the one who prays and addresses himself to that deeper level, awakening the realization of it in the one whom he addresses. Because Jesus speaks to a certain reality in the one who prays, that reality comes to life,[11] comes to self-consciousness and actuality. One becomes larger, and there is a release of new energy.

This is the first warning shock of what is to come, of the transformation of our self-consciousness and our world-consciousness that will be the consequence of intercourse with the consciousness of Jesus. But at this stage we may think that it only means that we are finding our 'real self' as a finer and more rounded and secure personality than we had previously expressed or experienced. We feel that our individual selfhood has somehow matured and come into its own. Our description of ourself has changed. We feel 'forgiven', 'saved'. We do not yet suspect that the whole idea of there being any description of our selfhood at all will be wiped out, and indeed that the very notion of 'individual self' will undergo a radical metamorphosis. We are very aware of the duality in the relationship and we enjoy it. The pleasure comes from the sense of the other being *other* and affirming us from his position of otherness.

Now it is necessary to press the advantage, not to relax. One must push deeper and deeper into Jesus and let him illuminate deeper and deeper levels of reality within oneself. Very strange things begin to happen as this effort progresses. The outward human personality of Jesus expands and fades as one enters more into the interior of his consciousness, and a complementary transformation takes place also in oneself as in a mirror image. What one *is* transcends what one does or what one says or what descriptive traits and qualities one has. In this stage, which we may call the prayer of *intimacy*, what Jesus *is* communes directly with what one *is*, passing through and beyond the mediation of either's behaviour or descriptive qualities. As the descriptions melt and evaporate before the burning radiance of each person's central reality, so the words that would capture those descriptions fail and silence super-

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10. The story of the appearance of the Risen Jesus to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus: 'They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road...?"'

11. The raising of Jairus' daughter: 'Taking her by the hand he said to her,..."Little girl. I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up....And he...told them to give her something to eat.' Mark 5:41-43. The raising of Lazarus: '(Jesus) cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The dead man came out, ...bound with bandages....Jesus said to them, "Unbind him and let him go."' John 11:43-44. In applying these stories to our prayer life, we may as well take note of the instructions to unbind and to feed the new life.

venes. The two luminosities gradually grow together.

One can no longer be said to be 'looking at' Jesus, as though he had a surface from which light was reflected. One has looked right *into* him as he has looked into oneself. And looking at/into him in order to understand him, one is regarding his living consciousness. But the only way to 'regard' a living consciousness is to be conscious of what it is conscious of. The one who prays discovers that what is happening is that one is actually looking up to God the Father and out on the world through the Consciousness of Jesus.

This is not the same as the exercise one did in the stage of studying Jesus and trying to figure out what he thought about a situation. It is not 'as if'. It is the experience of being admitted into a personal world, as though one had asked 'Where do you live?' and the other had answered, 'Come and see'.[12] One sees the other 'at home', and gets a sense of the rhythms, the atmosphere, the vital core of the other. But the only way one gets a sense of these rhythms is by getting into the rhythms oneself. One feels that Jesus and one are somehow yoked together and move as a single unit.[13] The act of praying at this stage is no longer bounded by any demarcated time of prayer. Every moment of living is praying, because praying is living—one sharing the life of Jesus and Jesus sharing one's life, like two lives that have flowed together, or one life in two persons.[14] There is no satisfactory way of saying it, but it seems perfectly clear in the experience.

Where is the 'individual self' now? There is no way to answer, because the question no longer makes sense. One could say that it has been surrendered to the Divine, or has merged into the Ultimate Reality, or that it is fulfilled in being united to its lover. But to anyone who still experiences the individual self as being the self, the real self, and the only self, any such account will sound like destruction of one's essential being. What has happened is that one has shifted what one means by 'myself'. It had been going on gradually ever since the dialogue began, and one had had steadily to deepen and expand one's sense of selfhood to match the depth and vastness one was discovering in Jesus and which he was evoking in one. We had thought that selfhood *was* the quintessence of individuation; now it appears that selfhood cannot be individuated in the sense of excluding other selves. On the contrary, this entering into, and sharing the consciousness of, another self is the most characteristic act of a self.

Dualism has passed over into nondualism, by the very intensity of its own dualistic energy. By desiring the other more and more, one was obliged ultimately to enter into the very life of the other. In order to know his mind and his will, so that one might love him the better, one had to be 'entrained' by the rhythmic pattern of his mind, his will; one had to be 'in phase' with him. It was not that one had to think about the 'same object or have the same opinions or views, or that one had to will the same event. Rather, one's *activity* of seeing, thinking, feeling, willing was united with his *activity*; the dynamisms are united and synchronized.

And so finally one comes into the prayer of *coincidence*, in which it is not even a question of seeing the world through the consciousness of Jesus but of experiencing Jesus' consciousness of himself. If one is really going to unite with the person one loves, one must become vividly aware of that person's sense of identity, the most intimate thing about him.

Jesus experiences himself as the Son of

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12. The story of the first meeting of Jesus and two of his disciples. John 1:38-39.

13. 'Take my yoke upon you.' Matthew 11:29.

14. 'In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.' John 14:20.

God, the perfectly obedient one,[15] the beloved one,[16] the very image of the Ultimate,[17] with whom indeed he is one.[18] It is the interior of this experience that is thrown open to the one who prays. But in order to become properly conscious of this, the one who prays must be conscious of it *from the inside*, and there is no way to do this except by experiencing it as being true of oneself. Perhaps it was this experience that provoked St. John of the Cross to exclaim :

> Let us rejoice, beloved, and let us go forth to behold ourselves in your beauty...that I may resemble you in your beauty and you resemble me in your beauty, and my beauty may be your beauty and your beauty my beauty; wherefore I shall be you in your beauty, and you will be me in your beauty, because your beauty will be my beauty; and therefore we shall behold each other in your beauty.[19]

I think we should notice that in some of these clauses St. John speaks as though there is a distinction between the beloved and himself, and in some of them he speaks as though there is not a distinction. He surely does this because both experiences are true; and if this does not square with our logic, it is because our former method of conceiving distinction is no longer applicable to such an experience.

We have been accustomed to distinguish among things that are objects for our consciousness, and to distinguish any object of our consciousness from our consciousness itself. But now it is a question of distinguishing two consciousnesses both of which are operating as *subjects*. It is essential to stress that in this experience, the one who prays does not experience the consciousness of the beloved as an object. The whole point of the experience—and the reason why it is not dualistic in the usual sense of that term —is precisely that the consciousness of the beloved is experienced somehow from the inside, that is, *from the subject side*, not as an object.

