



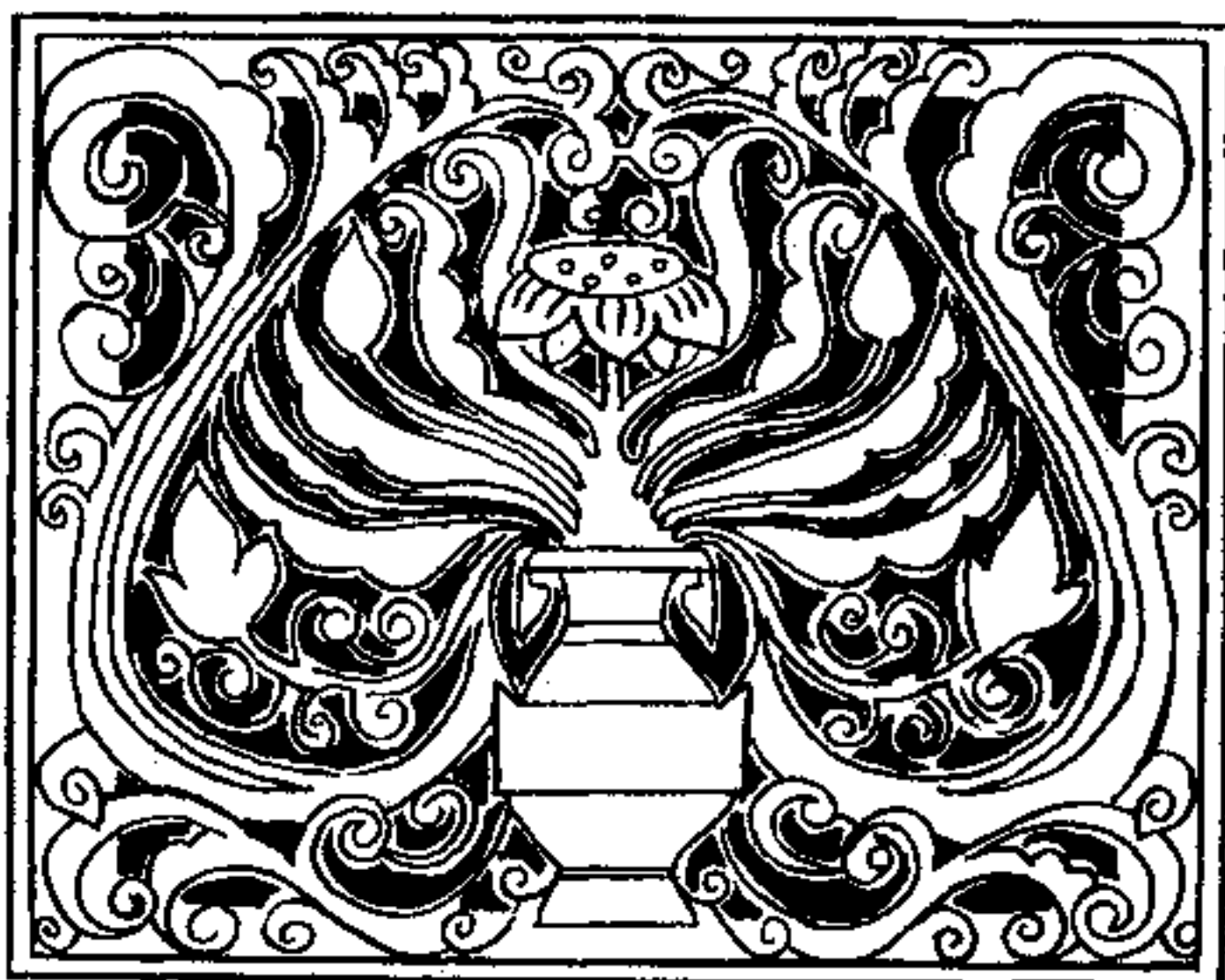
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Cover: A view of the Himalayas

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उत्तिष्ठत
जाग्रत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED.

Vol. 99

MAY 1994

No. 5

DIVINE WISDOM

GOD ALONE IS THE DOER

(Instructions of Nārada to Yudhiṣṭhira)

मा कञ्चन शुचो राजन् यदीश्वरवशं जगत्।
लोकाः सपाला यस्येमे वहन्ति बलिमीशितुः।
स संयुनक्ति भूतानि स एव वियुनक्ति च॥

Do not grieve over anyone. This world is under the control of the Lord, and all that happens is according to His will. He, the Supreme Lord, to whom all this world and its protecting powers offer worship always, is He who brings people together and separates them at His will.

यथा गावो नसि प्रोतास्तन्त्यां बद्धाः स्वदामभिः।
वाक्तन्त्यां नामभिर्बद्धा वहन्ति बलिमीशितुः॥

Just as a herd of cattle with their small nosestrings tied to a big rope are directed to go along well-marked paths, so are all men's individual concerns tied to the big rope of duty by the Lord, and they are thus made to walk the paths ordained for them.

यथा क्रीडोपस्कराणां संयोगविगमाविह।
इच्छया क्रीडितुः स्यातां तथैवेष्टेच्छया नृणाम॥

Just as the combination and dispersal of playthings are exclusively directed by the player's will, so are affairs of men by the Lord's.

यन्मन्यसे ध्रुवं लोकमध्रुवं वा न चोभयम्।
सर्वथा न हि शोच्यास्तं स्नेहादन्यत्र मोहजात्॥

Whether you consider the living self as eternal as the Spirit, or as temporal as the body, or as both in view of its being a combination of spirit and body, or as neither from the Absolute point of view, whatever be your attitude, sorrow for beings arises from love and attachment, which are caused by ignorance about the real nature of the soul.

From the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam

Global Religious Harmony

Conflicts

Conflicts arising from religion are of different kinds: Religion vs a person (or persons, society) born into that religion but unwilling to accept it wholly because of his or her modernity; religion vs the State; religion vs the sects within itself; sects vs sects; and one religion vs another.

Outwardly, the first two and the latter three form distinct groups. In the first the opposition is between the frame of mind cultivated through orthodox conventional faith and the here-now this-worldly frame of mind acquired from modern education (scientific and technological knowledge, and current emphasis on individual freedom in all matters) and socio-political priorities. In the second, the antagonism is among more or less similar minds, the causes of which are mentioned later.

However, on deeper examination it may be found that there is one common source to all this discord—absence of humility. Man is loath to admit and unable to understand as yet that the human mind is, beyond a point, simply incapable of knowing or saying everything even about tangible Nature, much less about an unseen God. The 'we know it all' of the preachers of religion and the youthful 'can do' of the preachers of science and materialism are the parents of these strifes.

Causes and proliferation of conflicts

Here we shall limit ourselves to discussing the grosser aspects of interreligious conflicts and the possible ways of eliminating them, because though the leading lights of today's world have found Aunt Sallies in religions, religions are assuredly the

strongest forces that can bring about abiding human good.

Before proceeding further, we must state clearly that the charges being levelled against religions by laymen and politicians—that they incite hatred and violence, and that a good many of the presently raging wars are fuelled by religious animosity—are not all sustainable. On the contrary, a close investigation of those rumoured religious conflicts shows that their roots are more in racial or cultural contradictions, politics, poverty, unemployment, etc. As for some of the ongoing wars, they may as well be identified as ethnic conflicts, religious feelings having been inflamed and used as a catalyst. It is easy to see that when two countries formally professing two different religions are at war, it is considered a religious war even if the causes be something else. Similarly, when self-proclaimed secular States are at war, it gives the impression of being a religious war if people in the respective governments belong to different faiths. For example, an Indo-Pakistani war or even a minor tension is invariably announced as a Hindu-Muslim hostility. When the Western countries fought Iraq, the feeling was that it was a disguised Christian-Islamic war! In fact, one of the tragedies today is that most of the wars, including the so-called religious ones that have got escalated from hatred, are insidiously provoked to destabilize governments, protect trade interests, ensure access to natural resources, test armaments and battle strategies, and keep busy the armaments industries which are major employers and fabulous revenue-earners. Certainly there is religious hatred and animosity. But the conclusion that most of

the current wars are mini-reincarnations of the Crusades or the early Islamic wars is a sign of immaturity if not a politically motivated deception.

So far as factual religious antagonism is concerned, it has become global only in the last three or four decades. After the second world war, the steadily increasing migration of people into many countries for trade or employment has 'polluted' homogeneous religious cultures, causing tensions. The explosion in the number of alien settlers, their insufficient inculturation, unemployment, etc. have aroused in the native people fears of being 'swamped'. Such situations are being capitalized on by religious fanatics and self-seeking politicians.

The Indian experience

Many countries which are now facing for the first time the complex problem of having to govern democratically a multiracial and

by political manipulation, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, etc.—are transient because they are induced from outside. They are simply repercussions of certain attitudes and activities of the centrally regulated organizations of the two foreign religions. These unnatural confrontations will weaken and cease as soon as those organizations initiate some basic changes in their dogmatic positions in the course of their earnest participation in the struggle towards harmony.

The causes of conflicts and the factors that contributed to their dissipation in the Indian context, discussed in the last month's editorial, hold good almost entirely in the world context also. Summarized from that editorial, the principal seeds of conflicts are: disparity in the sacred experiences of God or Reality that gave birth to religions; dissimilarity in the description of those experiences; assertion of every religion that it possesses complete knowledge of God;

...there is one common source to all this discord—absence of humility.

multireligious population are suffering agonies more or less similar to that of pre-Christian and pre-Islamic India. The religious leaders in those countries may find it easier to resolve differences with their sects in the face of a common external 'enemy'. But healing the religion vs religion conflicts is more challenging, and the process may take a long long time. Success can come only with openness, sincere self-examination, prayer and humility. Since India did overcome her problem of religious plurality and establish a characteristically pervasive culture of harmony, we are hopeful that the world too will succeed in achieving interreligious harmony. Present tensions in India between Hinduism, Christianity and Islam—those that are provably religious, and not those caused

anthropomorphism; claims to uniqueness of the founders of religions and their teachings; manifold speculative theologies; variations in their rituals, customs, etc.; puritanism; divergence in the ways religions affect societies; rigid organization of some religions; institutional interests; growth of these institutions into centres of political influence and financial power; hope of hegemony; and, worst of all, mutual recrimination.

Towards harmony

Religious and political leaders are greatly alarmed at the multiplying problems in the world. Most of these are much more serious than religious conflicts—youth violence, drugs, crime, exploitation of women, psychological problems of people,

unhappy homes, loss of values and, unfortunately, lack of wisdom and perspective in spite of extensive knowledge and information. Religious leaders can provide the necessary correctives for a careening world. But then, thinkers and laymen alike will not have anything to do with religions that are themselves quarreling. Religious heads also seem to have become aware of the growing indifference towards religions. They are perhaps feeling they have gone wrong somewhere in their practice of the commandments of the prophets: How is it that, what should have brought peace and unity to people is considered by a majority of those very people to be a source of disharmony and rift?

Nevertheless, it is heartening to see some religions and sects occasionally coming together to at least hear about one another's traditions. These events should be given as wide a publicity as possible to build up a complementary worldwide mood of enthusiasm and hope. This will also counter

a common language of discourse. This will be another great step forward for being able to understand one another's ideas and possibly discover long existing similarities deep within many religious experiences and practices.

What is harmony?

Even then, these meetings can become progressively fruitful only when it is accepted—and this too is beginning to be recognized—that religious diversity must and will remain. Because the variety of the sources of religions, viz their respective spiritual experience of God or Reality, indicates that God cannot be claimed to have been exhaustively comprehended once and for all by any one religion, and because the outward form of religion (doctrines, rituals, etc.) is a product of racial, social, cultural, historical (and even climatic) parameters as it is a subtle energy shaping them. It is not expected that religions should wholly discard their individual doctrines, practices, etc. Neither should harmony mean total

Come to think of it :

**Specialists from various branches of science are able to sit together...
trying only to arrive at Truth.**

...religious leaders, who promise peace and joy, cannot come together....

the grossly insensitive and negative media focus even on small interreligious disturbances. Probably the people of different religions and cultures who have settled in various countries have made an unexpected positive contribution towards harmony also. The character, piety, honesty and hard work of the cultured and professionally qualified among these foreigners have compelled native religious leaders and laymen to recognize greatness in other religions and cultures too. This could be one of the important factors that stimulated interreligious dialogues. Frequent interaction among religious groups may gradually help evolve

agreement, uniformity or merger, nor that all religions and sects should come under the control of some one religion. But religions should identify their own characteristic genius and keep them alive, de-emphasizing only those aspects of their doctrines etc. as are found to cause frictions in a multireligious society.

