

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LX

NOVEMBER, 1955

No. II



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य चरान्निबोधत ।”

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

AMBROSIA

Shri Ramakrishna asked me and Rakhal (Swami Brahmananda) to go for alms (as monks do). ‘Food obtained by begging’, he would often say, ‘is very sacred.’ One day I and Rakhal went out to beg. Before we started, Shri Ramakrishna put in a few words of caution, ‘Some will call you names, some again will bless you, some others will offer you money; you are to accept them all without demur.’ At the very first house we were chased by a gentleman, who shouted to us, ‘Robust tramps, aren’t you ashamed of begging? Can’t you earn your bread by honest work?’ Rakhal Maharaj got afraid, at which I told him, ‘Why get afraid? Did not Master forewarn us?’ Next, we came across a lady. On seeing us she said, ‘What makes you beg like this, my boys? What’s the idea?’ We explained our purpose. She was very glad

and gave us a four-anna bit. She looked up prayerfully to the Sun-god and blessed us from the core of her heart, ‘May God fulfil your noble ideal, for which you have renounced the world.’ Later on many people gave us rice, money, etc. Returning, we handed over everything to Shri Ramakrishna and, being asked, narrated the whole experience to him. When he heard the story of the lady he observed, ‘Yes, she is right. I am connected with the Sun-god. Once I suffered from a peculiar headache (?). All on a sudden a man appeared and said, “It is not headache; you have connection with the Sun-god”, and disappeared. I called Hriday to me and asked him to seek out the man. He searched for him up to the main gate but did not find any trace of him.’ Shri Ramakrishna then told us, it was a supernatural affair.

DOES VEDĀNTA ACCEPT EVOLUTION?—III

MĀYĀ AND EVOLUTION

BY THE EDITOR

Māyā is *prakṛiti*, nature, including all beings, consciousness, and what is known in religion as spirit. It is both manifest and unmanifest, a process and continuum. It is conscious in the sense of having direct intuition of itself as the continuum and process, which appears to the intelligence of man as a systematic working out of a definite plan. This is evident in each part and particle as well as in the whole of it. As the ever-present continuum, it is the full-blown perfection, where consciousness and existence are one. As the process it is an unfolding intuition of innate glory and richness, and an exhibition to the minds and senses of men, when they appear on the stage. Small bits of the world present themselves to man—to his senses directly in the present, taking which as data he proceeds backward and forward to the past and the future and combining the results finds Māyā to be a process. In his intuition time appears as a whole, as an eternal present; and the process is changed into the continuum.

Māyā creates man, who in turn discovers it and goes back to it. The emergent man merges into what he thinks Māyā to be. Māyā, as we have seen, is all that we can conceive of and many more besides. So Māyā is man as well. Here Māyā is acting the man, as it is acting many more parts at the same time. Whatever man does and thinks are really being done by Māyā. Man in the state of emergence, as well as before and after that, is nothing but Māyā. His body, sense-organs, mind, intellect, egoism—everything is Māyā. His life and death are emergence and immergence within it. As long as his sense of individuality lasts, he appears to himself as distinct from it; but in reality he is not—he is it. And Māyā being a whole, he is the whole of it. Still his indivi-

duality being his own thinking, he is and becomes whatever he thinks himself to be. But his thinking should be a true identification with the object of thought. I cannot be a god or a beast because I cannot rid myself of my identification with man. This is because the becoming takes place according to laws that are inexorable. Within the region of individuation everything occurs according to laws and with definite ends in view.

It is as individuals within the framework of changing time and fixed space that growth and decay and all kinds of transformation take place; and the observer of all that is man. Wonderful developments from nebula to gods and demi-gods might have taken place, but had there been no man to observe, record, and reflect, all these would have been useless, as good as not to have existed. So Māyā's emergence as man is the acme of creation. Man has given meaning, purpose, and content to Māyā. Man has given recognition to Māyā. Its process and exhibition are for him. Man is not vain when he makes philosophy assert that he is the measure of all things, that Māyā's glory and richness, power and plenitude, are meant as offerings to him, are objects to adore and worship him with. The incessant whirling of nebulae and globes, the merry dances of electrons round the nuclei, the bursting forth of dead elements into life of bewildering variety, all the sounds, colours, tastes, smells and touches, and all their entrances and exits, have but one end in view—Māyā's insatiable craving that its pet child, man, enjoys the Mother's properties. It is not poetry, no wishful thinking. If once it is granted that Māyā is not inanimate, not a blind force, that all these systematic developments according to definite laws, are not chance products, that the

moderns' chaos is really cosmos appearing chaotic because all laws have not been discovered, then these throes must have a grand purpose other than the mere births of particulars and individuals. The bud's blossoming forth into flowers and then into fruits and seeds, and again into new plants is no doubt a joyous unfolding, having even a compulsion of existence; but that cannot be the whole explanation. For they all being there in Māyā, there is no necessity for an unfoldment for its own sake; and in fact it is no unfoldment to it, the whole process being within it. Unfoldment, process, creation—all have a reference to something outside of them—an observer is necessary. A mere outside observer, however, will not do, for he, in his greed, may spoil or destroy it. To give nourishment is no doubt a purpose. As long as there is hunger it must be satisfied. So plants subsist on the five elements, animals on plants, higher animals on lower. A legitimate purpose is thus served.

But thinking, reflecting man is not satisfied with the service of this essentially selfish and temporary purpose. A grand project and undertaking must have a sublime end in view; the end must be commensurate to the means. A beautiful fragrant flower attracts a worm, which spoils it; a worldly man, who tears it off the plant and adorns a vase; a poet, who without touching the flower enjoys its grace and beauty and shares with others the sentiment it evoked; a philosopher who enjoys the beauty, understands the process, plan, and purpose, and gets at the source, the Māyā, the conscious creator-continuum. It is this discovery of Māyā and its riches by man that seems to be the ultimate end of these tireless projections and withdrawals. When this is done, Māyā's purpose is served and Māyā withdraws the man unto itself. The individual man's play too is done; the supreme end is attained. But what is the ultimate result? The continuum remains the same as ever, as if the projection and subsidence of the flower and the man with his knowledge and wisdom never existed at all. This is evolution.

II

This individual, we say, has a soul, which has to realize itself. What do we understand by this statement? What is an individual? What is his soul? What is meant by realization? This individuality, though it is generally held, is neither due to nor of the body. It is the knowledge and feeling of 'I'-ness that abides as the centre of experience, in which the body along with environments and many other factors, no doubt, play their parts. If we include the body in individuality, we are to include the environments also, for it is the action and reaction of these two, together with others, that produce experience. And in each experience, stored in the individuality, the contributions of both of them are discernible. Yet we do not include the environments in the individuality, though the reasons for inclusion or exclusion of both are the same. The individuality is variable, is constantly increasing and decreasing; it is a circle with an expanding and contracting circumference. Therefore to grasp such a figure the centre alone is our clue. And this centre is the 'I'-ness, its only invariable constant. If this is true then the individual does not possess a soul but is the soul, is consciousness, which is revealed in two forms: as it actually is and as it wants to be, as the real and as the ideal. Realization means the identification of the real with the ideal. It is an affair within consciousness, which is not found in the external world. We might possess external things, we cannot be or become them. They remain loosely attached to us, they do not enter our being. They are adjuncts to, not constituents of, our being. So our growth or evolution does not depend on them. Both the real and the ideal being consciousness, which is 'I'-ness, it is no growth, no incorporation of something extraneous. There is the all-encompassing consciousness the 'I'-ness is not other than that nor a broken piece thereof, for it is indivisible; but a mere notion of limitation without actual limitation. For the very consciousness of the expanding ideal up to its culmination in the infinite consciousness is seen

and felt interpenetrating this 'I'-ness. What is implied in yesterday's ideal becoming today's real is nothing but a change in the notion. In one vast consciousness, 'I'-ness created the yesterday's ideal, with which it identifies itself today. This creation of the ideal and the real in one basic consciousness is the doing of the 'I'-ness, which is all the while that very basic consciousness. It is its own choice and craving and fulfilment to be the individual as well as the universal. It wills and becomes a point, it desires to go back to the universal and it is there and that. The nature of self-awareness is that. Limitations in consciousness are due to will, which is uncaused. Breaking of limitations is again the work of the will.

A little deeper elucidation is necessary. The ultimate Vedāntic formula is consciousness = 'I'-ness = will, Brahman = Atman = Māyā. In the Vedānta proper Māyā is not explicitly identified with Brahman; but it is implicitly so. The explicit statement comes from the Tantras, whose approach is from the world to Brahman, just the reverse of Vedānta. But the conclusion is the same. Vedānta explains appearance, *sṛiṣṭi*, through Māyā without admitting the latter as an entity. But it takes care to refute that it is a non-entity. This mystery of Māyā's hovering between entity and non-entity can only be solved if Māyā is identified with will, which holds exactly the same relation with consciousness as Māyā with Brahman. The Upaniṣadic *sisṛikṣā*, the will to create, is Brahman and no other, for there is nothing aught in or beside Brahman. But the will has a reference to creation, maintenance, and destruction of the universe, all of which, as we have seen, are false with reference to the continuum, for nothing new has been added or subtracted. Hence our formula is truly Vedāntic.

When there is no creation, the 'I'-ness and will remain in consciousness as consciousness but without complete mergence into consciousness, in which case there would be no more *sṛiṣṭi*, which Vedānta does not accept—Shankara has admitted the eternity of the collective Māyā, and we have already referred to the *Shvetāshvatara*. As long as there is

appearance, the three are felt by the philosophers as the above identity, the highest experience being of the universal, i.e. as the Universal consciousness = 'I'-ness = will. At this stage also the question of evolution does not arise—here everything is *pūrṇa*, full and complete; this is the integral vision of the continuum, the Mahā-māyā. Coming nearer to our world-experience and therefore farther away from the absolute truth, individuation takes place. The *pūrṇa*, the whole, appears as fragmented. There are now many individual consciousness = 'I'-nesses = wills, with bewildering attractions and repulsions, all in strict accordance with laws as far as discovered. Individuals being fragments of a whole are born with a sense of want, with cravings and urges for the fulfilment of wants. Thus starts evolution where will is the predominant factor—will as consciousness (*sattva*, the subject, the knower-enjoyer), will as power (*rajas*, *prāṇa*), will as mass (*tamas*, objects of knowledge and enjoyment). As long as there is one individual in the vast universe, suffering from the sense of individuation or separation, evolution and involution will continue. As the universal and the particular are relative terms one cannot exist without the other. So the funny sport goes on eternally. And therefore the process of evolution-involution, which is ordinarily known as evolution, continues *ad infinitum*. The Vedānta philosophy accepts evolution in this sense. So far as the world of objects is concerned it is the same as the scientist's evolution, buttressed by the philosopher's. The evolution of the subjects is psychological as well as philosophical. The growth and decay of individuals, as we have said, is what we call evolution.

III

Between the absolute particular, by which we mean that beyond which we cannot go, and the universal there are infinite grades of particulars, wider or narrower, subtler or grosser. We have seen individuals have a centre but their circumferences are variable, sometimes growing wider, sometimes becoming narrower.

But the location of the centres may be in one body or one group or groups of bodies. A man is called an individual and so is a cell of his body. The cell has its own life and death with its tragedy and comedy as much as the man. Nor is individuality limited to organisms only. It extends to the collective or group nouns as well, to families, clans, races, nations, etc., to genuses, species, and sub-species, having common interests and characteristics, which, by fusions, co-operations, or competitions, may expand or contract or even die out.

This is important. A cell is an individual. It bifurcates and becomes two and in course of time, many. They might or might not be mutually helpful, they may even be hostile. As long as they are mutually helpful they have common interests, which are advanced by their friendly activities, in the absence of which all or most of them may die. In such cases the colony of cells should be regarded as one whole for they behave just as an individual unit; their life and death, growth and decay, depending on their collective life. This help may be direct or indirect. The cells forming a particular organ of a body are directly helpful to one another; but the cells of different organs of the same body are indirectly helpful, inasmuch as without the joint actions of the cells of one organ the body may suffer, thus affecting the cells of other organs. Similarly a family may be and should be considered to be a whole or an individual or a unit if the members are so interdependent as to make their lives impossible in hostile environments without the active co-operation of all the members. In all new settlements of human groups the same truth holds good. In wider circles of clans, races, etc., if we study their histories, it is equally evident.

The physical growth and decay is not the only reason for the acceptance of this theory. In human societies, nations, etc., there are other reasons, according to some, greater and more cogent reasons for this. A group of families living a particular kind of life for a number of centuries under peculiar geographical conditions develop a certain individuality

which becomes their inheritance and which sticks to them so fast that when change of circumstances takes place many, unable to adjust themselves, die out; and the survivors, in spite of adjustments, show wonderful tenacity in hugging to many of the old characteristics, which distinguish them easily from others.

This peculiarity is evident in the physical features of the individuals, in their mental traits, moral bends, as well as in their social and religious rites and customs. This peculiarity shapes their history and destiny to a very great extent. This inheritance being acquired, having been based on actions and reactions of groups and environments, may be changed in course of millenniums and centuries or in much shorter times under terrible stress and strain and by dint of tremendous will powers, for man's capacity for adjustment is almost unlimited. Still whatever changes take place are due to the combined co-operative actions and reactions not merely of the individuals but mainly of the groups and environments. And when a new adjustment is effected by a group of men, it becomes part and parcel of their inheritance in a few centuries. So in the long run all groups of people, large or small, have their individuality, and in no period of history can we find any group devoid of such peculiar traits.

The development of such human groups is indicated not merely by their physique but more truly by the culture and civilization they build up, by their material prosperity no doubt, but more so by their arts and crafts, literature and philosophy, moral excellences and spiritual attainments. Each small group has its own peculiarities in all these spheres. When a few of them come together and enter, through trade and commerce and other social intercourse, into one another's life, fusion takes place, resulting in the formation of a larger group with a complex culture and civilization; and if the history of mankind is any guide to its destiny it can safely be predicted, unless annihilation of the race is deliberately planned and executed, that the human race is going to

have one all-comprehensive group with innumerable varying sub-groups. But catastrophes do occur and human history has many interludes of dark ages. Whether ultimate fusion of races and nations takes place or not smaller groups with especial traits would always be there. Each such group and each larger group consisting of many smaller ones must be considered to have a soul, having a distinct history and destiny, its past, present, and future, which impart richness and variety to the otherwise monotonous life of the unity.

What we generally call an individual soul is after all an arbitrary limitation of the one universal soul. In the case of such individuals, the physical body is but one of the factors, is but a medium through which the action and reaction of the soul and its environments take place. What contributes to the growth or decay of the individual is the behaviour of the soul with relation to the circumstances, the affection of the consciousness constituting the individual—the body is but an intermediary. Nor is it obligatory that consciousness should always be affected through the medium of one body only. What is necessary for the affection, for the unfoldment of the richness within consciousness, is the interaction between consciousness as the subject and consciousness as the object, between the enjoyer and the enjoyable. And this criterion is fulfilled in the case of groups as much as the individuals. Any intelligent foreigner visiting any country or region, any race or clan cannot fail to be impressed by the collective enjoyment and suffering, growth and decay, efforts and undertakings of its creative urge. To deny individuality or a soul to such groups is belying facts. If John's Johnhood is unforgettable and lasts from birth to death, so is Englishman's nationhood. In our zeal for *camaraderie* we may try to do away with distinctions, which will however, be always there, our efforts notwithstanding. For love, amity, and goodwill it is not necessary. Nations and races have their individuality in the same way and in the same sense as the individuals.

IV

Except in the case of rare geniuses, who are hardly one in a million, we do not notice the fulfilment of a purpose in individual souls. They appear to come and go, living the same monotonous lives of the average man, just like the growth, decay, and death of a plant. And yet we do not deny them a soul. It is because the average millions keep up a type, which, from the point of view of humanity, is more important than the development of a particular individual. In the case of men like Buddha and Christ their individual attainments are less important than what their lives did and still do for the human race. Their immortality lies in the hearts, in the aspirations and endeavours, of the succeeding generations of mankind. And if nations, races, and humanity have no souls, for whom have they lived and suffered and died? Not surely for the frail bodies, even all put together, the clods of earth as they are. The individuals serve a purpose, but it is a twofold purpose, one is his own and the other, more lasting and important, is of the group he belongs to; and the group, similarly, serves a double purpose, its own and that of the larger group, one whose unit it is. So with the formation of wider groups greater purposes are fulfilled until in the highest generalization, the Being as a whole is re-attained, where endeavours find themselves realized in the eternal fulfilment and perfection.

