

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LXIII

AUGUST 1958

No. 8



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

YOUR CHILD

Mother, I am the child of your arms, your little child;
Brush away this dust and take me, Mother, in your arms.
Because I am soiled with dust, do not push me away.

All day I played, and now at nightfall I have returned;
Back to their own homes my playmates, too, have gone their ways.

How many thorns pricked my feet! How many heavy blows
This body bore! How many times I fell to the ground!
The others trampled me underfoot and went their ways.

Mother, no one looked back for me, not a single one;
The darkness of night closed in about me lonely there.
And then it was I thought of you with tears in my eyes.

—Translated from the Bengali original by
Brahmachari Yogatma Chaitanya

AMBROSIA

PURITY AND A NOBLE IDEAL

1. Be pure and you will understand religion, sooner or later. To the good, Lord reveals himself, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa did to Arjuna.

2. Some people criticize those who take meat and fish. In this *Kali Yuga* it is allowed. What matters is pure life. It matters little if you take or do not take this or that kind of food. There are people who take meat yet live a pure life and call on God; and others who do not take it yet live an impure life and have no faith in God. Man, be pure and receive the Lord's grace.

3. There are *śāstras* that supply food, cooked and uncooked, to *sādhus*. But this charity food does not suit all. It is spiritually degrading. For the donors give the money with many motives; and those who take food purchased with that money are to part with their spirituality to satisfy the desires of the donors. So unless the *sādhus* practise very hard, and long hours, they cannot save spirituality for themselves. All is spent in meeting the demands of the donors. So the idle *sādhus* get degraded in that way.

4. Our Master used to be very pleased if he noticed cleanly habits in some. He got annoyed with dirty people. His idea was that man should be clean both physically and morally.

5. *Sādhus* are leaving the world. It is deplorable. Who knows what evils will stalk the earth! Their passing away bodes evil. Bad times are upon us. Master said, 'Absence of *sādhus* is indicative of coming calamity. The very presence of *sādhus* is a great check on the evil-doers.'

6. O yes, you can take food supplied by Muslims, if they give you respectfully. Anything given in reverence is pure. Maintain purity at all costs.

7. Know the Truth or else vain is your life. Try to know Truth by all means.

Where God who is Truth is, there cannot be any enmity. If you fail to work hard for knowing the Truth, it will not reveal itself to you, nor will hatred leave your heart. Untruth and malice are first cousins. Peace reigns in a family where Truth is honoured. If one brother earns more and another less, the one who earns more tells the other, if he finds him sad on that score: 'Why are you sad, brother? Whatever I earn is for the whole family. How long are we in this world that we should seek to hoard money? When we are householders, our concern is to see that the children get food and education. What more is money for?' He is a really good brother. A good wife says to her husband: 'He is your own brother. Should you not take good care of him? How many days are we to live in this world?' From such a family quarrels are miles off. As one grows strong in righteousness, neighbours, even strangers, are regarded as brothers. There reign faith, devotion, and liberation from bondage.

SELFLESS LOVE

1. Man should love God for love's sake. It is very rare though. The milkmaids of Vṛndāvana had that kind of love. They wanted nothing in return.

2. When one has this real love for the Lord, one throws off all other things of the world,—objects of enjoyment, name and fame, consideration for human opinions. All things are evanescent. Love alone is the thing.

3. It is indeed a difficult job to go on serving the sick month after month. One cannot serve one's parents like that, not to speak of others,—one gets tired. If, however, one can do it in the right spirit one is sure to be immensely benefited.

4. To develop such love is a tremendous affair. Without the special grace of the Lord it is not possible. The love that the worldly

people display is selfish. Can you expect selfless love of them? There are of course exceptions; they are fortunate indeed. To love without the least expectation of return is something that is not of this earth; it is heavenly.

5. There are certain things which a man is especially fond of, as if his whole being is in it. When a man develops that kind of love for the Lord he will receive His grace.

6. Ours is infatuation, not love. Real love is something transcendental. It is the highly spiritual souls, divine incarnations, who know what love is. *Sādhus*, when they realize God, have a taste of this love; and actuated by this love, they busy themselves with removing sufferings of others. All their thoughts turn round one idea—how to do good to people. Now such *sādhus* have become very rare. The garb is there, the quality has disappeared.

7. Yours is mere talk of love. Love is born after strenuous *sādhana*. Creatures to love? Impossible. When the Lord's grace descends on a human being, then alone can he have an idea of true love.

8. By harming others, man wants to attain his end. This is his nature. He finds joy in the fulfilment of his desire and he cares little for the means he adopts. But true bliss is that which is attained without causing harm to any creature. This comes when one's self is killed outright. If you want to test this bliss, Lord's grace is necessary; and grace descends when one's life becomes unbearable without Him. So go on calling on Him unceasingly, longingly.

GRATEFULNESS

1. Man is so perverse that if you do a good turn to him, take him out of some diffi-

culty, he will not remember it; he forgets, and in consequence suffers. True man is he who remembers his benefactors. It passes my understanding how a man can forget such friends. It is but proper that such ungrateful creatures suffer.

2. Man benefits himself by his gratefulness and the Lord is pleased with him. People hate an ungrateful man; and in times of future difficulties no-one comes to his aid. His sufferings are increased by repentance.

3. Benefactors are to be enshrined in the hearts of the beneficiaries.

4. Once, on his way to Almora, Swamiji fell down exhausted on the road. A Muslim fakir gave him a fruit to eat and the Swami revived. Several years after, when the Swami returned to India with his international fame and was again in Almora he chanced upon the same fakir. Immediately the Swami ran up to him and pressed two coins into his palm. Surprised, I asked, 'Why do you give two rupees to this vagrant?' He gave me the antecedent and remarked, 'Well, Latu, do you talk of two rupees? The help he rendered to me in my dire moment is priceless. My gratitude to him is unbounded.'

5. The America-returned Swamiji went to pay his respects to Rama Babu, who was then ill. The room was crowded. The Swami picked up Rama Babu's shoes and placed them near the latter's feet. At this Rama Babu cried out in haste, 'Bilé,¹ Hold, hold! What are you doing?' Calmly did the Swami reply, 'Ramadada, I am that old Bilé of yours. Can I ever forget the benefit you have done to me?' It was Rama Babu who took Narendra to Sri Ramakrishna.

¹ Swamiji's childhood name of endearment in family.

REFINEMENT OF REACTIONS

BY THE EDITOR

Pure reasoning, like a strong lion, tears to pieces the elephants of great error that ravage the lotus beds of the mind.

He in whose mind, resembling a clear lake, reasoning faculties shine like a cluster of lotuses, holds his head aloft and stands exalted like the snow-capped mountain, Himālayas.

The mind that is fixed on the unshakable foundation of virtue and whose foremost characteristic is the courageous pursuit of Truth, is not shaken by afflictions but stands steady like a painted creeper which outside winds can never move.

The mind rendered pure through good company and the cultivation of contentment, self-control, and proper reasoning meets with prosperity and success like the king who has wise ministers to guide him.¹

I

Life compels us to react. It throws us into various situations, mainly unexpected and often painful. If we choose to remain indifferent, we only make matters more difficult. In the first place, refusal to act is itself a kind of reaction,—a most dangerous one when repeated and turned into a habit. Secondly, if we refuse to make a wise move, the problem does not end with our missing a chance to go ahead. For others may act wrongly, injuring not only themselves but also ourselves and the rest of society as well. All progress, thus, whether individual or collective, depends upon our learning to react promptly and in ways that draw out and coordinate the virtues present in every context. Religion and philosophy, at their best, offer disciplines to help us learn this supreme art.

There is deep significance in the comparison

¹ Ālūna-hṛdayāmbhojān mahāmoha-matanga-jān
Vidārayati śuddhātmā vicāro nāma kesarī.

Yoga Vāsishtha, Mumukṣu, xiv.8.

Mānase sarasi svacche vicāra-kamalotkaraḥ

Nūnam vikasito yasya Himavān-iva bhāti saḥ.
Ibid, 16.

Dharma-bhittau bhṛśam lagnām

dhiyam dhairya-dhuram gatām

Ādhayo na vidhunvanti

vātaś-citra-latām iva. *Ibid*, xviii.24.

Sat-sanga-santoṣa-śama-

vicāravatisan-matau

Pravartante mantri-vare

rājanīva jaya-śriyaḥ. *Ibid*, xvi.26.

of the human personality to a car.² Its sense organs are made to stand for impetuous steeds, the mind for the reins, and the power of judgement for the charioteer. The implication is that unless the driver combines in himself a variety of talents, the owner of the car and every other factor involved would be wrecked owing to the unchecked behaviour of the horses. He must be thoroughly conversant with the nature of the road, and he must be proficient in releasing and directing the energy of his pulling team. It is necessary to bear in mind that the students who were given the example of the car were familiar not merely with the slow-moving conveyances of the civilians of those days but also with the fast vehicles used with deadly efficacy in the field of battle. They knew that a careless turn of a military car meant the death of the hero

² Rathaḥ sthānur-dehas-turaga-racanā

cendriya-gatiḥ

Parispando vāto vahana-kalitānanda-viśayaḥ

Paro'ṇur-vā dehī jagati viharāmīty'anaghayā

Dhiyā dr̥ṣṭe tattve ramaṇam aṭanam jāgatam

idam. *Ibid*, xii.22.

This body of ours is the car and these organs are its horses. Our very breathings may be compared to the winds blowing on it and our mind, whose property is movement, to the reins for regulating the car's course. I, the embodied one, enjoying the bliss resulting from the proper control of this vehicle, am a spark of the Supreme Reality, sportfully moving in this world. Realizing thus, with the intellect pure and fully illumined one finds it delightful indeed to sojourn in this world.

occupying it, and probably defeat in the war and subjection to the conqueror.

Another example used was connected with the sea. It was not even hinted that wisdom consisted in avoiding the sea altogether, so that one could be safe not only from drowning but even from beatings by a few rough waves. The example, on the contrary, implied a bold and purposeful crossing of the deep. Naturally it suggested the need to employ one's resources to prepare a suitable vessel for doing it. What is more, it stressed the importance of preliminary training in seamanship. Even children knew in those days that successful navigation depended upon the ability to manipulate sails and the rudder,—to take advantage of favourable winds and to withstand the onslaughts of storms and boisterous waves. Thus, whatever examples were used, the lessons conveyed were always of a positive kind. They emphasized the value of fearlessness, of untiring efforts, of accurate gauging of prevalent forces, of quick judgements, and of timely manoeuvres. The refrain of every song that inculcated discipline invariably ran along some of these essential keys. It said, in short: "We ought to rely on our own personal exertions, attain clarity of understanding by studying scriptures and by keeping the company of the virtuous and thus fully equipped, cross the ocean of worldliness."³ When Truth is realized, "the journey of this world becomes delightful" indeed.⁴

II

All people, however, do not react in the same way to any given situation. In fact, they cannot; for tastes, temperaments, and capacities differ from man to man. In a way this diversity is good. For where one is weak, another can help him with the requisite strength and support. Besides, where all are endowed

³ Tasmāt pauruṣam āśritya
sac-chāstraiḥ sat-samāgamaiḥ
Prajñām amalātām nītvā
samsāra-jaladhīm taret. *Ibid.*, vi.24.

⁴ Cf. the two stanzas prior to xii.22, which end with this refrain: 'ramaṇam aṭanam jāgatam idam'.

with skills of different kinds, society itself stands to gain enormously by a judicious pooling of their resources.

How a well planned coordination makes for speedy progress can be seen by examining any cross section of social life, taken at random. For the sake of simplification, let us take the example of a tract of land whose physical features can be registered more or less alike by the eyes of everyone who looks at it. Let us specify further that it has a running stream on one side and that it gradually rises to high wooded hills, with rocks and boulders overlooking the entire scene. As it stands, no tourist will take the trouble to visit it; but one who knows agriculture will. For his trained mind will show him that he can have there enough land for himself, with not many competitors to purchase it. He will also mark that there is sufficient good water for man and beast as well as for cultivation of food-crops. He can thus confidently shift his family and animals there. The construction of a dwelling house and barn will not present any serious problem. For the main materials, stone and wood, are in plenty and near at hand. What is needed is the sheer labour to cut and remove them to the chosen site. If one man takes the initial risk and does something profitable, we can rest assured, others of the same bent of mind will hasten to copy his example. Thus, within a short time, that land would become a colony of enterprising farmers occupying its most fertile parts.