Further, there should be an extensively broadcast mutual agreement that preachers of religion, themselves first and then their followers also, will refrain from disparaging one another's faith. This by itself will have a singular effect on the world community.

Related to this there is another point to bear in mind. The scope of interfaith harmony should not remain confined only to the religious leaders, their organizations and adherents, but ultimately it should embrace all people. So, steps should be taken to re-express traditional religious idiom to match it with scientific thought. For, only if the masses are first able to comprehend what the various religions are saying, and that religion is rational, practical and necessary, will they respond to the interreligious discussions.

Is fanaticism a disease ?

There are some religions and sects which as things stand do not agree on the validity of diversity. But this fanaticism will not last long. It had its day in closed societies. Today irreversible global changes are penetrating such societies too, compelling them to introduce modern education, the very soul of which is openness, freedom of thought, enquiry and choice. Sooner or later educated persons will be steering such groups, and they will, conceivably, respond better to the fact of plurality. Fanaticism and puritanism appear ridiculous in a global culture of rationality and scientific knowledge. It may even be discovered that *all* classes of dogmatists are, as some thinkers have remarked, pathological cases. A deeper investigation may perhaps even reveal genetic disorders in such people. Come to think of it: Specialists from various branches of science are able to sit together and discuss their findings, opinions and speculations, notwithstanding sharp disagreements, trying only to arrive at Truth without predilections. Contrastingly, is it not strange that religious leaders, who promise peace and joy, cannot come together in that unprejudiced spirit of openness, wonder and enquiry with the sole purpose of arriving at Truth by pooling their insights for the benefit of mankind? They should imbibe this scientific spirit of not

saying, 'We already possess the Truth completely', simply on the basis of rationalized but unverified doctrines. Instead, they should feel, 'We would like to re-examine and verify to know better', even if this means an agonizing reappraisal. It is this spirit of humility before the endlessness of knowledge and the desire to know better, which permeates Vedanta, that helped India succeed in her struggle to establish harmony in diversity. The *Kena Upaniṣad* (II.1.2) reads:

The teacher said: If you think, 'I know Brahman (Reality, Truth) well', then surely you know but little of Its form; you know only Its form as conditioned by man or by the gods.¹ Therefore Brahman, even now, is worthy of your enquiry.

(The disciple said :) I think I know Brahman. (That is to say,) I do not think I know It well, nor do I think I do not know It. He among us who knows the meaning of, 'Neither do I not know, nor do I know', knows Brahman.

Diffuse Religious Organizations

Further, religious leaders should initiate steps to loosen their organizational control *of the masses*, leaving individuals free to practise a faith of their choice, in the same manner that modern educational courses are offered. It is no argument to say that centralized organizations do also serve to bring people together quickly for a good cause. For, people are sensible enough to support a noble endeavour even without belonging

1. The forms of Brahman conditioned by the bodies and minds of men and gods are only insignificant manifestations of It in time and space. The gist of the passage is that Brahman, free from all limitations, is infinite, non-dual, sublime, and eternal and therefore cannot be described as well-known by anyone.—Footnote of Swami Nikhilananda, quoted from his translation of the *Upaniṣad*.

to any particular organization. Besides, history shows that in the long run formal organization of religion is more a dormant menace than an instrument for good. On the other hand, narrow-minded individual preachers have never been able to scatter hatred and violence widely. Further, rigid organizational formality chokes the true spirit of religion. People have already begun to question the wisdom in surrendering their intelligence and conscience to a person or a group whose human judgements cannot be infallible.

In future, religious organizations will have to stand less on authority and more on the authenticity of their spiritual life and the universality of their service to society irrespective of sex, race, religion and culture. The Human Rights movement is all set to defeat every form of regimentation and discrimination. Also, the ongoing quest for a global ethic will naturally weaken religious and racial barriers, and address itself to 'the human being in essence'.

Other forces at work

In contrast to the cautious steps taken so

countries who, stepping out of institutionalized orthodoxy and fanaticism, will usher in religious harmony faster than the religious leaders, through extensive travels, cultural exchange programmes, etc. Even the theocratic States will have to relinquish dogmatic postures under the impact of globalization, or face isolation and underdevelopment. All attitudes and activities not in conformity with the holistic vision being sought for the emerging global society will become anachronistic and get weeded out.

Joining the efforts of religious organizations and educated laymen, governments also should initiate certain steps. They should introduce into the school syllabus chapters on all religions and faiths. Youth should be helped to understand the common bases of religions and also the factors contributing to the rich diversity in their beliefs and practices. One of the boldest steps governments should take is to prohibit people, particularly the religious preachers, from slandering other religions. (This policy would compare well with the universally accepted trade policy—advertise, praise and market your wares, but do not malign

...it will be the common educated people of different countries who, stepping out of institutionalized orthodoxy and fanaticism, will usher in harmony faster than the religious leaders....the key to harmony will be found in women and men! Not *only* in readjustments of...religious institutions.

far by (mostly the second line) religious leaders, other factors are already at work in right earnest, which perhaps will accelerate the progress towards harmony. In India, the absence of rigid religious institutions made it possible for the common people to forge bonds of harmony outside the walls of orthodoxy in the course of their pilgrimages etc. In the global context also it will again be the common educated people of different

other similar products. Then leave it to the wisdom of the customer to choose what suits him or her!) These State-interventions may not come so easily, because some governments are secular in a peculiar sense, some are run by the clergy directly or by proxy, and some have declared themselves to be theocratic to keep the clergy off their backs and retain their political powers. This situation too cannot last long. Globalization

of communication and economics, and political considerations in pluralistic States will compel governments not only to think globally without prejudice to race or religion but also to take measures to ensure religious and political harmony under pressure from the Human Rights movement. Extensive industrialization also, which necessitates modern education as also immigration of foreigners, will indirectly bring about harmony in diversity among the working masses.

In view of the swirling changes occurring in the world, it is principally up to the religious leaders to take bold initiatives to promote harmony, throwing away the apple of discord. In any case, there are three other forces working deliberately or otherwise towards that goal—the freedom-loving educated individuals nurtured by the

Human Rights movement, science in quest of holism, and the governments earnestly looking for a global ethic. Were these four forces to work in unison, the goal may be achieved speedily. If the religious leaders continue to hedge and feel all of a dither, the goal will be realized just the same, leaving out religious *organizations* as irrelevant.

What is exciting about it all is that, the forces outside the organized doctrinaire religions being in the majority, the key to harmony will be found and no mistake in what are central to those three forces, viz women and men ! Not *only* in readjustments of doctrines, books, beliefs, and religious institutions. What is the future we are trying to visualize? A world of women and men with health, education and wealth; all this and also spiritual insight into their innate sense of freedom.



Yes, my own life is guided by the enthusiasm of a certain great personality, but what of that ? Inspiration was never filtered out to the world through one man ! It is true I believe Ramakrishna Paramahansa to have been inspired. But then I am myself inspired also. And you are inspired. And your disciples will be; and theirs after them; and so on, to the end of time !

Don't you see that the age of esoteric interpretations is over ? For good or for ill, that day is vanished, never to return. Truth, in the future, is to be open to the world !

Swami Vivekananda

Madhusudana Saraswati on the Bhagavad-Gita

SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

NATURE OF THE SELF

Thus it has been proved in every way that the Self is not to be grieved for. Thereafter, with the words, '(all the bodies remain) unmanifest in the beginning,' etc., the Lord now dispels Arjuna's objection, 'Even though the Self is not to be grieved for, I am still grieving for the bodies which are aggregates of the elements':

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना॥ (2.28)

*Avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyaktamadhyāni
bhārata
avyaktanidhanānyeva tatra kā paridevanā*

O descendent of Bharata, (all) the bodies remain unmanifest in the beginning; they become manifest in the middle. After death they certainly become unmanifest. What lamentation can there be with regard to them?

In the beginning (*ādi*), before birth, *bhūtāni*, the bodies, made of the elements, viz earth etc., are unmanifest (*avyakta*), unperceived; in the middle (*madhya*), after birth and before death, they remain manifest (*vyakta*), tangible; again, after death (*nidhana*) they become unmanifest indeed—just as (bodies) in dream, magic, etc. have existence as mere appearances like silver seen on nacre, etc., but they do not exist before or after their cognition, because *dr̥ṣṭi-sṛṣṭi*¹ is accepted. Similarly, in accord-

ance with the logic, 'That which does not exist in the beginning and the end is equally so in the present (i.e. in the middle)',² these bodies surely do not exist in the middle even. This also accords with, 'Of the unreal there is no being' (2.16). This being so, *tatra*, with regard to them that are unreal, with regard to the extremely worthless bodies; *kā paridevanā*, what lamentation, or what sorrowful prattle, can there be? No sorrow whatever is proper. This is the idea. Indeed, even a fool does not grieve when after having seen various kinds of friends and relatives in dream he becomes separated from them on awakening. This very fact has been stated in the *Purāṇa*, 'It has emerged from invisibility, and it has again gone back to invisibility.'³ The nominative understood is 'the aggregate of bodies'. This being so, it is not proper to grieve even for the bodies. This is the purport.

Or the verse is to be explained as referring to the great elements, space and the rest: *Avyaktādīni*, those that have as their beginning (*ādi*), earlier state, the Unmanifest (*avyakta*), the Undifferentiated, (i.e.) Consciousness conditioned by nescience as its limiting adjunct; similarly, those whose middle (*madhya*), the state of continuance, is manifested (*vyakta*), not in their own highest nature as Reality but only by name and form that are creations of nescience; *bhūtāni*, space

the period they are cognized, created by a person through his nescience.

2. *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*, 2.6.

3. *Mahābhārata, Strīparva*, 2.13.

1. According to this view, all things are, during

and the rest that are such (as mentioned above); *avyakta-nidhanāni*, and which verily have the Unmanifest as their end, which have mergence in their own cause, the Unmanifest, as pot etc. have in earth;—what lamentation can there be with regard to those elements—, this is as before. Thus also the Śruti, 'This (universe) was then undifferentiated. It differentiated only into name and form,'⁴ etc. shows that the whole manifested universe has the Unmanifest as its material cause. As for its (the Unmanifest's) being the place of dissolution, it stands established by implication; for it is seen that an effect resolves only into its cause. This, however, has been elaborated in another book.

This being so, since grief is not proper even with regard to the elements, (viz) space etc., which being products of nescience are worthless, therefore it goes without saying that it is improper to grieve with regard to their effects. This is the purport. Or the idea is that, since they are ever present in the form of the Unmanifest, therefore, there being no separation from them, it is improper to lament for them. By addressing him (Arjuna) as 'Bhārata, O descendent of the Bharata dynasty', he (the Lord) indicates, 'Having been born in a pure dynasty, you are capable of comprehending the scriptural import. Why, indeed, is it that you do not understand?'

'Do not even many learned persons as well grieve? So, why do You taunt me alone again and again in this way? Besides, according to the maxim, "When a hearer does not understand, it shows the incapability of the speaker himself", even the non-comprehension of the meaning of Your words is no fault of mine!'

'As to that, the two faults stated (above)

do not accrue, because the sorrow of others as well arises, as in your case, just out of ignorance of the Self; and your non-understanding, too, of the meaning of the scriptures that impart instruction about the Self is due, as in the case of others, to the impurity of your own internal organ'—having this idea in mind He (the Lord) speaks of the inscrutability of the Self:

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेन—

माश्चर्यवद्ब्रूदति तथैव चान्यः।

आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति

श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित्॥ (2.29)

*Āścaryavatpaśyati kaścidenam
āścaryavadvadati tathaiva cānyah
āścaryavacchainamanyah śṛṇoti
śrutvāpyenam veda na caiva kaścit*

Someone visualizes It as a wonder; and similarly, indeed, someone else speaks of It as a wonder; and it is a wonder that someone else hears of It (and), having heard of It, even realizes It. And someone surely does not (know the Self).