To deny souls to groups of men of various grades, we must have a very peculiar notion of them. What is this abiding unity in man in the midst of the ever-changing body and mind that we call his soul? A growing unbroken urge and aspiration for the more, which remains unfulfilled in most cases and which, but for the compelling circumstances, is hardly noticeable in most cases. A soul is nothing if it is not this. Nothing abides in man but this hankering for the more. And this is fulfilled only when it becomes the whole, when there remain no more objects outside it. As the individual scales the walls of reality higher and higher he has to take rest in several landing platforms,

which are these wider and wider groups, with which he finds himself identified. Just as the individual is nothing but this urge, which grows by identification with wider and wider groups, so these groups, which are urges and nothing more, grow by similar identifications. Bodies, single or in groups, do not grow in the sense of fulfilment of urges. They do help this up to a limit, beyond which they cannot grow; but the urges grow and grow without stopping till they cover the whole Being. The bodies are subject to the physical laws of growth and decay, as the minds are to the mental laws. But this eternal urge for the more continues transcending all barriers and limitations. This is the individual's soul, his 'I'; as much as of the groups. The individual's body drops off but the urge persists, takes new suitable bodies and continues the march. Similarly the racial or national soul marches on, old generations, which are its bodies, drop off, new generations come and continue the work of improvement. It is the continuance and improvement of the urge that matters and not the births and deaths of bodies or generations.

Sometimes it so happens that after a long waiting there is a sudden jump of progress, when, unless the race or nation is well prepared, a schism takes place, some accepting the new evolute and the majority rejecting it. Those who accept it form a new group and start functioning as any other. The acceptance and rejection of Jesus Christ represent such a phenomenon. The Christian soul is born and is progressing. But the non-accepting Jews continue functioning and are throwing up their typical personalities in their secular and spiritual spheres. They too supply a note in the grand symphony, but the same note is not always predominant, nor is it desirable if there be no modulation. In the case of the Vedics in India it is different. Rāmas, Kṛṣṇas, Buddhas are born and are accepted by the people. They are incorporated in the nation's life, knowingly and deliberately by the followers, and indirectly and by sufferance by others.

V

The evolution of the individual runs on two lines, the physical and the mental, each of which is subdivided into two, gross and fine. This division is made for the convenience of analysis; otherwise, as we have seen, it is one continuous unfoldment. The gross physical development pertains to that of everything except the nerves; the development of the nervous system, especially according to yogic system, belongs to the fine category. This latter kind of growth has a direct connection with the mental development. The gross mental development concerns itself with thinking, feeling, willing, and intuiting, in which external objects are directly involved; whereas the finer type consists of the advancement of the faculties themselves, leading to the discovery, control, and direction of the how and why of the functions, culminating in the unfoldment of that higher type of intuition in which merge all processes of mentations, as in one eternal presence, where the distinction between the external and the internal is lost in the continuum. This leads us but to one inevitable conclusion regarding the process and purpose of evolution: starting with the individual consciousness of separation from, and a desire for reunion with, the world of objects, evolution reveals the almost inconceivable richness of the ultimate reality, terminating itself in the all-engulfing sameness of the infinite, whence it broke away. To this return consummation or even to a distant approach to it all individuals are not entitled. It is, however, the privilege, earned by hard labour and much suffering in previous births, of the few, in whom the whole process of evolution described above is perceptible; the average men and women content themselves with the gross developments only.

In the case of group evolutions also all the above categories and processes are equally discernible. Here too one or two out of innumerable groups and grades succeed in reaching the top, others continue to struggle, some wither away as unopened buds. And a clan, race, or nation is said to have reached the peak of its

evolution when the type of culture and civilization is accepted by it and is, as a matter of course, striven after by the majority; it is not necessary, nor is it possible, that the ideal be realized to perfection by all the members in a generation. When this stage is reached the race or nation dies, if, in the meantime, the ideal has not grown or been transformed. But the gigantic whirl of cosmic evolution goes on in its own speed and tension, to the sure end, which is being fulfilled, every moment of existence, to the seeing eye of a Kṛiṣṇa, a Caitanya, or a Ramakrishna.

So evolution is individualistic, by which term we are not only to understand strictly individual things and persons but also various groups, large and small. It is evident to the fragmentary vision and not to the integral, where the process is turned into the continuum. It is actuated by a purpose, which is the exhibition of the inner richness of Māyā. This purpose is a stage to be realized by individuals, but an accomplished fact to the whole reality. And this purpose runs throughout the manifested universe. There is no place whatever for chance in the process of evolution. The modern criticism of the law of causation does not touch the Vedāntic conception. And the extolling of indeterminism and statistics is due to lack of data sufficient to establish a principle and not because there is no principle involved in the facts and events. This assertion is

justified by the fact that where data are available—and it is a fairly big chunk of reality—the plan and purpose are clearly discernible. This factor of purposiveness in evolution implies that the basic reality is consciousness; but the consciousness is not discursive but intuitive, not indirect but direct and of the essence of the reality. This introduces a revolutionary change in the whole theory of evolution. It is not that the chased fish goes on trying all sorts of tricks to save its life and at last hits on developing wings and becomes a bird; but that the urge of the flying bird latent in the fish compelled the fleeing fish to take recourse to the development of wings under proper conditions and according to strict laws. This is the significance of the dictum *sarvasya sarvātmakatvam*, 'all are inherent in each'. This is what is meant by creation according to stored-up tendencies and knowledge, *yathā-karma yathā-shrutam*. What is most important to note is that evolution is limited to appearances and has no bearing on the continuum as a whole, far less on the basic consciousness abstracted from the basic will. Evolution is *Māyic*, within *Māyā* or the basic will, Gauḍapāda had no necessity for *Māyā*; but Śaṅkara, who had to build a philosophical system, who had to explain and not explain away the universe and the scriptures, had; and he has accepted evolution within the four corners of *Māyā*.

THE PROCESS OF HISTORY

BY DR. P. S. SASTRI

It is distressing to find deep prejudices in the garb of rational concepts in almost all philosophers of history. The account of Herodotus has a Persian bias, following the tradition of Hecateus, Hellanicus, and Xanthus. Later Greeks were dissatisfied with him for his excessive impartiality and for his aloofness

from internal strife and political machinations. Thucydides was one of the first to emphasize the influence of moral ideas on the historical process. The idea of pan-hellenism comes out forcefully in Isocrates, while the principles of morality have become the standards of historical and political evaluation in Socrates and Plato.

We have also theological and metaphysical theories of history. One view speaks of the fall of man from a primitive state of innocence and consoles him with the ideas of the Saviour and Judgement as the necessary completion of the process. A slight variant of the view treats the earlier history of man as a period preparatory to the receiving of the revelation, while the future is moving towards the day of the judgement. A third view treats every stage in human history as a moment in the Universal Spirit. All these three views believe that the process obeys a definite and clearly cognizable plan, that this plan obeys a certain moralistic theory or religious faith. On this view historical research should give place to theological and metaphysical speculations.

The sociological theories, on the other, hold that each civilization embodies the development of a specific human power or virtue which is realized in some one civilization. Thus Polybius argued that there was an indefinite repetition of the various stages between monarchy and mob-rule. Pareto held that the forms of government were always associated with the nature of the individuals. The development of human intellect, the changes in the feelings of men, or the means of production are given by others as determining the process of history. The first two views classify men and constitutions, and then relate the one to the other. The analyses of certain societies and the opinions arrived at from the study of a certain section of humanity constitute the basis of all these five theories. These are universalized. Yet they declare that they are all empirical and that they adhere to ethical neutrality. They also declare that they justify the evolutionary claim, which compels them to the belief in the idea of progress. Having admitted the reality of progress and of a goal to this, they hold to the inevitable movement of the process towards the goal. In other words their resolve to eschew metaphysics overtakes them and they fall back on the metaphysical problems of necessity, change, purpose, and ideal.

The problem of human history has an existence only when we admit the reality of

finite centres of consciousness. But is the welfare of man the ultimate purpose of the universe? By man every one means himself; and by universe everyone refers to his own circle of friends, or locality, or state, or the country. Conscious selves are part creators of history, because they bring with them creativeness and novelty to the world. This is necessitated by the relations of persons and it is not found anywhere else outside of the human situation. The fact that necessitates it is the moral order which is devoid of any meaning in the absence of conscious selves and which is only one of the factors. Hence to speak of man and his destiny as the central fact of the universe is to go back to the anthropocentric view of the early Christians. Neo-Platonism was humble enough to admit that man is a part of the phenomena in which appears divine efficiency, while the patristic philosophy of Christianity delineated the historical development of man purely in the light of its principle of predestination. In the hands of St. Augustine the position of every individual was fixed long ago by a divine decree; and the historical states are said to embody the conflict between the realm of God and that of the devil. With the Saviour six periods of history were over, and the seven is to commence on the day of judgement. Unfortunately there are stages even after the advent of Christ. The process of history is not the story of the solar system with seven ages named after the alleged planets.

Rousseau extended to history the deist view. Man, he admits, is endowed with the power of becoming perfect. The development of this natural gift is both a duty and a natural necessity. Since this development has been misguided and misled, he pleads that history must be begun anew. This can be achieved by giving up the unnatural pride in the intellect and by falling back on the natural state of feeling. From the false relations of society man must move towards his pure self. Later thinkers ignored this valuable emphasis on feeling, and built their theories on the idea of development. Herder saw that human history is a natural, involuntary unfolding of the

essential nature of man conceived in the light of his natural endowments and relations. Kant rightly saw that Rousseau's primitive paradise gives us a man who has no ethical consciousness. Kant therefore saw that the progress of history lies not in a growth of human happiness, not even in a general degeneration of man, but in a struggle towards ethical perfection. This struggle is to be lived by every individual. Accordingly the Kantian view of the progress of history is a progress achieved by every individual. It is a perfection similar to the one that comes to an individual when he has undergone four kinds of *sādhanas* outlined by Śaṅkara in his introduction to the *Brahma-Sūtras*. And Schopenhauer was correct in implying the truth that there is no progress in history, since the forms of activity necessitated by the eternal values always remain substantially the same; and to speak of progress in these forms is to be blind to their substance or meaning.

The first systematic attempt to make the nature of the so-called development intelligible was made by Hegel. Introducing the dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, Hegel began explaining the process. The thesis is said to produce the antithesis. It is better to remember that it is our critical attitude which interprets things in this light of one thing producing its contradictory or contrary. Any struggle between two mutually exclusive contending entities will tend to the elimination of the one or the submerging of the one in the other. Sometimes such struggles have ended in nothing in the history of human thought. Even the synthesis embodies a new idea altogether, for it is something like an emergent evolute breathing creativeness and novelty. To this Hegelian dialectic contradiction is vital. At times contradiction appears as negation; and in such cases the Hegelian has a tendency to avoid it and see its implicit positive meaning in the final synthesis. And because we deliberately seek to avoid negation, we develop the view that thesis and antithesis should be superseded in the synthesis. This is termed development only at the expense of rejecting contradiction or

adhyāsa which is vital to life; for in the synthesis all contradiction is supposed to disappear. And Hegel admits that contradiction is at the very basis of life, of the dialectic.

Hegel argued for the identity of Reality with Thought. The world outside, is not different from the Mind, has the character of Thought. This, when misinterpreted badly, will give rise to materialism. In this misinterpretation we get a Reality which has a material or physical character; and if this is identical with Mind, then Mind too is material in essence. Thus the dialectical rationalism of Hegel has given rise to dialectical materialism of Marx. Rejecting the panlogism of Hegel that the world is determined by the laws of dialectical logic, Marx and Engels rejected the spiritual nature of man. And the dialectic has become a notorious instrument of prediction. What cannot be explained is explained away. But nothing can be and should be explained away since phase of the historic process is characterized by creativeness and novelty. The conclusion forces on us the view that the earthly history of man is not the universal history, and that the process has its origin in something that is outside time. This something is the Nirguṇa Brahman, the ground of all appearances. It is Brahman as immanent in the seeming process that relates the finite beings and things to that which is beyond time.

This Brahman which is the ground of all existence has within it the temporal or historic process. Brahman itself does not change. As against this contention we have Hegelians maintaining the self-unfolding of the Absolute Idea in a wealth of change. Though this Idea is given an ontological status, we do not know how this Idea gets itself related 'to the practical means of its own realisation' in the individual minds. The living individual minds cannot believe that their end is the same as that of the process. Their efforts are futile if they do not cohere in the evolution of the Idea. The realization of the higher values of Sat, Cit, and Ānanda in and as individual selves is an impossibility on this theory.

If history embodies the development of the mind of humanity, what is this mind? Whose is it? Who is it? Where can we find it? If the individual efforts are independent of the evolution of the Idea, how can there be any concord between the two? If there is no difference, all the individual minds or selves are real, and the Idea is not an Idea. The mind of humanity or the World-Spirit is a great metaphor. If it stands for our higher values, it becomes the most concrete of all our objects of thought and ends of action. The realization of these values appears to be an essential element of the nature of time. But human capacities are not developed to the full in a single day; nor is every individual able to realize maximum satisfaction in his own life. The development that we are made to find is the work of various generations wherein each succeeding generation takes the thread from the point at which it was left by its predecessor. And a strict development has to exclude all repetition. But a process like that of a straight line is usually dull. But in human history we do find repetitions and novelty going together. These repetitions are enacted in the lives of concrete individuals. And that which realizes anything of value is the soul; and it does so by its own efforts. That which we realize is

not an alien factor as a consequence; it can be our own inmost self.

If the Absolute assumes human forms only to pass through those phenomena that are necessary to it, it cannot afford to guide the reciprocal actions of human beings and lead them to its realization of itself. Why should the Absolute Spirit that has taken the trouble of unfolding itself, try to realize itself? If the human individual is not a substantial self, if it is only an appearance of the Absolute, to whom is it an appearance? It cannot be for the Absolute, since the Absolute is said to appear in and through the human form. It must be an appearance to some other real entity. This is an unhappy conclusion for a good metaphysic of the Spirit. This state of affairs arises from the faulty position of predicating the process to the Absolute. The Absolute has no need to undergo any process. It is, as the *Shvetāshvatara* said, *sākṣī, cetā, kevala,* and *nirguṇa*.

The great error of the various philosophies of history is the implicit assumption that the philosopher can understand the secret of the universe. He may achieve everything else. But this is beyond his intellect. These philosophies are after all modern versions of the ancient cosmological arguments dealing with creation.

GOD OR NO GOD

BY SHRI J. M. GANGULI

If a question like the above be posed it is doubtful how many of us will feel like answering it assertively one way or the other. I mean how many will have the confidence coming from within out of some kind of perceptual realization, direct or indirect, and not out of a mere dead-load dependence on some traditional faith inculcated in the mind when it was young and immature. Yet, all the same, whatever doubts and questions may

lurk in the mind we keep them buried and hidden within, because we are forbidden often by some scriptural or priestly authority to wag our tongue on them, and also because we are generally afraid of a public censure and even of the Almighty's wrath.

Not only we must hold back all disquieting questions and discontented thoughts, but we must also keep on saying 'amen' to all that has been said before and all that is repeated

from pulpits morning and evening. We must spell and pronounce His name in a particular way; we must accept the calendar date and year of His incarnation as told to us; we must believe the story of when and how and for what purpose He made His creation: What made Him incarnate Himself on this earth; why redemption of His creatures, who are so prone to tempting sins which surround them, was considered necessary at a certain epoch and not earlier or later—and all the many other things to which our ears get tuned before we learn to look around and perceive things, which are not knitted in the tale that had kept us lulled. At forgetful moments, under some excited impulse, or thrilled by something the sublimity or the stupendity of which amazes us, we call out 'O Mighty Atom, O Fearful Force, O Inflexible Law', a name other than God or some scriptural equivalent of It, but then immediately we are denounced as infidels and atheists. How many such cries indeed have thus been child! How many inner voices inspired by subtle realizations have been choked, leaving us poorer and further away from the Real!

Those who presume to admonish and correct us hardly have any more light to throw on our confusion than what could be laboriously extracted from a book or from a heresay about someone's conception of the Unknown Hand, that someone being generally a mythological figure or one susceptible to ecstatic impulses. Like a person drifting in a current and catching at a straw, people failing to cross the threshold of mystery or unable to fit into an understanding whole pieces of detached experiences, may readily cock up their ears to any consoling sermon to comfort their disquiet mind. And when they feel a natural chilly nervousness at the dark uncertainties behind the screen of death they naturally incline on anything that is grounded on traditional faith and that is said to be an all-saving cover in an unknown land.

