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

ETERNAL VOICE OF INDIA

Vidyayā vindate amṛtam

'Immortality is attained through Self-knowledge'

All this that you see in this mutable universe, should be enveloped by Self, the all-pervading and omnipresent God. By that renunciation (of the pleasures of this mutable world) alone, support your Self, the divinity within. Do not covet anybody's wealth, whether it is your own, or of somebody else's.

By blinding darkness are covered the worlds of those who live a God-less life. To these worlds return again and again those who have murdered the Self within.

He who perceives all objects as existent in his own Self, and the Self in all beings, hates none, by virtue of that realization.

When to the seer all things appear as nothing but his own Self, what delusion, what sorrow can there be for the seer of oneness ?

He (the Self) is all-pervading, self-resplendent, formless, scatheless, muscleless, pure, unaffected by ignorance, the poet and seer, omniscient, transcendent, and self-existent.

Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad (1,3,6,7,8)

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL deals with some of the major ideas that surfaced in the International Seminar on 'Outer Space and Inner Space' held in New Delhi, in November 1986.

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF SISTER NIVEDITA: THEORY AND PRACTICE by Sri Anil Baran Ray, M.A., Ph. D. (Missouri, Columbia) and Mrs. Mamata Ray, describes how Sister Nivedita brought forth for the first time in modern India, the idea of education based on the ancient values and ideals of India, and how she struggled to infuse this spirit of national education into the lives of her students. Sri Anil Baran Ray is Professor of Political Science in Burdwan University.

Dr. Caribanu Cooper's article THE POEMS OF VIVEKANANDA is a short literary analysis of some of the poems of Swami Vivekananda. Dr. Cooper is Professor in the Humanities Department, University of

South Florida, USA.

THOUGHTS ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN PRE-INDEPENDENT INDIA is a brief account of how the three great national leaders, Lala Rajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal thought on national integration in India before independence. The author Dr. Aroop Chakravarti is a lecturer in history in Vidyant Hindu Degree College, Lucknow.

Dr. D. Nirmala Devi, a Senior Research Fellow, in the University of Calicut discusses in her article CONCEPT OF NATURE IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA, various dimensions of nature, as reflected in the holy text.

THE CONQUEST, a one-act play, dramatizes the historic conversion of Chandashoka to Dharmashoka and his final surrender to the teachings of Buddha. The author, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, has written this drama under the pseudonym 'Bodhisattva'.

OUTER SPACE AND INNER SPACE

(EDITORIAL)

Recently in November 1986 the ministry of arts, government of India, organized in New Delhi an International Seminar and an International Art Exhibition under the auspices of the Indira Gandhi Centre for Arts. The theme of the Exhibition was Ākāśa or space. The subject matter for the Seminar was *bhūtākāśa* and *cidākāśa*—outer space and inner space. Nearly sixty delegates from thirty countries including eminent scientists, historians, architects, engineers, town-planners, internationally celebrated authorities on religion, a senior lama from Tibet and a swami of the

Ramakrishna Order attended this Seminar. On 19 November 1986, in an impressive ceremony in Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, the prime minister formally declared the exhibition open to the public. He also welcomed the delegates from the different countries who had come to attend the Seminar. On 20 November 1986, Dr. D. S. Kothari, an eminent scientist of India, presided over the inaugural session of the seven-day-long Seminar.

The discussions on *bhūtākāśa* or outer space brought forth the idea of reverence for beauty and individual excellence in

our external life. The deliberations on *cidākāśa* or the inner space, brought forth a deeper awareness of the one undivided consciousness (*akhaṇḍa cit*) which one can realize in one's heart. This consciousness within is the basis of life in outer space. Everything exists in space. Einstein called space not merely space but, according to the theory of relativity, space-time continuum. All existence in space is related to time. And the way to the Absolute, beyond space-time relative existence, is through this very relative space, as another nobel-physicist Louis De Broglie said.

The Indian idea is to respect all space because it is the repository of all life. Space in Sanskrit is known as *kham*. Neglect of *kham* leads to *duhkham*, sorrow. Respect to *kham* leads to *sukham*, happiness. By showing respect to the external space, man goes beyond it, and reaches the world of internal space. 'Deification of Life' is the central theme of the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*. One can and should have the vision of God in everything by renunciation of selfish and sensate enjoyments. That is the goal of life. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* illustrates this great idea by means of a story. Satyakāma the son of Jabālā, was asked by his teacher to go to the forest and tend the four hundred lean and weak cows given to him. He decided not to return until the number of cattle increased to one thousand. All throughout this long time Satyakāma served the cattle with utmost respect. Being pleased with him, a bull, fire, a swan and a diver-bird taught him all the mysteries of life. Nature opened her secrets to this boy because of his utmost reverence for nature and all living beings. When he returned to his teacher, his face shone with the radiance of one who had realized the all-pervading presence of God.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* advocates two kinds of knowledge, *parā* and *aparā*, the

secular and the transcendental, in order to reach fulfilment in life. This is the basis of a holistic approach to life according to Indian tradition. Indian scriptures explain these ideas in many different ways. The *Brahma-sūtra* explains in the aphorism 1.1.22, *ākāśaḥ tat liṅgat* or 'Space verily is Brahman for Brahman's indicatory work is in evidence'. Śaṅkarācārya equates space with the ultimate Reality. He says, 'By the word space here we should understand Brahman.' *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* explains, 'For all things originate from space, to be sure' (1.9.1). The same Upaniṣad (8.14.1) says again, 'Space indeed is the accomplisher of name and form'. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (3.4) describes space, sky or *vyoman*, as the repository of all knowledge, 'This is that knowledge received by Bhṛgu, which is established in the supreme *vyoman*.' *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (4.10.5) describes space as one with the Absolute Bliss, '*Om kam* (i.e. bliss) is Brahman, *kham*, space, is Brahman'. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (5.1) equates space with *Om*, Brahman or the ultimate Reality. 'Om is that *kham* (space)—the eternal space'.

The concept of space is beautifully illustrated in a story of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. Upakosala, the disciple of Jābāli Satyakāma decided to fast and practise severe austerities in order to realize the ultimate Reality, Brahman. The fires (whom the Brahmacarin had worshipped so long) felt compassion on this sincere aspirant, and gave him the true knowledge about the vital energy (*prāṇa*), joy, and space in which the entire created universe exists.

'*Prāṇa* (the vital energy) is Brahman, *ka* (bliss) is Brahman, *kha* (space) is Brahman.' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 4.10.4). And again in the same Upaniṣad (4.10.5) it is said: 'What is *ka* (bliss) even that is *kha* (space); and what is *kha* (space), that is *ka* (bliss).'

Then comes the point of subtle distinc-

tion. The fires tell the seeker that in order to know the ultimate Reality one must enter the world of *cidākāśa*, i.e. the space within the heart. What is the nature of *cidākāśa* and how to enter this realm of inner space? The *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* (12.16) explains: 'In the citadel of the body, there is the small, sinless and pure lotus of the heart which is the residence of the Supreme. Further in the interior of this small area there is the sorrowless space (*gaganam viśokam*) that is to be meditated upon.' But how is it that space is one with *prāṇa* (the primal energy behind the universe)? *Praśna Upaniṣad* (verse no. 14) explains that *prāṇa* (energy) is one with *rayiḥ* (food). Food is nothing but matter, or *ākāśa*. Śaṅkarācārya comments, 'prāṇa and rayi convey the ideas of energy and matter'.¹ *Ākāśa* (space or matter) is thus equated with *prāṇa*. (energy). Einstein proved the same idea by showing that energy is only another form of matter. In modern physics there is no such thing as empty space. Space, as we have seen, cannot be empty. American physicist John A. Wheeler says that space, though outwardly empty, is nevertheless 'the seat of most violent physics'.²

The Vedas and Upaniṣads are full of passages conveying man's intense reverence for everything animate or inanimate in this world of outer space. Here is, for instance, an extremely moving invocation to water from the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* (1.54): 'O waters, verily you are bliss-conferring. Being such, grant us food, and great and beautiful insight (of the Supreme Truth). Further make us in this very life participators of that joy of yours which is most auspicious, just like fond mothers' (who nurse their

darlings with nourishment). May we attain to that satisfactory abode of yours which you are pleased to grant us. Generate for us also waters of life and pleasures on earth (during our sojourn here).'

The external world, the world of outer space, the *bhūtākāśa*, is a combination of matter (*ākāśa*) and *prāṇa* (energy). But this *prāṇa*, again, is a projection from the Self within. The *Praśna Upaniṣad* (3.3) explains this idea:

From the Self is born this *prāṇa*. Just as there can be a shadow when a man is there, so this *prāṇa* is fixed on the Self. He comes to this body owing to the actions of the mind.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says that the ultimate reality interpenetrates both this external and internal world. We can enjoy with all our senses of sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing, the external world of *bhūtākāśa*. But the way to *cidākāśa* is a way that transcends senses. All meditation on the *cidākāśa* is, therefore, essentially transcendental in nature. But once we have been adept in this meditation, internal prayers and japa, and succeeded to open the door to the *cidākāśa* (the internal space within our heart) we get a glimpse of the ultimate Reality. And then it is not difficult to understand that the external space (*bhūtākāśa*) is, indeed, a projection of the *cidākāśa*, the internal space. Swami Vivekananda, the greatest exponent of the ancient Vedanta philosophy in modern times, explains these ideas in his celebrated 'Introduction' to *Rāja Yoga* as also in countless other lectures:

Everything that we see, or imagine or dream, we have to perceive in space. This is the ordinary space called the Mahakasa, or elemental space. When a Yogi reads the thoughts of other men or perceives supersensuous objects, he sees them in another sort of space called the Cittakasha, the mental space. When perception has become

1. Swami Gambhirananda *Eight Upanishads* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama 1958) Vol. 2, p. 412.

2. Quoted in Heinz Pagels, *The Cosmic Code* (New York: Bantam Books, 1983) p. 243.

objectless, and the soul shines in its own nature, it is called the Chidakasha, or knowledge space.³

The internal universe, the *real* is infinitely greater than the external, which is only a shadowy projection of the true one. The world is neither true, nor untrue, it is a shadow of truth.⁴

This is the basic Indian philosophical approach to Reality which is distinct from the commonly accepted western approach. In 1900 in San Francisco Swami Vivekananda pointed out:

It is not the infinite of space, but the real Infinite, beyond space, beyond time.... Such is the world missed by the occident... Their minds have been turned to external nature and nature's god.⁵

Vivekananda also explained the difference between the occidental approach of the Greeks and the oriental approach developed by Indians:

Two curious nations there have been, sprung of the same race, but placed in different circumstances and environments, working out the problems of life each in its own particular way. I mean the ancient Hindu and the ancient Greek. The Indian Aryan, bounded on the north by the snow-caps of the Himalayas, with fresh-water rivers like rolling oceans surrounding him in the plains, with eternal forests which, to him, seemed to be the end of the world, turned his vision inward, and given the natural instinct, the superfine brain of the Aryan, with this *sublime* scenery surrounding him, the natural result was that he became introspective. The analysis of his own mind was the great theme of the Indo-Aryan.

With the Greek, on the other hand, who arrived at a part of the earth which was more beautiful than sublime, the beautiful islands of the Grecian Archipelago, nature all around him generous yet simple, his mind naturally went outside. It wanted to analyse the external world. And as a result we find that from India have

sprung all the analytical sciences and from Greece all the sciences of generalization.⁶

Dr. Raja Ramanna, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, India, in his inaugural address in the Seminar, struck at the root of the theme of space, the mystery of human consciousness. It is consciousness which is responsible for our perception of both the external and the internal space. Physical sciences, admitted the eminent physicist, have failed to define consciousness.

Physical space claims that it can eventually explain all knowledge including that of consciousness since its basic building blocks are indistinguishable molecules, but at the moment with all its successes the word 'consciousness' remains undefinable. It is a situation in which we know that something exists but can find no clear description in physical terms. Nearly 1,300 years ago, Adi Sankara in his Dakshinamurty stotra, verse 23, says 'if consciousness was not self-manifested then the universe would be blind darkness'. This celebrated statement shows that consciousness has to be self-manifested and if it was not there, nobody would know that there is such a thing as physical space.

Physical sciences consider, says Dr. Ramanna, 'the existence of consciousness as a separate entity and yet without its very existence there can be no physical space.' Ādi Śaṅkarācārya was the first Indian philosopher who made a systematic analysis of the consciousness at its various levels. Dr. Ramanna highlighted this contribution of Śaṅkara:

A logical approach to the study of consciousness as a philosophico-scientific entity has only been attempted by Samkara. It is quite possible that we will never know what consciousness is mainly because the possible phases of consciousness in our brains are too constrained for asking questions about itself. Samkara believes that we must create a new conscious state well outside the waking state, the dream stage, drug stage etc.

3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977) Vol. 1, p. 162. (Henceforward referred to as *Complete Works*).

4. *Complete Works* (1979), Vol. 2, p. 11.

5. *Complete Works* (1979), Vol. 1, p. 500.

6. *Complete Works* (1979), Vol. 3, p. 270.

He asserts that it is a state that can be achieved where the oneness of the diversity of all knowledge can be clearly seen.

This new state of consciousness is, 'the superconscious state', from where the individual realizes that the activities of his conscious or unconscious (dreaming) state are both projections of our will and desires on the eternal background, the undivided Consciousness.

Dr. Raimundo Panikkar from Spain, one of the few outstanding theologians of our times, took the holistic or Advaitic view regarding the inner and the outer space. In his paper entitled, 'There is no outer without inner space', Dr. Panikkar said:

In some cultures space has become mainly a physical notion and only by extension a spiritual one. ... Our underlying assumption will be the advaitic or non-dualistic relationship between the two. This means that we neither identify inner and outer space as being the same, nor separate the two such as to make only one of them real space and the other an analogical device. This implies that we recognize an underlying and more fundamental experience of space of which the inner and the outer are two qualified modes.

Modern physical concept of space as only a space-time continuum is a very limited and inadequate concept regarding space. Dr. Panikkar said:

But time, after Einstein, is not conceivable without space. Thus the space-time scheme seems to be common to all human disciplines. But this time-space is still far from that holistic experience of space we are looking for. Spatiality is a human existential. But this spatiality which is constitutive of Man is not an exclusively inner world of thoughts, dreams and actions where we live. It is not either the external cities, places, buildings in which we exist. Both are copenetrated so that one is impossible without the other...The outer cannot exist without the inner, as well as vice-versa.

The Swami from the Ramakrishna Order, India, took up the thread of

discussion led by Dr. Panikkar and pushed it further into the domain of man's consciousness. It is not just that there is no outer space without the inner space. The more important fact is that the outer space is a projection of the inner space.

