PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।"

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

THE MOTHER*

Come and see who this woman is
That has leapt on the battlefield.
Come and see, come and see—She will
Strike you dumb with Her beauty.
Towering sheer to the heavens
Sparkles the crown She is wearing;
From Her neck swings a garland of
Blood-spattered human heads.

Yielding under the weight of Her
Footsteps, the earth itself trembles.
Dazzled and almost dead I stand,
Watching Her naked beauty:
Blacker it gleams than black kohl, but
Nevertheless this astounding
Figure of Kali, the Mother,
Floods the whole world with light.

* Translated by Brahmachari Yogatma Chaitanya from a Bengali Song.

GRADED FORMS AND LEVELS OF AID

BY THE EDITOR

I

There are different ways in which we try to control others. The simplest and the most crude is to use physical force. We adopt it, almost instinctively, in the case of animals. If a bull refuses to drag the plough, our first reaction is to whip him or twist his tail. Being helpless, he chooses the lesser of the two pains and does the allotted work. Brute force, as is well known, is the main source of strength of all anti-social characters. Newspapers carry reports of armed robbers breaking into rich men's houses at night, even in big towns, killing those who resist, and carrying off all valuables. Society's defence against them consists in the appointment of armed policemen. When they overpower dacoits, handcuff them and drag them to prison, we see a legitimate employment of superior physical force to maintain law and order.

Turning to human groups called nations, we come across relationships that are complicated, blurred, and often wantonly ignored. Look at any war of aggression. At bottom it is house-breaking on a colossal scale. The danger does not end with the destruction of lives and property inevitable during the military action. For, it is followed by the 'elimination of the war potential'. It means the enslavement of the conquered population and a highly ingenious system of impoverishing them for generations together. The idea is to restrict their manufactures, industries, and trade in such ways as to prevent them from accumulating a surplus that can be converted into the instruments for a war of independence afterwards. But as long as there is no stigma attached to conquests,—rather, as long as historical and other traditions hold them up as brilliant examples of manliness and intelligence—there is bound to be a perpetuation of the feeling of bitterness among the victims, resulting in violent attempts to shake off their yoke. If there is glory in a conquest, there must be greater glory in achieving liberation; and so the chain of fighting is kept up. As a means of control, undiluted force is thus positively injurious outside a very narrow field. For, the spirit behind it has a way of reincarnating itself in progressively wider areas and in increasingly destructive forms.

Education is a more reliable method of influencing others. It combines many advantages and leaves no bad effect behind. Its recipients, individuals or communities, get a widening of their intellect according to the subjects taught and remain grateful ever afterwards to those who instruct them. With the enormous advances made in science and technology, there is an immense scope for the spread of knowledge to remote corners of the world. To millions in under-developed areas, such knowledge would come as an unprecedented blessing. It would result in a better utilization of their natural resources and in an all round improvement of their standard of living. It would teach them, in the first instance to get a better yield of corn, vegetables, and fruits from their lands and to raise a better breed of farm animals. These would enable them not only to obtain abundant and nourishing food for themselves but also to save some fair portion for sale or to give in exchange for other articles they require. Once a start is made in this line, local talent, lying dormant for want of proper opportunities, would come forward and play its part in erecting good houses and establishing well-equipped schools, hospitals, and even centres for research.

There is a general movement among powerful nations to speed up this kind of service in areas which suit them most at the present time. No doubt there are serious stumbling blocks in the way. Processes of manufacturing important goods are closely guarded secrets. The profit motive prevents a free dissemination of such useful information. Then there are various political and other considerations which act as 'traffic jams', as it were, and hold up the vehicles carrying the 'know how' personnel. Under certain combinations, these very considerations, curiously enough, clear the obstructions along some roads, and then different nations speed along them to gain spheres of influence in exchange for technical aid! Knowledge somehow finds its own level. The Unseen Hand that paves the way for its rise in one place manages to create such situations that self-interest itself compels the knower to carry his precious gift to other places in due course. There are at the same time fields like art and culture where a policy of exclusion serves no purpose and where competition leads to the progress of everyone concerned. It is a happy sign that in those fields co-operation is steadily on the increase. Many countries are now linked together by programmes involving exchange of professors and educational tonrs of large numbers of students specializing in different subjects of study.* Amounts spent by one country in giving scholarships to students of other countries is always a sound investment. It builds up an inexhaustible reserve of gratefulness and good will in foreign lands; and who does not want it? As against it, stands that kind of expenditure which flows into ways that increase fear and suspicion, lead to actual hostilities, bloodshed and destruction of cultural values, and, above all, leave a legacy of hatred lasting for decades, if not for centuries afterwards.

II

Let us now imagine ourselves to be the recipients of help and see what we would like to get and to experience within after such getting. Food, shelter, and medicines being primary requisites for all, we would certainly be thankful to receive them during floods, famines, epidemics and similar calamities. Even at other times, outright gifts can come in through broad-minded people who have an eye to detect the pressing needs of those living around them. Gifts, however, have a subtle way of pulling down the self-respect of their receivers to some extent. That is why the vow of non-acceptance of gifts is taken by sincere aspirants from the very commencement of their spiritual disciplines. If there is to be no feeling of embarassment but only the legitimate glow of rising self-reliance while viewing old events in retrospect, we should cease to treat helps as 'free' gifts at any stage of our onward march. It is a rare privilege, whether we are beneficiaries or not, to contribnte our mite towards that sum total of services without which society loses its cohesion and the chance to develop to the maximum the varied talents of all its members. Any help given by others, —separately as individuals, or united into an organization—has its value not only because of the tangible forms it can take but also because of the love and sacrifice that prompt it. He must indeed be a blind man who sees only the limited forms but not the unbounded spirit behind them. So, if circumstances force us to accept the forms, we should look upon it as a God-given opportunity to imbibe the spirit as well, and decide to express it in our own dealings with others later. This is much more than a simple question of economics or of paying back a badly-needed timely loan. The attitude involved here is one of capturing the higher values of pure and unselfish action and of driving it into the habit level, so that the whole personality may become an open channel for it thenceforth.

Help can be graded according to the nature of its forms and the ways in which it is offered. Every service that enriches our mind surely stands on a higher footing than the supply of

* Vide "International Education Exchange" in News and Reports column in this issue.

material goods, however valuable in themselves they might be. The latter, as is well known, cease to be available to the giver after their transfer. But ideas and skills that constitute the former have the unique power of spreading and flourishing the more they are passed on to others. In this respect they are like the flame of a candle that enables thousands to be lighted from it, without itself suffering diminution in the least.

The method of presentation is equally important. There was a time when people behaved as if new ideas were to enter like an army of occupation. As long as that picture coloured the imagination, the teacher acted like a military leader. His first step was to soften up the area of resistance, viz. the minds of the students, by demolishing the cultural structures found therein. That pattern is slowly changing. It is being generally recognized nowadays, at least in theory, that there should be nothing negative, irritating, or threatening in the manner in which even the most excellent ideas are presented. We all have a certain amount of pride about our families and what we consider to be the traditions of our community, country, creed, or race. That pride is quite consistent with the conviction that what our ancestors thought and did in their days must be considerably altered and supplemented by us to tackle the problems that confront us today. That very pride can act as a dynamo of power and enthusiasm if properly tapped. It can make us cheerfully and resolutely undertake difficult tasks whose completion we can never see in our own life-time. We shall bring into its humble beginnings the faith and satisfaction that, when the programme would be fully carried out, its successful termination will add to the glory of our forefathers and the tradition they handed down to us. We shall view our present limited share in the work in that wider perspective and value it as an essential link between the past and the future. It would be unwise to shake that legitimate and healthy pride in any attempt to teach modern subjects. Destructive criticism of ancient ways does not add to our mental clarity while trying to imbibe new ones. The most effective teaching is that which stimulates all that is noblest in the student and uses that as the motive power to make him think along original lines. 'In language and literature,' says Swami Vivekananda, while talking about the right method of education, 'in poetry and arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will be able to do these things better.' 'If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and stand on their own legs.'[1]

Even about enriching the mind, the Swami's ideas are worthy of note. Education, he points out, is not the amount of information that may be poured into our brain and may run riot there, undigested all our life. What is needed is assimilation, the building up of our character, making those ideas the basis for our plans and actions. 'If you have assimilated five ideas,' says he, 'and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.'[2] What we want is that kind of education 'by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.'[3] The secret of assimilation and even of the ability to discover new and important facts is the power of concentration. The Swami expresses it very forcibly when he says, 'If I had to do my education over again,' 'I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument collect facts at will.'[4] 'The world is ready to give up its secrets, if only we know how to knock, how to give the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow comes from concentration.'[5]

[1] *Complete Wks. of Sw. Vivekananda*, VII, 168.
[2] *Ibid*, III, 302.
[3] *Ibid*, V, 257.
[4] *Ibid*, VI, 36.
[5] *Ibid*, I, 130. These and other valuable ideas

III

Does character ever become steady and perfect without spiritual insight? It may appear, at first sight, that the only requisite for being service-minded is to keep the formula that we should look upon others as we look upon ourselves. Even without studying scripture, it is possible to arrive at the idea that, like us, all creatures wish to get what is agreeable and to ward off what is painful. There is, however, a vast difference between an intellectual acceptance of such an idea and the process of making the entire personality a channel for the effortless and unconditional flow of love and good will for all. If we analyse our behaviour patterns and unflinchingly trace them to their deep-seated sources, we shall come across a number of emotional tangles and egoistic pulls, ordinarily lying dormant. No doubt, as a source of power and enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge and facing difficulties, we may count upon our pride about ancestors and country's traditions. But, unfortunately, that emotional nucleus contains endless possibilities for mischief as well. In most of us, the intellect can hold up the motto of equal treatment of others only during our calm moments. It is usually powerless to control the habitual upsurge of emotions when appropriate stimuli happen to rouse them into sudden action. We then behave like the proverbial parrot that can sing God's names when everything is peaceful, but cannot help shrieking in the true parrot fashion when a cat seizes its tail.[6] The entire course of spiritual discipline is meant to help us in two ways: to arrive at a stable, all-comprehensive Ideal, and to subordinate the various emotions to the intellect that upholds it to start with. Emotional springs are not blocked or destroyed, but only smoothly taken over and incorporated into the Ideal that henceforth ceases to be a special possession of the intellect alone.

It is significant that the *Gītā* passage that teaches the equating of others with oneself comes practically at the end of the section describing the process and content of meditation.[7] Two facts stand out prominently here. First, regarding the content: What is to be seen, recognized, felt, and assimilated is shown to be the Unity behind what we fancy to be separate entities called our personal selves, others, and the Supreme Being. By continuous aspiration and inward churning we have to evolve a sensitive limb and learn to lift it far above the coarse atmosphere charged by our rivalries and exclusive attitudes. Floating like a balloon carrying specially tuned instruments, it would catch from any direction the peace and sacredness of a wholly unified perspective and regularly transmit to us impulses that transform our daily life. Secondly, regarding the process itself: Words like 'withdrawal' are no doubt used, but it is clear that no spatial or compartmental 'cut' is meant. The exhaustiveness of the values involved will bear this out fully. For that alone is declared to be the true and final 'vision' where we see ourselves existing in other beings, and all of them related to us in a similar way. This is one formula. It is followed by another: the Supreme Being Himself, who is without parts, existing in all creatures or everywhere; and everything, viz. the animate and the inanimate, equally existing in Him. Last comes the stipulation that whatever we do we should stand upon this Unity and do it as His worship. Mutual love and service on the social level thus become blended with adoration and worship on the religious level. It is only when such illumination comes that equality becomes firmly established and spontaneously operative.

Because this type of discipline is unique, the books dealing with it use technical terms applicable to a world of relationships transcending, but at the same time comprehending and elevating, social, economic, political, or philanthropic relationships. Their direct object is not to explain these latter relationships, and

of the Swami have been collected and published in a booklet, 'Education', by the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

[6] *Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna*, 236.

[7] *Gītā*, VI, 29-32.

we should not take it amiss if some books make no reference to them at all. And yet critics are not wanting who give narrow meanings to the technical terms used in describing spiritual discipline, and on the basis of such meanings argue that the society that produced those books looked down upon domestic, social, industrial, and patriotic activities, thereby betraying a woefully pessimistic and other-worldly outlook!

IV

The greatest service anyone can render us is to make us fully awake on the spiritual plane. The teacher's work in opening our inner eyes to the glory of the One Perfect Existence has been nicely compared by poets to the expert physician's art of applying medicinal collyrium to the physical eyes of a patient suffering from 'double vision'. Through interesting examples and parables every great teacher down the centuries has tried to enable aspirants to become conscious of higher values by degrees, and build them steadily into the very texture of their personal lives.

Is it possible for a person whose defect is cured to experience 'double vision' again, in the sense of taking all teachers and all paths to be totally distinct from one another and leading to different goals, of which one alone is true and the others false? We shall quote from Sri Ramakrishna's teachings to answer this and a few other important questions. The gas-light, says he, shines unequally in different places. But the life of the light, viz. gas, comes from one common reservoir. So the true religious teachers of all climes and ages are like so many lamps through which is emitted the life of the spirit, flowing constantly from one source—the Lord Almighty.[8] He points out the same truth through the picturesque example of the rain water falling upon the roof of a house and flowing down to the ground through pipes having their mouth-pieces shaped like the head of a tiger, or a bull. Though appearing to come out of a tiger's or a bull's mouth, it is only from the sky that the water really descends. 'Even so, the eternal truths that come out of the mouths of godly men are not uttered by those men themselves, but in reality descend from the kingdom of heaven.'[9]

Anyone who grasps this principle can never treat others as opponents and try to defeat or convert them by the force of superior argument. His sole effort will be to treat sincere aspirants with consideration and help them to get finer perceptions. To a Pandit who had been arguing vehemently with Mr. Mani Mullick, Sri Ramakrishna said with a smile: 'Mani Mullick has been following the tenets of the Brahmo Samaj for a long time. You can't convert him to your views. Is it an easy thing to destroy old tendencies?' He then half-humorously narrated how a devotee of the Divine Mother, forcibly converted to Islam, found it impossible to pray in the new fashion demanded of him, as Jagadambā still filled him 'up to the throat'. Then the Master added: 'God has made different religions and creeds to suit different aspirants.' For there are, as all can very well see, different temperaments, there are also differences in the capacity to comprehend. When the same Pandit, later, hesitated to take refreshments before finishing his evening prayers, the Master sang in an exalted mood:

> 'What need of rituals has a man,
> What need of devotions, any more,
> If he repeats the Mother's name
> At the three holy hours?'

The Pandit caught the spirit of the song and immediately consented to take the refreshments. The Master, however, remained true to his own principle and gently dissuaded him with the memorable remarks: 'No, I don't want to obstruct the current of your life. It is not good to renounce anything before the proper time arrives. When the fruit ripens, the flower drops off of itself. One shouldn't

[8] *Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna*, 184.