The experience may, for instance, feel like this : One seems to become aware of the Divine Consciousness, as incarnate in Jesus, as if one is experiencing the consciousness as one's own, and yet be very aware that the acts of that consciousness are far greater than those customary to 'one's own' consciousness. One may experience the Divine Will, say, in its intention to heal, and be astonished at its strength. One may have an impression of a great wind, or a huge ocean wave, or of some enormous irresistible force. But that force, the Will, is not experienced as directed toward oneself—one is not the object of the Will—but rather, one feels the Will *move* through one's own consciousness so that one feels what it feels like to will so mightily. One experiences it as if one is *doing* the willing, and yet one is amazed and overwhelmed by the supernatural power of the Will.[20]

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15. 'I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.' John 15:10. 'I always do what is pleasing to him.' John 8:29.

16. The voice heard at Jesus' baptism: 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.' Matthew 3:17.

17. 'He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?' John 14:9.

18. 'I and the Father are one.' John 10:30.

19. St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, stanza 36.

20. 'The mystic experience ends with the words, "I live yet not I, but God in me," (cf. Galatians 2:20). This feeling of identification, which is the term of mystical activity, has a very important significance. In its early stages the mystic consciousness feels the Absolute in opposition to the Self...as mystic activity goes on, it tends to abolish this opposition. ...When it has reached its term the consciousness finds itself possessed by the sense of a Being at one and the same time greater than the Self and identical with it: great enough to be God, intimate enough to be me.' E. Recejac, *Essai sur les fondements de la Connaissance Mystique*

Complex, or Trinitarian, Nondualism

This type of nondualistic experience is not the same as discovering that there is only one subject in existence, that the whole world has collapsed into a single consciousness, and that we had been mistaken when we had believed that there were many beings. It is neither simple dualism nor simplistic monism. It is an experiential realization of the complex nondualism that is characteristic of personal communion.

In our dualistic moments, we have used images of exclusion, mutual exteriority, and incommunicability to secure our intuition of the independence of the self as agent and to protect ourselves against the insanity of solipsism. In our monistic moments, on the other hand, we have realized that exclusion, incommunicability, and mutual exteriority are false, and we may have concluded that there cannot be more than one real agent. The doctrine of complex unity holds, as against both of these, that a plurality of autonomous agents exist who perfectly indwell one another, and further, that this is *necessary*—both the plurality and the indwelling—because of the nature of selfhood.

It is not necessary for beings to be mutually exterior and incommunicable in order to be autonomous. This is necessary only if the beings are defined by attributes that they possess and by which alone they can be distinguished one from another. If the autonomy is vested rather in the initiative of action rooted in the existential reality of the being, then there can be distinction togêther with mutual interiority and full communion. But only a personal being—i.e. a reflexively conscious *self*—can fulfill this requirement, can really be an initiator, an author of action. Subpersonal beings act as parts of cycles or loops of feedback reactions with their environments. A good deal of human behaviour is obviously of this kind, also, but the person, *qua* person, is *capable* of an authoritative act, an act that begins in the person and is not a re-action to an act begun elsewhere.

Persons, therefore, can be both autonomous and mutually indwelling. But, it must also be argued, *person* is not only the kind of being which can do this, it is the kind of being which characteristically does do this, and in fact must do this if it is really to be a person.

The insight discovery, then, of this line of prayer experience is that Ultimate Reality is not of the nature of any kind of object, that is, it is not anything that can possibly be an object for an observing consciousness (God is invisible). It is rather of the nature of selfhood (Brahman is Atman), i.e. the interior realization of one's existence as subject.

'Subject,' of course, is that which does have awareness of 'objects'. But the highest 'object' of which a subject can be aware is another subject like itself. And the only way to bring this awareness to perfection, as outlined in the stages of prayer described above, is to be aware of it as it is aware of itself. This suggests that subjective awareness of objects is a diminished representation of the fullness of subjective being, which is perfect indwelling of another subjectivity. So, if any being's characteristic nature, or essential being, is defined by its highest activity, then a conscious subject is one which is conscious of conscious subjects precisely as subjects.

If this argument has any merit, perhaps it could be applied to the Trinity, and we could say that the Divine Persons are each aware of each subject consciousness in the Godhead. Within the Trinity, there is no object : no Person is outside any other Person. This complete interior coincidence of the Persons is expressed by saying that

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(Paris, 1897). translation by S. C. Upton, *Essay on the Bases of the Mystic Knowledge* (London, 1899), p. 45. quoted by Evelyn Underhill in *Mysticism* (New York: Dutton paperback, p. 82).

the Godhead is only one. But that each Person knows and loves each other Person is also true, and for that they must be in some manner distinct. This distinction arises from the existential reality of the autonomous acts of knowing and loving which also constitute the unity. So the plurality and the unity are both referred to the same act, and that act is characteristic of the highest conscious selfhood. If Ultimate Reality is of the nature of selfhood, then because of the nature of selfhood, it must be a complex unity of this sort.

When the one who prays, therefore, is united with the beloved but not simply collapsed into a realization that there never was anything except that one being, this distinction is not due to a distance between Creator and creature but is the same kind of distinction that prevails inside the Godhead itself. The one who prays is no more separated from God than any one of the Persons of the Godhead is separated from the others. And similarly, the one who prays—in the highest union—is united with all the Divine Persons as they are united with one another.[21]

(To be concluded)

21. '...even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us.' John 17:21.

TWO VṚNDĀVANA GOSVĀMINS: RAGHUNĀTHA-DĀSA AND RAGHUNĀTHA BHATTA

PROF. RANJIT KUMAR ACHARJEE

Bengal Vaiṣṇavism derives much of its strength and vitality from the devotional and theological literature developed by the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins. But all the six Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins had not contributed in equal measure towards the formulation and enrichment of the metaphysics, practice and social codes of Vaiṣṇavism. It is well-known that the doctrinal basis of the sect was founded principally by Sanātana, Rūpa and Jīva. Among these three Gosvāmins, Sanātana and Rūpa developed the theory of of *rasa* and brought the basic tenets of Vaiṣṇava theology within the conceptual framework of Caitanyaism, and Jiva strengthened the philosophical foundation of this school. Gopāla Bhatta is believed to have codified Vaiṣṇava ritualism. The remaining two Gosvāmins, Raghunātha-dāsa and Raghunātha Bhatta, are equally held in high esteem and reverence as teachers, not so much for their scholastic pursuits or profundity of thought, for they did not write much, but solely for their austerity and modesty, passionate devotion and saintly character. They practised what Caitanya taught, and thus set personal examples worthy of emulation by all those who are interested in the spiritual quest, in accordance with the ideals of Caitanyaism in particular.