Vedanta philosophy believes that it is our own consciousness which creates the world outside. Does a man while in deep and dreamless sleep (*susupti*) have any consciousness of the world outside? Is a man who is dreaming of a dreadful tiger in sleep, aware that he is lying on a cosy bed in a perfectly safe room? *Dr̥g-Dr̥śya-Viveka* (verse no. 1) states:

Dr̥syah dhi vrttayah saksi dr̥g eva na tu dr̥syate
'All the scenes before us are projections of our intellect (activated by the presence of our consciousness). The only seer is the *Self* (the pure consciousness) inside us. This *Self* cannot be seen because it is itself the seer.

The Swami in his paper on 'Consciousness creates the outer world' showed how new ideas in modern physics are today supporting this view.

Today this ancient Vedantic concept is getting increasing support from the discoveries and interpretations of Quantum Physics. In the year 1927, Heisenberg discovered his uncertainty principle. According to the uncertainty principle a sub-atomic particle has no distinctive, objective reality. It is, as Michael Talbot put it, 'Omnijective'—an inseparable combination of the subject of the scientist and the object observed. Heisenberg declared that 'the common division of the world into subject and object, inner world and outer world, body and soul is no longer adequate and leads us into difficulties.'⁷

7. Ken Wilber (Ed.), *The Spectrum of Consciousness* (Illinois: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1982) p. 39.

But now arises a more important question. If reality is 'Omnijjective', which of the two components (subject and object), is primary? Does the external object bring awareness in the subject or does the subjective consciousness lend reality to the external world? This question was resolved once for all by the Austrian nobel-physicist Erwin Schrodinger. Schrodinger developed a new equation on the wave nature of every particle in the universe. This is the celebrated 'wave-equation'. This equation suggested that an electron, or a sub-atomic particle may sometimes appear simultaneously in two, three, or many different forms. This may sound strange, but it was found true both mathematically and experimentally. Schrodinger explained this idea through his well-known thought-experiment known as 'Schrodinger's Cat'. This thought-experiment suggests that the world in front of us is a world of 'multi-dimensional reality'.

Following this line of thinking, in 1957 physicists Hugh Everette, John A. Wheeler and Mill Graham examined the issues. They subsequently created the 'Everette-Wheeler' interpretation of quantum mechanics. This interpretation is called appropriately, the 'many-world interpretation' of quantum mechanics. Reality according to this latest interpretation of modern physics, is 'observer-created reality'. We create our own world. The external world is just a suggestion on which we project our own thoughts and feelings. Mary Magdalene saw the face of God in Jesus at the very moment when Roman soldiers were nailing him on the Cross. Max Planck, the father of modern physics, said, 'Consciousness, I regard as fundamental. I regard matter as derived from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing

postulates consciousness.'⁸ Wolfgang Pauli, another nobel-physicist also offers the same view on these latest findings in quantum physics. He writes in words which are, in fact, interchangeable with the just-quoted words of *Dr̥g-Dr̥śya-Viveka*: 'From an inner centre the psyche seems to move outward, in the sense of an extraversion, into the physical world.'⁹

The Seminar, however, was not limited to the discussion of the metaphysical aspects of space only. In fact, the greater portion of this seven-day seminar discussed how the different concepts of space in different types of cultures have influenced and shaped the art, architecture and music of these cultures. Art, architecture, music and science—all these are basically expressions of man's struggle to deal with the vast space in front of him and the infinite space he feels within himself. 'Art, Science and Religion are but three ways of expressing a single truth. But in order to understand it, one must accept Advaita', said Swami Vivekananda. The entire Seminar was, in a sense, a vindication of this central idea.

The western concept of space, and its influence on art and architecture, can be found in the art and architecture of Greece. In fact, as Swami Vivekananda put it, 'It is Greece that speaks through everything in Europe. Every building, every piece of furniture has the impress of Greece upon it. European science and art are nothing but Grecian.'¹⁰ What are the distinctive

8. C.E.M. Joad, *Philosophical Aspects of Modern Science* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932) p. 12.

9. Quoted in Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* (New York: Morrow Hill Paperbacks, 1979) p. 56.

10. *Complete Works* (1979) Vol. 3, p. 271.

features of Greek architecture? The Greek architecture was an expression of 'finite human identity in the vastness of an infinite universe.' Man, with all his littleness stood face to face against the vast space that lay in front of him in the form of sky, hills, and Mediterranean sea. He wanted to assert his own 'identity', and retain his individuality. The Greek, by and large, never thought of the unity of macrocosm and microcosm. For him the two stood apart and never merged into one another. Anastasio Tanoulas, a Greek architect who represented the ministry of culture and science from Greece explained this viewpoint in the seminar in his paper on 'Greek Concept of Space as reflected in ancient Greek architecture'.

Everywhere in Greece nature takes an interest, a share in the works of men, and men take her into account. Nature commands, but so does man. Everything in Greece—literally each thing. From the smallest to the greatest, every element is distinct, and appears proud of itself, aware of its necessity to the whole.

The very strong feeling for *individuality* [not holistic view] so characteristic of the Greeks matched with a very strong feeling of community, and resulted in the city states and democratic regimes of the late Archaic and Classical period.

The same concept of space dominates the construction of Egyptian Pyramids. This is how a Japanese architect once captured the spirit behind the construction of colossal pyramids:

When I first saw the pyramids of Giza, in the midst of virtually infinite desert space, I instantly understood why the ancient Egyptians were so zealous to construct the pyramids.

The infinities of nature...the infinite presence of the desert, the infinite expansion of blue sky, the desert sky at night with its innumerable stars as immeasurable as infinity... Human

identity in contrast with the infinite. This was the pyramid.¹¹

The entire Judeo-Christian art and architecture is basically influenced by the Semitic dualism between God and man. God is the ruler who presides over the universe. It is an austere Father image. Man, the puny creature who lives on earth, was once brought to existence by Adam and Eve. The Cartesian dualism between God and man is strictly maintained. Man, in his struggle to keep his identity, 'refuses to be absorbed by the Infinite'. The huge cathedrals with their sky-touching spires are examples of man's quest for the Absolute God thought to be existing somewhere above in the vast space of the universe. But the interior of the cathedrals expresses the western man's concept of finite, enclosed space where he dwells. Bruno Queysanne, another western participant in the seminar, discussed the above idea in his paper on 'Between Light and Shade: Gothic Architecture'. He said, 'In the Gothic cathedrals, the shells of space are built with a diaphanous structure from the blindness of the stones to the darky-lit of the stained glass windows.' The only source of contact between man inside and God outside is the huge glass window of the huge cathedral through which the radiance of heaven penetrates into the life of man. Shelly's lines express this idea most aptly.

Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
stains the white radiance of Eternity.

The Indian concept of space and its influence on architecture was the theme of some of the more prominent papers in the

¹¹. Koichi Nagashima 'Architectural Space Concepts—Identity versus Harmony', *PHP* (Singapore: PHP International Pte. Ltd.) August 1980. pp. 30-31.

seminar. Dr. Lokesh Chandra, Bettina Baumer, Michael, W. Meister, Prof. Shankara Pillai, Stella Kramrisch, and Balakrishna Doshi dealt with this theme in various ways.

Man, the human being, the microcosm, is described in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.1.1-2) as the 'city of Brahman'. Indian temple-architecture is an expression of this microcosmic reality inside man. The *Yogaśikṣā-Upaniṣad* (1.1.68) describes this human body as *Śivālaya*. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.1) speaks of the same as *Devālaya*. Śaṅkara in his '*Śiva mānasa-pūjā-stotra*' speaks of this human body as the house of Atman (*śarīram gṛham*). Within the heart of man is the small inner space, the '*dahara ākāśa*'. Inside this *dahara ākāśa* is the 'spiritual lotus' in which the Self or God in man, remains hidden. Stella Kramrisch, the renowned specialist in Indian art, pointed out these very ideas, in her paper: 'Space in Indian Cosmogony and its Architecture':

In the architecture of the temple the two innermost, macrocosmic and microcosmic, concepts are conjoint in the shape of the *garbhagrha* and that of the ideational pillar that traverses this small innermost sanctuary. The two conjoint themes are ensconced in the massive temple walls.

Created once again, not cosmogonically, though, but statistically, this creation, the edifice of the temple in the density of images that emerge from and have their station on the bulwork of its walls—is a reiteration in its own terms, a reconstruction of the all-filling akasa and of the waves of the flood prior to creation.

Their density, in the hands of the creative artist, invests the architectural monument; it is principal to the form of Indian sculpture and painting as well. There is no 'empty space' in Indian art. The space that lies between heaven and earth, *antarikṣa* is bounded, it is full of light, full of heavenly bodies, full of rivers and earth, pervaded by akasa.

Temples of South India have got distinct anthropomorphic structures. The *garbha*

gṛha corresponds to the *cidākāśa* or *dahara ākāśa*. The *vigraha* or the deity represents the Self hidden within us. The *nātmaṇḍapam*, or the music hall corresponds to heart where devotion is felt. The *balipīṭha* or sacrificial spot represents that place in human body where the animal propensities manifest most, and the animal in man must be sacrificed in order to reach the Self. The *dhvajastambha*, the towering pillar at the entrance of the temple represents the conquest of the Self over the non-self in man.

On 19 November 1986, the opening day of the seminar, nearly fifty musicians played inside the Vigyan Bhavan the celebrated Panchavadya of Kerala. In its deep and solemn rhythm, in the alternation of sound and silence, pause and resonance, one could feel the rhythm of the cosmic dance of Śiva. Music, to the Indians, is the doorway to the regions beyond music. It arises in outer space with the vocal sound or the striking of the instruments. Then it creates ripples in the *cittākāśa*, the mental space. Finally the music leads the listener to the region beyond music. Then one experiences the *anāhata dhvani*, (the unstruck sound, in the silence of the *cidākāśa*). Dr. Premalata Sharma, Vice-chancellor, Indira Kala Sangit Viswa-vidyalaya, M.P., held up this idea in her paper, 'Ākāśa and Sound':

Concentration on different points in inner elemental space is somewhat essential in music and there is every possibility of transcending inner elemental space and taking a leap or plunge into Chidakasha (space of consciousness).

Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'You explain AUM, as A, U and M. You call these three syllables as corresponding to creation, sustenance and dissolution. But I compare OM with the 't-a-a-m-m' sound

of the bell; t-a-a-m-m shows that from the relative (*līlā*) the sound moves to the Absolute (*nitya*); from the outer space (the gross) sound moves into the inner space (the subtle or the *cidākāśa*). From the three stages of our life—waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep—the AUM takes us to Turiya, the stage transcending these three stages.¹² *Brahmavidyā Upaniṣad* (12-13) describes how the sound of a bell which arises in external space (*bhūtākāśa*) leads us to the stage of absolute silence (of *cidākāśa*) which is Brahman itself.

Swami Vivekananda told nearly a century ago in the Harvard Graduate Philosophical Society that civilization is the manifestation of the divinity in man. The sensate cultures which give primacy to outer space, Vivekananda knew, will one day turn to the space within for fulfilment in life. He felt that India must rise up and deliver this message to the entire world. The influx of the West on the soil of India, according to Vivekananda, was the beginning of a new world culture when these ancient Vedantic ideas would go abroad. 'Today the ancient

Greek is meeting the ancient Hindu on the soil of India', he said.

On the pleasant winter evening of 20 November 1986, as the delegates from different countries were leaving the Indian International Centre of New Delhi, after the first day's deliberations, one could feel that a new horizon had already opened before them. It is the immortal spirit or consciousness within us which creates and shapes matter. Man needs both the spirit and matter, both *yin* and the *yan*, the intuitive and the material aspects of life. And space, or life as a whole, when treated with reverence, leads us to the world beyond space, to immortality. This is the message that was delivered in the seminar. One could get the impression of reverence for India in the bright faces of the delegates on that winter evening. One could remember the immortal lines of Tagore 'Awaken, O my mind, steadily on this vast sea shore of all humanity, this blessed pilgrimage, India'. One could hear the voice of Vivekananda, 'India will be raised, not by the power of the flesh, but by the power of the spirit.' One could realize the emergence of a Prabuddha Bharata—an Awakened India.

12. Shri Kumar Krishna Nandi, *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa O Śāstra Pramāṇ* (Calcutta: Students' Library, 1947) p. 142.

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF SISTER NIVEDITA : THEORY AND PRACTICE

MAMATA RAY and ANIL BARAN RAY

The meaning of the word *India* and the place of India in the world together with a burning desire to serve *India*, the *soil* and the *people*, are the things that are to be recognized as education for women. These things are the centre.¹

1. See Sankari Prasad Basu (Ed.) *Letters of Sister Nivedita* (Calcutta: Nababharat Publishers, 1982) Vol. 2, p. 1056.

So wrote Sister Nivedita. The quoted lines contain the essence of the educational ideas of Sister Nivedita which she sought to translate into practice by opening a school for girls and women in the Baghbazar area of Calcutta.²

2. Sister Nivedita (born Margaret Elizabeth Noble in 1867 in Ireland) came to India, at the

I

What was the need and rationale for establishing such a school? The rationale lay in the fact that the system of education as it was prevalent at that time was a *discipline* rather than a *development*. Taking into account the three R's at the primary stage and higher education at the university stage, the prevalent system covered only a handful of Bengali girls—a mere six and a half per cent of the total population of Bengal. There was, therefore, a great need for further diffusion of education along meaningful lines. Having established the rationale, Nivedita pointed out that education in her school should mean *development adapted to the actual needs of lives*. 'It is undeniable that if we could add to the present lives of Indian women, larger scope for individuality, a larger social potentiality and some power of economic redress, without adverse criticism, direct or indirect, of present institutions, we should achieve something of which there is dire necessity.'³

Nivedita was asked in the West about the purpose in establishing her school in India. The answer that she gave deserves to be quoted in view of the clarity with which she articulated her purpose :

To give *education* [not instruction merely] to orthodox Hindu girls in a form that is suited to the needs of the country. I recognise that if any Indian institutions are faulty it is the right of the Indian people themselves to change them. We may only aim to produce ripe judgement and power of action. Also, I consider that we should confer a direct benefit on any Indian woman

instance of her Master Swami Vivekananda, in January, 1898 and established a school for girls in Baghbazar of Calcutta in November of the same year. The Holy Mother Sarada Devi inaugurated the school and blessed it along with Swami Vivekananda.

3. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1982) Vol. 4, p. 376.

whom we could enable to earn her own living, without loss of social honour.⁴

Implicit in the above statement is the educational philosophy of Sister Nivedita on two counts. First, like her Master,⁵ she believed in natural growth. Education must have the stand-point of the learner and help him/her to develop in his/her own way. This philosophy of natural growth found explicit statement in a letter she wrote to Alberta Sturges (Lady Sandwich) on 27 September 1908.

The fact is, *Education*, like growth, *must be always from within*. Only the inner struggle, only the will of the taught is of avail. Those who think otherwise do so only because they are ignorant of education as a science by itself. We know that it is true of ourselves as individuals, that only the effort we make ourselves advances us. All the hammering in the world from outside, would be useless—if indeed it did not repel, and destroy our will to climb. The same is true of societies as of individuals—education must be from within.⁶

Secondly, she would do nothing to disturb the existing social, religious, or economic order. She would offer no criticism of the existing institutions with which the Indians were familiar, believing that every country had a right to lay down its own etiquette and was entitled to have respect for it. This was where the Christian missionaries had gone wrong—in seeking not the furtherance of Indian social life but its disintegration. 'The missionaries are mistaken because, whether right or wrong in their assertion of the present

4. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 4, p. 379.