[9] *Ibid*, 185.

forcibly tear off the green branch of a coconut tree. That injures the tree.''[10]

The dominant note in all that Sri Ramakrishna narrated, explained, or chanted was the feeling of sacredness born out of his unbroken consciousness of the Divine, within and without. "Why should the universe be unreal?' he asked and gave the answer himself by saying: 'That is a speculation of the philosophers. After realizing God, one sees that it is God Himself who has become the universe and all beings.' He also pointed out 'in a nutshell' the most direct means to attain such a realization. 'One must become', he said, 'like Sītā to understand Rāma, like Bhagavatī, the Divine Mother, to understand Bhagavān Śiva.' 'One must cultivate the attitude of Prakṛti in order to realize Puruṣa—the attitude of a friend, a handmaid, or a mother.'[11]

Since the Master stayed in a temple, and even when he was not officiating as a priest, engaged himself in making garlands to decorate the image with his own hands,[12] it was but natural that most of the figures of speech occurring in his talks should contain picturesque references to flowers, garlands, lamps, and the moods of formal worship. Take, for example, his beautiful reply to the question about the source of his vast knowledge. 'It is true,' he said, 'I did not study myself, but I have heard, much. I remember all that. I heard the Vedas, the Vedānta, Darśanas (philosophy), and the Purāṇas from good and reliable scholars. Then I made a garland of them all (meaning, the books) by means of a string, put it on my neck and offered it to the lotus feet of the Mother saying: Here is all Thy scriptures, Purāṇas and the like. Please grant me pure devotion.'[13] This was in a line with what he had done earlier at the close of the Shodaśi Pūjā. Then he had, as the culmination of his disciplines, given away for ever to the lotus feet of the Mother (specially invoked into Sri Sarada Devi) his all', viz. the results of his *sādhanas,* his rosary etc., as also his own self.[14] Similarly, doubtless, he made a garland of the devotees, lay and monastic, whom the Mother brought to him for instruction,—of whom a few had the privilege of gathering round him during his illness to serve him and to form a more or less well-knit 'organization' with its twin motto of working resolutely 'For one's own liberation and the welfare of the world'. About the unique power the Master wielded in the entire realm of the spirit, Swami Vivekananda made the following significant observation: 'It is not a very difficult matter to bring under control the material powers and vaunt a miracle; but I do not find a more marvellous miracle than the manner this mad Brāhmaṇa (Sri Ramakrishna) used to handle human minds, like lumps of clay, breaking, moulding and remoulding them at ease and filling them with new ideas by a mere touch.'[15]

[10] *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* Pp. 441-2.
[11] *Ibid,* Pp. 290-1.
[12] *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master,* p. 188.
[13] *Ibid,* P. 370.
[14] *Ibid.* P. 296.
[15] *Ibid.* P. 384.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND RASIK, THE SWEEPER

By Sri Kumud Bandhu Sen

Great were the stories told of how the humble priest of Dakshineswar had brought about a spiritual renaissance and had transformed teenagers into apostles of peace and goodwill combining Brahma-teja with Kṣātra-vīrya and preaching his message of fundamental

unity of all religions. Such stories, like a blazing fire, drew us out of our mundane existence during the formative years of our life and awakened in us a new consciousness. We felt like one blinking in the dazzling light of the day after a long stupor; and with the restlessness born of this sudden light, we would often repair to Dakshineswar and spend a whole day in the sanctum sanctorum surcharged with the spiritual emanation of Sri Ramakrishna and dream of those resplendent days when devotees and saints of widely divergent creeds and sects would gather round him and listen enraptured to his simple but soul-stirring talks. We would sometimes conjure up before our mind's eye the vision of Sri Ramakrishna in trance with a divinely gracious smile playing between his lips.

It was on a pilgrimage of this type in 1895 that I sat one morning before the very bedstead that had nestled Sri Ramakrishna. There was on it a portrait of Sri Ramakrishna profusely garlanded and bedecked with flowers. The aromatic fumes of burning incense which filled the room lent a mystic charm. I had an inkling of the ethereal fragrance of divine ecstacy as I thought of Thakur* and pondered over his spiritual experiences. He was not a mythical personage. Men who had personal contact with him and could testify to his trances and God-intoxication were still alive. As I thought on this strain the intellect asserted itself over my surging emotions and the spell was broken. I was lured outside by the musical ripples of the ever-flowing Ganges and the green foliage of plants and trees glistening in the sun.

As I stepped out of the room I found Ramlaldada talking to an elderly gentleman in the corridor adjoining the room. Sri Ramlal Chatterjee was a nephew of Sri Ramakrishna. He was a close companion of Thakur and later substituted him as the chief priest of the temple dedicated to Kālī. After Thakur's demise Ramlaldada took upon himself the self-imposed task of keeping Thakur's room in order and of taking the pilgrims round the spots sanctified by association with Thakur. Ramlaldada introduced me to the gentleman and told me that he was Sri Mahendra Kaviraj of Sinthee and was an intimate devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. The kindly gentleman took a keen interest in me and said that while I was inside the room Ramlaldada had told him that I was a young *bhakta* (devotee). Pointing to Thakur's room, the temples and the garden adjoining them he observed that it was not just another sanctuary —a place of pilgrimage but a *chinmoy bhūmī* where God condescended to play in human form. It emanated the uplifting warmth of spiritualism and revealed to us the true knowledge that transcended experience. It was his good fortune, he continued, to come into intimate contact with Sri Ramakrishna whom he met for the first time at Dakshineswar after Thakur had just returned from the village of Sihor. The ancestral home of Hriday, Thakur's nephew and constant companion, was located in Sihor. Thakur had been to Sihor from Kamarpukur when he heard that a few miles away was Fului-Shyambazar, a place noted for its Vaiṣṇava community and their devotional songs (Kīrtan). Thakur went there and enjoyed the company of the devout Vaiṣṇavas and their melodious Kīrtan for a week. He spent long hours with them interminably singing hymns and dancing in ecstasy. Sometimes he would pass into a trance and look as if he were dead. The villagers, who had congregated in their thousands for his *darśan*, wondered in their simplicity how a man, even though a saint, could come back to life again. Kīrtan parties from the neighbouring as well as distant villages came there in never-ending streams. Devout Vaiṣṇavas called his ecstatic states *Bhāva* and *Mahābhāva*, but who could fathom, Sri Mahendra asked, the immeasurable depth of his divine ecstasies. His very presence, he said, dispelled all doubt and ignorance and uplifted even the meanest of mortals to a high spiritual plane. He then directed me to Ramlaldada who, he observed, was Sri Ramakrishna's close associate and could bear him out in what he said from his own personal experience.

*Sri Ramakrishna.

'Listen to me,' began Ramlaldada in a reminiscent mood, 'Uncle was resting one pleasant afternoon in the verandah of his room, when all on a sudden he stood up and drawing my attention to Rasik, the temple sweeper, who happened to be passing that way, observed in a voice of deep concern that Rasik was not an insignificant mortal but a denizen of heaven in human form.' Continuing the narrative he said that as the chief priest of the temple, he knew old Rasik very well. He lived in a humble cottage in the sweeper's colony in the village of Dakshineswar, a short distance away from Ramlaldada's residence, and it was his duty to sweep the temple yard and the paths leading to it as well as to clean the temple lavatories. In his ecstatic state Uncle felt the presence of God everywhere; and he dismissed what he had observed about Rasik as one of his passing whims. To him the old sweeper was no more than a dutiful menial and good man to boot. But Rasik appeared on the scene again. Uncle used the Jhou (pine) grove in a remote corner of the garden as his convenience. One day while Sri Ramakrishna was going there, followed as usual by Ramlaldada with his spouted jug and towel, Rasik, who had been sweeping the part of the temple garden known as Panchavati, saw them. It was a grove of the five trees of Aśwattha, Bael, Bata, Amlaki and Aśoka, all sacred in Hindu mythology. This particular grove had acquired an added sanctity because Sri Ramakrishna had chosen the spot for his *sādhana.* At the sight of Sri Ramakrishna, Rasik stood away with reverence. When they met Rasik again on their way back, the old sweeper untied the napkin wrapped round his waist and putting it round his neck prostrated himself at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna. With his winning smile Thakur asked if he was doing well. Rasik stood erect and said, he could not outstep the accident of his lowly birth which condemned him to the despicable life of a sweeper. Thakur replied with alacrity that he should not bemoan his social status, for he was, after all, born a human being, the highest of God's creation. The Supreme Spirit dwelt in him. Thakur further reminded him that Ramachandra had embraced Guhak whom Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa revered as their own elder brother and that saints like Kabir had given the lie to man's vanity for branding his fellow-beings as 'untouchables'. A lowly-born who devotedly recited the name of Hari was superior to a Brāhmaṇa. Pointing at the temples Thakur said that there could be no discrimination between one man and another in the seat of the Divine Mother, for all irrespective of their caste and creed were Her offspring. Speaking about the dignity of labour, Thakur observed that work was divine and there was no gradation in a man's callings. He cited from the *Mahābhārata* the story of Dharmavyādha selling meat in the market in conformity with his hereditary profession and at the same time transmitting to Brāhmanas and savants the knowledge that is revealed to one through long years of *sādhana.* There was no stigma attached to one's calling so long as it was honestly done. There was no employment so humble as was incompatible with the highest spiritual aspiration. It was Rasik's good fortune, Thakur pointed out, to have been entrusted with the sacred task of sweeping the temple yard and the temple steps, sanctified by the dust of the feet of thousands of devotees who came to worship at the shrines. Thakur then quoted the following aphorism in doggerel verse:

'Princess, Thou dost not deign to see how many of Thy rare gems lie scattered in the midst of dust on the floor. The chambermaid, while sweeping the floor, picks them up and hands them over to Thee.'**

It was his good fortune to pick up gems, he said, and restore them to those who did not realize their worth.

With his eyes glistening with tears Rasik said, 'Holy Father, it does not become me, an unlettered sweeper, to question what you say,

*****Rāṇi manire ganana moni gariye pare kato dhoolar pare*
*Jhant dite ghar dashira dekhe tule dae Rāṇi tomar kare.***

but tell me, Holy Father, shall I be saved?' With a gracious smile Thakur asked him to raise a *'Tulsi Kānan'* in a corner of the yard, in the sweepers' colony, and sing devotional songs (Hari nāma kīrtan) of praise. Assuring him of the snpreme bliss that dawned on the apprehension of the Reality in his last days of life, Thakur walked briskly towards his room. Ramlaldada digressed at this point of the story to tell us that Thaknr would not tolerate any one else to address him as 'Father' except Mathur Babu and Rasik.

Two years after the demise of Sri Ramakrishna, said Ramlaldada, one day on his way to the temple from his residence he met Rasik's old wife near Panchavati. She was weeping inconsolably. What afflicted her, asked Ramlaldada, how was Rasik? In the midst of her sobs she blnrted out that her husband was very ill. Her sons had called in a qualified physician but he refused to take any medicine. He insisted on being given *caraṇāmṛta* (water used for ablution of the temple deity), she said. As Rasik was a devout Vaiṣṇava (a devotee of Viṣṇu), Ramlaldada forthwith repaired to the temple of Rādhākānta and handed over to her the holy water she had come for, with a few leaves of *tulsi*. Since Rasik's wife had not called again, Ramlaldada felt rather worried and personally went to their hut a few days later. Rasik's wife and his sons came out to meet him. They sobbed out that Rasik was no more and having composed their welling tears, they narrated how Rasik had surrendered himself to his Maker. The *caraṇāmṛta* from Rādhākānta's temple seemed to have a stimnlating effect on Rasik. He felt better. His fever abated and he spent his waking hours in devotional recitation and fervent prayers. One day when they had returned home after their work at about midday, he insisted on their sitting down to their meal at once. After they had complied with his wish, he asked them to take him out to the *tulsi* arbour. It was hot outside, but as their protests were unavailing they had to fall in reluctantly with his importunate solicitation. He lay reclining on a mat with his rosary and asked them to sit round him and sing devotional songs (Nāma kīrtan). After half an hour his face brightened up. There was an ardent look in his eyes and with a smile playing between his lips he lisped out, 'Oh! Thou hast come at long last! How surpassingly beautiful and gloriously resplendent!' He then closed his eyes and it seemed to them that a halo played round his radiantly peaceful face as he fell into eternal sleep. There was a ring of Rasik's ecstatic lisping in our ears and we reverently bowed down our head as a spontaneous mark of our homage to the memory of the devout soul.

THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

By Prof. M. K. Venkatarama Aiyar

It is necessary to understand what exactly the term 'literatnre' stands for. It is sometimes rather loosely used to denote all sorts of books. We speak of medical literature, legal literatnre and even wall-literature. But a little reflection will show that the word connotes certain qualities which entitle books to be termed literature. It is rather difficult to define these qualities, bnt two outstanding ones may be mentioned. They relate to the matter and manner of the book, *what* is said and *how* it is said. The subject-matter must not be too recondite or technical. Books dealing with such abstruse subjects will appeal only to the specialist. But the appeal of 'literature' is not confined to any special class

of people. Its appeal is universal. The subject must therefore relate to the fundamental urges and emotions of man. This does not mean that the poet is not free to deal with other subjects. There is practically no limit to the domain from which the writer can draw his materials. But whatever the matter, the poet has a way of expressing it. He gives it an excellent form. He has the knack of presenting the matter, whatever it is, in a beautiful manner. His way of putting things ensures universality of appeal. The *Bhagavat Gītā,* for example, though it deals with problems of Ethics and Metaphysics, has such an appeal because of the catching way in which the author has given expression to them. Rightly it has won its place as universal literature. So also the Upauiṣads and the Bible.

I

Such great books can be written only by men who have wide experience of life, who have sounded the depths of human nature, who have profound insight into the primary urges of life and who have unbounded sympathy for mankind and unshakable faith in human redemption. A great book can be written only by a great man. "A good book," as Milton says, "is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." The same writer says in one of his prose pamphlets that before one could write a good poem the author must himself be a poem. It is from God that the poet's thoughts come. "This is not to be obtained but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." "I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrated of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem." The grace of God is necessary for producing a great literary work. In *Saundarya Laharī* (16-17) Śrī Śaṅkara says that the man who contemplates the Devi with sincere and whole-hearted devotion will become the recipient of Her grace and then he will burst out into poetry of the highest level of excellence. The same idea is expressed by Kālidāsa in his *Śyāmalā Daṇḍaka.* He says that literature, both prose and poetry, will gush out of the lips of the man who meditates the Devi as holding the rosary of white beads and the book of wisdom in two of her hands and the goad and noose in two other hands. It is said of Mooka Kavi that, being endowed with the grace of Goddess Kāmākṣī whose ardent devotee he was, he burst into song of the Devi in five hundred stanzas of rare lyrical beauty. In *Lalitā-Sahasranāma,* Devi is described as the fountain-head of all aesthetic taste. Umā Haimavatī is found to expound the knowledge of Brahman to Indra and other gods in the *Kena Upaniṣad.*

The true meaning of all this is that the writer must forget himself, rise above his natural self, transport himself into the unself-conscious level, to be able to write good poetry. This is the idea conveyed by Matthew Arnold when he says that Nature took the pen from the hands of poets like Byron and Wordsworth and wrote out some of their best pieces for them. It is said of Jayadeva Kavi, the author of *Gīta Govindam,* an excellent lyric poem dealing with the sport of Lord Kṛṣṇa with the Gopis of Vṛndāvana, that he was unable to complete a stanza as the right word would not occur to him however much he wracked his brain. Then he left it at that and went for his bath. All the time he was full of that theme and the right word occurred to him when he was half-way through his bath. With water dripping from his wet clothes he rushed to his room and completed the stanza. Then he finished his bath and his breakfast and, all oblivious of what he himself had done in the meanwhile, found to his surprise that the stanza had been completed. He asked his wife, Padmāvatī, if anybody meddled with his work. She reminded him of what he had himself done. This incident is

very significant. It shows that great authors forget themselves when they write great poetry.