At this stage other and more far-reaching changes would begin. How can people with an eye for making profits through trade fail to notice the heaps of cereals and other edible products available there for sale? The coming of merchants means the construction of better types of houses, with special godowns and offices for transacting business. This, in its turn, means the arrival and settling down of various specialists like carpenters, masons, smiths, tailors, washermen and so on. Every added facility is bound to attract some one

who has been on the look out for it and who will be prepared to take a little risk himself to open up a new line with his own talent. As reactions follow one another in this fashion, we can expect a prosperous town to come up there as years roll by. The clear perception of a genuine need ordinarily provides the mental background for a series of reactions, each later one correcting and supplementing its predecessor, till finally the need is adequately met. With the increase of population, there would be a proportionate multiplication of requirements. And by and by social responses would condense into visible form as educational and medical institutions, meeting halls, markets, banks, transport services and the like. We may call this the beautiful pattern of reactions.

An ugly pattern will not be slow to raise its head as well. Human nature being what it is, the sight of wealth and luxury enjoyed by a few is likely to awaken jealousy and malice in some. Why this should happen we can never easily decide. What we can safely say is this: The desire to experience sensual delights is equally spontaneous and insistent in everyone. The method of securing them, however, is bound to vary according to the cultural level and the working capacities of the people concerned. As these qualities admit of numerous permutations and combinations, the differences in reactions are practically endless. Let us take a few examples. Who is not familiar with the sensitive type of person who has been living in comfort but whom adversity deprives of his accustomed pleasures all on a sudden? He may probably try his best to keep up an air of being unruffled by his loss. But it may rankle in his heart all the same. In the resulting clash of thoughts it will not be surprising if baser emotions appear in his mind now and then, making him more miserable than otherwise. As against men of refinement like him, there can be many whose longing for pleasures is as powerful but who are too badly equipped from the start to compete in honest

work and to procure them through normal payment. Most antisocial activities and even crimes are developed forms of little perverse reactions to painful pressures. There can be a combination of poverty, absence of educational opportunities, compelling desires, and the existence of tempting fields, often unguarded, right in front. It is such settings that give the earliest suggestions to attempt short cuts to enjoyment through thefts, robbery, organized dacoity and the like. A more subtle form of enjoyment consists in the continuous exercise of power, of social or political authority,—of what religious people call 'name and fame'. It is well known that in the scramble for it, the usual pattern of reaction includes misrepresentations, intrigues, and the deliberate creation of factions to overthrow actual or possible rivals. There is no guarantee that the little town of our example will be safe from these troubles. There too, as prosperity increases, some immature minds will be found to leave enough doors ajar for mischief-makers to enter and start pernicious movements. Society as a whole will then have to react by setting up the police, law courts, and even a well armed force.

History shows how tourists in the past often visited wealthy lands to reconnoitre and prepare the ground for the quiet entry of astute schemers a little later. We also know how in medieval days every wooded hill with big rocks and boulders attracted the attention of military adventurers. What more convenient place could be got than such an eminence for erecting a fort? From it the surrounding territory for miles in all directions could be dominated with ease. Though in matters of theorizing about 'one world', moderners have made spectacular advances, yet in actual practice the old pattern of reaction, viz. to seize, exploit, and domineer wherever a foothold on any pretext is got, continues unchanged. In fact the progress of science has shown that there is inexhaustible wealth almost anywhere,—in the sands on the seashore, under the snow-cap at the pole, and in the

limitless 'outer space'. Where there is wealth, quarrels may follow! Knowledge, as it stands, thus offers two equal chances: to react in a beautiful way or in an ugly, destructive way. We can either enrich human life and lift it to sublime heights, or debase it or even annihilate it by clinging perversely to narrow sectional views and fighting for them. Race, religion, language, economics, and politics have their legitimate places in constructive work. It cannot be a sign of knowledge or of evolution to put wrong values on them and employ them consciously to cause splits instead of unity, or hatred in place of love.

III

The remedy for sectional views is a type of education that leads to more and more inclusive views. In this matter, religious and philosophic disciplines can give us utmost help. What is required is that their explanations should not be designed for winning polemical victories and swelling the ranks of formal 'converts'. The idea of spiritual 'liberation' is not an enemy of individual and collective benefits that social, economic, or political measures can ordinarily confer. What spiritual men have condemned is the rigid attitude that fails to see anything beyond the apparently disconnected creatures and objects of the sense world. What they have pointed out is that there is a vast area of Existence beyond the range of the senses, that it is not exclusive of the perceived fields, but that it contains within it a Supreme Creative Principle harmonizing everything. How are we justified in assuming that we have an independent power to deal with problems and to solve them satisfactorily? To complete the picture we have also to understand that there is a most reliable Principle regulating every movement of the environment within which we live and work. It is that Principle which makes us recognize problems, stimulates us to act, receives our effort and manifests the *result*, as a *reaction* from Its side, according to Its own laws of Being. A unified outlook

demands that we should intelligently connect our birth, growth, perceptions, hopes, judgments, endeavours, and achievements with that all-embracing Principle. We may look upon It as a Person; in that case the steps we take to unify our outlook will be accompanied by a feeling of reverent adoration which will be eminently satisfying in itself. If we prefer to regard It as an Eternal Principle, the element of worship may be lacking but not that of certainty or of abiding trust.

By whichever methods the unification is achieved, the impact on the field of work is bound to be considerable. Other factors being equal, the man who plans and acts with the constant awareness of the Creative Background for all evolution must succeed in evoking surer and mightier responses from every level he contacts. This will not be possible for one who believes that he has to wrest his gains from a grudging, if not hostile, material environment. Every conceptual barrier causes a diversion of the energy that should go into confident forward movement. The assumption that improvements can come only as the final result of a prolonged fight with the environment is a formidable barrier. It not only creates an undercurrent of doubt and fear, but also alters the structure of the worker's personality into that of an engine of destruction. When it enters any field, its performance will be limited to threats and challenges, or smashings and levellings. It will be without the delicate limbs that can heal wounds or give an assuring touch. It will be unable, for want of proper instruments, to revive hopes, rouse self-reliance, or release the energy of virtuous endeavour in the persons whom it faces. If such limbs are to develop, there must be the pressure of the right attitude and aspiration from the start. In other words, conceptual barriers must be eliminated. Philosophy has to be learned and applied in such a way as to accomplish this. The last barrier will disappear only when misguided men and apparently insentient Nature are realized as nothing but temporary sense-

readings of what is, in truth, an eternally Perfect Being,—the constant Witness of the very readings themselves. With this realization the last inhibitions will vanish. Work then becomes spontaneous and attains the refinement ordinarily associated with worship in a shrine.

IV

So far as Indian philosophical ideas are concerned, we find that they were not meant to be put into practice only by those who led a retired life and restricted their activities to simple teaching. An impartial study of available literature shows that these ideas were exemplified also in the lives of people who commanded armies and governed kingdoms. It was understood that spiritual insight infuses a rare type of vigour,⁵ surpassing the one derived from the intellect that bases its judgments exclusively on sense data. Unless an administrator knew, by direct experience, what illumination meant, how could he enable his subjects to canalize their efforts to attain it through graded steps? If society as a whole is to be trained to drop sectional views and adopt a more and more unified outlook, from where can it draw the necessary inspiration? It has to come primarily from those persons who are so stationed as to be able to mould the thoughts and emotions of the masses,—i.e. from the rulers and others who occupy key positions in social, political and similar fields.

Some of the stories that deal with spiritual disciplines are highly suggestive. For example,

⁵ Cf. Śaṅkara Bhāṣya on *Gītā*, iv. 1. 'This Yoga, treated of in the two preceding discourses (imam adhyāya-dvayena uktam yogam), I taught to Vivasvat . . . to infuse strength into the Kṣatriyas, the rulers of the world (jagat-paripālayitṛṇām kṣatriyāṇām bala-ādhānāya). It is only when possessed of the strength of this Yoga that they can protect Brahma, the spiritual Ideal and tradition. When the spiritual Ideal, comprising Teaching and Administration, Brahma and Kṣatra, is well upheld that becomes adequate for regulating the affairs of the world. (Tena yoga-balena yuktāḥ samarthāḥ bhavanti Brahma parirakṣitum. Brahma-kṣatre paripālite jagatparipālayitum alam.)

there is the story of Naciketas. It shows that even children before puberty,⁶ can take an irrevocable decision to pursue Truth and shake off everything standing between them and the final goal. The Teacher's words of appreciation when Naciketas refused to yield to temptation are worthy of recall. For they show what inner qualifications must be acquired before higher perceptions can arise. He said, in effect: 'O Naciketas, how intelligent you are! I have tried my best to tempt you into accepting various objects of desire such as children, and charming attendants like celestial nymphs. But you have sternly rejected them, being fully convinced of their ephemeral and sapless nature. You have carefully avoided the contemptible path of wealth which is trodden by the ignorant and in which the thoughtless come to grief.' What the boy insisted on knowing, when framed in its final form, stood thus: Apart from what is commonly called virtue and its opposite, vice; apart from visible results and their subtle causes; apart also from things conditioned by time in its three modes, past, present, and future,—apart from these and other limiting factors, if you see or know Anything, please tell me That.' The main discourse which forms the answer deals with the eternally Perfect Principle, which can and should be realized by all. At the close of the teaching we get the statement that not only Naciketas but everyone else who transforms his outlook as that boy did will surely attain the insight with which he was so early blest. Referring to the technical term 'Ātman', the commentator says: Its derivative meaning is 'what pervades, what absorbs, what enjoys objects here, and what makes the continuous existence of the universe possible'.⁷ Insight, unified

⁶ Kumāram prathama-vayasam . . . a-prāpta-prajanana-śaktim, bālam eva. śraddhā . . . praviṣṭavati . . . Tvam punaḥ punaḥ mayā pralobhyamānaḥ api priyān putrādīn, priyarūpān ca apsaraḥ prabhṛtilakṣaṇān kāmān . . . teṣām anityatva-asāratvādidōṣān (cintayan), . . . tyaktavān asi, aho buddhi-mattā tava! Śaṅkara Bhāṣya, *Kātha*, i.2 and ii.3.

⁷ Praticyeva ātma-śabdo rūḍho loke, na anyatra (to denote the inner spirit, not to denote any other).

outlook, and realization of the Ātman cover the same ground and mean the same 'goal'.

Turning to another valuable text, we find a classification of virtuous people themselves into four types.⁸ It is natural that it must include 'the wise man who, as knowing the Truth already, is ever steadfast and fully devoted to the One all-embracing Principle.' He will find no other object of worship whichever way he turns. The list must also surely include the enquirer who vaguely feels the existence of this One, and struggles for a direct experience of It. It is remarkable that the text in question gives the other two places in the list to 'the distressed' and 'the seeker of wealth'. The commentator explains that the distressed man is he who is attacked by a robber, a tiger, illness and the like! In other words, it matters little what the immediate cause is that makes a person turn in the direction of the Supreme Force that responds to his heart-felt call. It may be the need to escape pain, or it may be even the idea of owning and enjoying objects of the senses.

All desires are not bad. The mental movements that seek to gain an object or to produce

Vyutpatti-pakṣe api tatraiva ātma-śabdo vartate
'Yac-cāpnoti yad-ādatte yac-cātti viṣayān iha
Yac-cāsyā saṁtato bhāvas-tasmād-ātmeti kīrtyate.'
Tam, pratyagātmānam svam &c. S.B., *Kaṭha*, iv.1.

⁸ This section is based on *Gītā*, vii.

a better situation, as also the running thrill that is felt when any movement succeeds, become harmful only when they go against virtue, i.e. when they block the way to a unified outlook. In fact, a step in the right direction is to understand that the fruits of actions are ordained by the Omniscient Lord Himself. Whatever the form of the deity worshipped and whatever the relief prayed for by a simple-hearted devotee, the All-merciful One responds to him to the extent that is needed to strengthen his faltering faith. It will enable him gradually to look upon 'desire' itself,—consistent with scriptural demands—as a manifestation of the Lord's presence in the mental field. The next step will be to weave it intelligently into an attractive pattern along with various other manifestations, like that of strength in anyone, free from passion or prejudice. In that list will come discrimination and self-control of spiritual people, 'human-ness' among mankind, life itself in all creatures, and the special properties of different elements, like physical brilliance in the sun. The harmonization and refinement of thoughts can be complete only when they lead to the realization, intellectually first, emotionally later, of the One outside whom no entity can exist, and in whom the whole universe is woven as a cloth in the warp or clusters of pearls on a string.