5. Swami Vivekananda: '...all is a growth from inside out... the seed can only assimilate the surrounding elements, but grows a tree in its own nature'. See *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972) Vol. 4, p. 347.

6. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 915.

need of education, they are not in a position to discriminate rightly the elements of value in the existing training of Oriental girls for life.⁷ The Christian educationists disregarded the value of education that a girl received from her grandmother at home. Far from neglecting such education, Nivedita put a premium on it :

There ought to be interaction between school and home. But the home is the chief of these two factors. To it, the school should be subordinated, and not the reverse. That is to say, the education of an Indian girl should be directed towards making of her a more truly-Indian woman. She must be enabled by it to recognise for herself what are the Indian ideals, and how to achieve them ; not made contemptuous of these ideals, and left to gather her own from the moral and social chaos of novels by Ouida.... Indian ideals of family cohesion, of charity, of frugality and of honour ; the admiration of the national heroes ; the fund of poetic legends, must be daily and hourly discussed and commented on. All that makes India, must flow through the *Indian home to make it Indian*.⁸ (Emphasis added).

What courses would Nivedita offer in the school to drive this sense of Indianness to the very bone of Indians ? Founded on the kindergarten system, the school would offer :

1. Bengali language and literature
2. English language and literature
3. Elementary mathematics
4. Elementary science
5. Manual training, by which she meant the use of hands for the making of handicrafts. The immediate objective of the last subject was to enable every pupil to earn her own living, without leaving her home. Its ultimate objective was to bring about a revival of old Indian industries and arts. It should not go unmentioned here that in including manual training in the curriculum, Sister Nivedita anticipated one of the basic foundations of Gandhiji's *Nai Talim* and

7. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

8. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* Vol. 5, pp. 74-75.

what goes by the name of vocational education at the present time. Worthy of mention in this connection is the fact that Nivedita proposed to take the help of the Hindu widows in her school. (She had a women's section added to the girls' section in her school in 1903) 'to organise two or three industries for which promising markets can be opened up in England, India and America. Amongst these, the making of native jams, pickles and chutneys is to be included.'⁹ This sort of thinking in terms of making women stand on their own legs economically should be considered revolutionary in view of rigid orthodoxy of the Hindu society of that time.

Since Nivedita's school was modelled on the kindergarten,¹⁰ it is necessary to note what exactly she meant by this system. She despised imitation and all things foreign, and yet how is it that she followed a system which was of foreign origin ? Is there any apparent contradiction ? No, there is no contradiction if the real import of what she meant by its use in the Indian context is understood. The system was, no doubt, of

9. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 4, p. 377. It should be noted here that a great advocate of industrial education and economic emancipation of women, Swami Vivekananda talked of setting up cottage industries at Belur Math and he was the first to moot the idea to Sister Nivedita that the girls at her school could make jam etc. Greatly elated over this idea, Nivedita wrote in her letter to Miss MacLeod, dated 7.6.1899: 'It strikes me as excellent. You have no idea of the deliciousness of green mango jam. And of course, you know Bengali Chutney. I am sure we can do this, and it would be widening the scope of our work educationally. To be managed entirely by women, think of that! Of course, we would make a very small beginning. Oh, I am dying to really earn what we want.' *Letters of Sister Nivedita* Vol. 1, p. 162.

10. Kindergarten literally means the garden of the children. In the system the school is likened to a garden, the teacher to a gardener, and every child to a plant.

foreign origin in that the Swiss educationist Pestalozzi laid down its broad principles and the German educationist Froebel made the first application of these principles in certain directions. Nivedita made it clear from the very outset that the kindergarten in Europe and the kindergarten in India were two different things. She *Indianized* the kindergarten, making that system an 'efflorescence of Indian life itself.'¹¹

As she insightfully observes in her letter to Swami Akhandananda, 'India cannot swallow the kindergarten as practised in Germany. But she can learn to understand that, and then make one of her own, different in details, but concordant in intention'.¹² Nivedita suggests the development in schools of home art¹³ such as clay modelling, paper cutting, and drawing in the form of *alpana*. She also found great virtue in the image-worship of the Hindus, in cow-puja¹⁴ and in the traditional religious vows or *vratas* observed by Indian girls.¹⁵ Writes Nivedita:

11. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 4, p. 406.

12. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 2, p. 580.

13. 'The right course is not to introduce a foreign process', she writes, 'but to take home art and develop it along its own lines, carrying it to greater ends, by growth from within.' *Ibid.*, p. 579.

14. Nivedita writes in a footnote in *The Web of Indian Life*: 'I was informed by so authoritative a body as the professors in the Minnesota College of Agriculture, USA, that this procedure of the Hindu Women is strictly scientific'. 'The cow is only able to yield her full possibility of milk to a milker whom she regards as her own child'. See *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 2, p. 55.

15. Waxing eloquent over the 'beauty' of these *vratas* preserved from time immemorial and handed down from generation to generation, Nivedita writes that they are good not only as lessons in worship but also in terms of maintaining social relationships and good manners. She asks, how could the Indian women be other than graceful when as a child she learns to ask

The religious education of Hinduism is a complete development not only of the religious, but also of the domestic and social mind... The image is a means of basing the idea of divine energy on concrete sensation. The girls' *vratas*, the cow-puja, and fifty other things, are a complete inclusion of this theory [Kindergarten] in Hinduism itself, and the right way would be to start from them, and go further if possible. Meanwhile, the beginning of education may be in the concrete, but its end lies in the trained attention, and power of concentrating the mind—and that India understands, as Europe never can.¹⁶

II

This discussion on Nivedita's educational ideas will remain incomplete without mentioning how she sought to give her pupils national consciousness in her own school at Baghbazar.¹⁷ In view of the great

mentally even a plant its permission before cutting its blossoms. 'O Tulsi, beloved of Vishnu' says the little maiden, about to gather the basil-leaves for worship, 'grant me the blessing to take you to his feet!' and only after a pause does she begin to pluck. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 4, p. 401.

16. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 2, p. 580.

17. Unselfish love and dedicated service characterized the development of the school. Nivedita had to beg money in foreign countries such as the USA and money in aid from foreign well-wishers for running the school. The privations she had to suffer going to the extent of cutting down her expenses on rice and milk has been noted even by Rabindranath Tagore. See Sarala Devi, *Niveditake Jemon Dekhiachi* (Bengali), p. 17. She was assisted in running the school by Sister Christine, an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda, about whom Nivedita wrote: 'All the things that Swami dreamt for me, she is fulfilling'. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 2, p. 589. Another person who assisted greatly these two in their work for the school was Sudhira Devi. She read up to class VIII in the Brahma Girls' School and was inspired to offer her honorary service to Nivedita's School by her elder brother, Debabrata Basu, a revolutionary who subsequently became a Sannyasin at the Belur Math.

purpose she sought to realize, her school may unhesitatingly be called the first national school for girls on modern lines. She taught her pupils geography, history, needle-work and drawing. Most interesting were her classes on Indian history. She had a passion for it. She believed that 'a national consciousness expresses itself through history, even as a man realizes himself by the memories and associations of his own life'.¹⁸ While talking about historical personages in the class she would even forget that she was in the class room. This happened one day when she was talking in the class about her visit to Chitor: 'I went up the hill and sat down on my knees. I closed my eyes and thought of Padmini. I saw Padmini Devi standing near the pyre and tried to think of the last thought that might have crossed Padmini's mind.'¹⁹ She would relate the story with gestures and manners so lively that it would seem as if she were in Chitor at that moment in time. Her objective in bringing back alive to her pupils the history of India was to excite their imagination and emotions and thus nurture in them the idea of India as an absorbing passion.²⁰

Having told her girls stories about the Rajput women, she would exhort them: 'You must all be like them. Oh Daughters of Bharata! You all vow to be like the Kshatriya women.'²¹ It is worth quoting Pravrajika Atmaprana, the biographer of Sister Nivedita, on how Sister Nivedita always reminded the girls that they were the daughters of Bharata-Varsha:

During the Swadeshi Movement she took the girls to the Brahma Girls' School so that they

18. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 5, p. 20.

19. Atmaprana, *Sister Nivedita* (Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1961) p. 231.

20. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 5, p. 26.

21. Atmaprana, *Sister Nivedita*, p. 231.

might listen to lectures given in the adjoining park. In the Swadeshi Exhibition organised by the Congress in 1906, Nivedita sent the handicraft of her students for display. She introduced spinning in her school and appointed an old lady for the task whom the girls called Charka-Ma. At a time when the singing of *Bande-Mataram* was prohibited by the Government, she introduced it daily in her school prayers.²²

Elsewhere Atmaprana writes:

When the Swadeshi Movement started she (Nivedita) came forward to boycott foreign goods and encouraged her pupils to do the same.... The idea of a national flag first came to Nivedita's mind in 1906 during the Calcutta session of the Congress. She chose the design of the *vajra*, the thunderbolt, had it embroidered by her pupils, and displayed it in the Congress Exhibition. By such activities she instilled into her students the spirit of patriotism and love for their own historical and cultural ideals.²³

She was greatly fond of education by public spirit, and by travel—not purposeless travel, but travel for an idea. '*To prepare one's daughters to understand their country when they see her*, would not be a bad way of summing up the object of childhood schooling',²⁴ she wrote. Lack of funds did not allow her to take her girls to historic places like Puri and Bhubaneswar, Chitor and Benares, Ujjain and Rajgir, Elephanta and Conjeevaram. But she made up that deficiency to some extent by taking them on short trips to places such as the Calcutta zoo and museum and Dakshineswar. The educational value of such trips would be obvious from what she told her pupils during a moment of crisis on one of such trips. They were all going by boat which rolled on one side as the river was rough. The girls were very much afraid when Nivedita

22. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

23. Atmaprana, *My India, My People* (New Delhi: Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, 1985), p. 31.

24. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 5, p. 26.

said : 'Why' are you afraid? Don't fear the big waves. Good boatmen remain firm at the helm and go over the waves safely. If in our lives we too learn to remain steadfast, then we will have no fear in life—never.'²⁵ It is this Upaniṣadic message of fearlessness, strength, courage and steadfastness in goal that her Master preached all his life and it is this message that Nivedita was seeking to make true to the life of her pupils.

'Straighten up your back, never crouch' was the advice she would give her students. Don't indulge in over-exuberance,²⁶ or be exhibitivite but be creative by all means. Anybody visiting her small room in the school could see Nivedita's room decorated with toys and painting made by her girls under her *creative* advice. She displayed these very proudly to all her visitors. On one such visit, Ananda Coomaraswamy, the great art connoisseur, praised a small *alpāna* design drawn by one of Nivedita's pupils. At this, Nivedita was beside herself with joy. This shows the great emphasis Nivedita gave on developing the artistic talents of the students, her ultimate objective in this regard being the revival of ancient Indian art. She exclaimed : 'How happy will be that day when Sanskrit written on palm leaves by my girls will decorate my room'.

III

The personal interest that Nivedita took in the day to day development of her pupils can be seen from the notes she kept of them. Here are two examples.²⁷

25. *Atmaprana, Sister Nivedita*, p. 231.

26. A great disciplinarian herself, Sister Nivedita once punished a girl student who indulged in blurting out the answers to question asked of other girls. See *Atmaprana, Sister Nivedita*, p. 230. She also made her students take regular physical exercise in the form of drill in the garden attached to her school.

27. See *Atmaprana, My India, My People*, Op. cit., pp. 28-29.

Bidyutmala Bose: Attended 45 times out of 60.²⁸ One of the strongest characters I have ever seen. Her courage and determination are wonderful. And she has exquisite taste. She was troublesome and disobedient till I had a quiet talk with her the other day—since then a smile has been enough. And the daintiest offerings have constantly arrived. She has fire and will enough for anything, but will be smothered in marriage²⁹ of course. Her sewing is particularly good.

M.N.: Attended 39 times out of 60. Such a good, sweet, quiet, painstaking child. One of the best, sweetest and cleverest children I have ever known. Most retiring and ceaselessly good. Easily lost in work.

The motherly care she took of her pupils was unparalleled. Her day at the school began with greeting the girls at the school gate, saying 'Ah! my children have come, my children have come'.³⁰ This was no formal greeting. She meant it with all her heart. When Mahamaya, a girl-student of her, had tuberculosis, she who had been suffering privations herself, spared whatever she could from her meagre resources³¹ to bear the medical expenses of the child and to find her a rented home at Puri so that she could be at peace in the last days of her life.

Giribala was a twenty-two-year-old widow with a child living in her uncle's house at Baghbazar. She started coming to school only to find herself criticized by her neighbours. Society being what it was at that time, such attitude born of orthodoxy was not unusual in those days. In the face of criticism she stopped coming. Nivedita not

28. Nivedita was very particular, almost fastidious about the regularity of attendances at the school.

29. One practice that Nivedita always regretted was the early marriage of Indian girls which left them little time and years to complete even their primary education. She was pained to see the early end to the studies of promising young girls.

30. *Atmaprana, Sister Nivedita*, p. 234.

31. *Ibid.*

only implored her uncle to send her to school but gave Giribala her own shawl so that she could come to the school covering herself with the shawl: 'My child, henceforward you will be able to attend the school regularly'.³²

The most moving example is that of Prafullamukhi, a child-widow, and student of Nivedita. On Ekādaśis, the day of fast for Hindu widows, Nivedita used to send for her and give her fruits and sweets to eat. On one such day it so happened that after the day's work for the school Nivedita went to the house of Dr. J.C. Bose. The moment she remembered there that it was an Ekādasi and that poor Prafullamukhi remained unfed for the whole day, she rushed back to her place and sent for Prafullamukhi, telling her with all the love of a mother: 'My child, my child, I quite forgot! How unjust of me: I did not give anything to you to eat but ate myself, how unthoughtful of me!'³³ It was this undiluted pure love of a mother that Nivedita extended to the

whole of India. It was the fullest extension of a woman's family ideal to the national ideal. The whole India was Nivedita's family. It was only in the fitness of the poetic vision of Rabindranath Tagore that he called Nivedita *Lokamata*. Can India ever repay the all-embracing love and selfless giving of this noble lady who was more Indian than any Indian could ever be and whose life was one long message on the urgent necessity of *national unity and national integration of India*? The italicized words in the last sentence represent the fundamental idea behind all her thoughts including thoughts on education. 'Be a nation. Think great of yourselves. Believe in your organic relatedness. Imagine a life in which all have common interests, common needs and mutually complementary duties'³⁴: this was the message Sister Nivedita left behind—a message which is even more relevant for India of today than it was for India of the 'time she lived and worked for.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. See Nivedita's letter, dated 28 July 1904 to Mrs. Ole Bull, *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. 2, p. 664.