Enam, It, the embodied self under discussion which, because of Its being possessed of opposite kinds of various qualities formed out of nescience, appears as non-existent though existent, as insentient though essentially self-effulgent Consciousness, as sorrowful though a mass of Bliss, as mutable though immutable, as non-eternal though eternal, as unmanifest though manifest, as different from Brahman though non-different from It, as bound though free, as possessed of duality though non-dual, as the object of awareness of different kinds of numerous imaginary forms; *kaścit*, some one alone—but not all—who is possessed of such disciplines as *śama*, *dama*, etc. (and) has his last body; *paśyati*, visualizes (*āścaryavat*, as a wonder,) to be existing as something comparable to a wonder, (that is to say,)

4. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.4.7.

realizes—through the maturity of Self-absorption—as reflected in the modifications of the internal organ which, as a result of negation—through the instructions of the scriptures and the teacher—of all duality within the range of nescience, takes the form of the true nature of the supreme Self alone, and which is born of the great Upaniṣadic sayings and is the fruit of all virtuous deeds. So also, the fact that someone (*kaścit*) sees (*paśyati*) It (*enam*), that is a wonder (*āścaryavat*)—used adverbially. Even the realization of the Self is like a wonder, since it (the realization in the form of the modification of the internal organ), though unreal by nature, is the revealer of Truth; though originating from nescience, It is the sublator of nescience, and while eradicating nescience it eradicates itself as well, because it is an effect of nescience! So also, *āścaryavat* qualifies the subject: Anyone who sees It is like a wonder, since this person, though free from nescience and its effects, behaves as though possessed of them owing to the predominance of the results of actions that have given rise to his present body; though remaining in Self-absorption, he emerges from it; and though he emerges, he again experiences Self-absorption. Thus, having an extraordinary conduct due to the variety of *prārabdha* (results of past actions that have produced his present body), he is fit to be sought after by all people because of his having acquired enlightenment that is difficult to attain. Hence he becomes wonderful indeed. Since all these three, viz the Self, Its knowledge and Its knower, are wonderful, therefore how can you easily realize the extremely inscrutable Self?—this is the idea.

Similarly, the Self is inscrutable even because of the absence of an instructor. Only he who knows the Self can teach It to someone else with certainty; for it is impossible for an ignorant person to be a teacher. Even when he knows, how can he speak, Self-

absorbed as he is generally? And even when his mind has emerged from Self-absorption, he cannot be known (as such) by another person. Even if he is known somehow, he does not speak at all, because he is indifferent to gain, adoration, fame and such other motives! Even if he somehow speaks out of mere compassion, he is very hard to find like God Himself. This He (the Lord) says in, '*ca*, and; *tathā*, similarly; *eva*, indeed; *anyaḥ*, someone else; *vadati*, speaks (of It); *āścaryavat*, as a wonder': As he knows so does he speak. *Ca* (and) is used for bringing in the sense of *enam* (It). And that (word) *anyaḥ* (someone else) means 'different from all ignorant people', not, on the other hand, 'different from the one who visualizes', because this would involve a contradiction. Here, too, *āścaryavat* is to be connected with the object, the verb and the subject. As to that, the wonderfulness of the object and the subject has been explained earlier. That of the verb is being explained: *Speaking* about the pure Self, which is beyond all speech, is like a wonder. In accord with this is the Śruti, 'failing to reach which, words turn back along with the mind'.⁵ It is a great wonder indeed that the pure Self, inexpressible through any word, is presented without the help of the relationship existing between a substance and its attribute, by imagining some relationship with words that are (generally) expressive of specific objects (i.e., objects having genus, quality, action or relationship) and are constituents of an indirect expression in which the (concerned) words partially shed and partially retain their own meanings,⁶—and that, again,

5. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.9.

6. For instance, in the Upaniṣadic sentence, '*Tattvamasi*' (Thou art That), *That* stands for the conditioned Brahman possessed of the powers of creation, preservation, dissolution, etc.; *thou* stands for the individual self, limited in every way; *art* indicates their identity. But they cannot be identical in the literal

presented in the form of an indeterminate direct perception.⁷ This is the meaning.

Or, it is a great wonder that, like a sentence which—without the help of the direct meanings of the words, without the help of their indirect meanings, and without any other relationship—awakens a person in deep sleep, the reality that is the Self is presented by such sentences as 'Thou art That'; for the power of words is inconceivable. And if words become meaningful without the help of any relationship, it will not lead to the fault of unwarrantable extension, because the same defect holds good in the case of figure of speech as well; for, relationship with the explicit meaning of a word may be common to many.⁸

Objection: May it not be argued that, meaning is determined by the specific intention of a speaker?

sense. Hence their incompatible limiting adjuncts are knocked out, and they stand united in their absolute nature as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss.

7. Perception is of two kinds, determinate and indeterminate. In the first case a man, for instance, is recognized as such, as possessed of hands, feet, etc. In the indeterminate perception, a stump of a tree, for instance, in darkness is not recognized as such from a distance, but it is known as something indeterminate.

Brahman realized through the Upaniṣadic texts cannot be described in words.

8. When somebody says, 'There is a cowherd-village *in the Gangā*', the meaning of *in the Gangā* is figuratively understood to be *on the bank of the Gangā* because the bank is related to the Gangā. But the aquatic beings also have such a relationship with the Gangā. Hence, even in a figure of speech these others have to be left out and the bank alone accepted.

Reply: No, since that too holds good equally for all.

Objection: May it not be argued that the specific intention is understood only by some particular person, not by all?

Reply: Well then, let some speciality of the person itself, in the form of faultlessness, become the determinant (of the understanding of the figurative meaning). And that is not barred out from this (our) point of view as well. So what is illogical in maintaining that, just as it is admitted by you that to a man of pure intellect the understanding of the purport of a sentence occurs through the investigation of the purport with the help of some figure of speech, so (in our case) to a similar rare person alone a particular Upaniṣadic sentence (such as 'Thou art That') produces, by itself, the direct realization of the indivisible Unity without the help of any relationship? Since according to this point of view the Self cannot be expressed by any word (through its primary or secondary meaning), therefore the sentence, 'failing to reach which, words turn back,'⁹ becomes all the more apt. And this view of the Lord has been elaborated by the writer of the *Vārtika* in such texts as,

Since nescience is weak, since the entity that is Consciousness is the Self, and since the power of words is inconceivable, therefore we know It through the destruction of delusion.

Without taking into account the relationship between words and their meanings, they, being roused by others, wake up from deep sleep by discarding sloth.

For no one understands words in deep sleep. Hence when nescience is

9. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.9.

destroyed by Knowledge, the result is (the realization) 'I am Brahman'.

The realization that comes in the form, 'I am Brahman', from words that destroy nescience, gets eradicated along with nescience, just as medicine does after curing a disease.¹⁰

Thus, after having stated that the Self is difficult to know because of the extreme wonderfulness of the subject-matter of speech, the speaker and the act of speaking, the Lord speaks of that (wonderfulness) even on account of the great scarcity of a hearer : And it is a wonder that someone else hears of It, and that, having heard of It, even realizes It. *Ca*, and; *āścaryavat*, it is a wonder; that, *anyah*, someone, who is a seeker of Liberation and is other than a liberated seer and teacher; after duly approaching the teacher, a knower of Brahman, *śṛṇoti*, hears; *enam*, of It—makes It an object of the deliberation called *śravaṇa* (hearing and understanding of Vedānta), i.e., knows for certain the purport of the Upaniṣadic sayings—; and *śrutvā*, having heard; *enam*, of It; *api*, even; *veda*, realizes It, as a result of maturity of contemplation (*manana*) and absorption (*nididhyāsana*). Thus has been explained the text, '*āścaryavat paśyati*, that someone sees It is a wonder'. Here also the wonderfulness of the subject (*knower*) is because it is difficult to find one whose mental impurities have been washed away by virtuous deeds performed in many past lives. So also will He (the Lord) say:

Among thousands of men, a rare one endeavours for perfection. Even of the perfected ones who are diligent, one perchance knows Me in truth (7.3).

And this accords with the Śruti,

Of that (Self), which is not available for the mere hearing to many, (and) which many do not understand even while hearing, the expounder is wonderful and the receiver is wonderful; wonderful is he who knows under the instruction of an adept.¹¹

Thus the wonderfulness of *hearing* and the *object of hearing* are to be explained as before.

Objection: What wonder is there that one who has gone through *śravaṇa* (hearing and understanding of Vedānta) and *manana* (contemplation on the Vedāntic teachings) should know the Self?

Hence (in reply) He says, *na ca eva kaścit*, and someone surely does not (know the Self). The *ca* (and) is used for connecting together the verb and its object. *Kaścit*, someone; even though undertaking *śravaṇa* etc., *na eva veda*, surely does not realize It. On the other hand, it goes without saying that one who does not go through them (*śravaṇa* etc.) does not know. This is according to the aphorism, 'The generation of knowledge takes place even in this life if there is no obstruction to the means adopted. For this is what is revealed (by the Upaniṣads)'.¹² It has also been said by the writer of the *Vārtika*,

If it be asked how does Its realization come, (the answer is) it comes surely from the destruction of bondage. And that destruction, again, may already have been, or will be, or is being attained.¹³

Even in the case of those who undertake *śravaṇa* etc., Knowledge dawns only after the dissipation of obstacles, but not otherwise. And that dissipation of obstacles has

10. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika*, 1.4.860-3.

11. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.2.7.

12. *Brahma-sūtra*, 3.4.51.

13. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika*, *Sambandha Bhāṣya*, 294.

already occurred in the case of some, as of Hiranyagarbha. For some it will happen in future, as in the case of Vāmadeva. For some it is happening (i.e., is being attained), as in the case of Śvetaketu. Hence the essential meaning is that the Self is difficult to realize because the dissipation of the obstacles is hard to attain. And it has also been stated in the Smṛti, 'Knowledge arises in people as a result of the dissipation of evil deeds.'¹⁴

If, however, (by taking the passage *īrutai api enam veda na caiva kalcit* as a single sentence instead of as two) the interpretation be, 'And no one realizes It even after hearing about It', then this will not conform to the Śruti, '...wonderful is he who knows under the instruction of an adept',¹⁵ and it will also contradict the utterance of the Lord, 'Even of the perfected ones who are diligent, one perchance knows Me in truth' (7.3). Hence this immodesty may please be excused by the learned ones. Or 'na caiva kalcit, someone

surely does not' is to be connected with each case (i.e. with all the verbs) (meaning thereby): Someone does not see It; (someone) does not speak (of It); (someone) does not hear (of It); (someone) does not realize (It) even after hearing (about It). Thus five types are indicated. Someone only sees, (but) does not speak; someone sees as well as speaks; someone hears the utterance about It and understands Its meaning as well; someone does not understand even after hearing; and someone is outside all (these types). However, if the verse be taken as referring to an unenlightened person, then (the meaning is that) realizing, speaking and hearing (of the Self) are equally matters of wonder to him because he is under the sway of the idea of impossibility (of his being Brahman) (*asambhāvanā*) and contrary thought (of his being human and not Brahman) (*viparītabhāvanā*). In this case the verse stands self-explained. But in the fourth foot of the verse the construction is: (someone surely does not realize It) even after seeing, speaking and hearing of It.

14. *Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva*, 204.8.

15. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.2.7.

O Mother, out of sport Thou hast divided the One Absolute Intelligence into two—Jiva and Siva—soul and God. Having transformed God into the individual soul, Thou dost convert that same soul back into God.

O Mother of the Universe, when will my senses become controlled? When shall I have neither enemies nor friends? When shall I be completely free from false and deluding hopes? When will my false mind be uprooted?

Devī-Bhujāṅga-Prayūta-Stotra

Who Am I ?

JANKINATH KAUL 'KAMAL'

Seeking pleasure in leisure
Robs thee of true pleasure.
Search then, for thy own joy
Of incessant work and no fruit.
Work must be owned;
Absorption—a cheerful touch,
Courage—carefree and love-besmeared,
Make thee laugh away all labour.
You want no more, hunt no shore.
Stoutly stepping up this rolling Earth,
Dauntless thou walkest the Path—
Flowing in water, shining in fire
And blowing fast in pervading air,
Measure thou the sky so vast.
Pause for a poise in cheerful charm.
If thou art the Herculean Hero,
Enter the unmoving full void.
Doubtless then—Thou art That—
Thy ocean of Bliss
Thy infinite fades, for there's no shade,
No worry, no care now,
All BLISS: the Supreme Blossom.
Wilt thou talk of peace or war ?
Is there tongue to speak ?
Who ? To whom ? A surprise Divine !
That's the mystery of 'Who am I' !



A man is possessed of limited powers and is miserable ; he wants to expand his powers so that he may be happy. But consider if it will be so ; if with limited perceptions one is miserable, with extended perceptions the misery must increase proportionately. . . . What is the real power ? Is it to increase prosperity or bring about peace ? That which results in peace is the highest perfection.