"The truth of the Paramātman is extremely subtle, and cannot be reached by the gross outgoing tendency of the mind. It is only accessible to the noble souls with perfectly pure minds, by means of Samādhi brought on by an extraordinary fineness of the mental state.

As gold purified by thorough heating on the fire gives up its impurities and attains to its own lustre, so the mind, through meditation, gives up its impurities of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, and attains to the reality of Brahman."

—*Vivekachudamani*, 360-1

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S SIGNIFICANCE FOR WESTERN THOUGHT

BY DR. ALBIN R. GILBERT

When I was asked to speak on Sri Ramakrishna on this, his anniversary, I had trepidations as to my qualifications to say anything significant in the presence of learned Swamis. Then I decided to offer a few thoughts, if only for the purpose of revealing misapprehensions, thoughts on what this unique religious genius might mean to the Western world.

It seems to me that very few spiritual leaders have soared so far beyond the culture into which they had been born as Sri Ramakrishna did. He is like a singular mountain peak towering over smaller summits, and overlooking reaches which are beyond the horizon from lesser heights.

Yet contrasted with the dazzling grandeur of his spiritual stature was his delightful personality. From the memories of his personal disciples we learn about the cheerfulness he could radiate, and his serene, at times even bantering way with people, quite in contrast with many forbidding sages.

Let my brief inquiry be confined to those aspects of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching from which Western thought can most benefit. Of these the most significant are his views on human nature, his quest of God, his suggestions for self-cultivation, and his thoughts for the betterment of mankind.

While Western psychology has been exploring extensively the subconscious and conscious strata of personality, Hindu psychology has specialized on the superconscious. Sri Ramakrishna, whose life was devoted to the unsatiable pursuit of religious experience, spectacularly demonstrated by his own personality to his disciples and to the world how human nature can be turned toward superconscious communion. To me he was a living verification of the theory that there is in man a hidden source of superconscious experience. This source can be tapped and kept flowing, if only

an indomitable yearning can shift our psychic energy away from vital and self-centered motivation toward superconscious experience.

Sri Ramakrishna's quest of God was, of course, rooted in Hindu tradition; but it appeals nevertheless to Western scientific thought: he did not content himself with divine experience as mediated by theologians or priests. Rather, he strove incessantly for direct, immediate experience, or, in his parlance, for an actual perception of God, comparable to sense perception. As we know, he attained this experience abundantly. He held that superconscious experience is within the reach of everybody who pursues indefatigably the proven ways towards its realization.

Now, as far as Sri Ramakrishna is concerned, he occupied a unique position in the quest of God. From his early years on he was capable of plunging into *samādhi*, that is, ecstatic superconscious experience, in an uncontrolled way. He was, as Romain Rolland, his greatest Western biographer, saw him, a religious artist, rather than a religious toiler. And yet, his uncontrolled inspirations provide guidance even to those who are the religious toilers.

To Western thought, the religious situation in India is very bewildering. In the Hindu quest of God one can discern at least three types of religious leaders. One type is represented by a very few, heaven-inspired supreme souls who, like Sri Ramakrishna, seem to attain *samādhi* in an effortless, uncontrolled way. Others have to achieve it the hard way, by means of *Yoga*. Finally there are those who, like Gandhi, seem to disdain ecstatic, trance-like religious experience. They prefer to blend the rational thought of God with their daily life. But all these people, even those who plodded along the path toward God, looked

up to the religious genius of Sri Ramakrishna for guidance, untutored as his genius was.

Sri Ramakrishna had a singular gift of integration. Though he could himself attain *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*, that is, the highest level of absolute, impersonal experience of changeless reality, he also thought God in a *personal* way. In a sublime sort of psychodrama he would approach God as his father, mother, child, or friend.

But more than that. He once said: "I have a burning desire to worship God in as many ways as I can; nevertheless my heart's desire has never been satisfied." So we see him worshipping God in all the great traditional forms. In Hindu tradition he invoked God by the names of Śiva, Śakti, Sarasvati, Lakṣmī, and Hari. He also plunged into the other great religions like Christianity and Islam. This was in no sense an effort for tolerance; rather it was a realization of the essential unity of all religions.

I now turn to some principles of self-cultivation, as suggested by the great example of Sri Ramakrishna. Western minds often have a misapprehension regarding the way to enlightenment as sought in India. They think that the realization of the Absolute can only be accomplished by the arduous system of *Yoga*. Sri Ramakrishna warned of the dangers of *Rāja Yoga*. Concerning this he once said to Saradananda, one of his disciples: "The sole object of these practices is concentration of the mind; this is easily attained by all who meditate with piety." Such an end can only be achieved, to be sure, under a regimen of continence and freedom from mammon.

While these prerequisites are familiar to Western thought from the practices of mystics and artists, another precept for self-training is rather unfamiliar to the West. What I mean is Sri Ramakrishna's advice to man to work with zest and interest, yet at the same time with disinterestedness, that is, "without the hope of reward or fear of punishment." This demand is hard to comprehend in a highly active and competitive culture, such as ours.

Yet it is just here where we sorely need an antidote against our maddening way of life.

From these thoughts on self-improvement let us finally turn to Sri Ramakrishna's importance for the betterment of mankind. Sri Ramakrishna attracted all classes and castes, the lowly minds and the highest intellectuals, Christians, Mohammedans, and Brahmos. That the poor and downtrodden would flock to a man like him is quite understandable. But he also impressed the powerful: the middle class of Bengal, Brahmin aristocracy, and spiritual leaders of the *Brahmo Samaj*, the great Hindu unitarian organization. All were eager, under his leadership, to enter the Kingdom of God, even through the eye of the needle.

What is the secret of this equalizing influence of Sri Ramakrishna on people from all walks of life? It is that he made them realize the common ground of society, or rather, the undivided existence of all being. So long as people are self-centered, metaphysically and religiously, so long as they pursue merely their vital needs and egoistic motives, so long as they neglect their superconscious potentialities, they will be engaged in a struggle of life. If men will, however, exert their superconscious capacity, if they will, in other words, live religiously, they will realize the common ground of all existence; they will come to respect one another's value, and to live together like the members of a harmonious family. Moreover, they will adopt and maintain democracy in terms of equality, the religious principle that all men are equal.

On this anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna's birth, we see mankind plunged into a tragic situation. Already entangled in local wars, mankind is overshadowed by the imminence of an Armageddon. In the light of Sri Ramakrishna's gospel, this situation is basically an outgrowth of the general decline of religion. As we face this situation, the words that he once exclaimed come to our mind: "Let us raise a mountain of God in the midst of

humanity!" Yes, that is his desperate outcry even now.

Should this outcry be unheeded, as it well may be, and should mankind flame into universal suicide, would Sri Ramakrishna yield to despair? Here, another thought from his gospel comes to mind, a thought where he envisions eras of humanity that pass and emerge. He tells us that whenever there is a

decline of religion in any part of the world, God sends his Avatāra, or Saviour, there. So we see: Regardless of what the future might hold in store for mankind, Sri Ramakrishna's gospel was conceived to inspire hope. The Saviour that God sends has been known as Krishna at one time, as Christ at another; we might add that he might be known as Ramakrishna himself.

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION IN ŚIVĀNANDALAHARI

BY PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA AIYAR

Some critics have said that there is no place for religion in Śaṅkara's philosophy as it is uncompromisingly monistic. But this is a wrong notion. As a philosopher, Śaṅkara was no doubt a rigorous and thorough-going monist, but it is also true that he recognized a lower point of view. Viewed from this lower standpoint, which is that of the intellect, the Nirguṇa Brahman becomes Saguṇa. It is not as if Śaṅkara admitted two ultimate realities, one with attributes and the other without attributes. Rather Reality is strictly One without a second, but it is capable of being viewed from two different standpoints, the intuitive and the intellectual. Saguṇa Brahman, which is really the Acosmic Brahman in 'empirical dress', is also spoken of as Īśvara. The work of creating, sustaining and destroying the world is attributed to Him in *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (III.1). Coming one step lower down, we separate the three functions and attribute them to three different gods, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. These are the Hindu Trinity. But we do not stop even here. Viṣṇu has his 'avatārs' of which that of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are widely popular as fit for worship. This descent is really a confession to man's weakness. It is a case of stooping to conquer. It is said in the *Bhāgavata* (X.33.37) that the

Lord assumes diverse forms to suit the tastes and temperaments of men to make them god-minded. Śrī Śaṅkara was quite alive to this truth and he has made sufficient provision for religion and worship within the ample structure of his philosophy. He has also composed hymns in praise of most of the gods of popular worship.

His *Śivānandalahari* is a hymn in praise of Lord Śiva in hundred stanzas. It is characterized by depth of religious emotion and also by poetical merit of a very high order. In fact it is the profundity of the emotion, its depth and tranquillity, its calmness and composure that invest it with great literary charm. There is close connection between supreme emotion and high poetry. When the devotee gets warmed up in devotion (bhakti), when his imagination takes fire, he rises clean above all his natural limitations, all that is accidental and adventitious and expresses himself in simple language which is also the language of the purest poetry. *Śivānandalahari*, therefore, is as much a classic of poetry as of religion. This is as it should be. In our country religion is the matrix of all the sciences and arts, including poetry and music. In addition to its literary charm and deep religious feeling, the poem has the advantage of coming from the

pen of one of the greatest philosophers of the world. It has the Advaita philosophy for its background. This feature constitutes the special strength of all the Hindu religious classics. The Vedānta philosophy viewed from a lower standpoint and transformed into a way of life, becomes Hindu religion. There are no dogmas therefore in Hindu religion which have to be accepted unquestioningly as matters of mere faith.

Religion is so natural to man. It is the expression of the longing for the Infinite that is planted deep in him. Owing to an original bent he seeks God outside of him, not knowing that He is seated in his own heart. The finite soul is drawn towards God by an irresistible inward urge, much in the same way in which the seeds of a certain tree known as the *Ānkola* are attracted to the parent root, iron filings towards magnet, the chaste and faithful lady to her husband, the creeper to a tree, and rivers to the ocean. These are the illustrations given in *Sivānandalahari* (stanza 61) to elucidate the notion that devotion to the Supreme Being is inherent in human nature. It does not owe its origin to any extraneous circumstances. It has nothing to do with time or place. Man's sense of his incompleteness, his feeling of finitude, sets him on the path of religion. This search develops into *bhakti* when the mind becomes one-pointed and is always centred on the Highest. The same idea is enforced in another stanza (59) by means of four examples, all drawn from bird-life. Just as the *Hamsa* is in search of the lotus-pond, the *Cātaka* eagerly awaits a cloud-burst to slake its thirst, the *Cakravāka* anxiously looks for the advent of the dawn and the *Cakora* for the rise of the moon, even so man's mind is fervently in search of the Lord who will confer lasting bliss (*kaivalya-saukhya-prādam*). Stanza 60 presents the same idea in a slightly different light. The mind is here exhorted to seek God as a haven of rest. Just as a man carried along by a roaring current of water stretches his arms towards the shore; the wayfarer, beaten by the scorch-

ing rays of the sun, runs to the cool shade of a tree; the man drenched to the skin by torrential rains seeks shelter in the nearest house; the man racked by pangs of hunger seeks the hospitality of some generous host; the man in terrible want looks to a philanthropist for some help; and finally, the belated traveller enveloped in darkness hails a gleam of light with great joy,—even so the *jīva*, heir to a thousand ills, storm-beaten, way-weary and life-weary, looks to God as the destroyer of all fear (*sarva-bhayāpaham*) and as the bestower of happiness (*sukham*). Better examples cannot be thought of to bring home to the reader the vital relationship that links him to his Maker. Stanzas 59-61 constitute pure poetry. The examples come so natural to the poet. They aptly illustrate the important idea that faith in God is the very breath of man.