THE POEMS OF VIVEKANANDA

DR. CAREBANU COOPER

Swami Vivekananda, born in 1863, is well-known as a giant intellect, an outstanding writer of pragmatic, inspirational prose and poetry, an orator, and a patriotic Hindu, whose powerful message revolves around the ancient Vedantic axiom: *ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*—'Truth is one, wise men describe it in various ways'.

Vivekananda's teachings would have been difficult for the Western world to accept, had it not been for the 19th century Transcendental Movement in literature.

Having reverentially studied the Hindu Upanishadic philosophy, the poets of this movement accepted the immutable *Atman* or divine inner core amidst *samsāra* or the changing panorama of the outer world. The sense of infinite existence became a realized fact, and by means of his intuitive vision, Whitman, like Vivekananda, entered the spiritual centre within himself and discovered the true glory of his transcendental self. Vivekananda also, cognizing the infinity of existence, unleashed tremendous powers

within himself—powers he employed to help mankind emerge from the thralldom of *māya*, or the delusion of dualities.

In his childhood Vivekananda developed a love of poetry that never left him. As a child he spent many hours listening to his mother's recitation of stirring tales from the ancient epics, and as a student, he came under the afflatus of the British Romantic poets. From a very early age, Vivekananda began writing poetry and composing songs, all of which reveal the imprint of his early spiritual inspirations. The soul became his persona, the 'Reflector true—Thy pulse so timed to mine,¹ that he constantly searched for the how and why of things, and not satisfied with stereotypic answers, Vivekananda formulated his own responses based upon his meditations. These answers were written in poetic form. Vivekananda's poetry was spontaneous, expressing the immediate emotion of a whole conscious experience.

Three broad themes run through Vivekananda's poetry. These are perceptions ostensibly disparate, yet inextricably interwoven. They represent Vivekananda's philosophy of life; and though his life appeared compartmentalized, it was unmistakably synthesized by his guru Ramakrishna's teachings of Unity and Oneness that stretched from the lowly worm to the heavenly *devas* (gods). These three broad motifs in Vivekananda's poetry are, the religious or metaphysical, the social or critical sentiments, and the poems of prophecy. His poems were written in Bengali and English, and like his oratory, reveal an authority of *jñāna* (Self-knowledge), and the elan of *bhakti* (zealous devotion to God). Vivekananda's reputation as a poet of note stemmed not so much from

1. Swami Vivekananda, 'To My Own Soul' *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977) Vol. 8. p. 170. (Hereafter referred to as *Complete Works*)

his prosody, but from the covert implications interwoven into the poems. The strength of his verse lay in their spiritual strength and autobiographical nature, and could be termed (to use a Wordsworthian phrase) 'emotion recollected in tranquillity.'

Although very few of his poems are dated, the images Vivekananda used and the feelings he evoked are universal. Like the great philosophical poets, Milton and Whitman, Vivekananda used blank verse to convey his meaning. This form of poetry allowed him to attain an incredible range and flexibility in his verse.

From his earliest childhood Vivekananda had been attracted to and made a deep study of Hindu religion. He considered the Goddess Kālī² the primordial Power behind life and the universe to be his spiritual Mother, 'the One behind phenomena.'³ 'Kālī the Mother,'⁴ considered one of Vivekananda's better-known poems, was written under exceptional circumstances. According to his Eastern and Western disciples, Vivekananda composed the poem at a time when his

brain seethed with the vision and the consciousness of the Mother...while his vision was intensest (sic), he wrote the poem 'Kālī, the Mother'... Filled with sublime consciousness, he wrote to the last word; the pen fell from his hand; he himself dropped to the floor losing consciousness.⁵

A striking parallel between this poem and Dante's *Inferno* emerges: Vivekananda's

2. Kālī, the dark-hued Hindu goddess of destruction, destroys those traits in man that hinder him from an awareness of his divinity. Thus Kālī is beneficial, by helping man to attain an ultimate union with Brahman or the Godhead.

3. *The life of Swami Vivekananda* by his Eastern and Western Disciples (Calcutta, India: Advaita Ashrama, 1960), p. 547.

4. 'Kali, the Mother', *Complete Works*, (1972), Vol. 4, p. 384.

5. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, op. cit., p. 596.

determination to 'see' Mother Kālī through the experiences of the terrible death reminds us of Dante's eagerness to meet his beloved Beatrice through the awe-striking journey of Inferno and Purgatorio. Dante's journey took him through the underworld and finally with the loud hosanna of a multitude of angels, to Beatrice in Paradio. In this poem, however, the object of Vivekananda's passion was no human being but Kālī, the terrible face of Divine Mother. Vivekananda passed through *samādhi*⁶ in which the vision of Kālī was revealed through the 'Sturm und Drang of the Cosmos.'⁷ In this poem, Vivekananda repeatedly used onomatopoeia to portray his agitation. He described the night as 'darkness vibrant', paralleling Milton's vision of 'darkness visible'. To Vivekananda, the occasional flash of 'lurid light' (as alliteration that gets lost in the imagery), revealed the 'roaring whirling wind ... [which] swirls up mountain-waves, / To reach the pitchy sky.'

The first line, 'The stars are blotted out', prepares us for the raging tempest that follows, a whirlwind of frenzied intoxication. The wild wind is personified as millions of lunatics, 'wrenching trees by the roots, / Sweeping all from the path.' Flashes of lightning reveal a tumultuous sea, with Death omnipresent. This Death is Mother Kālī, the All-Destroyer. Vivekananda's adoration of Kālī recalls the Psalmist who said: 'Though thou slay me, yet will I trust Thee.' (*Job*, 13 : 15). Vivekananda often told his disciples :

Learn to recognize the Mother as instinctively in ...terror, sorrow and annihilation as in that which

6. Superconscious experience in which the mind, attaining to the ultimate state of calmness and concentration, experiences communion with the Divine Reality. Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in America, New Discoveries* (Calcutta, India: Advaita Ashrama, 1966), p. 709.

7. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, op. cit., p. 596.

makes for sweetness and joy.... The Mother Herself is Brahman.... The heart must become a cremation-ground, pride, selfishness, and desire all burnt to ashes. Then, and then alone, will the Mother come!⁸

After twenty-one years of affluent living, Vivekananda suffered the deprivation of his father's death and experienced the Sturm und Drang of life. It was then that his spiritual quest began to take a new turn. The misery and terror of his privation were the 'cremation-ground' whereupon his last tinge of ego was 'burnt to ashes', and through his sorrow, like the phoenix, Vivekananda achieved a spirit of renewal. He learned to recognize the Mother in terror and grief, and to 'Dance in Destruction's Dance.' This then was the end of the storm which had been heralded by the first line of the poem : 'The stars are blotted out.' Now, calm ensued, and the last line antithetical to the first, 'To him the Mother comes', falls upon Vivekananda and the reader like a benediction.

The metaphysical poem 'The Cup'⁹ reinforces the oral nature of Vivekananda's mission. Like Christ and Socrates, Vivekananda communicated his messages in spoken rather than written words—which was to awaken mankind to cognizing his divine potential as one with the inscrutable Divinity. 'The Cup' is written as an apologue in which the Divine, as the pedagogue, enlightens a devotee on the reason for his harsh life, and how he could counteract such inclemency. Here Vivekananda employs a familiar biblical allusion to symbolize the unfathomable suffering mankind endures. Like Christ who prayed in his garden agony, 'Let this cup pass from me', the devotee also questions the tribulations of his life.

A repetitive use of the words 'My child' emphasizes the relationship between teacher

8. *Ibid.*, p. 597.

9. 'The Cup', *Complete Works*, (1972), Vol. 6, p. 177.

and taught, and the anaphora at the beginning of each of the three verses, has a premonitory ring to it :

This is your cup...
This is your road...
This is your task...

This call is reminiscent of Vivekananda's relationship with Ramakrishna, who often had to remind the reluctant youth of his worldly duties. The first stanza reveals a Karmic¹⁰ matrix that had been formulated early in the devotee's life, and an explication of this pattern is given in the second and third stanzas.

The devotee's karma of 'fault and passion, ages long ago' had chartered 'a painful road and dream' which he was forced to travel. While the problems ('stones') sent as tests from the Divine gave him no ease, another way could not be taken, as this was the allotted path for the devotee to traverse. While his work also gave him no joy or aesthetic satisfaction, it was a task meant for him alone, and as such, had a special place in the Divine plan. This alludes to Vivekananda's life and the period following his father's death. Vivekananda had been forced to spend long hours in uncongenial, mundane work in order to provide for his family, and puzzled at finding himself in such straits, he often railed against his destiny. But Vivekananda's loving faith in the Divine restored his equilibrium, and like Rabbi Ben Ezra of Robert Browning, Vivekananda acquiesced : 'My times be in Thy hand !/ Perfect the cup as planned.' The poem ends on a paternal note. The devotee is told (as Vivekananda had often been told by his guru, Ramakrishna), that he should make no attempt to comprehend the seeming-caprice of life ; instead he was urged to cease his investigation of the profane world,

10. A concept according to Hindu, Buddhist and Jain, that all actions have inevitable moral consequences in this life or the next; preordained fate.

and concentrate on seeking Divine grace.

Vivekananda creates an artistic personification of the concept of 'Nirvāna',¹¹ an idea Vivekananda affirms to be a reality in this Vedantic poem whose tone suggests the Hallelujah chorus. 'Nirvāṇaśaṭkam or Six Stanzas on Nirvāṇa',¹² was written by Śaṅkarācārya¹³ in Sanskrit, and Vivekananda translated it into English. Though a poem that is taken out of one language and translated into another usually suffers great loss, or as the Chinese proverb states, 'A translation is the reverse side of the brocade', this is not the case with Vivekananda's 'Nirvāṇaśaṭkam.'

Vivekananda, a master of both Sanskrit and English gave the literary ballade, 'Nirvāṇaśaṭkam', a striking vocabulary. His years as a *parivrājaka* (itinerant monk), and later as an *ācārya* (teacher), are reflected in his elucidation of the unanswerable question : What is Nirvāṇa ? Each verse begins with the personified Nirvāṇa stating what it is not. The penultimate line is the resounding climax, intensified by a reversion in the usual order of sentence structure : 'I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.' In the last line (the resolution), the riddle is solved when the individual who has already realized the state of perfect detachment from body and mind, of perfect desirelessness declares that he himself is Śiva, 'Śivoham, Śivoham' (the Absolute God).

The pattern of rising tone developing to a climax, then falling to a resolution, is repeated in the five stanzas. The first verse is built on the structure of a ballade :

I am neither the mind, nor the intellect, nor the
Ego, nor the mind-stuff ;

11. The final absorption in Brahman, or the All-Pervading Reality, through the annihilation of the individual ego.

12. 'Nirvanashatkam', *Complete Works* (1972) Vol. 4, pp. 391-92.

13. Eight-century Hindu philosopher.

I am neither the body, nor the changes in the body;
 I am neither the senses of hearing, taste, smell, or sight,
 Nor am I the ether, the earth, the fire, the air;
 I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—
 I am He, I am He. (Śivoham, Śivoham)¹⁴

In the first verse, Nirvāṇa had declared that it was not a composite of physical traits like the body or its senses, neither emotional or moral values, nor was it limited by the time sequence of death, or man-made limitations of caste, region or nationality. The repeated words 'I am neither ...' arouses the reader's curiosity as to what Nirvāṇa is, as opposed to the repeated statements of what it is not. What the blessed state of Nirvāṇa represents is revealed through the refrain of the last two lines in each stanza which commences with 'I am ...' The last verse completely explicates the realization of Nirvāṇa as formless and limitless beyond space and time. Nirvāṇa is the feeling of one's existence everywhere. It is represented by 'Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute', or 'Sat, Cit, Ānanda', which, according to Hindu philosophy, represents man's highest level of spiritual development. Thus, the ecstasy of Nirvāṇa culminates in one's identification with Śiva, the Absolute God. Vivekananda accepted this interpretation of Nirvāṇa and it represented the culmination of his personal revelations after intense *tapasyas* (austerities).

Many of Vivekananda's disciples consider 'To the Fourth of July'¹⁵ prophetic in tone. It was written on the fourth of July 1898, and four years later on that very day, July 4, 1902, with 'springing joy' and 'life renewed', Vivekananda's 'shackles' of work

and responsibilities were 'broken', and he attained the Nirvāṇa he had been seeking all his life. This poem not only reveals the poetic skill of Vivekananda the versifier, but more importantly, the ardour and human traits of Vivekananda the seer.

July 1898, found Vivekananda in Kashmir, and on the fourth of the month, he planned a surprise celebration for his American friends. He had a tailor make a replica of the American flag, and together with branches of evergreen, it was nailed to the prow of the dining room boat, where a tea had been arranged. Vivekananda's special contribution to the merriment was the gift of his poem 'To the Fourth of July.' The intense yearning for 'liberty and freedom'—the central themes of the poem—so overcame Vivekananda, that immediately after that he made a trip to the famous shrine of Śiva at Amarnath. It was difficult but spiritually enlightening for the summer sun had melted the ice, causing land slides and impassable roads. From that time onwards, Vivekananda developed a brooding introspection, and confided, 'I am attaining peace that passeth understanding, which is neither joy nor sorrow, but something above them both.'¹⁶ In a poignant letter to his disciple Nivedita, he confessed, 'I don't want to work. I want to be quiet and rest ... but fate or Karma, I think, drives me on—work, work.'¹⁷

It is not the actual fourth of July that is portrayed, but a blending of concrete and abstract responses to a national event (freedom from oppressive rule), and to eternal concepts (liberty from the chains of Maya, delusion). The metaphorical conception of freedom is portrayed as twin-faceted: one, representing the American nation, and the other symbolically predicting the freedom that awaited Vivekananda four years later.

The poem is written in blank verse,

14. I am Shiva, the Absolute God—a mantra used in the practice of monistic Vedanta.

15. 'To the Fourth of July', *Complete Works* (1973) Vol. 5, p. 439.

16. *Complete Works* (1977) Vol. 8, p. 504.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 413.

Vivekananda's favoured style of prosody, and represents a near-perfect integration of image and idea with symbol and thought. The poem opens with the same foreboding images that characterize 'Hold on Yet a While Brave Heart': 'dark clouds ... gloomy pall', but a 'magic touch' transforms them into the jocund illustration of 'high noon ... shackles broken ... in springing joy their life renewed!' This 'magic touch' as a symbol for Spring, 'awakens ... the world to a "new life" of love and freedom', while the Sun, 'Lord of Light' emerges from behind the 'gloomy pall' of dark clouds, recalling the similar image of hope and triumph which dominates the poem 'Hold on Yet a While Brave Heart.'