But does one get any warmth of feeling, any thrilling stimulation in the mind, when just accepting and swallowing a tasteless pill,

or when surrendering inquiring thoughts and imagination to postulates and dogmas? The intoxication of a drink, or the forced adherence to a heresay evidence, does not last long, unless repeated to the extent of callousness and insensibility. To shut all doors and windows for keeping off the streaking light from outside, which pulsates and waves the mind, can only cause greater uneasiness and dark fear. The doubts and questions, which are provoked by external light and air, may well rock the mind into a proper and harmonious setting with the environment from which there is no escape. Our placements therein may then appear in a fuller perspective, and the apparent breaks and discontinuities in the order of things, which frighten and upset us, may even disappear.

Let man stand face to face with himself and all that appears before him, unloaded of tradition, unchained to any dogmatic faith, and unburdened of all convenient hypotheses, which seek to cover crevasses and blind spots in our vision. He will then see and appreciate more the diverse manifestations which point to some Great Cause at the core. And he will then perhaps be truly inspired to make a direct approach to It, and to collect all his self to span the gap that yawns between.

Outside, under the dome of the blue sky, with exhilarating cross breeze blowing, rather than inside a stuffy arched hall dimly candle-lighted; away in the open landscape with the mind free to react and respond to it, and not in the heat of a congregation when struggling to catch the words flowing down from a platform and forcing them down into a mind that has been scared by what has been told about the consequences of unbelieving—yes, it is there that we come in better perceptual consciousness of the Unknown. There we see and hear and feel things, which are more real about that Mysterious Unknown than when we sit tight and passive in a theological class, where shadows and images are pictured and dressed and named and given a garland of shining attributes which may strike our imagination and fit nicely within the four corners

of our comprehension. Indeed, we see things outside, altogether different from what is assiduously sought to be impressed on us by the doctrinaires to keep us within their order and also to preserve their doctrines unimpaired by any fickleness of our mental weather. Even before we had opened our eyes and looked around, our imagination, our evolutionary mental reactions, and our individual impulsive responsiveness to environmental influences, were griped, collected, and put into casks made to certain specification. The Real, the Infinite, the Absolute remains remote because of our being thus shut off from Its direct shine and warmth. But, if perchance we leak out from our cask we are stupefied by what we see and experience outside. Hardly anything here in its technicolour, any manifestation in its diversity, any magnitude in its shape or dimension, bears a resemblance to what was told and depicted to us.

We are at once astonished at our vanity in giving a human form to the formless Expanse that evolves, creates, and holds the universe of our experience! And what unchecked credulity it was to give qualitative attributes to the Force or whatever that be which seems to operate on that Expanse! They may make it agreeable and even consoling to the mind when it is distressed, but perhaps all of them falsify themselves on close scrutiny and hard comparison with cold facts and solid realities.

'He is all-merciful'—But the solid rocks encrusting the earth bear no imprint of softness; they give no stable hold, no assured quarter to anyone. 'Rise, roll on awhile and then fall on me again'—is the stern edict written on them for all time and for all persons, weak or strong. The shrieks and cries, which come piercingly even through shouts of drunken revelry at all hours and which chill human feelings in the dark coldness of midnight, leave no gap for any voice of mercy to steal through from any corner. There he is shivering in the night on a cold pavement; behind, from a dimly-lighted room,

tearing sobs come a little girl stands there with her hand stretched for alms, her eyes blind, for what fault one cannot guess from her obvious innocence.

I hurry on to escape from this dreadful place. I hear music and song ahead and feel better; but across the road the dead gloominess of a cemetery throws dark shadows on the dazzling café opposite. Away I go, turning now to left and then to right. I keep my eyes away from a hospital, for I am sick of sights of pain and suffering. Suddenly a car from behind dashes along and curves in into a palace gate with a doctor and a nurse seated inside. Do then disease, bereavement, misery and unhappiness, and all the rest of the appendages of life also obey no halting orders of a king's guard?

How violently and impatiently the mind rebels when in the midst of this terrible scene of pain, woe, and suffering all around, sermons and hymns continue to burden on 'Thou art merciful'. There is no trace of mercy on the rock-cut continuous lines which gird the world, and which only obey their own inscrutable laws. Moreover, the worried call for mercy, which has been heard through all ages, and which all the time echoes and reverberates from all walls and ceilings, whether of straw or of mosaic, implies ever-existing pain, suffering, and misery. It is the helpless and the condemned who pray for mercy.

Another thing which theology generally overlooks is that a call for mercy comes from a feeling that either God is external to the world of our suffering and altogether dissociated from the relentless agencies operating here, though He may hold the power to overrule them if moved by our appeals and tears; or He is Himself the agency that works in everything, in good or bad, but who may be disposed to do favours to those who earnestly submit themselves to Him.

In the first case, if He is a Creator, He is at least not the Creator of our world, nor is He the force that works and controls it. That introduces the idea of another Creator, who

may also be approachable and appealable. If not and if for an escape from the relentless government of this Creator, the one to whom we pray, has to be looked up to, it would be un-understandable why our Saviour, who is possessed of exercisable power over the other Creator and over us, lets evil forces act here to our fall and our suffering? Why does He not clear the world of all sins and evils, and take us direct under His benevolent care?

On the second hypothesis too we do not stand on clear ground free from inconsistencies. How can He be the Creator of evils and temptations, which lay us low, of the mire of woes from which there is no 'get-up'? 'No', they say, 'It is your fault if you fall victim to temptation and do evil and suffer from their inevitable consequences. You had the free will to choose your way. You could well have taken the path to Heaven and not the downward one to Hell.'

Apart from easing the problem, free will is another hypothesis, which imposed on the other, makes confusion worse confounded. If we all had the same and similar free will then under similar circumstances there could be no reason for our having different inclinations and our taking various paths. Our reactions to similar things and similar environment should have been the same. If we have behaved differently, as of course we did and do, it could either be due to our free will being differently controlled and directed by powers beyond us or we were placed in dissimilar circumstances. That surely will not be allowed as it would mean reflection on God's impartiality. Free will has been interpolated into our consideration to hold Him clear above any responsibility for evil and for anybody's wrongdoing, but when considered deeply and analytically it stains Him no less with responsibility for our lot.

What were evil, sin, and temptation created for? And why were we made so weak and susceptible to them? Free will and conscience, which we are believed to be endowed with, are poor equipments in a

ceaseless battle with those dragons, as history of mankind shows.

'He is All-seeing.' Past, present, and future—all appear side by side on one screen under His glance. Why then when He could see how we would incline to evil and succumb to temptation, how we would swerve from the path of wisdom, in spite of our conscience and free will, did He throw us here, He whom we consider as All-knowing and All-benevolent?

Here again, like the attribute of the Merciful the attributes of All-seeing and All-benevolent shake on their foundation. These attributes, unreal as they are, only put a deeper cloak of mystery on the Mysterious and make our mind less clear for an image that may fall on it than when we put them aside and look at the Mystery directly from different angles and through its diverse working. But then I become a disbeliever, for I do not presume to shape and dress Him, as a child does its doll; for I do not find a suitable word in the dictionary which can be properly given to Him as a name. But is it really not ridiculous to prepare a few bouquets with qualities like mercy, benevolence, all-pervading vision, unlimited power, and the like, and fix them on His gigantic, unsurveyable breast?

Perhaps I become a greater believer when, instead, I watch His operations, His building and breaking, His creating and destroying, when I observe and study the physical rules and laws, which function within our experience, things which leave me staring and wondering at them, speechless and without an incentive to symbolize Him on an altar, or hold His potentialities within a few sentimental phrases? The mad effort to personify Him; the scholastic vanity to limit and refrigerate Him in the cold print of a scripture; and the enthusiastic feeling to humour Him with musical hymns—what can they mean to That which, to fulfil some gigantic purpose, rushes on and on, operating hard, rigid, and inexorable laws, hurling and sweeping, heaping and scattering, erecting and levelling, pro-

ducing and crushing these now, those then, and who knows what thereafter! It has no time to stop to rain drops of mercy on despair and agony, or to protect a rainbow of soft romantic colours on the horizon.

I am asked to meditate and concentrate. I sit under a tree, but how soon shifting hot sun turns and blazes on my face. My stomach craves for food, the tongue for water; eyes want sleep and paining limbs rest; and the slate I wash clean for an imprint of my meditations is stealthily obliterated by my mind with a revolving picture of things, which make me get up and pursue them. A rigid law-bound Force keeps me time-chained; day and night, a shower or a draught, decay and death, and the multifarious physical changes which tickle my senses and excite my feelings and emotions, all the time, rotate and revolve, come and go, uncontrollable even by the primordial Energy, which we suppose to have given the initial momentum to them. As I write my head is wheeling at terrific speed on the rim of the rotating earth, which at the same time is dashing round the sun, and with it is being hurled into the chaotic depths of space. No softness, no sympathetic consideration for my weak limbs, no time to breathe and rest, no still quietness for a moment's meditation.

How the morning red rose charms me; but, wait, I can see the creeping hands of inevitable wither nearing it as the sun inclines to the west. The glow of the dawn, smiling blue dome, the warm vigour of the day—ah! they know not how stony-heartedly they are held between the dark and cold jaws of a preceding and a following night. Life is socketed in death and decay, which close and put it out in strict obedience to a Law that is deaf to cries and entreaties. 'If such be our life and all that we know, what is then in them? How unbearable this world becomes! If there be no pity, no response to shrieks and sobs, how can we hold ourselves in pain, woe, and suffering? If hope gets no sand grain to stand on, no straw to grasp in despair how

is living possible, for don't we, in the midst of storm and gale, fog and chill, live on hope?'

Such wails come echoing and droning from all sides but get drowned and lost in the roar and whirl of the Cosmos. But who ever asked us to live on hope? It is indeed not in hope that life gets water to keep it green, but it is in hope that it finds seeds of death and decay. But I had better leave the romantic story of hope, its birth, growth, and decay for another day, so as to wind up my passing reflections on the conception of God through some imaginary attributes, which hardly correspond to realities. So many other thoughts come in a train when pondering over Him, but the point that is important to consider is if we should not go below the surface of commonplace ideas and notions about Him in the light of experiences gained and judgement rectified, to know and understand Him as He is. There should and could be no stubborn theorizing, no one-way-path direction, no this-and-not-that attitude in this respect.

This-and-not-that cannot be true to One who must be both and all. Good and bad, soft and hard, sin and virtue, kind and cruel—cannot be different to One, in whom they must all be engulfed. I and He must refer to the Same, who displays varied reflections and projects different images, but holds them all. I see His hand in the mighty surging of oceans; I hear His voice in the music of the spheres; I perceive His wrath in lightning-thunder; I dread to think of His purpose when a volcano erupts in the night and the flaming lava swallows innocent sleeping creatures; I feel the cold sharpness of His steel hand when the tree of life is felled, when love-bound relations are torn to pieces, hopes and emotions are trampled down, and family ceilings are blown off by cries and wails.

And I see Him too in the sparkle of rainbow, in the shy blush of the morning star, in the softness of green valley, in the care-free blossoming of wild flowers, in the innocence

of children at play; and all around in the thrill of budding life, and in the vibrations of my own intertwined feelings and emotions.

Stupefied and bewildered I close my eyes, and what do I see inside? A dotless, markless, colourless Void, where there is no motion, no activity, no life, no death, and no I or He. When I look back to locate and preserve my 'I', I find that it has dwindled away and is no more. And when I look forward there is a

blankness where there is nothing, save myself, infinitely extended, dreaming the whole story of physical experiences and of imaginary Creation. Me and Me alone; no one but Me to give attributes to, to name and personify, to blame and to praise, to pray to and to cry for. Kind or cruel, free or law-bound; large or small; Creator or Destructor, Cause or Effect—it is Me and nothing but Me, unifying and holding all and sundry in one Great One.

THE SAMVARGA VIDYĀ

(A TECHNIQUE OF MIND FIXATION FOR A JÑĀNA YOGI)

BY DR. CHINMOY CHATTERJEE

The problem of mind fixation for a Jñāna Yogī who does not believe in any symbolic worship of God which might prove to be an aid for mind concentration, is not comprehensible to modern mind. Like a Karma Yogī he does not believe in doing *niṣkāma-karma*, dispassionate work, without having the least desire to enjoy the results of his work. The Jñāna Yogī's path is entirely different from that of the followers of the path of Bhakti or Karma. From the very start, he adopts different means and practices for the concentration of his mind on the formless Self and makes persistent efforts to forget the dual existence. But how is this possible? Can the gross human mind be given an impetus towards the subtlest of the subtle? It seems to be paradoxical. But the Upaniṣads, which embody esoteric spiritual knowledge, prescribe as many as twenty *Vidyās* or techniques, which throw some light on this point. The great commentator Śaṅkara has characterized these *Vidyās* as *Upāsana-vidhi*. They are advanced branches of knowledge to be pursued after the completion of the preliminary education for the realization of the Final Reality.

In every age of the thought and cultural life of India, gifted persons and Incarnations of God explained to the general mass the technique of attaining Divinity through Bhakti and Karma and did not throw much light on the ways and means adopted by the followers of the path of Jñāna. These, in later days, gave rise to various cults, which gradually helped the growth of sectarianism and narrowed the outlook of human mind. But the techniques prescribed in the Upaniṣads left the mind free to soar higher and higher up without any restriction. This was one of the reasons for the crystallization of the concept of universalism. Thoughts in the Upaniṣads have many facets and each of them helps the aspirants to extricate their mind from human limitations and bondages of various kinds. Let us examine one of these techniques in the present context.

The *Samvarga Vidyā*, which finds mention in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (4.3.1-8), prescribes *Vāyu* (air) in relation to *Prāṇa* (vital energy) as the medium for mind fixation. Śaṅkara in his introductory remarks, at the beginning of the Fourth Chapter, says, 'It has already been attributed that *Vāyu* or air

and *Prāṇa* (vital energy) are to be seen as parts of Brahman'.

The word *Vāyu* in the Upaniṣads carries a special significance. Because the Shruti in subsequent sentences describes *Vāyu* as the 'absorber of all' (implied in the term Samvarga) (*Ch. Up.* 4.3.1). But the deeper sense of the term had not been unfolded in the beginning. Śaṅkara also interprets the term as 'the external air' (*vāyurbāhyaḥ*). If its interpretation is confined to indicate 'external air' only, much of its spiritual value is lost. The Shruti has already stated that *Vāyu* is that 'subtle entity' which like ether, supports the earth. It has been described as the connecting link through which this world and the next and all beings are held together (*Bṛih. Up.*, 3.7.2). *Vāyu* has been meditated upon as the Self (*Ch. Up.*, 5.14.1), because of its affinity of attributes with the Supreme Self. It is the vital force (*prāṇa*) according to the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* (1.2.4). *Vāyu* has been called 'immortal, limitless, and undefined'. (*Bṛih. Up.*, 2.3.2., 2.3.3.) 'It is the Liberation (*mukti*). It is the diversity of individuals and the aggregate'. (*Bṛih. Up.*, 3.3.2.) The air is the inner Self of all beings, moving and stationary, according to the *Bṛihadāranyaka* (3.3.2). The *Aitareya Upaniṣad* defines *Vāyu* as *prajñātma*' (3.1.3). The *Vāyu*, according to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, is 'the Self-resplendent (*divya*), formless (*amūrta*), unoriginated (*aja*), pure, and all-pervading Being who is both within and without.' (2.2.)

Having thus described the attributes of the *Vāyu* the seers of the Final Reality asked the aspirants to meditate on the *Vāyu* and adopt it as a technique to give the mind a tendency towards Ātman, the Supreme Self. As a devotee (*bhakta*) makes persistent attempt to fix his mind upon a deity and concentrates on the all-pervading omnipotent character of the Being represented by the symbol, so the followers of the path of Jñāna are asked to take up *Vāyu*, a natural element, as an aid for a mental drill. Of all natural elements

Vāyu is suggested as an aid because of its close affinity with the Supreme Being.