At that transcendental level, all that is merely accidental, adventitious, local and particular will fall away from the ken of the writer and he will deal only with what is permanent and abiding in human nature, — man's elemental joys and sorrows, his hopes and aspirations, his ideals and ambitions. Such themes, being intimately connected with human nature as such, will have an unfailing and universal appeal irrespective of age or clime.

II

Coming to form, we have to note that the way in which we say things is as important as what we say. There are some who exalt matter at the expense of manner and there are others who go to the other extreme and maintain that form is everything and that content is only of secondary significance. Both are one-sided views. If matter becomes preponderant and form goes to the background, the result will be a book of knowledge and not of power. Scientific treatises, History and Philosophy come under the category of books which are weighted with matter and which are therefore only informative. Books on travel, adventure and exploration also come under this head. We read such books for the information they impart and not in the sense of literature. Even these books may sometimes be qnite readable and possess excellence of literary form. Gibbon and Macaulay, though primarily historians, have considerable claims to literary merit. Plato and Bergson, among philosophers, are known as much for the poetic qualities of their expression as for the depth and profundity of their thoughts. It is well known that Śrī Śaṅkara's great commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras* is a model of Sanskrit prose style. His religious poem, *Saundarya Laharī*, is as remarkable for its lyrical excellence as for the depth of its religious emotion. No hard and fast distinction, therefore, is to be made between what Newman calls literature of knowledge and literature of power. The difference is one of degree and not one of kind. Books on History, Philosophy, Exploration, Travel and even Science may occasionally rise to literary excellence. It depends on the amount of constructive imagination that enters into such books. Poetry also may degenerate into drab prose if it lacks imagination and is overweighted with matter. Pope's *Essay on Man* and many portions of Wordsworth's *Prelude*—'deserts of preaching,' as Lord Morley calls them—are instances in point.

If we go to the other extreme and make much of form to the utter neglect of matter, then there is the danger of the book becoming thin and insubstantial. It will cease to be of abiding interest. With a change of literary fashion the book will become obsolete. It will flutter for a brief space of time when the momentary fashion is on and will soon sink into obscurity. The true Classics are those which blend in happy measure both form and matter. We must remember that there is an intimate, vital and organic relationship between the two. There is no matter without form nor is there form without content. Aristotle said long ago that formless matter and immaterial form are both ideal abstractions. Both are mere fictions. Even the lump of clay has its own roundish form. It is open to us to destroy the lump-like form and give another form, say, that of the pot or the jug to the clay. But this can be done only within certain well-defined limits. We cannot impose any form on any matter. The form of the pot or the jug cannot, for example, be imposed on a quantity of sands. We can make a razor out of steel but not out of stone or wood or wax. Form must be sustained by matter. It cannot be an imposition from without bnt a natural flowering of the matter. The poet has a way of sensing things; and even when he is describing a phenomenon of nature, such as a storm or an earthquake, he does so not as an impartial spectator or objective observer but as one who seeks to enter the phenomenon and understand its

uniqueness. What is individual and unique in things can be grasped only by deep insight and inward communion, and not by mere scientific observation and experiment. The object, therefore, enters into the very being of the poet. It gets transformed in the process. When it finds expression it bears the stamp of the poet's individuality.

Insight and communion presuppose imagination of a high order. It is constructive imagination that enables the poet to give to 'airy nothing a local habitation and a name'. The poet writes in a 'fine frenzy'. The whole work of art takes shape in the white-heat of imagination. Then he bodies forth his deep-felt experiences in a medium with which by long practice he is well acquainted. The poet uses language, the painter uses the pencil and canvas, the sculptor works on marble stone with his chisel, and the musician plays on mere sound. *Sāhitya* is not essential for good music. The *rāga* as such touches our emotions and evokes the right response. The veriest tyro in music knows the difference between *mohanam* and *mukhāri*, for example. In instrumental music, we altogether miss the text of the song and yet we nod our heads in appreciation. This fact must give the quietus to the language controversy in the realm of music. To insist that songs must be in a particular language savours of linguistic fanaticism.

III

This is however a side-issue. Coming to our main theme, we said that the poet expresses his high experiences in the medium of language. But, as it obtains in current use, it is a very imperfect vehicle for conveying the original insights of the inspired poet. Words are but broken light on the depths of the unspoken, said George Eliot. There is a gap between the original intuitions of the poet and the common words that are in daily use. Language is an instrument that we have forged for the transaction of everyday life. It was not intended for such high purposes. But still the poet has to take it, such as it is, and bend it to his own purposes. He sometimes takes liberties with grammar and idiom. Hence we speak of Shakespearian grammar and we know also how Carlyle coined his own phrases which have come to be called Carlylese. But even otherwise, the poet uses common words and phrases in his own special way. That is what we call the style of the writer. It is the personality of the writer that shapes his style. It has been well said that a man's style is not like his coat or cloak which he can put on or put off at will; it is rather like his skin. There is no question, therefore, of one man adopting or copying the style of another. Newman's wise observation is worth quoting in this context: "While the many use language as they find it, the man of genius uses it indeed, but subjects it withal to his own purposes and moulds it according to his own peculiarities. The throng and succession of ideas, thoughts, feelings, imaginations, aspirations which may pass within him, the abstractions, the juxtapositions, the comparisons, the discriminations, the conceptions which are so original to him, his views of external things, his judgements upon life, manners and history, the exercises of his wit, of his humour, of his depth, of his sagacity, all these innumerable and incessant creations, does he image forth, to all does he give the very pulsation and throbhing of his intellect, utterance, in a corresponding language which is as multiform as this inward mental action itself and analogous to it, the faithful expression of his intense personality, attending on his own inward world of thought as its very shadow; so that we might as well say that one man's shadow is another's as that the style of a really gifted mind can belong to any but himself. It follows him about as a shadow. His thought and feeling are personal, and so his language is personal."

Since the poet has perfect control over the language he has chosen as his medium, he will use words with maximum effect. The right word will be in the right place and not a word too much. Coleridge has referred to this point

in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. The critic cannot take the least liberty with the order and arrangement of the words. No word can be dispensed with as being superfluous, nor can it be replaced by its equivalent. Several words may convey more or less the same meaning, but yet the poet selects a particular word for its suggestiveness and melody. This is what is called poetic diction. We cannot take a word from where it is and put it elsewhere in the same stanza or even in the same line. Such is the organic symmetry of the piece. It is all due to the fact that the poem as a whole takes shape in the glowing imagination of the poet and drops like Minerva from the head of Zeus. Just as words are organically connected with the theme, even the similes and metaphors are part and parcel of the treatment. They are not extraneous, mere frills and fringes added from without to enhance the beauty. They cannot be dropped without doing damage to the poem. They come so naturally and take their proper places. The poet who has observed life and nature on a vast scale has an abundance of images wherewith he elucidates his theme. Walter Raleigh, in his volume on Shakespeare in the E.M.L. series, says that "they throng about him like poor suitors proffering their services and the magnificence of his generosity finds them work to do" (p. 25). Among Indian poets, the pride of place must be given to Vālmīki in the use of similes and metaphors. They simply pour out of his mouth. They are so apt, so varied, drawn from different walks of life and aspects of Nature. It would be interesting and quite worth one's while to make a separate and special study of Vālmīki's figures of speech, especially his similes. Very often they compel attention and grow on our imagination. Kālidāsa is also justly famous for his similes (upamā Kālidāsasya). One has only to read the first few stanzas of his *Raghuvamśa* to appreciate how natural and telling are his similes. Some poets like Homer and Milton, Tennyson and Matthew Arnold, deal with them at considerable length and develop them as complete images. They are known as Homeric similes or what Dr. Johnson calls 'the simile with the long tail'.

IV

So much with regard to the form and matter of great poetry. Let us now come to the reader. To be able to read and appreciate literature two requisites are essential. One is that the reader must try to meet the author half-way. He must be willing to be enlightened and hence he must read with sympathy. He must put himself *en rapport* with the author. It is no use beginning with a prejudice. The reader must also make allowance for the passage of time. While reading a book written two hundred years ago the reader must try to recreate the conditions and the social milieu that prevailed then. It is unfair to judge a writer of the 17th century from the vantage ground of the present age. The second requisite is the disposition of the mind that is willing to listen without being hyper-critical, what Coleridge calls the 'willing suspension of disbelief'. In a drama, for example, there are certain initial assumptions which may appear rather improbable. In *King Lear*, for instance, it may be difficult for the intelligent reader to believe that a king could be so foolish as to part with his kingdom to his daughters, on the strength of their professions of love to him, without reserving a slice to himself. But if this assumption is not granted, the rest of the story will not follow. Similarly in the *Merchant of Venice*, we cannot imagine how a man like Antonio could be so foolhardy as to sign such a bond to his worst enemy, Shylock. And yet the superstructure is built on this foundation. If the reader begins by questioning these premises, he puts himself out of tune with the rest of the work and his reading of it will come to no purpose. What we take from a book will be in proportion to what we bring to its study in terms of sympathy, imagination and willingness to be enlightened.

How does it pay us to read literature? This is an absurd question on the face of it. We read literature for pleasure and not for

profit in the narrow sense of that term. The study of literature does not benefit us in the same way as the study of science and technology does. But man wants something more than bread. He has a soul in addition to, and quite independent of, his stomach. Mere economic prosperity will not make him happy. The soul craves for satisfaction. Before it can manifest itself and shine forth in its native splendour, much discipline and refinement will have to be gone through. Man will have to die out of his lower nature. His sordidness and selfishness, his self-love and egoism, his harshness and cruelty, have to be eliminated and in their place man will have to cultivate fellow-feeling, sensitiveness to suffering, a fine sense of fairness, social justice and so forth. In one word, a silent revolution will have to take place in his inward life and he will have to be totally transformed. The study of literature has a large part to play in this work of refining our feelings and filling us with higher and nobler ideals. Aristotle thinks that the study of tragedy has this ennobling effect and calls it 'catharsis'. It means purification of man's nature. All great literature has such a moral purpose. It has nothing to do with direct preaching, but it leavens our nature in a silent and unobtrusive manner. This is the only kind of didactism that is permissible in literature. The Veda commands us to do this or refrain from doing that. It is what is called *prabhu sammita;* the Smṛtis give advice like a friend and it is *suhṛt sammita*. But poetry adopts the gentle and charming manner in which a man's wife gives him counsel, as does Sītā to Śrī Rāma when he promised to the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya that he would destroy the Rākṣasas though they had not offended him in any way. The influence of literature is *kāntā sammita*. Literature may not save the soul, but it will certainly make the soul worth saving. We may add that in the pure and disinterested appreciation of great poetry we have the nearest analogue to the bliss of Brahman.

THE NYĀYA-VAIŚEṢIKA CONCEPTION OF SOUL

(A CRITICAL EXPOSITION)

By Dr. (Miss) Anima Sen Gupta

In this article I propose to make a critical survey of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of soul, which is a bold departure from the Upaniṣadic conception of the Ātman.

In India, soul is generally accepted as an eternal and permanent principle. All orthodox schools also agree that the soul is essentially pure and that in its pure form, it is never affected by any kind of worldly impurities. Further, sorrows and joys of life, pleasures and pains never form a real part of the ever pure self. The Ātman is distinct and different from the psycho-physical organism and its connection with the latter is only artificial or illusory. There is, however, no universal agreement among the different orthodox schools regarding the noumenal character of the Ātman. For the Sāṁkhya, the self is pure consciousness; for the Vedānta the self is pure consciousness, pure existence and pure bliss; and for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the soul is totally devoid of all qualities including consciousness.

According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers, there is no distinction between knowledge and consciousness. *Caitanya* is identical with *jñāna* or *buddhi*. The soul, dissociated from the psycho-physical organism, becomes dissociated from the instruments

through which knowledge can be gathered. Hence in the disembodied condition the soul fails to have any kind of knowledge. Knowledge has origination and decay. Like all other non-eternal objects, it arises in the self from a conglomeration of conditions and when the conditions are disjointed, knowledge or consciousness immediately disappears. Ātman in its noumenal form is, thus, wholly unconscious and its relation with consciousness is only external and accidental.

Non-recognition of the identity between self and consciousness constitutes an important feature of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika realism. This is due to the fact that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy has recognized from the very beginning a distinction and not *Tādātmya* between the thing and its quality or essence. "Jar" as a substance is different and distinct from its red colour as well as from "Jarness" which is its essence; and both of them are related to it by the relation of inherence. The self as knower is also the substance which is characterized by knowledge. Our inner experience always takes the form of "I know", "I am pleased", "I am sorry" etc. Moreover, in inner perception the self is always revealed to us as the substratum of knowledge, volition, pleasures, pains etc. and is never identified with any form of experience.

Although the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas, like the Upaniṣadic sages, have admitted the existence of the transcendental and eternal self, yet they have used their own independent judgement while reducing this transcendental self to an indeterminate characterless abstraction which may be held to be equivalent to non-being or nothing. If we destroy all qualities of the self, including consciousness, the self itself seems to be destroyed.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika method of distinguishing and separating substance from its quality or essence and of holding substance to have a being independent of quality or essence seems to be guaranteed only by the evidence of uncritical experience of the common man. A careful analysis of experience of the world, however, reveals and affirms that quality or essence is identical with the thing or determines the character of a specific substance. What prevents a thing from vanishing into nothingness is its essence or determinateness and it is impossible for us to think of a thing or substance as different from its essence. The being of a Jar consists solely in its "jarness" and the Jar can never be thought of without "jarness". This essence the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika have abstracted from the thing and then they have given it the name *Jāti*. This Jāti, in their opinion, is eternal and indestructible. "Jarness" existed before the creation of different Jars and it will continue to exist even after the destruction of all Jars.

Since in the case of the soul, they have applied the same method, the soul has been viewed as a substance in which the essence *Ātmatva* inheres. It is only when the soul comes in contact with the body and mind that qualities like *jñāna, icchā, prayatna, sukha, duḥkha* arise in it. Viewed critically, this theory seems to have treated the soul in the same manner in which an ordinary material object has been treated, even though these philosophers have tried hard to preserve a definite line of distinction between their view of the soul and that of the materialistic school. They have refuted emphatically the view that body is identical with the soul. Had consciousness resided in the body, we could have found this quality even in a dead body. As this never happens in this world, the body must not be regarded as the substratum of consciousness. The materialistic contention that consciousness resides in a living body, has been rejected by these philosophers, as in that case we shall not be able to explain the continuity of consciousness as well as memory. The body is continually becoming new. The body of childhood is not the same as the body of the youth, and the body that one has in his old age is different from the body that he had in his childhood. If consciousness is a quality of the body, then it also will change constantly and, therefore, there will be intermittent breaks in the continuity of conscious life, which in turn will impair memory. Even

mind cannot be regarded as the snbstratum of consciousness. Mind is atomic, and if knowledge had been a property of the mind, then it would also have been atomic and therefore non-perceptible in nature, which really is not true. Both body and mind are thus found to be unsuitable for serving as the substratum of knowledge. The soul, in their opinion, is also eternal. A new-born baby starts sucking its mother's breasts without going through any course of training. This the baby can do simply because it had learnt this activity in some prior births. On the basis of such facts, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers establish the existence of an eternal and permanent soul in which *Saṁskāras* of the previous births remain stored up from a beginningless time and which passes through a series of births and deaths till it is finally liberated.

