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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

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

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Prabuddha Bharata

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Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 88

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No. 8

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

सप्तास्यासन्परिधयस्त्रिः सप्त समिधः कृताः ।
देवा यद्यज्ञं तन्वाना अबध्नन् पुरुषं पशुम् ॥

1. When the gods performed the sacrifice by binding the Puruṣa as the victim, the seven [metres] became the enclosures¹ and the twenty-one [categories] became the logs of fuel.²

Rg-Veda 10.90.15.

यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजंत देवास्तानि धर्माणि प्रथ-
मान्यासन् ।
ते ह नाकं महिमानः सचंत यत्र पूर्वे साध्याः
संति देवाः ॥

2. Through the sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice.³ These became the first *dharmas*.⁴ Through them [all those who perform the sacrifice] attain the heaven where dwell the gods known as *Sādhyas*.⁵

Rg-Veda 10.90.16.

* The concluding two stanzas of the *Puruṣa-sūkta*. Of the several interpretations of this hymn the Advaitic one adopted by Sāyaṇa has been followed here. According to it the hymn deals with two Puruṣa: the Primal Puruṣa (known as Hiraṇyagarbha) and the Virāt-Puruṣa. Another view is that there is only one Puruṣa, creating and sustaining all creation, and Virāt is only his body. Some people interpret the sacrifice of Puruṣa as man's self-sacrifice to the Divine.

1. In the actual Vedic sacrifice *paridhi* refers to the shallow trench dug around the altar to protect it from evil influences. Three trenches are dug around the *āhavanīya* fire and around the northern fire, and an imaginary one around the sun. Since the sacrifice here is a mental meditation done by the gods, according to Sāyaṇa, the seven *paridhis* stand for the seven Vedic metres (*chandas*) like Gāyatri, Anuṣṭubh, etc.

2. Sāyaṇa quotes *Taittirīya-Samhitā*, 5.1.10.3., to show that 'thrice-seven' means the twelve months, the five seasons, the three worlds and the sun.

3. According to Sāyaṇa the first *yajña* refers to the mental sacrifice of the gods, and the second *yajña* means the *Puruṣa* himself regarded as the sacrificial object. The statement may also mean 'sacrifice done for the sake of sacrifice' or 'duty for duty's sake'.

4. *Dharmāṇi* is usually translated as 'duties' or 'ethical codes'. Sāyaṇa interprets it as 'the main laws governing the evolution of the universe'.

5. The 'heaven' refers to the world of Virāt-Puruṣa, according to Sāyaṇa.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

This month's EDITORIAL discusses how all activities and meditation could be done as sacrifice.

In THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE LIFE OF M., Swami Prabhananda, a trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, shows that the *Kathāmṛta* is not merely an accurate record of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna but a standing witness to the great transformation that these had brought about in the life of M. himself.

In the second instalment of INSIGHT AND MANIFESTATION Dr. Beatrice Bruteau concludes her brilliant exposition of Christian prayer by revealing its deifying

and life-transforming power which comes to the spiritual man when he attains maturity in prayer.

The second instalment of GIRISH CHANDRA GHOSH by Swami Chetanananda, head of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, U.S.A., brings home to our minds the redeeming power and unconditioned love of which Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment.

Dr. Donald Szantho Harrington, Senior Minister (Emeritus) of the Community Church of New York, gives a brief profile and central message of a great Jesuit palaeontologist and thinker in TEILHARD DE CHARDIN: AND THE INVINCIBLE ENERGIES OF LOVE.

MEDITATION AND SACRIFICE—IV

(EDITORIAL)

Transcending the ego

Life is a vast and inexhaustible stream of power, consciousness and joy. Every living being is an integral part of it. The microcosm (individual being) and the macrocosm (universal Being) have the same structure and are in dynamic contact with each other. All the nourishment for health, all the power for work, all the knowledge for the mind and all the happiness for the soul are there in the stream of universal Life. The more we open ourselves to the larger divine Life, the richer, greater, happier we become.

And yet, millions of people live in ill health, underdevelopment, powerlessness, fear and sorrow. The great medieval Indian saint Kabir sang, 'The washerman washes clothes in the river and yet is dying of

thirst.'¹ Though living in the midst of the abundance and fullness of life modern man remains empty and unfulfilled. Being isolated from the stream of life he is unable to open himself fully to it.

What is the cause of man's alienation from cosmic Life? There is no external wall cutting him off, no external obstacle blocking the way. The source of all sufferings, difficulties and sorrows is internal. The wall that separates the individual from cosmic life is within him; it is his own egoism. As Sri Ramakrishna has repeatedly stressed, egoism itself is bondage. The world has not bound us as we mistakenly think; there are no physical ropes tying us to the world. We are only bound by internal chains; we are bound, encapsulated, by the ego.

1. जल बीच धोबिया मरत पियासा रे ।

Egoism is of two types, the losing and the winning. A person who fails to achieve success in any field of life develops the losing type of egoism. He blames either God or other people for his misfortune. He clings to his sufferings instead of trying to get rid of them. He mistakenly thinks that the world owes him a living and that it is the duty of others to make him happy. He cuts himself off from the universal stream of life by creating a gloomy private world furnished with resentment, fear and grievances and populated by the distorted images of other people.

The person who attains success in the world develops the winning type of egoism. He does not blame God (if he happens to believe in Him) or other people; rather he exploits them to his advantage without giving them any credit for his success. He does not want to isolate himself from others, but they leave him alone. He drives himself too far off from the universal stream and thus gets cut off from it. His private world is built of ambition, greed, competition and worry.

Success and failure appear to be vastly different in the beginning but, as long as egoism persists, their ultimate result is the same—unfulfilment, unhappiness, *asāntih*.

Egoism is not mere ignorance. It is a form of reaction of the individual to the conditions of the external world. However, what originally began as an instinctual drive for self-preservation gradually becomes an unconscious resistance to the essential goodness of life. The losing ego resists success and prosperity, the winning ego resists failure and misfortune. It is this egoistic resistance to universal Life that manifests as stress in human life. Conflict, unhappiness, neurosis and psychosomatic disease are all products of stress. Merely turning to spiritual life as a religious duty does not solve the problem. As a matter of fact, when egoistic people practise Japa and meditation, these very practices may

intensify their unconscious resistance to universal Life and may make their life worse than it was before.

Egoism can be overcome only by something higher than the ego. The impulse for this effort must come from a higher source, which may be the Personal God, the Avatar, the Guru or one's own higher Self, the Atman. Blessed are those who come under the guidance of an illumined soul who removes their egoism through spiritual surgery. Some fortunate aspirants attain ego-transcendence through a spontaneous awakening of the Atman. A few others achieve it through intense prayer. In some people the stress of life goes on building up until it reaches a breaking point when the ego capsule cracks and they suddenly encounter universal Life. Many people need bitter experiences like a car accident, an acute illness, a friend's betrayal or a financial crisis to shatter the ego. However, such sudden changes are rare. For the vast majority of people ego-transcendence is a long-drawn-out process, and the only way to do it is to put the ego at the service of other people through Karma Yoga. Through unselfish service the ego has to be gradually re-educated and attuned to universal Life. This is the first step in spiritual life.

Extension of consciousness

Human personality is a complex structure. In the Upaniṣads it is described as consisting of five *kośas* or sheaths. These *kośas* are not like empty boxes or the storeys of a building. Each *kośa* is filled with consciousness and is a self in itself. Each of these *kośa*-selves has its own unique life and its own laws of development. Each is dependent for its life on a corresponding universe. Food for the *annamaya*-self comes from the physical universe; psychic energy for the *prāṇamaya*-self comes from the cosmic Prāṇa; knowledge for the *manomaya*-self comes from the cosmic mind; the consciousness

of the jivatman known as the *vijñānamaya*-self is a reflection of the Paramatman; the bliss of the *ānandamaya*-self is derived from the bliss of Brahman. Each of these five selves can function properly only by opening itself fully to the corresponding level of universal Life and by constantly renewing this contact.

When this renewal process is faulty, the self is cut off from universal Life and remains undeveloped. This is what happens when we lead an ignorant, unconscious life. To achieve the full development of each *kośa*-self, and the integral growth of the whole personality, each *kośa* must open fully to universal Life. For this it is necessary to enter into each *kośa*, understand its working, remove its defects, purify it, develop its powers and open it fully to universal life. Is it possible to do all this?

Entering the *kośa* and opening it up are not physical acts. It is by extending awareness that we contact the *kośas*. But for this we must first discover the centre of our awareness, that is, the point at which the Atman manifests itself, the point of contact between the Jivātman and the Paramātman. What is this centre? It is the *dhī* or higher *buddhi*, also known as the spiritual heart; it is the common hall or vestibule through which we can 'enter' all the *kośas*. Once this inner door has opened, once the *dhī* or spiritual centre has awakened, the next step is to extend the higher awareness into all the *kośas*.

How to do this? Through meditation. The ancient sages developed higher forms of meditation through which they gained a deep understanding of the real nature of man and the world. With the help of these techniques we can focus the light of Atman into the nooks and corners of each *kośa*, purify them and open them to universal Life.

Yajña is primarily a spiritual discipline

When the ego is transcended and the

different parts of the personality are brought under the control of the Atman and opened to universal Life, our whole life becomes a joyful participation in the evolutionary creativity of the Divine. This participation in divine Life through higher awareness is called *yajña*. Through it the individual finds his place in *ṛtam*, the cosmic harmony. He understands that life is not meaningless, empty or illusory. All life is evolving towards higher levels of consciousness, freedom and bliss. *Yajña* speeds up this evolutionary process by transforming human consciousness and by enabling man to participate fully in the evolutionary progression.

It should be pointed out in this context that the aim of *yajña* is not to lead a happy, well-adjusted social life in a spirit of give and take. This kind of life can be led by tactful adjustment or slavish surrender of one's ego to the dominant person or group in the society. *Yajña* is fundamentally a spiritual discipline, and its main purpose is the transformation of human consciousness. The harmony and peace that it gives are only an effect or by-product of the higher awareness that it directly leads to. *Yajña* has thus two dimensions, a vertical one and a horizontal one. On the one hand it leads to higher and higher levels of awareness and, on the other hand, greater and greater harmony with universal Life. Even at the lower levels it is a conscious, controlled process which distinguishes it from the unconscious, impulsive drifting of ordinary life.

Yoga, līlā and yajña

Before proceeding further it is necessary to place *yajña* in perspective. What is its place among spiritual paths, and what distinguishes it from other disciplines?

Man's search for the Ultimate has followed two courses; through negation and through affirmation. In the way of negation, known in Vedānta as *neti, neti* ('not

this, not this'),² the world is regarded as unreal and hence evil, and the main spiritual effort is to withdraw oneself from it. Buddhism, Jainism and traditional Advaita Vedanta advocate this course.

In the way of affirmation, known in Vedanta as *iti, iti* ('this, this'),³ the world is looked upon as real and as an aid in the spiritual quest. The main endeavour is to encounter Reality *through* the world. This encounter may take three forms : encounter between Puruṣa and Prakṛti; between Jīva and personal Deity; between Jīvātman and impersonal Supreme Spirit. The first type takes the form of an attempt to free the self from the hold of Prakṛti by understanding and conquering Prakṛti. This is what Patañjali's Yoga teaches. In the second type of encounter the world is looked upon as the playground of the personal Deity and life as His eternal play, *līlā*. Evil and sorrow are only an aspect of this divine sport. This view is found in the Purāṇas and was fully worked out by some of the later Vaiṣṇava schools. In the third type of encounter the world and every object in it are regarded as manifestations of the dynamism and glory of the all-pervading impersonal Spirit. Life is a divine *yajña*, a constant exchange between the individual and the cosmos. Evil and suffering are lower and imperfect manifestations of divine power caused by not participating fully in divine *yajña*. This view was originally developed in the ancient Vedas and was revived with suitable modifications by the Gīta, the Tantras and, in modern times, by Sri Ramakrishna. Whereas the Gīta united the two concepts of Yoga and *yajña*, Sri Ramakrishna combined together all the three concepts of Yoga, *līlā* and *yajña*. Furthermore, through his doctrine of *jñāna-vijñāna*

he united the way of negation and the way of affirmation by treating them as two phases of man's total experience of Reality.

The most fundamental idea of *yajña*, which distinguishes it from other disciplines, is this : the attainment of supreme harmony through participation in God's work in the world. The Vedic sages called the supreme harmony *ṛtam* : Sri Ramakrishna called it *bhāva-mukha*. It is the meeting point between God and the world, between the noumenon and the phenomenon, between the Absolute and the relative, or *nitya* and *līlā* as Sri Ramakrishna called them. This integral experience is the most mature and perfect knowledge of total Reality. Through it one reconciles all conflicts like those between good and evil, happiness and sorrow, self-effort and divine grace etc. Through it one understands how the one Reality appears as both impersonal and personal, formless and with form, immanent and transcendent.

This integral experience is attained not by running away from the world but by participating in it with right understanding; not through meditation alone but by combining work and meditation; not through knowledge alone but also by loving all as manifestations of the Divine; not by seeking only one's own salvation but by seeking the liberation of all (*sarvamukti*). This is what the ideal of *yajña* stands for. It is living in the Divine, by the divine, for the Divine, and becoming an open channel for the Divine.

Yajña — a spiritual balance-sheet

Human life is a channel for the flow of divine power. What *yajña* does is to keep this channel open by purifying it and clearing the obstacles. At first God appears to be at the receiving end of this channel, as the enjoyer (*bhoktā*) of our sacrifice, as the goal of our striving. But as we advance we realize that God is also the starting point ;

2. Short for *na idam brahma iti*, 'that this is not Brahman'.

3. Short for *idam brahma iti*, 'that this is Brahman'.

He is the eternal giver, infact, the only giver, all others being only distributors. As the Gīta says, God is the 'Prime Mover from whom all work originated at the beginning of Time.'⁴ Everything comes from God and returns to God—through us.

When we realize this, the difference between the sacred and the secular will disappear. We will then see every activity either as an act of receiving from God or as an act of giving to God. Every man's life is nothing but a balance-sheet for God. Look into your life, examine it carefully, and see how much you have received from God and how much you have returned to Him.

In ordinary secular life we are very careful in keeping accounts of income and expenditure, or debit and credit as accountants call them. But we seldom extend this habit to our daily conduct and experiences. Listening is income, talking is expenditure. Learning is income, teaching is expenditure. To be loved is income, to love is expenditure. To be hated is income, to hate is expenditure. Health is income, disease is expenditure. Purity is income, sin is expenditure. All kinds of income are not necessarily beneficial, nor are all kinds of expenditure harmful. If we keep such an account of our day-to-day life with the understanding that everything comes from universal Life and returns to it, ordinary living will become a *yajña* and secular life will change into spiritual life.