The God chosen for worship in this hymn is Lord Siva. It is really the Brahman of the Vedānta who is worshipped as Siva or Viṣṇu or Devī or any other God. These Gods are only supports to meditation on the Highest. From among the gods of the Hindu pantheon a man is free to select any divinity that appeals to him most. This is the doctrine of *Iṣṭa Devatā*. The particular god chosen for worship will be spoken of as the Highest and all the rest will be relegated to the background. It means no dispraise of the latter. It only means preference without any exclusion. 'Na hi nindā nindyam ninditum pravṛttā, api tu stutyam stotum.' This is the full statement of what is generally known as the *nahi nindā nyāya*. It means that the object in bestowing scant praise on some gods is not to disparage them but to exalt some other god who is selected for worship. After all, according to Advaita Vedānta, all names and forms are extraneous to Brahman who is strictly beyond time, space, causal relation, and all other modes of the human intellect. When all names and forms are mere superimpositions, it does not very much matter whether we call the Highest, Siva or Viṣṇu, Rāma or Kṛṣṇa

or, for that matter, Allah or Christ. There is absolutely no ground for quarrel. When Śiva is exalted at the expense of Viṣṇu or Viṣṇu is exalted at the expense of Śiva, no disparagement is meant to the god who is relegated to the background.

Now we come to the conception of Lord Śiva in the poem. He is the Supreme God, Mahādēva. He is Ādya in the sense that He existed before the creation of the world. He will continue to exist even after the destruction of the world in Mahāpralaya. 'What shall we say of Your heroism and Your courage? What other god can attain to Your status? At the time of the destruction of the world, when the gods run in fear and the seers tremble, You remain unmoved, in the full enjoyment of the bliss that is natural to You' (34). He is the final import of the three Vedas (trayīvedyam). He is Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva all rolled up into one (triguṇātmaka). Brahmā and Viṣṇu offer worship to Lord Śiva. They try in vain to understand His greatness. The lesser gods are like chaff when compared with Śiva who is described as 'uttamottamaphala' (100). They queue up to have *darśan* of Śiva (namassambhramajuṣāḥ, 17). He is in the world and also beyond it, being both immanent and transcendent. Śiva's transcendence is well brought out in stanza 86 where it is said that though all the ingredients necessary for worship are ready at hand, the poet says that he is unable to proceed with it because the only two places where worship can be offered,—the head and the feet—are both inaccessible to him. But He is easily accessible to His devotees and dwells in their hearts. Since He exists before and after the world, since as Brahmā He creates the world, as Viṣṇu sustains it, and since He is also the indwelling light in the hearts of men, He may be regarded as the grand synthesis of all the four kinds of revelation referred to in Christian theology. He destroys the primeval ignorance of the finite jīvas and imparts the highest and best knowledge to them. The expressions 'saukhyopadeśa' in stanza 27 and

'dr̥ṣṭādr̥ṣṭamatopadeśa' in stanza 35 stand for the saving knowledge which Lord Śiva alone can confer on erring mankind. In stanza 91 the poet again refers to this point and says that through the grace of the Lord the original nescience which was lodged in his heart has disappeared and made place for the true knowledge which liberates. That the saving knowledge can come only through the grace of God is a fact accepted by the Upaniṣads as well as by the Vedānta philosophy. 'Devotion to the personal God,' writes Aldous Huxley (*Perennial Philosophy*, P. 39), 'is the best preparation for the unitive knowledge of the Godhead.' Before the onrushing of the Lord's grace nothing can stand as an impediment, not even fate and predestination. In stanza 15 Śrī Śaṅkara calls attention to this fact. He says: 'How does it happen, unless it be due to Your indifference, that You, who easily clipped the fifth head of Brahmā with the tip of your finger-nails, do not destroy my evil fate which fills my mind with impure desires and which, consequently, turns it away from meditating on You?' The idea is that man's innate evil tendencies which may be spoken of as overriding fate, or destiny, can be stamped out, if only the Lord wills it.

The conception of Godhead set forth above is what is generally known as monotheistic. There is only one God and that God is Śiva. The worship of Śiva chiefly consists of meditation and prayer. Meister Eckhart has observed that 'what a man takes in by contemplation, that he pours out in love.' The great yogins meditate on Śiva. In stanza 55 Śiva is described as 'dhyeyākhilayogibhiḥ'. What the yogins discover in meditation, that they pour out in well-chosen words. Prayer and meditation imply utter devotion to Him. One's thought, words and bodily deeds must all be turned towards Him. There is no half-way house here. No one can serve two masters. If one is devoted to the worship of Śiva it means that he bends all his energies, bodily and mental, to the service of the Lord. The poet refers to this kind of

whole-hearted devotion in several places. In stanza 7 he says that his mind must be set on the feet of Śiva, his vocal organs must sing the praises of the Lord, his hands must be engaged in making flower-offerings, his ears must be intent on listening to the stories of the Lord, his intellect must be lost in meditation and that his eyes must be pinned to the feet of the Lord. This means total surrender of body, mind and sense-organs. In stanza 94 he reverts to this theme again and observes: 'That alone is tongue which speaks of the Lord, they alone are the eyes which gaze on Him, they alone are the hands which constantly place flowers at His feet and that man alone will have fulfilled his duty who meditates on Him.' In stanza 81 the same point is made out somewhat differently. 'He is the *jīvanmukta* (liberated while living) who spends his entire time in the Lord's service such as deep contemplation, prostrations, listening to His stories, gazing at Him and singing His praises.' Service of Lord Śiva is thus a whole-time job and calls forth all the reserves of our energies. One-pointed will and singleness of heart are the *sine qua non* of worship. "The disciplining of the will", writes Aldous Huxley, "must have as its accompaniment a no less thorough disciplining of the consciousness. There has to be a conversion, sudden or otherwise, not only of the heart, but also of the senses and of the perceiving mind." The most important thing is to make the mind and intellect dwell uninterruptedly on the Lord. The mind is apt to wander and run after the pleasures of the senses. It is notoriously difficult to control. It is like the fickle-minded ape or the wild elephant. It is the seat of lust, anger and allied evils. Except with the help of the Lord, it is difficult to tame the mind and set it on God. If one can concentrate his mind on Śiva and refuse to bargain for any material ends, he can be looked upon as the best among the yogins. 'Instead of entering into deep ponds, impenetrable forests and inaccessible mountain-tops in search of flowers', says the poet, 'one can easily make an offering of the single flower

of his own mind and rest quiet. What a pity people do not know this simple method of worshipping the Lord!' (st. 9) 'There is nothing that the Lord can desire of us. He is the lord of infinite riches. Meru (the Mountain of Gold) and Kubera (the Lord of Wealth) are near at hand to Him. The *Kalpaka* tree, *Kāmadhenu* and *Cintāmaṇi*, all wish-yielding, are in His very house. The cool rays of the moon are ever shining on His head. All auspicious things are ready at His feet. What is there for us to give to the Lord except it be our mind?' (st. 27). In several places the poet takes up this theme again and again and dwells on the importance of offering one's mind without any reservation whatsoever to Lord Śiva. 'As God has to wander from place to place to ensure that things are going on all right, He will do well to discard His bull and make use of the devotee's mind, which, like a horse, is noted for its speed' (st. 75). In yet other stanzas the Lord is requested to make the devotee's mind His dwelling place. 'The Lord is fond of hunting. He can as well do it in the devotee's mind where there are several wild animals in the shape of lust and greed' (st. 43). The devotee's mind is like a spacious tent and the Lord with all His retinue can conveniently camp in it (st. 21). And so on and so forth. In such stanzas there is plenty of scope for the free play of imagination. 'The human mind is doubtless a hard place for the tender feet of the Lord. But He has danced on the hard rocks of the mountain fastnesses as if to practise Himself for the entry into the human mind' (st. 80). The Lord cannot therefore refuse to enter the mind of the devotee on the ground that it is a hard place (st. 95).

Bhakti is defined in stanza 61 as the constant dwelling of the mind at the feet of Lord Śiva. But it requires much arduous training. Self-purification, utter meekness and humility, meditation, prayer, and japa are aids to the rise of bhakti. One must reduce himself to a mere cypher, to a state of utter passivity,

before true devotion can spring up in him. Egoism and conceit must vanish without leaving a trace behind. Self-love is hard to conquer. It may disappear in one form but may reappear in another and more subtle form. One can never feel absolutely sure that he has conquered his lower nature completely. The poet is keenly alive to this difficulty and implores the helping hand of the Lord. The pious recitation of hymns and the due performance of circumambulation, worship and other appropriate actions by means of the leg, hands, eyes, ears, tongue, mind and head respectively constitute the necessary preparation for the rise of bhakti. These are ways of disciplining the mind and body for the onset of bhakti. 'It is a tender creeper which springs up from a well-watered seed-bed, rises on supports to the pandal and then puts forth countless tendrils, flowers and fruits' (st. 49). In another place (st. 68) bhakti is likened to a stray cow and the Lord is requested to take her into His fold and tend her. One can establish himself in bhakti partly through his own efforts and partly through the grace of the Lord. The latter must be sought in utter humility. In stanzas 13 and 14 the poet makes this point very clear. He speaks of himself as the humblest and the lowliest (madanyaḥ ko dīnaḥ?). 'You are indeed the protector of the meek and the humble and surely I take the foremost place among the latter. Our relationship therefore is very close.' That the aspirant for the Lord's grace must forget the pride of his learning is made clear in stanza 5. That logic-chopping and syllogistic reasoning will lead nowhere and will end in mere weariness of the flesh is stated in stanza 6. Conceit and pride of all kinds must be mercilessly exterminated. There is no use, observes Aldous Huxley, "turning to God before we have turned away from ourselves. We cannot be alive to God before we are dead to our lower nature." Dying to selfhood is the indispensable precondition for the rise of bhakti.

The outward marks of true bhakti are stated

in stanza 67. They are the shedding of tears of joy and the hairs standing on end. This phenomenon can be explained in terms of physiological-psychology. Under the influence of strong and overpowering emotion the tear-glands become active. The mental attitudes induced by true bhakti are multiform. This hymn covers the whole gamut of religious emotion and expresses every shade of feeling that arises in the mind of the bhakta. Man's sense of finitude, his feeling of dependence, his craving for the Lord's mercy, his absolute self-surrender without reservation of any kind, his sense of guilt and supplication for forgiveness, his struggle to quell his lower nature, his efforts to steady his mind and cleanse it of all impurities, his intense desire that in his inmost heart he should always be thinking of the Lord, that he should not set any value on material ends, his feeling that the jīva is like the bride intensely longing for union with the bridegroom, namely, God, and his eager cry for the beatific vision—these and several other facets of bhakti find classical expression in *Sivānandalahari*. Some of these feelings are extremely tenuous, elusive, and fugitive. The poet has however captured even these, given them some shape with the aid of a simile or metaphor or erotic imagery and has expressed them in unforgettable language. It would be no exaggeration to say that *Sivānandalahari* is a superb model of devotional poetry. All the varieties of bhakti mentioned in *Bhāgavata* (VII, 5.23) namely śravaṇam, kīrtanam, smaraṇam, pādasevanam, arcanam, vandanam, dāsyam, sakhyam and atmanivédanam, are exquisitely set forth in this poem.

The poet freely draws from his store of purāṇic lore to elucidate the shades of bhakti mentioned above. There is reference to Śiva's drinking the poison that emerged from churning the milky ocean, to his kicking Yama when he approached Mārkaṇḍeya, to Brahmā and Viṣṇu seeking to know Śiva's head and feet by assuming the form of the Swan and the Boar, to Brahmā's fifth head being clipped with Śiva's finger-nails, and to the story of

Kaṇṇappa Nāyanār who worshipped Śiva in a very strange manner. Just as the crude material of the original story acquires a new complexion in the hands of the skilled dramatist, even so these purāṇic stories are so skilfully handled that they shed their drabness and throw a tender light on some aspect or other of Lord Śiva's greatness. To the mill of inspired religious imagination everything is grist. The white heat of the devotee's bhakti sheds a new halo around these stories and invests them with a new meaning. When the devotee thinks of the mighty achievements of the Lord, the incident of the dreaded poison comes in handy; when he thinks of the transcendent character of Śiva, the incident of Brahmā and Viṣṇu assuming the form of the Swan and Boar to know the head and feet of the Lord is found most appropriate; when he wants to emphasize the fact that God cares more for the purity of the heart than for the forms of worship, the story of Kaṇṇappa Nāyanār eminently serves his purpose.