Without entering into the controversy whether the unqualified Supreme Brahman can at all be qualified, let us assume Brahman as a qualified Being for the purpose of understanding the technique of the *Samvarga Vidya*. In many places in the Upaniṣads attempts have been made to qualify the unqualified Supreme Being—*Puruṣa*. It has been described as *akṣara*—immortal, without shadow, meaning formlessness, colourless, formless and omniscient. (*Pr. Up.*, 4.19.) To indicate the Unconditioned the Shruti has amply made use of the prefix 'nañ' (no) before all conceivable qualifying adjuncts as *asthūla*, *anānu*, *ashabda*, *arūpa*, *adrishya*, *avarṇa*, *amṛita*, *akāya*, and thus through the series of negations the Shruti indicates what is Brahman. In relation to these adjuncts *Vāyu* has also been described as self-resplendent, formless, unoriginated, pure and all-pervading Being who is both within and without, anterior both to life and mind. He transcends even the transcendent, unmanifested causal state of the Universe. (*Muṇḍaka Up.*, 2.1.2,3.) If the qualifying adjuncts to both *Vāyu* and Brahman are analysed it will be seen that there are several points of agreement and affinity. Apparently it seems *Vāyu* is nearer to the Supreme Brahman so far as the qualifying adjuncts are concerned, though actually it is not so. Therefore, for the beginners, *Vāyu* is suggested as the means for fixing the mind on the Supreme Being. The *Vāyu* is, as it were, the representation of the ultimate Reality.

Let us further examine the technique. The Shruti says that *Vāyu* is indeed the end of all or the absorber of all, implied in the phrase '*Vāyurvāva samvargaḥ*'. For when Fire goes out it goes into the air. When the sun goes down, it goes into the air (*Ch. Up.*, 4.3.1); when the moon goes down, it goes into the air. Śaṅkara, explaining the Shruti, says, 'When movement is caused by *Vāyu* then the sun is led by *Vāyu* when it sets. The disappearance of the sun at the time of

setting is caused by *Vāyu*, or at the time of final dissolution (*pralaya*) the sun and the moon losing their separate existence and form merge into *Vāyu* which is the cause of *tejas* (Fire principle).

Accepting *Vāyu* as an aid the Shruti goes on explaining the principle of absorption (*samvarga*) because the meditation on the *Vāyu* is not the aim of the technique. *Vāyu* in relation to *Prāṇa* (vital energy) is an aid to train up various senses of the aspirant, so that he may be fully absorbed in the Final Reality. That is the reason why *Vāyu* has been described as *samvarga*. The fact is, the all-absorbing character of *Vāyu* has to be meditated upon (*ato vāyu samvargaguna upāsva*)—(*Ch. Up.*, 4.3.2.) Śaṅkara explaining the all-comprehensive character of *Vāyu* says that for being an element of discarding, collecting together, and absorbing all, *Vāyu* has been called 'the all-absorbing element'. The Shruti while explaining this technique has taken the help of various natural phenomena, so that they could be easily meditated upon by the aspirant. Extrovert human mind which spreads over various objects of this manifested world through sense organs, has to be given an inward trend, so the Shruti could not avoid citing different types of examples from Nature, all leading to the same goal of absorption. It now applies the technique to the spiritual field.

The Shruti says *Prāṇa* (vital energy) is *samvarga*, absorber of all. Earlier it has been said, 'This vital force is air' (*Bṛih. Up.*, 3.1.5) and '*Vāyu* by becoming *Prāṇa*, vital force, entered into nose. (*Ait. Up.*, 1.2.4.) The Shruti therefore argues: as externally all objects of senses are absorbed by *Vāyu* so internally all senses merge into *Prāṇa*. It has been said, 'When a man sleeps speech goes into breath, so are sight, hearing, and mind. *Prāṇa* indeed consumes all.' (*Ch. Up.* 4.3.3.)

Explaining the process of absorption in terms of the inner life the Shruti takes the example of deep sleep and says that a man is said to be sleeping because he is gone (*apīta*) to his own (*svam*). In deep sleep

(*susupti*) the *Jīva* or the individual self is affected neither by vice nor by virtue, the heart becomes free from all miseries. (*Ch. Up.*, 6.8.1.) That stage of desirelessness of the individual self is the stage of Highest Bliss (*parama ānanda*).

The whole process of meditation becomes explicit with the interpretation of the term *svapiti* by the Shruti and the commentator. The *Samvarga Vidyā* aims at 'attaining one's self' or 'absorbing in one's self' by a particular technique of thought process that everything 'merges' into *Prāṇa* or the *Vāyu* when it is exhausted or extinguished. The Shruti has shown the principle of merging of an element into one—apparently taken to be the Final Reality—is common both in the external sphere of human activity through sense perception by direct contact with natural phenomena and in the internal mental and supermental sphere. Experiences in outer world is co-ordinated with the inner life so that the former might be helpful to the latter in meditating on abstract things.

The Shruti cautiously establishing common points of affinity between *Vāyu* and *Prāṇa* (vital energy) and explaining in its own way the apparently absorbing character of the two, says 'There are the two absorbers—air among the *devas* (those who shine forth) and *Prāṇa*—vital energy—among the senses. (*Ch. Up.*, 4.3.4.) To understand the principle of absorption examples of *Vāyu* and *Prāṇa* and their innate traits and faculties have been explained, so that one may, with these aids, comprehend the technique of absorption and trace out the Final Reality which absorbs all.

The Shruti is not satisfied with establishing identity of *Vāyu* with *Prāṇa* and explaining the all-absorbing character of the two. It takes each one of the internal and external sense organs of a human body and goes on establishing points of affinity with other objects of Nature, like *sūrya*, *candra*, *agni*, etc. For instance, in the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣad* it has been said that the sun rises from the vital force and also sets in it.

Shankara commenting on the Shruti says, 'Externally the sun rises from air, as the eye in the body from the vital force; and in the same air the sun sets in the evening and to the vital force a man goes to sleep. Here the underlying idea is to explain to an aspirant the unattached character of the sun; and as the sun is unattached so the vision of a man should have that characteristic. Because, the moment the mind of an aspirant gets stuck up in attachments experienced through sense organs, it loses the force of being elevated to a higher plane and of finally merging into Pure Consciousness. Here, in the Shruti the attributes of not being affected or contaminated by external visual impurities have been given to the sun and the transcendental Ātman alike because of their qualities of being unattached or untouched by the miseries of the world. The state of being unattached was to be achieved by the aspirant as a prerequisite to final absorption; so the Shruti prescribes a side-technique while explaining the *Samvarga Vidyā*.

The real aim of the *Samvarga vidyā* as a

whole is to attain Brahman modified by various terms (*lakṣaṇa brahman*), according to Shankara. The technique of meditation is to analyse and understand the principle of absorption both internally within the body and externally in the Nature outside. The technique seeks to emphasize that by constant cogitation on the principle of absorption both internally and externally the individual self comprising of sense organs, mind, and intellect ultimately gets absorbed in the Supreme Self. It is similar to the doctrine of realization of the Reality of the Vedantist. *Vāyu* (air) is one of the important constituents of creation, so it has been taken as the medium of explaining how the manifested universe emerges, as it were, from the modified Brahman and again becomes absorbed in It. Interpreting the manifested outer world according to the principle of absorption, the Shruti enters into inner spiritual life and applies the theory to explain the all-absorbing faculty of *Prāṇa*—the vital energy which has been identified by Shankara as *Sat* (True) Brahman (*Ch. Up., 4.10.5.*)

VIDYAPATI'S FAITH

BY PROF. RADHAKRISHNA CHOUDHARY

Vaiṣṇavism has been one of the most important cults of India, and its history goes back to hoary antiquity.¹ According to the Upaniṣads, God is the protector of all beings, is the lord of all, and dwells in the heart of every man; seeing Him as He is and everywhere, is eternal bliss, to be attained by contemplation on Him, and purification of the soul. This Upaniṣadic thought played an

important part in moulding the later religious doctrines and influenced the later thinkers. It is from here that the conception of the Supreme Spirit manifesting itself in various forms sprang up, and it resulted in the development of the theory of Avatāras or Divine Incarnations later on.² In the epic, Vāsudeva is the eternal soul of all souls. Pāṇini refers

² In the *Mahābhārata* and some of the Purāṇas, a number of Avatāras is mentioned, but an attempt at systematization is first made in the *Bhāgavata Purāna*, where there are three lists of Avatāras, of 22, 23, and 16 respectively. Pāla inscriptions refer to Varāha, Nṛsiṃha, Vāmana, and Parashurāma Avatāras. Jayadeva gives a list of ten Avatāras.

¹ R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, Vol. IV, pp. 1-124 (Poona, 1929). H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Early History of Vaiṣṇava Sect*. S. K. De, *Vaiṣṇavism*. S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*. R. P. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*.

to the Vāsudeva form of worship.³ It was a predominant form of religion in the North-western India, and even the Greeks adopted it, as is evident from the Besnagar Pillar Inscription.

In this form of religion an attempt was made to introduce religious reforms in the shape of repudiation of animal slaughter and inefficiency of sacrificial worship. The new religion came to be represented to have been identical with that taught in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The religious idea of devotion arose and received a definite shape when Vāsudeva revealed the *Gītā* to Arjuna.⁴ In the *Gītā* we find the earliest exposition of the Bhakti cult. It preached the eternity and indestructibility of the human soul. It insisted on concentration of mind, contentment, disinterested action, and freedom from all sins through highest knowledge. Bhagavān is the source and last resting place of the world and the man of passion should surrender himself to Him. The form shown to Arjuna by Kṛṣṇa is called Vaiṣṇava form (*rūpa*) and it appears that the association of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu had been accepted in the Epic period.

The Vaiṣṇavism as a cult was in full swing in Bengal in the twelfth century A.D., when Dhoyi, Umāpati, Govardhana, and Jayadeva composed many verses on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Most of these poems are now collected in Shṛīdhara-dāsa's *Saduktikarnāmrīta*. All these poets intensified the devotional strain of a class of mystics. Similar account is found in the Belva inscription of Bhojyavarman which refers to Kṛṣṇa as sporting with hundreds of Gopis.⁵ While Vaiṣṇavism was becoming a living force in Bengal, other parts of eastern India were busy discussing the minutest details of different sects of Hinduism and Buddhism. Mithilā, though a great centre of orthodox religion and culture, was not totally out of Vaiṣṇavite influence. A gloss over the hitherto discovered archaeological materials

gives us an insight into the prevailing religious belief. The images of Viṣṇu, Kamalāditya, Lakṣmī-nārāyaṇa, Garuḍa, etc. are greatest proofs of the fact that here also the people were acquainted with the Vaiṣṇavite thought. Jayadeva exercised a good deal of influence on the growth and development of Vaiṣṇava thought in Mithilā. *Pārijāta-harāṇa* of Umāpati is a drama on Kṛṣṇa's sport with the Gopis, and it was written in Mithilā in the first quarter of the fourteenth century.⁶ Jayadeva's influence on Umāpati is apparent beyond any shadow of doubt. Govindadatta's *Govindamānasollāsa* is another example of literature on Kṛṣṇa legend. Umāpati unleashed a force of Kṛṣṇa legend to be followed by other writers in literature. He paved the way for the future rich traditions of Maithili love poetry. There is no doubt that Vidyāpati was greatly indebted to Jayadeva and Umāpati. Vidyāpati's contemporary Vācaspati Mishra, in his *Tithinirṇaya*⁷ starts with an invocation of the highest being while most of his works are begun with an obeisance to Hari or Kṛṣṇa.⁸ Vardhamāna, in his *Danḍaviveka*, has also referred to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. All these point to the existence of a good amount of literary output on the Kṛṣṇa legend before the emergence of Vidyāpati on the scene.

Vidyāpati was not only aware of such rich heritage but was thoroughly conversant with the different ideals then preached. Kṛṣṇa legend became the vehicle of his poetic excellence. He was well acquainted with the

⁶ Grierson's Introduction in the J. B. O. R., Vol. III, Part I, pp. 22, 23: "The story is told in chapters 124-135 of the *Harivaṁsha* and somewhat different versions are given in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (V. 30-31) and in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (X. 59). He follows the *Harivaṁsha* account, departing from it in one particular, i.e. Kṛṣṇa's assistant in the fight with Indra was, according to him, not his son Pradyumna, but his friend Arjuna Dhananjaya. All the songs are in Maithili. Mithilā has for centuries been celebrated for the graceful lyrics. . . . and the most famous name is Vidyāpati whose songs were adopted by the Vaiṣṇava reformer Caitanya. . . ."

⁷ R. Mitra, *Notices*, V. p. 149, No. 1139.

⁸ P. V. Kane, *History of the Dharmashastras*, Vol. I, p. 401.

³ Pāṇini, IV. 3, 98; *Vide J.R.A.S.*, 1910, p. 168.

⁴ *Gītā*, VII. 19. Cf. *Om Namō Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*.

⁵ *Inscriptions of Bengal*, p. 19.

Vaiṣṇava religion. A cursory glance into his *Puruṣaparīkṣā* will acquaint the readers with a number of stray references about this sect. The reference to Mathurā⁹ and Dwārakā¹⁰ shows that these important religious places with their age-old Purāṇic traditions were known to him. Reference to Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa clearly indicates the prevalence of Viṣṇu form of worship.¹¹ In *Bhūparikramā*, he chooses Balarāma, elder brother of Kṛiṣṇa, as his hero.¹² All these clearly demonstrate his inclination. Even when he was completely free, he did not devote his energy in writing something original on Shiva or Shakti, rather he busied himself in copying the *Bhāgavata* with great care. His only solace must have been the fact that the copying of the manuscript would give him opportunity to refresh his association with the *Bhāgavata-līlā*. It will be evident from his poems also that whenever he wrote without any dictation from his masters, he wrote songs bearing on the Kṛiṣṇa-legend.

The Bhakti movement of the medieval age took its inspiration from the *Bhāgavata Purāna*. A host of reformers preached a thorough reform in the conventional form of worship because that was shaken to its foundation by the Islamic impact. The contemporary reformers influenced Vidyāpati.¹³ The Purāṇic influence brought *Kṛiṣṇa-līlā* on the forefront¹⁴ and the advent of Islam acted as a catalytic agent which brought the loose elements together and gave birth to Vaiṣṇava

poetry. On the basis of the *Bhāgavata* and the *Brahmavaivarta Purānas*, the conception of love was interpreted as a mode of play. It was supposed to symbolize the creative power, though to a rational mind it appears like an adventure into the uncharted future from the certainties of his past and present. The greatest defect was that it did not overcome the philosophy of illusion. The only difference was that old wine was now kept in a new bottle. The basis of medieval religious reform was *Kṛiṣṇa-līlā*. *Līlā* in the form of sports was first popularized by Jayadeva. Through *līlā* Rādhā-Kṛiṣṇa legend was brought down to the level of the people. The whole theory of love came to be based upon the concept as existed between the Gopis and Kṛiṣṇa. Grierson is of opinion that it dealt categorically with the relation of the soul to God under the form of love which Rādhā bore to Kṛiṣṇa.¹⁵ Here Rādhā represented the soul and Kṛiṣṇa the Deity.¹⁶ The immortality¹⁷ of Rādhā-Kṛiṣṇa songs is an eloquent expression of his (Vidyāpati's) Bhakti.¹⁸ By means of *Līlā-Bhakti*, Vidyāpati wishes to attain communion with Hari.

The feeling of devotion or *bhakti-rasa* comprises the following principal sentiments, viz. *shānta* or quiescent, *dāsyā* or relation of a servant, *sakhya* or friendly, *vātsalya* or filial, and *madhura* or sweet.¹⁹ The greatest depth of emotion is reached in the sweet sentiment. An intimate personal tie is established between Kṛiṣṇa and the devotee in this mental attitude. The *madhura* or *Shrīngāra-rasa* is pronounced to be sweetest in the Vaiṣṇava faith.²⁰ In this respect the Vaiṣṇava poets were indebted to Sanskrit literature. The sweet sentiment between man and woman was recognized as the dominant influence as

⁹ Grierson's ed. of *Puruṣaparīkṣā*, Tale 7.

¹⁰ Ibid., Tale 42.

¹¹ Ibid., Tales 36, 43, and p. 123.

¹² Had Vidyāpati been a strong believer in any other sect, he would have taken another character, of which there is no dearth in Indian legend, as his hero. This particular point may help us in ascertaining his actual and personal inclination, and if studied in the light of his copying the *Bhāgavata*, we are doubly sure on this point.

¹³ S. S. Dass, *Hindi Sāhitya* (Prayag, 1944), pp. 273-4. Cf. *Hindi Me Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya Ke Pratham Kavi*, p. 179; *Bhakti Kāvya Ke Pratham Bāve Kavi*, p. 180.