A spiritual aspirant is God's accountant. Knowing very well that everything belongs to God, he keeps a close watch on what he receives from universal Life, how and how much he uses it. He uses only just enough of it to meet his physical and spiritual needs. This form of true self-denial is

what is meant by *tapas*. Everything else he returns to universal Life. Allowing the gifts of universal Life to flow freely through him to others, unobstructed by the ego, is what is meant by *dāna*. True *tapas* is not mere austerity which often degenerates into self-torture; true *dāna* is not egoistic charity. For a Karma Yogin *tapas* and *dāna* are two methods by which he orientates himself to universal Life. As such, they are not special disciplines to be done at a specific time (as for example, fasting or giving in charity on a particular day) but constitute a two-fold general principle that converts every activity into a *yajña*, a spiritual discipline. If *Yajña* is the main body, *tapas* and *dāna* are its wings. These three together form the very foundation of spiritual life, especially of Karma Yoga. That is why Śrī Kṛṣṇa has emphatically declared: 'The practice of *yajña*, *dāna*, and *tapas* should never be given up... This is my firm and highest belief.'⁵ The Upaniṣad also states: 'The wise aspire to realize It (the infinite Self) through the study of the Vedas, through *yajña*, *dāna* and *tapas*.'⁶

If the Karma Yogi converts his whole life into a *yajña* through *tapas* and *dāna*, the Bhakta, the lover of God, does it through prayer and worship. Prayer is asking God, receiving from God. Everything we receive is the result of a prayer, though we may not always be aware of it. Even those who do not pray to God are full of desires, wishes and hopes—and desires, wishes and hopes are only unarticulated, unconscious prayers. In this sense every one is constantly praying. What a spiritual aspirant does is to

5. यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत्
... निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥

Bhagavad-Gītā 18.5-6.

6. तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिषन्ति
यज्ञेन दानेन तपसानाशकेन ।

4. Cf. तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये

यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ।

Bhagavad-Gītā 15.4.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad 4.4.22; and also 6.2.16.

be conscious of this fact, articulate his wishes properly and direct them all to God. Furthermore, he accepts everything with gratitude as God's *prasāda*, grace. Worship is giving or surrendering to God as an act of service. A true Bhakta converts all his activities into different forms of worship, at first with the help of repeated interior self-offering and, later on, through a habitual meditative awareness of the presence of the Lord in his heart. Furthermore, seeing the Lord in all people, he serves them in every possible way. Service to God is called *bhajana* (from the root *bhaj* = to serve); service to man is called *sevana* or *sevā*. For centuries these two had remained separate and often even mutually contradictory. Swami Vivekananda unified them into a single path capable of leading man to spiritual fulfilment through social service. Thus, through the two disciplines of prayer and worship, a devotee of God converts his whole life into a *yajña*.

All life is yajña

The Yogi says: All life is *yoga*. The Bhakta says: All life is *līlā*. The Karma Yogi says: All life is *yajña*. These three—*yoga*, *līlā*, and *yajña*—are only different frames of reference to understand the relationship among God, soul and the universe. It does not matter which conceptual frame we choose. What is important is to live a real life.

Real life is divine life. Divine life is a life of harmony, higher consciousness and self-fulfilling joy. God is the source of consciousness and bliss, and all individual souls are moving along an evolutionary spiral towards this divine Centre. The closer we move towards the Centre, the more divine our life becomes. We cannot reach the divine Centre in one sudden leap. For universal life is one total organism undergoing a graded evolution and we cannot

jump out of its evolutionary spiral. All the changes that take place within and without us are brought about by Nature through its evolution. But at its lower levels evolution is a very slow process. Those who spend their lives in sense-enjoyment remain at a lower level and undergo very little transformation. However, at higher levels of consciousness individual evolutionary progression can be considerably speeded up. This is what *yajña* does.

Evolution is based on the Law of Sacrifice. At the lower levels there is struggle for existence, and only the fittest survive while the rest are sacrificed. Similarly, at the higher levels there is struggle for consciousness; only the fittest spiritual aspirants realize the ultimate Reality and gain freedom, whereas the less fitted aspirants continue to move along the evolutionary spiral. The fittest animals are those which are best adapted to their environment, the fittest spiritual aspirants are those who are best adapted to universal Life, who have converted their whole life into *yajña*.

How do we speed up our evolutionary progression? All that we have to do is to maintain intense aspiration and to convert our entire life into a *yajña* by opening ourselves, surrendering ourselves, fully to the creative powers of universal Life. Aspiration alone is ours, all work is done by the Divine. Evolution is not an individual affair, it is a cosmic movement. All the power needed for spiritual progress comes from universal Life. When through *yajña* we open ourselves fully to it, it will bring about all the changes we need and will augment our evolutionary elan. All the logs needed to fuel spiritual evolution are there in universal Life; all that we need is an altar to build up the flames. Converting one's whole life into *yajña* means converting one's heart into an altar.

(To be concluded)

THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA : AND THE LIFE OF M.

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

We learn from the diary of M.¹ that on 2 April 1905 the Holy Mother told Nikunja Devi, the wife of M., in the presence of Golap-Ma, 'I bless that this book (the *Kathāmṛta*) may spread very widely so that all people may know the Master.' Again on the day previous to the Kalipuja day that year the Holy Mother said to Nikunja Devi, 'Daughter-in-law, tell your husband that I am blessing him from the core of my heart.' I wonder if M. ever dreamt that the Holy Mother's blessings would bear fruit in the way they have done in recent months, which have been witnessing an unprecedented spurt in the sale of the Bengali edition of the book, with one of the new single-volume editions of the book alone registering sale of a quarter million copies in the first month and a half of its publication.

The chronicling of the Gospel

Many people celebrated the *Kathāmṛta* centenary during 1982-83, and Sri Ma Trust, Chandigarh, published a commemoration volume entitled *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathāmṛta Centenary Memorial*, although the first volume of the *Kathāmṛta* was published first on 11 March 1902. Here it must be noted that the *Kathāmṛta* is not a reproduction of M.'s diary and that M. did not even think of the word *Kathāmṛta* as the title of his articles or book before 1898. M. met his Master Sri Ramakrishna on a Sunday in the month of February 1882. Unfortunately M. did not remember

the exact date of this meeting. It was certainly not 26 February 1882, as is popularly held. Among the three probable dates M. has mentioned in his diary, circumstantial evidences almost conclusively point to 19 February 1882 as the date of his first meeting. Evidently, M. did not record immediately the proceedings of this meeting, nor of the next six meetings, which he had with Sri Ramakrishna in quick succession. Of these, the proceedings of the first five only have been reported in the *Gospel* and the remaining two have been left out.

However, soon thereafter, perhaps six weeks following the first meeting, M. started recording the proceedings of these meetings in his diary. Being the headmaster of a school, he could be with the Master only on Sundays and other holidays. He kept short diary-notes of the incidents, discussions, and discourses that took place in the course of his association with Sri Ramakrishna. Evidently he kept these diaries for his personal use. Once M. said, 'I used to note down the Master's words in order to think about them, in the intervals before I met him again, so that the impressions made on my mind might not be overlaid by the stress of worldly work and responsibilities. It was thus for my own benefit that I first made the notes so that I might comprehend his teachings more perfectly.' When a great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, Girish Chandra Ghosh, wanted to glance through the diary, M. declined, saying that its contents could be disclosed only after his death. But circumstances forced M. to change his decision. He devoted himself to transcribing his diary into a biographical narrative, and he did it in four stages.

¹. Mahendra Nath Gupta, a great lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, chronicler of the Master's life, and author of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* known as the *Kathāmṛta* in its original Bengali version.

The publication of the Gospel

First, he published a collection of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings under the title *Paramahamsadever Ukti*. Only its third edition, published in 1892, by Satchidananda Gitaratna has been traced. The collection was done with the help of one Sadhu Mahindranath Gupta. Recent researches clearly suggest that both Satchidananda Gitaratna and Sadhu Mahindranath Gupta were the pseudonyms of M. On seeing the first edition of this publication in Bengali, Swami Vivekananda congratulated M. on 7 February 1889, writing, 'Thanks! 1,00,000! You have hit Ramkristo in the right point. Few alas, few understand him.'

Second, repeatedly inspired by the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and by some instruction he received in dream from Sri Ramakrishna, M. launched upon a daring enterprise. Instead of presenting Sri Ramakrishna's teachings in isolation, he now decided to present Sri Ramakrishna and his words in a realistic setting. Holding those diary notes in front of him, M. would meditate on them for hours to reconstruct the scenes, the dialogues, and the atmosphere he had witnessed so long ago. He was not merely recalling the past but was actually re-living those blessed hours. One of the outcomes of this exercise was the *Gospel*. Around 1897 M. published in English four booklets under the title *A Leaf from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. On reading the second leaflet Swami Vivekananda wrote him on 24 November 1897, 'Now you are doing just the thing... You will have many blessings on you and many more curses but *vaisāhi sab kāl bantā sāheb* (That is always the way of the world, Sir.)' M. read out his manuscripts, some in English and others in Bengali, before the Sunday meetings of the Ramakrishna Mission Association held at Balaram Bose's house in Calcutta. The

Bengali monthly *Tattvamanjari* demanded that the words of the Master should be published in the vernacular. As prophesied by Swami Vivekananda, M.'s work was hailed by many as a precious gift, but there were some hostile criticisms too. Some dubbed the *Gospel* as a mere Sunday report of M., and said that the Master had other superior teachings which he did not reveal to M. Hurt by such uncharitable remarks from some familiar quarters, M. felt discouraged. However, the appreciations of persons like Swami Vivekananda and the Holy Mother dispelled all his doubts. The Holy Mother wrote him from Jayarambati, 'Once he (Sri Ramakrishna) had kept all that in safe custody with you ; now, as he thinks necessary, he is getting it published... All that you have recorded is true. One day when I was listening to what you had recorded, I thought that he himself was speaking.' Thus being assured, M. hurriedly started publishing instalments of the *Kathāmṛta* in seventeen popular Bengali journals like *Udbodhan*, *Tattvamanjari*, *Nababharat*, *Sahitya*, *Hindu Patrika*, etc. from 1897 onwards.

Third, Swami Trigunatitananda, editor of the *Udbodhan*, the Bengali organ of the Ramakrishna Order, published in one volume everything M. had already published in various journals. Thus came out on 11 March 1902, the first volume of *Srī Srī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta*. This brought heaps of praise for M. Still, he could not summon enough self-confidence, to proceed further. At such a moment Sri Ramakrishna guided him through a dream. On 14 October 1902, M. saw the Master in a dream. M. touched his feet. The Master assured him saying, 'I have taken your responsibility. I am holding you. Why do you worry so much?' M. begged pardon of the Master. The Master then repeatedly assured him. Henceforward M. assumed a rather aggressive posture. He

himself took the initiative, and published the second, third and fourth volumes of the *Kathāmṛta* in 1904, 1908 and 1910 respectively. The year 1925 saw the publication of its appendices in the form of a booklet. And the fifth volume was with the printers when M. passed away on 4 June 1932.

Fourth, to meet the growing demand of the readers, Vol. I of the *Gospel*, translated into English by the author himself, was published in 1907 by the Brahmavadin Office, Madras. Again, based on the English translation of some of M.'s diary-notes, Swami Abhedananda published Vol. I of the *Gospel* in December 1907 from the Vedanta Society, New York. A second edition of the first one, revised by M. himself, was brought out by the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, in 1911. Next year, the Vedanta Society of San Francisco brought out a reprint of the Madras edition. Its second part was published by the Madras Math in 1922. And the full translation of the entire *Gospel* by Swami Nikhilananda appeared first in 1942.

The *Gospel* created a stir, particularly among the intellectuals. Aldous Huxley observed, 'No other saint has had so able and indefatigable a Boswell. Never have the small events of a contemplative's daily life been described with such wealth of intimate details. Never have the casual and unstudied utterances of a great religious teacher been set down with so minute a fidelity.' On reading a part of the English *Gospel* that was published at that time, Monsieur Romain Rolland wrote to M. on 10 October 1928, 'Thank you for having transmitted to us the benefit of the benign smile of your Master.' The well-known modern novelist Christopher Isherwood, who wrote a popular biography of Sri Ramakrishna, finds in the atmosphere of the *Gospel* narrative the quality of 'nowness'. Being in the occasional company of Sri

Ramakrishna M. was aware of this and tried to narrate it with a 'thankful wonder'. The style of the *Gospel* is Biblical in its simplicity. It is as simple as Sri Ramakrishna himself. It takes the readers straight to the truth, and not through any metaphysical maze.

The nature of the Gospel

Though the *Gospel* is mainly a record of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, it is also a biography of the great Master in the last and most important phase of his life. According to Harold Nicholson a true biography must have the three elements of truth, individuality and art.² The *Gospel* has all these and something more. But what is the real 'gospel' (or glad tidings, as the word literally means) that the *Kathāmṛta* has brought to humanity? It is the message of the One Eternal Religion discovered and vitalized by Sri Ramakrishna. This special feature was pointed out by Swami Vivekananda when he said, 'Other teachers taught special religions which bear their names. He left every religion undisturbed, because he had realized that, in reality, they are all part and parcel of One Eternal Religion!' Into whatever category we may put it, this piece of hagiographic literature has a great charm, for it can certainly help men to find peace and happiness even in the midst of the anti-religious philosophies of today.

The act of writing about a real person, whether in a biography or in a memoir, instantly deprives his personality of several dimensions, instantly transform him through print into a limited image. M. minimized this shortcoming by combining annotative and analytical methods with the synthetic method. When questioned about his

2. Harold Nicholson: *The Development of English Biography*, 1959, p. 157.

portrayal of his Master M. explained, 'We have tried to take different photographs of the Master. Every shot provides details of Sri Ramakrishna in a different setting.' More significant than this is the fact that M.'s creative genius enabled him to project Sri Ramakrishna's detached photographs with such continuity and speed that the effect produced combines motion and life. We find in front of us, as it were, a living Sri Ramakrishna smiling, talking, cracking jokes, singing, dancing, and occasionally diving into the ocean of bliss—always with a bewitching smile on his lips. The whole book is filled through and through with the loftiness, tranquility and gravity of the highest spiritual experiences, but this is harmoniously blended with the naturalness and spontaneity of real life including the apparently trivial incidents of day-to-day life. Some even suspected that M. had foisted his own ideas on the illiterate priest of Dakshineswar. One such person was N. Bangarayya of Madras. He came to Calcutta, talked with M. for three days, and was convinced that the disciple's style of speaking was entirely different from that of the Master.³ Sri Ramakrishna was unique, and unique were his words. N. N. Gupta, an eyewitness, truly remarked, 'No other man within the memory of man spoke as Ramakrishna spoke.' And M. had the unique credit of presenting those words undistorted.