Sri Ramana Maharshi

Preaching Sri Ramakrishna?

SWAMI BHUTESHANANDA

The revered Swami, President of the Ramakrishna Order, in his Benedictory Address at the Bhāva-Pracār (Preaching the Message of Sri Ramakrishna) Meeting at Belur Math on 27 June 1993, emphasizes that to be effective a preacher's life must conform to the Message.

Swamiji said that we should do preaching, and so we are enthusiastically going ahead in preaching work. But, before we start preaching it is necessary to have conceptual clarity. First comes clarity of ideas and ideals ; then comes preaching. However, if our whole life is spent in getting conceptual clarity regarding our ideals (bhāva-suddhi), when shall we do preaching? Therefore we need not go that far. What we have to do is to start with some clear conception of our ideas and ideals. That is to say, preaching work will go on and, along with it, attainment of clarity of understanding will also progress in a natural way.

The organized way of doing preaching that we now find was not there in this form in the past. But then, whichever place any of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna visited got changed into a centre for spreading the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. As long as they remained in a place, their presence itself served as preaching work. This is the tradition that has come down to us. Nowadays we are trying to propagate our ideas in a more organized way.

However, we have to keep in mind that our life should be in conformity with our preaching. Preaching through one's life is the best form of spreading the message. If this were not so, our endless talking would have no meaning. Nowadays people evaluate a person's words by comparing them with his life. Our words will have no

value if they don't conform to our life.

Now, what do we mean by 'our words'? The words of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda, and also the teachings of the other disciples of the Master. This is what we want to spread. However, nowadays our preaching extends to a variety of topics. I don't know whether all these extended topics can be derived directly from their teachings. It is true people expect that we are capable of talking on any subject. But we are not omniscient! Hence, our attempt to talk on all kinds of subjects may sometimes make us the laughing-stock of people. Therefore, while engaged in preaching work, we should take into consideration the topics which we are capable of handling and to what extent we have got that capacity. Our preachers should be careful about this. The reason for this is that many of us have not undergone much preparation for preaching. Hence, at every step, we have to compare our words with the 'original'. The words of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji form the 'original'. We only follow them. Therefore, it is better to see that we speak only as much as is in conformity with their teachings.

This will also lead to a good deal of introspection on our part. Whenever we talk, we should also see that along with it a certain amount of introspection also is carried on : do we practise what we profess. And people also observe whether we practise what we

(Continued on page 240)

Scenes From the Life of Swami Vivekananda— A Children's Pageant

GIRISH PARIKH and SHETAL PARIKH

This pageant, wherein the author exercises his poetic license and imagination, is an adaptation of his screen play for a three-hour feature film. The Parikhs are devotees living in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

- NARRATOR : In Simla, a part of Calcutta, India, a lady named Bhuvaneshwari prayed daily to Śiva for a son. She already had several daughters, but had a desire for a son.
She wrote to her relative who lived in Varanasi, the holiest city in India, to worship Vireshwara Śiva for her.
Finally, on January 12, 1863, a son was born to Bhuvaneshwari and Vishwanath Datta. The family gave him the name Narendranath, meaning Lord of men. But Bhuvaneshwari called him Vireshwar because she believed that her son was a gift from Vireshwara Śiva.
His nickname was Biley.
Biley was a naughty child. When he was five years old...
(Biley comes running on the stage. His sister chases him.)
- SISTER : Biley, you naughty boy!
- BILEY : You can't catch me, sister!
- SISTER : Don't run so fast Biley, you'll fall down!
- BILEY : Sister, try to catch me!
- SISTER : I will catch and spank you!
(Biley runs fast, but is about to be caught by his older sister. He steps into an open gutter [small channel—drain] running on the side of the road.)
- BILEY : Now catch me!
- SISTER : *(She raises her hands in disgust)* Get out of that gutter, Biley! Don't you know mother will ask me to take a bath if I step into that dirty drain!
- BILEY : I told you, you can't catch me!
- SISTER : You are a very naughty boy! Biley, I'll tell everything to mother. I will also tell her that you give away so many things to beggars!
(The door of the DATTA home is closed. A BEGGAR comes.)
- BEGGAR : I have not eaten for three days, please give me something to eat.
(Slowly the door opens. Biley comes with a plate full of food and gives it to the beggar.)

BEGGAR : God bless you!
(A MONK comes.)

MONK : Om Namō Nārāyaṇāya!
(Biley gives the tiny piece of cloth wrapped around him. He is now only in a loin cloth.)

MONK : You look like a monk in your loin cloth!

BILEY : Can I be a monk like you?

MONK : Indeed, you can be a great monk. Next time I see you I will teach you meditation.

BILEY : What's that?

MONK : I'll tell you next time.
(Monk exits. A BEGGAR WOMAN in rags enters.)

BEGGAR WOMAN : My son, can you give me something to eat?

BILEY : I just gave away food. But wait a minute.
(Biley goes into the house and comes back with an expensive sari.)

BILEY : Mother, keep this!

BEGGAR WOMAN : (Touching the sari to her forehead:) Long live, my son!
(Bhuvaneshwari comes out from inside.)

BHUVANESHWARI : Biley, you're giving away too many things. I'll have to lock you up!
(Bhuvaneshwari pulls Biley into the house.)
(Biley is locked up in a room. He is angry. He takes all the pillows and blankets from the beds and throws them everywhere. He then sits facing the wall, on a bed.)
(Bhuvaneshwari enters.)

BHUVANESHWARI : Biley! You bad boy! Look at the mess you made!
(An OLD LADY enters.)

OLD LADY : What's the matter, Bhuvaneshwari?

BHUVANESHWARI : Look at what Biley did! I prayed to Śiva for a son, and he sent me one of his demons! Whenever we ask Biley to do something he doesn't want to do, he acts like this. He has a very strong will.

OLD LADY : And he has a loving heart too. Bhuvaneshwari dear, Biley came from Śiva. I think he is Śiva himself. That is why you cannot force him to do anything.
(pondering,) Ah, I know the trick!

(Biley watches attentively.)

BHUVANESHWARI : *(curious:)* What is it?

(The old lady whispers in the ear of Bhuvaneshwari. Biley has again started throwing things angrily.)

(Bhuvaneshwari leaves the room and returns with a pot full of water, and gently pours water over the head of Biley while chanting—)

BHUVANESHWARI : Śiva...Śiva...Śiva...

(Biley becomes quiet.)

(VISHWANATH enters.)

VISHWANATH : What's the matter?

BHUVANESHWARI : Look what Biley has done! And he gives away so many things to the poor! I'm afraid he'll also be like you!

VISHWANATH : *(pleased:)* That means he wants to help the poor and the holy men. Don't worry dear, it will be alright!

BHUVANESHWARI : You are not worried, but how can I run the household like this?

VISHWANATH : And I have to run the office and make money for the household! Let me take Biley with me to my office. That will divert his mind!

(In Vishwanath Datta's office, there are several hookahs [Oriental tobacco pipe] with a long, usually flexible tube so arranged that it draws the smoke through water in a vase or bowl and cools it. Also called hubble-bubble. A bubbling sound is caused when the smoke is drawn through water, hence the name for smoking.)

BILEY : Father, why do you keep so many hookahs? You need only one to smoke.

VISHWANATH : You are right, my boy! But they are not for me!

BILEY : Then why do you keep those hookahs?

VISHWANATH : Good question. Biley, as I told you before, I am a lawyer. Many people of different religions come to me for help. Most of them are Hindus like us, but some are Muslims, and some are Christians. Just remember, there are many religions. The Hindus will not touch the hookah used by Muslims, so I keep separate hookahs for Hindus and Muslims. To keep peace among all my clients of different religions, I have kept a separate hookah for each !

BILEY : But, father, why can't they all smoke from the same hookah?

VISHWANATH : They are afraid of losing their caste if they do so! Biley, I will have to go to the nearby post office. Can you wait in the office for a few minutes? I will be back soon.

(Biley nods his head. Vishwanath leaves.)

BILEY : *(to himself:)* What will happen if a Hindu smokes from the hookah of Muslims? What will happen if he smokes from other hookahs? Father says the Hindu may lose his caste! I am a Hindu. Let me find out what *really* happens!

(Biley goes near each hookah one by one and smokes from each one. Vishwanath comes.)

VISHWANATH : What are you doing Biley?

BILEY : Father, I tried every hookah, but I am not changed. I am the same Biley!

VISHWANATH : You naughty boy!

(Biley is next seen playing with five boys.)

BILEY : Come on everyone, let's meditate. I have learnt meditation from a monk. Let's meditate like grown-ups.

1ST BOY : How do you do that?

BILEY : I'll show you. First, everyone sit down.

(Everyone sits down cross-legged.)

BILEY : Then place your hands like this. Sit up very straight—

1ST BOY : Then what do we do?

BILEY : Concentrate on God.

(Boys obey.)

BILEY : You have to close your eyes to meditate.

(For a minute or two everything is quiet, but the boys are unable to sit still for long. They begin to cough and giggle. They open their eyes to see what the other boys are doing.)

2ND BOY : Come on, let's do something else. This is too quiet for me.

3RD BOY : Me too, but look at Biley. I wonder how he can sit still for so long?

(1st boy sights a deadly cobra slithering across the floor.)

1ST BOY : *(shouting:)* There's a snake! Run! Run!

(But Biley is concentrating only on God and does not hear his friend's warnings of the approaching snake. The boys watch in astonishment.)

(The cobra moves around for a while, and then goes away without harming Biley. After a while, Biley opens his eyes.)

1ST BOY : Biley, there was a snake here!

BILEY : A snake ? Where ? I know nothing of the snake! I was enjoying meditation! Why did you disturb me?

NARRATOR : Biley is now about ten years old, and is called Naren. He is attending a grade school. A teacher is giving a lesson in Geography.
(Several children in the class. A small globe of the world is on the table. Map of India is hung on the wall.)

TEACHER : Today we will learn something about America. Let me show you America on the globe.
(He takes his stick and moves it around America on the globe.)

TEACHER : In the previous class, I asked you to go to the library and study about some big cities of America. I hope you have done that. Can anyone tell me the name of the largest city in America?
(Some students, including Naren, raise their hands. The teacher points to one student to answer.)

ONE STUDENT : New York.

TEACHER : Right. In what state is the city of Chicago? Naren, can you answer?

NAREN : Illinois.

TEACHER : Wrong! It is in Indiana! Indiana, like India!

NAREN : No, Sir, Chicago is in Illinois!

TEACHER : You are wrong, Naren! You have not done the homework! I must spank you.
(Teacher picks up the stick and spans Naren. He slaps him also.)

NAREN : *(loudly:)* I am right. Chicago is in Illinois, why don't you look at the globe?

TEACHER : *(checking his pockets, squinting at the globe:)* I forgot my glasses at home, this globe has very small writing. But I know Chicago is in Indiana!
(Bell rings. Teacher grabs the globe and leaves the class. Children also leave.)
(Naren has now come home with his cloth bag containing books. He hurls and throws the bag on his bed in anger. Hearing the sound, his mother Bhuvaneshwari comes running.)

BHUVANESHWARI : Naren, don't throw your bag of books like that. In the books resides the Goddess of Learning.
(Naren does not answer.)

BHUVANESHWARI : You are a bright student and a good athlete also. But why don't you behave well, Naren?
(Naren is quiet. Bhuvaneshwari comes near.)

BHUVANESHWARI : Why are you so quiet, Naren? What's wrong?
(Noticing the face of Naren.)

Oh, my boy! Your face is swollen! What happened?

NAREN : *(almost crying:)* I gave the right answer to my teacher, but he said it was wrong, and spanked me!

BHUVANESHWARI : Then what did you say?

NAREN : I said that my answer is right. He was very angry.

BHUVANESHWARI : You did the right thing, my son. You must always tell the truth.
(Knock on the door. Bhuvaneshwari opens the door. The TEACHER comes in.)

TEACHER : *(now in glasses, adjusting glasses:)* I am sorry, Naren. I was wrong! Chicago is in Illinois, as you answered.

NARRATOR : Naren is now a teenager. He wants to find God.

NAREN : Sir, have you seen God?

GENTLEMAN : My boy, postpone searching for God until you are old. First enjoy the worldly pleasures.

NAREN : But suppose I don't live to be old? I want to search for God *now*. Tell me, have you seen God?

GENTLEMAN : *(evasively:)* It takes many years of austerities to see God. Is it a joke to see God?