Thus, so far as these characteristics of eternality and permanence of the soul and also its bondage, liberation and transmigration are concerned, we do not find any radically new idea in the philosophy of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school. It is only in respect of the noumenal nature of the soul that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school adds a new note which is not in keeping with the Upaniṣadic tradition. If we search deeply for the cause, it will perhaps not be very difficult for us to trace it out in the multicoloured soil of our own motherland.

The Nyāya philosophy developed gradually in course of its fight against the Buddhistic philosophy. It was therefore not unlikely that in its resistance against this *Avaidika* religion, it had accepted (perhaps unconsciously) many thoughts and ideas of Buddhism which were appealing to them. From the second century A.D. upto the eleventh century A.D., the Buddhistic thoughts were prominent; and because of the rational and catholic spirit of Buddhism it was popular among the people. The important task of refuting the anti-Vedic arguments of the Buddhistic schools was taken up by the Naiyāyikas. *Śūnyavāda* was criticized in the Nyāya-Sūtras. Nyāya-Vārttikā was written by Uddyotakara with a view to refuting the charges of Dignaga and Vasubandhu. The most remarkable *Avaidika* feature of Buddhism figured prominently in the form of the Pudgala-Nairātmya-vāda of this school, and this was the doctrine that became the target of criticisms from all other orthodox schools of philosophy and religion. So far as egoity and personality are concerned, we find that all orthodox schools agree with Buddhism in holding that these are due to ignorance and that these are also the root causes of all worldly pains and miseries. The psychological self is fictitious, unreal and therefore non-permanent. The first step towards *Mokṣa,* therefore, consists in the realization of the unreality of this psychological and personal ego. The ego and individnality have got to be transcended in order to reach spiritual perfection. While Sāṁkhya-Yoga and the Vedānta idealism admit the existence of a permanent self as transcendental consciousness which serves as the uniting principle of all knowledge and phenomenal thinking, the Buddhists refuse to recognize any such eternal principle of consciousness and reduce self to momentary states and processes of phenomenal consciousness of our empirical life. The denial of permanent consciousness and recognition of impermanence and change in the realism of psychical phenomena seem to constitute common features of both Buddhism and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy. Judging the importance of the Buddhistic thoughts and ideas with which the philosophical atmosphere of that period was highly charged, we may infer that the essentially logical minds of the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas did discover a layer of truth in the Buddhistic denial of permanent consciousness. If we analyse consciousness, we actually find nothing but mutable psychical states appearing in the forms of knowledge, desires, will, pleasures, pains etc. These are the contents of our self and these are not stationary and eternal. They appear and disappear due to the operation of their

generative and annihilative conditions. Soul as pure transcendental consciousness can never be demonstrated in actual experience. We never become aware of the dual nature of consciousness, one phenomenal and the other transcendental. In fact, if we make a distinction between permanent consciousness of self and mutable knowledge or Buddhi (as is done by the Sāṁkhya and the Advaita Vedānta), then we shall have to admit that in one and the same body, two different forms of consciousness, belonging to two different orders, exist at the same time. Yet nobody is aware of this duality. Such a position does not seem to be justifiable from the Nyāya point of view.

These philosophers have, however, maintained their orthodox attitude by denying emphatically the Buddhistic doctrines of momentariness and *pratītyasamutpāda* in every sphere, including the sphere of consciousness. Production and destruction are correlatives to increase and decrease (*upacaya* and *apacaya*) and increase as well as decrease can happen to things only if they last for more than one moment. If a thing is momentary, then increase and decrease which need different points of time, can never be predicated of it. It is only a thing having *Sthāyitva* (duration for some time) that can increase at one moment and decrease at another. So, though consciousness is unsteady and impermanent, it does not last for one moment only. Both momentariness and *pratītyasamutpāda* favour the maxim: *"Asataḥ Sat-utpadyate"*, which goes against all empirical evidence. If *Asat* can be the cause of *Sat*, then we ought to have seedlings from the seeds which have been reduced to powder. The causal relation of succession, advocated by the Buddhists was however accepted by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, but they have preserved the Upaniṣadic tradition by holding the causal view of *Bhāvāt bhāvotpattiḥ*. An effect for them is always the result of the operation of three forms of causal factors which function together in such a manner that from their joint operation a new phenomenon comes into existence. One form of causal factor is called *samavāyi-kāraṇa* or that which is capable of producing an effect which inheres in it.

Samavāyi kāraṇa is either of the nature of the component parts or of the nature of the substratum in which the effect inheres. Knowledge or consciousness, being an effect, must have a *samavāyi kāraṇa* or substratum and this substratum is the soul. Here knowledge arises from a combined functioning of soul, mind, sense-organs and object and if any of these factors becomes inoperative, consciousness fails to appear. Consciousness as an effect is different from each one of the causal factors, although it is dependent on them. The essentially realistic minds of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika seem to have taken here a very bold step, and unlike any other traditional theory based on the Upaniṣadic conception of pure consciousness, have declared that consciousness is only a mutable product and accidental quality of the soul and that it is dependent on the object. Consciousness unrelated to an object is an absurdity. Thus the object here is not a modified form of consciousness. On the contrary, the importance of consciousness has been deliberately minimized by making it dependent on the object.

Here, the question arises: Does the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system fare well in the field of philosophy by recognizing the reality of a characterless and unconscious soul? The answer cannot be given in the affirmative. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika hypothesis that knowledge is a separable quality of an unconscious soul-substance and that it can arise only in relation to an external object goes against the evidence of experience in the sense that it fails to make adequate provision for the self-conscious nature of human thought. Moreover, the complete separation between self and consciousness has given almost a materialistic colour to the metaphysics of these two schools. If the soul substance in its pure form is totally devoid of consciousness then how are we to distinguish and differentiate it from another inert unconcious substance like a jar?

Of course, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philoso-

phers will answer this criticism by saying that the self differs from a so-called material object in the sense that while in a material object, there is *atyantābhāva* of consciousness, it is not so in the case of self. If this reply is judged critically, then also, we have to admit that "self" possesses an inseparable and indistinguishable character (essence) different from the physicality of the so-called material objects. This essence or inseparable character is identical with the thing and it is only by virtue of this essential quality that a substance is distinguished either as material or as spiritual. If "Jarness" is separable from the "Jar" and *Ātmatva* from the Ātman, then in their pure forms (i.e. abstracted from their essences) they will never be distinguishable from each other. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas have identified knowledge with consciousness but they have preserved the word *Ātmatva* to connote the essential quality of the Ātman. Now what does the word *Ātmatva* stand for? If it means *Cetanatva*, then the soul will be a conscious substance even in its pure form: as being a *Nitya-dravya*, it will never be separated from its *jāti* or essence. In that case, the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas too must be prepared to recognize two forms of consciousness, one phenomenal and one noumenal. But if *Ātmatva* is not identified with *Cetanatva* thereby making *Cetanatva* a non-separable quality of the soul, then there will be no means at the disposal of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers to save their metaphysics from falling into the dark abyss of materialism. This is a point which needs much careful analysis and very critical reflections; and it seems to me that there is still much scope for research work in this direction. Such a research will surely be able to throw more light on the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of soul.

THE BODY MYSTICAL AND TRANSFIGURED

By Sri Batuknath Bhattacharya

Mystic Cults and Ecstasies: From Marcus Antoninus who saw only impure and worthless dust in this tenement to Ambarīṣa who viewed the human body as the instrument of divine service is indeed a far cry. A new worth-whileness invests the body and its activities in the present and is projected also into future cycles of existence. As Prahlāda says: 'Through whatever thousands of births I may travel, my Lord, may my devotion, O Everlasting One, remain undiminished to Thee in them!'[13] From this devout mood to pass to strenuous courses of discipline in which the powers of the body are systematically trained, hardened, exercised, sublimed so as to yield raptures, exaltations, trances, illuminations, occult, visual, auditory, and tactual experiences, extensions and refinements of natural faculties and even temporary suspensions of vital functions in a state of *samādhi* is to enter into the mammoth cave of the mystic cult. Religious history of all countries has contributed its share to this realm of the spirit. The Temple of God is holy, says the Bible, which Temple ye are. To the mystic the body is the microcosm, the little universe, and is the epitome of the larger universe, the macrocosm. According to the Tantra, the human figure also has in it the fourteen worlds, the seven lower and the seven upper. The Haṭha Yogin discovers in the *Ṣatcakras*, the six centres or plexuses, the seats of different deities as well as Gaṅgā, Kāśī, and Triveṇī, to attain to which by appropriate exercises and

[13] Nātha yoni-sahasreṣu yeṣu yeṣu vrajāmyaham,
Teṣu teṣu-acyuta bhaktir-acyute'stu sadā tvayī.

meditations is to have emancipation within one's very grasp. In India the enormous literature of Yoga and Tantra, Śaiva and Śākta esotericism, and Sahajiyā cult testifies to the age-old and pervasive absorption in these forms of conditioned spirituality. It is thus that man strives to transcend his bodily limitations and reach out to powers denied to him by unaided nature.

Whitman's 'The Body Electric': The marvels he thus conjured up are now being replaced by others, perhaps, of a subtler and farther-reaching kind which modern scientific appliances and mechanical inventions are multiplying. These marvels pertain to the body as well as to the world outside, and they call forth a sense and feeling which may be called the distinctive modern attitude. Some of its manifestations are marked by an almost mystic rapture, very much akin to the religious experiences just referred to above. Curiously enough some striking utterances are met with in the rhapsodic lists of the poet of American democracy. As a prelude to one of these verse catalogues,

> They are my poems - announces Walt Whitman - -
> Man's, woman's, child's, youth's, wife's, husband's,
> Mother's, father's, young man's, young woman's, poems.
> All attitudes, all the shapeliness, all the belongings
> of my or your body, of anyone's body, male or female,
> The lung-sponges, the stomach-sac, the bowels, sweet and clean.
> The brain in its folds, inside the skull-frame.

Then he goes on to give an inventory of our bodily parts as seen by a poet's eye for beauty, admired, adored, ringed round by a halo of wonder, charged with an intimate sense of the harmonious purpose and supersubtle design of the Divine Architect. Elsewhere he says:

> If anything is sacred, the human body is sacred,
> And the glory and sweet of a man is the token of manhood untainted,
> And in man or woman, a clean, strong, firm-fibred body
> is beautiful as the most beautiful face.
> I sing the Body Electric.

So our poet declares his function. He dreams of a New Adam, the father of a new race. He considers the human body divine And of its functions there is none of which we need be ashamed. He thus thinks far ahead for the marvellous kind to which he belongs and its yet unrevealed potentialities.

> The circling rivers, the breath, and breathing it in and out,
> The beauty of the waist and thence of the hips,
> Oh, I say, these are not the parts,
> and poems of the body only, but of the soul,
> Oh, I say, now these are the Soul.

He thus blazons forth the gospel of the modern age:

> Behold, the body includes and is the meaning,
> the main concern, and includes and is the Soul,
> Whoever you are, how superb and how
> divine is your body or any part of it!

And here we have a glimpse of the truth in which Science and Religion see eye to eye, the unfathomed mystery of the immense and the infinitesimal universe:

> And I will thread a thread through my
> poem that time and events are compact,
> And that all things of the universe are perfect miracles,
> each as profound as any.

Lawrence's Renaissance of the Flesh: A close affinity of spirit leads by an easy transition from Whitman's democratic adoration of all flesh to D. H. Lawrence's trustful and unquestioning abandon to its impulses,—a cult otherwise called the resurrection of the flesh. His faith is implicit and absolute in the natural man,—the noble savage—who lives mainly through the body. The renaissance of the

body, he claims, is the only feature common to the civilizations springing up around us. My great religion, Lawrence proclaims, is a belief in the blood, in the flesh as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds, he says, but what our blood believes and feels and says is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle. What do I care about knowledge? All I want is to answer to my blood direct without the fribbling intervention of mind or moral or what not. I conceive a man's mind as a kind of flame, for ever upright and yet flowing, and the intellect is just the light that is shed on to the things around. And I am not so much concerned with the things around, which is really mind but with the mystery of the flame for ever flowing.

Expanding Modern Studies: The foregoing resume of diverse human attitudes to the body,—as developed and expressed by frank acceptance of sensations, by ascetic contempt, by pious purpose, by poetic intuition, or by philosophic realism—brings us to the portals of the last, still evolving outlook. And this in a way includes and sums up all that preceded and yet reaches a greater depth, a higher altitude and a minuter insight. It is a way of beholding of which Science is the eye-opener and the added purposes of modern human existence are the determinant. A fuller understauding of the chemistry, mechanism, and dynamics, of the courses, aims and their limits, charges the body with multiplied meaning, unplumbed mystery, and unlimited potentials. Man is still to himself the Unknown after the lapse of a hnndred centuries during which his intelligence has been aiding and checking his instinct. Compared with aeons of his unawakened past or the limitless vista of the ages that await him, the book of civilization is still in its opening chapters. His efforts and his conclusions of the past become dated and put in their place by the strides that he is now making towards an ampler knowledge of the nature and powers of his mind and body. It has been said that the human mind is fitted to understand the physical world, the properties of which may be formulated in mathematical equations but it is unequal to the complexities and subtle processes of living organisms. For life has not yet yielded its secret to man's intelligence, however acute and ingenious in working.

The Unending Marvel of Birth and Growth: But within the specific limits of his understanding he has unravelled biological facts and processes of astounding intricacy. And his recent findings have given a sharper edge and point to the sense of awe and bewilderment expressed in the well-known *Pañcadaśi* stanza: 'What greater wizardry is there than that a tiny germ lodged in the womb puts forth shoots as hands and head, feet and the rest, grows conscious, and by turns is clothed in garbs like infancy, youth and decrepitude, sees and feeds, hears and smells, and walks to and fro?'[14] Let us turn to the modern scientific version of it: Life begins as a quivering colloid, builds a brain which refines itself to discovering the most efficient methods of destroying others and, by a boomerang effect, itself!

Magic Ooze of the Glands: A wonder and a mystery still imperfectly probed is the body's growth. It is like a magic brick continuously breeding other bricks and so adding to itself; it has its symmetry and unique anatomical structure and has a system of control and co-ordination of diverse functions, of continuous repair and elimination of waste, with check on every kind of excess and an overall balance and harmony. The glands are the dynamos and the brakes,—the magic ooze of their silent chemistry—in the thyroid controlling the speed of living, its absence making for defective brain and mentality; the pituitary regulating the growth of the skeleton, its seasonal inactivity causing hibernation, and so on. Here we seem to have reached the limit of descriptive

[14] Etasmāt kim-ivendrajālam-aparam yad garbha-vāsa-sthitam retas-cetati hasta-mastaka-pada-prodbhūta-nānāṅkuram.