Unlike other scriptures, the *Gospel* does not demand any preparation on the part of the reader. The teachings are of universal application. They satisfy the learned and the ignorant alike. A man of devotion, a man of work, a man of knowledge—all are inspired equally, not excluding the atheist. Realizing the frailties and inadequacies of human beings, Sri Ramakrishna assured everyone of the 'glad

tidings', and M. has brought that message of hope within the reach of all.

Master's mahāvākya on M.

We now turn to another important aspect of the *Gospel*. Notwithstanding his great literary talent, the production of the *Kathāmṛta* was but a by-product of M.'s Ramakrishna-sādhana, to which he had committed himself ever since his meeting Sri Ramakrishna in February 1882. Academically the most brilliant among the Master's disciples, M. was then serving as the headmaster of a high school. By that time he had had four children, three sons and a daughter. Bitter family squabbles made the peace-loving M. so despondent, that he actually walked out one night into the wide world with the thought of putting an end to his life. Circumstances brought him, however, to Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. M. considered this meeting the 'greatest event' of his life. Sri Ramakrishna welcomed him saying, 'I can see from the signs of your eyes, brows, and face that you are a yogi. You look like a yogi who has just left his seat of meditation.' Deeply moved by Sri Ramakrishna's magically plastic and sensitive disposition, attractive smile, charming voice, and deep spiritual experiences, M. opened himself freely to Sri Ramakrishna's presence and influence. His rudderless life found a new creative direction and mission. M. accepted him as his mentor and saviour in crossing the ocean of life. He would often repeat the salutation prayer:

Samsārārṇava ghore yaḥ kaṇadhāra-
svarūpakāḥ

Namostu Rāmakṛṣṇāya tasmai śrī
Gurave namaḥ

(Salutations to Ramakrishna, the Guru, who stands firm as the helmsman while

³. *Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1949, p. 228-9.

ferrying people across the dangerous ocean of worldliness). From that moment M. had a new lease of life. Moreover, he gradually blossomed into an evangelist of the Godman.

Sri Ramakrishna, who could see the ins and the outs of M., made some significant statements about him. M. regarded them as *mahāvākyas*. They were fifty-two in number. He recorded them reverentially in his diary. Among them we find Sri Ramakrishna's saying, 'I recognized you on hearing you read the Chaitanya Bhagavatam. You are my own. The same substance, like father and son... Before you came here, you didn't know who you were. Now you will know.' In the presence of Iswarchandra Vidyasagar Sri Ramakrishna told of him, 'He is a nice young man and is sound at the core. He is like the river Phalgu. The surface is covered with sand; but if you dig a little, you will find water flowing underneath.' He also said: 'Once (in a vision) I saw Gauranga and his devotees singing Kirtan in the Panchavati. I think I saw Balaram there, and you too.' Referring to M. the Master once told Devendra Majumdar, 'The inundated water has united the drain with the pond. Now the water is quivering a little... He and I have become one.' The thirty-sixth *mahāvākya* states, 'Illumine him, Mother, otherwise how will he illumine others in turn? Why have you thrown him into the world? Otherwise, had this firework been ignited, how it would have excelled!' However, in another *mahāvākya* the Master assured M. by praying to the Mother, 'Mother, please reveal yourself to him now and then. Let him pursue both. What will it do by making him give up everything at once, Mother! Well, you may do whatever you like in the end. If you want him to give up everything, do so.'

From the very beginning Sri Rama-

krishna taught M., 'Do all your duties, but keep your mind on God. Live with all—with wife, and children, father and mother—and serve them. Treat them as if they were very dear to you, but you know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you.' While M. practised the spiritual disciplines prescribed by the Master, the latter protected him as a mother-bird protects her fledglings from rain and wind by spreading her wings over them. As M. proceeded, he became diluted in the ocean of thought of Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna once said to M., 'You don't want anything from me, but you love to see me and hear my words. My mind also dwells on you. I wonder how you are and why you don't come.' According to the science of homoeopathy, the strength of a medicine increases as its dilution increases. As M.'s dilution in the thought of Sri Ramakrishna increased, he became richer in his spiritual attainments.

Master's ādeśas to M.

If those fifty-two statements of Sri Ramakrishna be regarded as *śruti*, Sri Ramakrishna's specific commands to him, eighty-five in number, were held by him as *smṛti*. Here are few examples of them. 'Meditate on God, you have much work to do'; 'Visit this place, just as one cleanses a brass-pot daily'; 'Advise the youths who call upon you'; 'Bring Bankim (a boy devotee) here, otherwise you instruct him; your words will bring him illumination'; 'Whenever you fail to visit here, write me a postcard'; 'Massage my feet.'

The Gospel in the life of M.

M. not only did carefully sift and catalogue the *mahāvākyas* and *ādeśas* (commands) from the sayings of the Master, but he sincerely followed them in

letter and spirit. He served the Master in his humble way. Moreover, in spite of his natural modesty he was persuaded by the Master to sing devotional songs, and even to participate in devotional dances along with other devotees. And his endeavours were amply rewarded. Even as late as 1 March 1899 M. dreamt that he was passionately singing 'O Lord, must all my days pass by so utterly in vain?' and that on hearing this the Master passed into deep *samadhi*.

Thus went on the process of being and becoming in M. Like a sunflower with its face always turned towards the sun, M. depending entirely on Sri Ramakrishna moved forward in the path to the divine. He felt an urge to renounce family life and become a monk. Sri Ramakrishna prevented him saying, 'Mother has told me that you have to do a little of Her work—you will have to teach "Bhagavata", the word of God to humanity. The Mother keeps a Bhagavata pundit bound to the world.' But even this could not pacify him, perhaps. Then, one evening when M. was alone with him at Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna said in an ecstatic mood, 'Let nobody think that if he does not do Mother's work, it would remain undone. The Mother can turn even a straw into a teacher.' This settled once for all M.'s hesitation and doubt. In obedience to his Guru's command M. lived outwardly as a householder, but inwardly all-absorbed in the Divine. His life exemplified the Master's teaching that an ideal householder must be a *grhastha-sannyāsi*, who practises inner renunciation. He must live like a good maidservant of a rich family, loving and caring properly for the children of the house, but knowing always that her real house and children are elsewhere. Sri Ramakrishna kept a loving watch on M., who sincerely followed the Master's advice in handling the worldly problems

as well as the spiritual disciplines prescribed by him.

One day Sri Ramakrishna was heard to utter in an ecstatic mood, 'Mother, I cannot talk any further—give power to Ram, Mahendra, Bijay, and others; let them do your work from now onward.' Sri Ramakrishna chose Mahendra (M.) as his faithful recorder, commissioned him to keep a record of his teachings, tutored him in the art, and frequently discussed with him what had been spoken. Thus the Master guided him in keeping a correct and authentic record of his ideas, views and teachings. The fiftieth *mahāvākya* of Sri Ramakrishna was, 'He has no trace of ego'. True to this, this humble messenger, when someone approached him for spiritual guidance, would often say, 'I am an insignificant person. But I live by the side of an ocean and I keep with me a few pitchers of the water of the ocean. When a visitor comes, I entertain him with that. What else can I speak but his words?'

The evangelist M. gradually turned into a living gospel. His life, so long centred on the Master, became full of the thought of the Master. Like St. Paul he could say, 'The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith in the Son of God.' One eyewitness has recorded: 'Though his exterior was Mahendra Gupta, his interior was united with Sri Ramakrishna through his deliberating, thinking, and meditating on Sri Ramakrishna and continuously practising in life his teachings... He did not retain what is called the "fiery independent spirit of self-assertion."' He completely gave up his inherent fiery independent thinking and desire for self-assertion. Sri Ramakrishna had filled his heart to the full. The purpose of his living was only to serve as a reflection of Sri Ramakrishna.⁴

4. Mahendranath Dutta: *Mastermasayer Anudhyan*, p. 19.

He considered himself a mere machine driven by Sri Ramakrishna. It was from this firm faith he used to defend himself saying, 'Is it I who have produced the *Gospel*? The Master himself has done his work. Appearing in me as my intelligence and will-power, he made me write this. Even if we do not understand it, he is the doer and the supervisor who gets the work done.'⁵ Towards the last phase of his life when some admirer of his attributed the production of the *Gospel* to his talent, M. protested saying, 'The Master is everything. The tram car, as long as it is connected with the electric wire, moves forward, and has its lamps burning and fans moving. Pull out the connector, and everything will stop. Now I clearly perceive that he is leading me by holding my hand, and I am certain that he will lead me through the last part of my journey too.'⁶

M.'s experience of the Master

As M. advanced in his journey to the temple of the Divine, one could notice another development in him. The seed of great possibilities that was sown in his heart gradually germinated and sprouted forth into a plant. As it grew into a fine tree, there appeared besides the rich foliage a beautiful bloom, rich in colour and fragrance. Quite fascinating is the story of this development. During the early days when his mental horizon had just turned crimson with the rise of the Ramakrishna-sun, he declared that he had never before seen such knowledge, ecstatic love, faith in God, renunciation, and catholicity in anybody other than Sri Ramakrishna. As his inner life deepened further, it dawned on him that Christ, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna—all the three were one and the same. After he had drunk a few sips

of the nectar of divine bliss in the company of Sri Ramakrishna, he one day submitted to Sri Ramakrishna, 'You are as infinite as He, of whom we have been talking. Truly, no one can fathom your depth.' His poetic temperament found nice expression when M. said to the Master, 'God sports through you. This I have realized, that you are the instrument and God is the Master. God has created other beings as if with a machine, but yourself with His own hand.' As M. progressed in his Ramakrishna-sādhana, his inner life continued to blossom forth. On 28 July 1885 M., at his Master's behest, repeated before him, 'You told us to imagine a field extending to the horizon and beyond. It extends without any obstruction; but we cannot see it on account of a wall in front of us. In that wall there is a round hole. Through the hole we see a part of that infinite field.' The Master asked him, 'Tell me what that hole is.' M. replied, 'You are that hole. Through you, can be seen everything—that Infinite meadow without any end.' The Master patted the disciple's back expressing his pleasure at the latter's understanding. The disciple's understanding continued to grow deeper. He finally set up in his heart a perennial 'Dakshineswar' where Sri Ramakrishna, the God-incarnate sported eternally with his loving devotee. He further shared with the worldly people the bliss he derived through his regular communion with the God-incarnate.

From being a chronicler M. gradually changed into an evangelist dedicated to the cause of the Master. But what for? An idealist as he was, he dreamt of a golden future. In a letter addressed to a swami of the Ramakrishna Order in 1928 M. wrote: 'This time the Godman of modern times has appeared in this country... Henceforth the foreign culture, that is, the so-called material civilization of the

⁵. *Udbodhan*, Vol. 67, No. 8, p. 434.

⁶. *Ibid*, Vol. 65, No. 6, p. 316.

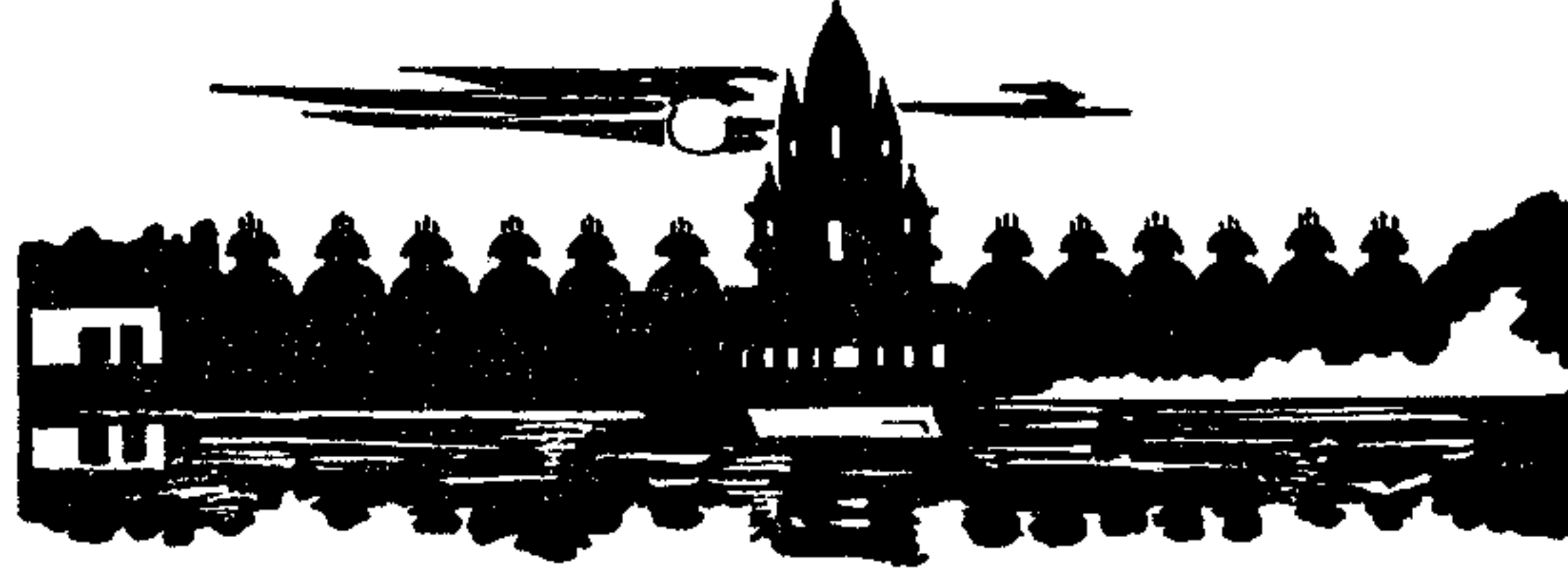
West, will not be adored for long. Sex-worship and dollar-worship, it is hoped, disappear by the grace of the Lord. "Pure devotion", "Human life's aim is God-realization", etc. as upheld by the Master, will henceforth be pursued. And your life and character, and not mere lectures, will arouse the consciousness of the people, no doubt.' Thus in his daily life M. caught the glint of his Master's splendour and glory. It shone through all he said, all he did, all he was.