NAREN : *(firmly:)* Sir, my question is: Have you seen God? Say Yes or No!

GENTLEMAN : Then the answer is No, but some day I want to meet Him.
(Naren leaves.)

NARRATOR : After asking the question, Have you seen God?, to several people, Naren goes to Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, who lives in retirement in a boat on the holy river Ganga, near Calcutta.
(Naren appears suddenly and asks his usual question. Devendranath is meditating. He is startled and opens his eyes.)

NAREN : *(tense, excited:)* Sir, have you seen God?
(Devendranath is unable to answer. He gazes at Naren, and puts his right hand on his head to bless him.)

DEVENDRANATH : No, my boy, but you have Yogi's eyes!
(Naren is disappointed, is about to leave. Devendranath closes his eyes and resumes meditation.)

NAREN : *(to himself:)* He has *not* seen God! If Maharshi Devendranath Tagore has not seen God, then who has?

NARRATOR : Naren's neighbour Ramachandra Datta then tells him about Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Naren had first heard about Ramakrishna, the Saint of Dakshineswar, from Professor Hastie of his college. He had

first met Ramakrishna at the house of Surendranath Mitra and had even sung a religious song for Ramakrishna. Pleased with the beautiful singing of Naren, Sri Ramakrishna had invited Naren to come to Dakshineswar near Calcutta. But Naren had thought, how could an illiterate priest of the temple of Kali, who did not even know how to sign his name, help him?

Ramachandra Datta urged Naren to at least visit Sri Ramakrishna once. Naren agreed, and one day he went to see Sri Ramakrishna with Surendra and his friends.

(Naren, his friends, and Surendra enter Ramakrishna's room. Sri Ramakrishna is sitting on a cot. There are a few devotees sitting on the floor. Ramakrishna immediately recognizes Naren and is delighted to see him.)

RAMAKRISHNA : *(excited:)* My dear Naren! So you have come! Let's go outside!

(Ramakrishna holds his hand and pulls him to the northern veranda. He shuts the door behind him.)

RAMAKRISHNA : *(tenderly:)* Ah, you come so late! Why did you keep me waiting so long? My ears are burnt listening to the profane talk of worldly people. Oh, how I yearn to unburden my mind to one who can appreciate my innermost experience!

(Ramakrishna sobs. Naren is puzzled.)

RAMAKRISHNA : *(with folded hands:)* Lord, I know you are the ancient sage Nara, an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, born on earth to remove the miseries of mankind!

NAREN : *(to himself:)* Who is this man I have come to see? He must be crazy! Why, I am just the son of Vishwanath Datta, not some Lord!

(Ramakrishna goes to his room and brings some sweets. He feeds Naren with his own hands.)

NAREN : Please give the sweets to me. I shall share them with my friends.

RAMAKRISHNA : They may have some afterwards.

(Ramakrishna feeds Naren with all of the sweets in his hand. Then he seizes Naren's hands.)

RAMAKRISHNA : *(almost begging:)* Promise me that you will come alone to me at an early date.

NAREN : *(looking at the loving face of Ramakrishna:)* Yes!

(They are now in the main room. The disciples and devotees of Ramakrishna are still sitting on the floor. Ramakrishna is sitting on his cot. Naren is standing.)

NAREN : Sir, have you seen God?

RAMAKRISHNA : *(immediately:)* Yes, I have seen God! I see him as I see you here, only more clearly. God can be seen. One can talk to Him. But who cares for God? People shed torrents of tears for their wives, children, wealth, and

property, but who ever weeps for the vision of God? If one cries sincerely for God, one can surely see Him.

NARRATOR

Who is this Ramakrishna Paramahansa? Ramakrishna was born to a poor but pious brahmin couple in a small village of Bengal in 1836. From his very childhood he felt intense desire to get a vision of God. When he was sixteen years old, he went to Calcutta, but was disgusted by the materialistic metropolis. He refused to take regular education; for him the education that leads to God-realization was the real education. He became priest of the Kali temple at Dakshineswar. God is worshipped as Mother of the Universe in that temple. He got the vision of the Mother Kali without the help of any teacher but by his intense longing and readiness to give away even his life if he did not get the vision of the Mother. He then desired to realize God by following different paths. Through the various disciplines of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam he reached always the same goal, realization of God-consciousness. He tasted the bliss of communion in various ways: sometimes merging himself totally in the Divine; sometimes, as a child of the Divine Mother, maintaining a separate individuality, but in appearance only. Attracted by his spirituality came many souls to quench their thirst for knowledge and bliss. All got bliss and peace in his presence and had uplifting feeling. He gave to all mankind without any barrier.

After about one month, when Naren again visited Sri Ramakrishna—

(Ramakrishna is alone. He is sitting on the cot. Naren comes. Ramakrishna is delighted and makes Naren sit beside him on the bed. Ramakrishna is suddenly overcome by emotion, mutters something to himself with his eyes fixed on Naren. He draws Naren closer to him. In the twinkling of an eye he places his right hand on the chest of Naren.)

NARRATOR

: The touch at once gives Naren a novel experience. With eyes open he sees that the walls and everything in the room whirl rapidly and vanish into naught, and the whole universe, together with Naren himself, is about to merge in an all-encompassing mysterious void! Naren is terribly frightened and thinks that he is facing death, for to him the loss of individuality means nothing short of that!

NAREN

: *(crying loudly:)* What is this you are doing to me? I have my parents, brothers and sisters at home!

(Ramakrishna laughs aloud, and strokes the chest of Naren.)

RAMAKRISHNA

: All right, let it rest now. Everything will come in time!

NARRATOR

: Naren's strange experience vanishes gradually in the reverse order. He finds himself and the windows, doors and other things inside and outside the room as they were before. That was Naren's first experience of trance or Samadhi.

(Ramakrishna is talking to a few devotees who are sitting. Ramakrishna is on a cot. Naren also is in the group.)

RAMAKRISHNA : So renunciation is essential for realizing God. If you are a householder, you should be detached in your mind. For me, I cannot even stand the touch of money or metal !

(The talk is over and the devotees leave. One devotee and Naren remain. Ramakrishna exits.)

NAREN : *(to the devotee:)* What a renunciation! But is he telling the truth? What happens when he touches money?

DEVOTEE : I've heard that his hand becomes bent!

NAREN : Aha! You have only *heard*, not seen! Is such renunciation possible?

DEVOTEE : You may test him if you want.

(The devotee leaves. Only Naren remains. He looks around to make sure nobody is watching him, then he takes out a silver rupee from his pocket, raises it to his eyes and carefully observes it, and then puts it under the mattress on the cot. He then goes to a corner in the room, sits, and closes his eyes as if meditating.)

(Ramakrishna comes. Naren opens his eyes a little bit, and watches. Ramakrishna sits on the cot. Then he jumps up as if it was on fire. Naren stands up.)

RAMAKRISHNA : What has happened to my bed?

(A servant comes in and searches the bed. The rupee falls and rolls on the floor, making a sound. Ramakrishna looks at Naren with satisfaction.)

RAMAKRISHNA : Naren, I'm glad that you tested me. One should never accept a guru without testing.

NARRATOR : Naren's father dies all on a sudden due to heart attack. His rich family suddenly becomes poor.

RAMAKRISHNA : Naren, what's the matter?

NAREN : You already know. Do I have to tell you?

RAMAKRISHNA : I did get news about you. I know after the sudden death of your father your family is in a terrible condition.

NAREN : And I am the eldest son in the family. I must at least feed them. But I am not even able to do that! I cannot get a job anywhere!

RAMAKRISHNA : Naren, do you know why you are suffering?

NAREN : Why?

RAMAKRISHNA : You're not accepting my Mother Kali.

NAREN : Mother...Mother...Mother... All the time Mother! Why should I accept your Mother?

RAMAKRISHNA : Because She is your Mother also. My Mother is the Mother of all.

NAREN : Can you do one thing for me? Can you pray to your Mother to help me?

RAMAKRISHNA : I cannot ask such things from the Mother. Naren, today is Tuesday, the holy day for worshipping Mother. She will give whatever you ask of Her. Go to the Temple of Kali.
(Naren leaves, and returns after some time.)

RAMAKRISHNA : What did Mother say?

NAREN : I forgot to ask Her about a job!

RAMAKRISHNA : What? Go right back! Hurry!
(Naren leaves, and returns after some time.)

RAMAKRISHNA : What happened this time? Did you ask for a job?

NAREN : I... I forgot again!

RAMAKRISHNA : What a fool you are! The Mother will give *whatever* you ask. Never forget that you're Her child. Now go back quickly.
(Naren leaves, and returns after some time.)

NAREN : No, I couldn't ask for the job or money. It would be like asking for a pumpkin from a great king. I asked only for devotion, for selfless love, and for the power to understand Her!
(Ramakrishna draws Naren near and caresses his head.)

RAMAKRISHNA : Naren, the Mother tells me that your family will not have to worry about the basic necessities. And you will be a monk after I pass away. Come Naren, let's both pray to the Mother.
(They both leave.)

NARRATOR : Ramakrishna has passed away. Naren has now become Vivekananda. He is wandering through India as a monk to see the condition of his motherland. He comes to Alwar, a city in North India.
(Maharaja of Alwar is westernized. He is talking with Vivekananda. The Prime Minister, Major Ramachandraji, and a few officers are present.)

MAHARAJA : Swamiji, I do *not* believe in image worship!

VIVEKANANDA : But it is not merely an image to the worshipper. It is the living deity.

MAHARAJA : Nonsense! Images are nothing but stone, clay or metal, and sometimes paper! How can one worship them?

VIVEKANANDA : You are making a mistake!

MAHARAJA : *(irritated:)* Are you sure?

(Vivekananda looks above at the wall. A big coloured portrait of the Maharaja is hanging on it.)

VIVEKANANDA : *(to the prime minister:)* Bring that picture down.
(Prime Minister brings the picture down.)

VIVEKANANDA : Now spit on it!

PRIME MINISTER : *(shocked:)* Swamiji, but how can I ...

VIVEKANANDA : *(insisting:)* Come on, spit on it!

PRIME MINISTER : I... I...

VIVEKANANDA : *(ordering:)* I say spit!

PRIME MINISTER : *(firmly:)* I cannot!

VIVEKANANDA : Spit! It's merely a paper covered with glass!

PRIME MINISTER : *(almost shouting:)* No, Maharaja will kill me if I insult him!

VIVEKANANDA : So you see Maharaja in it.
(Turning to Maharaja)
The worshipper of the image also sees the living deity in it.

MAHARAJA : I apologize, Swamiji.

NARRATOR : While meditating on a rock near Kanyakumari, the southern tip of India where the three oceans meet, Swami Vivekananda got the idea of going to the West to spread the message of his Master Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna, appearing in a vision, gave him the command to go to the West. But Vivekananda wanted a confirmation of that vision, and so he sought permission and blessings from the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, the wife and the Divine Consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was the Energy. She was the Power. He wrote a letter to her.

(The Holy Mother is conducting a worship before the picture of Sri Ramakrishna. The worship is about to be finished. She puts flowers at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Saradananda enters with a letter in his hand. He touches the feet of the Mother.)

SARADANANDA : Mother, here is a letter for you from Naren.

HOLY MOTHER : I haven't heard from my son Naren for a long time. Sarat, please open the letter and read it to me.

(Saradananda opens and reads the letter.)

SARADANANDA : *(reading slowly:)* Dear Mother, please accept my humble salutations. For some time, some of my disciples and admirers are urging me to go to America and spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna at the World's Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago. They even collected

donations, but I have asked them to distribute the money to the poor. Mother, how can I go to America without Your command and blessings? If You *will* that I should go, then please send Your command and blessings to your unworthy son. Salutations at Your Lotus Feet again and again, Your son Naren.

(Looking at the Mother:) And he has given his address at Madras.

HOLY MOTHER : *(wiping tears, worried:)* Sarat, I'm worried to tell my son to go to a foreign land! But that is exactly what our Master wants.

SARADANANDA : How do you know that Sri Ramakrishna wants him to go to America?

HOLY MOTHER : Naren is *born* to spread the Master's message everywhere. After the passing away of the Master, I saw a vision. I was standing on the bank of the holy Ganga. Suddenly Sri Ramakrishna emerged from behind and rushed down by me into the river. His body of pure spirit got dissolved in the holy waters. As I stood transfixed there, all of a sudden Naren burst upon the view from nowhere. Shouting with elation, 'Glory to Sri Ramakrishna!', he went on sprinkling handfuls of that water over the millions of people standing around. Before my very eyes all of them became freed from this world at the very touch of that water.