Vivekananda commented upon America's search for freedom. Being 'self-banished', renouncing home and love of friends, the early settlers toiled with untold misery, 'Each step a struggle for their life or death', until 'today' (July 4, 1776), when they attained Liberty. This dovetails with Vivekananda's search for *mukti*, liberation. After arduous *tapasyas*, austerities, especially during his *parivrajaka* days as an itinerant monk, Vivekananda attained his goal. The last stanza bursts into joyful prayer for man's release from bondage. The metaphor 'high noon' represents light and knowledge, and Vivekananda's desire was that this 'light' spread all over the world, releasing the imprisoned souls from their limitations (physical and mental), and thus renewing life. Vivekananda's shackles were the constraints set by Maya, and on their removal, he felt he was ready for the ultimate Nirvāṇa and a new life. To Josephine MacLeod, a disciple, Vivekananda confided :

The battles are lost and won. I have bundled my things and am waiting for the great deliverer. Shiva, O Shiva, carry my boat to the other shore.¹⁸

18. *Ibid.*, p. 422.

Vivekananda, a poet of cosmic consciousness, possessed an all-embracing vision, enabling him to see 'a world in a grain of sand.' His never-ending presentation was the doctrine of the self as *atman-brahman* (self-Divine Self), or, 'I am He, I am He, Shivoham, Shivoham.' Vivekananda's apocalyptic vision had its roots in the prayer from the *Kātha Upaniṣad*, 'From the unreal lead me to the real, from darkness lead me to light, from death lead me to immortality.'¹⁹ Hence in his poem 'The Living God', Vivekananda was able to write with confidence, 'Him worship, the only visible!/Break all other idols!' Vivekananda's search for *amṛtattva*, immortality, led him to look within himself, and beneath the many ego-phantoms, to find the 'Paramātman', or real basis of all existence.

This poet of the cosmos had gained his release from delusion by a withdrawal from *saṁsāra*, panorama of the world, for as he stated in 'The Song of the Sannyasin', 'fetters though of gold, are no less strong to bind.' Vivekananda's knowledge of the world convinced him of the limiting range of all earthly achievements with its frustration of 'ever running, never reaching' the goal. His credo as a sannyasin was to renounce the unstable for the eternal truth, namely, the self, and his constant prophetic refrain was, 'He conquers all who conquers self.'

Vivekananda is primarily a lyric poet. He perfected his own method of infusing intensity and complexity into his verse by various means, a favourite technique being the repetition of symbols with varying meaning :

...stones and trees ne'er break the law,
But stones and trees remain; that man alone
Is blest with power to fight and conquer fate
Transcending bounds and laws.²⁰

19. *Kātha Upaniṣad*, 4.1.

20. 'Angels Unaware', *Complete Works* (1972) Vol. 4, p. 385.

Like Keats' sensuous power, Vivekananda's gift of visualization arouses a sensory impression associated with feeling, hearing, smelling, seeing, which illuminates the meaning of the poem. We see and hear the agony in 'The Song of the Free' :

The wounded snake its hood unfurls,
The flame stirred up doth blaze,
The desert air resounds the calls
Of heart-struck lion's rage.²¹

We smell the fragrance of the

...violet, sweet and pure,
But ever pour thy sweet perfume
Unashed! unstinted, sure!²²

Vivekananda's verses like those of the Transcendentalists, had a healing power, a soothing tone not entirely sad or entirely joyous. It is an inner happiness that remembers sorrow, that is familiar with a resilience which will not allow it to be cast down. A vignette of the pleasure-seeker in 'Angels Unaware' reveals the tone of this special bitter-sweet healing :

One drunk with wine of wealth and power
And health to enjoy them both, whirled on
His maddening course, till the earth, he thought,
Was made for him, his pleasure-garden....
Then sorrow came—and Wealth and Power went—
And made him kinship find with all the human race
In groans and tears, and though his friends would
laugh,
His lips would speak in grateful accents—
'O Blessed Misery!'²³

Vivekananda was the master of many poetic styles. Among them the ballade form with its haunting refrain akin to a mantra,

'I am He, I am He, Śivoham, Sivoham.'²⁴ His metrical technique resembles an important form of the classical music of India, the Rāga.²⁵ This is a melodic framework from which the virtuoso projects his most profound sentiments, through improvisations. Like a ballade it repeats the same motifs, with variations on the predominant melody. This technique of repetition and variation characterizes Vivekananda's verse and is clearly seen in his celebrated poem 'Song of the Sannyasin' composed at Thousand Island Park. In the poem 'The Cup', the predominant theme (melody) is 'Life', while symbols and metaphors (variations) intensifies the experience of living. Variants of the main theme are portrayed in the first four words of each of the three stanzas—'This is your cup...', a metaphor for life—and is explicated in the first verse, 'dark drink...of fault and passion', introducing a colourful timbre. The second verse employs a variant of the main theme—'This is your road...' which, the devotee 'must travel' despite it being painful and drear. Verse three has yet another variant of the theme of life—'This is your task...' The poet urges the devotee to accept that particular life for only by total acceptance can he be assured of Divine grace. Vivekananda's love and knowledge of music is subtly revealed in this Rāga-like poem, which could easily be termed 'Life or the Autobiography of the Soul.'

In Vivekananda's poetry, every verse is undergirded with the concepts of Brahman, the Divine Essence from which all creation emanates. The themes of man's freedom, strength, fearlessness and self-confidence radiate from man's realization of this Divine Essence within himself. Vivekananda's poetry is not verse for an hour,

21. 'An Interesting Correspondence', *Complete Works* (1977) Vol. 8, p. 163.

22. 'To An Early Violet', *Complete Works* (1977), Vol. 8, p. 169.

23. 'Angels Unaware', *Complete Works* (1972), Vol. 4, p. 385.

24. 'Nirvanashatkam', *Complete Works* (1972), Vol. 4, p. 391.

25. The melodic basis of Indian classical music on which musicians improvise,

but concepts for all times. The combination of intellect and emotion, with their appropriate styles, arrests one's attention, a gift graphically illustrated by Ramakrishna :

As the snake remains spellbound with its hood

up on hearing the sweet music of the flute, so does He who is in the heart, the Antaryāmi, when Naren [Vivekananda] sings!²⁶

^{26.} *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, op. cit., p. 163.

THOUGHTS ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN PRE-INDEPENDENT INDIA

DR. AROOP CHAKRAVARTI

In the previous centuries we had a limited vision of India in a climate of fear, suspicion, intolerance and misunderstanding. India with its mighty mountains, great rivers and vast plains was, 'a continent rather than a country'. This vast land was divided into various provinces, inhabited by different cultures. It could not boast of a single Nation. When our nationalist leaders came to the forefront of our freedom struggle, they too realized that this concept of nationalism as well as the idea of nationality were to be inculcated into the minds of the people. Without this spirit of nationhood, it would have been impossible to get rid of the bondage of foreign domination.

Among the leaders who at first spelt out the theory of nationality were the famous trio of India's freedom struggle, 'Lal, Bal, Pal', representing Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal respectively. They alongwith Aurobindo Ghosh and other leaders tried to inculcate the spirit of nationalism into the minds of our people. They propagated the idea Nationality, Nationalism and National Education.

Preaching the ideals of Nationalism through National Education, Tilak maintained that the National Movement should have a common language for the whole of

India. This was absolutely necessary, because, a common language is a vital element for the growth of nationalism.¹ Quoting Manu in support of his views, Tilak writes, 'Manu rightly says that everything is comprehended or proceeded from Vak or Language'². Tilak rightly viewed that if we want to draw a nation together there is no other force more powerful than a common language for all. Tilak was one of the few men of his age to have given a thought to the linguistic problems of this vast country. Furthermore, Tilak expressed concern over the way the British Government was going ahead with its educational policy. He opined that national education was that education which gave a clear idea of the knowledge and experiences of our ancestors. He gave instances as to how our prosperous industries were taken away and yet we remained ignorant of the immense damage.³

Remedy to all such flagrant acts of exploitation lay in National Education, an education which would be totally on national lines and in keeping with the vital interests of the people of the country. Lala Lajpat Rai too opined that, 'National

1. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Writings and Speeches* (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1919) p. 27.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Education must be provided by the nation, and whether the State is a true representative of the nation or not, it must be made to provide for it. The nation should be made conscious of this'. Bipin Chandra Pal also went deep into the development of National Education. He said that the educational policy enunciated by Lord Curzon was motivated to appease the graduates, who would ever remain loyal to the foreign Government in their own country.⁴ This movement of National Education, as Pal maintained, was people's reply to the official policy.

Throwing light on the movement of National Education, Lajpat Rai tells us that no scheme of national education would be complete in India without including an active teaching of 'Patriotism' and 'Nationalism' as a regular subject of study. In this connection he cited the examples of the European countries as well as the United States and how they made it a point to cultivate the spirit of patriotism and nationalism through their schools. However, Lajpat Rai cautioned his countrymen that there should be no divergent tendencies in this field because of the fact that India is dominated by so many religions and castes. Therefore, he suggested that the teaching of patriotism in India and its place in the scheme for national education must revolve round mainly our love for India, regardless of the various creeds and castes into which it is internally divided.

Regarding the National Educational Movement in Bengal, Lajpat Rai observed that it was in no way an anti-Government movement though it owed its initiation to the threats of Government.⁵ Aurobindo Ghosh too along with Bipin Chandra Pal eloquently advocated the idea of national

education. For the development of this noble idea, they had set up a National Council of Education. The purpose of this council was to take up the cause of national education in right earnest. It practically reduced English to the status of a secondary language.

Our Nationalist leaders always worked for a unified progress of the national movement. They always wanted that all the communities should shrink their differences and move onwards with the common aim of nationalism. Bipin Chandra Pal rightly tells us that 'the original models of the different races that have come together in modern India must be kept always vividly in view by the Indian nation-builders'⁶. The five world cultures those of Hindu, Parsee, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist, which have existed together in India have special characteristics of their own. Furthermore, Pal aptly points out that, 'It would be worse than unwise to try to obliterate and reduce them all to a colourless unanimity'⁷. The working together of the different forces would pave the way for the development of the national consciousness, which alone could secure for this country a rightful place among the nations of the world.⁸ At the same time Pal cautions us that none of the great world cultures should try to superimpose its own ideals and methods upon other cultures.⁹ It was the basic unity which, as Pal rightly observes, 'while maintaining the elements of diversity and differentiation intact makes cooperation possible in this work of nation-building, between the leaders of the different communities'¹⁰.

Tilak during the course of one of his speeches pointed out how there has been

4. Bipin Chandra Pal, *Character Sketches* (Calcutta: Yugayatri Prakashak, 1957) p. 89.

5. Lajpat Rai, *Young India* (New Delhi: Publications Division) p. 148.

6. Bipin Chandra Pal, *Writings and Speeches* (Calcutta: Yugayatri Prakashak, 1957) Vol. 1, p. 32.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid. p. 33.

perfect harmony in India among different sects of people. He said that the fact that so many associations were doing him honour showed that all the people had joined hands together for the great National Work of Home Rule or Swarajya. Commenting on the problem of communal 'harmony, Lajpat Rai said that the teaching of Hindu-Muslim unity could be greatly facilitated by the writing of special and carefully worded works on the life and teachings of our great national heroes. Similar to Bipin Pal's Composite Patriotism, Lajpat Rai too said that there should be a composite production of patriotic and scientific history. Lajpat Rai rightly observed in the context of communal harmony and national integration that, 'If mother India is proud of a Nanak, she is also proud of a Chisti. If she had an Asoka, she had a Akbar too'. He further cautioned us that diversity of race, religion and language is often exploited by the foreigners as a pretext to deny us the status and privilege of a nation. According to Lajpat Rai there is no conflict of races in India and furthermore, 'there is no country on the face of the globe which has a pure race'.

Bipin Chandra Pal with his idea of Composite Patriotism tried to bridge the gulf between two major sactors of our societies, that is the Hindus and the Muslims. Bipin Chandra's concept of Composite Patriotism had a wide range of implications especially in a country like India where various cultures and religions move together.

Bipin Pal rightly observed that if a single community or religion is given a place of stewardship, it would hamper the healthy growth of nationalism. Therefore, the only way to solve the issue was to encourage the growth of Composite Patriotism.

Bipin Chandra Pal, further throwing light upon the idea of Composite Patriotism and Composite Cultures, tells us that this Composite Culture could very much help in the formation of a basic unity. This basic unity between the leaders of different communities of these great world cultures could be maintained along with their elements of diversity and differentiation intact.¹¹ Both the Hindus as well as the Muslims according to Pal, should assist in the realization of the national ideal without subjugating their own special features. Thus Bipin Chandra's Composite Patriotism could have been a possible alternative to the two nation theory of the Muslim League.

Thus we find that the nationalist leaders had a vision of national integration not only by political arrangements, but by an understanding of the cultures of the different peoples. These leaders had always kept before them the ideal of oneness. They knew that India is a country where there is unity in diversity and therefore, they always thought that any movement in India should be an integrated national movement and this would be the basis of a complete national integration.

11. Ibid.

CONCEPT OF NATURE IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

DR. D. NIRMALA DEVI

While describing the nature of God, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* has incidentally described the nature of the world. 'Nature in her perplexing multiplicity is God, becomes finite, and relative without losing as much as an iota of His absoluteness or wholeness.'¹ According to the *Gītā* the world has sprung up from God, lives in Him and is to be finally dissolved in Him. God is the origin, the end and the resting place of the world. God who is also known as *Puruṣa* created it through His *prakṛti*. In chapter 13, the idea is further explained: 'Know thou that *prakṛti* (nature) and *puruṣa* (Soul) are both beginningless; and know also that the forms and modes are born of *prakṛti* (nature).'²

God, again, is to be regarded as imperishable—*akṣara*. In some places, the *Gītā* is also found to maintain that God is unmanifested (*avyakta*) for the reason that He represents the quality of subjectivity which cannot form part of the manifested world of objectivity. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* tells us that God is not merely the Absolute or Brahman. The Brahman is a pure ontological potency, as such, it is beyond the unmanifest. 'But beyond this unmanifested, there is yet another Unmanifested Eternal Being who does not perish even when all existences perish.'³ It is the Supra-cosmic unmanifested which is changeless and eternal in the midst of all changes. Two types of unmanifested are sometimes distinguished. An unmanifested (*avyakta*) into which all unredeemed beings enter. The next is the supra-cosmic *avyakta*. It is

imperceptible to the ordinary mind.

Puruṣa builds this universe through His *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* is the primordial matrix out of which all material and psychic phenomena evolve. The world has also been likened by the Gita to an *Aśvattha*,⁴ the peepal tree, which has its root above and branches below, indicating its origin in God. The three *guṇas*, i.e. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* nourish its branches. Its foliage are the different objects of sense perception. This tree, like the banyan, has sent its roots below in the world of men, which becomes the spring of their actions. These deep roots of attachment to the objects in the world have become firm there, and have pinned human beings to this world. As this world is *anitya*, evanescent, and *asukha*, full of misery, the Gita exhorts people to cut down these firm roots with the strong sword of detachment and carry on the search for God. About the nature of the world there has long been a controversy as to whether it is to be regarded as real or unreal. The Lord's *prakṛti* is His Nature. His Nature is two-fold—the lower, *aparā* and *parā*, the higher.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, 'Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind and understanding and Self-sense—this is the eight-fold division of My nature. This is My lower nature. Know My other and higher nature which is the soul, by which this world is upheld, O mighty-armed (Arjuna). Know that all beings have their birth in this. I am the origin of all this world and its dissolution as well. I am the pure fragrance in earth and brightness in fire. I am the life in all existences and the austerity in ascetics.'⁵

1. George Feuerstein, *Introduction to the Bhagavad-Gita* (London: Rider & Co., 1976) p. 97.

2. Radhakrishnan, S., *The Bhagavad-Gita* (Bombay: Blackie & Son Ltd., 1976) p. 308.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 233.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 327.