¹⁴ *Līlā* is *mokṣa—Līlāvattu kaivalyam; līlāyā sarvaṁ prayojanatvāt.*

¹⁵ Grierson, *Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁶ J.A.S.B. (1882, Part I), p. 29.

¹⁷ Beames, *Vidyapati and his Contemporaries*, p. 31.

¹⁸ Mitra-Mazumdar, *Vidyapati*, Song No. 855.

¹⁹ *Indian Historical Quarterly*, December, 1947, p. 278.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 281-2.

early as the Upaniṣads.²¹ *Shrīṅgāra-rasa* was regarded as capable of making the universe permeated by sweetness.²² Abhinavagupta, in his commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyashāstra* pointed out that love elicited a response in the heart of every living being. Vidyāpati took to *madhura-rasa* as it included all other *rasas*.²³ Love and sweetness were the remarkable features of his poetry and it is through these two things that God could be achieved. His Bhakti was based on *madhura-rasa*. It is to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa that he diverted his attention for everything and it was his belief that people could attain their object by pinning all faith on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Vidyāpati's ultimate faith is evinced by the fact that he, in his last age, returned to Hari for guidance, nay for deliverance. It was devoid of all rituals. His influence on later Vaiṣṇava literature would not have been so great had he been a poet of gross sensualism.²⁴ In *Caṇḍidāsa*, the erotic passions of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā play a very important part. As a poet of pleasure, as Rabindranath called him, Vidyāpati in his early youth wrote entirely secular lyrics, no doubt, but his study of the Purāṇa and other Vaiṣṇava literature enabled him to identify himself with the spirit of the time. As a court poet he must have written for the pleasure of his masters, but there are also poems without *bhanitās* where the *tīlā* has been sung and if not all, at least these songs epitomize his Vaiṣṇavite leanings.²⁵

Vidyāpati believed in the unity of the Godhead. His belief in the Goddess is evident from his invocation to the Goddess of energy. He did not bother his mind with the problem of the origin of the Goddess. He conceived of Shakti as the nourisher and sustainer.

²¹ Ibid. Cf. *Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. 3. 21. For Vidyāpati's indebtedness to Upaniṣads, see writer's forthcoming paper, 'Vidyāpati's Philosophy.'

²² *Agni Purāṇa*, Ch. 339. 11.

²³ S. K. Chakravarti, *Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, p. 139.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 210, 247; Cf. C. R. Das, *Kāvyer Kathā*, pp. 36, 40.

²⁵ About 195 such poems on *viraha*, Nos. 467-569 and 719-57 (Mitra-Mazumdar ed. of *Vidyāpati*) are there.

His description of the physical charms of Rādhā is clear indication of the fact that he was impressed by the Shakti form of Rādhā. He did not distinguish between gods. He was of opinion that all gods, with their different forms and shapes, were nothing but embodiments of the One Almighty, and it mattered little by which name we called them.²⁶ Vidyāpati has been generally described as a Shaiva by a host of scholars, and conservative Maithil scholars fastidiously cling to this point. In support of their argument they say that Vidyāpati's ancestors were Shaiva. But this does not seem to be convincing. He wrote his Sanskrit works on a variety of subjects at the instance of his masters or mistresses; and as a scholar attached to the court, he had to obey to his patron. Whenever free, he composed Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa songs. His association with the Oinwāra court was responsible for writing a number of works on Shaiva and other cults.

All poems written on palm leaves, hitherto discovered, are purely Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa songs and not one of them deals with Shiva.²⁷ When he wrote for spiritual satisfaction, he wrote songs on Kṛṣṇa. He was a conscious poet and finished scholar whose similes were brilliant poetical feats. The ideas of sensuality and lust are redeemed by those that are platonic and spiritual. He moves all day in the sunny groves and floral meadows of the earth, but in the evening rises high and overtakes his fellow poets.²⁸ He occupies a unique position among the singers of the Kṛṣṇa songs. Looking through the vista of centuries we see him standing in his own pure light as the guide and saviour of Vaiṣṇava faith. He founded no sect and laid down no dogmatic creed. He inspired Caṇḍidāsa and Caitanya and this influence has been rightly acknowledged by all.²⁹ He was the first of

²⁶ Vidyāpati's *Gaṅgavākyāvalī*. Cf. His *Puruṣaparīkṣa*. Cf. His *Vibhāsāgar* for a similar passage.

²⁷ N. N. Dass, *Vidyāpati Kāvya-loka*, p. 21.

²⁸ D. C. Sen, *Madhyayuger Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, p. 149.

²⁹ D. C. Sen & K. N. Mitra, *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī* (Calcutta, 1930), Introduction.

the old master-singers whose short religious poems exercised such potent influence on the faiths of eastern India.³⁰

Even when he used the name of his patron in the *bhanitās*, he did not forget his allegiance to Hari and that is why he called Shivasingha 'Hari-like', 'Ekādasha-avatāra', 'Abhinavakamha', 'Nāgar Guruvara Ratan'.³¹ About fifty per cent of his poems deal with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.³² His ultimate hope lay in Kṛṣṇa. Whenever he felt desperate and became morose, he put his own feelings in the mouth of Rādhā and painted the picture of helplessness. In such a state of mind he always remained preoccupied with and concentrated his feelings on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.³³ Unless one is inspired by a particular faith one cannot show his poetic excellence. A close scrutiny will reveal to us the two types of *Padas* in Vidyāpati: (i) Gross sensual type which he wrote for pleasing his masters; and (ii) highly spiritual and intellectual type which inspired the later Vaiṣṇava poets. Charm and grace of poetry have been the subject of literary criticism, but his platonic and spiritual themes have been the basis of higher thinking of the Vaiṣṇava philosophers. It was his association with the court that stood in his way of frank expression of thought, otherwise he felt himself identified with Hari.³⁴ Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's sports in the groves attracted his attention. We have to bear in mind that the *Rāsa-līlā*, is a patent story of the Kṛṣṇa legend.³⁵ Examples of filial relationship are not lacking in Vidyāpati.³⁶ In a dark night Kṛṣṇa thinks how the Gopis will come after

crossing the Yamunā and it is here that Vidyāpati asserts that the Gopis are wiser than the Kanhā and they know the way out. Love here takes the form of adventure.³⁷ Vidyāpati's wailing for Mādhava is a sign of poet's feeling for the hero. Such kind of attachment to Kṛṣṇa is not possible for one who has not identified himself with the cause he upholds. Without this one may sympathize with but cannot feel the actual pang experienced by Kṛṣṇa. These poems are without any reference to the patrons. Rādhā is attracted by the excellent qualities of Kṛṣṇa.³⁸ Rādhā's longing for Kṛṣṇa has been picturesquely painted by the poet.³⁹

All these and many others will convince us that he has not only digested the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa legend but had also identified himself with the cause, definitely at a later stage of life when he had to feel the pinch of poverty. In course of his unusually long life he had seen the ups and downs of the kings and princes, and had experienced all sort of pleasure from different sources. The grip of the feudal age was so deep-rooted that it was difficult for him to pronounce any ideal of equality on the basis of early democratic character of Vaiṣṇavism. His successors in Bengal could at least do this quite easily, as they were free to do it. Therefore when his life was spent in such an unfavourable atmosphere, he stuck to the Vaiṣṇava faith, which was purely his personal acquisition and through which he wished to cross the ocean of mortality. His aim was ultimate salvation, and the influence of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* was apparent. While he aimed at *mokṣa*, Caitanya did not care for any such thing. According to the latter, services to Kṛṣṇa with all the senses working in harmony constitute Bhakti. Here lies the distinction between Vidyāpati and Caitanya. It is true that Vidyāpati also identified and found

³⁰ Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 149.

³¹ Mitra-Mazumdar ed. Nos. 41, 89, 103, and 185. *Ibid.*, No. 177: It has been taken by the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas with a slight modification in *bhanitā*. (*Vide Padakalpataru*, No. 1879).

³² *Ibid.*, p. 93: This indirectly hints that the rest of his poems are devoted to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

³³ *Ibid.*, No. 218 and p. 497.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Nos. 543 and 549.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Nos. 554, 535.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Nos. 478, 479, 480, 481, and 482 are without reference to any king.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Nos. 335 and 337, without *bhanitā*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 337.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Nos. 539, 546. The last number is a fine piece depicting Rādhā's restlessness for Kṛṣṇa.

himself lost in Kṛiṣṇa⁴⁰ and ultimately sought refuge in Him,⁴¹ but with an eye to the theory of ultimate salvation. With a heritage of fatalistic philosophy of life in which salvation was the only objective he could not be expected to go further. With Jayadeva he extended further in a popular language the influence of the theme of Rādhā-Kṛiṣṇa. Especially in the last stage of his life, his appeal was confined rather exclusively to a longing for salvation.⁴² He was conditioned by the circumstances of time and environment; as such his concept stood for unity of Godhead, his personal attraction being to the beautiful form of Lord Kṛiṣṇa. Following the traditional custom, he could make his both ends meet by pronouncing no distinction between Hari and Hara. But, for his mental satisfaction, he composed poems on Rādhā-Kṛiṣṇa, whose picture is so deeply engrafted on his mind that he always liked to see Kṛiṣṇa palpably before him. His life-long observation of his (Kṛiṣṇa's) picture failed to satisfy his longing eyes, which remained wet with wistfulness.⁴³ How far Vidyāpati had gone in his association with Kṛiṣṇa cult is evident from the above statement. His constant faith in sin and other allied conventional philosophy is part and parcel of his Vaiṣṇava songs; and while praying for salvation, he frankly states that throughout his life he remained preoccupied with amassing wealth by sinful means; who can relieve him of all such sinful actions? The wealth, thus amassed, was enjoyed by all, but on the day of judgement there was none to accompany him. Naturally there was no other alternative but to remember his old friend Hari, who is kind and destroyer of sin.⁴⁴ Hari was

his only solace; but let us not forget that he never distinguished between Hari and Hara, they being, to him, two representations of one Almighty.

It is very difficult to ascertain the actual faith or sect of Vidyāpati in the present state of our knowledge. No last word can be said on this point. If we call him a Smārta worshipper of the five deities (*pañcādevopāsaka*), we have to bear in mind there is no mention of Sūrya (Sun) worship in his poems.⁴⁵ People supporting his association with Shiva, Shakti, or Pañcādevatā, draw our attention to his varied writings but they forget that all these were not written by Vidyāpati of his own accord, but at the instance of his patrons. Songs without reference to his patrons are helpful in ascertaining his actual faith. Worshipping ancestral deity is a part of household duties, which may not agree with his personal view. Perhaps this aspect of interpretation has been overlooked by all the supporters of the theory of his being a worshipper of Shiva or any other deity. One can remain a Muslim and a communist at the same time. According to his family and cultural tradition he may continue to be a Muslim but his personal attachment may be to communism. Whether he ever practised Shaiva or Shākta cult, and what were his attainments are all clumsy guesses, not free from doubts. The arguments based on the unpopularity of his songs on Rādhā-Kṛiṣṇa has no force, is silly. The reason why his Vaiṣṇava songs were not popular in Mithilā is to be sought in the innate conservative outlook of the province. Their popularity would have meant the end of a class who thrived on the possession of the so-called spiritual knowledge and who kept a tight hold over the credulity of the people. When

⁴⁰ Ibid., No. 757. Cf. *Bhāgavata*, X, iii.

⁴¹ Ibid., No. 769.

⁴² Ibid., No. 771.

⁴³ Ibid., No. 768. There is a good deal of controversy over the authorship of this poem. Cf. Dr. S. K. Bandopadhyaya, *Bangla Sāhityer Kathā*, pp. 22-23. (Quoted in Mitra-Mazumdar, p. 499. They also ascribe it to Vidyāpati).

⁴⁴ Ibid., No. 770.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 86. For Vidyāpati's sect Cf. S. N. Thakur, *Mahākavi Vidyāpati*, pp. 157-81; N. N. Dass, op. cit., pp. 1-24. He takes a more sober view and calls him *vastutantravādi* (realist). Mitra-Mazumdar ed. pp. 95-103. The chart given therein is very useful. Both Dr. Umesh Misra and his son Dr. J. K. Misra hold the purely traditional view.

man can reach God without any via media, there is no necessity of a priest or the like. That is why the conservatives refused to make the songs popular. Checking the growth of Vaiṣṇava faith and songs stunted the growth of the Maithila literature, which was consequently overshadowed by Sanskrit. Popularization of the vernacular would have revealed to the people at large the secrets of knowledge, which, till then, was a preserve of the learned aristocracy. Sanskrit was the vehicle of thought of the class dominating over the unlettered masses to whom knowledge was a taboo. History has shown that in our sister province, Bengal, the Vaiṣṇava movement gave rise to Bengali literature which rejuvenated her.

In his presentation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme, Vidyāpati set a new line. There is little or practically no difference between him and the *Bhāgavata*. He has twisted the story according to his own convenience. The story begins with Rādhā's coming to age. According to our poet, she is younger than Kṛṣṇa. The messengers talk to Rādhā about Kṛṣṇa and *vice versa*. Both of them see each other and thus starts the *pūrva-rāga* (the first attraction). This first occasion was caused through the messengers. During this period of *pūrva-rāga*, the messengers depict the beauty of each other. Stage is then set ready for *abhisāra* and the first meeting takes place. On return Rādhā narrates the experience of her first meeting with Kṛṣṇa. Then begins *māna* (the pique) and again they meet and Kṛṣṇa entreats Rādhā. *Abhisāra* goes on and they meet each other in the groves and while doing so Rādhā is conscious of the unfavourable social criticism. In the meantime Kṛṣṇa informs Rādhā about his departure from Gokula to Mathurā. The event takes place and the pangs of separation are now unbearable to both. Even with all accessories at her disposal, Rādhā does not feel happy and similar is the case with Kṛṣṇa. Their feelings are narrated to each other by go-betweens. Imaginary and real meetings take

place. The meeting is generally on a mental plane and Rādhā becomes satisfied.

The story on the whole is *ekāṅgī* (gushing love of the one party), and Vidyāpati has taken only such episodes which he thought necessary for his poetry, departing from the original wherever desirable. It is said that when Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā, the messengers took Rādhā's message to him and this part is his own invention. He again brings Kṛṣṇa from Mathurā and arranges a meeting and thereby the pangs of separation are soothed. In the original *Bhāgavata* story, reference is made to Gopis and not to Rādhā in particular. He has referred to Uddhava, which is another departure from the original. Vidyāpati does not send him to Braja. From our poet's description of Uddhava, it appears that he was thoroughly acquainted with the original form of Kṛṣṇa. His originality lay in the fact that he succeeded in constructing a connected whole. Inspired by the ancient *rasa* theory, he decorated the entire episode with his flowery poetic genius and that is why his Padāvali is immortal.

Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā have been the themes of innumerable poets and writers. Vidyāpati has introduced Kṛṣṇa in his vigorous youth. Kṛṣṇa, introduced by Jayadeva, was brought to perfection by Vidyāpati, who has described his features, his role as a hero, and also his pangs of separation.⁴⁶ Dr. J. K. Misra, in his *résumé* of Vidyāpati, following Dr. S. K. De, has held that though Vidyāpati knew a good deal of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, yet his treatment of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa episode fundamentally differed from it.⁴⁷ The learned Doctor has shown that Vidyāpati was influenced by *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* and Jayadeva. A great poet generally takes clue from various sources and constructs the story in his own way. Kālidāsa's *Abhijñāna-Shākuntalam* is a living example of this type

⁴⁶ For an exhaustive discussion, Cf. Dakshinaranjan Ghosh, *Vaiṣṇava Gītāñjali*, pp. 1-50.

⁴⁷ Dr. J. K. Misra, *History of Maithili Literature*, Vol. I, p. 160-1. Cf. S. K. De, op. cit., p. 1, fn. 1; pp. 7-10; and p. 412.

where he has shown his poetic excellence even though he was indebted to the *Mahābhārata* for his story. The undercurrent of Dr. Misra's argument lies in his contention to support the theory that in Vidyāpati there was not even a tinge of Vaiṣṇava feeling. As an impartial observer he should have taken pains to note that certain deep feelings, expressed occasionally in connection with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, cannot be the result of a mere feeling for poetry but of actual experience in life. The poignant and deep feelings of separation are unique. Rādhā's love attainment at particular moment reaches perfection to a degree unheard of, so much so that the poet pictures *viparītarati* in the coming of a *pralaya*.⁴⁸ Rabindranath, being stirred by the music of Vidyāpati, says, 'His poems and songs were one of the earliest delights that stirred my youthful imagination and I even had the privilege of setting one of them to music.'⁴⁹ As a poet of love, he succeeded, like a successful florist, in presenting a beautiful garland of songs, the priceless heritage of which has never been forgotten.