So, Sarat, my son Naren is born to disseminate divine knowledge to the world. He is not different from the Master. Bring paper and pen.

(Saradananda gets paper and pen ready. The Holy Mother dictates the letter. She tells Saradananda: 'Sarat, mention about my vision also.')

NARRATOR : The disciples and devotees of Swami Vivekananda then arrange for him to go to Chicago. From Bombay the P. & O. ship, *Peninsular* took Swamiji to Colombo, China, and Japan. Leaving Yokohama by another ship, the *S. S. Empress of India*, Swamiji finally reaches Vancouver, Canada on July 25, 1893 and from there Swamiji comes by train to his destination—Chicago.

(Seeing the sign, INFORMATION BUREAU, COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION, Vivekananda comes to the information desk.)

VIVEKANANDA : Sir, I've come to speak at the World's Parliament of Religions.

INFORMATION OFFICER : *(slightly amused):* I beg your pardon!

VIVEKANANDA : When will the World's Parliament of Religions start? I've come to enrol myself as a delegate.

OFFICER : *(looking at the desk calendar:)* Let's see, today is July 31. It will start in the second week of September...

VIVEKANANDA : Oh, I'm too early.

OFFICER : No sir, I'm afraid you're too late! The date for enrolling as a speaker is already gone!

VIVEKANANDA : But I'm coming all the way from India!

OFFICER : Do you have any references?

VIVEKANANDA : No!

OFFICER : Then I'm sorry, I cannot help you further.
(*Vivekananda almost collapses on a bench nearby.*)

NARRATOR : Vivekananda gives up the idea of speaking at the World's Parliament of Religions. Even to attend the Parliament as a spectator he has to wait over a month. And he is running out of money. Someone suggests to him that he go to Boston where he can live less expensively than in Chicago. Travelling in the same carriage of the train with him is Miss Katherine Sanborn, who lives near Boston. Impressed by Vivekananda, she invites him to her home.
(*Miss Kate Sanborn's home*)

KATE SANBORN : Swami, you look like 'a curio from India!' Why don't you buy some American clothes?

VIVEKANANDA : I'll buy a winter coat. But I'd rather wear the monk's clothes while preaching. It gets a little attention!

KATE SANBORN : A curio from India! So do you really intend to teach, Swami?

VIVEKANANDA : I'd love to. I'll teach Vedanta—

KATE SANBORN : I've invited my friend Professor Wright. I think he'll also be interested in you.
(*The bell rings.*)

KATE SANBORN : Oh, the Professor is here!
(*Miss Sanborn opens the door. Professor Wright enters.*)

KATE SANBORN : Professor, meet Swami Vivekananda. Swami, this is Doctor John Henry Wright. He's professor of Greek classics at Harvard University. We call him a walking encyclopedia!

VIVEKANANDA : I'm glad to meet you, Professor.

KATE SANBORN : I expected you to come a little later.

PROF. WRIGHT : Well, I couldn't wait to see your curio from India!

KATE SANBORN : Let me prepare coffee and some breakfast. Meanwhile, Swami, talk to Professor Wright about your, what was that ...?

VIVEKANANDA : Vedanta.
(*Ms Sanborn leaves. Professor and Vivekananda start talking. When Ms Sanborn comes with trays, they are still talking. Now they talk while drinking coffee, etc.*)

- PROF. WRIGHT : Kate, the *real* walking encyclopedia is right here in your home. (*to Vivekananda*) '*Vivee Kananda*'—is that how your name is pronounced?
- VIVEKANANDA : That's good enough. But it is one word.
- PROF. WRIGHT : What does it mean?
- VIVEKANANDA : The first word, *Swami*, is descriptive of a Sannyāsin, or one who formally renounces the world. And the second word, *Vivekananda* is the name I assumed on my renunciation of the world. It is customary with all Sannyāsins to take a new name. The word *Vivekananda* signifies, literally, 'the bliss of discrimination.'
- PROF. WRIGHT : That's interesting. Kate had told me you've come to speak at the World's Parliament of Religions.
- VIVEKANANDA : Yes, but I've given it up!
- PROF. WRIGHT : May I know why?
- VIVEKANANDA : I'm late to enrol. And I don't have any credentials. My people should have known better. I was foolish to come all the way from India to speak at the World's Parliament, without enrolling, without credentials.
(*He is firm. Stands up from his seat and paces.*)
But I'm determined to teach Vedānta in American cities. I'm here amongst the children of— (*looking at the picture of Mother Mary and the Baby Christ on the wall*)— the Son of Mary, and Lord Jesus will help me. But if I fail, I'll go to England and try there. If I fail there also, I'll go back to India and wait for further commands from the Lord.
- PROF. WRIGHT : (*improving pronunciation:*) *Swami Vivekananda*, you can speak at the World's Parliament of Religions! But one has to represent some organization. (*After a brief pause*) You can speak as a representative of Hinduism? Do you agree?
- VIVEKANANDA : I agree.
- PROF. WRIGHT : I know the chairman of the World's Parliament of Religions. Kate, get me paper and pen. I'll give the letter of recommendation to the Swami right away.
(*Ms Sanborn gets paper and pen. Professor writes.*)
- PROF. WRIGHT : (*writing:*) Dear Doctor John Henry Barrows...Swami Vivekananda — V...I...V...E...K...A...N...A...N...D...A..., Vivekananda is more learned than all our learned professors put together....He represents Hinduism. And I cannot imagine a better man than him to represent that great religion....I strongly recommend him as a speaker.... Sincerely,...John Henry Wright.
(*Professor folds the letter and gives it to Vivekananda.*)
- PROF. WRIGHT : And Swami, I'll also buy you a train ticket to Chicago.

(Whistle of the train. Vivekananda with a bag in hand enters the stage.)

VIVEKANANDA : I am in Chicago again. *(Searches his pockets.)* But where did I put the address? I must have lost it in the train!
(to someone on the platform)
Sir, how can I go to ...

SOMEONE : No English... Speak German!

(He gets the same answer from a few people whom he asks. The platform is getting lonely. Tired, he sits on the bench, and closes his eyes for a few moments, as if in meditation. When he opens his eyes and looks around he sees a box-car [goods' wagon]. He rises, walks into it with his bag, and sleeps.)
(It's now morning. Vivekananda wakes up in the wagon.)

VIVEKANANDA : *(to himself:)* I smell fresh water. Oh, I'm extremely hungry!
(He takes out a kamandalu [a begging bowl] from his bag, and walks out of the station with the kamandalu in one hand and bag in the other. At the door of one house he asks a servant:)

VIVEKANANDA : Can you give me something to eat? And how can I go to ...

SERVANT : Get out from here! You cannot beg! ...

VIVEKANANDA : But as a monk I can beg — I'm a monk from India!

SERVANT : But this is *not* India—this is America.

VIVEKANANDA : I see no difference!

(The servant slams the door.)
(Vivekananda goes to another house. Talks to a servant, who observes his strange dress insultingly.)

VIVEKANANDA : Brother, can you give me some food?

SERVANT : No food, but I'll give you this water. I hope that will fill your big stomach!

(The servant pours the water into Vivekananda's kamandalu and, while doing so, deliberately pours some of it on his hand and stomach, wetting his clothes and the ground — because of which, Vivekananda slips and almost falls down. The servant rudely laughs at him. Swamiji slowly straightens and steadies himself, standing calmly. He raises his hand, as if forgiving the ignorant servant.)

VIVEKANANDA : B...r...o...t...h...e...r...!

(The servant stops laughing and turns serious.)
(Vivekananda walks across the street [in front of the next house] where he collapses.)

VIVEKANANDA : Help me God!

(From the window of the house across the street a lady sees Vivekananda.)

Slowly the door of the house across the street opens. The lady comes out. She walks to Vivekananda.)

MRS. HALE : Sir, are you a delegate to the Parliament of Religions?

VIVEKANANDA : Yes, mother.

MRS. HALE : I'm Mrs. George W. Hale. You are welcome in our home.

NARRATOR : That morning of September 1893, America opened her heart to Vedanta.

(Mrs. Hale helps Vivekananda to rise, and helps him to her home. We see Mr. Hale and the four Hale daughters lovingly welcoming Vivekananda.)

MR. HALE : You are welcome in our Hale House.

VIVEKANANDA : Father!

MRS. HALE : You must be hungry, my son. Let me get some food. After you finish eating, I'll take you to the offices of the Parliament of Religions.

(Vivekananda closes his eyes in silent prayer. The Hale family watches.)

(The World's Parliament of Religions.)

CARDINAL GIBBONS : It is indeed my pleasure to open this World Parliament of Religions.

(Applause and cheers from the audience. Dr. Barrows comes to the podium.)

DR. BARROWS : We welcome you all! As most of you know, this meeting is an adjunct of the World's Columbian Exposition, which is organized to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus.

NARRATOR : And then the delegates rise, one by one, and read prepared speeches. Vivekananda is totally unprepared. He has never before addressed such an assembly. When he is asked to speak, he is seized with a strange 'nervousness', and requests the chairman to call him a little later. After postponing several times, he finally agrees, and, being encouraged by the delegates seated next to him, rises and walks to the podium—

DR. BARROWS : And now, ladies and gentlemen... Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu monk of India...

VIVEKANANDA : *(closes eyes, prays in silence, then:)* Sisters and Brothers of America! ...

(The audience responds with great joy. Clapping and applause continues as if it will never stop! After full two minutes the applause slowly subsides. There is pin-drop silence, as everyone is eager to hear the next words of Vivekananda.)

VIVEKANANDA : Sisters and Brothers of America! It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions; and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people

of all classes and sects. My thanks also to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far off nations may well claim the honour of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept *all* religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is everyday repeated by millions of human beings: *'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'*

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: *'Whoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me.'* Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilizations and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the *same* goal. (*Thunderous applause.*)

NARRATOR:

: Vivekananda's mission of spreading the message of his Master formally began with the World Parliament of Religions. He then travelled to the various cities of America. Then he went to England. When he returned to India, he received a hero's welcome. He visited the West a second time also. Several Vedanta Centres were started in India and in many cities of the West. Swamiji also started the Ramakrishna Mission in India for the service of the people. He established the Ramakrishna Monastery for the training of the monks. Both are located at Belur, near Calcutta.

Swamiji gave the message of Vedanta. He gave the Ultimate Truth that really everything is spiritually One. He saw God in everyone and everything and served them. He inspired his brother-monks, disciples, and all to serve people, and in this way to attain liberation for one's self also.



Ancient Egypt and India—Some Parallels

DR. S. K. BALASUBRAMANIAN

Serious attempts to discover common roots of races and religions are small welcome steps towards realizing a global society. The author, from Pune in Maharashtra, has here applied his interpretative talent to point to some interesting similarities among the Egyptians, Iranians and Indians.

Ancient Egypt is a monumental testimony to prehistoric human ingenuity. Its artifacts, the pyramids, the myriad temples and statues, have survived the rough ravages of time. It was the foundation for much of ancient Greek greatness and had influenced Judaism and Christianity. The modern science of Chemistry owed its name to Egypt which was known as Kemi in the southern regions and as Khemi in the northern regions. We owe our 365-day-year to these people. Due to the fortunate circumstance that the ancient Egyptians left a voluminous literature, we understand their religion and customs better than we do those of any other ancient people.

Still, we do not know who the Egyptians were, though we have their funerary monuments, records of their agriculture, and the massive temples and statuary of their gods and kings. The Egyptians traded with southern Europe, the Levant, Mesopotamia and Persia. India too was known to them, wherefrom they imported sandalwood. The eastern lands were known to them as 'Punt', written in hieroglyphics as PUN (the terminal 't' being the 'feminine ending for a foreign country'). *Punt*, interpreted as 'land of gods', is generally conceded as referring to India. The people of Punt were 'not unlike the Egyptians' in appearance.¹

In spite of the obvious leads, the relationship of the ancient Egyptians to the Vedic Hindus had not been investigated. In fact the word *Punt* itself could be the Sanskrit word *punīt*, meaning holy. Hindustan was the holy land of the gods for the Egyptians.