Raghunātha-dāsa

Raghunātha-dāsa's life presents a shining example of the renunciation of worldly wealth, power and fortune for the sake of spiritual advancement. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth in a *kāyastha* family of Saptagrām in the district of Hooghly (West Bengal), from his boyhood he showed no inclination to a life of ease, luxury and sensuous enjoyment. He was the only son of Govardhan Majumdar, a rich landlord of

Saptagrām who enjoyed a princely income of twelve lakhs of rupees per annum. Though the exact date of birth of Raghunāth-dāsa is not known, old records indicate that he was certainly a junior contemporary of Śri Caitanya. (1486-1533 A.D.) Raghunātha received the close attention and affection of all the members of his family, as he was the only son in a wealthy joint-family of two brothers; Govardhan and elder Hiranya. He was brought up in an environment of plenty and luxury but strangely enough, Raghunātha, who was the only heir to the vast fortune, showed clear and unmistakable inclinations towards religious life and practices from his very boyhood. Evidently this proved disquieting to his parents and uncle. His innate religious tendencies were enkindled and intensified when he came into close contact with the pious and highly spiritual personality of Saint Haridāsa at Saptagrām. Raghunātha was greatly impressed by the saintly character and spiritually powerful personality of Haridāsa which aroused his dormant desire for asceticism and renunciation. He had the opportunity of serving Haridāsa with all sincerity and devotion. Haridāsa blessed him heartily.

With the passage of time, his strong inner urge for leading a pious life showed no sign of retardation. On the contrary, it deepened and intensified. Naturally this made his father apprehensive and he tried the time-old technique for distracting him by arranging his marriage with a charming young girl at a comparatively young age of seventeen. But this produced no perceptible effect in Raghunātha's attitude to life. Caitanya embraced sannyasa in the year 1510 A.D. He was being hailed as a great emancipator of mankind, and people in large numbers turned to his 'religion of love' for solace and peace. Raghunātha came to know all about it and felt a passionate longing to have the pious company of Caitanya. Caitanya paid a visit to the venerable Advaita's house at Sāntipur. In his eagerness to meet Caitanya, Raghunātha left for Sāntipur. Advaitācārya knew young Raghunātha well and was aware of his devotional and ascetic temperament. Advaita received him with all affection and love. Raghunātha's long-cherished desire was fulfilled; he obtained Caitanya's affection and blessing. Again on the occasion of Caitanya's visit to Sāntipur on his way to Rāmakeli, Raghunātha met Caitanya for the second time and expressed his desire to renounce the worldly life and also to accompany him to Puri. Caitanya, however, forbade him not to do so at that moment, for he realized that the time for his renunciation had not yet ripened. On the contrary, Caitanya advised him to perform all the obligatory family and social duties in a disinterested manner and assured him that at the appropriate moment he would certainly obtain the grace of Kṛṣna.[1]

Raghunātha returned home as a radically changed man and he found it difficult to resume his normal household duties. His paternal residence appeared to be a dungeon to him, and he made several attempts to escape from it which were, however, foiled by the guards engaged by his apprehensive father. Raghunātha realized that Nityānanda's approval and blessing might make his spiritual quest fruitful. His meeting with Nityānanda at Pānihāti, a place not far off from Calcutta, stimulated his spiritual longings considerably. A significant as well as interesting event occurred during this meeting which is still commemorated by the devout Vaiṣṇavas through an annual festival called *Daṇḍamahotsava*.[2] A detailed

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1. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja: *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*. Madhyalīlā-Chapter 16. Edited by Harekrishna Mukhopadhyaya & S. C. Majumdar. (Calcutta: Dev sahitya Kutir. 1979) P. 514.

2. Sri Ramakrishna attended this festival at Panihati several times, and the *Kathāmṛta* (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) gives a vivid account of the Master's ecstatic participation in it.

account of it has been given in the *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta,* Antya-lilā, chapter VI. Perceiving Raghunātha's latent desire for ascetic life while outwardly engaged in matters mundane, Nityānanda laughingly called him a 'deceiver', and ordered him to feed all the assembled Vaiṣṇavas, as a 'punishment'. Evidently this 'punishment' was a boon to young Raghunātha. He arranged a sumptuous feast and distributed huge sums of money to the Vaiṣṇavas present on that occasion. It is said that people hailing from different classes of the society participated in the function which virtually turned into an inter-community feast. Many modern scholars suggest that by arranging such an inter-community feast Nityānanda took a most daring step in the caste-ridden, conservative society of Bengal. He sought to demolish the caste barriers especially in religious matters so as to usher in an era of social equality and brotherhood. This can well be considered to be the most significant contribution of Nityānanda to the Caitanya Movement.[3] *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* further states that Raghunātha-dāsa begged for Nityānanda's blessings so that he might attain the grace of Caitanya—a long-cherished dream he had nourished from boyhood. Nityānanda was really overwhelmed by the rare modesty and purity of his character and also by the sincerity of his purpose and singlemindedness in his devotion. He alongwith the other Vaiṣṇavas present there wholeheartedly wished the speedy fulfilment of his intense desire.[4]

Raghunātha returned home thereafter. But the pangs of the separation from his dear Master, Sri Caitanya was too much for him to bear, and he was constantly seeking a suitable opportunity to free himself from the vile servitude to the domestic life. Apprehending his possible escape, his father tightened the security measures. His movements were restricted and he was virtually made a prisoner in his own house. But as the divine dispensation would have it, one day the opportunity came and he escaped the vigilance of his apprehensive father, renouncing, as Kṛṣnadāsa Kavirāja informs us, wealth befitting Indra and his *apsarā*-like wife. His desire for meeting Caitanya was so deep and intense that he cared not a bit for the hardships of such a long journey on foot. He avoided the main public thoroughfare for fear of being noticed by those known to him or to his father. Bearing all sorts of physical hardships, thirst, hunger and sleeplessness, Raghunātha reached the holy town of Puri after twelve days and offered himself as a flower at the feet of Śrī Caitanya. Needless to mention, he was warmly welcomed by Caitanya and immediately admitted into the community of his intimate associates. Svarūpa Dāmodara, a close associate of Caitanya at Puri and well-versed in Vaiṣṇva theory and practice, was entrusted with the task of imparting appropriate religious training to him.