Parvāyeṇa śiśutva-yauvana-jarā-veṣair-anekair-vṛtam paśyatyatti śṛṇoti jighrati tathā gacchati-atha āgacchati. vi. 147.

knowledge and understanding of the physical basis of our existence. But this is merely in appearance. There are greater depths and farther reaches.

Evolution to awaken Dormant Cells and Inactive Centres: The mechanism of the body calls for the fullest comprehension if that can ever be attained. And in the light of that complete knowledge and the daily developing technique of conditioning with all the disciplines of the past to aid,—Yoga and dietetics, Eugenics, and miscegenation, and conscious evolution—it has to be geared to the ventures of an air-age, an age of atomic power, radio-activity, space-travel, of a shrinking globe and explosive population. Neurology has detected cells in the cranium as yet apparently of no function. They seem to wait for their redemption, awakening and illumination at the trumpet-call of the fuller life for mankind that the future has in its store. It is an ascension such as was prefigured by the sage of Boston a century back. Evolution, says Lecomte du Noüy in his *Human Destiny*, continues in our time no longer on the physiological or anatomical plane. It is, therefore, evidently through the brain that man must evolve. And the process seems to be traced by Emerson when he says: Unpublished nature will have its whole secret told, man made of the dust of the world does not forget his origin, and all that is yet inanimate will one day speak and reason. Each material thing has its celestial side, has its translation through humanity into the spiritual and necessary sphere, where it plays a part as indestructible as any other. These words seem to echo the cosmic aspiration to which St. Paul gave his characteristic Christian utterances: The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. The creature itself also, as the apostle foresaw with his inspired eyes, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. To this the testimony of evolution adds its assent when it says that each new organ with its special function in the animal mechanism has been an instrument of freedom and of independence of the environment.

The Body Divine in the Making: And so, in whatever direction we turn, before us rise sign-posts flashing a single message: End there is none. And notwithstanding the frailties, the blind gropings, the mischances and failures, past reckoning, of the tainted flesh of the present, it is a legitimate human prerogative to aspire and prepare for the far-off divinely ordained event, Paradise Regained on earth by the angelic offspring of Fallen Man. And thus we come to and conclude with the dream of the ages, a dream which perhaps shines brighter as the actuality looks less promising: the autonomous man of sovereign will who sways the processes of his body and the impulses of mind as he masters and utilizes the forces of nature outside. Without wings Man shall yet soar to altitudes unforeseen and stand the rigours and dissolvent stresses of supersonic speed and space-travel, make the ice-capped Poles his permanent home, as comfortable as the temperate clime, fashion a germ-free earth and a body of perfect natural immunity. And this undaunted adventure with 'lungs of brass, muscles of iron and nerves of steel' and brain-cells of electronic agility, the frogman and submarine diver, the Everest-climber and daring parachutist, a class one air-plane pilot, polar and inter-stellar explorer, he shall yet be capable of profoundest meditation and intense concentration, unconcerned at the opposites or dualisms,—the *dvandvas* which unnerve the softly nurtured.

Man the Master of his Bodily Destiny: Such a creature of Body Divine will emerge into life's arena. He will have vigour and fitness unimpaired till the last breath for any work in hand, like a sword leaping out of its scabbard, and will be capable of tapping at will the as yet unawakened powers and resources within his system and will yield himself up from a sense of fulness and sufficiency to the elements whence he had sprung, as in Huxley's *Brave New World*,—a godlike being, of perfect self-mastery, willing

life and willing death even, as did Bhīṣma, the super-hero of the *Mahābhārata*. And when he makes his exit from this stage, he will leave behind remains that Nature, perhaps, and no preservative art, will embalm and keep fresh and sweet, 'corrupt flesh putting on incorruption.' Nothing of the body then shall be evil or unclean and, as in Chinese economy, nothing without use, nothing like refuse or garbage. The supreme homogeneity of the Vedāntic outlook, 'All this cosmos, and whatsoever is in it, is indeed Brahman', will be shared as a practical rule of life by the widest commonalty; and an abounding good-will and sense of sanctity shall suffuse human action and experience. And the Upaniṣadic benediction shall verily be a present possession:

> Good alone may we hear with the ears, O Gods, and good alone behold with the eyes, O adored ones, and with firm limbs and body serving, may we live the span the Gods have measured and appointed for us!'[15]

[15] Bhadraṁ karnebhiḥ śrṇuyāma devāḥ, bhadram paśyema akṣabhir-yajatrāḥ sthirair-aṅgais-tuṣṭuvāṁsas-tanūbhir-vyaśema devahitaṁ yad-āyuḥ.

BENEDICT LABRE

SAINT BY ACCLAMATION

By Mr. Paul Hourihan

On the eve of the French Revolution Europe was swarming with beggars, thousands and thousands of them. All except Benedict Labre are forgotten.

Few men have been able to live as he did, with such severity, and with that simple single-mindedness and terrifying logic which, as much as their radiance, is one of the hallmarks of the saint. But *some* have been able to: there have always been hermits, beggars and ascetics of all kinds among the men of God. So in fairness it may be said that nothing in Benedict Labre's life up to the moment of his death at thirty-five, in Rome, was really unique or original. It was what happened *after* his death that marks him out and presents his story for our edification, and wonder.

He was born in 1748, the oldest of what were to be fifteen children, in a small Catholic village, strong in its piety, dotted with shrines, in the northwestern part of France. Both his parents were religious people and each had brothers and uncles in the clergy. As Benedict's father was a fairly successful farmer, they were able to give him a good education.

At the age of twelve Benedict was handed over to an uncle who was a parish priest in a neighboring village, to live and study with him until he was eighteen. According to the plan, Benedict was then supposed to follow his uncle's calling, since even as a boy he had shown signs of an inborn religious tendency beyond the average; and, also, it was his father's hope that at least one of his sons should become a priest—a secular, parish priest, working and living among the people.

But during the six years with his uncle Benedict came to believe that he could be of more service, both to himself and to the world, as a contemplative monk than as a parish priest. He had always been a withdrawn, lonely boy; cheerful but meditative; loving and considerate of others, but haunted by the thought of God, the Passion of Christ, and the waywardness of men—a youth unable to respond to life the way other people did, or value the things they valued; the very image of the young man set apart from the

life around him, forever looking on, unable to take part in the activity of the world according to an accepted tradition. More significantly, even as a boy he was always holding himself back, always checking himself, driven even then by an inner urge to strip himself of everything that was superficial.

When Benedict was eighteen he came home to his parents and soon made known to them what his deepest wishes were: to join the strictest monastery he could find, preferably the Trappists, for he believed that among men leading austere, self-abnegating lives consecrated to God he would attain the spiritual peace which until then had eluded him. There followed the first of many struggles between Benedict's longing for a contemplative life and his parents' dismayed and stubborn opposition to it.

For the next three years Benedict made one attempt after another to get himself admitted into Carthusian or Trappist monasteries. For some he was not strong enough, or not old enough, or not qualified; in one or two he manifested such spiritual turmoil even after being accepted that they quietly asked him to leave. And each time his parents renewed their opposition to his course, arguing that it was clearly not the will of God that he should pursue it any longer. Still he persisted and finally, in 1769, when he was twenty-one, he told them he was leaving them for good, and that, come what may, he would continue seeking access to monasteries in France, or even Italy.

But he would not leave until they consented. There is much evidence that he loved his parents. In two letters that he wrote them during the first months of his wandering—the only two he ever sent—there is apparent a deep filial love and respect, and an anguished desire not to hurt them any more than necessary. When at last they yielded to his wishes and gave him their blessing, he left them, never to return, never to see them again. Except for the two letters he sent in the year following, while he was still within the borders of France, they lost all track of him.

In 1770 he lived eight unhappy months in a Cistercian monastery in southern France. The confinement depressed him, and even in this silent and austere place he found that he could not renounce enough, could not *denude* himself enough, could not sufficiently express his complete dependence on God. In addition, here he passed through the most serious spiritual crisis of his life up to that time and, as a consequence, his health broke down. At the end of the eight months' trial his brother monks, fearing perhaps for his sanity, suggested that he leave.

Benedict Labre was twenty-two when he left France, a lonely, disoriented, homeless youth, directing his steps hopefully now to Italy, to the shrines, the holy places. . . . perhaps a community of hermits somewhere, or even another monastery in Italy. The second letter he sent home to his parents, around this time, suggests that he still thought of the monastic life as his goal. But soon afterward there must have been some great spiritual experience, or a series of experiences, that changed his view radically. Some terrible or glorious vision had given him his vocation at last . . . . to be an eternal pilgrim on all the highroads of central Europe, wandering in a profound obscurity and nameless isolation; a self-despising and self-annihilating beggar who would welcome contempt, hunger, privation, loneliness, ignominy, and live in the world as an all-renouncing monk—for whom the whole world would be his cloister.

For the next seven years, with Rome as his starting-point, he wandered over Italy, Germany, Switzerland, south France and Spain, visiting the chief shrines, dressed in rags, broken shoes on his feet, sleeping under the sky, an old sack slung over his shoulder in whch he carried a few devotional books and the dust collected at the graves of saints. He was seen everywhere, and yet not seen. He never gave his name, background or associations. He traveled alone, with God as his only companion. He lived on alms for which he did not beg, and when there was none forthcoming he ate wild berries and

fruit. If anyone gave him more than he needed for that day he passed it on to some other beggar.

A kind of agony at the thought of God had possessed him, a sense of God inhabiting and consuming him, ruining his flesh, flogging him endlessly across all the roads and mountain passes of Europe; an all-devouring and insatiable hunger to become more and more a part of the Eternal One.

For the next, and last, six years of his life he settled in Rome, by day visiting churches all over the city, by night sleeping in a dark corner among the ruins of the Colosseum. Soon people were calling him "the beggar of the Colosseum." Some of those who knew him then said that he seemed to go weeks and months at a time without speaking. But he was known all the same, observed everywhere, and by eyes which out of scorn or fear avoided him, or out of shame. And there were times when many heard his voice, speaking the simplest words whose effect was always extraordinary on those who heard them—all agreed to that.

His confessor, an obscure priest in Rome, also found him extraordinary. After Benedict had made one or two visits to his church this priest began to take down notes of the things he said and of his own impressions of this strange, silent man who, as time went on, began to speak of the Trinity and the Godhead in the confessional box with a directness and passion that dumbfounded the priest, but who, when asked for his background and education, answered that he was only a poor ignorant beggar who knew nothing.

A popular artist of the day, named Cavallucci, painted him as he was praying in one of the Roman churches. The painting, which now hangs in the National Gallery at Rome, is a marvelous work. Benedict's arms are crossed in front of him, in reverent recollection; he wears a habit-like garment, worn, dusty and old. A large, heavy rosary hangs around his neck. His eyes are gently closed, he is lost in prayer. It is a face of silence, the face of a man who has seen God. Nothing, one senses, can frighten this man. Nothing on earth can allure him. He wants nothing. Whatever he has sought in life, he has found—and has become that which he found. There is a peace on this face that is dazing and unutterable. As one gazes at the picture, awe at what must have been his life flows into one's heart.

For several weeks prior to his death his confessor entreated Benedict to take better care of himself, for the failing state of his health was clearly evident now. At least he ought to tend to the sores and ulcers that were appearing on his body. Benedict did not listen to him. Any kind of consideration for his body, his mortal existence, at this stage of his life was the farthest thing from his mind. One morning after Mass, on the steps of a little church he had come to frequent most during his last period in Rome, the church of the Madonna dei Monti, Benedict fainted from malnutrition and disease—and longing for God. A neighborhood butcher who knew him only slightly, it seems, begged him to come to his house and rest there. Benedict agreed.

That same day Benedict Labre died in the man's house, an unknown beggar, obscure, silent, penniless, his flesh wasted; in a back street in Rome, at the age of thirty-five.

That was when it happened.

Even from this distance it takes one's breath away to contemplate it. No one knows just how it started, or when, but all at once the event was being broadcast in the neighborhood, then in other neighborhoods and, swiftly, throughout the city. Everybody seemed to become aware of his death at the same time. Suddenly, with one accord, the children of the neighborhood were parading through the streets, shouting in unison, over and over again: "The Saint is dead!... The Saint is dead!...*E morto el Santo*!..." And all at once thousands of people all over Rome, as if communicating silently and mysteriously with each other, conspired to work a mass miracle as great and inexplicable as Benedict's life had been and in the process to re-

deem themselves, to absolve their lives of the scorn, the abuse and the indifference they had shown him when he lived. Suddenly everybody in Rome seemed to remember him and now it was as if nobody who had ever seen him, much less spoke to him or lived near him, had ever forgotten him. They all remembered now, and each tried to outdo the other in how much he remembered. All seemed compelled to share in this common cause, this passionate and instantaneous movement whose motivation was the recognition of the divine in man and the ability of *all* men to recognize that divinity, not to let it die but to hail it, to worship it, and so enshrine it in their own heritage.

He lay on view for four days in the church of the Madonna dei Monti. Hundreds, then thousands and more thousands of people from every corner of the great city came, even as the fever mounted, the burning, swelling mass urge to do homage to Benedict Labre, the beggar, suddenly dead. And the same cry, again and again, rose in intensity: "The Saint is dead......A Saint is dead in Rome..." The press of numbers was so great around the church that troops were summoned to preserve order. Even after he was buried, within the little church itself, on Easter Sunday afternoon, the throngs kept coming endlessly. As a countermeasure the church was closed, then reopened a few days later, and once again great throngs of exalted people poured into the church to be near him even in death, and they continued coming that way for two and a half more months. Even Rome had never witnessed anything like it.

From Rome, in a matter of days, the news spread like wildfire throughout Italy, and beyond Italy, across all the roads and passes where he had trudged his way during the long years of pilgrimage. In towns, hamlets, shrines, mountain villages all over Catholic Europe it seemed that everyone recalled him, that no one had forgotten him. Overnight the legend grew and formed, and this in a day of slow communication. Miracles, false and genuine, were reported; hundreds of stories were told; soon his name was known from one end of Europe to the other; and on lips everywhere the same words were heard: "A Saint is dead in Rome......"

And the beggars of Rome, who had seen him so often, who had watched him as he prayed and read his books of devotion, who had mocked and insulted him and gloated on the thought that here was one whom *they* could look down on—they, too, remembered. Once for a few weeks during a period of sickness he had stayed with them in a public lodging-house and, after the mockery and abuse were over, they remembered how he had changed them all in those few weeks—gradually, wordlessly; how at the end they had chanted the Te Deum and prayed with him; how he had lifted them all up in spite of themselves, done something to their lives so that they could never be the same again. Even these beggars had their day of glory now. They, also, would not be excluded from the vast ground-swell of desire to honor this man who only a short time before had passed among them, moving in a field of holiness, like a presence, like a memory......strangely like the image of another Man of whom, they now realized, Benedict Labre had always reminded them.

A year and a half after his death his career and sanctity, as well as the miracles, were being discussed in London papers. In 1784, the year after his death, his Roman confessor wrote and published his life story; written, he states in the preface, because so many conflicting tales were being circulated about him. In 1785 an abridged translation of this work was published in London. And he was canonized a saint by the Pope exactly one hundred years after he collapsed that day on the steps of the little church, in the bright sunlight.