The Hindu demonology encompassed several people of South West Asia: Persians, Assyrians, Mesopotamians and perhaps the Egyptians. The Persian followers of Prophet Zoroaster were a breakaway community of the Vedic Hindus. They followed one of the four Vedas: the *Atharvaṇa*. Bhṛgu, son of Varuṇa, the Hindu rain-god, is supposed to have been the leader of this group of uncompromising monotheists. The relationship between the two systems had been studied by Jatin Mohan Chatterjee (*Atharvan Zarathustra—The Foremost Prophet*, published by the Parsi Zoroastrian Assoc., Calcutta, 1971), and is generally considered adversarial. The Hindus called all these people by the collective name of *asura*, which was taken up by them as a badge of honour and identity. The Assyrians were led by their King, Ashurbanipal, which name in Sanskrit would mean 'the protector (*pāla*) of the *Asura-Vāṇi* (the *Asura* Edict)'. The Mesopotamian epic *Gilgamesh* is said to contain the flood episode found in the *Matsya-Purāṇa*. The semitic Mesopotamian King Sargon was a *Daitya*, since his successor and grandson was named Naram Sin, after the Hindu Man-lion *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, Narasimha.

1. The facts cited in this article are taken from the book, *The Splendour that was Egypt*, by Margaret A. Murray; Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd., London, 1964; xx, footnote; pp. 21, 33.

Because of their close contacts through several centuries, I would group the prehistoric Greeks and the Egyptians together and call them Greco-Egyptian. There is evidence of contact between the Indo-Aryans and the people in the Tiber valley where the Roman Empire took root and flourished. In the prehistoric Bronze Age (between 2000-1000 BC) Rome was populated by a people coming from the northern regions, the Danube area. 'They spoke an Indo-European dialect, cremated their dead and were mainly agriculturists and stock farmers.' These people were called by the archeologists the *Terra-moricoli*. In a later period, around 1000 BC, another people, called the Villanovans, lived in this area. They also cremated their dead and preserved the ashes in bronze urns carrying the *swastika* emblem.²

The Purāṇic *Asuras* belonged to two classes: the *Daityas* and the *Dānavas*. The Persians, Mesopotamians and Assyrians were the *Daityas*, whereas the Greco-Egyptians were the *Dānavas*. The Macedonian Greeks led by Alexander were known in Sanskrit literature as *Yavanas* (from *Ionian*). The Greeks were called *Danaos* in Latin. The Romans even had a derogatory proverb about them: '*Timeo Danaos et donos ferentes*', which meant, 'Beware of the gift-bearing Greek', recalling the Trojan Horse episode of Homer's epic. Purāṇic *Dānavas* were the descendants of the daughter of Dakṣa, Danu. The Hindu gods were the *Ādityas*, children Aditi, another daughter of Dakṣa. These two and Diti, the mother of the *Daityas*, were married to the sage Kāśyapa, and their children were therefore step-brothers, with the usual rivalry and jealousy associated with such relationship. The river Danube in Europe owed its name to Danu.

The first *Dānava* was Vṛṣaparva, whose daughter Śarmiṣṭha was married to Yayāti. His son by Devayāni was Yadu. The *Yehudis*, or the Jews, were also descended from Yadu. The Egyptian king was called *pharaoh*, derived from *parva* (of Vṛṣaparva). The title *pharaoh*, having been derived from Śarmiṣṭha's side, led to matrilineal descent for the Egyptian kings. The succession was from mother to daughter, the heiress's husband becoming the Pharaoh. The practice led to some bizarre customs: A Pharaoh stood to lose his status as king on his wife's death, and so would marry his daughter, the heiress, to retain his kingship.

The Hindu story of Yayāti also fits with a Jewish version: Abraham begot Isaac through Sarah, and Ishmael through the dark skinned slave woman Hagar. Isaac was the predecessor of the Jews, and Ishmael of the Arabs, who later became Muslims. Yayāti got Yadu through Devayāni and the Egyptian predecessor through Śarmiṣṭha who was serving Devayāni as a maidservant. Yadu became the Patriarch of the Hindu Yādavas and the Hebrew *Yehudis*; and another son of Yayāti, Puru, was the Paurushashpa of the Zoroastrians. With his father's blessing, Puru acquired an empire before Yadu did.

The preceptor of Vṛṣaparva was Śukrācārya, who appears in Greek literature as Socrates. The two scholars shared a common fate: death by poisoned wine. Socrates was forced to drink wine mixed with hemlock poison, while Śukrācārya drank wine laced with the ashes of Kacha, the son of Brhaspati. He died a gory death to facilitate the revival of Kacha from out of his body.

The Egyptian alphabet was called Hieroglyphs, or 'words of God', similar to the Sanskrit alphabet being called the *Devanāgarī* script.³

2. Fig. 1. *The Grandeur that was Rome*, by J. C. Stobart, revised by Maguiness and Scullard; Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd., London, 1961; pp. 11-12.

3. *The Splendour that was Egypt*, p. 195.

The Egyptian King, or Pharaoh, was considered God. The Queen Hatshepsut, who ruled as a Pharaoh in the second intermediary period (dynasty 18), put it down bluntly: 'I am the God: The Beginning of Existence'.⁴ As the king was divinity incarnate himself, he was also offered as a sacrifice to God in times of famine or other difficulty. The method of extracting his life was by cobra-bite. Notice of the imminent death was served on the King by a priest of the God of Death, Anubis, wearing the Jackal mask. The process recalls the death of King Parīkṣit following a curse by a Brāhmin ascetic: 'The hour had come when the King was to give up his body and attain absolute freedom. Now true to the prediction, Takṣa appeared and poured his venom into the King's body which was dissolved back into the elements from whence it came.' In later days the ritual sacrifice of the pharaohs was made symbolically by offering a flour model of the kings.

The Christian belief that Jesus Christ, as the King of the Jews, was a sacrificial offering to God could be traced to the Egyptian practice.

The vulture and the cobra were worshipped by the pharaohs. The former was visualized as a passive protective goddess, and the latter as an aggressive or offensive protector. The Snake and the Eagle adorned the King's crown. They are both well known objects of worship for the Hindus. Hathor was a cow-goddess, ubiquitously encompassing many other gods and goddesses, like the Hindu Kāmadhenu as the universal mother goddess.

The pharaohs wore two crowns symbolizing their suzerainty over the two parts of Egypt—the southern upper (up the Nile) Egypt, and the northern lower Egypt.

The *Daitya* Mahābali in Hindu mythology was the ruler of the two dimensional Kingdom.

The sun god Re corresponds to our Ravi and was the God of the Kings. Every other god, including Osiris and Horus, was considered his incarnation. The names of all the gods carried the suffix 'Re' to show their derivation from and relation to him. One of the titles of the pharaohs was 'Son of Re', similar to the *Sūryavamśī Ikṣvāku* title of the dynasty into which Rama was born. Re was worshipped as the pyramidal stone at Yun (Heliopolis in Greek). In spite of all his overwhelming greatness, Re was considered a simpleton, and the mythologies surrounding him were slightly derogatory. Thus Re-worship resembles Śiva worship in India.

The Egyptian ritualistic temple-worship is similar to that of the present day Hindus. The God was awakened in the morning with a hymn and, following a ritual bath, was decorated with robes and crowns and offered his morning meal. He heard petitions and prayers of supplicants in a courtyard. After a 'siesta' there was an evening audiencé and a night meal. The God was then disrobed and sent to sleep. On special occasions the idol was taken out in a procession. The festivals were seasonal like the Hindu ones.

Burial customs of the Egyptians were markedly different from those of the Hindus. It might be that cremation was not possible in Egypt because of scarcity of firewood.

That part of the human being which survived death was called *Ka*, and it was believed to be an integral part of the gods and human beings. It is shown as a small man with upraised arms holding the hieroglyphic symbol for *Ka*. The word also

4. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

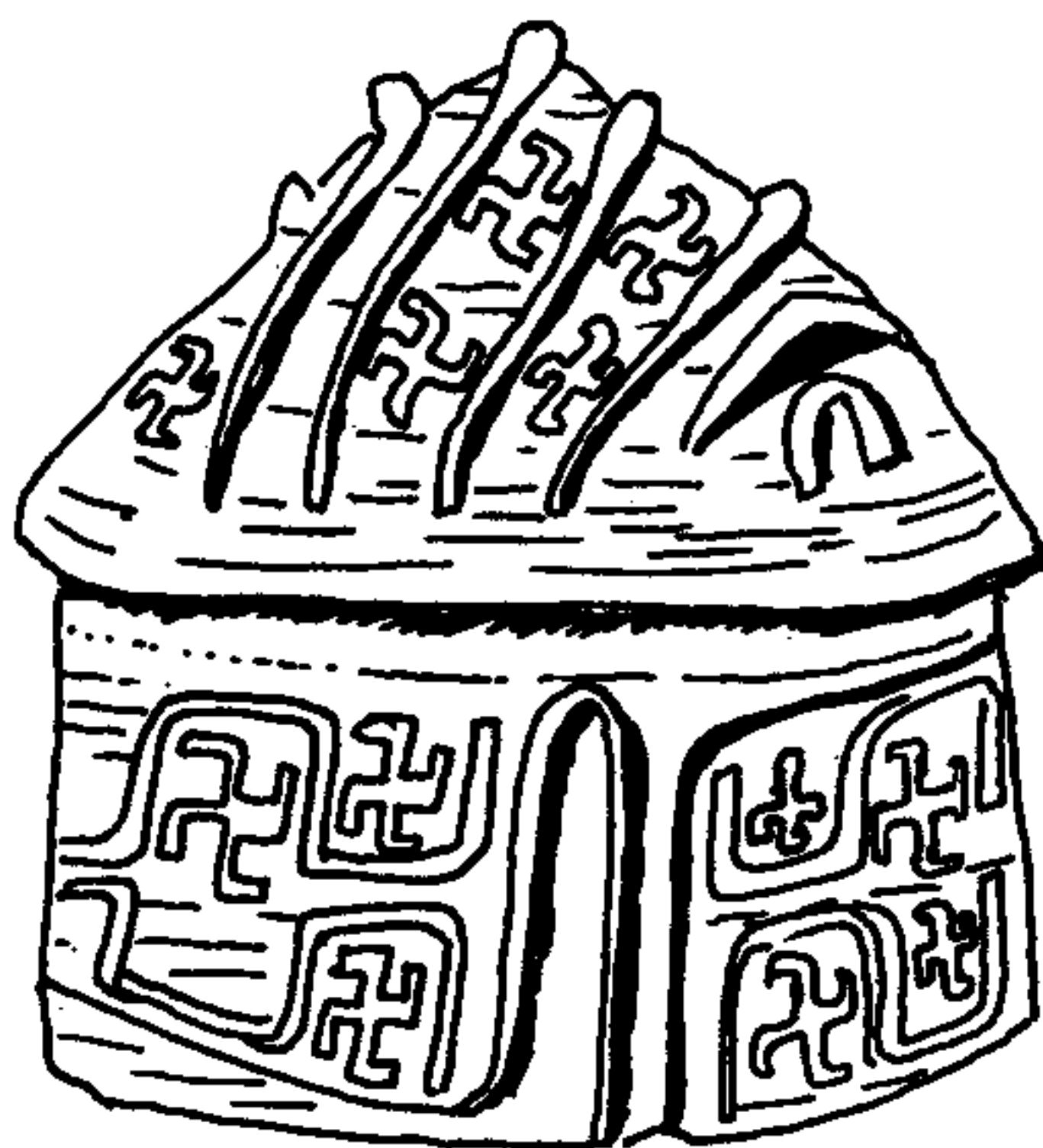


Fig. 1. Pre-Roman Urn from the Tiber valley for the storage of the ashes of the dead. ca. 1000 B.C. The Hindu Swastika is seen.