Raghunātha-dāsa epitomized modesty and sincerity, and his inclination towards asceticism was undoubtedly keen and deep. After some days, he started begging alms in front of the main gate of Jagannātha temple which also enabled him to have glimpses of Lord Jagannātha. All the while, he went on reciting devotedly the Lord's name. In a short time he learnt Vaiṣṇava theology and the fundamentals of Vaiṣṇava discipline under the able guidance of Svarūpa Dāmodara. But in order to have the Master's own instructions on religious practices, Raghunātha once entreated Caitanya, through Svarūpa Dāmodara, to enlighten and advise him the right course of spiritual advancement. In reply Caitanya said that in addition to what had been

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3. G. S. Roychoudhury: *Śrī Caitanyadeva O Tāhār Pārṣadgaṇa* (Bengali). (Calcutta: Calcutta University. 1957) pp. 90-93.

4. *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*: Antya-lilā. Chapter vi. P. 530.

taught, he should bear in mind the following cardinal maxims :

'Listen not to distracting words about worldly matters, nor participate in such a conversation. Take not rich, delicious food pleasant to the tongue, nor wear costly and attractive garments. Respect the persons who are to be respected. And recite Kṛṣṇa's holy name without any interruption. In remembrance, worship and offer obeisance to Rādha-Kṛṣṇa as if you were in Vraja (Vṛndāvana).'[5] In essence, this is what had been taught in Caitanya's own beautiful poem *Śikṣāṣṭaka*— a collection of eight Sanskrit verses containing his simple and passionate faith.

As days passed by, Raghunātha's tendency towards extreme austerity and asceticism intensified and inflamed, and he endeavoured to translate Caitanya's teachings into practice. He gave up begging at the temple gate, as he felt that it had not been heartily approved by Caitanya. Also giving up the practice of begging from door to door, Raghunātha collected rotten and decomposed residues of prasāda (food offered to Lord Jagannātha) from the drains and took them with a little salt, and that too only once a day. Being moved by his extraordinary austerity and exemplary asceticism, Caitanya blessed him and made a gift of a *Govardhana-śilā*, a dark-coloured stone used as a symbol of Kṛṣṇa which he himself had worshipped, and a *gunja-mālā* (rosary) which he himself had used for his Japa on Kṛṣṇa. Raghunātha realized the spiritual significance of the gifts, and throughout his life he worshipped the *Govardhana-śilā* with elaborate service and unflinching devotion. He had the privilege of serving Caitanya for sixteen long years as his close attendant and of observing the depth, beauty and sublimity of Caitanya-*līlā* at close quarters. During the last twelve years of his life, Caitanya spent his days in an ecstatic state of divine inebriation (*premonmāda*) and became incapable of taking care of himself. Svarūpa Dāmodara, Raghunātha-dāsa and other intimate disciples took care of the Master with loving solicitude.

After the passing away of Caitanya and Svarūpa Dāmodara, Raghunātha-dāsa left Puri for Vṛndavana where he joined Rūpa and Sanātana. But he was so overwhelmed with grief at the demise of Caitanya that he even went to the extent of attempting to kill himself by jumping down from the Govardhan mountain.[6] Sanātana and Rūpa, however, successfully persuaded him not to take such a step. With loving care and tenderness they accepted him as their younger brother. At Vṛndavana he led a self-imposed life of extreme austerity and asceticism. The *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* tells us that Raghunātha embodied in himself innumerable noble qualities. Caitanya himself is said to have admired the rare Vaiṣṇava qualities of his character and acknowledged the depth and intensity of his devotion. He used to spend the major part of the day in uninterrupted remembrance of the Lord, recitation of His Holy Name. He slept only for a short while, tasted no delicious food, and ate just enough for bare subsistence. He clothed himself like a destitute. He also found delight in narrating the wonderful religious fervour manifested in the later years of Caitanya's life at Puri. All through his life, he scrupulously adhered to the instructions imparted by the Master.[7] Kavi Karnapur in his *Caitanya-Candrodaya* aptly observes that all these qualities assembled together made Raghunātha the perfect embodiment of renunciation.

According to *Viśva-kośa*, Raghunātha-

5. Ibid. P. 534.

6. *Visva-Kosa*—A Bengali Encyclopaedia. Vol. 16. Edited by N. C. Basu (Calcutta) P. 140. Also. *Bhakta-Carita-Mālā* (*Bengali*) by Sashi Bhusan Basu (Calcutta: Indian Publishing House, 1918) P. 170.

7. *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*: Antya-lilā. Chapter vi. P. 537.

dāsa lived at a place adjacent to Govardhana during the first part of his Vṛndavana days, and reclaimed Rādhā-Kuṇḍa and Śyāma-Kuṇḍa, two important spots associated with Kṛṣṇa-lilā.[8] It is said that he spent the last days of his life near Rādhā-Kuṇḍa till his death at the ripe age of 85 years. Dr. S. K. De writes 'From his *Vraja-vilāsa-stava,* it appears that he became blind in his old age and his *Dāna-keli-cintāmaṇi* was composed after he had become blind.'[9] In his old age, he had the constant company of and sincere service from Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, who along with Rūpa and Sanātana learnt from him the minutest details of Caitanya-*lilā* at Puri which constituted a major portion of the subject-matter of the *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta.* However, the Bengali encyclopaedia *Viśva-kośa* gives a different version of the closing years of his life. Raghunātha, so goes the narration, returned to Puri after the demise of Rūpa and Sanātana and breathed his last there.[10] But this seems to be most unlikely, for it might be reasonably asserted that after the passing away of Caitanya and Svarūpa Dāmodara, Puri had no special attraction for him other than Lord Jagannātha. Furthermore, it was not feasible in his old age to undertake such an arduous journey on foot from Vṛndāvana to Puri.