But long before that he had been canonized in the truest sense—by the will of the people, the acclamation of his own contemporaries, and the mercy of the God who lives forever in the hearts of all men.

BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM

By Sri Akshaya Kumar Banerjea

(*Continued from previous issue*)

II

The perfectly calm and tranquil, desireless and emotionless, egoless and objectless, differenceless and changeless, self-illumined state of consciousness, attainable through the systematic practice of *Yoga* and *Samādhi*, cannot be described and comprehended in terms of the categories of the empirical understanding. The characteristics of neither empirical consciousness nor negation of consciousness are present in that state. If the concept of existence is understood in an empirical way, it cannot be appropriately affirmed of that transcendent state; but on that account existence cannot be altogether denied of it. The consciousness of individual existence vanishes; it may be spoken of as the annihilation of consciousness and existence from the lower empirical point of view, particularly if there be the cessation of bodily functions as well after the attainment of that state. But from a higher transcendental point of view it may be regarded as the perfect fulfilment of consciousness and existence, inasmuch as the individual consciousness attains absolute union with the Universal Consciousness and the individual existence is merged in the Universal Existence. It is a super-conscious state, which cannot appropriately be called either conscious or unconscious; it is a state of transcendent existence, which cannot be called existent or non-existent in the empirical sense. When the individual consciousness, through the appropriate processes of self-discipline, attains this perfectly illumined transcendent state and becomes one with the Infinite and Eternal, it rises above the *Law of Karma* and above the bondage of repeated births and deaths and consequent sorrows of finite empirical existence. This is the state of *Nirvāṇa* or *Mokṣa*, which all *Yogis* and *Jñānis* (including Lord Buddha) regarded as the ultimate desirable end of human life.

While imparting lessons to the seekers of emancipation from sorrow, Lord Buddha would ordinarily speak from the empirical and practical point of view. He would accordingly emphasize that liberation from the causes of individual existence and consequent sorrows was the ultimate goal of moral and spiritual discipline. Only on rare occasions he would divulge the truth that *Nirvāṇa* was not really the annihilation of existence, but a perfectly calm, tranquil and blissful state of existence,—*śāntam gaṁbhīraṁ sukhamayaṁ*. He would not however make any dogmatic assertion about the nature of the super-consciousness and super-existence which is attainable through *Nirvāṇa* or extinction of finite individual conscious existence.

While Lord Buddha as a true spiritual descendant of the ancient *Mahāyogis* instructed his followers to avoid the snare of subtle metaphysical speculations (which he would often refer to as *Brahma-jāla*), his intellectualist followers constructed the most complicated metaphysical systems on the basis of his teachings, devoted their time and energy to logical fighting, and divided themselves into several philosophical schools, such as, *Sarvāstitwa-vādins*, *Vijñāna-vādins*, *Śūnya-vādins*, etc. Each of them claimed to expose and rationally establish the true view of the great Master; but they quarrelled among themselves and quarrelled with other philosophical schools with the sharpest weapons of logic. Again, while Buddha taught his followers to become free from all kinds of desires and attachments and to devote themselves to moral and spiritual self-discipline, his monastic disciples established a big monastic church

(*Sangha*) and directed their energy to the development and expansion of this church-organization. Every centre of the Sangha grew into a university, a centre of culture,—spiritual as well as secular—and towns and cities grew round the important centres. Different religio-philosophical schools started different organizations, trained missionaries for the propagation of their distinctive views and modes of discipline and made systematic efforts for the expansion of their spheres of influence among the common people. The deepest regard for the personality of Lord Buddha was the bond of union among the divergent schools and organizations. Another bond of union among them was their revolt against the Vedic authority, the Vedic *Karma-Kāṇḍa*, the Vedic animal-sacrifice, the Vedic social system and all forms of orthodoxy which prevailed at the time. The spirit of rebellion against the existing order of things and the prevailing authorities has in every age a powerful appeal to the common people, who are deprived of the benefits of the order. Thus Buddhism as a well-organized rebellious system spread its influence in all parts of this vast country after the demise of the illustrious *Mahā-Yogi*. It had its healthy influence upon the art, literature and philosophy as well as upon ethics and religion of the whole country. There was an unprecedented upheaval in the Hindu society. Some sections of Buddhists laid special emphasis upon the Master's teachings about social service, and this had its special appeal.

Hinduism never disowned Lord Buddha. He was recognized as one of the greatest *Mahā-Yogis* and *Mahā-Jñānis* and religious teachers (*Mahācāryas*) that sucked the breast of Hinduism age after age. He was given an adorable place among the *Avatāras* or Incarnations of God. The spiritual influence which he exerted upon the ethico-religious life of all sections of the Indian people and upon all the aspects of Hindu culture was admired by all. The principles and ideals which he so powerfully preached among the people had been realized and taught by the most enlightened Ṛṣis, Munis, and Yogis of the Hindu society long before his advent. But Buddhism as it was preached by his followers after his *Mahā-parinirvāṇa* in an organized way as a *protestant* system of religion created a serious problem for the Hindu society. Buddhism might have easily developed and expanded as one of the important religious sects within the fold of Hinduism and might have exercised its noble influence upon the general life and outlook of Hinduism as a whole from within, just as many other sects did before and after Buddha. Hinduism had a wonderful capacity to assimilate new cultures, even those imported from foreign lands, and to perfectly Hinduise them. Buddhism, being evolved from within Hinduism, could be much more easily incorporated into its own life-structure.

But, as time went on, missionaries of the Buddhist church chose to estrange Buddhism from the general life of Hinduism. They tried to deal a hard blow at the long-standing life-structure of the Hindu society, which was based upon the belief in the authority of the Vedas supported and expanded by the noblest cultural and spiritual contributions of a long line of universally adored saints and sages. Hinduism could never tolerate that the experiences and teachings of *one man*, however spiritually enlightened and intellectually wise he might be, should set aside the experiences and teachings of the whole host of wise and enlightened sages and saints of the past ages and become the basis of an altogether new order of society. Hinduism, it was believed, has a soul of its own, and all extraordinarily great men are special self-manifestations of the same Soul for serving special purposes.

Since a very early age Hinduism developed a wonderful capacity for the harmonization of cultures,—for the assimilation of the experiences, discoveries, and spiritual realizations of newer and newer sages and saints and of the manners, and customs, ideas and sentiments growing among different sections of mankind, whether indigenous or foreign. It always assimilated the new with the old and adapted the old to the new, though the process might

not always be smooth and easy. It had an innate tendency to discover some inner unity underlying all varieties, in the field of human culture as in the diversified world. Hinduism has therefore been ever-old and ever-new, ever-conservative and ever-progressive. It has rejuvenated and reinvigorated itself in every age through impact with newer and newer cultural forces and circumstances without ever losing its unity.

In the field of religion Hinduism never recognized the spiritual experiences of any one particular saint or prophet as the complete and perfect self-revelation of the Absolute Truth. In Hinduism no prophet is the last messenger of God, no *Avatāra* is the only Incarnation or the only truly begotten Son of God, no *Ācārya* or religious teacher is the sole custodian of all spiritual wisdom. Hinduism welcomes and pays homage to all great men of high spiritual attainments of all ages and all countries and assimilates the contributions made by them to human culture with its past heritage. But it fights against a religious sect which claims that its founder is the sole or the foremost custodian of the supreme spiritual Truth and that his teachings should supersede the teachings of all other saints and the accumulated wisdom of the past.

Accordingly Hinduism, while according a cordial welcome to Buddha and the fine ethico-spiritual ideals and modes of discipline preached by him, had to offer a stiff fight to Buddhism, when it propagated the view that all the collective wisdom of the past and all the spiritual and cultural heritage of pre-Buddhistic India should be disowned and Lord Buddha's teachings alone in their constructive as well as destructive aspects should be followed.

During the long period of peaceful fighting and mutual adjustment between Hinduism and Buddhism, on the intellectual, moral and spiritual planes, there was wonderful development in all the spheres of Indian culture,—in Philosophy, Literature, Arts, Religion and Social Outlook. Extraordinary geniuses flourished among the exponents of both Hinduism and Buddhism. The great Hindu thinkers rationally reinterpreted the old philosophical doctrines and religious beliefs in new lights, so as to successfully meet the objections raised against them by the learned Buddhist thinkers. The advocates of different philosophical views and different religious cults within the fold of Hinduism combined together to re-establish the authority of the Vedas and the ancient cultural and spiritual heritage of the Aryans, and they offered a united resistance to the spirit of rebellion against the accumulated wisdom of the past. They pointed out that all the noblest tenets preached by Mahāyogi Buddha and his enlightened disciples had already been there in the spiritual treasury of India and they were only re-stated by these adorable saints. They also pointed out that the objections which the Buddhist scholars raised against the fundamentals of Hinduism and on the ground of which they wanted to keep the Buddhist church separate from and independent of Hinduism were generally based on misunderstanding and that the old customs against which they raised valid objections were either non-essential features or temporary aberrations in the eternal spiritual culture of the Hindus. There were arguments and counter-arguments on both sides, and the literature from different points of view was immensely enriched. In one sense this was a most glorious period in the cultural history of India. It may be mentioned that Jainism also played an important part in the cultural development of this period.

Slowly and steadily the divine work of the assimilation of Buddhism with Hinduism went on for about a thousand years. Hinduism was greatly liberalized in this process and Buddhism was more and more incorporated into it. Towards the end of this period two great monastic movements arose within Hinduism,—one from the south and the other from the north. One was initiated by Jñāna-guru Śaṅkara, and the other by Yoga-guru Gorakhnāth. The one was based on ancient *Vedānta*, and the other on ancient *Yoga*.

Both the movements spread over the whole of this vast sub-continent within a short time. Both of them exercised an undreamt-of spiritual influence upon all classes of people. As the result of these movements the assimilation of Buddhism with Hinduism was practically complete, at least so far as India is concerned, though Buddhism continued to spread its influence in its own name in the countries round about India.

(*Concluded*)

THE SAINT OF THE TORRENT BED

BY DR. MOHAN LAL SETHI

Sri Ramakrishna was never tired of impressing upon his men devotees that 'woman and gold' (Kāminī and Kāncana) were the two great hurdles in spiritual life. I believe he impressed the converse of this, too, on his women devotees. But the occasions for the latter were fewer than the former. As often as the subject cropped up,—and it was pretty often—the Master used to advise his followers to go into solitude, away from women and the things and comforts which gold can buy, and practise spiritual disciplines. Solitude and spiritual exercises are indispensable for every aspirant. It is imperative that the taboo on Kāminī and Kāncana should be respected throughout a Sādhaka's career because the chances of a fall are far too many. Let me illustrate this teaching of Sri Ramakrishna from the life of a holy man whom I came to know, some time ago. People referred to him as 'Sukki choi wālā Mahātmā' (lit. the saint of the Torrent Bed).

This holy man used to live in a small room built in the deserted bed of a hill stream, about a mile from the nearest habitation. The room was surrounded by an open yard enclosed by a wall. In the compound wall there was a stile through which entrance was gained to the hermitage. It is now more than twenty years since I had my first interview with him. Most of what he then said has slipped from my memory but two things which he recommended for me are still fresh in my mind. He said, "Make a habit of reading the *Gītā* every day." Then he asked me, "What is your salary?" I could not help giving a reply but inwardly I felt annoyed. To my bewilderment the holy man added, "Give ten per cent of your salary in charity every month."

I sat with the holy man for less than half an hour. While sitting in his room, I noted particularly that the room contained one earthen jar for water and two very ordinary straw mats. It was on one of these that we were sitting. The other was occupied by the holy man himself. He was wrapped in a coarse *khadi* cloth dyed in the traditional ochre and another similar cloth covered his legs. There was nothing else in the room.

This was one of my earlier excursions into holy land. I felt interested in the holy man and on enquiry I learnt from the people of the town that he lived by himself. He stirred out once a day at about noon for 'bhikṣā'. He would stand at the entrance of a house and say 'Hari Om' but once. If some food was given, he would eat it standing there and then, otherwise he would move on. Generally he accepted only one *Chapati* from a family and was satisfied with two or three. On the way back wherever he found some one drawing water from a well, he asked for a drink. He used to make a cup of his two hands and drink his fill. He needed no more. For some considerable time, I could not dare to approach the

holy man. I feared he would question me about my reading of the *Gītā* and the sum he had specified for charity. As I had defaulted in both the items of instruction given, I feared to go near him. But do what I may, the two items continued to disturb the peace of my mind. The first was purely personal. After some time I procured a few editions of the *Gītā* and started reading the one which was most intelligible to me. I had to do this secretly because there is a popular adage in Punjabi which says that one who reads the *Gītā* begins to shun work and becomes altogether useless. About the second item of instruction,—giving ten per cent in charity every month—in the first place I could not bring myself to do so and secondly when I mentioned the subject to my wife, without whose knowledge the money could not be given, she turned down the proposal! She said, "The boys and girls have to be educated. If you give away so much in charity every month, the children will be deprived of such education as we can give them." Her tone and temper were more eloquent and significant than her words. Thus the Harischandra in me was stifled pretty effectively for the time being. In spite of this hard logic, I could not forget the teachings of the holy man. One thing, —reading of the *Gītā*—I was already doing in secret. The second, I thought, should also be done in secret for the benefit of all concerned. I recollected the teaching of Jesus Christ in the sermon on the mount. 'But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth' (Matth. VI: 3).

Some time later, in a talk with my wife, I brought up the subject of the holy man. My object was to visit him along with her in the hope that he would repeat his instruction and perchance if my wife got the lesson at first hand, she might be converted and become a help instead of a hindrance in my pursuit for a higher life. She readily fell in with my idea of visiting the holy man. Accordingly, one Sunday in summer all of us, myself, my wife, and children of whom two were teenaged daughters, started for the holy man's place. About a furlong from the hermitage we came across a disciple of the holy man. He said, "Are you going to the holy man? Women and girls cannot enter the hermitage. Leave them here. You and the boys can go and see him." I pleaded with that disciple but he said, "The saint makes no exceptions.Women-folk who want his *darśan* can see him when he goes to the town for bhikṣā." Willynilly I left the girls and my wife under the shade of a tree and proceeded along with my sons to the hermitage.

We got in, made our obeisance and sat down. The saint talked to us for about fifteen minutes. To my great relief, he did not ask me any questions about the last lesson. I was much too terrified lest he should recollect our previous meeting and haul me up for a defaulter. Moreover, I was very much agitated over the restriction which the holy man had laid down in regard to his visitors.

Naturally my wife was disappointed and all the way back she was commenting on the experience we had had that day. "What sort of a holy man is this who sees a difference between a man and a woman? He is very far from the goal. He should know that the Hindu Śāstras recognize equality between a husband and his wife. The wife is known as the 'ardhānginī' of her husband. No religious ritual can be performed by a husband without his wife." I agreed with her completely more through ignorance than anything else. My knowledge of the Hindu way of life, particularly the rules of conduct laid down for the Sannyāsins, was non-existent.