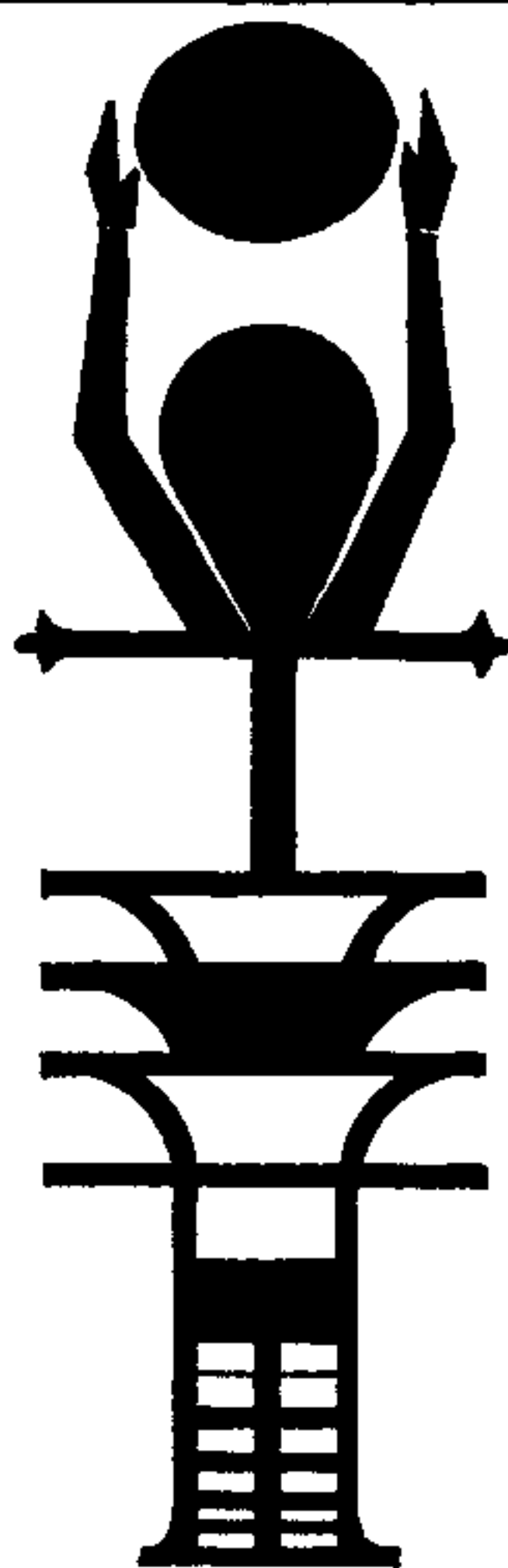


Fig. 2. Osiris Emblem of ancient Egypt. The rising *Ka* upholds the Sun. *Ka* itself rises out of five sheaths corresponding to the Upaniṣadic view.

meant food.⁵ Thus it corresponds to the outermost sheath of the Atman according to the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. In the early days food offerings were made at the cemeteries, but later, ritual offerings with singing of hymns was adopted for this purpose.

Osiris was the presiding Deity of the pharaohs. He was also the Judge who weighed the heart of the dead. His emblem was the rising *Ka* upholding the Sun from a series of four more figures. The picture is in total conformity with the Upaniṣadic hymn: 'This is His Head; this is His right side; this His left side; this the torso; here is the tail fixed.' And again, 'This *Puruṣa* and the One in the Sun, they are one (as given below). After departing from this world He goes beyond the *ātman* of Food; then the *ātman* of *Prāṇa*; then the *ātman* of *Manomaya*; then of *Vijñānamaya*; and finally of *Ānandamaya*.' The five sheaths in the Osiris figure correspond to the Upaniṣadic view. (Fig. 2.; cf. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, *Brahmānanda-valli*, *anuvāka* 8)

Another point of coincidence between the two systems is the belief in reincarnation. 'The Egyptians were the first who asserted that the soul of man is immortal and, when the body perishes, it enters into some other animal, constantly springing into existence; and when it passes through different kinds of terrestrial, marine and aerial beings, it again enters the body of man.'⁶

Like the Hindus, the Egyptians also believed in the trinity of divine hypostases. Their idea was considered by H. H. Wilson (*Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* bk. 1, Ch. 2, fn. 1) as 'more perplexed and unsatisfactory' than that of the Hindus, which is 'most original as well as most methodical and systematic in form.'

5. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

6. *Ibid.*, Herodotus quoted on p. 130; see fig. 2, plate xxiii after p. 70.

The Egyptian Sun-God Re was supposed to die at dusk everyday and traverse the nether world in the company of seven celestials in a boat to be reborn at the next dawn. The Hindus believe that the Sun is attacked at the time of *sandhyā* (dusk) by terrific fiends, called *Mandehas*, with the intent to swallow him. The fiends are scattered by the *Gāyatrī*-sanctified waters offered by the *Brāhmins* as part of their evening prayers. The demons die at dawn and get revived at dusk to renew their attack on the Sun. The Egyptian Sun-God is surrounded by seven minor celestials compared to the Hindu *Nava-graha* (nine planets).

The first Egyptian pharaoh was Narmer Menes, corresponding to the Hindu Manu. He was *Narmer*—beloved of men. He was the first mortal king; the earlier ones were thought of as divine. He diverted the course of the Nile. Some of the Egyptian names are easily understood as Sanskrit-based. Thus the name of the pharaoh of the middle kingdom, Amon-em-hat, could be from *Amon-Mahat*. The early anti-establishment King Khufu could be a modification of *Kaśipu* (*Hiranya Kaśipu*, the *Daitya*). His son was Khafra (*Prahlāda*?). The King Akhenathan was a monotheist believing in a single God—the Sun-God. The negro kingdom south of Egypt was called the Kush, and to the northeast was Levant. These names could be derived from *Kuṣa* and *Lava*, the sons of Rama. The Sphinx is a distortion of the Sanskrit *sinha* (lion). So is the Egyptian word *Simbel*. The man-lion is common to the mythologies of Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Hindus.

The Egyptians had a weakness for wine just as the early Hindu gods and the Vedic Aryans loved the *soma* juice. When wine could not be had, beer from malted barley was substituted. Even women were addicted to it. One lady is quoted to have

said animatedly: 'I shall love to be drunk!'⁷ However, the Egyptians did not worship fire.

Some of the ancient Egyptian monuments can be understood in the perspective of Hindu mythology. Thus the four colossal rockcut statues at Abu Simbel represent the four sons of the King Daśaratha of the Ikṣvāku dynasty and were appropriately called those of Rameses-II (of the 19th dynasty). The location of the statues at Abu Simbel is also significant. On the cornice above the statues stand diminutive dogheaded baboons facing east, and they were believed to worship the sun at dawn. The association of the monkey species with the statues accords well with Indian mythology.

The Hindu mythological story of the Ganga fits the factual situation on the banks of the Nile more closely than it does our holy river. The Ganga is the divine river brought down to the earth by Bhagīratha to redeem the souls of the dead sons of his ancestor Sāgara. Śiva agreed to break the force of the waterfall over his head and release the river in a steady stream. But it is the Nile, not the Ganga, which flows through the valley of the dead, or the necropolis, littered with graves even up to the mountainside hollows.

The divine river (Ganga), in an ever playful mood, inundated the *āśrama* of the sage Jahnu and carried away the materials he had collected for his *yajña*, or sacrifice. Enraged, the Sage took up the river in the palms of his hands and swallowed her. The river disappeared, and Bhagīratha, faced with the prospect of failure in his hard work, begged the Sage for merciful forgiveness. The ṛṣi relented and released the river in a small trickle from his ears. There are, however, not many physical features of our river Ganga

to correspond with this story.

In contrast, cascading down to the plains the Nile disappears into a papyrus swamp, called the Sudd, 600 miles long, and reappears as a tame river at the other end with crystal clear waters. All along her course are strewn monuments which accord well with Hindu mythology. The town of Karnak stands at about 22° latitude corresponding to the Tropic of Cancer. The remains of a glorious sun-temple are scattered about in this town. At a slightly lower latitude on India's eastern coast is located the Sun-temple at Konark. The town names are similar and are derived from Sanskrit (*kona* + *arka*, sun-at-an-angle).

Flowing through the mountain gorges full of the remains of the sons of Sāgara, and past the colossal seated-statues of the sons of Daśaratha, and through the town dedicated to the Sun-God, the holy river washes the feet of the man-lion near the pyramid-shaped temple of Śiva and merges into the Mediterranean.

Only the pyramid does not fit into Hindu mythology at first glance. However, we have to note that the Śiva temple at Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu is in the form of a pyramid mounted on a square plinth accommodating the *garbha-grha* (sanctum). The Sun-temple at Konark is also pyramid-topped. Since the Mayan people of Central America also built pyramid-shaped temples for the Sun, we have to infer a common but as yet un-understood concept behind all these structures.

The comparisons made here raise a tantalizing question about the Hindu past. Was Hinduism a worldwide religion once, from which the major religions of the world drew inspiration? We can only pose the question: the answer has to come from archeology.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 87.



PRACTICAL VEDANTA

FORGIVENESS IS A HERO'S VIRTUE

The Maratha soldiers of Bajirao Peshva surrounded the troops of the Nizam on all sides. All the supply routes of the Nizam were closed. In the meanwhile the Moslem festival of Muharram approached. Surrounded by the enemy for a long time, the Nizam and his men were on the verge of dying of starvation. Finding no other recourse, the Nizam wrote a letter to the Peshva: 'Should we starve even on a festive day? We have heard that the Peshva is a great hero, possessed of a great heart too. Would he ever attack a starving enemy?'

The Peshva showed the letter of the Nizam to his eight commanders for their opinions, and all of them replied that it would not be wise on the part of the Peshva to show mercy to the Nizam. The Leader then said to his commanders, 'A Maratha is a hero and a human being at the same time. Whereas the duty of a hero is to fight against his enemy, the nature of humanity is to offer food to a starving man, even if he be an enemy.' Thus, under his order, cartloads of foodstuffs were sent to the Nizam.

DIGNITY OF LABOUR

One day Napoleon Bonaparte went out with his consort for an evening walk. While passing through a narrow street he saw a woodcutter coming from the opposite direction with a load of wood on his head. When the man came close to them Napoleon signed to his Lady to make way, as he himself also moved to the side to allow the man to pass.

The consort, who was of royal descent, could not quite understand or accept this act of her husband. Sharply she said, 'The man didn't show any courtesy to us, still you make way for such a rustic!' Gravely Napoleon said to her, 'My dear, you don't know the dignity of the toil, that is why you consider labour inferior to wealth. Remember, respect for labour is greater than respect for royalty.'

Reviews and Notices

SUFISM: A DICTIONARY WITH PROFILES OF SAINT POETS, by T.C. Rastogi; Sterling Publications, Pvt. Ltd., L-10, Green Park Extension, New Delhi, 110 016; 1990; pp. 110, Rs. 125/-

Essentials of Islamic mysticism are woven into Sufism, and strands of Sufi thoughts are interwoven beautifully into Persian and Urdu literature. Sufism produced a galaxy of poets who viewed God as Absolute Beauty and Absolute Love. Their poetry with profoundly sublime ideas has been over the centuries providing aesthetic pleasure and spiritual illumination. But the major constraint on lovers of Sufi poetry is language. Here an admirable attempt is made by the learned author to remove this constraint, by giving a concise dictionary of Persian and Urdu terms. The first part of the book gives literal and spiritual meanings of the beautiful, pleasant-sounding words used in Sufi poetry. As stated by the author in the Preface, these terms are used in the congregation of almost all the Sufi Orders in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and other places.

The second part of the book is devoted to six saint-poets: Omar Khayyam, Hafiz and Rumi, belonging to the Persian-speaking

belt; Sarmad, Chandrabhan Brahman (both associated with Dara Shikoh) and Beidil—hailing from India. Lives of these saints are appraisingly vignettted with the help of available references and their poetries are critically looked at. It is a sheer pleasure to read their lives and the excerpts of their lofty poetries—translated into English, brimming over with Love of God. A brief introduction to the essentials of Sufism preceeds the lives of these poets. There are references from various publications.

Swami Vivekananda had said, 'The Sufis are hardly to be distinguished from the Hindus, their thought has become permeated by ours.' Perusal of this book brings out the fact of coalescence of Islamic and Hindu mysticism. The Vedantic *Tat Tvam Asi* (Thou Art That) and *Aham Brahma Asmi* (I am Brahman), and the Sufi's ecstatic utterance, *Anal Haqq*, point out to no distinct poles. We should be thankful to the author for providing us a dictionary of the terms, and such a comprehensive review of the poetries of these saints with their subtleties and sublimities.

The printing and get-up of the book are excellent.

Dr. Chetana Mandavia
Rajkot

Preaching Sri Ramakrishna.?

(Continued from page 215)

preach. If we maintain alertness regarding this matter, and do preaching work with great enthusiasm as a part of our activities, then it will bring us nothing but good. The blessings of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji will be upon us.

Now, if we can conduct ourselves keeping in mind their words, maintaining our

loyalty to them, our words will carry weight and people will also be benefited. Needless to mention, we too will get benefit in the process. There is no doubt about it. I pray to the Holy Trio that they may always keep us alert in this regard. May they shower their blessings upon us so that we may never take a wrong step or talk irrelevantly.