Raghunātha-dāsa was the only non-Brahmin religious guide among the six Gosvāmins, but for that reason, he was not less respected in the Vaiṣṇava society. The religion of love promulgated by Caitanya seeks to emphasize that religion should not be the exclusive possession of any particular community. 'Caitanya never, for instance, encouraged any particular caste or person to have the monopoly of the function of a spiritual guide or teacher, himself selecting men like Rūpa, Sanātana and Raghunātha-dāsa for the task of propagating the faith.'[11]

Raghunātha-dāsa had no special aptitude for the composition of any theological or metaphysical treatise. Nevertheless, he was endowed with some literary capacity and he composed in lucid Sanskrit some lyrical hymns, *stavas* or *stotras,* numbering about twenty-nine which were compiled together under the title *Stavāvali* or *Stavamālā.* Some of these *stavas* were composed in praises of Chaitanya (*Caitanya-Stava* and *Gourānga-Stava-Kalpataru*), while others deal with certain aspects of Kṛṣṇa-*lilā* at Vṛndavana. Dāsa-Gosvāmin's another work which deserves some consideration is his *Mukta-carita,* a Sanskrit *kāvya* of campu-type written in prose and occasional verse. Its subject matter is Kṛṣṇa's early sports at Vṛndāvana and its ultimate object is to establish the superiority of Kṛṣṇa's free love for Rādhā over his wedded love for Satyabhāmā. Another small work entitled *Dāna-keli-cintāmaṇi* was composed obviously in the line of Rūpa's *Dāna-keli-kaumudi* portraying an imaginary account of the *dāna-lilā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Both these small lyrical works deal with the two erotic episodes relating to Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndavana-*lilā.* Scholars have not commended Raghunātha's compositions for their superior literary quality. 'The purely poetic merit of these *stavas* cannot be estimated very highly, but their evident erotic mysticism, consisting of deeply emotional spiritualization of sensuous forms, gives them a rich and luscious charm and a sweet ring of passion, which bear a striking testimony to an interesting feature of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism.'[12] Raghunātha-dāsa was and still is respected as one of the Six Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins not so much for his literary achievements as for his rare sacrifice, extraordinary modesty, severe

8. *Visva-Koṣa.* Vol. 16. P. 140.
9. Dr. S. K. De. *Early History of Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal* (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1961) P. 121.
10. *Visva-Koṣa.* Vol. 16. P. 141.
11. *Early History* P. 108.
12. Ibid. P. 122.

asceticism and, above all, for his intense love for the Lord.

Raghunātha Bhatta

Another Vṛndāvana Gosvāmin, who like Dāsa Gosvāmin did not influence the doctrinal trend of the Vaiṣṇavism through any theological or metaphysical contributions, is Raghunātha Bhatta (Bhattacarya). Bhatta Gosvāmin was the son of Tapan Miśra, whom Caitanya had met during his journey in East Bengal in his pre-sannyāsa days. Tapan Miśra, a pious Brahmin, was an inhabitant of Rāmpur, a village on the bank of the river Padmā (now in Bangladesh). Miśra accepted Caitanya as his guru and Caitanya is said to have instructed him about all the subtleties of sādhanā. As advised by Caitanya, the entire Miśra family settled down at Benaras permanently. Raghunātha Bhatta was born in 1505 A.D. (Saka 1427).[13] Nothing much is known about his boyhood days, for most of the biographers of Caitanya are silent about Raghunātha Bhatta. Murāri Gupta mentions him and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja devotes a small portion of the *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* to him. (Antya lilā, chapter 13). It is said that Caitanya frequented Tapan Miśra's residence during his stay at Benaras on his way to and back from Vṛndavana.[14] At that time, Raghunātha was a mere boy, but the charm of Caitanya's magnetic personality and devotional fervour had drawn the boy Raghunātha towards him. He served Caitanya with deep devotion in all possible ways, and it is said that Caitanya bestowed his grace on the boy. Later developments in the boy's life induce us to presume that Caitanya had implanted in him the seed of devotional love which subsequently sprouted into a full grown tree with rich foliage. Further, it might be assumed that Raghunātha accepted Caitanya as his guru, though there exists no tangible evidence to establish Raghunātha's direct initiation by Caitanya.

After some years, Raghunātha met the Master at Puri whom he served in different ways. He was an adept in cooking, and himself cooked good dishes with utmost care and devotion for Caitanya. He stayed at Puri for eight months and then returned home at the Master's behest. The Master instructed him to look after his aged parents and also to study *Śrimad-Bhāgavata,* the Bible of the Vaiṣṇavas. The Master advised him not to enter into wedlock. After four years, on the death of his parents, he again visited Puri and stayed with the Master for eight months. Thereafter, he was directed by Caitanya to join Rūpa and Sanātana at Vṛndavana, where he spent the last days of life. Caitanya had given him a *tulsi* rosary which he cherished and used all through his life. The author Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja tells us that Raghunātha Bhatta had a melodious voice and that he used to recite *Śrimad-Bhāgavata* devotedly and melodiously.[15] As a matter of fact, he introduced a novel mode of reciting this holy scripture. The narratives of the *Bhāgavata* would become vivid and animated by his new mode of reading. It is said that Rūpa used to take delight in listening to his reading of the scripture. In all his discourses on *Śrimad-Bhāgavata,* Bhatta Gosvāmin adopted the Caitanyaite line of interpretation. It is well-known that the Master regarded *Śrimad-Bhāgavata* as the correct and detailed commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra,* the fountain-head of Vedanta Philosophy. Raghunātha Bhatta does not appear to have left any work. His life was not so eventful at least on its surface. Still, he is even now honoured as a great

13. *Visva-Kosa* Vol. 16. P. 141.

14. Sri Harekrishna Mukhopadhyaya: *Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava Sādhanā.* (Bengali). (Calcutta: 1970) P. 117.

15. *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*: Antya-lilā. Chapter 13. P. 577.

Vaiṣṇava apostle and is included in the galaxy of Vṛndavana Gosvāmins on account of certain rare qualities of his radiant personality which are still cherished by each and every Vaiṣṇava devotee. He passed away probably in the year 1579 A.D. (Saka 1501).[16]

16. *Visva-Kosa* Vol. 16. P. 142.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: Edited BY T. M. P. MAHADEVAN and GRACE E. CAIRNS. Published by the World Press Private Ltd., 37 A College Street, Calcutta-700 073. 1977. Pp. xi+311. Rs. 50.

Here is a significant pnblication blazing a new trail in the hitherto untrodden terrain of Indian philosophy. The great thinkers of ancient India who attained lofty spiritual heights in their quest for Truth evidently did not consider the temporal process of history worthy of attention. So a philosophy of history finds no place in the monumental systems of thought they erected. It is gratifying to note, therefore, that the volume under review worthily fills the lacuna in our ancient philosophical systems.

Twelve eminent philosophers of the contemporary age, in addition to the two learned editors, have contributed penetrating essays on the march of history, each from his or her own standpoint. All shades of philosophic outlook are brought to bear upon the historical process, and the result is a collection of essays on the philosophy of history from the standpoint of Indian thought, presented to the world of scholarship for the first time.