The bhakta's eager longing for the beatific vision is expressed in language of unsurpassable beauty in stanzas 24-26. 'When can I enjoy the bliss of being admitted to the holy presence of Lord Śiva, attended by His Gaṇas, in His golden palace in Mount Kailāsa, and with hands uplifted and interlocked on my

head cry "Lord, Sāmbaswāmin, save this poor soul", and in this state spend several eons as if they were so many minutes? When can I have darśan of You, the three-eyed God, seated on Your bull, with Umā embracing You, Brahmā and other gods singing Your praise in chorus, the self-controlled sages crying "all hail" and Your Gaṇas singing and dancing around You? When, O when, can I have the heart-felt bliss of holding fast to Your feet, place them on my head, eyes, and bosom and smell their sweet fragrance—a pleasure denied to Brahmā and other gods?' That this eager cry of the soul was answered and that the much-longed-for vision was vouchsafed to Śrī Śaṅkara is clear from st. 99. He asks 'O Lord, is it right that You should grant me Your divine darśan when You denied the same to Brahmā and Viṣṇu who were at considerable pains to know Your head and feet?' This is the climax of bhakti. The bhakta whose devotion is crowned with success does not forget his less fortunate brethren. He has a kind thought for them and intercedes on their behalf. From this state of self-forgetful, unselfconscious bhakti to the final consummation, it is not a far cry. Mokṣa is almost within the grasp of such a bhakta. Such single-minded devotion prepares the way for the saving knowledge and, in its turn, it leads to Mokṣa. In fact *it is Mokṣa*.

WHERE ALL RELIGIONS MEET

BY SWAMI SAMBUDDHANANDA

The word 'Religion' derived as it is from *re* meaning 'back', *ligare* meaning 'to bind', to bind back to certain principles or code of rules, cannot convey the meaning of the word 'Dharma' for which it stands. Dharma, in Sanskrit, from root 'Dhṛ' meaning 'Dhāraṇāt Dharma Ityāhuḥ' or 'Dharati Viśwam iti Dharmah, means that which upholds or sup-

ports this universe. So religion, as there is no better substitute for the word Dharma in English language, in the widest sense of the term means that which is the upholder or supporter or in other words, which upholds, maintains, and supports this universe in every sense of the term. The only meaning of the word 'Dharma' can be Truth. For, it is Truth

that upholds this universe. Out of Truth it comes, in Truth it exists, and into Truth it merges.

Religion can be defined from two different standpoints, firstly religion as the End itself as indicated in the previous lines, and secondly, religion as a means to an End. From the second standpoint religion corresponds to the means and ways by which the End, the Truth, can be perceived and realized. The great philosopher Kaṇāda has defined religion as 'Yataḥ Abhyudaya-Nisreyasa-Siddhiḥ Sa Dharmah', whence come prosperity and spiritual peace,—that is called Dharma. Others define it as 'Yasmin Deśe Yadācārah Sa Dharma Samprakīrtitaḥ'—the rules and manners as prevalent in a particular part of the country are also known as Dharma. The rules of conduct, particularly in India, have been framed by the Indian Ṛṣis—saints and sages—with the object of attaining the highest good in life. Therefore, the rules of conduct have also been characterized as means to the End, that is Dharma.

Dharma (Religion) is not in forms and dogmas, in rites and rituals, in creeds and conventions. It is not in reasoning but in being and becoming. It is in practice. It is realization. The object is to realize the Truth by work or worship, by devotion or discrimination, or by meditation or concentration, by one or all of these harmoniously combined. We are all finite beings on earth. The object is to infinitize ourselves, to realize the infinite. The End is one, means to the End are countless,—like radii to the centre of a circle or concentric circles.

Differences in religions may loom large, but to the intuitive eyes which are able to penetrate into the real state of things and discover the unity underlying the endless multiplicities of this world, they forthwith disappear. In this world of phenomena one comes across endless varieties in all spheres of life but when he goes deep down into the matter, he finds out the real background and realizes how one has become many. An

intense study of the objective world discovers the oneness of things which, in fact is one underlying Truth behind the manifold appearances that amaze and astound the people of this world. While accounting for the endless diversities in the physical world, Vedānta maintains that 'name' and 'form' are responsible for their creation. If you take away the names and forms of the objective world you will find that the differences have all merged and all the varieties have a common base where they all meet together. Take for example waters of the different seas, rivers, lakes, wells and tanks, that are in one sense physically different from one another. Then again, take water which can be found in three conditions, solid as ice, liquid as normal water, and gaseous as steam. They all appear really to be widely different from one another but when a particle of water of the sea or lake, river or tank, or a particle of ice or of normal water, is chemically analysed, it is found that each of the particles has yielded only 2 parts of Hydrogen and 1 part of Oxygen. So H₂O is the common background of all varieties of water that one may come across.

The Absolute Reality of the Universe called by different names, such as 'the God' of Plato, 'the Substantia' of Spinoza, 'the Unknowable' of Herbert Spencer, 'the Oversoul' of Emerson, or the Transcendental Thing-in-Itself of Kant, is one which is transcendent and immanent in nature, and which is the soul of our soul and the life of our life. Water whether called 'ab' by the Arabians, 'jal' by the Indians, or 'pāni' by the Mohamedans is the same substance and whosoever will drink it by whatsoever name it will quench his thirst.

The Creator of the Universe is One, He cannot be many. The Brahman of the Vedāntins, the Jina of the Jains, the Jehovah of the Jews, the Ahuramazda of the Zoroastrians, and the God of the Christians are but different appellations of the One and the same Being. Pray to Him by any of these names, the spiritual thirst of an aspirant will be slaked for ever. Had all these been different, there

would have been a competition in the creation itself but the creation presents to us a wonderful uniformity existing everywhere in the world.

When we study the principal religions of the world, like Christianity, Hinduism and Islam, we come to find that there are three parts in every religion; first philosophical, second mythological, and the third ritualistic. Philosophy lays down the fundamental principles of every religion and from that standpoint one can hardly find out any difference between the existing faiths and isms of this world.

But Philosophy cannot be understood by one and all, it is meant only for the highly developed intellectuals and as such it is beyond the range of apprehension of the ordinary people. So there is a necessity for the presentation of the abstruse principles of philosophy in and through the eventful and illustrious lives of great saints and sages, which comprise mythology. Mythology makes a more easy approach to the abstract principles of metaphysics.

But a sect or society or a class or community is not composed of highly developed intellectuals and the educated people only. In every religion there is an enormous mass of individuals who are purely illiterate. Now what about them and their religion? Are they to go without a religion because they are illiterate? That can never be. Therefore, in every religion we find the other section which is ritualistic. In this section of religion we find a large number of rites and rituals introduced for the free use of the people with a

view to making them also religious. Every religion wants to keep within its bounds all the individuals from the highest to the lowest, all contented with the principles and practices which it has laid down for the people.

Now, when we look at the different religions from the ritualistic standpoint we find them so widely different from one another. As we go higher and higher from the ritualistic to mythological and from the mythological to the philosophical, we find that the differences have altogether merged or vanished. But even in the ritualistic section also we find a wonderful meeting point when we try to find out the Truth behind them. Rituals, in some form or other, are absolutely necessary for the beginners of religious life. Along with rituals people use symbols.

Just as a crescent is sacred to the Mohammedans, a cross is sacred to the Christians, so are various symbols like the Swastika or images sacred to the Hindus. Just as a mosque is sacred to the Muslims, a church to the Christians, a pagoda to the Buddhists, so are various shrines and temples sacred to the Hindus. If people try to reason in this light they will in no time understand that really speaking there is no difference amongst the religions as means to an end, as pathways to the Almighty, as means to the realization of the *summum bonum* of life. 'Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudha Vadanti', Truth is one but sages call it by various names. The more this principle is grasped, the more easily can people harmonize the differences in different isms or faiths, and look upon others as their brothers, as their own flesh and blood, and as their own spiritual kinsmen.

“To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions was the mission of my Master. Other teachers have taught special religions which bear their names, but this great teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for himself. He left every religion undisturbed because he had realised that, in reality, they are all part and parcel of the one eternal religion.”

—Swami Vivekananda

THE CONCEPT OF TRANSCENDENTAL REALITY

(AS EVOLVED BY MAṄḌANA MIŚRA)

BY DR. S. S. HASURKAR

(Continued from previous issue)

Having [thus] elaborated one of the fundamental facets of the Transcendental Reality along the lines of logical argumentation, Maṅḍana Miśra turns his attention to another, equally important and controversial aspect thereof. He states, ^{13a} that there are many so-called philosophers, who honestly believe that the Reality of Being is not one, but many. Had it been one, this arrangement whereby different sorts of experiences come to different experiencers,—on which the entire edifice of the universe is built—would not have been possible. The distinction that exists between the individual souls, some of them being already liberated, others still labouring under the harmful influence of avidyā,—this distinction also would not have been possible. Moreover, had the Ultimate Reality been one without a second, the power of knowledge (dr̥k-śaktiḥ) of the Ātman would have turned out to be purposeless. Because, there would have been no objects of knowledge, enjoying a separate existence as such. Surely that power of the Ātman cannot operate upon the Ātman Himself. Because it is impossible. Why, the very existence of the knower, the draṣṭā, i.e. Ātman, is inferred on the strength of the non-self, objects of knowledge, as given in knowledge! Therefore, the Ultimate Reality is not one without a second,—they conclude.

But this belief of the Dvaitins,—the author of *Brahma-Siddhi* points out^{14a}—is unequivocally condemned by the sacred texts. On the other hand, they frankly attribute perception of duality, sentient and non-sentient, to the con-

juring influence of Māyā. They also hold that it is, therefore, vanquishable at the hands of ultimate realization of Oneness. Had duality been real, nothing would have been strong enough to vanquish it. The dualist cannot say that even after the ultimate realization, duality does exist, that the text advocating its ultimate destruction should be interpreted in a 'lākṣaṇika' manner. Because he cannot show any purpose, likely to be served thereby. Moreover, such an 'aupacārika' denial of duality, which does exist as a matter of fact even after the ultimate realization, would have turned out to be inimical to the real interests of the sādḥaka because of its being based on mere assumption and being thus contrary to the harsh actuality.

As regards the arrangement whereby different experiencers get different sorts of experiences, which is the backbone of the universe, Maṅḍana Miśra says:¹⁵ It can be accounted for on the basis of mutual distinctions, conjured up against the sustaining background of fundamental Oneness. The philosophers of less advanced schools of thought enunciate that the self (the Ātman) of a being named, for example, A, is of atomic dimension, or is of a dimension equal to that of his physical body. However they may thus disagree on the point of the dimensions of the Ātman, they are unanimous about there being no component parts of it. In spite of that, whenever their head aches, or their leg is hurt, do they not say, 'Ah! There is a terrible pain in my head, in my leg'? The explanation, which these so-called realistic philosophers

^{13a} B.S. 6/7 to 6/11.

^{14a} B.S. 6/11 to 6/25.

¹⁵ B.S. 7/1 to 7/6.

may advance of these seemingly contradictory utterances,—well, none can deny that very explanation to the Advaitic thinkers also. It is also futile to ask, says our philosopher:¹⁶ “If there is only one Reality, one Ātman, abiding everywhere, how is it that A does not experience the experiences of B?” Because, the Dvaitin who asks this question does not himself experience the painful sensation in his leg, anywhere else except in his leg! But this does not dissuade him from holding strongly to the view that his self is without component parts as such.

As regards the distinction that exists between the liberated selves and those still labouring under the influence of avidyā, the Advaitin says:¹⁷ It also can be accounted for as being based on diversity, superposed on the sustaining ground of Ultimate Reality. Does not one face appear in a quite bewildering diversity of forms due to the corresponding diversity of the reflectors? It shows a lack of acquaintance with Advaitic view,¹⁸ to argue that the superposition is the fault of the intellect of the perceiver: However powerful it might be with relation to the perceiver, it cannot affect the nature of the thing, nor can it enable the thing to act in a way consistent, not with its real nature, but with the superimposed one: Therefore, however deep-rooted the superposition of diversity on the ultimate unity of Being may be, it can never be capable of conjuring and maintaining the entire universe. Because, says the author, the superposition characterizes not only the diversity but also the entire universe with its multifarious activities. Therefore, it is logically consistent to advocate the diversity, which is superpositional by nature, as responsible for the universe of the equally superpositional character.

The third objection, which the Dvaitins had taken to the Advaitic view of the Ultimate Reality is equally invalid¹⁹—says Maṇḍana

¹⁶ B.S. 7/6 to 7/10.

¹⁷ B.S. 7/10 to 7/13.

¹⁸ B.S. 7/13 to 7/18.