Sri Ramakrishna had noticed the co-existence of the attitudes of 'servant-I' and 'I-am-That' in M. Though these two constituted his personality, only the attitude of 'servant-I' found predominance in the life and deeds of M. as the chronicler of the Master. Bathed in the glorious light of Ramakrishna, 'Master Mahashay', as M. was popularly called, was a typical Indian ṛṣi who used to draw crowds of spiritual seekers as well as strangers around him. One such person, an Englishman, has left on record his impression about him. He wrote, 'Night after night I come, less to hear the pious utterances of Master Mahashaya than to bask in the spiritual sunshine of his presence. The atmosphere around him is tender and beautiful, gentle and loving; he has found some inner bliss and the radiation of it seems palpable. Often I forget his words, but I cannot forget his benignant personality. That which drew him again to Ramakrishna seems to draw me to Mahashaya

also, and I begin to understand how potent must have been the influence of the teacher when the pupil exercises such a fascination upon me.'⁷

With his own individuality lost in the light of Sri Ramakrishna, M.'s true nature shone in the glory of his Master. His true life which began as the chronicler soon became a glorious commentary on the *Gospel* itself. His thoughts, actions and utterings—all reflected Sri Ramakrishna and his glory. Spiritual aspirants felt attracted by the angelic appearance of M., with silky white beard and large lustrous eyes. They regarded him as 'his Master's voice.' In him they could also see his Master's reflection. He was a true evangelist of the first order, and his words and actions evoked nothing but the thoughts of his Master and the image of his Master. Thus brilliantly shone the Mahendra-moon, a satellite of the Ramakrishna-sun, till 4 June 1932 when he offered his last prayer, 'Mother—Gurudev—take me in your arms.' His prayer was granted. The disciple's spirit got reunited with the Master. Nevertheless, M. as the chronicler and evangelist continues to live in the Gospel side by side with his Master—he as *aṇoraṇiyān* (smaller than the smallest) and his Master as *mahatomahīyān* (greater than the greatest). They have for all practical purposes become one for eternity.

7. Paul Brunton: *A Search in Secret India*, 1934, p. 133.



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

DR. BEATRICE BRUTEAU

The Way of Manifestation

If the prayer of insight was our learning to live in God, the prayer of manifestation is our experience of God living in us. In this prayer one has a vivid sense of God being one's life—not in the sense of God being the most important thing in one's life, but in the sense of God being the act of living which one is. God is experienced as a dynamic activity of existing, which existing is, in me, my existing. Therefore the prayer experience, or conscious attending to God, becomes now a matter of expression, or action. What one does is God's doing.

It is common for those who experience the higher states of prayer to say that they have not done anything of themselves but God has done it in them or to them. They speak of the divine initiative and call their experience passive. But it also happens that some say that what is characteristic of their prayer is that they cannot tell whether what lives and moves in them is their own life and will or God's. In the experience and the theological explanation offered here, it is suggested that while, if one could distinguish between 'my act' and 'God's act' one would say 'It is God's act not mine,' the whole point of the experience itself is precisely that it

becomes impossible and nonsensical (having no assignable meaning) any longer to make such a distinction.

This is the interpretation I would put on the word of Swami Brahmananda that spiritual life begins with samādhi. It is only after one has realized the divine union that one can begin to live the divine life. Coinciding with the divine life and consciousness means, in a Christian context, participating in the divine activity of creating, so that the prayerful life becomes, when it is full and ripe, the active life in the world. This is not the same as the active life serving as a prayerful life, which it does as one is advancing toward the state of insight and union. There the effort of activity serves as a means of purification to the one who prays, a preliminary to the state of union. Here the activity is a consequence of the divine union and comes about not because of the nature, condition, or situation of the one who prays, but because of the nature and will of God. It is God who is active and creative, and therefore one who is united with God must perforce be active and creative with God.

Several realizations or forms of the prayer of manifestation follow from this. Among them are: All my actions are God's actions. I am united with Jesus in

his capacity as the Logos through whom all things are created. I participate in creating the world I experience. And I can create new and better worlds.

All my actions are God's actions. It is essential to remember that this is being said of one who has passed through all the preceding stages of prayer and whose actions are therefore pure and benevolent. Also, the emphasis here is on the existential and dynamic union with God; this is not a way of claiming that one can justify, or call attention to, one's acts by exhibiting them as divinely inspired or mandated. It is rather a humble but vivid realization that even my least movement of lifting my pen or drawing my breath is possible only by God's creative presence in that action itself, and that when I serve my neighbour, it is God dwelling in me who performs this service, no prideful credit to me.

More than this, though: I am impelled to act, and to act as well and as generously and intelligently and beautifully as my nature permits, because the divine creative pressure is expanding within me. *It* experiences creative urgency, and this urgency moves through me, through whatever limited abilities I have. And it doesn't matter how limited those abilities may be. They are full of the divine creativity; all that they are and all that they do is sustained by the divine life. And indeed, it is part of the divine creativity itself that it should express itself in limited ways, so what is one degree or kind of limitation compared to another? All are limited, and all are divinely active.

The particularity of my limited mode of expressing the divine life thus is part of that very divine activity. I can realize my union with the absolutely Transcendent One and therefore with its creative self-expression and therefore with the particular limited forms in which it is expressed, and

therefore with *this* particular limited form which I am accustomed to call 'myself'. Perhaps we can appropriately recall here St. Bernard's sequence of ways of relating love of self and love of God. In the beginning we love ourselves for our own sake, then we love God for our sake, then we love God for God's sake, and finally we are able to love ourselves for God's sake. How different is the last state from the first!

In daily life this means that everything is transformed. The most familiar things and actions are shot through with the divine presence.²² Everything is marvellous, because everything is something that God is doing; nothing is ordinary or tedious or banal or trivial or unworthy of notice. Things/events are no longer compared with one another, but all are instinctively and spontaneously compared with Nothing, with Nonexistence. Nothing is taken for granted, the world is not a given from which one starts, much less a deception or a trap from which one would escape. One *lives* the world from the inside out, so to speak, like an illumination, a

22. The world is charged with the grandeur of
God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook
foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze
of oil

Crushed....

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep
down things;

And though the last lights off the black
West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward,
springs—

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with
ah! bright wings.

'God's Grandeur,' by Gerard Manley Hopkins, available in many collections, e.g., *Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Penguin, 1953), p. 27.

radiation. It is, perhaps, something like the way one listens to music very intently, so caught up in it that one feels that one is *making* the music, that this music is one's own song, one's own self-expression.

It further means that action in the world need not be avoided but one can be quite active if that is the appropriate disposition of the abilities that make up the nature of the particular being that one is. One participates in the divine creative life by developing and operating those abilities in the context of the rest of the divine creativity, the world. Such action cannot be distracting as it would have been at an earlier stage, because one now perceives it precisely as the divine life, as the creative presence of God, God here in action, God acting through me and through others. The whole attention and devotion are wrapped up in God and nothing but God because one doesn't see anything else except God—God as creatively active in the many things/events.

I am united with Jesus in his capacity as the Logos through whom all things are created. Ruth Burrows, in her *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer*, says that the state of transforming union has 'no counterpart in nature. It can be understood only in the incarnation. It derives from that and, as someone dared to suggest, can be called an extension of it. A person in this state is totally possessed by Jesus, identified with him in his surrender to his Father. Thus, through her (the one who prays) Jesus is on earth in an incomparable way. His kingdom has come in her and because of this comes ever more fully into the world.'²³

The person in whom the transforming union has been realized may be regarded as an extension of the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus: this is the experience of

the one who prays in this way. Jesus experiences himself as, identifies himself with, the 'Word' or 'Son of God' level of being, the unique Principle through which the Absolute manifests itself in the world.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.²⁴

He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.²⁵

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.²⁶

The suggestion I want to make here is that this incarnation is not only a utilitarian affair, something done in order to accomplish a given end, but it is a spontaneous, self-expressive act on the part of God, an act of beauty, an end in itself. It is epiphany, manifestation. And not even manifestation *to* someone, in order to convince, persuade, show, or console. It is, if we may say so, 'intransitive' self-manifestation, the act of an artist.

Now, the one whose prayer takes the form of realization of union with Jesus, finds that this means union with the Principle of divine self-manifestation, and participation in the incarnation. This one *also* is the Word made flesh, dwelling here. The experience of union, or coincidence, makes one experience this from 'the inside' and in this sense know it of oneself, but one also recognizes that it is true of all else that exists. The scope of 'the incarnation' expands to include 'all creation'. The sense of being an extension of the incarnation then operates in concrete life

²⁴. Colossians 1:15-17.

²⁵. John 1:2-3.

²⁶. John 1:14.

²³. London: Sheed and Ward, 1976, p. 118.

in two ways; In the narrower sense, the one who prays in Jesus feels a personal union with him and a participation in his particular career in the world. One's own manifestation takes the form of extending this career as one conceives it and according to one's abilities. In the broader sense, one realizes union with the Logos which becomes incarnate in Jesus, and works/plays to manifest this universal principle.

I participate in creating the world I experience. In some sense it must be true that 'all things are created through (me) and for (me).' The one who prays realizes in a practical way that the world-manifestation in which one lives is partially a product of one's own creative activity. What I experience—what is 'for me'—has to some extent come 'through me'.

The gospels speak a good deal of 'faith', or 'believing'. This can be taken in various ways. I want to suggest here that one meaning may be that 'faith' is our conscious participation in creating the world we experience.

And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened.²⁷

But what is it to 'believe'? It is, in this meaning among others, to be convinced of the reality or possibility of a certain world-state and to expect to experience it. We are always doing this, more or less, at least with respect to our conviction about the possibility and the probability of certain events. Our own experience—what we notice, what stands

out for us—is to a large extent shaped by what we already believe about the world.

But, now, if we experience being united with the Logos which creates the world—which says 'Let it be...' and it is so—we see that our 'belief', which picks out certain aspects of world-experience to be focused in our reflexive consciousness, is somehow caught up in, or is part of, the universal Logos' act of creating the world. The world is not just imposed upon me, but I have some input into it, however tiny. And my 'believing' that 'makes it so' is not a fancy or a deception or an irregularity, but is a part of the way the universe is designed to operate.

Consequently, I feel that I belong to the Logos and I belong to the universe that it creates, and my existence and my action and my believing are all integral parts, or aspects, or participations in, the divine self-manifestation that is the world. The rest of the world is not disconnected from me and over against me; it appears almost as an extension of myself. I need not avoid and cannot escape responsibility for my experience, but neither do I find my experience alienating. This gives a deeper meaning to the notion of 'self-acceptance' and world or experience acceptance that has long been mentioned in spiritual traditions and that is now popular in psychological circles. However, we must reiterate that it is not the unrealized self that makes the significant act of acceptance of self, world, and experience, but the realized self. Its acceptance is rooted in the experience of union with the Logos in whom 'all things were created'.

This leads inevitably to a sense of profound involvement with, and commitment to, other people and the rest of the world generally. One feels that all others are 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.'²⁸ One quite literally means it when

²⁷. Matthew 9:27-29.

²⁸. Genesis 2:23.

one declares 'Whatever you do to the least of these...you do to me,'²⁹ and feels that all creation is a single living being, which is one's own being at the same time that it is the being of everyone else too. This is the state of the bodhisattva, in which one longs for the salvation of all and dedicates oneself to the welfare, perfection, and happiness of all beings.

I can create new and better worlds. These last two realizations, of the creative power of faith and of solidarity with all creation, produce, finally, the prayer of manifestation that unites with the creative Logos in making 'all things new.'³⁰ The one who prays is clearly aware that creation is still going on and that the exercise of 'faith' is our way of participating in it.

And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and never doubt,...even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.³¹

"Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."³²

What has to be noticed here is that the 'asking' must be done 'in prayer' and 'in my name.' This protects us against any interpretation that would allow idiosyncratic or magical practice of 'faith'. One must be 'in prayer,' that is, one must have passed through the stages of purification and transcendence of all self-centred or self-seeking movements to the transforming divine union in which the individual will is entrained with the divine will. And one must ask 'in my name,'

that is, one must be identifying with, and locating oneself in, the Logos, or Son of God, level of reality; one must actually *be* 'in' the Name, the essential reality of the person.

All of this being so, one can then consider what the exercise of faith might mean as a prayer of manifestation. Perhaps we may think of faith as a distinct faculty of consciousness, in addition to the knowing power, the willing power, and the valuing or affective power. If we describe carefully what we mean, we may say that the faith faculty is allied to the imagination. Imagination is the power of consciousness to form internally a novel being by improvisation, to fabricate something on the interface between the conceptual level of the spirit and the material level of the cosmos. Imagination constructs the model in consciousness and then projects it outward and clothes it spatially, temporally, and materially. The imagination is the artistic faculty, it is the power by which great works of art are composed and created.

But it need not be limited to such works as painting, music, and literature. Daily life is a creation, a work of art, and improvement of our life and world is a work of faith. Healing in the name of God is a creative act that has long been practised, and why should it not be expanded to all sorts of 'healing,' of larger scale ills as well as diseases of the individual? And why not pass beyond correcting what we experience as ill to adding to what we experience as good and beautiful, that our 'joy may be full'? Up to this time, says Jesus, we have not really asked in the name of the Logos. If we can enter into this prayer of manifestation, shall we not ask?

We have usually thought of faith as something that we have at the *beginning* of our religious pilgrimage, Sustaining

²⁹. Matthew 25:40.

³⁰. Revelation 21:5.

³¹. Matthew 21:21-22.

³². John 16:23-24.

ourselves by reliance on the word of those who *have* seen, we do our spiritual practices and eventually, by the grace of God, we break through to vision of the Reality, after which we need faith no longer.³³ This is a perfectly good use of the word, and when that meaning is intended, that statement about what happens is true. But 'faith' can have more than one meaning. When we take 'faith' to mean conviction and expectation coupled with a clear, unwavering focus of the imagination in union with the divine will,³⁴ then we may see how it is a late phenomenon in the spiritual journey, something that comes in a full and operative way only when the realization of union with the creative Logos is steady.

In this latter sense, we have not had much faith, and we have not done 'the wonderful works of God'.³⁵ We are like the disciples of Jesus who tried to cast out a demon but failed, provoking Jesus to exclaim, 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?' Later, 'the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"' He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have

faith... nothing will be impossible to you."³⁶ But even Jesus could not perform miracles where the people themselves were lacking in faith.³⁷ So it may be that the awakening of the faculty of faith is something that comes fairly late in the spiritual life and results from the realization of one's union with the divine creative power.

Prayer in Jesus

This has been a description, together with some argument and speculation, of a way of prayer in and through Jesus. The point has been to say that the one who prays first gains insight by entering into the consciousness and the personal reality of Jesus, discovering there that one is united with the 'Son of God' or Logos Principle of Reality. Then, because one is so united, one participates in doing what the Logos does, that is, manifesting God by creating the world. Thus one's actions become prayers also, prayers of externalization and manifestation as the internalizations had been prayers of insight.