The restriction laid down by the holy man in regard to women continued to puzzle and rankle in my mind. Reading the scriptures and allied literature gradually resolved my puzzle. Through the years that followed I came to know that the Hindu sages and seers had clearly visualized that the one and only object of human life is the realization of Self. The whole life of a person was therefore planned and regulated towards that supreme goal. Brahmacarya āśrama was the first period of study and discipline. It was a preparation for

the household life, Gṛhastha āśrama. The Gṛhastha was allowed legitimate enjoyments but his chief object was to clear off the three debts,—the debt to the gods, the debt to the Guru, the debt to the ancestors.

Having paid off his debts when the Gṛhastha found that he was getting old and his son had begot a son, he was to enter the third period of his life, Vānaprastha. This was the second and more intensive period of study, thought and discipline. The study and thought were meant to inform and cultivate the mind. Viveka and Vairāgya, discrimination and detachment, were always to be aimed at. When these were attained with some measure of success, the aspirant was to seek initiation into Sannyāsa. This fourth period of life, Sannyāsa, was meant to be a life of complete renunciation and contemplation.

The initiation into Sannyāsa, the climax of a life of discipline and deep thought led by a devout Hindu, is preceded by the recital of certain mantras by the Guru followed by the aspirant. The Supreme Self is invoked for the bestowal of light, truth and grace. The following piece is culled from the initiation of Sri Ramakrishna, as cited in *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*:

> 'Oh Supreme Self, I offer as oblations my vital forces; and controlling my senses, I set my mind on Thee alone. Oh Shining One, who directest every being, remove from me all blemishes that are obstacles to right knowledge and ordain so that the knowledge of the Reality, free from absurdities and contraries, may rise in me...'

The aspirant is asked by his Guru to make an oblation of all his desires into the sacred fire. Finally he makes an oblation of his sacred thread and the tuft of hair on his head.

The chief of the vows administered are the vow of chastity and the vow of poverty. These vows are very comprehensive. The vow of chastity implies that the new entrant into the order will look upon all womenfolk as his mothers, sisters, or daughters. He will remain chaste in word, thought and deed. He will give no private audience to women and so far as possible would remain away from their company. A complete sublimation of sex is aimed at. The vow of poverty ordains that the Sannyāsin will own no property, movable or immovable. Money is portable property. Because money in the olden days was invariably made of one metal or the other, the Sannyāsin was not allowed to touch coins or anything made of any metal. He was allowed a Kamaṇḍalu (begging bowl) and a wooden staff. His Kamaṇḍalu was to be made from the shell of some fruit. The staff was meant to support him and in case of need, to ward off the wild animals in the forest where he was to live. The Sannyāsin was to be satisfied with the minimum of apparel. He was to live on the minimum of food obtained by bhikṣā for which he could go to the nearest habitation only once in twenty-four hours, a little after midday, when people had finished their midday meal. The do's and dont's for Sannyāsins are given in some detail in the sixth chapter of the *Manu Smṛti*. The new Sannyāsin is very often given a new mantram. This he repeats and works into the very texture of his being during long hours of meditation.

The initiation into Sannyāsa is a new birth. It is fraught with more risk and danger than the physical birth. The Sannyāsin is given a new name. The Guru bestows upon him an ochre cloth. The ochre colour of the cloth is symbolical of fire. It is meant to remind the Sannyāsin of the sacred fire at the time of initiation in which he burnt away his desires and his past. For this reason it is a time-honoured custom that a Sannyāsin should not talk of his past. If a person through ignorance puts a question to a Sannyāsin about his past, the Sannyāsin parries the question. Contrariwise, if a Sannyāsin talks about his past, he is deemed not to have understood the true significance of Sannyāsa. The ritual of initiation is meant to represent a complete break with the past.

To return to Sri Ramakrishna and his taboo on 'woman and gold'. Sri Ramakrishna practised in full measure what he preached to others. It is well known that sometime after being

installed as the priest in the temple at Dakshineswar, he embarked on the following *sādhanā*. After a bath in the Gangā he sat on the bank. He took a clod of earth in one hand and a rupee or some other coins in the other hand. He then repeated, 'Rupee, earth—earth, rupee.' As he repeated this formula he went on changing the contents of one hand into the other, and ultimately threw the contents of both hands into the Gangā. This is how Sri Ramakrishna cultivated aversion for gold. This aversion grew to such an extent that if somebody placed a coin in his hand or touched his hand with a coin, his hand would get twisted and contorted and it would not become normal until the touch of the coin was removed. Students of the life of Sri Ramakrishna know how one day Narendra Nath Dutt, who became famous under the name of Swami Vivekananda, verified this for himself by concealing a coin under the Master's bed cloths.

Sri Ramakrishna held all women, young and old, as mothers. Women devotees used to visit him. A few minutes after their coming, he would tell them to go and see the temples. If they did not take the hint, it was his habit to walk out of the room himself. Thus he kept himself at a respectable distance from women. It puzzles some people when they come to know that Sri Ramakrishna was a married man. His wife, Sri Sarada Devi, has now come to be known as 'the Holy Mother'. Every one of the large number of disciples who lived with Sri Ramakrishna has testified to the fact that the alliance between their Master and his spouse was a purely holy one. It is also on record how the Master was tested even in this respect. The story is worth repetition.

Once Yogindra, who later came to be known as Swami Yogananda, was staying with the Master when Sri Sarada Devi had come to Dakshineswar. She was lodged in a room known as the Nahavat in the temple. On one particular night Yogindra woke up to find the Master's bed deserted, his waterpots in their places and the door of the room ajar. A terrible suspicion gripped his mind. We quote Yogindra's own words; "Has the Master gone to the Nahavat, where his wife lives? Does he also deny in action what he professes in words? No sooner had that thought crossed my mind than I became simultaneously overwhelmed with suspicion, fear and various other feelings. I decided, however cruel and unbecoming it might be, truth must be found ont. I then stood at a place near at hand and began watching the door of the Nahavat." A couple of minutes later he heard the slapping sound of slippers coming from the side of the Panchavati! The Master came up and stood before him and said affectionately, "Ah! you are standing here I see." Yogindra shrank within himself in shame and fear. The Master understood everything from his face but instead of taking offence, at once reassured him and said, "Well, it is all right. Observe a Sādhu in the daytime as well as at night and believe him then only."

To conclude, when wisdom dawned and I came to see the logic, the beauty and the far-sightedness of the restriction which the holy man of the Torrent Bed had laid down for himself and his visitors and made enquiries with a view to renewing my contact with him, I was informed, much to my chagrin, that he had laid down his mortal coil some time previously!

"You must see God; the Spirit must be realized—that is practical religion. Everything else is good so far as it leads to this one grand idea."

—*Swami Vivekananda*

ŚRĪ-BHĀṢYA

By Swami Vireswarananda

(*Continued from previous issue*)

Topic 4

THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION IN THE SCRIPTURES AS REGARDS THE FACT THAT BRAHMAN IS THE FIRST CAUSE

In the last section it was shown that the sense organs, Ākāśa etc. are dependent on Brahman and have their Self in Brahman, and thereby it was shown that the Pradhāna independent of Brahman cannot be the Cause of the world spoken of in the Śruti texts. Now it will be shown that all the Vedānta texts describing the Cause refer to Brahman alone and not to the Pradhāna at all, as that Cause.

कारणत्वेन चाकाशादिषु यथा व्यपदिष्टोक्तेः ।१।४।१४॥

14. And on account of (Brahman) as described being declared to be the cause of ether (Ākāśa) etc.

The Sānkhyas again try to show that the causal texts do not refer to one particular single cause. In the Śruti texts no particular single agent is declared to be the Cause of this world and therefore Brahman cannot be the sole First Cause. 'In the beginning, dear boy, this was Being alone, one only without a second' (*Chh.* 6. 2. 1), here Being is said to be the First Cause. In another place the text says, 'In the beginning this was indeed Non-being' (*Taitt.* 2.7.1); 'Before creation, this was Non-being. Then it became Being' (*Chh.* 3. 19. 1.) Since the texts mention different agents as the First Cause, it is not possible to say that they declare that Brahman alone is that First Cause. But on the other hand it is possible to infer that the Pradhāna is the First Cause. 'This then was Unmanifest' (*Bṛh.* 1. 4. 7), shows that before creation the universe existed in the Pradhāna in its unevolved condition and then 'It manifested itself as names and forms' (*Bṛh.* 1. 4. 7), which shows that the creation proceeds from the 'Unmanifest', i.e. that which is not distinguished by name and form. The 'Unmanifest' is none other than the Pradhāna. As this is eternal in its essential nature and the basis of all change, it produces the world of name and form. It can therefore be said to be both Being and Non-being. But Brahman cannot be said to be both without contradiction. So the texts like, 'It thought, may I be many' etc. have also to be appropriatively interpreted to refer to the Pradhāna, as meaning the state immediate before the evolution sets in. The terms, 'Self' and 'Brahman' are also to be interpreted as referring to the Pradhāna which is all-pervading and eminently great. Therefore the Pradhāna alone is the First Cause.

This Sūtra refutes this view. The word 'and' is used in the sense of 'but'. It is possible to declare from the Śruti texts that Brahman who is all-knowing, Lord of all etc. alone is the sole Cause of this world. Brahman as described is said to be the Cause of ether etc. As described means: (Brahman is that omnipotent, omniscient Cause) from which proceed the origin etc. (i.e. sustenance and dissolution) of this (world)' (*B. S.* 1. 1. 2). Brahman is introduced as the subject matter in the text, 'Brahman is Existence, Intelligence, Infinitude' (*Taitt.* 2.1) and then the text says, 'From that very Self ether sprang' where 'from that' refers to the Brahman mentioned earlier. Similarly in the text, 'It sent forth fire' (*Chh.* 6. 2. 3.) the word 'It' refers to Brahman mentioned earlier in that text, 'It thought, may I be many' (*Chh.* 6. 2. 3.). All accounts of creation therefore confirm the view that Brahman is the sole Cause of this world.

If that be so, how can the texts describe

It as Non-being. The next Sūtra explains it.

समाकर्षात् ।१।४।१५।।

15. On account of the connection (with the passages referring to Brahman, Non-being does not mean absolute Non-being).

'In the beginning this was indeed Non-being', here also the Non-being refers to Brahman alone. The section previous to this text says, 'Different from this Self consisting of Understanding is the Self consisting of Bliss' (*Taitt.* 2. 5); 'He, the Self desired, May I become many . . . He projected all this, whatever there is here. Having brought it forth, verily, He entered into it' etc. (*Taitt.* 2. 6). This latter text refers clearly to the Brahman consisting of Bliss referred to in the previous text. Further *Taitt.* 2.6 says 'On this there is this verse' and declares in *Taitt.* 2. 7, 'In the beginning this was indeed Non-being' etc. It is clear that *Taitt.* 2. 7 explains what is said in the previous section. Moreover we have the text, 'Out of fear of Him the wind blows' etc. (*Taitt.* 2. 8) which refers to Brahman.

In the state of dissolution when there is no distinction of name and form, Brahman not being connected with them is said to be Non-being. The text, 'This then was Unmanifest' (*Bṛh.* I. 4.7) does not refer to the Pradhāna but to Brahman whose body is not yet evolved into gross form. 'That same Being has penetrated into all these bodies up to the nail ends' (*Bṛh.* I. 4. 7), here the words, 'That same Being' refer to the 'Unmanifest' mentioned earlier and It is said to enter all beings and that It thereby becomes their ruler. *Chh.* 6. 3.2 also says that Brahman enters into creation. It enters into creation and becomes its ruler which is not possible for the insentient Pradhāna. The 'Unmanifest' therefore is Brahman when Its body is not developed into gross form but exists in a fine state. 'It developed Itself as names and forms' (*Bṛh* I. 4. 7), i.e. It evolved Its body into the gross form with the distinction of names and forms. In this interpretation the words 'It thought' etc. can be interpreted in their primary meaning. Therefore Brahman is the sole Cause.

(To be Continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

We are very thankful to Swami Nikhilanandaji, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, for having kindly sent us the poem on Kāli. The Swami writes that he has an 'idea of translating some of the devotional songs sung by Sri Ramakrishna and others, which we now use in the Math and Mission. Yogātma Chaitanya, who has been publishing some poems in American literary magazines and may have a volume published here next year, is putting them into verse. At present he is working mostly on songs to Kāli and Śiva' . . .

We are thankful to Sri Kumud Bandhu Sen, who is well known to our readers, for sharing with us a highly instructive incident from the life of Sri Ramakrishna, which he heard as far back as 1895. In 'the seat of the Divine Mother,' 'there (is) no gradation in a man's callings.' In fact, 'There (is) no employment so humble as (is) incompatible with the highest spiritual aspiration.' All 'work (is) divine . . . . so long as it (is) done honestly.' The truth of this statement is best illustrated in the simple, yet sweet and touching story of Rasik, the sweeper at the temple of Dakshineswar, as it is retold by the devout and learned

author. The old sweeper, who was no more than a 'dutiful menial' in the eyes of others, was to Sri Ramakrishna verily a 'denizen of heaven in human form' and no ordinary 'insignificant mortal.' . . .

'The true classics are those which blend in happy measure both form and matter.' The article on 'The Study of Literature' by Prof. M. K. Venkatarama Aiyar, M.A., Retired Professor of Philosophy of National College, Tiruchirapalli, is in itself an example of such blending,—rare in these days of overspecialization. The Professor combines in himself a wide knowledge of philosophy, literature, Sanskrit and English, art, and music, as the apt quotations taken from different sources, the series of pictures drawn from literature and philosophy, and light and effective touches on art, will show. The professor has a charmingly simple and direct style. Who can fail to agree with the characteristics of good literature which he mentions, such as its 'unfailing and universal appeal irrespective of age or clime' and 'communion' and 'constructive imagination' of the writer. . . which gives him the ability to 'use words with maximum effect' and not merely as 'mere frills and fringes added from without to enhance the beauty' ?. . . The last para has an important message to people in all walks of life. 'Man wants something more than bread. He has a soul in addition to, and quite independent of, his stomach. Mere economic prosperity will not make him happy. The soul craves for satisfaction. Before it can manifest itself and shine forth in its native splendour, much discipline and refinement will have to be gone through.' A timely warning, artistically presented, to most of us who are likely to overemphasize political and economic programmes *at the expense of inner refinement*. . . .

In the March '57 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata* we published an article on the 'Philosophy of Sāṁkhya in Upaniṣads' by Dr. (Miss) Anima Sen Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., of Patna University. In this issue, she discusses the distinguishing features of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of soul. With characteristic simplicity of expression and clarity of thought she shows the points of difference and similarity between this conception and those of the Sāṁkhya, Vedānta, and Buddhist systems. 'The Nyāya philosophy developed gradually in course of its fight against the Buddhistic philosophy. It was therefore not unlikely that in its resistance against this *Avaidika* religion, it had accepted (perhaps unconsciously) many thoughts and ideas of Buddhism.' As she rightly says, the subject of *Ātmatva* in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy 'is a point which needs mnch careful analysis and very critical reflections; and ...... there is still much scope for research work in this direction.' . . .