A bird's-eye view of his writings reveal to us that he composed poems in honour of various gods and goddesses, besides Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. That has been the basis of a controversy about his faith. Islam's impact forced Mithilā to be more orthodox in her outlook as she was then the only surviving Hindu state. The other side of the picture is that Mithilā was also a centre of Sūfī saints. Its influence on the cultural history of Mithilā is yet to be studied and only then we shall be in a position to ascertain truth pertaining

⁴⁸ Mitra-Mazumdar, No. 704.

⁴⁹ Rabindranath's letter to N. N. Dass, dated 23-11-1937.

to Vidyāpati's sect. His association with the Muslim rulers does not rule out the possibility of his contact with the Muslim saints and their influence on his mode of thinking. The question about his faith has been kept open in this paper for further discussion by the scholars though it has been pointed out that he had Vaiṣṇavite leaning. Posterity remembers him for his love-lyrics attributed to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Grierson's remark on the solemnity of these love lyrics are worth quoting: 'God is love is alike the motto of the eastern and of the western worlds. . . . the warmer climates of the tropic have led the seekers after truth to compose the love of the worshipper for the worshipped to be that of supreme mistress Rādhā for her supreme lord Kṛṣṇa. . . .' He called them Vaiṣṇava *bhajanas*.

Vidyāpati was a great poet and philosopher of his age. Let us not bind him to any particular sect or faith unless we have sufficient justification to do so. I have shown elsewhere how our poet had to do a lot of things in accordance with the wishes of his patrons. Even believing in a particular sect, or subscribing to a particular view, which ran counter to the fixed etiquette of the court, was not allowed to anyone there. We should remember that Caitanya or Rāmakrishna could preach independently because they were free to do so. Not only the court but the social bindings were also there for Vidyāpati. He seems to have been a Vaiṣṇava at heart, but being a believer in the unity of Godhead, he wrote other things simply to maintain his position in the court and society. A critical study shows that he was a poet of hope and had faith in the potentialities of man. To him love was God.

'Fixing their minds in Him, 'at one with Him, abiding in Him, realizing Him alone as the Supreme Goal, they reach a state from which there is no return, their sins having been destroyed by their Knowledge'.

BUDDHIST SHRINES AND MONUMENTS IN NEW CHINA

BY DR. B. R. CHATTERJI

For many years I had been earnestly wishing to visit China. Chinese history in most of its phases had a great appeal for me. So I considered myself very fortunate when I was asked by the India China Friendship Association to join its goodwill mission to China last year (1954).

We reached New China on 19th September and proceeded straight to Peking. On the very day of our arrival there (23rd September) we met on the lawn of the Congress Hall the Dalai Lama himself. It was the afternoon recess hour of the Congress of which the Dalai Lama was a prominent member. A Chinese lady novelist, who had come to Meerut in the winter of 1953 and who was also a member of the Congress, introduced me to him. The Dalai Lama was talking to some Tibetan gentlemen but he received us politely. Several of our members of the delegation seized the opportunity to get his autograph. I am glad to say that I did not subject the illustrious personage (a handsome young man) to this indignity.

For the next few days we did the sight-seeing of Peking. The Summer Palace with its associations of the 'Last of the Empresses,' Tzu Hsi, and some of the Imperial Pavilions in the once Forbidden City were dreams of beauty. The Temple of Heaven was superb.

On 28th September we got into an evening train to see the Buddhist cave temples near Ta Tung, west of Peking. These are the famous Yuan Kung grottoes in a hill-side overlooking a valley brightened by a pretty hill stream. The French Orientalist René Grousset in his *Histoire de L'Extreme Orient* (p. 321 et seq. tome I) discusses at some length these remarkable Buddhist antiquities. It was during the rule of the Wei Dynasty that the monk T'an Hiao was entrusted by the Chinese Emperor to direct the most important portions

of the sculpture work in the period A.D. 453-466.

The images and mural designs in the caves to the right of the main entrance have been destroyed by the ravages of time. But several caves to the left have preserved their art treasures. Here are still to be seen huge images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, mostly of clay, moulded on supports of iron spikes fixed up on the hill side. These images are painted or gilt. There are stone images too hewn out of the rock and it is to these that Grousset refers when he praises the sculpture of these grottoes. By the by he calls them Yun-kang caves. The style is described by him as partly Gāndhāra, partly the Kushān art of Mathura, and as regards sweetness of expression and elegance of pose, akin also to Gupta Art. The Bodhisattvas in some of the grottoes are seated European fashion (as we sit in chairs). Indeed Grousset sums up by saying that of the rare epochs of truly religious art the Wei epoch in China is one.

What has been destroyed already cannot be restored. But the new regime in China is carefully preserving what is still left. I may also mention that at the entrance of one of the caves we saw a figure with three heads, as far as I can remember, with a trident, accompanied by a bull, on one side and on the other a six-headed figure, bow in hand, attended by a peacock. To me and my companion (we two made the discovery) the figures were recognizable as Shiva and Kārtikeya.

We returned to Peking that night and the next day we went to see the famous 'Lama Temple' of Peking. This is locally known as the Yung Ho Kung. We passed through a neat and clean path shaded with fine trees. The whole atmosphere is quiet and tranquil. In the main shrine, a big hall, there is a gigantic Buddha image said to be carved out of a 50-

foot high sandalwood tree. All around are smaller (but still of superhuman size) Bodhisattvas. Great lamps, silk tapestries, etc. add to the grandeur of the scene. The brilliant hues of the porcelain tiles of the roofs, the saffron robes of the monks, all combine to make a colourful scene.

It was originally the residence of a Manchu prince and was consecrated as a temple in the middle of the eighteenth century. Mongolian and Tibetan monks live here. The temple had suffered much during the Kuomintang regime. It has been renovated at an enormous cost by the present government.

There are said to be about four hundred Buddhist places of worship in Peking. Two temples in a lovely setting we saw from a distance—one dominating the Summer Palace grounds, the other near the white dagoba of the Pei-hai park.

After our travels in the industrial areas of Manchuria, we journeyed toward the West. On 17th October we reached Sian. The past history of Sian or Changan (its old name) goes back to very ancient times. The tomb of She-huangti (third century B.C.), the Emperor who first made China a centralized state, is to be seen near this city. After that several imperial dynasties made Changan (Sian) their capital. It was from this place, at the end of the fourth century A.D. that Fa-hien set out for India. After visiting Buddhist places of pilgrimage in Gupta India he came back to China by sea and returned to Sian. It was about the same period (early fifth century) that the greatest of Indian scholars who came to China, Kumārajīva, wrote under the patronage of the Chinese Emperor his translations of ninety-eight Buddhist texts in the capital city of Changan. Other Indian scholars came here from Kashmir and other places and carried on the task of rendering into Chinese Indian works on Buddhism.

Old Sian or Changan is however chiefly remembered today as the place associated with Hiuen-tsang (or Yuan Chwang). This 'prince of travellers', the friend of King Harsha, travelled over the length and breadth of India

for fifteen years A.D. (630-645). His departure from Sian (A.D. 629) was carefully kept secret, but when he returned in A.D. 645 he was given a right royal reception by imperial command in this city.

On 18th October we made our pilgrimage to the Great Pagoda (Ta Yen-ta) where Hiuen-tsang translated the Buddhist scriptures he had collected during his Indian travels. The Emperor T'ai-tsong of the illustrious T'ang Dynasty wrote the preface to Hiuen-tsang's works. A famous calligraphist of the imperial court artistically inscribed this royal introduction on two stone slabs which have been placed at the foot of the great tower. It is a very tall tower commanding a grand view of the Wei river valley—a river celebrated in T'ang poetry.

That same afternoon we paid again our homage to Hiuen-tsang at the cenotaph of the great pilgrim many miles away from the Great Pagoda. After passing through fine rural scenes made colourful by persimmon trees laden with glowing fruit we reached the monastery where Hiuen-tsang's ashes are buried. As we entered the quiet sanctuary we were told the story of the place. Hiuen-tsang, dearly loved by the Emperor, spent his last days and died in the royal palace. But as the funeral monument of such a dear friend on the palace premises would have made the Emperor feel sad when his eyes would fall on it, the ashes were brought to this distant place to be interred. A statue of the pious traveller in a stone pavilion marks the place. Our leader Shrimati Uma Nehru, placed a wreath on it on behalf of the delegation.

An inscription with the pilgrim's figure engraved on it in another pavilion at the back of the cenotaph reads as follows: 'Went south and went west . . . crossed 128 countries . . . road was rough . . . opened a new path for successors . . . brought back texts . . . 13,000 chapters (Sutras?) of Buddhist texts translated by him.' It is the record of one of his disciples.

On the 19th we saw a Lama temple near the city wall of Sian. The abbot, a stout cheerful person, is a member of the Congress. In the

lovely little gardens in the courtyards there were beautiful flowering shrubs and creepers. The volumes of the Kanjur were kept carefully in a fine hall. The sacred images, the banners, etc. were all in good condition. Indeed it was a place so calm and quiet that we left it with regret.

At the farewell banquet given to us on our departure that evening from Sian this abbot, with another more elderly Buddhist dignitary, graced our table.

On 24th October, during our stay at Shanghai, we passed by a structure like an Ashoka column. We were told that it marked the entrance to a recently-built Buddhist shrine. Unfortunately the day's programme did not allow us to see the place.

From Shanghai we came to Hangchow—China's 'Paradise on earth', with its great lake and picturesque hills and profusion of flowers. Here, on the 28th, we were taken to the foot of a wooded hill, vocal with murmuring streamlets, with Buddhist images, carved out of hard rock, visible among the shrubs on the hill side. We heard the local tradition that the whole hill flew down from the sky coming from India directly.

Facing the hill were two Buddhist temples. One of them, a very tall and imposing

structure, was being thoroughly overhauled at great expense by the State. In the other shrine, which was in excellent repair, we saw a gigantic lamp with a finely carved frame. These two shrines are very ancient and held in high esteem by Buddhists.

Another temple of Hangchow is associated with 'the monk who was not mad but had peculiar characteristics' whose memory seems to be still cherished in this ancient and beautiful place. Here lived the monk and one day he partook of meat and wine. The monastery caught fire the same night and was burnt down. The abbot turned him out and forbade him to re-enter the place unless he could rebuild it. The story relates that the monk slept and snored that night while building material gushed out of a well in the temple courtyard. When he woke up the next morning the temple was in perfect condition. A gilt image of the monk on a full-blown lotus in a pavilion of the shrine commemorates his memory.

In another room we saw the picture of a centenarian monk who had on that day gone to Shanghai.

Indeed it was a very agreeable surprise for many of us that Buddhist shrines and monuments were so well kept and looked after in the new regime.

PREFACE TO VEDĀNTA

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

(Continued from the October issue)

II

The reliance of Vedānta on the authority of scriptures, i.e. the triple texts (Upaniṣads, *Gītā*, and *Vedānta-Sūtras*) has been a target of attacks for critics at home and abroad. Certain European critics and their friends in India have regarded the Vedānta as religion and not as Philosophy. Philosophy, accord-

ing to the Western conception, is the pure intellectual interpretation of Reality. It is based on logic and inference. Reason is its guide and not revelation. In this sense Indian Philosophy in general, and Vedānta in particular, are a contradiction in terms, hanging as they do by the apron-strings of religion. They assert on the authority of *Śruti* the

reality of the Spirit and the existence of soul. There is no pure logical approach to Truth as in Science or Philosophy. Things are taken on faith and trust and no proof is asked for them. The strongest belief of the Vedāntin is his faith in the infallibility and inerrancy of the Vedas. Hence it is declared to be *unscientific, irrational, and dogmatic*. The close association of religion and Philosophy in India is held up for ridicule.

Further, some hold that Vedānta believes in a faculty called intuition. The intuition of the seers is dubbed as unreasoned. They say it is found in the depths of silence with a capital 'S'. Indian Philosophy is said to work in the twilight zone of experience. Uninformed and unsympathetic critics regard Indian Philosophy as a hotchpotch of 'lofty ethics, low customs, subtle wisdom, superstitious ideas, profound thought, and priestly barbarism.'

The criticism boils down to the point that the supreme authority claimed for Scripture by Vedānta makes it unphilosophical, authoritarian, and dogmatic. The criticism derives support from the Western conception of the term Philosophy.

The term Philosophy in the West has acquired a restricted sense. It is a purely intellectual interpretation of Reality. It makes use of reason and perception, i.e. sense knowledge. Reliance on intuition is considered as taking away the scientific value of Philosophy. Intuition and scriptural authority do not brook the spotlight of reason. They sit loose to facts. They work, not in the region of the clear light of reason, but in the twilight zone of experience.

Thus, we see that the primacy of the intellect or ~~critical~~ 'critical intelligence', in the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, is the characteristic of the Western systems of Philosophy. There is close and rational alliance between science and Philosophy in the West. Philosophy strives to become more and more scientific by adopting mathematical methods. Philosophy in the West is speculative. Reason is given the greatest place as the

method of understanding Reality. Socrates urged the need for concepts and definitions and equated virtue with knowledge. Plato admitted none in his academy who had not a course and was not efficient in geometry and numbers. Socrates defined man as a 'rational animal', Plato as a 'social animal', and Aristotle as a 'political animal'. It did not occur to any of them to define man as a spiritual being. The Philosophy of the Middle Ages is one long chain of the development of the Christian dogmas. Descartes, the father of modern Philosophy, declared, 'that which is clear and distinct is true'. His successor Spinoza sets forth his Ethics in geometrical fashion. He declared that 'Truth will be eternally hidden from the human race, had not mathematics, which deals not with ends, but with the nature and properties of figures, shown to man another form of Truth.' Leibnitz outlined his Philosophy on the basis of symbolic logic and infinitesimal calculus. He declared that mathematics is our guide; 'If we had it, we should be able to reason in metaphysics and morals in much the same way as in geometry and analysis.' 'If controversies were to arise, there should be no more need for disputation between two philosophers than between two accountants. For, it would suffice to take their pencils in their hands, to sit down to their slates, and to say to each other (with a friend as witness if they liked) "Let us calculate".'

Kant effected the Copernican revolution in philosophy by declaring that it is impossible to have a science of metaphysics. Metaphysics as a natural disposition is possible and not as a science. Hegel identified the real with the rational.

Thus we find that the logical consequence of interpreting Philosophy in terms of pure reason has landed the West in logical positivism. The logical positivists declared that they are taking one step ahead of Kant. Kant declared the impossibility of metaphysics as a science. The positivists say that if metaphysics is not verifiable it is nonsensical. They regard all the philosophical problems and

propositions of traditional metaphysics and speculative Philosophy as either tautologous or nonsensical. Wittgenstein, the prophet of the school, writes that 'the right method of Philosophy be this, to say nothing except what can be said in terms of the propositions of natural science, i.e. something which has nothing to do with Philosophy: and then always when some one wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to certain signs in his propositions.' Analysis, we are told, is the chief method and creed of this school. Propositions are analysed by them into two classes, the *analytic* and the *negative* and the negative again into the *empirical* and the *logical*. Such an analysis perforce excludes all value-judgements and does not commit us to any transcendental or metaphysical views or even meaningful ideas. The logical positivists hold the view that metaphysical terms like God, soul, immortality are unverifiable. Sensory verification is their great principle. They confine meaningful assertions only to matters of empirical fact which can be submitted to sensory verification. They hold ethical statements as ejaculations of emotion. They declare that the acceptance of metaphysical categories and a deep analysis of them bring one up against logic, language, and Truth which are pretty serious things to find oneself against.

Philosophical systems in the West, by unduly restricting the meaning of the term Philosophy to a purely logical and rational interpretation of Reality, have landed themselves in logical positivism. In their anxiety to emancipate themselves from the apron-strings of theology and religion they have only succeeded in hanging on to the coat-tails of science and logic. It has resulted in the new slavery to science and semantics.

The Vedānta, like all other systems of Indian thought, interprets the term Philosophy in its plenary sense and not as mere rational knowledge. This fact arises from several reasons and a proper understanding of all the arguments is absolutely necessary for

an appraisal of Vedānta as Philosophy. Indian Philosophy, and Vedānta in particular, feel that the knowledge of ultimate Reality cannot be had by the exclusive use of man's instrument called Reason. The Vedāntins have submitted the faculty of reason to a thorough and critical examination in order to know its powers and limitations. They examined the instrument before they have used it.