Both types of prayer, it seems to me, are characteristic of a Christian context, of prayer that is somehow referred to Jesus. And indeed, I would suggest, both types of prayer are essential to us human beings in the context of any spiritual tradition. For prayer, as I said in the beginning, is a matter of coming to know, and to coincide with, The Reality, following on which it is also a matter of playing one's full role in The Reality. The complete spiritual life is both insight, or realization of the transcendent root of our being, and manifestation of the creative expression of that being.

(Concluded)

33. 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' II Corinthians 5:7. Cf. the story of Jesus' revelation to the samaritan woman he met at the well: 'Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony....he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and we know...."' John 4:39-42.

34. 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.' Hebrews 11:1. 'Let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord.' James 1:6-8.

35. Acts 2:11.

36. Matthew 17:17-21; cf. Mark 4:40: 'He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?"'.

37. Matthew 13:58: 'He did not do many mighty works there (in Nazareth) because of their unbelief.'

GIRISH CHANDRA GHOSH

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

(Continued from previous issue)

There is a saying that if a man takes one step toward God, God takes ten steps toward him. It was not just that Girish was seeking Sri Ramakrishna; even more so, it was Sri Ramakrishna who was seeking Girish to play a vital role in his divine drama.

Long before he met Girish, Sri Ramakrishna had had a vision which he described as follows: 'One day, when I was meditating in the Kali Temple, I saw a naked boy skipping into the temple. He had a tuft of hair on the crown of his head, and was carrying a flask of wine under his left arm and a vessel of nectar in his right hand. "Who are you?" I asked. "I am Bhairava (the chief of Śiva's host)," he replied. On my asking the reason for his coming, he answered, "To do your work." Years later, when Girish came to me, I recognized that Bhairava in him.'

Girish hated hypocrisy from the bottom of his heart. Being bold and strong in character, he did not find it necessary to hide his weaknesses. And indeed, it takes tremendous courage to unite mind and speech, especially to one's discredit. Girish would say, 'I have drunk so many bottles of wine that if you were to place one bottle on top of another they would reach the height of Mount Everest.' It is true that he drank a great deal and he had once been addicted to opium. He also would visit brothels often. But one should not think that he was a seducer, an exploiter, a cheat, or given to actual

cruelty. His strength of character kept him above hypocrisy and other such evils.

When Girish was drunk he had little control over his speech and behaviour. Seeing him in this condition, even the girls of the brothels hesitated to open their doors to him. 'One night,' said Girish,

In a euphoric and drunken mood, I was visiting a house of prostitution with two of my friends. But suddenly I felt an urge to visit Sri Ramakrishna. My friends and I hired a carriage and drove out to Dakshineswar. It was late at night, and everyone was asleep. The three of us entered Sri Ramakrishna's room, tipsy and reeling. Sri Ramakrishna grasped both my hands and began to sing and dance in ecstasy. The thought flashed through my mind, 'Here is a man whose love embraces all—even a wicked man like me, whose own family would condemn me in this state. Surely this holy man, respected by the righteous, is also the saviour of the fallen.'

One day a devotee complained to Sri Ramakrishna about Girish's habit of drinking and begged him to ask Girish to give it up. But Sri Ramakrishna sternly replied: 'Why do you trouble your head about him? He who has taken charge of him will look after him. Girish is a devotee of the heroic type. I tell you, drinking will not affect him.'

On another occasion Sri Ramakrishna asked Aswinī Kumar Dutta if he knew Girish Ghosh.

'Which Girish Ghosh? The one connected with the theatre?'

'Yes.'

'I have never seen him, but I know him by reputation.'

'A good man.'

'They say he drinks.'

'Let him! Let him! How long will he continue that?'

Sri Ramakrishna never forbade Girish to drink, as he knew that it takes time to change deep-rooted habits. Yet the silent influence of the Master's love worked miracles.

Girish saw his life changing under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna, yet he could not fathom the nature of this great soul. One day he asked the Master, 'Who are you, sir?' Sri Ramakrishna replied, 'Some say I am Ramprasad (a poet-saint of Bengal), others that I am Raja Ramakrishna. I simply live here.'

Gradually Girish became convinced that Sri Ramakrishna was an Incarnation of God, and he started to spread this idea among the devotees. On a certain occasion Sri Ramakrishna asked Girish: 'Hello! What were you saying about me? I eat, drink, and make merry.'

Girish: 'What should we have been saying about you? Are you a holy man?'

Ramakrishna: 'No, nothing of the sort. Truly I do not feel that I am a holy man.'

Girish: 'I am not your equal even in joking.'

In the same vein, Girish related once that Sri Ramakrishna had asked the future Swami Yogananda what he thought of him. The young man replied, 'You are neither a householder nor a sannyasin (monk).' Sri Ramakrishna was greatly pleased and exclaimed, 'What an extraordinary statement you have just made!' Sri Ramakrishna was happy to know that his disciple had recognized his divine nature, which is beyond all limitations and stages of life.

One day Girish surrendered himself completely to the Master. He asked him

for instruction as to what he should do from then on. 'Do just what you are doing now,' said Sri Ramakrishna. 'Hold on to God with one hand and to the world with the other. Think of God at least in the morning and evening.' This sounded simple to Girish, but then he recalled that his life was so irregular that it would be hard for him to remember God at those stated hours; so he kept quiet. Sri Ramakrishna read his mind and said, 'Well, if you cannot do that, then remember God before you eat and before you sleep.' But now Girish was reluctant to promise anything to Sri Ramakrishna. He knew that, with his instinctive resistance to self-discipline and rules, he might not be able to keep even this simple observance. Then Sri Ramakrishna went into an ecstatic mood and said to him: 'So you are unwilling to agree even to this. All right. Give me your *power of attorney*. Henceforth I will take full responsibility for you. You won't have to do anything at all.'

Girish was relieved. This sounded to his liking, for he understood that Sri Ramakrishna had relieved him of all responsibility for his own spiritual well-being and had made him free. But, in fact, he had made himself Sri Ramakrishna's slave. Complete self-surrender is more binding than the observance of strict disciplines. One day, soon after this, Girish remarked in Sri Ramakrishna's presence, 'I shall do this.' 'No, no,' corrected Sri Ramakrishna. 'You can't talk like that anymore. Say, "I shall do this if God wills."' Girish began to understand. As time passed he came to realize that he could not perform any action of his own free will. He had to consciously surrender to the Divine Will, and gradually he found that he was forced to think of the Master every moment. In the later part of his life he would say, 'Look at me. I am not even free to breathe.'

To a large extent progress in spiritual life depends on the intensity of one's effort. Yet it still takes time to eradicate past *samskāras* (impressions of the mind). In Girish's case, however, his faith and love were so intense that a transformation in his life was brought about very quickly. In spite of this, Sri Ramakrishna once made a remark about Girish to another devotee, 'You may wash a thousand times a cup that has held a solution of garlic; but is it ever possible to get rid of the smell altogether?' Girish heard about it and he was hurt. He went to Sri Ramakrishna and asked, 'Will this smell of garlic go?'

'Yes, it will.'

'So you say it will.'

'All smell disappears when a blazing fire is lighted. If you heat a cup smelling of garlic, you get rid of the smell; it becomes a new cup.'

Now and then Sri Ramakrishna would visit Girish's theatre and bring him sweets. Once the Master fed Girish with his own hands. Girish wrote of this in his memoirs:

One day when I arrived at Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna was just finishing his noonday meal. He offered me his dessert, but as I was about to eat it, he said, 'Wait, Let me feed you myself.' Then he put the pudding into my mouth with his own fingers, and I ate as hungrily and unself-consciously as a small baby. I forgot that I was an adult. I felt I was a child of the mother, and the mother was feeding me. But now, when I remember how these lips of mine had touched many impure lips, and how Sri Ramakrishna fed me, touching them with his holy hand, I am overwhelmed with emotion and say to myself, 'Did this actually happen? Or was it only a dream?'

One day Sri Ramakrishna asked Girish to massage his feet, allowing him the opportunity to give him loving, personal service as an intimate disciple. Girish wrote later: 'I was unwilling. I thought,

"What nonsense! Who is going to sit and massage his feet?" But now when the memory returns I become overwhelmed with remorse. It is only the thought of his infinite love that gives me solace.'

Gradually, however, Girish began to notice how other devotees were serving the Master with love and respect, and by contrast, what a terrible life he was leading. He felt bad, but because of his dissolute life style he was reluctant to offer his service. Then one day, when Sri Ramakrishna was visiting the theatre, Girish, under the influence of liquor, voiced his desire: 'I have not been able to serve you in this life. But if you are born again as my son I can do so. Please promise me that you will be my son.' 'What are you saying?' said Sri Ramakrishna. 'Why should I be born as your son? I shall be your guru, your Chosen Ideal.' Then Girish became angry and abused the Master in coarse language. The devotees who were present were very much shocked and upset and asked the Master not to see Girish again. Sri Ramakrishna quietly returned to Dakshineswar. He prayed, 'O Mother, Girish is an actor. How can he understand your glory? Mother, please forgive him.'

The next day Ram Chandra Dutta visited Dakshineswar. He heard the story of Girish's behaviour the previous evening and told the Master: 'Sir, the serpent Kaliya¹ told Kṛṣṇa, "Lord, you have given me only poison; where shall I get nectar to offer you?" It is the same with Girish. Where will he get nectar? Girish has worshipped you with whatever you have given him.' Sri Ramakrishna smiled and said to the other devotees present:

1. Reference to the story of Kṛṣṇa subduing the venomous snake Kāliya by dancing on the serpent's head. Kāliya began spewing out quantities of poison and told Kṛṣṇa, 'Lord, it is you who have given me poison, rather than nectar, with which to worship you.'

'Listen to what he is saying. Get a carriage. I shall go to Girish's house right now.'

Meanwhile, Girish was very repentant. He had refused to eat and was weeping piteously. Suddenly he saw the Master at his house and was overwhelmed. He said, 'Master, if you had not come today, I would have concluded that you had not attained that supreme state of knowledge where praise and blame are equal, and that you could not be called a paramahansa (an illumined soul).'

Sri Ramakrishna once said to Girish: 'You utter many abusive and vulgar words; but that doesn't matter. It is better for these things to come out. There are some people who fall ill on account of blood poisoning; the more the poisoned blood finds an outlet, the better it is for them... You will be purer day by day. You will improve very much day by day. People will marvel at you.'

One morning Girish went to Balaram Bose's house and found Balaram cleaning rice. Balaram was a rich landlord and had many servants, but nevertheless he was doing this menial work himself. Girish was amazed and asked Balaram the reason for this. Balaram replied: 'The Master is coming today, and he will have his lunch here. So I am cleaning the rice myself.'

Girish was impressed by Balaram's devotion, but again it saddened him that he could not also serve the Master in that way. He returned home and, closing the door, thought: 'Indeed, God comes to the homes of those who have devotion like Balaram. I am a wretched drunkard. There is no one here who can receive the Master properly and feed him.' Girish lay down on his bed. At 1:30 P. M. he heard a knock at his door. Opening it, he found the Master standing there. 'Girish, I am hungry,' said the Master.

'Could you give me some food?' And yet Sri Ramakrishna had finished his meal at Balaram's house only a little while earlier! As there was no food in his house, Girish asked the Master to wait. He then hurried to a restaurant where he purchased some fried bread and potato curry and brought it back to the Master. This food was coarse and hard to digest—not at all the kind of food usually served to the Master. But Sri Ramakrishna ate it with great joy.

Swami Brahmananda once commented that among all of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Girish Ghosh had the greatest intellectual powers. Yet Girish's intellect could not stand up to the power with which the Master conveyed the incomprehensible nature of Brahman. One day the Master told him: 'What do you know about the knowledge of Brahman? The great sage Nārada saw the infinite ocean of Satchidananda from a distance and returned; the ever-pure Śukadeva touched that Ocean only three times; and the great god Śiva drank only three handfuls of its water and lost consciousness.' Girish clapped his hand on his forehead and exclaimed, 'Stop, sir! Say no more. My head is reeling.'

Girish one day requested Sri Ramakrishna to give him a spiritual vision. 'Do not desire such visions,' was the reply. 'For even if you have them, you may not believe what you see.' Later Girish understood the import of those words, for he realized that his doubting mind would have considered such an experience to be some kind of magic or illusion.

Once Girish heard the Master say: 'If a passionate desire arises and persists during meditation, stop and begin to pray. Earnestly pray to the Lord that this desire be removed, that it not be fulfilled. Any desire coming up in meditation, particularly a repressed one, gradually becomes intensified. And if one or more of our

passions are involved, the results can be most disquieting.'

Girish wrote:

Sri Ramakrishna instructed everyone to abstain from telling lies. I told him, 'Sir, I tell numerous lies. How shall I be truthful?' He replied, 'Don't worry about that. You are above truth and falsehood.' When I feel tempted to tell lies, I at once visualize the Master's form, and lies will not come out. Sri Ramakrishna has full sway over my heart—he has it by the power of his love. Lust, anger, and all the terrible passions vanish if one feels this transcendental love of his—no other spiritual practice is required. This realization is the highest goal of human life.

Once Girish wanted to test Sri Ramakrishna's grace and spiritual power. With this in mind, he went to a brothel, intending to spend the night there. But at midnight he experienced an unbearable burning sensation all over his body, and he immediately left the place and returned home. The next morning he went to Dakshineswar and told the whole story to Sri Ramakrishna. The Master listened and then told him firmly: 'Rascal, do you think you have been caught by a harmless water snake and will be able to escape? You have been bitten by a real cobra. After three cries you will be silenced.' Girish's faith in Sri Ramakrishna was strengthened. He was coming to believe that the Master was a saviour of souls like Sri Chaitanya, who redeemed the two villains, Jagai and Madhai. On another occasion, again wanting to test his guru, Girish deliberately tried to think of a worldly thought in Sri Ramakrishna's presence, but he found that he could not.

On July 28, 1885, Sri Ramakrishna went to the home of Nanda Bose, a wealthy man of Calcutta, to see his collection of pictures of gods and goddesses. He was very much impressed. He said to Nanda: 'Though you are a householder, still you

have kept your mind on God. Is that a small thing? The man who has renounced the world will pray to him as a matter of course. Is there any credit in that? But blessed indeed is he who, while leading a householder's life, prays to God. He is like a man who finds an object after removing a stone weighing twenty maunds.' (A maund is approximately eighty-two pounds.)