None has ever attained philosophic wisdom or ineffable bliss without meeting obstacles from within his own mind and from the surroundings outside which include well meaning relatives. Whether the aspirants lived in the Pre-Christian era anywhere, or on 'the eve of the French Revolution' in Europe, or within the past hundred years in India, their attitude towards wealth and sensual pleasures, —which may be conveniently brought under the term 'Kāminī-Kāñcana'—has remained essentially the same. Like Benedict Labre, they have shown a 'terrifying logic' in their summary rejection of bodily enjoyments and of everything else that stood in the way of their realization of 'the Eternal One'. Modern man is in a way favourably situated in the matter of making earthly life more comfortable and fruitful for himself and his fellowmen. For he has the tremendous advantages gained through science and technology. But unfortunately there is something in him that feeds on whatever it gets and tends to create in him greater greed in place of the greater contentment hoped for. That something, likewise, causes greater fear all around,—greater fight, destruction, and ruthlessness instead of abiding faith, peace, harmony, and inner sweetness. That something is precisely the 'Kāminī-Kāñcana' which genuine religious aspiration has ever tried to control and sub-

limate through suitable exercises. There is a stage, as all dimly see, beyond which power based on bodily features, on finance, or on military equipment can only endanger human unity and the higher values of life demanded by the intellect in its clearest moments. The more people feel within themselves all the implications of this limit ahead of them, the more quickly will they swing in an opposite direction and sincerely try to reach a Source of Strength that will eliminate dangers and intensify goodness. Signs of such an awakening are not wanting. The very fact that in spite of loud protestations to the contrary, people at heart do take delight in studying and discussing the lives of saintly men and women, points to it. It is in this light that we have to go through the lives of two saints, Saint Benedict Labre and the Saint of the Torrent Bed, published by us in a rather unusual manner, almost one behind the other, in this number of *Prabuddha Bharata*. . . . Mr. Paul Hourihan has very gently infused lofty emotions in his excellent description of Benedict's prolonged struggles. How can we forget the picture, he gives, of the young lover of God, aged about twenty-two, having 'at last' 'a glorious vision' and setting out to be 'an eternal pilgrim on all the highroads of central Europe, wandering in a profound obscurity and nameless isolation', 'an all-renouncing monk,—for whom the whole world would be his cloister'? There is a special pathos where he speaks of how Benedict 'fainted from malnutrition and disease,—and longing for God' or how after his death even the ordinary beggars who had 'gloated at the thought that here was one whom *they* could look down upon,—they too remembered' 'how he had lifted them all up in spite of themselves'. This feature, viz. the transformation of others, even doubters and scoffers, in a most imperceptibly sweet manner, in such a way that they would slowly begin to understand the principles of spiritual life, both theory and practice, can be detected in the lives of all types of saints. Dr. Mohanlal Sethi, D.Sc., P.E.S., has, after starting his article in the manner of a friendly talk about his early 'excursion into holy land', brought out this truth with as delicate and sure a touch as Mr. Hourihan. We are thankful to both writers.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

NOTABLE HOROSCOPES. BY SRI BANGALORE VENKATA RAMAN, EDITOR, THE ASTROLOGICAL MAGAZINE, *"Sri Rajeswari", Bangalore 3. Pp. 415. Price Rs. 7.50, or Sh. 15.*

Prof. B. V. Raman's signal service to the cause of Astrology is well known to thoughtful men. About this book particularly, he writes: 'It is the fascinating quest I have for astrology that has made me bring out *Notable Horoscopes*, and if by my humble labours I could make others take a more lively interest in this sublime science, my labours will not be in vain.' As a matter of fact, 'Even in the more liberal platform the question of planets and men seldom comes out in open.' 'It takes time for the acceptance of astrological advances,—advances made in the face of rabid, destructive and damaging criticisms of the Press and the Politician.'

There are 77 studies in this book. 'Except in two or three cases, first the "Special Features" of the horoscope are examined, the discussion mostly bearing on the combinations which could have produced the native whose chart is under consideration.' 'How a particular event could have happened under a particular daśā and bhukti has been clearly discussed.' 'Finally, under "Remarks", the horoscope is summed up, bringing out the peculiar combinations that have made the native what he was or is.'

'So far as the authentic horoscopes are concerned, the dates have been secured from trustworthby sources.' 'Horoscopes of Krishna, Buddha, Sankara etc., though "speculative" have been constructed on a sound basis' from literary and other sources after careful study and scrutiny. Those who think that Ādi Śaṅkara lived 'sometime between the middle of the seventh and the first quarter of the

ninth centuries' would do well to go through the elaborate footnote given by Prof. Raman. Why should they not take the trouble to co-ordinate facts scattered in various books with the 'Guru-parampara list preserved in Śringeri Mutt', as he has done? 'It looks as though these scholars have confused Ādi Śaṅkara with his name-sake Abhinava Śaṅkara who was the Guru of Kāmakoti Peetha and the 36th in succession to Ādi Śaṅkara. This Abhinava Śaṅkara, a very learned and pious man, was born in 788 A.D.' He too, like Ādi Śaṅkara, 'toured all over India, held discussions with learned men and conquered them intellectually.' We shall refer to two examples more: First about Swami Vidyāraṇya, 'for the exact details' of whose birth the author is 'indebted to Prof. P. S. Sastri' who in his turn 'got them from Śrī Kalyāṇānanda Bhārati (Guntur). The second is Hyder Ali for the details of whose birth, information was received from various sources, including 'the grandson of Dewan Purnayya who was Hyder's colleague.'

The educative value of the book is considerable. How did Budha-Āditya Yoga work in particular individuals? What was the directional influence under which Bandhana Yoga operated in the life of Sri Aurobindo? Mark the position of Venus and then judge whether the natives were not absolutely chaste,—say Vivekānanda (p. 196) or Jesus (p. 41). Or take the life of Einstein. He has 'Mars lord of 6th and 11th in the 8th with Rāhu. Ever since his Daśā commenced, life had been made intolerable for him in Germany.' Each chart is examined from various useful angles like this. There is possibility to make further approaches still. This is amply illustrated in the Editorial of The Astrological Magazine for Feb. '58, where the strong and weak points in the horoscopes of Tipu and Napoleon are clearly analysed. In this book we have a presentation to help serious students, and make sincere doubters pause and reflect deeply.

A SOURCE BOOK IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY. EDITED BY SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN AND CHARLES A. MOORE. *Published by Oxford University Press, Mercantile Buildings, Lal Bazar, Calcutta-1* (Agents in India, Burma and Ceylon for the educational books published by George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., and for all books published by various universities like Columbia, Princeton etc., and by the Commonwealth Fund.) Pp. xxix + 684. Price Rs. 21/-

In bringing out this book, the editors and publishers have done a signal service in the cause of a closer and better understanding of Indian Philosophy among the English-knowing public here as well as abroad (though it is primarily meant for the Western readers). As the very name indicates, it is intended to bring them nearer to and put them into touch with the 'source material .... (of) all the major philosophical systems and perspectives of India.' The book contains representative selections from the Ṛgveda, the Upaniṣads, all the major systems of Indian Philosophy (including Jainism and Buddhism), and the whole of Bhagavadgītā and Dhammapada. The selections are made so as to provide a 'convenient and usable form' of source material for a 'comprehensive general study of all the systems and of India's basic social philosophy.' The General Introduction gives a brief account of the chief characteristics of Indian Philosophy and a history of its development through the centuries. The short explanatory introduction to each section is bound to be of great help in grasping the full implications of the selections that follow. The last section deals with 'contemporary thought' as given expression to in the works of Sri Aurobindo and S. Radhakrishnan. Explaining the object of publishing the book, the Preface says: 'Part of the function of this volume is to "prove" both the substantiality and the wide range of Indian philosophy and also to convince skeptical Westerners that much of Indian philosophy is *philosophy* not only in its unique Indian forms but also in accordance with the strictest standards of open-mindedness, critical analysis, and rational investigation.' In the introduction to the selection from Kautilya's Artha-śāstra, it is said that they 'are given to show that ancient Indian thinkers were not uninterested in practical and theoretical problem of economics and politics.' On the other hand, they 'combined idealism with a high degree of realism.' This volume should go a long way in removing from the minds of the unsympathetic critics the misconceptions regarding these as well as other aspects of Indian Philosophy.

S. K.

ASTROLOGICAL MAGAZINE, 1958 ANNUAL NUMBER. *Raman Publications, "Sri Rajeswari", Seshadripuram, Bangalore-3 (India). Pp. 233. Price Rs. 3. 75.*

This Volume maintains its predecessors' standard of excellence. The learned Editor makes it abundantly clear, as on previous occasions, that "Astrology, as developed by the Hindus, is not based upon a conception of hopeless fatalism." "Hereditary propensities", ascertainable with the aid of one's horoscope, "are capable of being influenced for good or bad to a certain extent by a suitable exercise of what is ordinarily called will power." A little space is devoted to speak about "a certain section of upstarts" who indulge in "undignified criticisms of Hindu Astrology" or "who pose themselves as authorities in the science." After giving a bird's eye view of what is in store according to astrological

installed as the priest in the temple at Dakshineswar, he embarked on the following *sādhanā*. After a bath in the Gangā he sat on the bank. He took a clod of earth in one hand and a rupee or some other coins in the other hand. He then repeated, 'Rupee, earth—earth, rupee.' As he repeated this formula he went on changing the contents of one hand into the other, and ultimately threw the contents of both hands into the Gangā. This is how Sri Ramakrishna cultivated aversion for gold. This aversion grew to such an extent that if somebody placed a coin in his hand or touched his hand with a coin, his hand would get twisted and contorted and it would not become normal until the touch of the coin was removed. Students of the life of Sri Ramakrishna know how one day Narendra Nath Dutt, who became famous under the name of Swami Vivekananda, verified this for himself by concealing a coin under the Master's bed cloths.

Sri Ramakrishna held all women, young and old, as mothers. Women devotees used to visit him. A few minutes after their coming, he would tell them to go and see the temples. If they did not take the hint, it was his habit to walk out of the room himself. Thus he kept himself at a respectable distance from women. It puzzles some people when they come to know that Sri Ramakrishna was a married man. His wife, Sri Sarada Devi, has now come to be known as 'the Holy Mother'. Every one of the large number of disciples who lived with Sri Ramakrishna has testified to the fact that the alliance between their Master and his spouse was a purely holy one. It is also on record how the Master was tested even in this respect. The story is worth repetition.

Once Yogindra, who later came to be known as Swami Yogananda, was staying with the Master when Sri Sarada Devi had come to Dakshineswar. She was lodged in a room known as the Nahavat in the temple. On one particular night Yogindra woke up to find the Master's bed deserted, his waterpots in their places and the door of the room ajar. A terrible suspicion gripped his mind. We quote Yogindra's own words; "Has the Master gone to the Nahavat, where his wife lives? Does he also deny in action what he professes in words? No sooner had that thought crossed my mind than I became simultaneously overwhelmed with suspicion, fear and various other feelings. I decided, however cruel and unbecoming it might be, truth must be found out. I then stood at a place near at hand and began watching the door of the Nahavat." A couple of minutes later he heard the slapping sound of slippers coming from the side of the Panchavati! The Master came up and stood before him and said affectionately, "Ah! you are standing here I see." Yogindra shrank within himself in shame and fear. The Master understood everything from his face but instead of taking offence, at once reassured him and said, "Well, it is all right. Observe a Sādhu in the daytime as well as at night and believe him then only."

To conclude, when wisdom dawned and I came to see the logic, the beauty and the farsightedness of the restriction which the holy man of the Torrent Bed had laid down for himself and his visitors and made enquiries with a view to renewing my contact with him, I was informed, much to my chagrin, that he had laid down his mortal coil some time previously!

"You must see God; the Spirit must be realized—that is practical religion. Everything else is good so far as it leads to this one grand idea."

—*Swami Vivekananda*

were graduate students, and a much smaller number were classed as "special students." Students from the Near and Middle East included a higher percentage of undergraduates; students from India and Africa a higher percentage of graduates.

In general, foreign students in the U.S. concentrated on engineering (22.3%), then the humanities (21%), social sciences (14.4%), followed by the natural and physical sciences, medical sciences, business administration, education and agriculture. More than one-third of the Near and Middle Eastern students studied engineering, while African students preferred the social sciences, engineering and the humanities, in that order. The report notes that almost half of the foreign students in the U.S. were studying at their own expense.'

'During 1956-57, 6,741 physicians from 88 countries trained in the United States, a sharp increase over the 6,033 reported last year. Among the chief countries of origin for doctors training in the U.S. were Turkey which sent 427 doctors; India, 203; Iran, 183.

To study the reverse side of the coin, the Institute states that 9,887 Americans studied at 387 institutions in 54 foreign countries during the past academic year. In addition, 1,492 faculty members of U.S. colleges and universities were abroad on teaching or research assignments. While the majority of these were in Europe, 178 faculty members were in the Near and Middle East and 47 in Africa.

One conclusion emerges from these varied statistics: international exchanges of students, professors and physicians are increasing, and from the resultant exposure to diverse cultures and ideas must come greater understanding and friendship between nations. As a West Coast newspaper, the *Los Angeles Mirror*, said in an editorial on the subject recently: "It (exchange of persons) may be slow in showing results. But we think it is sure." '

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RIOT RELIEF RAMANATHAPURAM, MADRAS

The relief work which was started in the riot-affected areas of Ramanathapuram district on October 4, '57 was concluded on December 28, '57. Of about Rs. 85,000/- spent in this relief work, Rs. 5,000/- came from the public and the rest from the Government of Madras. The Mission also received gifts in kind and other types of help from the public, the Government, officials and non-officials. Our thanks go to them; and to the Press for its helpful co-operation.

Covering the entire riot-affected areas of the four taluks, the Mission gave relief to 3,252 families of 124 villages. Of these the Mission supplied building materials to burnt houses, as shown in the following table.

Taluk	No. of villages.	No. of families.	Burnt houses rebuilt.
Paramakudi	2	108	105 houses in 1 village.
Mudukulathur	7	298	257 ,, ,, 7 villages.
Aruppukottai	40	951	395 ,, ,, 19 ,,
Sivaganga	75	1895	466 ,, ,, 18 ,,
	124	3252	1223 ,, ,, 45 ,,

Total figures of distribution

The other items and figures of distribution are as follows:

4,491 sarees; 3,861 dhotis; 350 children's garments; 394 adults' shirts; 445 mats; 450 wall-lamps; 16,250 aluminium vessels; 444 measures of rice; 1,98,750 coconut leaves for thatching; 1,97,100 palmyra leaves; 29,906 bamboos; 59,440 bamboo and areca-nut splits; 2,155 palmyra rafters; 22,235 coils of ropes (big and small); 10,689 Mangalore tiles and bricks; and Rs. 1,713.75 carpentry charges.

Apart from the general relief given, the Mission extended some special help to: the Veerambal Church, Arungulam Primary School, Kalathur and Tiruppachetty community halls, and those five families of Keelathooval village who lost their male members. In addition to these, some common grinding, pounding and husking stones were supplied to the Kogandam village where these things were broken to pieces.

Due to panic 73 families of Arungulam, 25 families of Kogandam, 78 families of Elanjambur and 33 families of Karasakulam had deserted their hearths and homes and were living here and there under trees or with relatives in other villages. As the Mission continued to get the houses in other villages reconstructed by supplying housing materials, carpentry and labour charges, the deserters of the above-mentioned villages gradually came of themselves, and with relief given by the Mission, got resettled in their homes.