5. *Ibid.*, Ch. VII. 4,5,6,9. p. 216.

Maya and the world of change

According to the Gita the changing world is an illusion. Maya stands as the principle of change. Dr. Radhakrishnan says that if the fundamental form of the supreme is *nirguna* or qualityless, and *acintya* or inconceivable, we can say that the world is an appearance which cannot be logically related to the Absolute. 'In the unalterable eternity of Brahman all that moves and evolves is founded. By It they exist; they cannot be without It, though It causes nothing, does nothing, determines nothing. While the world is dependent on Brahman, the latter is not dependent on the world.'⁶ The relation between the Reality and the world are brought out by the word Maya. Maya is derived from the root *ma* 'to form', 'to build'. It originally meant the capacity to produce forms.

Maya has been used in different senses. Isvara is the meeting point of immutable and mutable principles. Maya is the principle of change and mutation. It is the eternal becoming and it depends on Isvara. God fashions the universe by His creative power. Sometimes Maya is said to be the source of delusion (*moha*). 'Deluded by these three-fold modes of nature (*guna*), this whole world does not recognize Me, who am above them and imperishable'.⁷ By the force of Maya we have partial consciousness which loses sight of the ultimate Reality and lives in the world of phenomena. Thus, we are under the sway of this partial consciousness and God's real being is veiled from us by the play of *prakṛti* and its modes. We must shatter all forms and go behind the veil in order to find the Reality.

In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* the word Maya is used in different senses: (1) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that He is both the being

and non-being. 'I give heat; I withhold and send forth the rain. I am immortality and also death, I am being as well as non-being O Arjuna.'⁸ (2) Maya has, again, the sense of denoting lower *prakṛti*, in which God casts the seeds of creation. Puruṣa is said to be the seed which the Lord casts into the womb of Prakṛti for the generation of the world. 'The birth of all beings follows this combination of matter and spirit. Of all the bodies that take birth from different wombs, this primordial matter is the mother and the supreme Lord is the procreating father.'⁹

The action of Nature is cyclic. When at rest, it is called the 'unmanifest'. When it starts to move, diversity appears. The whole process is being likened to a day and night of the creator God, Brahma. At the day's dawning all things manifest, spring forth from the unmanifest and then at night-fall they dissolve (again) in the same thing called 'unmanifest'. As the manifested world hides the real from the vision of mortals, it is said to be delusive in character.¹⁰

Cosmology

The Gita accepts from the Sāṃkhya its cosmology. The cosmic order is evolved out of *prakṛti*. In the Gita, Sāṃkhya is given the pride of place. While holding up Bhṛgu as the greatest *ṛṣi* (sage) the Gita declared Kapila, the founder of the Sāṃkhya school of thought, to be the most outstanding *siddha* (seer). Both the Sāṃkhya and the Gita hold that there are twenty-four elements involved in the cosmic evolution.

The whole cosmic process, according to the Gita, is the supreme God's working. He works on *prakṛti* which is conceived as

8. Ibid., Ch. IX. 19., p. 246.

9. Ibid., XIV:3,4. pp. 315-16.

10. Ibid., *Sandilya Sutra*, Ch. VII:25,14. pp. 223,218.

6. Ibid., 'Introductory Essay', pp. 37-38.

7. Ibid., p. 41.

a positive entity because it has the power of resistance. The Gita emphasizes the immanence of Īśvara. Īśvara embraces the world of finite souls and nature.

With regard to the *puruṣa*, the Gita declares that he is the knower of the field (*kṣetrajñā*), while *prakṛti* comprises the total range of objects that fall within the purview of knowledge. The Gita establishes only an epistemological relation between the two. One is the knower and the other is the known. *Prakṛti* is matter and *puruṣa*, consciousness. They are the lower nature and higher nature of Isvara.

The first and the most important point of difference between the two classifications, those of Sāṅkhya and the Gita, consists in the status assigned to the *puruṣa*. In the classical Sāṅkhya, the *puruṣa* has absolutely nothing to do with *prakṛti*. It is absolutely independent of the *prakṛti*. The two are disparate in their character. They represent two different metaphysical realities altogether. In the Gita we cannot see any such metaphysical character in *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. This is obvious from the fact that the *puruṣa* is called by the Gita as *parā-prakṛti*. It is the subtlest aspect of the *prakṛti*. All the other elements which are twenty-four in number are the constituents of *prakṛti* which is different from *parā-prakṛti*.

According to Sāṅkhya, *prakṛti* is composed of the three fundamental qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These *guṇas* did not exist independently of *prakṛti*. At the beginning of the third chapter of the Gita we are reminded of one thing that 'Every man is powerless and made to work by the constituents born of Nature'.¹¹ The *guṇas* are of the nature of joy, joylessness and dejection and have the purpose of illuminating, activating and restricting. They are interdependent and yet productive and cooperative in their

activities. As in Sāṅkhya, in the Gita also we can see the three constituents of nature i.e. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, 'goodness' or purity, 'passion' or energy and 'darkness' or 'dullness' or sloth.

There is no entity (*Sattva*) on earth or again among the gods in heaven who is free from these (type of) primary constituents (*guṇas*) born of the world ground.¹² The *guṇas* constitute the entire manifest world. They are the irreducible ultimate foundation of the physical cosmos. These constituents also unite for all mental and psychic phenomena. The meaning of the word, *guṇa* is 'strand' or rope. All these show their cohesive function. In the Gita their nature and modes of manifestation are more clear and exhaustive. In Sāṅkhya we cannot see such clarity. The idea of three strands can be clearly seen in the Vedic times also. This can be illustrated by a hymn of the *Atharva-Veda*: 'A lotus with nine gates enveloped by three strands—in it is a being strange, possessed of self. That (it is that) knowers of Brahman know.'¹³

The same idea we come across in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.4.1) also. All beings are apportioned between fire, water and food (solid matter). They represent the colours red, white and black. The world-phenomena consist of many things and these things are reducible to three basic qualities. The 'red' of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* corresponds to the 'passion' or energy of the Gita and of the Sāṅkhya, the white to 'goodness' or purity, and the black to 'darkness', 'dullness' or 'sloth'. Goodness helps us to release the self from matter. Passion is an instinct with purposeful activity. Darkness induces stupor, sloth and deadly activity. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is understandably more concerned about the working of the *guṇas* with respect to the inner world. According to George Feuerstein 'Sattva

¹¹. Ibid., III:5, p. 133.

¹². Ibid., XVIII:40, p. 364.

¹³. *Atharva-Veda*, 10.8.43.

reflects most faithfully the condition of the One Being (Sat); Tamas, on the other hand, is that power which obstructs the pure ascending tendency of *Sattva*. It has a fixing, condensing, "materialising" and externalising effect. And finally, *rajas* embodies the principle of activity which mediates between the "idealistic lucidity" of *Sattva* and "materialistic obscurity" of *tamas*.¹⁴ In all the spheres of life we can see how these three work in all. In the Gita this idea becomes clear from the verses 14.5,19 and 17.22 and 18.39. With reference to these *gunas*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: 'Know that (all) states of being, whether they be goodness, passion or darkness, proceed from Me, but I am not in them, they are in Me. By these three states of being inhering in the constituents, this whole universe is led astray and does not understand that I am far beyond them, and that

I never change nor pass away. For (all) this is my creative (and deceptive) power (*māyā*) composed of the constituents, divine, hard to transcend'.¹⁵

The Gita does not enter into the details of evolution. All the cosmic elements of Sāṅkhya can be found in the Gita also, and the evolution series is the same. *Avyakta* or *prakṛti* is the originative cause. *Prakṛti* has its transformation into *buddhi*; *buddhi* into *ahamkāra* and *ahamkāra* into *manas*, the five senses¹⁶ and the five organs of activity and the five *tanmātras*. Nothing new has been added to the Sāṅkhya scheme. The equilibrium of *prakṛti* is disturbed by the infusion of spirit. This infusion disturbs the equilibrium and evolution begins, giving rise to multifarious dimensions of Nature including man and his mind.

14. George Feuerstein, *Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita*, op. cit. pp. 103-04.

15. Radhakrishnan, S, *The Bhagavad Gita*, op. cit. pp. 216-18.

16. Ibid., p. 330.

THE CONQUEST

(A One-act Play)

BODHISATTVA

Characters: Ashoka: the king of Magadha

Minister

General

1st Soldier

2nd Soldier

Upagupta: A Buddhist monk

Scene: Inside a war-tent through which a side of the battle-field of Kalinga is seen on the screen at the backstage.

Time: Evening; red glow of the setting sun and battle-fire are seen in the evening sky.

Act I

1st Soldier: Oh, what a terrible and deadly war! Fighting, fighting, fighting. Shelling, murder and killing. Oh, it is terrible! I have never seen such a powerful enemy as the Kalinga people. But (*enraged*) I tell you my dear comrade, victory is sure to come. We must have a crushing victory over the Kalingans.

2nd Soldier: And the victory is going to come right this evening.

1st Soldier: Is there any doubt about that? After all, our warrior king, the great fighter Ashoka, is the grandson of Chandragupta, the great.

2nd Soldier: And Chandragupta had left behind an unthinkably large army and we are irresistibly powerful today both on land and sea.

1st Soldier: That is it. Since the first day of our frontal attack on Kalinga the minister has been advising His Majesty to move his naval army through the sea path.

2nd Soldier: And King Ashoka has already ordered the movement of ships.

1st Soldier: But I don't think we will need the naval power. Our attack on land has been one of the largest and most horrible that history has ever seen. (*Softly*) Hark, here comes His Majesty and his general, and the minister. (*Suddenly looks in surprise through the wings*)

[*Enter Ashoka, General and the Minister*]

Ashoka: The dream has at last come true. The conquest of Kalinga was the dream of my grandfather Chandragupta. This was also the dream of my father, Bindusara. I myself was dreaming of this conquest since my childhood. General, Minister, and my soldiers! I congratulate you all on your effort in making it a success.

General: Your Majesty, I am afraid, the success is yet to come. We have to see the

last phase of the war. For the last two weeks our soldiers have been fighting valiantly for the capture of the Kalinga capital. And the Kalinga people have been giving an equally tough defence to protect their city.

Ashoka: General, do you think the Kalingans will be able to resist us? After all, since the days of Chandragupta, our soldiers have learnt to use the deadly weapons of Greek warfare. You know that we took them over from Selukas when he was forced to sign a treaty with my grand father.

General: That is true, but I am afraid the finish will be neither bloodless nor smooth.

Ashoka: General, what if the fields are flooded with enemies' blood? That matters little to Ashoka who murdered his own brothers and sisters in the dark dungeons of Pataliputra. Not a single cry was heard outside the dungeon walls. Everything was smooth and peaceful.

Minister: His Majesty's execution of plans is much wiser than His Majesty's grandfather's. Chandragupta murdered his relatives and the plot was leaked out. But General, look at the smooth ways of our King.

General: It is all true, Your Majesty. But the death-cries of the open war field are louder than the solitary cries in royal dungeons.

Ashoka: What do you mean General?

General: For five days, Your Majesty, the cries of the dying soldiers in the Kalinga fields have reached heaven. One million and fifty thousand Kalinga soldiers have so far been killed on the field. The Kalinga sky is now strewn with vultures coming to feast on human carcasses. And burnt branches stand on fields which were green with foliage even a week ago.

Ashoka: Why not bury the dead bodies in the proper military fashion?

General : Your Majesty, then we will have to bury the whole of Kalinga. It is impossible to bury or burn the bodies. Most of them are already half-burnt and mutilated. Some that are still living in the area are dying of thirst and hunger.

Ashoka : Why not ask the Kalinga civilians to come back and nurse the wounded ones ?

General : There are no civilians in Kalinga.

Ashoka : Where are they gone ?

General : They have either fled or are dead. We will have to listen to the terrible cries of the soldiers day and night for some weeks more. There is none to give them a last drop of water and bury the mutilated corpses.

Ashoka : General, do you mean to say that we have won only a vast cremation ground after this historic war ?

General : Your Majesty, I am afraid, we have won a hell.

Ashoka : (*Turning to the audience*) I was dreaming of a land of beauty, of art, of painting. (*Suddenly turning to General violently*) General (*enraged*) I must go to the war field and see for myself. (*Pointing his finger to Minister*) Make all preparations for victory celebrations—music and hunting. After all, Kalinga is an exquisitely good place for hunting.

Minister : Your Majesty, all preparations for the victory celebration are ready. We are only waiting for the final order.

Ashoka : Very well, General, I shall myself see the last phase of the final battle and see that Kalinga war will be recorded as one of the greatest victories in all ages to come.

[*Exeunt Ashoka and his General*]

2nd Soldier : I think there is meaning in what our General says. I even shudder to think of our terrible army movement we have seen this morning.

1st Soldier : What ? Do you believe our General ? Victory is imminent, and king Ashoka has asked to kill any one of our enemies seen on the way.

2nd Soldier : What do you mean ? Kill everyone seen on the way ? That is certainly not the law of war.

Minister : Very true my dear soldier, but law is written only in books. The flames of war burn to ashes every single grass root of conscience grown in the human heart.

2nd Soldier : But will this mass killing of innocent children, helpless mothers and defeated soldiers bring us anything more than a murderous victory ? Will not the cry of dying millions spoil our merry-making ?

Minister : No, no, dear soldiers. The heart-rending cry of the parched millions will be the very music for us to feast upon this night. (*Turning to the 2nd soldier*) Why did you come to war with this womanish heart ? Conscience is the eternal weakness of incapable hearts. And mark you, I have turned the King's mind completely free from the last pangs of these weaknesses which you call mercy. Kindness, softness, sympathy and love. . . . Ha, Ha, (*enraged in excitement*) we will see that history records King Ashoka as the most terrible and ruthless fighter. The Kalinga war will put to shame all petty victories that have been and will be seen in future. Even the war-devastations of the mighty Alexander will be nothing compared to the terrible Kalinga war. Victory is imminent. We wish to wash our hands in the pools of enemy blood. Hey, soldier, go and see whether the king has come back.

[*1st Soldier leaves the stage*]

2nd Soldier : But Sir, I have seen King Ashoka even more intimately than his own relations. I have been working as the keeper of his tents for the last ten years.

I am afraid, he will not be able to like this terrible mirth.