On this same occasion, Nanda Bose served sweets to Sri Ramakrishna and then offered him betel-leaf on a tray. But the other guests had already taken some from that tray. It is the custom that something can be offered to God only if no one else has partaken of it beforehand; so the Master would not accept any. Nanda noticed this and questioned him about it. Sri Ramakrishna replied: 'Before I eat anything I offer it to God. It is a notion of mine.' Nanda was a little proud of his knowledge of Vedanta philosophy. Trying to evaluate Sri Ramakrishna's actions intellectually, he said, 'But the betel-leaf would have gone to God all the same.' He said further: 'You are a paramahansa. Why do you abide by the injunction or prohibition of the scriptures? They are meant for ignorant people.' Sri Ramakrishna smiled and again remarked, 'It is just a notion of mine.'

Nanda concluded from this that Sri Ramakrishna had not attained the highest nondualistic state of realization, beyond the pairs of opposites and the law of causation. Girish came to know of this and felt bad. He was convinced that the Master had not revealed his divine nature to Nanda because of the man's pride of learning. Wanting to test this himself, Girish invited the Master to his house. Without any comment, Girish brought in a tray of betel-leaf, took one himself, and then offered the tray to the Master. The Master immediately understood Girish's intent and, with a smile, took a betel-leaf

from the tray. Mad with joy, Girish saluted the Master again and again and then disclosed the whole story to others who were present. He who makes the rules can also change them. Girish's love had set aside all rules of religious observance. Moreover, the great teachers observe scriptural rules in order to set an example for others, and not for their own benefit.

Thus, Girish came to have firm faith in the redeeming power of Sri Ramakrishna. Years later he would say, 'Had I known that there was such a huge pit in which to throw one's sins, I would have committed many more.'

Once Sri Ramakrishna asked Girish to take a bath in the Ganga, but Girish was reluctant to do so. It is common belief that if a person takes a bath in the Ganga he becomes pure. Girish considered this mere superstition. Finally the Master persuaded him, saying, 'If you (being a great devotee) do not abide by these religious customs, who else will follow them?' Girish obeyed. Later he would bathe in the Ganga on auspicious occasions. One day the thought came to his mind that if the Master had taken on all his responsibilities, why should he have to bathe in the Ganga to be purified? And again, he wondered why the Master had asked him to do it. However, his analytical mind soon found an answer: When sinners take a bath in the Ganga, the goddess Ganga absorbs their sin and makes them pure. On the other hand, it is believed that when holy people bathe, she gains virtue by offering peace and delight to them. He concluded that through the Master's grace he had become so pure that by his bathing the redeeming power of Mother Ganga would increase a hundredfold!

Where there is love there is faith. Girish's passionate love for Sri Ramakrishna endowed him with what the Master himself described as 'one hundred twenty-

five percent faith.' He loved to talk about Sri Ramakrishna to his friends and bring them to the Master to be blessed. Knowing this the Master one day prayed aloud to the Divine Mother: 'Mother, I cannot talk so much. Give a little power to Kedar, Ram, Girish, and Vijay, so that people may go to them first, learn a little, and at last come here (to me) to have their spiritual awakening with a word or two.'

In the spring of 1885, the cancer that was to prove fatal began to develop in Sri Ramakrishna's throat. In September the devotees moved him from Dakshineswar to Calcutta. There he was closer to the doctor and could be better taken care of by the devotees, who served him, supported him, and came to see him during the last months of his life.

November 6th of that year was the day of the worship of the Divine Mother Kālī. Sri Ramakrishna said to one of his disciples: 'It is good to make some arrangements for the worship. Please speak to the devotees about it.' The devotees made arrangements accordingly. In the evening nearly thirty people assembled in the Master's room. Girish described that event:

Sri Ramakrishna sat down to perform the worship, surrounded by flowers, fruits, and all the various articles for worship. Suddenly he turned to me and said: 'It is the Divine Mother's day. One should sit and meditate like this.' I do not know what took hold of me at that point. I just rushed forward and, chanting 'Jai Sri Ramakrishna (Victory to Sri Ramakrishna),' offered flowers at his feet. The others in the room did the same. Sri Ramakrishna immediately went into samadhi, his hands assuming gestures symbolizing fearlessness and the bestowal of boons.

As Sri Ramakrishna's health was steadily deteriorating, the doctor advised him to move outside of the city, where the air would be better. Consequently, a

beautiful garden house was found in Cossipore, and the move was made on December 11, 1885. An arrangement was made whereby the householder disciples of the Master would contribute money for his treatment, his food, and for the rent. The young, unmarried disciples, the nucleus of the future monastic order, would then manage the household, including the nursing and shopping. After a while some of the householder disciples noticed that the expenditure was gradually increasing. They accused the young men of carelessness and asked that the account book be strictly maintained. The young disciples, however, were offended by this and decided not to accept any more money from those householders. When the situation became tense and critical, Girish came forward with a solution: he simply set fire to the account book in front of everyone. Then he told the householder disciples to contribute each according to his capacity, and he would make up the deficit. To the monastic disciples he said, 'Don't worry. I shall sell my house if necessary and spend every bit of money for the Master.'

On January 1, 1886, Sri Ramakrishna felt strong enough to take a walk in the garden. It was a holiday, and many devotees had come from Calcutta to visit the Master that afternoon. He began walking slowly through the garden, and the devotees followed him. Suddenly Sri Ramakrishna said to Girish, 'Well, Girish, what have you found in me that you proclaim me before all as an Incarnation?' Falling to his knees before the Master and saluting him with folded hands, Girish responded with great emotion: 'Who am I to speak of Him? Even the sages Vyasa and Valmiki could find no words to measure His glory!'

Sri Ramakrishna was deeply moved. He blessed Girish and the assembled devotees, saying: 'What more need I tell you? I bless you all. Be illumined!' Then he went into samadhi and began to bless the devotees, touching them one by one. With each touch he gave spiritual awakening.

One day, not long after this, Gopal Ghosh (who later became known as Swami Advaitananda) expressed to the Master his desire to distribute ochre cloths and *rudrākṣa* rosaries to monks. Sri Ramakrishna pointed to his young disciples and said: 'Why not give them to these boys? They are full of the spirit of renunciation. You won't find better monks any where else.' Gopal had twelve pieces of cloth and twelve rosaries which he handed over to the Master. Then Sri Ramakrishna himself distributed them among eleven of his young disciples. Thus, the foundation of the future Ramakrishna Order was laid by the Master. One cloth and one rosary were left, and the Master asked that they be kept for Girish; for, indeed, he was second to none in his spirit of renunciation.

Girish did not visit the Master very often at Cossipore because he could not bear to see the Master ill. One day Girish went there after the Master had eaten some farina pudding. The unwashed cup with the remnant of the pudding, mixed with the discharge from his throat wound, was still on the floor, and some tiny ants were eating it. Pointing to the cup, Sri Ramakrishna said to Girish, 'Look! And still people call me an avatar!' Girish immediately remarked: 'Sir, now even those ants will get liberation. For what other reason should you have this disease?'

(To be concluded)



TEILHARD DE CHARDIN: AND THE INVINCIBLE ENERGIES OF LOVE

DR. DONALD SZANTHO HARRINGTON

When people sometimes ask me, as they do, to what I credit whatever success I may have had in my Manhattan ministry,¹ I reply: It is because I have a faith; I am a believer. I have a faith by which to live and from which to preach and teach. Because everyone needs such a faith, they are drawn to listen to me, and can be helped by what I have to say.

I believe that this universe is an orderly universe. I know that it stems from Something greater and more wonderful than I, who am only a small part of its wholeness. But because I, who am only a part, am a person, I know that It is also at-the-least personal. That Something for me, thus, is *Someone*.

That Someone, who for me is God, I have gradually learned to describe through my researches into the nature of things. Through the whole array of the sciences from geology to sociology and psychology, and by the intuitions, myths and teachings of all the world's great religions. Paramount among my teachers were the following:

1. The author was Senior Minister at the Community Church of New York, Manhattan, for thirty-eight years until he retired in 1982.

Henry Nelson Wieman, the great process philosopher and empirical theologian under whom I studied almost fifty years ago at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Wieman, a Protestant Christian, later a Unitarian, contributed the great idea of *God in the process*—the dynamic God that is Being-Becoming, portrayed in the process of evolution as ever higher forms of creative interaction between parts of a whole, in which there is ever-increasing mutuality—mutual support, mutual enhancement, and mutual harmony with the purposive whole of which it is a systemic fragment. With Weiman, I began to see and feel God as superhuman, but not necessarily supernatural, as the source and energizing force pulling things together in a universe otherwise characterized by energy dissipation and dissolution.

Secondly, there was Martin Buber, the Jewish philosopher and sage, who helped me to understand the interplay of religious concepts and practices with righteous, human living, who brought the Biblical heritage alive for me, and let me discover the unique place of freedom of will and choice in God's plan for human growth in character and responsibility. Nothing I

have ever read has stimulated my thinking more than Buber's *Between Man and Man*.

A third great influence was Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet of India, whose prayers and songs gave me as a young man a vehicle for the expression of my deepest thoughts and feelings about God. For Tagore, God was not a theological argument, but a first-hand relational experience. My Mother's gift of his little book of prayers and songs, entitled *Gitanjali*, on my fourteenth birthday opened up a new world of devotional expression which greatly heightened the meaning of my theological concepts themselves, as they emerged across the years.

Fourthly, Dr. John Haynes Holmes, my beloved Unitarian predecessor in this pulpit who gave me a stirring model of fearless religious and social prophecy, and the carrying of the message into action to change the world and make it over more in the image of the prophet's vision. His preaching was a flaming fire, and his life and work exemplified all that he sought to teach. Happy the preacher who has a good model for his ministry.

Finally, there was Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the Roman Catholic, Jesuit priest-scientist-philosopher who was the one who for me brought it all together, tying present to all the past, and the past to all the future. All the way from the Alpha to the Omega, in the process bringing science and religion back together again as harmonious partners serving the human and divine adventure. What Teilhard de Chardin did for me, principally through his great work, *The Phenomenon of Man*, was to help me to assemble all of the parts of the immense puzzle of this universal life we all share so as to form a picture that made sense, a moving picture in which I was not only an observer, but part of the observed, a participant in the process I was looking at. He put it all together into a

single hypothesis, a unified theory, into which the scientific knowledge I had gained across the years could be made to fit. For this I shall always be profoundly grateful.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was born in the South of France in May 1, 1881 into a devout Catholic family. He early decided on his vocation of priest and set as his goal becoming a member of the Jesuit order. His hope was to become a servant of God and humanity through scholarship, scientific and philosophical research, and teaching. Before he was through, he had become one of the greatest and most comprehensive scholars of our time. One of his students Marcel Legaut would later write of him:

We were personally surprised to find a priest who approached religious questions with intellectual vigour, with no attempt to conceal or avoid even the most thorny problems. As young believers of goodwill, we knew of course that such spiritual and intellectual honesty was possible. But the fact was that, despite our Principal's care to choose speakers from priests of such integrity, we often enough had occasion to spot the smile or joke which was really an evasion of an objection, to detect the lack of any real interest on the part of the speaker in a rigorous classification of the questions treated and to sense the desire to teach rather than to learn the truth, to solve the difficulties of others rather than one's own, and indeed to seek to forget the latter by busying one's self in the apostolate.

But with Father Teilhard the very opposite was true. When he spoke it was our turn to have the timidity of our pusillanimous faith unmasked, to recognize our own intellectual cowardice, our unconscious but unrelenting search for security and composure, in a word, the childishness of our faith, and—however disguised, the corroding dishonesty of our spiritual life.

From the beginning, Teilhard's theological orthodoxy seems to have been held in some doubt by his superiors, who were somewhat chary about his theories of man and God, and probably happy to send him off to China for researches that might keep

him away from impressionable young students.

A large part of his life was spent in China as the chief advisor to the Chinese government in the fields of geology and palaeontology, the study of the earth's crust and the clues to its past history to be found in the fossil remains therein. One of the results of this was that all of his later hypotheses concerning the future of life and the human element were well grounded in a thorough knowledge of our planetary beginnings and pre-human evolutionary development.

The altogether extraordinary thing that Teilhard does is to assemble and present the scientific data from the many different branches of science that demonstrate that the universe in its entirety must be regarded as one gigantic process, a process of becoming which had an Alpha or beginning, in the distant past, and which proceeds, following certain constant and detectable universal laws, towards a foreseeable end or Omega Point, a process which he calls a 'cosmogenesis', which can be defined by the *direction* of its evolutionary development, its deducible future trends, and its own inherent possibilities. Once you have accepted the foundation principle of evolution, he points out, you can extrapolate backwards into history to find the pattern of the past, and then by taking that pattern and extrapolating forward, that is, by applying it imaginatively to the future, you are in a position to develop a plausible forecast of the future, and even to begin to make out the dim outlines of the ultimate.

For Teilhard, evolution is a process that began, not with life, but at the very beginning of the universe—with the Big Bang itself, eighteen or twenty billion years ago. Since that beginning a pattern slowly emerges, whose character is a combining of electrons to form atoms, and

molecules, and molecules first simple and then more and more complex elements, the organisms, all the way up the biological, evolutionary ladder to conscious, reflective, *future-determining* man. Throughout all of this, he declares, science discovers and describes an *irreversible coherence*.

In this age-long upbuilding process, *this cosmogenesis*, there are successive stages. The earth-process moves from geo-genesis, the story of the rocks, to geo-genesis, the story of life, to psycho-genesis, the drama of emerging degrees of consciousness, to noogenesis, the coming upon the scene of man with his self-conscious, reflective mind, and his collective spirit which we call culture, which made a coherent civilization possible, and whose accumulated and transmitted knowledge have carried him out into the stars! Teilhard shows us in detail how the earth has evolved one skin after another, from a core of iron, the barysphere, to the outer rock or lithosphere, to the water skin or hydrosphere, to the atmosphere which makes life possible, to the biosphere in all its wonderful proliferations of plant and animal life, to the noosphere, reflective and collective Man. As he puts it: 'The earth, in man, gets a new skin, and finds its soul!'

In this long, natural, evolving process there have been break-through points where the process has lunged forward, so to speak, though if you look carefully you can see the preparations already there in scarcely distinguishable, rudimentary form. Such was the emergence of life from the non-living. For how long did it tremble on the edge before conditions became just right for life to emerge?

Then, those first single-celled creatures moving through the warm seas, multiplying by dividing, then seeking each other out, clinging together. (Isn't it amazing, how, from the very beginning, living things have always wanted to be together. 'Reach out

and touch someone,' is not just a slogan of A.T. & T. Corp. but the most ancient of all of the great laws of life!)