The advaita Vedantic view of history is ably expounded by Swami Adiswarananda (page 21-58), Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan (201-232) and Dr. D. M. Dutta (115-134). A renowned Samkarite upholding the absolutistic view, DR. MAHADEVAN achieves the difficult task of finding a place for the temporal processes in the timeless Reality. Time, he says, is the gateway to Reality which is timeless, and the goal of history is the realization of Mokṣa on a cosmic scale. Historical processes have to be interpreted in this light.

SWAMI ADISWARANANDA expounds the Cyclic Theory against a background of the Christian providential, the Hegelian idealistic, and the humanistic linear views. According to the Swamiji, phenomena recur in each of the cycles. There is no such things as progress, but only change (p. 38). As a result of this cyclic view, the Swamiji declares, man is a mere spectator of history and not a participator. The historical process is an incident in the phenomenal realm which is an expression of God's Līlā or Māyā. The goal of life is Self-realization.

DR. D. M. DUTTA stresses moral values in the historical processes. He uses the Law of Karma in his interpretation of human evolution in the March of History.

Two interpretations of history from the integral standpoint are presented by GRACE E. CAIRNS (p. 20) and PROF. HARIDAS CHAUDHURI. Though called by the same name, the two expositions are very different from each other. The former is based on Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. History on this view, is directed towards the goal of attaining Integral Supramental Consciousness. Man is a free participator in this process. And hence any interpretation in history has necessarily to be psychological. Professor Chaudhuri, on the other hand, has pressed together the diverse theories of evolution, ancient Indian and modern European, and shows that history is a phase of evolution which in its turn is a facet of the philosophy of the whole cosmos. He also demonstrates that all interpretations of history are matters of insight and of creative imagination and hence subjective.

A study of history on the basis of a philosophy of values is attempted by PROFESSOR A. G. JAVADEKAR (p.187-200). History is a process of realization of eternal values, and would ultimately point to something greater and beyond the values themselves, namely Truth which is the bedrock of all values.

PROF. J. N. MOHANTY (p. 251-262) analyses those aspects of Indian thought which made it impossible for our philosophers to concern

themselves with history. On the basis of this analysis, he determines the conditions necessary and sufficient for generating a genuine Philosophy of History.

PROF. N. A. NIKAM'S essay (p. 265-277) is an elucidation of the metaphysics of the idea of history. History deals with the past and is a regressive perspective of time. A Philosophy of History according to him is essentially a philosophy of *action* and not of thought.

'Social Revolution' is the central theme of PROF. KALIDAS BHATTACHARYA (p. 59-92). This may seem to be a deviation from the main theme of the book, but it is justified. The significance of social revolution and progress as expounded by Hegel and Marx are given, and it is contended by the Professor that Sāmkhya, Yoga and Tantra too are concerned with revolution. True it is they speak of revolution in the spiritual realm. Why not link this with revolution in the mundane social realm ? The Professor shows what happens when this linking is done.

The volume under review was ostensibly meant to confine itself to the philosophical consideration of history. Yet, other aspects of history have not been ignored. Facts of history presented by PROF. DHIRENDRA SHARMA (p. 295-311) are shocking and revealing. His refiections thereon are galvanizing. And his bold declaration (imitating Marx) that it is more important to change history than to write it or analyse it (p. 308) leaves us with a sense of disappointment.

PROF. BIMAL KRISHNA MATILAL (p. 233-247) surprises us by his declaration that the application of the metaphysical systems to the interpretation of history is neither interesting nor important (p. 236). Still he employs the ideas of Ḳarma and Samsāra to give his own interpretation.

PROF. V. V. DESHPANDE (p. 135-166) goes beyond the pale of the Philosophy of History and discusses the Itihāsa-Purāṇa literature of our land and the need for taking them to the doors of our villagers. PROF. B. G. GOKHALE (p. 147-185) advocates. in his essay, the writing of Indian history on a new pattern suggested by him.

There are three separate groups of essays in this marvellous book. The first is concerned with purely philosophical aspects of history comprising the contributions of the Editors, Swami Adiswarananda, Professors Haridas Chaudhuri. D. M. Dutta, A. G. Javadekar, J. N. Mohanty and N. A. Nikam, The second group is of a semi-philosophical nature including the writings of Professors Kalidas Bhattacharya, B. K. Matilal and Dhirendra Sharma. The third group includes the purely historical, mostly non-philosophical expositions of Professors V. V. Deshpande, B. G. Gokhale, and S. K. Saksena. Each group presents marvellously fresh and invigorating ideas worth deep consideration by our scholars. However, taking the main purpose of the Editors into consideration, the first group deserves special attention. The reviewer feels that this dominant group has laid the philosophic foundations, well and truly, for an interpretation of the meaning, purpose and goal of human history. The superstructure, similar to what Hegel has achieved, has to be erected. The basic or foundational concepts of Indian philosophy have to be employed to interpret the history of India, and other countries of the world. The reviewer hopes that the learned Editors would launch on this task and give us a companion volume to the one under review.

This book, as a significant and valuable addition to the extant literature on the Philosophy of History, should be in the hands of all student and teachers of philosophy in our country. But for this a cheaper edition will have to be brought out.

PROF. P. S. NAIDU
Professor of Philosophy (Rtd.)
Universities of Allahabad, Rajasthan and Agra

MYTH, SYMBOL AND LANGUAGE (*A Vivekananda Perspective*): BY 'ANANDA. Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratisthan, Calcutta-700 029. 1980. Pp. 204.

Myth is not a fable or fiction. It is the expression of an experience, sacred, exemplary and significant, as Mircea Eliade understands it. By knowing the myth, one knows the origin of things. Symbol, on the other hand, participates in Reality in a cognizable fashion. Paul Tillich's analogy of the national flag is instructive in the study of symbology. Language is as it were the hand of the mind, a vehicle of ideas. It is the best show man puts on. It is the expression of the divinity in man ; a gift of God. Words take us from the myth-making phase of human mentality to the state of logical thought and conception of facts.

The author of the long 'essay' under review, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, develops a

philosophy of language found in the writings of Swami Vivekananda in the light of the global researches in the field. He tries to show the significance of the statements of the great prophet-philosopher for a proper understanding of Indian religion and culture. For Swami Vivekananda the entire universe is a symbol and God is the essence behind. According to him neither symbol nor language could be created. The *nāma-rūpa* as he calls them, are inseparable and beginningless like the Veda. He upholds the Śabda-Brahman theory of language which is neither the result of convention nor of a contract. Language and Reality are one.