¹⁹ B.S. 7/19 to 8/6.

Miśra. It is wrong to say that the (existence of the) knower is inferred from the act of knowing the object of knowledge. For the (existence of the) knower is self-manifest. Nor is the mutual distinction between the objects of knowledge an indisputable fact. Because the means of right knowledge (pramāṇas) are constitutionally incapable of proving it. As regards the purposefulness of the power of knowledge (dr̥k-śaktiḥ)—which in the present transcendental sense is identical with the knower, the Draṣṭā, the Ultimate Reality,—it does not suffer a bit even when nothing different from its own self is accepted as its object. This stand cannot be accused as a feat of imagination. Because it is actually borne out by instances on an empirical level of being. Is not a lamp, burning bright in a place, where there is no other object present to be illuminated, considered as having served the purpose of its being by illuminating its own self? Moreover, this arrangement of the knower and the objects of knowledge, which the Dvaitin finds everywhere in the universe, and which in his opinion is an insurmountable obstacle in the path of monism,—this arrangement would not have been here had there been no Ultimate Unity of Being, underlying it! Had the knower and the objects of knowledge been of a fundamentally divergent nature, had their natures been in no fundamental way interrelated, they would not have been connected thus by a relation subsisting between the knower and the objects of knowledge. How can an object, in no way interrelated with the knower, ever be an object of knowledge? It cannot be said that both the knower and the object of knowledge, though mutually different, come into contact with each other on their being transferred into one ‘antaḥ-karaṇa’, and hence their mutual relation. Because the knower is identical with pure Sentience. On the authority of the sacred texts, it is ever-pure (i.e. not subject to impurity, likely to be created by the contact with non-sentient objects), and ever free from transformation as well as transference. If, in

order to honour such texts, it is held that it is the Buddhi, itself an object of knowledge, that, in the presence of pure Cit, gets transformed into the semblance of original Cit, the latter remaining all the time uninvolved in the process,—then such a semblance must be accepted as being but conditionally real. And then, how can such a semblance of Cit, which is but conditionally real establish the unconditionally real existence of objects of knowledge? It surely cannot. And, if there is no factor establishing the unconditionally real, independent existence of the objects of knowledge, in what manner is the Advaitin wrong in proposing that there is no such existence at all?

The followers of the Mimāṃsā school of thought say²⁰ that the existence of the objects of knowledge is indicated by their being objects of knowledge. They become objects of knowledge in a way which shows their existence as external, as distinct from the existence of the knower. Surely, one says, 'This is blue.' He

²⁰ B.S. 8/6 to 8/7.

does not say 'I am blue.' Therefore, Advaitism is an impossible proposition. But, these learned people forget,—Maṇḍana Miśra points out,²¹ that this externality, this distinctness of the objects of knowledge, which is given in the process of knowing, can be very easily explained away by the Advaitins by propounding that it is the knower, the Cit, one without second, which assumes the forms of internal and external. Does not a person behold his own reflection, which is essentially identical with him, as external to him? The Dvaitins, on the other hand, have no explanation to offer to the Advaitins, when they ask a fundamental question, namely—'If the Ultimate Reality is not one, but two, Sentience and Matter, mutually different, how is the latter ever known (cetyate) by the former?' Therefore, the Ultimate Reality is One without second,—concludes the author of *Brahma-Siddhi*.

(To be continued)

²¹ B.S. 8/7 to 8/13.

MYSTICISM AND RELIGION

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

What is mysticism? It is religion in the most acute, intense, and living sense. It is an immediate awareness, a direct and intimate consciousness, of God. It is religious experience, neither theological knowledge nor metaphysical perspicacity. It is first hand knowledge, and not information derived second hand. It is not a relational type of knowledge. It is restful and living contemplation of the Divine. It is ineffable. It is a *bona-fide* discovery of the ground of Reality and the goal of life.

Mysticism is latent in the depths of the world's sub-consciousness. It has developed under the shade of every great religion, some-

times outside the church and at times inside the church. It has a long and respectable intellectual ancestry in the East as well as the West. In the East all the philosophical systems are the results of the spiritual experience of the sages who propounded them. In the West, on the contrary, many philosophers have refused to pass beyond the frontiers of the mind. They look with suspicion at those systems that base their doctrines on spiritual experience. The dominance of the rational is the chief note in Western thought. In the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan, the Western tradition stands for critical intelligence and the East for creative intuition. Some thinkers, how-

ever, argue that Indian philosophers have accepted unreasoned intuition and thus mixed up philosophy and religion. They regard it as the characteristic of an outmoded philosophy and of pathological psychology. In reply we point out some of the essential features of mystic experience, as taught in the Indian systems.

i. In the first place realization does not mean knowing Brahman but being Brahman. It is trans-intellectual and trans-relational. It is not subject-object knowledge but unitive experience. It is also self-evident. It cannot be faithfully and adequately expressed in terms of human language. Only symbols are to be employed. One Upaniṣad declares that mind and speech return from there without reaching It. The height is unscalable. Another Upaniṣad compares it to lightning. Plato in the seventh Epistle says: 'There is no writing of mine on this subject, nor ever shall be. It is not capable of expression like other branches of study. If I thought these things could be adequately written down and stated to the world, what finer occupation could I have had in life than to write what would be of great service to mankind?' St. Thomas wrote till he got the vision; after the vision he refused to dip his pen in the ink. The fourteenth century author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* declared: 'The high and the best way thither is run by desires and not by the pace of feet.' The conscious mind and intellect of man are merely the superficialities of the Self. Man needs the *divya-cakṣus*, divine vision. 'For He may be loved, but not thought. By love may He be begotten and holden; but by thought never.' The Bible says, 'Be still and know.' 'Śānta upāsita.' says the Upaniṣad. To secure that experience, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* says: 'Look that nothing live in thy working mind but a naked intent stretching' (*ananya bhakti*). 'Smite upon the thick cloud of unknowing with a sharp dart of Longing Love.' Boehme states that 'the wheels of imagination must be stopped.' Thought,

convention, self-interest, priggishness, lust, etc. smear the windows of the senses. They drape the panes. So Blake holds: 'If the doors of perception are cleansed, everything will appear to man as it is—infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through the narrow chinks of his cavern.' Dionysius the Areopagite writes: 'If any one saw God and understood what he saw, then it was not God that he saw, but something that belongs to him.' The Upaniṣads again and again describe the ultimate Reality as 'not this, not this', 'not *this* which is before you, which you worship.' The negative description is clinched in the *Māṇḍūkya* verse: 'It is unseen by the sense organs (*adrṣtam*). It is unrelated to the things of the world (*avyavahāryam*). It is incomprehensible by mind (*agrāhyam*). It is indefinable (*alakṣaṇam*). It is unthinkable (*acintyam*). It is indescribable (*avyapadeśyam*). At the same time, It is essentially of the nature of consciousness which constitutes the character of the Self of man (*ekātma-pratyayasāram*). It is the negation of the world (*prapañcopaśā-mam*). It is the tranquil, the blissful, and the non-dual (*śāntam, śivam, advaitam*). With all this it is Reality of the real (*satyasya satyam*).' Though the ultimate category is absolutely indeterminable, It is not ultimately unrealizable.

ii. Mysticism takes its stand on experience, not dogmas, creeds, or contingent fancies. It rejects all the forms of external authority common to denominational, dogmatic, and exclusive theologies, i.e., belief in an infallible revelation or book, or an infallible church or a prophet. It shifts the centre of gravity in religion from authority to experience. This makes mysticism place religion on an objective, empirical, and scientific basis. It is the bold and experimental approach to religion. This insistence on experience as the ultimate testimony makes it scientific. In the eloquent words of Dr. Radhakrishnan, 'It takes its stand on verifiable truth and not correct solutions of creedal puzzles. It is not opposed to

science or reason. It is not contingent on any event, past or future. No scientific criticism or historical discovery can refute it, as it is not dependent on any impossible miracles or unique historical revelations. Its only apologetic is testimony of spiritual experience. It is not committed to authenticity of any documents or truth of any stories about the beginning of the world or prophecies of the end.¹ In the popular mind, mysticism is identified with and believed to consist in locutions, weeping, trances, stigma, apparitions, visions, and auditions. They are not indispensable conditions of mysticism. They are the first and passing stages, not the core. They represent only the psychical aspect and not spiritual, in the words of St. Paul.

iii. Mysticism takes up the contemporary challenge to Religion which comes from Naturalism which is a form of anti-religious humanism. Naturalism regards the method of religion dogmatic and not scientific. This is answered by the mystic's stand on experience and not dogma.

The second enemy to spiritual religion is dogmatic theology. It claims exclusive, total, and special disclosure of divinity to it, with the result each prophet abrogates the truths of creeds other than his own. Each says, 'Thou shalt have no other God but me, no prophet but me.' A sharply defined and fully described anthropomorphism is inconsistent with catholicity of outlook. It does not tolerate any rival. No other approach is approved. This leads to wars, proselytisms, conflict, and persecution. Enthusiasm is mis-spent in rivaling one another in the art of competitive indoctrination. 'It brutalizes men by its rites and shrivelling terrors of superstition.' The practical record is depressing. Fundamentalism, intolerance, fanaticism, and bigotry are the results.

The spiritual religion of mysticism avoids these errors, because the transcendent Reality cannot be described. It is described differently

by different men. The different pictures of God are the different intellectual formulations of one indescribable Reality. None of them is the exclusive picture of Reality. All are different attempts to represent the One from different perspectives. Such a view promotes fellowship of faiths. It makes for peace and makes impossible the cruelty practised in the name of religion. The God of one religion does not conflict with the God of another religion. There is no need for proselytism or persecution. Thus it corrects the two defects of traditional religion, i.e. dogmatism and inhumanity.

Tolstoy in his *A Confession* writes: 'I read and studied these books, and here is the feeling I have carried away from that study. If I had not been led by life to the inevitable necessity of faith; and if I had not seen that this faith formed the foundation of the life of men; if this feeling, shattered by life, had not been strengthened anew in my heart . . . if there were within me only the faith of which theology speaks, I, after reading these books, not only would have turned atheist, but should have become the malignant enemy of every faith, because I found in these doctrines not only nonsense, but the conscious lie of men who had chosen the faith as the means for obtaining certain ends.' Elsewhere he writes: 'I intended to go to God and found my way into a stinking bog.' To the theologians he cries: 'Go yourselves to your father, the devil . . . You are not speaking of God, but of something else.' The God of religion is not the God of theology.

Swami Vivekananda in one of his American addresses said that the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* are the only scriptures that declare that by scripture alone we cannot attain Mokṣa. The final authority is experience. 'This Self cannot be known by the study of the Vedas, nor by intellect, nor even by much hearing the sacred scriptures.'²

iv. Mysticism is not, as some think, a mere way of feeling. It is not a matter of

¹ *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, pp. 294-95.

² Nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo
Na medhayā na bahunā śrutena.

emotions or the subject of psychology. It is not the experience of people who are highly suggestible or who have a disordered mind and an intemperate imagination. It is not 'the distressing appearance of entirely sophisticated and reflective persons cudgelling themselves into an attitude of lisping childishness.' Freud, as we know, describes religious experience as an illusion and not a delusion,—mental comfort and the rest, based on an infantile part of our nature. It is a regress, a stepping back to the attitude of little children coming up against the problems of life and death. All these lines of attack are based on the criticism that mysticism is subjective experience.

This is not true. Mysticism is an attempt to realize the living God in the soul and in nature, or more generally it is an attempt to realize, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal and of the eternal in the temporal. In the words of Goethe, it is the scholastic of the heart, the dialectic of the feelings.'

The mystics of the world exhibit a striking unanimity in their confessions. 'They form an invariable brotherhood scattered through all lands and times. Though separated by space and time, they reach hands to each other and agree in saying that God and man are separated only in outer appearance, both are indissolubly one.'³ Dean Inge writes that 'mysticism is singularly uniform in all times and places. The communion of the soul with God has found much the same expression whether the mystic is a neo-Platonic philosopher like Plotinus, a Mohammanan Sufi, a Catholic monk, or a Quaker. Mysticism which is the living heart of religion springs from a deeper level than the differences which divide the churches, the cultural changes which divide the ages of history.'⁴

It is not purely subjective. It is the genuine discovery of an object and is not opposed to Reason though it transcends it. It is not discontinuous with knowledge. It is the

concentration of all faculties, will, intellect and feeling, upon God. It is the logic of the whole personality that is at work and not the half-personified Reason. 'The human mind,' says Macarius, 'is the throne of the Godhead.' The Cambridge Platonist, Whichcote, writes to Tweekney: 'I oppose not rational to the spiritual. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.' The author of the *Gītā* asks us to take resort in the Buddhi. McTaggart writes that a mysticism which ignores the claims of understanding would be doomed. 'None ever went about to break Logic, but in the end Logic broke it.'