Minister : Albeit, he will not only like it but will himself take part in the merry-making. Today and today itself we are going to lay foundations of the great Magadh empire on the tears of dying men and blooded fields of Kalinga. That was his Majesty's dream. That was our dream and the dream has come true. Let us prepare for the victory celebrations. Hey,where are you,music makers, trumpeters, singers, dancers ? Hey, get ready for the great victory evening. His Majesty and his general must be received with shouts of victory.

[*Enters the 1st soldier gasping and sweating*]

1st Soldier : Sir, victory is won. (*gasping*) His Majesty himself is coming back to the tents with his General. But Sir, thousands of dying soldiers of our enemy are crying to drink a few last drops of water. They are lying very near our war camps.

Minister : How does His Majesty feel about that ?

1st Soldier : His Majesty has been deeply struck. He is impatient, he is shaking. He is sweating, some unknown fear has come upon him. Our General is trying his best to comfort him, but Sir, Oh, how sad, he is disconsolate ; he is on the verge of tears. He is unwilling to leave the field and is standing in the midst of huge hills of dead bodies, even approaching the dying soldiers himself with a pitcher of water. Sir, let us rush to the field and beseech him to come to rest in the tent.

2nd Soldier : Hark, here comes His Majesty. Look ! He is a different man. Look he is tired and exhausted.

Minister : (*very very slowly*) He lookspale. His face is changed ! (*The merry music goes on softly in the background*)

(*Ashoka enters with the General and waiters. The merry music grows slowly louder*).

Ashoka : Minister, General and soldiers, stop the music. (*Somebody rushes outside and the music slowly stops*).

No more of music. It must be a day of mourning. (*Everyone looks at each other and at the king*).

It must be an evening of silence. What music can there be when millions of springing life are forced to enter the dark burial of eternal oblivion ? Is this the promised land that I was dreaming of since my childhood-days in the Maurya palace ? Kalinga is no more a coveted kingdom, but a vast cremation ground that repels even the deadliest of men. All fighting is over. And with it all clashing of shields and dazzling of swords. (*Silence*) And with it is over all that we call life. Kalinga is now a vast dreadful kingdom of death and ghastly silence. No marching of cavalry, no chatting of babies, not even a sound of weeping from a loving wife or mother. (*Suddenly listens to some sound in the background*). What is that long moaning sound ?

Minister : Your Majesty that is the cry of vultures and dying soldiers.

General : Your Majesty is tired and exhausted. Your Majesty has led the entire war from the early morning, you must take rest and have peace.

Ashoka : What rest and peace can there be for one who has murdered the rest and peace of innocent millions, these calm and quiet Kalinga people. They used to graze their cattle in this beautiful fertile land, till their farms had brought rich harvest home by their own hard toil. They are a race of painters, sculptors and poets. Ashoka has killed them all on a sudden, for no fault of their own. General, can Ashoka have rest any more ?

General : Your Majesty must have a little rest and sweet music.

Ashoka : Music ? Listen, General, listen to the music of cries still calling from the dark field. Do you hear ? (*The cry of vultures and dying soldiers is heard in the background*). Minister, when I murdered my own sisters and brothers, I never heard their crying. Is it their cry that I hear ?

Minister : Your Majesty, but we have victory, one of the greatest ever to be recorded in the pages of history.

Ashoka : Yes, victory it is, but not a victory of life and happiness. It is a victory of murderous ambition. It is a victory of death. If Kalinga war is a victory, then history will record King Ashoka as the terrible Ashoka. Is that the victory we hankered after ?

No, it is not a victory ; it is a defeat of peace ; it is a defeat of rest and life ; it is a defeat of humanity and Ashoka will have to bear the curse even for centuries. And this great disaster will only precipitate new disasters throughout the world. Dear General, history only repeats itself. Oh, how sad, how awful even to think that Ashoka will be remembered as a killer. And ambition has led him to kill. (*Coming alone a few steps*) Who is there to show him a new light ? Who is there to lead him to a new path ? Is there no kindly light to lead him to the way of peace ? Is there no great sacrifice which can wash all the blood from the hands of the blood-thirsty Ashoka ? Is there no voice of love that can silence the cries of murdered millions ? Are there no words of peace that can make me forget these mad scenes of blind fighting ? Oh Lord, Oh Lord ! (*He kneels down with a sobbing face*) (*A soft sweet incantation in a single voice is heard in the background*)

Buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi

Saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi

Dhammam śaraṇam gacchāmi

Everyone listens spellbound. The music comes nearer. The light is dim.)

Upagupta : (*from background*) Is there anyone dying from thirst here ? I have brought the sacred water of Lord Buddha for them. Is there anyone ? My dear brother, no fear from me to anyone that lives. I am the servant of Buddha. I have come to give you the drink of eternal life.

Ashoka : (*in soft voice*) Minister, whose is this wonderful voice ? Who is he that has come to give eternal life ?

(*Minister rushes outside to see the man and comes back promptly*)

Minister : He is a queer man with long yellow clothes, and a shaven head. Probably he is a monk. And he is fearless. In the midst of the ruins and dying soldiers he walks calmly and gives them drinking water.

(*Again the chanting is heard in the background*)

Ashoka : (*Rises up with an unknown hope*) How sweet is this voice of life in a desert of death. We have only taken the lives of millions for a fortnight and this voice has come to give them back eternal life. (*Turning to General*) Call the monk. (*Turning to the audience*) I wish to see how he gives life to the dead.

(*General rushes out with 1st soldier and 2nd soldier. A few moments later the monk enters, followed by the General and the soldiers*)

Ashoka : Who are you that dares to walk in this field of flaming fire ? The corpses are still burning.

Upagupta : I am Upagupta, a humble servant of Buddha. I bring showers of Lord's mercy whenever there is suffering in the world. The fire of desire can never be extinguished by more desire. They can only be calmed down by the cooling showers of peace and love.

Ashoka : Who has called you to come to the dying ?

Upagupta : Lord Buddha. Just as your ambition of conquest has brought you here

all the long way from Pataliputra to murder innocent millions, Lord Buddha, the all merciful, has sent me to bring showers of love and mercy to the unfortunate ones.

Ashoka : But Buddha died centuries ago. Did he not ?

Upagupta : Yes, but Buddha is not a body. He is a spirit of undying love and endless mercy. Therefore he lives in the minds of millions. He is immortal in love.

Ashoka : How do you bring eternal life to the dying ?

Upagupta : To those who die from thirst I give drinking water from my water vessel. To those who live in body but suffer in spirit from the thousand sorrows of life, to those more wretched ones I bring the shower of Nirvana.

Ashoka : What is Nirvana ?

Upagupta : Nirvana is the end of all desire. Dear Emperor, your desire has given you the bloody conquest. And the great conquest brought death to millions. Do you think this conquest will bring you peace ? I see you are already sick with desire. I see your General, and the soldiers are sick with desire and war and bloody battle.

Ashoka : Tell me, Sir, what is the way of peace.

(The General and the soldiers stand in respectful gesture behind the king)

Upagupta : The way of peace is to give up selfish ambitions. The way of peace is

the way of love and not of destruction. The way to conquest is not through war, but through Dharma, the way of righteous living. The way of victory is not through murder but through mercy, love and sacrifice. Tell your general, your minister, your soldiers to rush to the dying ones and love them even in their last dying moments. The right kind of action will lead them to peace.

Ashoka : *(To the General, Minister and soldiers)* Do you hear the words of peace ? Go now to the dying ones. *(They leave the stage)* Holy Sir, how can I repay the words of nectar that you have given me.

Upagupta : But dear Emperor, I came to give drinks to the dying ones.

Ashoka : It is not they who are dying but the mighty conqueror Ashoka who is dying of wounded conscience in the midst of victory...Teach me, the cursed victor, the new way of life. *(Kneels down)*

Upagupta : *(In a posture of blessing)* Take refuge at the holy feet of Lord Buddha. He, the Enlightened one will lead you through the way of peace. The victories of Dharma and peace will bring you, dear emperor, much brighter laurels than the victories of a murderous war. May you be reborn in the name of Lord Buddha!

Buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi

Saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi

Dhammam śaraṇam gacchāmi

The curtain falls

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

The Chernobyl Episode

The improbable finally happened leaving behind an unexpected spectre of death and disease on a continental scale. In last May, when the nuclear accident occurred at Chernobyl, European countries like France, Germany, Poland, Italy and Britain, besides Russia, were suddenly awakened to a hitherto unexperienced fear of nuclear radiation. Dr. Manfred Popp, West German Government's director of nuclear energy research, said, 'It is something we had really feared—an accident of these dimensions, a full or partial meltdown of a reactor.' French

Government admitted, though late, that radioactive cloud from Russia had indeed raised the radiation levels of French soil. Spinach from the French border region of Alsace was found to contain 2,400 to 2,600 becquerel per kg. of radiation whereas the maximum permissible amount safe for health is 2,000 becquerels per kg. Instantly the prices of vegetables marked a sharp fall by 75%. In Netherlands people voted to power those candidates who assured delay in the construction of nuclear power plants. In Italy children under ten years and pregnant mothers were asked not to drink fresh milk even 4 weeks after the Chernobyl accident. In Scotland there was a dramatic decline in milk consumption. In West Germany shop-keepers had to assure their customers that vegetables and fruits had arrived from Spain where there was no radiation. Some political parties demanded a ban on all nuclear power plants in West Germany, which provide 36% of the Federal Republic's electricity. Ten thousand anti-nuclear protestors battled with police against the installation of new nuclear machines in Wackersdorf. The country, according to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, had gone 'crazy' in an anti-nuclear hysteria. Poland arranged to administer potassium iodide to children around the country as a possible antidote to the radiation hazard. Poles even uttered bitter jokes like, 'Be radiant'. In Italy, some political parties and pro-environmentalists launched a signature campaign of 500,000 citizens for a total ban on nuclear power plants.

In Russia, where the accident really happened, the picture is grim. According to international experts 100,000 Soviet citizens have received potentially harmful doses of radiation. 92,000 people have already been evacuated from the area. 15 persons died and 20, according to government statistics, were in critical condition.

It was Sweden which first publicized the accident. Later, Moscow admitted that the explosion had occurred when scientists were conducting experiments in Chernobyl reactor no. 4. Moscow even admitted, 'The accident took place as a result of a whole series of gross violations

of operating regulations by workers.' Chernobyl, like the atomic explosion on Hiroshima, is again a man-made disaster. History has repeated itself. This time the catastrophe has come not through aggression, but through unpardonable negligence on the part of working scientists.

Can we do without the nuclear power today? Most of the advanced countries are depending heavily on nuclear power. In Japan the Ikata plant near Hiroshima provides 26% of the nation's electricity. The Soviet Union's 41 nuclear plants provide 11% of the country's energy. In Britain nuclear power plants provide 18% to 20% of the energy of the nation. But new trends in thinking are surfacing. Sweden has affirmed its commitment to close down all nuclear power plants by 2010. India has already gained sufficient independence regarding the installation of nuclear power plants. Very recently India refused the Soviet offer of two new plants in India, as the government wants to avoid any dependency on foreign support. And rethinking about nuclear power plants had already started when Dhruva research reactor was shut down. The department of environment reportedly refused to clear the proposed nuclear power plant at Kaiga in Karnataka.

Schumacher's idea of smaller energy resources may be a viable idea for a world frightened by these nuclear giants, which sometimes revolt against total human control, thereby precipitating a global disaster. Two ways remain open to us: we close down all nuclear plants in the days to come and discover safer energy sources from nature, or we discover safer methods for the operation of nuclear power plants and take lessons from the Chernobyl episode. For the first one, we need a total repatterning of our existing super-industrial culture. May be, like Thoreau we too will have to go to a quiet Walden, sow seeds and live in utter simplicity of life with a new compensation-profundity of spiritual living. Or we have to evolve more responsible scientists who will not spare themselves in order to save the entire mankind. Global responsibilities and irresponsible minds ill go together.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

TRANQUILITY AND INSIGHT (*An Introduction to the Oldest Form of Buddhist Meditation*): BY A. SOLE-LERIS. Published by Century-Hutchinson (Rider Division) Brookmount House, 62-65 Chandos Place, Covent Garden, London WC2N 4NW. 1986. Pp. 176. £ 6.95.

As its sub-title indicates, this book is an introduction to the oldest form of meditation practised by Gautama the Buddha and prescribed by him to his followers. The author has followed and often quoted from the Pali text *Visuddhi-magga* of Buddhaghosha, which is the oldest manual of Buddhist meditation.

Practice of meditation in various forms has been prescribed by almost all religious faiths, but in no other religion has it been given so much importance as in Buddhism. True, in India—the land which gave birth to Yoga and Buddhism itself—meditation has been practised right from Vedic times. But in Hinduism meditation coexists with and is supported by various other disciplines and rituals, whereas in Buddhism meditation is the chief and all-embracing spiritual technique. Buddhism gave a tremendous impetus to the development of the theory and practice of meditation in India.

As is well known, Buddhism is divided into two main sects: Theravada (or Hinayana) and Mahayana, of which the former is clearly the older one. As Mahayana spread in different lands such as Tibet, China and Japan, it mingled with the cultural traditions of those countries and these accretions have a direct bearing on the various Mahayana meditation techniques such as zen, which have become quite familiar in the West in modern times. Although Theravada also spread to countries outside India such as Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, it remained faithful to the three main Pali canonical scriptures called the Tripitakas and has thus succeeded in maintaining the purity of the original Buddhist meditation techniques. Therefore Sole-Leris, the author of the book under review, is justified in describing the Theravada meditation tradition as the 'oldest form of Buddhist meditation'. Various meditation techniques lying scattered in the Tripitakas were collected by Buddhaghosha in his monumental work *Visuddhi-magga*.

Though the Pali Canons have been the subject of extensive research and studies by orientologists for more than a century, interest in

the Theravada practice of meditation has been roused only during the last thirty years. The main reason for this is that in Theravada countries Buddhist monks had for several centuries emphasized mostly the study of scriptures and the observance of moral principles. The revival of interest in meditation techniques began at the turn of the present century when a Burmese monk by name U. Narada Mahathera rediscovered the immense possibilities inherent in the *Satipatthana Sutta* of the Tripitakas. It was his disciple Mahasi Sayadaw and a lay man by name U Ba Khim, who popularized the Vipassana meditation technique. Sole-Leris has given a comprehensive account of the schools of these two masters and their successors in the last chapter.

The present book supports the thesis that although *samadhi* (*samatha* in Pali) or Tranquility as a state of stillness of mind was experienced by Buddha (it had been known to many others before him), he was not satisfied with it. So he went further and discovered a new method of cultivating deeper awareness known as *vipashyana* (Vipassana in Pali) or Insight which led to full enlightenment. Accordingly, there are two meditation paths in Theravada tradition: Tranquility (Samatha) and Insight (Vipassana). Until recently, in Buddhist monasteries both the paths used to be taught, training in Tranquility being usually considered an indispensable adjunct to Insight. What Mahasi Sayadaw and U Ba Khim did was to develop Vipassana as an independent technique adapted to the conditions of modern times.