If myths, symbols and language are studied in the proper perspective (and the author chooses for his perspective the writings of Swami Vivekananda), some apparent contradictions could be resolved. If we keep in view the fundamental thesis of Swamiji that there is difference only of degree between the language of a philosopher and the utterance of a baby we shall resolve the contradictions of the texts—sacred or secular. Swami Vivekananda strongly holds that all mythologies contain nuggets of truth and all polished phrases contain trash. There is relativity of truth on phenomenal plane.

The book is an important contribution to the study of the philosophy of language. But the running exposition of the theme without division into chapters creates difficulties to a common reader. The presentation could be more readable if classified and edited by some academician or by the author himself.

DR. S. P. DUBEY, M. A., M.A., PH. D
University of Jabalpur
Jabalpur

YOGA NIDRA: BY SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI. Bihar School of Yoga, Monghyr, Bihar 811 201. 1982. Pp. 284. Rs. 40.

'That Nidra which is not a form of Prakriti but is the manifested form of Purusha' (*Yogatārāvali*, 26). The theme of this book is this special kind of sleep which is between the normal state of awareness and regular sleep. Drawing upon his own experience and his knowledge of the concerned techniques in the Yoga Sastra, Swamiji develops a special application of the principle of *yoga-nidra*, not only for spiritual purposes but also for tackling problems of mental health, tension, vital violence etc.

In this state of dynamic sleep there is no pull of inertia and tamas; the consciousness is freed from external compulsions and the door is opened to the subliminal dimensions of the being. By special methods this state can be utilized 'to develop the memory, increase knowledge and creativity or transform one's nature (p. 2)'. The author calls it an aspect of Pratyahara; knowledge in this state is obtained without sensory medium. He mentions: 'In modern psychology, this has been termed the "hypnagogic state" but I prefer to call it the "hypnayogic state".'

There is a detailed account of the step-by-step processes that are employed by Swamiji and the results that have been obtained. In brief, there are seven steps: making the resolve of what one wants to do or be; rotation of consciousness from limb to limb or object to object as directed by the instructor; awareness of breath; relaxation of feelings and sensations which are awakened and neutralized with their opposites; visualization of images named by the instructor; repetition of the resolve, *sankalpa*: gradually bringing back the mind from the sleep to normal awareness.

It is interesting to read that 'Wolfgang von Goethe used the inspirations and intuitions from this state to solve problems arising in his work. In dreams occuring in this state, Kekule realized the circular molecular structure of benzene; Nobel laureate Niels Bohr saw the planetary structure of the atom, and Einstein accelerated his awareness to the speed of light in the famous "thought experiments" which led to the theory of relativity.' (P. 8)

This treatment opens up immense possibilities which it would be worthwhile to pursue. There is a practice in some parts of our country of reading out from some holy texts like the Gita or Ramayana while putting a child to sleep and even after the child goes to sleep. It helps to form the right *samskāras*, as the consciousness goes on absorbing the vibrations of the reading. Obviously the principle is the same as of *yoga-nidra*.

SRI M. P. PANDIT
Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry

SANSKRIT—ENGLISH

SRIMAD BHAGAVATA VOL I (*Skandhas* 1—4): TRANSLATED BY SWAMI TAPASYANANDA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 600 004. 1980. Pp. XLVI+455. Rs. 100.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam occupies a unique position among the Purāṇas. It is not only the fount of the Bhakti doctrine but is also the quintessence of Vedanta, *sarvavedāntasāram.* By being conversant with the teachings of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam,* one practically gets hold of all the essential teachings of Indian spiritual tradition. Swami Tapasyanandaji is therefore, to be congratulated for making this priceless treasure available in English translation, and he deserves unstinted praise for taking upon himself this arduous and colossal task; which he hopes to complete in four volumes, of which the first one has just come out in print.

The translator has given precedence to readability over meticulous accuracy in his translation, as he himself has stated in the preface. Though he modestly disclaims Sanskrit scholarship, his work shows a thorough grasp of the essential spirit of the text, and he has also been successful in conveying it through a very lucid and free rendering. But in some places, the translation may appear misleading. For instance, the translation of verse 5 in Chapter 15 of the 1st Skandha (p. 65) as 'betrayed by Hari, whom I took to be a friend' may convey the wrong impression that Arjuna, who utters this verse, realizes after the demise of Krishna that the latter was not a friend to him in the true sense of the term, though he had taken him to be so. In fact what is conveyed by the word *vañcita* in this verse is repeated by the word *rahita* in verse 20 and the meaning in both cases is 'bereft of' or 'without'. Without his friend Sri Krishna, Arjuna feels absolutely helpless and powerless, being bereft of his only source of power, and this he conveys throngh his long lamentation. Similarly the translation of *sātvatām patih* in verse 14 of Chapter II (p. 7) as 'the master of all devotees' and again of *sātvatapungave* in verse 32 of Chapter IX (p. 41) as 'a noble scion of the Yadu clan' may lead to some confusion, as in both cases the meaning is the same. The translator, however, has done well in taking liberties here and there to make the meaning more explicit to which no exception should be taken. For instance, he translates *prakṛtimupeyuṣi* as 'assumed his power of Yogamāyā', and *ratirastu me anavadyā* as 'unfailing and absolute devotion, which seeks not liberation even'. In such places as the above two instances, too literal a translation would not have conveyed the true sense, and the translator has done well in indulging in a little explanation over and above his translation.

Swami Tapasyanandaji has been highly successful in conveying the message of the *Bhāgavata* to the English-reading public by taking recourse to this method of free translation. He has also added, at the outset, a very valuable, long general introduction, covering nearly 30 pages, where in eight sections he deals with numerous topics, such as the origin of the Purāṇas and the place of the *Bhāgavata* among them, the philosophical outlook of the *Bhāgavata,* problems of modern readers and others. Swami Tapasyanandaji has rendered a unique service through his illuminating presentation of the real nature of the Purāṇas, which should be read over and over again by the present-day readers 'who have been influenced by the modern scientific view of nature, universe and man'. He reminds us that 'the Purāṇas are not at all to be read as history and geography, nor are they to be regarded as fiction... They belong to an order different from both history and fiction... The Purāṇas are the upthrow of a people's mind struggling to express their quest for a meaning for a life and their findings in this respect' (p. XIV).

Both the printing and get-up are excellent, and there is no doubt that this new edition of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* will find an honourable place in every library, public and private.