Then, there came another break-through, one that no one could have suspected, though after it happened it seemed so obvious. The growing cluster of cells clinging together became cumbersome and unwieldy; and then somehow some cells found a way to perform one function on behalf of the whole cluster, while others performed a different function. Thus, the whole cluster became more effective, but also naturally dependent, each one doing his job well and trusting others to do their different jobs equally well. So emerged more and more complex creatures enjoying the effectiveness of everincreasing differentiation of function of their separate parts. Advancing complexification became advancing integration, the more and more perfect functioning of part with part for the well-being of the whole—and simultaneously of every part. What Wieman called that mutuality of support, enhancement and meaning which is, in fact God-in-the-Evolutionary Process, and the best objective description of the relationship of Love.

The next break-through was to reflective man. Physically, anatomically, it was not a long step from the higher anthropoids to primitive man. But the consequences of the achievement of the reflective mind were incalculable. The universe became conscious of itself—evolution became not only conscious of itself but capable of an increasing degree of self-direction, a self-direction consciously aware of the requirements for future success within this planetary context. As Teilhard put it succinctly: 'In the great game that is being played, we are (increasingly) the players, as well as the cards and the stakes.'

As players we humans face certain great problems which we have to master. One of these is the trap of individual isolation,

choosing to live for ourselves at the expense of the rest of the body of humankind. (How foolishly our country is off on that kick today!) Another is the collective trap, compelling the individual to socialize whether he will or no, in which case we become like the ants or the bees who have no choice. The challenge to individual men and women is to achieve an individuality which chooses to realize itself in living for the well-being of the whole planet, and all its creatures. As Teilhard says:

'From one end of the world to the other, all the peoples, to remain human, or to become so, are inexorably led to formulate the hopes and problems of the modern earth in the very same terms.....' 'We reach the personalization of the individual by the humanization of the whole.'

Even more specifically, he says: 'the day of nations is over. What we have to do now (if we are not to perish) is to shake off old-fashioned prejudices and set about building the planet Earth.' Calling for a new 'spirit of the Earth,' or 'Earth-sense,' he wrote:

By 'earth-sense' I mean a passionate feeling for the common destiny that is continually drawing the thinking portion of life still further forward. No feeling has firmer roots in nature and none, accordingly, is stronger. But, in fact, there is no feeling, either, that is so slow to make itself evident, since, if it is to become explicit, our consciousness must first rise above the widening (but still much too narrow) circle of family, country and race, and realize at last that the only truly natural and real human unity is *the spirit of the earth*.

And then there is the problem of the future of the earth, and whether evolution *has* any long future on earth. What is its next stage? What will this human spirit do when some day, millions of years from now, the earth grows too cold to support life?

Teilhard is not afraid of such questions.

Listen to him confront them with his clear reason, and calm rationality. He writes:

Since its birth, knowledge has made its greatest advances when stimulated by some particular problem of life needing a solution; and its most sublime theories would always have drifted, rootless, on the flood of human thought if they had not been promptly incorporated into some way of mastering the world. Accordingly the march of humanity, as a prolongation of that of all other animate forms, develops indubitably in the direction of a conquest of matter put to the service of mind. *Increased power for increased action.* But, finally and above all, *increased action for increased being.*

Of old, the forerunners of our chemists strove to find the philosopher's stone. Our ambition has grown since then. It is no longer to find gold but life; and in view of all that has happened in the last fifty years, who would dare to say that this is a mere mirage? With our knowledge of hormones we appear to be on the eve of having a hand in the development of our bodies and even of our brains. With the discovery of genes it appears that we shall soon be able to control the mechanism of organic heredity. And with the synthesis of albuminoids imminent, we may well one day be capable of producing what the earth left to itself, seems no long able to produce: a new wave of organisms, an artificially provoked neo-life. Immense and prolonged as the universal groping has been since the beginning, many possible combinations have been able to slip through the fingers of chance and have had to await man's calculated measures in order to appear. Thought artificially perfects the thinking instrument itself; life rebounds forward under the collective effect of its reflection. The dream which human research obscurely fosters is fundamentally that of mastering, beyond all atomic or molecular affinities, the ultimate energy of which all other energies are merely servants; and thus, by grasping the main spring of evolution, seizing the tiller of the world.

I salute those who have the courage to admit that their hopes extend that far; they are at the pinnacle of mankind; and I would say to them that there is less difference than people think between research and adoration. But there is a point that I would like them to note, one that will lead us gradually to a more complete form of conquest and adoration. However far

knowledge pushes its discovery of the 'essential fire' and however capable it becomes some day of remodeling and perfecting the human element, it will always find itself in the end facing the same problem—how to give to each and every element its final value by grouping them in the unity of an organized whole.

Now, there is the ancient problem and demand, and the responding pattern—the seeking out of that ever increasingly effective, —by free choice and friendly persuasion, —mutual support, enhancement and meaning—of all for one and one for all, on a planetary scale.

Teilhard spells it out:

Mankind must realize that its first function is to penetrate, intellectually unify, and harness the energies which surround it, in order to still further understand and master them..... If we are going toward a human era of science, it will be eminently an era of human science. Man, the knowing subject, will perceive at last that man, 'the object of knowledge' is the key to the whole science of nature.....

Up to the present, whether from prejudice or fear, science has been reluctant to look man in the face but has constantly circled round the human object without daring to tackle it..... Yet the more persistently we try to avoid man in our theories, the more tightly drawn become the circles we describe around him, as though we were caught up in his vortex..... Physics is no longer sure whether what is left in its hands is pure energy, or on the contrary, thought. At the end of its constructions, biology, if it takes its discoveries to their logical conclusion, finds itself forced to acknowledge the assemblage of thinking beings as the present terminal form of evolution. Man..... represents, individually and socially, the most synthesized state under which the stuff of the universe is available to us..... To decipher man is essentially to try to find out how the world was made and how it ought to go on making itself..... So far we have certainly allowed our race to develop at random and we have given too little thought to the question of what medical and moral factors *must replace the crude forces of natural selection* should we repress them. In the course of the coming centuries it is indispensable that a nobly human form of eugenics, on a standard worthy of our personalities, should be discovered and developed.

.....Is it not precisely the world itself which, culminating in thought, expects us to think out again the instinctive impulses of nature so as to perfect them? Reflective substance requires reflective treatment. If there is a future for mankind, it can only be imagined in terms of a harmonious conciliation of what is free with what is levelled up and totalized. Points involved are: the distribution of the resources of the globe; the control of the trek toward unpopulated areas; the optimum use of the powers set free by mechanization; the physiology of nations and races; geo-economy, geo-politics, geo-demography; the organization of research developing into a reasoned organization of the earth. Whether we like it or not, all the science and all our needs converge in the same direction. We need and are irresistibly being led to create, by means of and beyond all physics, all biology and all psychology. *a science of human energetics.*

It is in the course of that creation, already obscurely begun, that science by being led to concentrate on man, will find itself increasingly face to face with religion.

And what of the long future? Teilhard is not afraid to think of this. 'The stuff of the universe,' he writes, 'by becoming thinking, has not yet completed its evolutionary cycle... We are moving towards some, new critical point that lies ahead... We are faced with a harmonized *collectivity of consciousness* equivalent to a sort of super-consciousness'. 'In every organized whole, the parts perfect themselves to fulfil themselves.' 'The more other they become in conjunction, the more they find themselves as "self".'

Looking far into the future, he sees 'the birth of some single centre from the convergent beams of millions of elementary centres dispersed over the whole surface of the thinking earth.'

This single centre being supremely spiritualized will be supremely personal, will itself be Personal. Whatever it is that has been moving within the universal life, has been not only internally driven in its 'irreversible coherence,' but externally, *lovingly*, drawn towards a supreme culmina-

tion, and because Love is always personal, the Something is, in fact, Some One!

Here is how Teilhard de Chardin says it:

...I adopt the supposition that our noosphere is destined to close in upon itself...and that it is in a psychical rather than a spatial direction that it will find an outlet.....Hence, quite naturally, the notion of change of state recurs.

Noogenesis rises upwards in us and through us unceasingly. We have pointed to the principal characteristics of that movement: the closer association of the greatness of thought; the synthesis of individuals and of nations or races; the need of an autonomous and supreme personal focus to bind elementary personalities (voluntarily) together, without deforming them, in an atmosphere of active sympathy. And, once again: all this results from the combined action of two curvatures—the roundness of the earth and the cosmic convergence of mind—in conformity with the laws of complexity and (ever-heightening) consciousness.

Now when sufficient elements have sufficiently agglomerated, this essentially convergent movement will attain such intensity and such quality that mankind, *taken as a whole*, will be obliged—as happened to the individual forces of instinct—to reflect upon itself at a single point; that is to say, in this case, to abandon its organo-planetary foothold so as to pivot itself on the transcendent centre of its increasing concentration. This will be the end and the fulfillment of the spirit of the earth.

The end of the world: the wholesale internal introversion upon itself of the noosphere, which has simultaneously reached the outermost limit of its complexity and its centrality.

The end of the world: the overthrow of equilibrium, detaching the mind, fulfilled at last, from its material matrix, so that it will henceforth rest with all its weight on God-Omega.

The end of the world: critical point simultaneously of emergence and immersion, of maturation and elevation.

One of the by-products of all of this, he points out, has been the reuniting of science and religion, the rediscovery by science, of what he calls 'the invincible energies of Love.'

After close on to two centuries of passionate struggles, neither science nor faith has succeeded

in discrediting its adversary. On the contrary, it becomes obvious that neither can develop normally without the other, and the reason is simple: the same life animates both. Neither in its impetus nor its achievements can science go to its limits without becoming tinged with mysticism and charged with faith....

Man will only continue to work and to research so long as he is prompted by a passionate interest. Now this interest is entirely dependent on the conviction, ... that the universe has a direction and that it could — indeed, if we are faithful, it *should* — result in some sort of irreversible perfection. Hence comes belief in progress...

Scientifically we can envisage an almost indefinite improvement in the human organism and human society. But as soon as we try to put our dreams into practice, we realize that the problem remains indeterminate or even insoluble unless, with some partially super-rational intuition, we admit the convergent properties of the world we belong to. Hence belief in unity.

Furthermore, if we decide, under the pressure of facts, in favour of an optimism of unification, we run into the technical necessity of discovering — in addition to the impetus required to push us forward, an addition to the particular objective which should determine our route — the special binder or cement which will associate our lives together, vitally, without diminishing or distorting them. Hence, (religious) belief in a supremely attractive centre which has personality.

Teilhard presents to us in this great work a convincing interpretation of the phenomena of life culminating in the reflecting mind and loving heart of Man.

Love is the most universal, the most formidable, and the most mysterious of cosmic energies... The most expressive, and at the same time the most profoundly true account of universal evolution would doubtless consist in telling the story of the evolution of love. The progress toward Man, through Woman, is in fact the progress of the whole universe. The vital concern for Earth... is that these bearings be established...

Let man... discern the wholeness of reality shining spiritually through the flesh. Then his understanding will master what previously served only to frustrate and disappoint his power to love... Some day, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love. Then

for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.

In other words, there is purpose, point and power discernible throughout this universe of cosmogenesis. There is Something within driving us towards the ever-more-loving relationship. And there is Someone beyond our immediate ken loving us into lovingness, reaching out to us, as we reach out to one another to warm us out of our selfishness and greed, and to draw us out of our personal prejudices and private preoccupations. And in its warmth and light we will learn to give up the cynical exploitation of our fellow humans for *our own* individual benefit *because we want to*, because we know better, because we know we are loved, and that all our destiny and all our hope is to live in love for one another. The single cell which goes its own way, heedless of the whole or of its companion cells is an outlaw, a cancer, and that we need not be. For our very nature calls us to the Love that is of God, the God that shall one day be, as St. Paul put it, 'All in all,' a Love which, no matter what befall, will never let us go. And as Paul said in his Letter to the Romans: 'In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature or circumstance, will be able to separate us from the love of God...'

This is the great Teilhardian hypothesis. On his one hundred and first birthday I commend it to you as the most satisfying, scientifically and religiously, of all the theories, of all the universal life theories I have yet encountered.

Father Teilhard finished his monumental work, *The Phenomenon of Man* in the year 1940, but, as with so many other of his theological and scientific speculations, the

church refused to let him publish it. But he was permitted to circulate it to his friends for criticism, among them some non-Catholics. Otherwise, it might never have seen the light of day. It was published only after his death in 1955, here in America, which was his home during the last years following World War II. Since then, however, it has won acclaim, not only outside, but within the Church he loved to his dying breath. Today, great Catholic universities have whole departments focussed on his studies and ideas. And it is a new and better church thereby.

A little before 10 April, 1955, Easter Sunday, the day on which Teilhard was given the grace to die suddenly, he had said to a close and dear friend, 'I go to

meet him who comes.' And then he prayed a prayer which fully exemplifies his faith:

'Lord, since with every instinct of my being and through all the changing fortunes of my life, it is You whom I have ever sought, You whom I have set at the heart of universal matter, it will be in a resplendence which shines through all things and in which all things are ablaze, that I shall have the felicity of closing my eyes.'

That felicity today surrounds his memory, and will lighten the path of humankind with hope into the far distant future, and who knows, but into that blazing Omega of Perfect Love in which he so devoutly believed, and which every single one of us has the responsibility to help create. So may it be.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SPIRITUAL IDEALS FOR MODERN MAN: BY SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA. Published by Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, Belur Math, Howrah 711 202. 1980. Pp. 200. Rs. 20.

The old resurgent spirit and the integrated world outlook of India were rejuvenated in modern times by the contact of the Indian mind with the West and assimilation of its scientific spirit, and a great neo-Vedantic movement was initiated by Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the last century. Swami Vivekananda carried the synthetic vision of India to the West in 1893 and spread its universal message of Vedanta and Yoga in America and Europe. He started Centres to continue his work and to preach and teach Spiritual Ideals to meet the needs of humanity in harmony with man's scientific achievements. In due course, these Centres multiplied in USA and other places headed by competent Indian Swamis.

'In this book', as the blurb says, 'Swami Vividishananda, Founder-Leader of the Vedantic Society of Western Washington, Seattle, presents through his recorded lectures (in USA) the ideas and ideals of the Neo-Vedantic traditions initiated by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.' The Swami deals with some of the important topics of spiritual life and its background lucidly, in simple language, from the Vedantic point of view in the context of, and

illustrated by, the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and provides answers to the several theoretical and practical problems that face the modern man.