Reason is one of the recognized methods of Philosophy. Vedānta holds that reason cannot work in a vacuum. It is an empty instrument which cannot by itself lead us to any truth. It elaborates, explains, and systematizes the basic spiritual experiences of the Upaniṣadic seers. We affirm and discover the supreme Reality by immediate direct spiritual experience, and interpret it in terms of logic. When logic goes against the deliverances of the spiritual intuitions of seers, it is set aside. Śaṅkara, in his commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtras*, observes:

'In matters to be known from *Shruti* mere reasoning is not to be relied on. As the thoughts of man are altogether unfettered, reasoning which disregards the holy texts and rests on individual opinion only, has no proper foundation. One sees how arguments which some clever men had excogitated with great pains, are shown by people still more ingenious to be fallacious, and how the arguments of the latter are refuted in their turn by other men; so it is impossible to accept mere reasoning as having a sure foundation. Nor can we get over this difficulty by accepting as well founded the reasoning of some person of recognized eminence, whether Kapila or any one else, since we observe that even men of the most undoubted intellectual eminence, such as Kapila, Kaṇāda, and other founders of philosophical schools have contradicted each other.'

The scripture is self-valid. It does not need any proof. Its authority needs no support from anywhere. It is the direct evidence of Truth, just as the light of the sun is its own evidence of light, and at the same time the direct means of our knowledge of form and colour. The authority of the Scripture is not invoked in all matters. What can be known by perception and inference is not

to be learnt from Scripture. It is authoritative in respect of those facts that cannot be known by other sources.¹⁵ Nor can Scripture attain authoritativeness when it contradicts the experience of the sense knowledge of objects. A hundred scriptural texts declaring fire to be cold or non-luminous will not attain authoritativeness.

Spiritual realization, which is the goal of Vedānta, is immediate experience carrying its own validity with it. It is not a relational or mediate type of knowledge involving the subject-object relation. The faculty of reason works only when premises are supplied to it. The subject matter for reason comes only from experience. Western philosophers employ reason to synthesize sense-experience. They restricted the term experience to the world disclosed by the senses only and leave out all other forms of human experience. They confine their attention to the world of objects. They leave out the experiences of the subject. Vedānta takes the entire experience of man into account. It includes not only his sensuous waking experience but also his supersensuous, dreaming, sleeping, experiences also. The entire inward experience of the subject is given prominence in Vedānta. It is 'Atman centric' in the words of Dr. P. T. Raju. Vedānta gives a synthetic view of all the experience. Hence, it has an integral view of Reality.

To regard the senses and reason as the only sources of knowledge is to restrict the significance of the term Reality. These two faculties tell us very little about Reality. The knowledge they give us is mediate and relational. The mere fact that the human mind is not aware of what is beyond the senses is not the same as saying that there is nothing beyond the senses. The Vedāntin agrees with the poet Browning when he says 'our reach exceeds our grasp'. We have an earnest intimation of the transcendental spirit. We are half conscious of it. The Vedāntin does not, like the agnostic, declare that the trans-

endent is unknowable. He accepts the need for a separate means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for the realization of the extra empirical. This is his justification for the authority of Scripture, i.e. revelation. The knowledge which we get from reason is not free from defects. It cannot give us immediate and certain knowledge. All relational way of knowing, in the last resort, is involved in contradictions. Hence the need to accept scriptural authority in respect of the Supreme. The Vedāntin posits the existence of the Supreme as a working hypothesis on the basis of Scripture. The postulation is an act of faith. Aldous Huxley sums up the issue in his saying, 'Faith is a pre-condition of all systematic knowing, all purposive doing and all decent living.' Referring to the need for a way of knowing higher and other than the intellect, A. E. Taylor writes,

'It seems indeed as if the function of mere intellect were only that of a necessary and valuable intermediary between a lower and a higher level of immediate apprehension. It breaks up the original union of the *what* and the *that* of simple feeling, and proceeds to make the *what*, which it deals with in its isolation, ever more and more complex. But the ultimate issue of the process is only reached and its ultimate aim only satisfied so far as it conducts us at a higher stage of mental development to the direct intuition of a richer and more comprehensive whole in the immediate unity of the *that* and the *what*.'

Vedānta proves the limitations of reason and so posits the existence of a Supreme Reality on the authority of the *Shruti*. In the last analysis, it is the first-hand immediate self-certifying spiritual experience that is the proof positive for the existence of the Spirit. The Vedāntic sages affirm what they accept as a working hypothesis on the authority of Scripture, by their own spiritual experience. *Experience is the ultimate test for the existence of the Spirit. Such an attitude can hardly be called dogmatic and unscientific.* The Vedic sages talk of their experience of Reality. They declare variously, 'I have heard', 'I have seen', 'I have enjoyed', 'I have drunk'. They do not speak from

¹⁵ 'Aprāpte śāstram-arthavat.'

second-hand knowledge. They speak from direct experience. There is a striking unanimity in the experience of the spiritual seers of different ages and different climes. They shake hands with one another and proclaim the unity of all religions and the fellowship of faiths. The philosophical system built on the experience of the mystics is called Perennial Philosophy or Eternal Gospel.

III

The Vedānta is not dogmatic in any sense of the term, for it bases its ultimate faith on experience and not heresay. Its acceptance of the authority of Scripture is only unphilosophical on the surface. Scripture, by its very nature, is a collection of words. It has to be interpreted in order to understand its meaning. Śaṅkara, the representative of Advaita Vedānta, does not accept all the Vedas as authoritative. Only the purportful Scripture is authoritative.

The purport of the Scripture is determined by six determinative marks of purport called *tātparyā liṅgas*. They are the harmony of the initial and concluding passages (*upākrama* and *upasaṁhāra*, repetition (*abhyāsa*), novelty (*apūrvatā*), fruitfulness (*phala*), glorification by eulogistic or condemnatory passages (*arthavāda*), and intelligibility in the light of reasoning (*upapatti*).

Though reason (*upapatti*) is only one of the determinative marks of purport, on close examination we find that it is all in all. In fact reason steps in at every stage. It is reason that has to decide which passage is the initial one and which the concluding one. It is again reason that points out which repetition is purportful and which is not. The really novel message has to be ascertained by reason. Thus we see that the role of reason is very prominent in the interpretation of scriptures.

Vedānta does not minimize the importance of logic. Like all the other systems of Indian Philosophy it makes epistemology the portal to metaphysics. In the words of Max Müller, 'almost the first question which every one of

the Hindu systems of Philosophy tries to settle is, How do we know? They give *noetics* the first place. No object of knowledge can be established or known without the help of *pramāṇa*. The dictum of Mimāṃsaka is '*mānādhīnam-mayasiddhiḥ*.'

The Vedāntin does not belittle the power of reason. He expects the student to be critical and not be the dupe of appearances. He must have a discerning intellect and an inquiring frame of mind. The Upaniṣads declare that there is no admittance to the fold of Vedānta 'for those that are intellectually indolent, and cannot or would not think'.

The student of Vedānta is asked to examine and to think out the pros and cons of the message he receives from his Guru. He is not to accept blindly whatever his teacher teaches. It is not blind faith nor blank acceptance. *Manana* or reflection has an important place in the Vedāntin's discipline. The discipline is partly moral and partly intellectual. Reason is acclaimed as the charioteer. Inquiry or *jijñāsa* is enjoined on the aspirant. *Jijñāsa* is research, in the words of Deussen. Philosophical inquiry is made the necessary preliminary for spiritual realization. All these point to the fact that logic was not discarded by Vedānta.

The Vedānta system is a spiritual guide. It is also an intellectual system with a rigour all its own. The system adheres to the strict rules of logic. The arguments are developed with perfect freedom, freshness, and downrightness. They follow logic rigorously without ever looking right or left. There is no trace of intellectual cowardice in the system. They show a strong and a simple desire to abide within the strict limits of knowledge. The doctrines are elaborated ~~with~~ perfect freedom and ruthlessness. It is sheer ignorance to describe that Vedānta is positive throughout and is not argumentative, that it asserts and does not prove.

A glance at the method of Vedānta and the nature of the logical discussion carried on in the commentaries reveals the place of reason in Vedānta. Max Müller remarks that 'the

teachers of Vedānta are working out mighty philosophical problems with unfaltering love of Truth, and in an unimpassioned and truly philosophical spirit.'

The method, in the hands of Śaṅkara, affects one almost as a great physical act of courage. The boldness is astounding as the sonorous prose in which it is set is fascinating. In the words of Daniel H. H. Ingalls, 'If one has a taste for grandeur, if one relishes, for example, the poetry of Lucretius with its "flaming walls of the universe", one cannot be unmoved by the sonorous prose of Śaṅkara where these flaming walls are tumbled down.'

The method adopted by Vedānta passes through three steps. First of all we get a presentation of the *prima facie* views. The Vedāntin states in full the tenets of other rival schools. They take up first, that system which is remotest to Vedānta. Then follows a serious criticism of the other systems from the logical and scriptural standpoints. The rival systems are convicted of contradiction and inconsistency. The criticism of other views is called *khandana*. Lastly, there is the establishment of the final position as reasoned out doctrine. This is called *siddhānta*. In all this, Vedānta makes use of logical reasoning. Non-contradiction is the test of Truth, as unoblatability (*abādha*) the mark of Reality. The legitimate claims of reason are recognized by Vedānta. Vedānta is more than rational thought and not less than it. Spiritual intuition is neither infra-intellectual nor contra-intellectual. It rises above the intellect. 'The death of the intellect is not a necessary condition for the life of the Spirit.' Dr. S. Radhakrishnan observes, 'wisdom pure and transcendent is different from scientific knowledge but not discontinuous with it.' The dialectical method of Vedānta compels it to deal with the tenets of all other schools; this makes it a compendium of the entire range of Indian Philosophy.

Śaṅkara's method of Advaita Vedānta is unique. It is critical and dialectical. It passes in review the positions taken up by

other systems of Philosophy and criticizes them in turn, one after another. In this process of criticism the Advaita Vedāntin never fails to note the varying fulness, the philosophical worth, and the logical acumen of other systems. The lower category is criticized in the light of the higher in which it finds its fulfilment. In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, 'In Vedānta, as in the Upaniṣads, there is progressive discovery of truth.'

To sum up, the Vedāntin's insistence that the final testimony of Truth is a first-hand spiritual experience makes it scientific. Others may teach us the truth, which they have reached, as well as the method by which they have done so, but unless we by ourselves get at those experiences, we cannot call it our own. The Upaniṣads declare that we should see the Spirit. It is variously described as *anubhava*, *darshana*, *brahma-sparsha*. Philosophy is not the mere discovery of Truth but its realization. Along with this insistence on spiritual experience there is the recognition of the function and the legitimate use of logic, which makes Vedānta acceptable to the contemporary votaries of science and reason. Hence, the charge against Vedānta that it is unscientific and purely based on faith is not true.

The distinguishing characteristic of Vedānta is its close association of Philosophy and religion. The close alliance of the two in Vedānta and in other systems is a dominant feature of Indian Philosophy. The basic motive for Philosophy, according to Vedānta, is to put an end to all the sorrows of human life and attain a state of existence called *mokṣa*. In *mokṣa* the individual has all his doubts and disbeliefs dispelled and all his strife and tension overcome. It is looked upon as the state of perfect bliss. The destiny of man is to attain *mokṣa*. In *mokṣa* he grows to his best and realizes his true nature. All arts and science should subserve the individual's aspiration for *mokṣa*. There is no such cry in Vedānta as 'art for art's sake'. Everything is for *mokṣa's* sake. Vedānta originates in man's search for the highest good

which will radically terminate all the suffering and limitations of human life. This practical motive is throughout there in all the systems of Indian Philosophy. This basic Practical motive has at times overshadowed the logical subtlety, depth and skill, the

powers of analysis, the force of argument, the dialectical acumen, and the play of reason found in Indian systems of Philosophy which regales and baffles many an ardent lover of pure thought.

(To be concluded)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Readers of the January issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata* are well acquainted with the views of Dr. P. S. Sastri, M.A., M.Litt., Ph.D., about 'philosophies of history'. This month's 'The Process of History' is a further instalment on the same topic. Readers will naturally expect more from the same pen. Here, in this article, the learned professor takes a bird's-eye view of the different 'philosophies' since the days of Herodotus and finds them all inadequate. But his diatribes are mainly directed against the unfoldment of Hegel's Absolute. He has put some very pertinent questions to the Hegelians, which they would find difficult to answer. . . .

'God or no God' from the familiar pen of Shri J. M. Ganguli, M.A., well known among the Calcutta youths, is a terrible tirade, couched in fine poetic expression, and directed against the established cantos of churches. The thoughts and sentiments that find a vent in the article, are representative of what the Hegelians call the stage of antithesis in the revelation of truth. In the lives of many sincere seekers there comes a time when the tenets and rites and ceremonies of established religions appear to weigh them down and in despair and impatience they turn agnostics, even iconoclasts. This does not show that the church tenets are wrong or religious disciplines are useless or harmful. The thoughts indicate the agonizing dissatisfaction of the seeker with himself and therefore with the world and its Creator. The Vaiṣṇavas have compared this

stage with the lover's pique. The beloved is angry with her lover and uses a language which she would not normally do. And yet the picture given here of the world and the Creator is not overdrawn; hideousness appears, because the portrait is woefully fragmentary. A silhouette shows the beauty of the outline but why fix your eyes on the black? There is nothing wrong in calling God an 'atom' or a 'force', nor are the peculiar combination of the three letters G-o-d sacrosanct. But the scientists look on 'atom' and 'force' differently, and why should we take their fish out of the water? A pressing machine separates oil and the oil cake, why abuse the poor seed? Neither the cake nor the oil is useless. What is wrong is to look for the oil in the cake and the cake in the oil. How amusingly beautiful is this divine sport of hide and seek, of being there and not there, of the time, space, and multiplicity, of the psalms and curses, of the unions and separations, of joys and cries ! . . . !

After Vidyāpati, no one can aspire to be a lyric poet in any North Indian language without a deep appreciation of Vidyāpati's poems. The Poet Tagore was made after him. 'Vidyāpati's Faith' by Prof. Radhakrishna Choudhary, M.A., F.R.A.S. (Lond.), Purāṇashāstrī, is quite a learned article, which butts the orthodox Maithil view, held by equally learned doctors. Prof. Choudhary has ransacked a vast field of literature in Maithili, Bengali, and Hindi and has, we think, made out his case, as far as it can be done in the absence of direct confession of faith, which is lacking. We are

sorry to have been forced, in consideration of space and Devanāgarī script, to strike out all the quotations in the foot-notes, some of the finest lyrics in Indian literatures. The poems have been sung and recited and drew tears from the eyes of millions of people and they have remained as fresh and inspiring as ever. Their deletion has shorn the article of much of its original beauty. . . .

'Buddhist Shrines and Monuments in New China' by Dr. B. R. Chatterji, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., is from the travel diary not merely of a historian or philosopher but a pilgrim, to whom ' . . . it was a very agreeable surprise' to notice 'that Buddhist shrines and monuments were so well kept and looked after in the new regime.' It is difficult for India and China to forgo their rich ancient cultures and to think of their mutual relation as anything but that of eternal sisters dedicated to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

VINOBAJI'S GRAMDAN MOVEMENT

We are exceedingly glad at the new turn the Bhudan Movement of Vinobaji has taken. In fact it has all along been there; he has made the concept explicit now. Had the Bhudan Movement meant mere partitioning and transferring of land it would have been doomed to failure, it would have been a retrograde step. Now it is plain to all his critics that the distribution of land is but the first step to its collectivization. Otherwise it would have appeared to those who had not possessed land of their own that the collectivization and equitable distribution of products and sale proceeds had been a favour shown to them, for they had no claims on that.

Had government snatched away all the lands from ~~the~~ possessors and then distributed them collectively to the whole village, it would have produced ill-feeling among the villagers, instead of evoking love, sympathy, and generosity that Vinobaji's process has actually done. In the case of State collectivization, the State becomes the possessor and the villagers landless wage-earners, dumb driven cattle, though well fed and properly looked after. The joy of

possession and freedom would have been lacking.

According to Vinobaji's method every villager has the joy and pride of a possessor, has the satisfaction of a giver, we should say, has the supreme satisfaction of giving his all to all—all his possession, himself and his blissful labour thereafter to all with whom an intimate relation of affection and reverence has been established. In this case the villager is the master and giver and the State is the servant and receiver—just the opposite of what obtains in the communist countries.