The mystic's knowledge has none of the limitations of sense and rational knowledge. It transcends them. It is not a 'contralogical'. It is called *Sākṣātkāra*, *Samyag-darśana*, *sub specia eternitalis* view. Among the seven gifts of the spirit, wisdom and understanding are prominent. 'Mysticism is reverent thought and unrestrained feeling.' It is true integral knowledge. It transforms men into little Gods and makes them work hard for the establishment of world-community. The mystics possess greater power than normal men.

v. Another criticism is that the mystics are an indolent lot and lazy. This is not true when we know the great work of the active mystics, the crusaders of God. They incorporate and incarnate the values of religion in the life and the institutions of men. They build the new social order in the image of honesty, truth, and love. They are not escapists. They realize the experience and spread the light in every age. They suffer martyrdom and bear witness to their experience.

vi. The tenets of mysticism are:

(1) The unity of all existence.

(2) In order to know God man must be the partaker of the Divine. 'What we are, that we behold,' and 'what we behold that we are.' We are consubstantial with the uncreated ground of the deity. Plotinus said that 'every man is a double', meaning that one side of his soul is in contact with the intelligible, the other with the sensible world. It is

³ Helier on Prayer, p. 191.

⁴ *Freedom, Love and Truth*, pp. 25-26.

in His light we see the light. Though we are made in the image of God, our likeness to God only exists potentially. God is not wholly other to man. Spinoza declared: 'We feel and know that we are eternal.' Man is not an irremediably fallen creature of sin, tied down to a body of lust, with no glimmer of divinity in him. He is 'imprisoned splendour', in the words of Browning. The Kingdom of God is not hither or thither, it is in us. It can be realized here and now, in the mortal frame, not at some distant date after death. It is the birthright of all without any distinction. The mystics affirm the dignity and divinity of man. It is humanism *par excellence*. The mystics affirm the unity of God and man. They do not admit any barrier in between the two. Man does not need any intermediary between him and God. Such as men themselves are, such will God Himself seem to them to be. He is closer to us than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet. St. Paul writes that 'God hath sealed in us and has given us the earnest of the spirit in our heart.' If God is not found in man, He is unfindable. 'All things that are yonder are also here.' We need not search for His footprints in nature, when we can behold His face in ourselves.

vii. The Ethics of Mysticism: 'Love God and do what you like.' said St. Augustine. It is impossible to love God and do bad to men. It is hypocrisy to take the name of the Lord in vain. Good life is indispensable for godly life. The mystic gives up all those activities that forbid unity. Without holiness no man can see God. 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.' 'One who has not desisted from bad conduct, whose senses are not under control, whose mind is not concentrated, whose mind is not free from anxiety, cannot attain this Self through knowledge.'⁵

The mystics have sunny confidence in the ultimate triumph of Good. They seek not ātmakalyāṇa but good of society. Some think

⁵ Nāvirato duś-caritāt nā'sānto nā'samāhitah;
Nā'sāntamānaso vā'pi prajñānena enam-
āpnuyāt.

that Eastern mysticism is world-negating and not life-affirming. Eastern mystics regard the world as an illusion and the only thing we can do with it is to wake up from it. They do not dominate life but try to escape from it. Theirs is a personality-destroying mysticism. Buddhist and Hindu ethics are not born from a feeling of compassion but from the idea of keeping undefiled by the world.

The truth, however, is that the mystic outlook combines in fine and proper proportion the executive and reflective aspects of life. The two centralities of religion are energy and vision. The exclusive domination of one leads to savagery and the domination of the other leads to dwelling in cloud land. The *Gītā* paradox of 'action in inaction' is resolved in the personality of the mystic who combines the vision of the Yogi and the executive ability of the commissar, the bow of Arjuna and the grace of Kṛṣṇa.

viii. The mystic experience is the common path of light all have trodden. It is the steel frame behind all types of religious structures. The skeleton is the same, the flesh covering it varies in texture and the skin above the flesh varies in colour. They express themselves in symbols. Some regard God as a personality, others as spirit. The human mind has to resort to symbols to express its experience. Thomas Aquinas says that all language about God must necessarily be analogical. A. N. Whitehead writes: 'Mankind, it seems, has to find a symbol in order to express itself. Indeed expression itself is symbolism . . . Symbolism is no mere idle fancy or corrupt degeneration; it is inherent in the very texture of human life. Language is itself symbolism.' Symbols suggest but do not express. They provide support for experience which lies beyond the power of words. Berdyaer writes in his book, *In Spirit and Reality*: 'We cannot dispense with symbolism in language and thought, but we can do without it in the primary consciousness. In describing spiritual and mystical experience man will have recourse to spatial

symbols such as height and depth, to symbols of this or another world. But in real spiritual experience these disappear, there are no symbols of height and depth, of this or another world. The primal creative act is realistic and non-symbolic; it is free from conceptual elab-

oration.' Religious Experience is, in the words of Bergson, 'the crystallization brought about by the scientific process of cooling what mysticism had poured white hot into the soul of man.' Through religion all men get what a few privileged souls possessed in full.

THE ART OF AJANTĀ

BY SRI PARESH NATH MUKHERJEE

The art of Ajantā, one of the richest heritages of our ancient culture, has been an object of great admiration and inspiration to scholars of all countries and of all times. "There are no fewer than twenty-nine caves of various sizes at Ajantā. They are cut in the hard volcanic rock, some of them going as far as 100 feet into the rock, which is naturally considered a remarkable architectural achievement. Cave No. 1 is the finest 'vihāra' in India. The Chaitya Hall in Cave No. 10 measures 100' × 40' × 33', Cave No. 26 contains a gigantic sculpture of the Buddha, considered to be one of the finest in the whole of India."¹ Else Lüders, a famous German traveller, in a letter written from Calcutta on 14th February 1928 to Germany (later published in a book) described the Ajantā caves thus: "They (the caves) resemble those of Ellora in their arrangement, only that here some Assembly Halls are covered over and over with frescoes. Frescoes from 200 B.C. to 600 A.D., and how wonderful are many (of them) in composition and sketch! They represent scenes out of the Buddha's life, as also Jātaka stories, festive-processions, and domestic scenes. The colours are often shining and well preserved. . . . The Entrance-wall is often decorated with the most gorgeous

reliefs. The whole of it is again a miracle."² Thus to all visitors at all times Ajantā has appeared a veritable wonder, a miracle.

This is very naturally so, because the art of Ajantā represents the highest perfection of an artistic tradition matured in the course of a few centuries, and rooted in the discipline of ancient Indian art canons and 'Śilpa-sāstras'. This Art was rooted in Truth, for in ancient India Truth was beauty, and art stands for beauty. There is a nice French proverb: "Rien n'est beau que le vrai" ('Nothing is beautiful except Truth'). "Beauty lies in the experience of a particular type of harmony."³ This harmony is made of the correspondence of the inner feelings and emotions with the outer representation. Truth in the Ajantā art does not mean anatomical truth, for then Photography should have been considered as the most perfect Art. Here Art

² *Unter Indischer Sonne* By Else Lüders (P. 66-67) "Sie sind in der Anlage denen in Ellora" ähnlich, nur dass hier einige Versammlungshallen über und über mit Fresken bedeckt sind. Fresken von 200 v Chr. bis 600 n Chr, und wie wundervoll sind viele in Komposition und Zeichnung! Sie stellen Szenen aus dem Leben Buddhas dar, auch Jātakadarstellungen, Festzüge und häusliche Szenen sind vertreten. Die Farben sind oft leuchtend und gut erhalten. . . . Die Eingangswand ist oft auf das Prachtvollste mit Reliefs geschmückt. Das Ganze ist wieder ein Wunderwerk."

³ *Fundamentals of Indian Art* By S. N. Dasgupta (P. 2)

¹ *Places of Buddhist Interest* By the Publications Division (Govt. of India: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Page 40).

represents the truth of emotions, ideals and spirit, more than it represents strictly anatomical truth. M. Henry Martin very accurately observes: "For Buddhist sculpture ideal beauty is not physical, but the expression of the spirit divine."⁴ He further remarks, "It does not seek the beauty of forms and of proportions, it neglects anatomical details, it simplifies the contours, and does not attach importance except to the expression of the face."⁵ This superior truth is expressed with remarkable lucidity in the art of Ajantā. That is why it is so very touching to our soul and appealing to our inner self.

To perceive this truth is also no easy task. The western art is for the uninitiated masses. The Indian art and particularly that of Ajantā, is for the few who are properly initiated. "To understand Indian art and its mysticism an initiation is necessary."⁶ Without it a layman will never be able to appreciate its higher truth and nobler beauty. For instance the 'Chitrasūtra' describes five typical forms of eyes resembling lotus, fish and so on that represent different types of characters. We find at Ajantā such peculiar types of 'eyes' as human beings ordinarily do not possess. They are symbolic 'eyes' representing certain characters and emotions prescribed by the Śāstras. The look suggests divinity,—a longing for the other world. Again the 'Chitrasūtra' mentions nine types of postures expressive of different ideas and emotions. Thus we find at Ajantā some peculiar postures that we do not come across in ordinary everyday life. But the initiated art critic will find in them the expression of that higher truth and emotion which no accurate photograph can

ever describe. In every detail this wonderful discipline of the ancient Indian art tradition is to be seen. The waist of the female figures was represented to be thin, for thin waist was supposed to be a mark of beauty. But the breasts and hips of the female figures are full and developed, for these were signs of motherhood. Describing this feature in the Yakṣiṇī figures, Rene Grousset remarks: "Never, even in the Greece of the classical age, has the innocent and spontaneous joy of life been so happily expressed. Never has the poetry of the female form been rendered with a more sensuous power than in the statues of female genii (Yakṣiṇīs)."⁷ Certain European writers failed to notice the nobility and dignity in this art. Thus a famous French critic says at one place: "It is then an art refined, voluptuous, in which the Post-Gupta plastic forms attain their perfection. The subtle rhythm of composition is obtained by the lines of the human body on which the entire attention is carried (focussed)."⁸ Although it is a very good appreciation, it is not entirely true. The truth in this case was best expressed by the late Professor S. N. Dasgupta, who writes: "Often the feminine figures are painted with all the realities of feminine attractions of youthful charm, beauty and passion, but still there is no suggestion of voluptuous indecency, . . ."⁹ The artists at Ajantā were not afraid of painting the realities of life, and their main object was to sublimate life and give it human dignity, never to debase it. The fingers and the palm of female hands form a unique feature of Ajantā art. With their infinite variety of forms they express the different feelings and sentiments in a remarkable manner. In the fingers and eyes of the

⁷ Rene Grousset: *The Civilisation of the East* (Page 102).

⁸ Jeannine Auboyer: *Les arts de L'extreme-Orient* (Page 61): "C'est alors un art raffiné, voluptueux, dans lequel les formules plastiques post-Goupta atteignent leur perfection. Le rythme subtil des compositions est obtenu par les lignes des corps humains sur lesquels se porte toute l'attention."

⁹ S. N. Dasgupta: *Fundamentals of Indian Art* (P. 88)

⁴ *L'Art Indien et L'Art Chinois* By M. Henry Martin (P. 22): "Pour le sculpteur bouddhique, la beauté idéale n'est pas la beauté physique, mais l'expression de l'esprit divine."

⁵ *Ibid* (P.22): "Il ne recherche pas la beauté des formes et des proportions; il néglige les détails anatomiques, il simplifie les contours, et n'attache d'importance qu'à l'expression du visage."

⁶ *Ibid*, (P.6): "Pour comprendre l'art indien et son mysticisme, une initiation est nécessaire."