DR. GOVINDA GOPAL MUKHOPADHYAYA, M. A., PH. D., SAMKHYA TIRTHA.
Professor, Department of Sanskrit
University of Burdwan

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

Report for April 1982 to March 1983

Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, was started on 19 March 1899 under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda in the Kumaon Hills of the Himalayas. In 1903, a small dispensary was started by the Ashrama in response to the dire need of the local villagers in sickness. Since that time the dispensary has developed into a fairly well-equipped, small rural hospital. The

hospital stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is under the charge of a monastic member. A resident allopathic doctor treats the patients with the help of his assistants, and earnest efforts are made to maintain a high standard of efficiency in service. Moreover, all patients receive prompt and sympathetic treatment completely free of charge.

The hospital has 25 beds in the indoor department, but sometimes arrangements have to be made for more. There is also a small operation theatre. A dental chair and a pathological department provide additional help in the treatment of patients. The total number of patients treated during the year in the Indoor Department was 407, of which 321 were cured and discharged, 63 were relieved, 11 were discharged otherwise or left, and 12 died. In the Outdoor Department, the total number of patients treated was 17,910, of which 5,386 were new and 12,524 were repeated cases.

Our present immediate needs: (1) Providing fresh lockers to all the (25) beds in the Indoor Department: Rs. 5,000. (2) Providing new mattresses, bed sheets, bed covers, and woollen blankets for all the beds : Rs. 10,000. (3) Construction of a Dormitory for the attendants of patients: Rs. 50,000. (4) Creation of a Permanent Fund for the purchase of medicines. (To be invested in Long Term Fixed Deposit in a Scheduled Bank and interest only to be used for this purpose.): Rs. 5,00,000. Cheques and drafts may be drawn in favour of *Mayavati Charitable Hospital* and sent to the President, Mayavati Charitable Hospital, P. O. Mayavati, via. Lohaghat, Dist. Pithoragarh (U. P.), 262-524, India.

OBITUARY

With deep sorrow we have to announce the passing away of Swami Budhananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi Branch on 11th June 1983 at 6 p.m. at the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan, Calcutta. A few days ago he went to Belur Math, and became indisposed there with various ailments. He was admitted to the Seva Pratishthan where his condition took a serious turn following a cerebral stroke from which he never regained. The immediate cause of death was cardio-respiratory failure in a case of cerebral haemorrhage. He was 66.

Born in 1917 in East Bengal, (now Bangladesh), the Swami was known in his pre-monastic life as Bhavani Prasad Dutta. He completed his graduation in 1939 from Dacca University and studied up to the final M. A. course without appearing for the examination. He joined the Order in 1944 at the Madras Math Centre and worked there till 1959 in various capacities, including the editorship of *Vedanta Kesari*. An initiated disciple of Swami Virajananda Maharaj, the Swami received sannyasa from Swami Sankarananda Maharaj in 1954. He was posted by the Headquarters to our Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in New York, U.S.A. as Assistant Minister, in 1959 to preach Vedanta. He successfully conducted the work there and also in San Francisco and Hollywood Centres, for about seven years in all. He returned to India in 1966, and took up the responsibility of the Head of the Chandigarh Centre. In 1968 he came to Mayavati as the Joint Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata,* and in 1969 he was appointed President of Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, as well as Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*. In 1976 he was appointed Head of the Delhi Centre, as its Secretary, where he continued till the last.

Scholarly and contemplative by nature, the Swami has to his credit a number of books and articles, both in English and Bengali. *The Mind and Its Control, Can One be Scientific and yet Spiritual, The Saving Challenge of Religion* etc. are a few of his books that have gained admiration of both spiritual seekers and modern rational minds. His meticulous attention to details and profound erudition are the two of the distinctive features of his writings. His oratorical powers and organizing faculty are well proved by the grand success of the recent youth convention organized by him at New Delhi. Somewhat reserved, yet warm and affectionate, the Swami was respected and loved by all. His demise has created a void in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, and the Order has been deprived of the services of a fine monk. May his soul rest in peace!

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Spirit of Research

Science in the true sense of the term is a way of life—the true way of life in the empirical world. It is not a mere technique or special activity carried out in a laboratory. True science is inseparable from the life of the scientist. A true scientist is one who *lives* science, who has converted his *whole* life into the pursuit of empirical truth.

The desire to know is there in all people ; curiosity is there even in monkeys. It is only when this natural urge to know is liberated from pleasure-seeking biological life and intensified beyond a certain threshold into an all absorbing search for a direct experience of true empirical reality does it become the discipline of science. The scientific search for reality is called research. This seeking is an expression of the evolutionary urge of the soul to transcend its limitations and attain higher states of existence, knowledge and happiness. Research may be linked to technology and economic prosperity, but its real motive power lies deep down in the consciousness of the scientist. It is the urge to evolve, to transcend, that constitutes the true spirit of research. In his inspiring autobiography *My Life With the Microbes* Dr. Selman Waksman, the discoverer of Streptomycin, quotes the words of his teacher T. B. Robertson on the spirit of research as follows. 'I earnestly hope that every student of science will become an ardent devotee of research and exponent of the spirit of research, for the spirit of research is that spirit which inquires for the purpose of making things better than they are, and which urges humanity toward higher purposes and more worthy achievements in every aspect of our lives. What, after all, is really worth doing in this life ? If our object be merely to keep things going as they are, then, truly all the activities of mankind become virtually nothing more than house-keeping on a world-wide scale. We would grow food today that we might eat tomorrow, make clothes solely in order to wear them out, pass our lives in absolute subservience to our animal needs, earn merely what we spend and for spending's sake.'

There are hundreds of academic and industrial research institutes all over India, and thousands of men and women are working in them. But very few of these scientists are inspired by the true spirit of research. The vast majority of them have been pushed into the field of research either by the forces of economic necessity or by that all-pervasive tendency of educated Indians to seek cushy jobs. This explains why, in spite of enormous financial investment in science, important original contributions to its advancement have rarely been made in this country.

In this context an observation made by Prof. K. L. Chopra, a Bhatnagar Memorial Award winner, published in the *Science Reporter* of May 1977, deserves the consideration of all thoughtful Indians. 'Poor quality of scientific work in India has only a small connection with the lack of facilities. Primarily it is due to the lack of a scientific and technological culture, proper attitude, dedication and commitment on the part of the scientists working as a group... Research in science should be undertaken by only those who have the commitment and devotion of a deeply religious man.'