And it will have all the advantages of Russian collectivization minus the grave defect of enslaving the people to the abstract State, which *may* turn out to be a ruthless tyrant. All the information, instruction, supply of seeds and manure, training in the handling of machines, etc. that the State will supply to the villagers will have the character of paid servants' service to their masters. It is the villagers tilling land and the labourers working in mills and factories who are filling the State coffers out of which are paid the President, the Ministry, and the entire Executive of the State. So the peasants and workers, the real producers of wealth, are the primary masters of the country; they will have that dignity under Shri Vinoba's scheme.

In reality, the President and other State dignitaries are not servants but co-partners in the production of wealth and culture of the country. This is the true attitude—no one is a master or a servant. everyone is a loving and joyous worker in the Lord's vineyard, Lord in the shape of humanity. But unfortunately it is seen throughout the world that the State servants lord it over the populace, they dictate terms to them, drive them to meaningless, nay, dangerous wars and keep them in poverty, ignorance, and degradation. So it is but proper that the pendulum should swing to the other end for a while and the State give back to the peasants and workers their long deprived honour and dignity.

It is this revolution in outlook that has attracted the noble heart of Jayprakash

Narayan and forced him to make a gift of his life to the movement. Of all the P.S.P. leaders it is Shri Lohia who has failed to understand the true significance of this new movement. This shows the godless nature of the leader. There are others, too, though not of Lohia's stature; but they may rest assured that India will never accept them as leaders, however well-meaning they might be.

Let Vinobaji speak for himself of the advantages this new turn of the Bhudan Movement, viz. the Gramdan (the gift of the entire village together with all its properties to form a common stock) would entail:

"The first advantage of liquidating ownership over land and converting the total land into one unit is that it will help increase the village wealth. Crops will be properly planned by the villagers themselves who will also decide about the quantity of the produce to be disposed of. Joint deliberations in the direction of agricultural improvements will be possible. Government assistance or any other outside help, if and when necessary, will be easily procurable. Individuals will not be required to incur any debts. In short, Gramdan will facilitate village planning and will make life contented and happy. . . ."

'When the village became one family, mutual affection would be deepened and life would be full of bliss. The village as a whole would be transformed into a heaven where people participated in each other's joys and sorrows or gratifications and afflictions. "Today it is the family which is supposed to be the centre and source of happiness. But it is not without the co-operation of all that happiness is derived. When everyone forgets his or her individual identity, the joy that is thus derived is boundless. . . . Pleasure, relish and taste—all will be greatly enhanced when the village will be thus transformed into one family. That may be called the second and the cultural aspect of Gramdan. The third and a great advantage of collectivization is the raising of the moral standard of the people and elimination of their quarrels, thefts and virulence. Do we steal in our own house? No. So it will be in the village when it is turned into one family. The standard of morality has gone very low today because the people have, due to their selfish individual interests, established their separate household and property. . . . This is how people have become narrow-minded and have made their houses so small, their concept of family so narrow. But when the ownership over land and wealth disappears, morals must go high. This is the greatest of all the advantages. . . ."

"The last, but not the least, advantage . . . will surely be the spiritual one. When we speak in terms of 'my' house, 'my' farm, this 'my' and 'mine' make man a slave to attachment. But when man will free himself from this feeling of 'me' and 'mine' and will realize that all that exists is for the use of all and that there is nothing that belongs solely to this 'me' particularly, he will soon have

emancipation. . . . It should be our conviction that the whole village is our home and the house which we live in and consider to be for the sake of ourselves only is also for all. Man cannot get realization through the wrong notions of 'I for none' and 'none for me'. Realization comes through the feeling of 'I belong to all' and 'All belong to me' . . ."

VISIT TO RUSSIA

Shri Nehru visited Russia and other Eastern European countries. His reception everywhere was grand and generous, and one is tempted to admit, spontaneous and affectionate. But that is a passing phase. We are concerned with results, if there are anything abiding. One thing is too palpable to be ignored. Nehru returned more enlightened and more convinced of the correctness of the steps that were being taken for the uplift of India; and we have no hesitation to say, stronger with a tested belief that India had more friends than enemies.

Nehru is not only a statesman but a scientist too and has been actively associated with many committees and associations of scientists established for the scientific improvement of the country. To allow such a man to visit secret factories and ask any number of questions at his sweet will is a privilege rarely granted by the communists, unless they are thoroughly conversant with the nature of the man as well as his policy. The country that had not allowed his sister, Mrs. Pandit, to go beyond the extremely limited bounds within the capital and that had given Dr. Radhakrishnan his life's longest leisure for literary pursuit could not have flung open all the gates of towns and factories so easily and with so much warmth unless all her doubts had been fully resolved by acts, carefully observed by herself and her tested allies.

Evidently China played her part well in the game. Sardar Panikkar must have been subjected to severe tests before he could break the iron ring and get admission into the inner circle of the Chinese authorities to represent to them the modern trends of India's culture and policy. Chou's visit to Delhi and Nehru's to China, the latter's performance, at the open and secret sessions at the Bandung

Conference and the continuation of talks by Menon—all have been followed and studied minutely by both China and Russia to accept Nehru as their friend outside the Red ring. The communists' experience since Stalin's death must also have brought home to them the necessity of courting friendship outside their fold. The observing eyes of Russia and China saw how America, since the P.O.W. affairs in Korea, was slowly encircling India by giving military aid to Pakistan, encouraging Goa's intransigence, alienating Ceylon and some other countries, and how India was chafing and groaning, and feeling hampered in her honest attempt at industrialization for improving her standard of living by the refusal of U.K. and U.S.A. to supply her tools and technicians liberally. Russia came down with her offer of establishing a steel factory. The ball was thus set rolling. Nehru's visit to Eastern European countries brought many offers in its trail. India now feels she is not to depend hopelessly on one country alone. This is the most important result of Nehru's visit.

Nehru felt, from his talks with the statesmen of all the countries he visited and especially from the spontaneous demonstrations of the people everywhere, how strongly people abhorred war and desired peace, and how his formula of the Panchashila was hailed as just the sort of assurance needed to save the world from the fatal tension and anxiety. Some interested people decry the Panchashila, and ask, 'Are not the principles included in the U.N. Charter?' Yes, they are; but the trees were lost in the wood. The *Gītā* was there in the *Mahābhārata* but it required the genius and commentary of a Shankara to bring it out and show its greatness. Whatever that be, Nehru had the satisfaction of seeing his 'area of peace' thus extended beyond his own imagination. Having allowed and encouraged the unprecedented demonstration of the Russian people, will the authorities find it easy to suppress the people's desire for peace, if they need such suppression? This is the second

important result achieved by the visit. But the authorities allowed it, one may say, encouraged it deliberately, for they really wanted peace. People shuddered to remember the ravages of the last war and were just beginning to taste the sweets of peace, earned by very hard labour, which they did not like to be spoiled by demoniac action.

The part played by the Russian government before, during, and after Nehru's visit and his talks with the British Prime Minister on the eve of the Geneva Conference of the Bigs convinced the carefully observing U.S.A. of the sincerity of the Russian peace overtures. The eve of the departure speeches of the U.S. President and the U.S.S.R. Prime Minister were indications of what was to follow. And it came out as expected, not a jot or tittle more or less—actual results nil, potential results fairly satisfactory. This is the third important result of Nehru's visit. Nobody is so foolish as to say that Nehru was responsible for this happy result. But what we are trying to bring out is that Nehru's visit was instrumental in opening the flood-gates of the people's emotional surge and demonstrated it to the few minds who could not shake off their doubts. His visit thus indirectly served the great cause.

This will help India. Nehru knows it. But Nehru knows something else also, and that is very important to Nehru and India. Nehru's real strength lies embedded in the hearts of united India. If the hands of his countrymen work unitedly and devotedly, that will give him strength that is irresistible and joy he values most. Every country needs friends abroad, India most. That her friends are increasing is a good omen. But unless Indians can shake off their petty quarrels and work unitedly for achieving greatness, which is almost being thrust upon them, no outside support will be of any avail. How does Nehru feel, just after his return from the triumphant visit, the Akali, Kazhagam, and other petty movements, and the despicable factions within his party, sweet and energetic Dhebar notwithstanding?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE LIBERATOR: SRI AUROBINDO AND THE WORLD. BY SISIRKUMAR MITRA. *Published by Jaico Publishing House, 125, Bell Lane, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1. Pp. xii+120.*

The Liberator presents a chronological narrative of Sri Aurobindo's many-sided life. The gradual unfolding of his literary and political acumen, his active participation in an armed rebellion for freeing India from foreign yoke, his subsequent renunciation of political activity, and retirement for higher spiritual pursuits, are now well-known. Sri Sisir Kumar Mitra has dwelt on these themes in a spirit of admiration and reverence, with emphasis on the impact of Sri Aurobindo's personality on the history of his time.

Discerning readers of the volume will find in Sri Aurobindo's life a harmonious blend of quiet mysticism and political action. It is pointed out again and again in the volume that Sri Aurobindo's total dedication to spiritual *sādhana* is only a continuation of his active political career, that his renunciation of direct political action served only to intensify his influence on vital political events through his 'yogic' power. This is, however, a mystic claim, which literary reviewers are not competent to pass judgement on.

MAHAYOGI. BY R. R. DIWAKAR. *Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chaupatty, Bombay 7. Pp. xx+288. Price Rs. 1-12-0.*

This is an admirable book by a scholar and administrator on the life and philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. With his thorough acquaintance with the vast literature on the subject, the author has given a lucid survey of the main events of Sri Aurobindo's life, with emphasis on his inner spiritual unfoldment, and his philosophy and yoga. Readers of the volume cannot but be impressed by the clarity and understanding with which Shri Diwakar discusses the synthesis of yoga and life which was the supreme goal of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual endeavours. 'According to Sri Aurobindo's teaching', says the author, 'the emancipation of the human race lies not merely in the attainment of Mukti and absorption into the Absolute but in the divinization of mind, life, and matter here and now in this terrestrial existence. It can be done, he says, if the Supermind is realized and its powers invoked for this purpose. It is promised through Integral Yoga.' (p. 239-40).

What this 'Integral Yoga' is, its genesis and development, its point of departure from traditional yoga, and the philosophical doctrine of the evolution of the 'Supermind' into the twin principles of mind and matter, together with the impact of these ideas on the development of human personality and social organization, con-

stitute the profound analytical study, which have lent weight and authority to the volume. The book also has a genuinely historical perspective and vividly portrays the great role which Sri Aurobindo played as a nationalist and patriot, prior to his whole-hearted dedication to spiritual *sādhana* (chapters I-V). Chapters VI-X expound the basic principles of his philosophy.

An Appendix—consisting of (i) Chronology of Sri Aurobindo's life; (ii) Herald of a New Age (selections from Sri Aurobindo's writings); (iii) As others see him; (iv) Darshan and its Significance—a bibliography, glossary, and index, complete the volume.

TO BADRINATH. BY K. M. MUNSHI. *Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chaupatty, Bombay 7. Pp. xi+66. Price Rs. 1-12-0.*

Kedarnath and Badrinarayan—what sacred memories of Himalayan peace and calm these two names evoke! Through the centuries their attraction for the soul thirsting for God has been undying. Modern civilization has not waned their spiritual force. Shri K. M. Munshi, Governor of Uttar Pradesh (India), who undertook an official tour of these districts (on the Indo-Tibetan border) in May 1953, records in this book his delightful experiences in the course of his pilgrimage to Badrinath (his official itinerary, unfortunately, did not take him to Kedarnath). Whether describing the soul-rapturing grandeur of the Himalayan scenery, or the wild beauty of the river Alaknanda, or yet dwelling on the ages-old culture of the land shrouded in the majestic legends of the past, Shri Munshi reveals himself as a fascinating writer. Packed with homely humour alternating with high seriousness, these travel notes have an inimitable charm of their own.

These notes were originally published as the famous weekly series of 'Kulapati's Letters', published in various newspapers in India. They have been revised and rearranged in the book in twelve chapters. The Appendix 'Trek to Badrinath' (by R. Sahai, I.F.S.) gives in brief relevant factual information pertaining to the pilgrimage, very valuable to intending pilgrims. The frontispiece carries a map of the pilgrim-route from Rishikesh. In addition, there are nine plates, taken during Shri Munshi's tour.

FAMOUS TALES OF IND. BY A. S. PANCHAPAKESA AYYAR, M.A., I.C.S., BAR-AT-LAW. *Published by V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons., 292, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Road, Madras 1. Pp. xiii+394. Price Rs. 4.*

The book is a collection of eleven stories, so wisely culled from mythology and history and so finely presented in a racy style, mostly in dialogues,

that it gives a complete picture of the complex Dravido-Aryan social structure of India at its best. Anyone, Indian or a foreigner, wishing to understand what has kept India alive and progressing through the rises and falls of millenniums, without undergoing the labour and industry of studying the source books, cannot do better than to read these four-hundred pages and have the satisfaction that he has got in touch with the soul of India. Here he will moreover get a clear idea of the three im-

portant strands of Indian culture, viz. the Vedic, the Jain, and the Buddhist, and how peacefully and in co-operation and emulation they have built this wonderfully noble civilization of the land. Only one is sorry for the poor get-up of the book and the selection of types which, we are afraid, will scare away foreigners before they are able to judge its intrinsic merit. When the whole world is eager to understand and appreciate India our publishers have a duty to discharge.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS

REPORT FOR 1954

The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras, has completed the fiftieth year of its useful career at the end of 1954. The following is a brief report on the working of the Home for the year 1954:

The Home had under its management four distinct sections—the Collegiate, the Technical, the Secondary, and the Elementary. For the Collegiate section the Home provided a hostel only; the Technical and Secondary sections were being run as self-contained units, providing both residential and instructional facilities; the Elementary section had two elementary schools for day-scholars—one in the city and another in the mofussil, the latter having a free hostel attached to it for Harijan members. Admissions were almost always restricted to the poorest among the best, the chief guiding factor in the selection. At the end of the year, the boarders to the different sections numbered as follows: Collegiate (at Madras) 45, Technical (at Madras) 63, Secondary (at Athur) 175, and Elementary (at Uttiramerur) 25. From all the sections a total of 64 boarders belonged to backward and scheduled classes.

The Seva-praveena Samiti, an organization of student leaders, was made responsible for the distribution of domestic duties and maintenance of general discipline among the boys. Special religious classes and discourses, Bhajans and Pujas, and the celebration of festivals served to maintain a spiritual atmosphere in the Home. Progress registers of individual students and a character gallery exhibiting the names of boys who had distinguished themselves by exemplary conduct were maintained as usual. The total number of volumes in the Library at the end of the year was 3,251. The Reading-room received many newspapers and periodicals.

University Education: Of the 45 students in the

Collegiate section, 34 were in the Vivekananda College, and the rest in other Colleges of the city. 14 students appeared for the various University examinations and 12 came out successful, 8 of them securing first class. 43 students were in receipt of scholarships and fee concessions.

Technical Education: The Ramakrishna Mission Technical Institute, with the fully equipped Jubilee Automobile Workshop attached to it, prepares students for the L.A.E. (Licentiate in Automobile Engineering) Diploma, the course extending over a period of three years. The Institute had a total strength of 63. 19 students were in receipt of scholarships and fee concessions.

Secondary Education: The Residential High School, situated at Athur, had a strength of 175, including 8 day-scholars. 32 students appeared for the S.S.L.C. Public Examination and all were declared eligible for college courses. More than 60 per cent. of the pupils were in receipt of scholarships and fee concessions. Spinning, weaving, carpentry, and gardening continued to serve as crafts and hobbies for all the pupils, outside school hours. The School Library had about 5,000 volumes.

Elementary Education: The Home had under its management two elementary schools:

(i) *The Centenary Elementary School, Mylapore:* The school had a strength of 305 (183 boys and 122 girls) at the end of the year.

(ii) *The Ramakrishna Mission Higher Elementary School, Malliankaranai, Uttiramerur:* The school had a strength of 153 boys and 25 girls. The Harijan Hostel, attached to the school, had 25 boarders.

Finance: The total expenditure in the running of all the sections amounted to Rs. 1,40,108-7-2 while the receipts were Rs. 1,37,374-3-9, resulting in a deficit of Rs. 2,734-3-5.

To meet the annually recurring deficit arising from the all-round rise in the cost of food-stuffs and other materials, and to enable the institution to carry on its useful activities efficiently and on a sound financial basis, the Home needs liberal help in cash and kind from the generous public.