The first lecture 'Are You the Master of Your Destiny' removes the misunderstanding about the profound and universal Law of Karma (Law of Cause and Effect) and shows that along with its corollary of Rebirth, it makes man the Master of his own destiny and he can perfect himself progressively through many lives by his own efforts. He does not have to entrust his destiny to any priest or prophet, for he in his true nature is the divine soul. Divine Perfection is innate in every being, including insects and animals. Only it has to be progressively manifested, and a human being has the greatest opportunity to strive for it.

The second deals with 'Materialism', the contrary view, and shows its limitations and how it cannot answer the vital questions of man and solve his problems. The views of scientists, utilitarians, and other types of materialists are discussed and it is pointed out how 'Advaita Vedanta is the only religious philosophy that can satisfy science, that can be acceptable to modern scientists.' (P. 32)

Next the 'problem of Evil' is discussed as it obstructs the manifestation of the innate divinity, and its Vedantic solution is presented. 'What

Happens after Death?' is then rationally analysed on the basis of the constituents of many-layered human personality and the law of conservation of the psychic and moral effects of our actions, which opens up innumerable opportunities to everyone to perfect oneself in due course through the law of Rebirth.

In 'Kundalini or Spiritual Power', it is shown how the cosmic divine energy lies potent in every being, like the potency of a tree in a seed, and the means and methods of awakening it.

All these ideas in the foregoing chapters hinge on the central fact that man is not a physical being, but a divine soul inhabiting a body. It uses the mechanism of the bodies—psychophysical organisms—for the progressive manifestation of its divinity and perfection through the process of evolution.

We next come to the practical aspects of inculcating these spiritual ideals. 'Symbols of Religion' discusses the oneness of religion, though different symbols are used in different faiths. All the symbols, gross and fine—from images and rituals to various word and form symbols, and different conceptions of incarnations, deities, and God—help man to rise to the highest realization. The Tantras have made a science of these symbols and lay down elaborately many techniques of integrating the individual to the universal at all levels of human personality. In 'What are the Tantras', the author shows how the Tantras have developed out of the rudiments in the Vedas and that the later undesirable accretions in it are not really a part of them. However, since it was not relevant here, the author could have desisted from comparing the practical outlook of the Tantras with the profound, complex, and comprehensive philosophical Advaita of Shankara in a few lines to establish the superiority of the Tantras, over it without understanding Shankara properly. (P. 105-6) Philosophy must be met with philosophy and practical aspects with practical view-points. And, as to the latter, Shankara's practical philosophy will accept the genuine Tantras and much more besides. Shankara too propounds the oneness of *Shakti* and *Shaktimān*. (*Brahma-Sūtra Bhāṣya*, II.16,18). Some of the views expressed by the author here, though practically useful, are philosophically untenable. The spirit of the highest teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda is in accord with the Advaitic view of Shankara.

Among the rest of the articles. 'Practical Aids to Meditation', 'Bhakti Yoga and the Sublimation of Emotions', 'The Law of Forgiveness', 'The

Teacher and the Disciple', give practical hints to the aspirants for spiritual life.

'Swami Vivekananda, the Spiritual Dynamo' delineates the Swami's contribution to the spiritual awakening of Man, especially in the West. And the last one, 'Christianity and Hindus', shows that the Hindus accept the 'Christ' symbol and the spiritual teachings of Jesus Christ. But, he points out, the Christians have mostly discarded them and politicalized Christianity and use anti-Christ methods to increase their numbers in India and elsewhere. He adds: 'There is the testimony of many Christians that Christ, the crucified saviour, is at times not to be found in the church. Fraud, political wire-pulling, theological jugglery, bigotry, as superstition, they say, are some of the undesirables that all too often characterize the church.' (P. 193)

This is a timely book for the modern man who is seeking non-dogmatic, truth-oriented, universal spiritual values and ideals. The printing and get-up are nice and the price moderate for this big-size cloth-bound book of 200 pages.

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RAMAKRISHANA SADHAN PARIKRAMA
(*Ramakrishna's Spiritual Practices: A Study*):
BY MANORANJAN BASU. Published by Smt. Mira Basu, 50B, Halderpara Road, Calcutta 700 026. 1981. Pp. xxxi+146. Rs. 22.

Sri Ramakrishna passed away in 1886. The next decade witnessed at least four of his biographies in print, three in Bengali and one in English. The Bengali *Lives* were written by Suresh Chandra Datta, a Brahmo devotee, Ramchandra Datta and Akshay Kumar Sen, both lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. The English *Life*, published from London, was written by none other than the great Western savant F. Max Mueller. As years rolled on, Sri Ramakrishna began to attract the imagination of larger and larger numbers of admirers both in India and abroad. As a result, a galaxy of talented persons including several distinguished Western men of letters like Romain Rolland and Christopher Isherwood came forward to write on Sri Ramakrishna. The tradition has not ceased even today; rather it is becoming more prolific. Claude Alan Stark and Harold W. French's books published during the seventies and the book under review are notable examples of this trend.

The present book which is a translation of its original in Bengali, attempts, as it is indicated in

its sub-title, to make an in-depth study of Sri Ramakrishna and the uniqueness of his *sādhana* or spiritual practices.

The author has tried to impress upon his readers how Gadadhar Chattopadhyay of Kamarpur village rose to the exalted state of a *lokaguru*, preceptor of humanity. The evolution and transcendence of Gadadhar, the vicissitudes and adventures of his spiritual practices and the inner dialectics of their various phases have been drawn in vivid colours which place this book in a class by itself.

The printing, paper and over-all presentation of the book are of a high quality. The outline of Sri Ramakrishna's figure on the cover is at once artistic and evocative. Swami Lokeswarananda's Foreword and Kalidas Bhattacharya's Preface have certainly enriched the book.

There are, however, a few things in the book which demand a little more scrutiny on the part of the author. The author has added at the end of the book 'Explanatory Notes', a genealogical table of Sri Ramakrishna and a bibliography. Nos. 5, 6, 29, 30, 31 of the 'Explanatory Notes' include names of some books only. It is not clear what relation they have got with the 'Explanatory Notes'. No. 14 reads: 'The *Tadala Tantra* mentions as many as sixty-four Tantras, the names of which have almost a tinge of modernity about them. These Tantras are as follows.' But the list furnished thereafter enumerates names of only 63 Tantras, instead of 64. The readers unfamiliar with Sanskrit words, particularly foreigners, would find it difficult to get the correct pronunciation of Sanskrit words. Diacritical marks on such words, therefore, would facilitate the study of the book so far as such readers are concerned. We wonder why the author has not given the sub-title of the book, 'Ramakrishna's Spiritual Practices: A Study' on the cover also. The book is in English, but the title on the cover remains the same as it is in its Bengali original.

But in comparison with the quality of the book, these minor criticisms may be overlooked. The author has indeed laid the students of Ramakrishna under a debt of gratitude to him.

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VEDIC SOCIALISM: BY NITYA NARAYAN BANERJEE. Published by Hindutva Publications, U-36, Green Park, New Delhi-16. 1980. Pp. 274. Rs. 50.

It is now widely acknowledged that neither Capitalism nor Socialism can provide a lasting

foundation to human society. Both of these Schools, however, have faith in capital as the primary means to an end they know not what. But the immediate result of both the ideologies is human deprivation. Exploitation, war, pollution and starvation are the natural consequences of industrialization which is the backbone of both the societies and governs the fate of the entire globe at present. Scientists and politicians take pride in developing nuclear energy which is mainly accumulated for destructive purposes under the pretext of self-defence. Deadly nuclear weapons could destroy mankind if the slightest emotional imbalance should occur in the minds of those who control them. Alienation and dehumanization are patent everywhere in the society which is heading fast towards self-destruction. Parental love, conjugal fidelity, filial duties and social obligations are diminishing equally fast in the present-day society.

The Hindu society, rooted in Vedic spiritualism, has preserved human values to a large extent in spite of various onslaughts on it and the lapse of many centuries. The author of the book under review holds that the modern society could be restructured in the light of the Vedic social structure. For him Vedic socialism is the only remedy for the ailing human society of the day. He presents a blueprint for the future society of mankind based mainly on the *varnāśrama-dharmas* (duties pertaining to class and stages envisaged by Manu and others. Such a society is not an utopia. It was actualized in the Vedic times, as is clear from the statement of king Asvapati in whose kingdom 'there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no man who has not installed the sacrificial fire, no ignorant person, no adulterer, so how can there be any adulteress' (*na me steno janapade na kadaryo na madyapo; nānāhitagnir-nāvidvānna svairī svairimī kutah; Chhāndogya Up., V.II.5*). Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo tried to materialize the same Vedic ideal in the present-day society where every individual could have full freedom to realize his true nature and become aware of the oneness of all living beings.

One might ask whether Vedic socialism will not put the clock back and bring us back to the primitive stage or whether it will be able to adjust with the scientific discoveries of the modern age. The author, on his part, does not see any conflict between Vedic socialism and science. He simply warns us of science becoming the master instead of the servant. If material lust is tempered with principles of spirituality no major problem can arise.

Although the author would like all the nations of the modern world to adopt the principles of Vedic Socialism, he does not advise us to wait till an ideal state is created for its implementation. According to him one can begin practising Vedic socialism at individual and family levels. This will gradually lead us to the transformation of the whole world.

The book has succeeded in presenting an out-

line of Vedic socialism for the entire humanity. The language of the book is lucid and thoughts are derived from primary sources. At places some discussions seem misplaced but the overall synthesis is commendable.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

VIVEKANANDA ASHRAMA, SHYAMALA TAL

Report for April 1981 to March 1982

Started as a centre for meditation and spiritual practices in the secluded and serene surroundings of the Kumaoun range of the Himalayas at an altitude of 5,000 feet, the Vivekananda Ashrama, Shyamala Tal is now a well-developed institution with retreat facilities for monks and lay-devotees, a 15-bed indoor/outdoor hospital, a veterinary clinic, an apiary, a huge water reservoir with a capacity of 6 lakh litres of water, and a large orchard and flower garden of wide repute.

The Ashrama retreat provides accommodation for some 35 persons at a time. Besides regular evening *arati* and *Ramnam Sankirtan* on every Ekadashi day, annual festivals like the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Holy Mother are celebrated, in which the local people and villagers join and partake of *prasad*.

The hospital and the veterinary departments are the only source of medical help to the people within a range of 54 miles between Tanakpur and Champawat. Besides free treatment, patients are given free medicines and injections. Indoor patients are also supplied diet, tea, milk and kerosene oil free of charge. During the year the hospital treated 26 indoor patients and 9,205 outdoor patients (new: 2,706; repeated cases: 6,526). The veterinary department treated 67 animals, including cows, buffalos, bulls, calves and goats.

The Ashrama water reservoir supplies drinking water to the local villagers during summer and drought periods as well as to the hospital. *Our requirements:* 1. For the upkeep and improvement of the hospital including the Veterinary Unit a permanent fund of at least Rs. 50,000 is to be created. Any one intending to perpetuate the memory of his/her near and dear relatives may

do so by: i. donating an Endowment Fund of Rs. 5,000 for the maintenance of one bed in the hospital, ii. donating any smaller amount to the Permanent Fund.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION. SINGAPORE

Report for 1981

This centre was started in 1928 with a view to rendering service to the people of the region. The main establishment consisting of the Mission office, the Ramakrishna temple and the Boys' Home is situated at 179 Bartley Road, Singapore. *Spiritual and cultural activities:* Besides carrying on daily worship in the temple, Ramanama kirtan was held on every Ekadashi day. Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, Rama, Krishna, Shankara, Guru Nanak, Jesus, Mohamed and other prophets were celebrated with special puja, discourses, devotional songs, etc. Weekly spiritual classes were conducted and a few lectures were delivered in the Singapore city. Interviews were given to earnest spiritual seekers.

Educational activities: The Ashrama library made available to the readers books on religion, philosophy, literature, etc. and the reading-room received a number of periodicals, journals and newspapers. Total number of books was 5,416. The book sales department of the centre made available Ramakrishna-Vivekananda-Vedanta literature to a large number of people.

Boys' Home: The boys' home shelters boys from poor families unable to support the children or provide suitable environment for their education. The boys are provided wholesome food and facilities for study, games, singing and participation in prayer and worship, etc. There were 45 boys during the year. The home has a children's library for the use of the boys.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A Code of Conduct for Indian Scientists

Speaking at a meeting of young scientists organized by the Planning Commission in New Delhi on 6 November 1982. Prof. M. G. K. Menon pointed out the need for changing the existing rules for Indian scientists. He was of course referring to the administrative procedures adopted by scientists for the speedy processing and circulation of scientific information. What he did not stress, and what is perhaps most vital for the advancement of science in India, is the need for a change in the basic attitude of Indian scientists towards science itself—a change from what Pandit Nehru described as the ‘bullock-cart mentality’ of dogmatism and traditionalism to the true scientific temper.

The cause for the slow progress of science and the poor results of research in India is usually attributed to inadequate facilities and ‘politics’. This is only another instance of the bad workman’s quarrelling with his tools. Almost all the great discoveries of fundamental importance have been made by great men under simple ordinary conditions. Michael Faraday had to make insulated wire by winding sewing thread with his own hands on miles of copper wire. Marie Curie used an ordinary kitchen oven to boil tons of pitchblende. Alexander Fleming used bedpans and other hospital enamelware to culture penicillin-producing moulds. Einstein’s ‘laboratory’ had nothing more than a table, a few books, a sheaf of paper and a pencil. J. B. S. Haldane, who had made India his home, pointed out thirty years ago that a great deal of research in this country, especially in the field of agriculture, needed very little equipment and investment.

As a matter of fact, most Indian research and academic institutions in India are well furnished with costly equipment. As for corruption and bureaucratic tyranny, it is good to remember that no power can prevent a truly great man from going up. The truth is, the majority of Indian scientists are not inspired by pure love of knowledge and the spirit of research. What they need is a change of basic attitude, and this calls for a code of conduct. A religious man, especially monk, is guided in his search for Truth by certain spiritual and moral rules and, should he fail to follow these principles, he would not attain his goal. But scientists, who too are supposed to be seekers of Truth, are not saddled with such inconvenient ethical restraints. When a religious man swerves from his ideal, he is branded a whited sepulchre or a Rasputin. But a scientist who is dishonest or immoral is still recognized as a scientist owing to the mistaken notion that science is beyond ethics.

Like spiritual men scientists too have a higher moral obligation over and above the mere mechanical conformity to social conventions and statutory rules. Every Indian scientist must impose upon himself the following three imperatives as a minimum code of conduct. 1. Intense longing for truth and readiness to undergo any sacrifice for its realization. 2. Cultivation of the scientific temper consisting of objectivity, accuracy and a sense of the inter-relatedness of things. 3. Impersonality which means absence of egoism and jealousy, and readiness to share knowledge with others.