Several books on these two meditation pathways have come into existence in recent years. The most comprehensive and authoritative of these is Nyanaponika Thera's *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (also published by Rider). Sole-Leris's book is a simpler introductory volume lucidly discussing all the essential features of both the paths. His book is divided into nine chapters. After an introductory survey, he discusses the three levels of concentration (*parikamma samadhi*, *upacara samadhi* and *appana samadhi*) and the various concentration exercises which provide the basis for the practice of both Tranquility and Insight. Chapter 5 is devoted to a discussion on Samatha and the states of absorption (*jhana*) produced by it. Chapter 6 is devoted to a detailed discussion on

Vipassana including the four Foundations of Mindfulness and the stages of progress resulting from it.

Nowadays Vipassana is being practised by thousands of people in all walks of life—businessmen, government officials, doctors, engineers, scientists and teachers mainly for its worldly benefits such as relaxation of body and mind, alertness and increase of work efficiency, cure of psychosomatic disorders, etc. But its original and ultimate aim is the attainment of the highest form of liberation known as Nirvana (Nibbana, in Pali). The author has devoted one chapter to it.

Contrary to popular belief, the actual practice of Vipassana involves intensive preparatory and life-long dedication. For those who want to know about the theory and practice of Vipassana we recommend the book under review as the best introduction to the subject. It provides yet another support to Buddha's exhortation: 'Meditate, and do not be remiss, that you may not have cause to regret it later.'

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MODERN PHYSICS AND VEDANTA: BY SWAMI JITATMANANDA. Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati K. M. Munshi Marg, Bombay 400 007. 1986. Pp. 87. Rs. 30.

It is the free spirit of enquiry and the common fields of interest that link the ancient Rishis of India with the scientists of modern age. In some of the utterances of top physicists like Albert Einstein, Max Planck, Werner Heisenberg and others we hear the echoes of the words of the Upanishadic sages who lived thousands of years ago. Physicists are heading towards the knowledge of the final unity of the universe—a 'grand unification' of mind and matter, subject and object, observer and observation. Vedanta too affirms this unity; according to it the entire universe is one, interconnected and interpenetrated by the ultimate Reality, which is of the nature of Consciousness, as the very basis of all existence and the ultimate goal of all knowledge. The exposition of the common ground between western science and ancient Vedanta was one of the important contributions to the world thought made by Swami Vivekananda as a part of his attempt to interpret ancient truths in a way acceptable to modern people. It is this great

work of Swami Vivekananda that forms the central theme of Swami Jitatmananda's book *Modern Physics and Vedanta*. Around this core the author has organized seven magnificent chapters each bringing out one particular aspect of modern physics and its counterpart in Vedantic thought.

The first chapter entitled 'Whither Physics Today' is a brief overview of the major trends in modern physics. In the next chapter entitled 'Vivekananda interprets Vedanta to the West' the author discusses the intellectual climate that prevailed in America and Europe at the end of the last century, the impact Swami Vivekananda made on it, and the implications of that impact. In the third chapter 'The Quest for the Ultimate Building Block of the Universe', Swami Jitatmanandaji traces the development of physicists' understanding of the nature of the ultimate particles from the 'water-melon' model of J. J. Thomson to the latest speculations on 'quarks'. The next chapter 'The Uncertainty Principle and the Omnijjective Reality' is a very interesting narrative which deals with in a scholarly way the famous postulation of Heisenberg and Einstein's objections to it. The chapter entitled 'Relativity and Maya' begins with a lucid account of the basic concepts of Einstein and ends with a discussion on Maya. In the chapter 'Intuition—the Common Basis of Science and Vedanta' the author shows how positivist thought in the West has gradually come to accept the fundamental role played by intuition in the conceptualization process. The author skilfully uses this acceptance to establish the validity and contemporary relevance of spiritual intuition upon which the whole system of Vedanta rests. In the final chapter 'Vedic Cosmology and Modern Astrophysics' the author discusses the 'Big Bang' theory of the origin of the universe in a captivating manner and points out its striking similarity to the cosmology propounded by the ancient Samkhya and Vedanta philosophers.

The above account is only a bare outline of the basic plan of the book. Its distinguishing feature is the wealth of quotations, anecdotes and a formidable amount of information on various relevant topics that the author has massed together from some of the most recent and authoritative works. As Dr. Raja Ramanna remarks in his Foreword, this book cannot be treated as an introductory volume. It, however, serves admirably well as a source book for both

students and general readers. Scientists and scholars will find the book highly stimulating. An index would have enhanced the usefulness of the book.

Swami Jitatmanandaji brings out forcefully that man's future largely depends on the possibility of his becoming both truly scientific and spiritual, not theoretically but in practice. This harmony between ancient insights and modern discoveries is a subject which is now assuming international dimensions. A time has come when man must address himself to the conquest of both outer and inner nature, and the integration of scientific temper and religious quest.

The author deserves our congratulations for presenting a book of this kind on Vedanta and Science, a synthesis of which should form the basis of man's total education as envisaged by Swami Vivekananda.

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DIVINITY HERE AND NOW: BY A.R. NATARAJAN. Published by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 40/41, 2nd Cross, Lower Palace Orchards, Bangalore 560 003. 1986. Price not mentioned.

Bureaucrats are seldom expected to be creative. But there are notable exceptions like the author of this book. A top-ranking civil service official, Sri A. R. Natarajan has been devoting his leisure hours to the pursuit of the spiritual ideal. Drawn to the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana Maharshi from his early youth, he is the founder-director of a spiritual and cultural centre in Bangalore and is a versatile scholar. He was on the editorial board of the journal *Mountain Path* and the present book is a collection of some of the editorials he wrote in that journal from 1982 onwards.

The title indicates the central theme of all the essays: the constant, unbroken, immediate awareness of the Self in every-day life, and the means of attaining it. Sri Ramana Maharshi has shown that the simplest and most universally applicable method of realizing the transcendental Self is to trace the 'I' thought to its source. This can be practised by both seekers of Knowledge and seekers of Bhakti. According to Bhagawan Ramana, the maintenance of such an inward

enquiry, *atma-vichara*, at all times is the best form of *tapas*, austerity. Sri Natarajan's chief endeavour is to show that *atma vichara* does not stand in the way of performing the daily duties of life. He also stresses the need for great earnestness in this path of enquiry which he carefully distinguishes from meditation. With the help of quotations from the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi and anecdotes from his life, the author clarifies, in a refreshingly original way, several psychological and metaphysical principles involved in spiritual life. Spiritual aspirants, especially those who are familiar with Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings, are sure to derive inspiration and practical benefit from this book.

K.P.V.

TAMIL-SANSKRIT-ENGLISH

UPADESA UNDIYAR (OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA): TRANSLATED FROM TAMIL INTO ENGLISH BY SADHU OM AND MICHAEL JAMES. Published by Sri Ramana Kshetra, Mounalayam, 14, Manakkula Vinayakar Street, Tiruvannamalai 606 603. Tamil Nadu. 1986 Pp. 52. Rs. 6.

UPADESA SARAM (OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI): TRANSLATED FROM SANSKRIT INTO ENGLISH BY A. R. NATARAJAN. Published by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 40/41, 2nd Cross, Lower Palace Orchards, Bangalore 560 003. 1984. Pp. 63. Price not mentioned.

Here are two different editions of the same text containing the quintessence of the teachings of the great sage of Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramana Maharshi. The original work in Tamil, consisting of 30 verses composed by Sri Ramana Maharshi himself, is actually a part of a much larger work by the Tamil poet-saint Muruganar entitled *Tiruvundiyaar*, a hymn in praise of various gods, goddesses and Avatars. In one place in that hymn Lord Shiva is depicted as giving advice to some ascetics. Muruganar requested Sri Ramana Maharshi to compose some stanzas as Shiva's advice. Accordingly, the Maharshi composed thirty verses epitomizing the fundamental principles of Vedanta. These thirty verses came to be separately printed as *Upadesha Undiyar*. Sri Ramana Maharshi himself later on translated these stanzas into

Telugu, Malayalam and Sanskrit under the title *Upadesha Saram*.

The first book by Sadhu Om and Michael James is a word-to-word English rendering of the original Tamil verses (*Upadesha Undiyar*) with brief annotations, while the second book by A. R. Natarajan is a running translation of the Sanskrit verses (*Upadesha Saram*) with a commentary in English. It is clear Sri Ramana Maharshi's own Sanskrit rendering is not a literal translation of his original Tamil work. Apart from this fact, the two books differ from each other in several respects. Sadhu Om's notes are terse, accurate and illumine several metaphysical points in an authoritative and original way. Sri Natarajan's comments are more discursive and lucid and are documented by cross-references to other works of Ramana Maharshi.

The subject-matter of both the books is of course the same. It includes karma, divine grace, worship, meditation, breath control, control of mind, nature of mind, the merger of mind in the Self, the relationship between the soul and God, and similar topics. The most important and characteristic teaching of Sri Ramana Maharshi is given in three verses: 'Wherefrom this "I"-thought arises? If one enquires thus, it vanishes. This is self-enquiry.' (Verse 19). 'In the place where "I" (the mind or ego) merges, the one (existence-consciousness) appears spontaneously as "I", "I" (or "I am I"). That itself is the Whole (*purna*)'. (Verse 20). 'That ("I-I", the Whole) is always the import of the word "I", because we exist even in sleep, which is devoid of "I" (the thought "I", the mind)' (Verse 21). Both the books are a boon to sincere spiritual aspirants.

K.P.V

SANSKRIT

SADDARSHANAM (*A Sanskrit translation of the original Tamil work of Sri Ramana Maharshi with a commentary in Sanskrit*): BY SRI VASISHTHA GANAPATI MUNI. COMMENTARY BY KAPALI SASTRI. Published by Shri T. N. Venkataraman, Sri Ramanashramam, P.O. Tiruvannamalai 606 603. 1986. Pp. 87. Rs. 12.

The philosophy of Sri Ramana Maharshi epitomized in his original Tamil work 'Forty Verses on Reality' has been lucidly expounded

in the present Sanskrit composition. The main work consists of 44 stanzas in *upajāti* metre. These stanzas lead us deep into the thought of Sri Ramana Maharshi. The main theme here is that God who is omnipotent manifests Himself through all the sentient and non-sentient things. The ultimate Reality is of the nature of Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. One who sees God and the world, both with form and without form, is the one who has had the total vision. (Stanza 6). Without the five sheaths (*koshas*) enveloping the Self it would be impossible to experience the world. Without the gross body can any one have the experience of the outer world? (Stanza 7). The outer world itself, which is the creation of the Self enables us to grasp the attributes 'of seeing' and 'of being seen'. But there is a total identity between the seer and the seen. There is also a relation of identity between the subtle mind and its gross form—the world. If Devadatta's mind is lost, the world created by his mind is also lost. But this has no effect on the mind of Yajnadatta or of Ishwara emanated as the world. (Stanza 8). The ultimate Reality alone has no birth or death. (Stanza 9). The establishment of identity with this Reality may alone be called the vision of the Truth. (Stanza 10). Duality will vanish as soon as one realizes that the Self is the substratum of all knowledge and objects of knowledge. (Stanza 13). The ignorant and the wise both have their universes. The visual world is true for the ignorant, but the substratum of the visual world flashes as total Reality before the wise. (Stanza 20).

The ineffable Reality thus discussed is threadbare in the thirty-nine stanzas. At last it is said that a man is bound to suffer the fruits of his actions unless he cleanses his mind of the idea of his being the doer. When he does so, he reaches the state called Liberation or *mukti*.

The original stanzas in the Tamil book are a succinct exposition of the philosophy of life lived by Sri Ramana Maharshi. The Sanskrit rendering of the Tamil work is lucid and, if sung, will sound melodious. Shri Vasishtha Ganapati Muni has rendered a great service to those who are interested in Maharshi's philosophy, but do not know Tamil. Kapali Bharadwaja, the great scholar and follower of Sri Aurobindo has provided an elegant, well-orchestrated commentary on the Sanskrit stanzas. This has gone a long way in enabling the aspirants to appreciate the truth of these great teachings.

Books of this kind which reinterpret ancient insights play a vital role in the development of a correct attitude towards life in modern situations.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MYLAPORE, MADRAS

REPORT FOR 1985-86.

Started under the inspiration of Swami Ramakrishnananda in 1905 in a modest way with just 5 orphans, this institution has now grown into its present dimension with the capacity to provide free board to 358 students. The Home which follows the Gurukula system of education runs the following institutions.

The Hostel at Mylapore: accommodates a total number of 319 students belonging to following sections: Residential High School boys: 176; Residential Technical Institute boys: 120; boys studying in different institutions: 23. All the inmates of the Home are under the care of monastic wardens and lay wardmasters. Emphasis is laid on character formation through moral and religious instruction. Puja, prayer, observance of religious festivals are some of the activities of the hostel. All the domestic activities of the Home are carried out by the students themselves under the guidance of superiors.

Residential High School: (Standards VI to X). Out of a total number of 176 students, 100 belonged to backward communities and 16 belonged to S.C. and S.T. In the 1985 S.S.L.C. examination 38 students appeared and 36 passed. School education in the state being free, scholarship is offered to some students for the purchase of the text books and for the payment of examination fees.

Residential Technical Institute: offered a three-year diploma course in mechanical engineering with three electives: automobile technology, machinshop technology and agricultural farm equipment technology. There were 40 students in I year, 39 in II year and 41 in III year. In the final D.M.E. examination of May 1985, out of the 42 students who had

appeared, 39 students passed—all in first class. While scholarship was offered to all the students, 28 belonging to backward class enjoyed a further benefit of 50 per cent concession in fees and 8 others full freeship. Inplant training for the final year mechanical engineering students was arranged in a number of well-known firms in the city. There were 4,853 books in the institute library and 1418 books in its Bookbank. In the part-time evening post-diploma course (of 1½ years) in automobile engineering 12 students appeared for the final examination in April 1985 and all of them passed in first class. 18 candidates were admitted in September '85 in IV batch. Classes were conducted for the course of A.M.I.E. Section A (Diploma stream) with 43 students.

Ramakrishna Centenary Primary School: completed 51 years of its service. The school is housed in a two storeyed pucca building. It has standards I to V, with a strength of 354 children, of which 195 are boys and 159 are girls.

Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Malliankaranai: The Home runs a middle school from standard I to VIII with a strength of 236 boys and 98 girls, and a hostel for 39 boarders from backward communities, as a part of the village development program in Malliankaranai, Dist. Chengleput, where it owns an estate. Agriculture is taught as a prevocation subject in the school. Under the village development program, the Mission has taken many initiatives such as reclamation of saline soil, cultivation of fruit trees, maintenance of a primary health centre in its premises for the benefit of the villagers and organizing cultural activities for the youth. For these various projects undertaken by the Home, its secretary solicits donation in cash or kind from the public. All donations, exempt from income tax, may be forwarded to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 92, Sri P. S. Sivaswamy Road, Mylapore, Madras 600 004.