Ajantā figures are expressed infinite compassion and piety. These figures, surcharged with divinity seem to tell the ordinary creatures of this Earth something of the Divine mercy and the bliss of Brahman, the ultimate goal of all life, its 'Mokṣa'. They seem to tell the message of the Vedas: "I view all beings with the eyes of a friend."¹⁰ In this Great Academy of Ancient Art, Ajantā excels in representing the qualities of fully developed motherhood, the joy of life, sanctity of all life including animal-life, Divinity, Divine Grace and Mercy, and great compassion. Some of the figures definitely seem to express the idea of ultimate relief and hope of salvation. The eternal Bliss is the ultimate consoler to suffering humanity. "Knowing the supreme Bliss of Brahman, one is never afraid (of anything)."¹¹ This great hope is held out to mankind in and through art in ancient India. Mr. Havell speaks of the "joie de vivre, so clearly manifested in the art of Sānchi and Ajantā, which the Buddha's mission had evoked."¹² Griffiths has pertinently observed: "I cannot help ranking it with some of the early art which the world has agreed to praise in Italy . . . Here we have art with life in it, human faces full of expression, limbs drawn with grace and action, flowers which bloom, birds which soar, and beasts that spring, or fight, or patiently carry burdens."¹³

The Ajantā art is noted for its wonderful creativity and artistic freedom. The ancient art critic Mammaṭa has observed that artistic creation 'is unfettered by the laws with which Nature had fettered herself' (Prakṛtikṛtanīyama-rahitam).¹⁴ Without freedom there can be no art. Beethoven expressed his view

¹⁰ *Sukla Yajurveda*: "Mitrasya aham cakṣuṣā sarvāṇi bhūtāni samīkṣe."

¹¹ *Taittirīyopaniṣad* II, 4. Ānandam Brahmano vidvān na bibheti kadācaneti."

¹² E. B. Havell: *History of Aryan Rule in India* (P. 418).

¹³ Griffiths: *Ajanta Frescoes*.

¹⁴ S. N. Dasgupta *Fundamentals of Indian Art* (P. 35)

that "Liberty and Progress form the goal in art as in all life."¹⁵ Liberty but not licence, is the predominant quality in Ajantā art. This art has considerable freedom because the artists who made it had considerable restraint and self-control. That was the secret in ancient Indian art tradition. Art had freedom, but the artist was self-controlled. Only the high priest of art could produce divine art. The artist was a yogi, a priest, and no ordinary man. He was not shy to depict life in all its aspects, but in doing so his object was to sublimate life and never to debase it. And it must be admitted that he succeeded to a remarkable degree in this holy task.

Historically the art of Ajantā is important, for it has described various scenes of historical as well as of everyday importance. One painting shows the diplomatic relations of king Pulakesin II with the Persian king Kushrau II (Cave i).¹⁶ In Cave xvii a painting depicts horses, elephants, warriors with shields and weapons being transported across the sea in big boats.¹⁷ Cave ii shows a sea-going ship with three masts, with jars containing provision for a long voyage. Cave xvii shows a king's anointing. It is interesting to note that in this ceremony ladies play a very prominent part.¹⁸

Such is the wonderful art of Ajantā, which has excited both curiosity and admiration since ages past, throbbing with life and vitality, the embodiment of Truth, Beauty and Grace, trying to bring down on earth something of heavenly divinity, and inspiring all humanity for all time to come. It has its message even for the present time as well as for the future. The peculiar blending of Divinity and Humanity will always continue to be its chief characteristic.

¹⁵ Romain Rolland: *Vie de Beethoven*: "La liberté et le progrès sont le but dans l'art comme dans la vie tout entière."

¹⁶ E. B. Havell: *History of Aryan Rule in India* (P. 212-213)

¹⁷ Mrs. Speir: *Life in Ancient India* (1856)

¹⁸ *Ibid* (1856)

LALLA YOGESWARĪ

KASHMIR'S PROPHET OF HARMONY

BY PROF. SUDHANSU BIMAL MOOKERJI

Hindu and Buddhist monarchs held sway over pre-Muslim Kashmir. The country reached the height of power, prosperity and culture under them. Kings like Lalitāditya Muktāpīda (695-732 A.D.) and Avanti Varman (855-884 A.D.) are never-to-be-forgotten figures of Indian history. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni's invasion of Kashmir was beaten back by the Kashmiris in the 11th Century. So far as we know, the Kashmir invasion was the only expedition of the redoubtable Sultan which did not pay dividends.

The Muslims conquered Kashmir in the 14th century. Sadr-ud-din, the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir (1319-22 A.D.), was at first a Buddhist and his original name was Rinchen. Sadr-ud-din's death in 1322 was followed by a short spell of Hindu rule. But Shah Mir, a Muslim soldier of fortune, seized the throne of Kashmir in 1339. The Muslims were henceforward the arbiters of the destinies of Kashmir for centuries.

The country was passing through a crisis in the middle of the 14th century. The national genius had gone in hibernation, as it were. The stream of culture had become stagnant. Kashmir and the Kashmiris were confronted with cultural and spiritual bankruptcy. The Muslim conquest however came to the rescue and Kashmir began to show signs of new life before long.

The Muslim conquest ushered in a new era in the annals of Kashmir in general and in her spiritual and cultural annals in particular. It was, above all, an era of synthesis in the field of religion. Students of Indian history are aware of the influence of Islam on the medieval Hindu religious and social thought. In the words of Sarkar, "The example of

Islamic society acted as a solvent on Hindu prejudice."¹ The saint-seers of medieval India breathed new life into the dry bones of religion at a time when religion had degenerated into an unending series of rituals and external observances. They preached the message of equality and fraternity. Theirs was a message of assimilation, not annihilation. Theirs was a mission of fulfilment, not destruction. Religion was to them a process of 'being and becoming'. The God they spoke of was not a communal or sectarian God. He was the God of Man and they were the prophets of religious humanism. Their God did not confine Himself to temples, mosques and churches.

Lalla Yogeswarī of Kashmir was a fellow-traveller of the medieval Indian saint-seers such as, Rāmānanda, Kabīr, Nānak, Caitanya, and others. She was in fact a pioneer in the path they trod. Muslim missionary activities, begun in Kashmir long before the Muslim conquest of the country, were stepped up after that conquest. The resultant conflict in the domains of Kashmir's thought and religion led to a spiritual renaissance and Lalla Yogeswarī was the harbinger of this renaissance.

Born in an orthodox Brahmin family of Pandrethan in 1335 A.D., Lalla developed from her childhood an intense aversion to all rituals and religious observances. She was married in an orthodox Brahmin family. Her married life was not a happy one. A tyrannical mother-in-law and a cruel, un-sympathetic husband made her life miserable. Finally, she ran away from home and wandered from place to place. She was at

¹ *India Through the Ages* by J. N. Sarkar, p. 64

this stage unconscious of what happened around her. Her clothes were in tatters. She passed her time mostly in singing and dancing. People marked her and thought that she had gone mad. During these wanderings, she met the famous Śaiva saint and philosopher Siddha Vāyu. Lalla sat at Siddha Vāyu's feet for lessons on the Śaiva philosophy and the ancient culture of Kashmir. Later in life, she had long discussions on religion, philosophy and spiritualism with the famous Muslim saint Shah Hamadan. These discussions changed the course of Lalla's religious life and she plunged headlong into the difficult task of bringing about a religious synthesis in Kashmir. Hindus and Muslims in large numbers became her disciples. She used to be called Lal Ded, i.e., Mother Lalla, by the former. The latter, on the other hand, used to call her Lalla Mājee, i.e., Mother Lalla. Others would call her Lalleswari or Lalla Yogeswari. She had a long life. The Hindus believe that she melted in thin air to be immersed into the Universal Soul and became one with It. The attainment of such oneness is, in fact, the *summum bonum* of a Śaiva devotee's life. The Muslims, however, think that Lalla died a natural death. A grave near the Jama Masjid at Brijbihāra is believed by them to be the place where Lalla was buried.

Lalla preached in the colloquial dialect. Songs and sayings attributed to her are called Lallavāka. They are among the most precious cultural legacies of Kashmir. They have been translated into English, Sanskrit and various other languages.² Purity of life, self-denial, renunciation, and a spirit of detachment constitute the essence of Lalleswari's message. Freedom from the fetters of sensual desires and conquest of the weaknesses of the flesh are the price of Supreme Bliss. The body must be like a piece of dry wood. A complete mastery over passions, in other words, is the essential pre-condition of spiritual emancipation. None can reach the spiritual

goal by following the beaten track and by observing the formalities of religion. Lalla says,

“Some have abandoned home,
Some the forest abode,
What use a hermitage if thou
controllest not thy mind?”

Lalla realized that differences of creeds and philosophies notwithstanding, they all lead to the same goal, that God is one and indivisible, though different people call Him by different names. ‘Whether it be Śiva or Keśava or Brahma or Jina,’ Lalla would say, ‘by whatever name a worshipper may call the Supreme, He is still the Supreme and He alone can release.’ Do we not read the same message in the *Gītā*?³ Śrī Rāmakrishna too used to say that just as different names, such as ‘jala’, ‘pāni’, and ‘water’ notwithstanding, water is always water, so also is the Lord, though He has a thousand names and one. The true devotee with faith in the guru's words, with genuine love for God, and with his mind restrained by wisdom like the horse by reins, transcends death and attains immortality.

Lalleswari was against extremes both in enjoyment and renunciation. Like the Blessed Buddha centuries ago, she prescribed the golden mean—the Middle Path. In her own words, ‘By overeating you will not achieve anything, and by not eating at all you will become conceited by considering yourself an ascetic. Eat, therefore, moderately, O darling! and you will remain balanced. By eating moderately, all the doors of success will be unbolted to you.’

Obstacles in the path of spiritual quests should not dishearten the seeker of God. His attempts to light the lamp of Love and Wisdom in the sanctum sanctorum of his own heart may be frustrated again and again. He must not lose heart, however. He must persist and march onward to the goal. The seeker ‘must travel alone in silence in Life's thorny path with patience in sorrows and

² We are not aware if they are available in Bengali or Hindi translation.

³ Cf. Ye yathā mām prapadyante tānstathaiva bhajāmyaham.

sufferings alike.'⁴ Then and then alone the pilgrim will one day reach the journey's end and will be blessed with enlightenment and supreme bliss. Lalla sang:

'Searching and seeking Him, I, Lalla,
wearied myself,
And beyond my strength I strove;
Then, looking for Him, I found his
doors closed and latched.
Thus deepened my longing and stiffened
my resolves,
And I would not move but stood
where I was,
Full of longing and love, I gazed on Him.'

She describes her reward in the following words:

'Passionate, with longing in my eyes,
Searching wide and seeking night and day,
Lo! I behold the Truthful One, the Wise,
Here in my own House to fill my gaze,
That was the day of my lucky star,
Breathless, I hold Him my Guide to be.'

⁴ Cf. Jivan kantik-paṭhe yete habe neerave ekakee—Sukhe dukhe dhairya dhari—Tagore

It has been noted above that many thought at first that Lalla suffered from insanity. The 'wise fools' ridiculed her. She suffered a lot at their hands. The attitude, however, changed later on and Lalleśwarī won the love and respect of her contemporaries—high and low, rich and poor alike—by the saintliness of her character, the purity of her life, the loftiness of her thought, and the catholicity of her outlook. Lalleśwarī left her mortal coils six hundred years ago. But her memory is as fresh as ever in the mass mind of Kashmir. Her sayings and verses enjoy great popularity even today.

The Muslim conquest of Kashmir was followed by the evolution of a new religious philosophy based on the synthesis of Islam and the Kashmiri Śaivism. According to this new philosophy, man himself—and he alone—is the architect of his own fate. One must have the fullest confidence in oneself. Self-confidence is essential for salvation. Lalla Yogeśwarī is the first exponent of this ideology in Kashmir.

ŚRĪ-BHĀṢYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from previous issue)

TOPIC 3

BRAHMAN, THOUGH OF A DIFFERENT NATURE FROM THE WORLD, CAN YET BE ITS CAUSE

A further objection is raised by the Sāṅkhyas who say that the Smṛtis of Manu and others are irrational and so their conclusions are defective; but the Kapila Smṛti is rational and so, in interpreting the Vedānta texts, one should take help from it and not from Manu and others. This topic deals with this objection and refutes it.

न विलक्षणत्वादस्य तथात्वं च शब्दात् ॥२११४॥

4. (Brahman is) not (the cause of the world) because this (world) is of a contrary nature (from Brahman); and its being so (i.e. different from Brahman) (is known) from the scriptures.

Objection (continued in the next Sūtra also): The cause and the effect must be of similar nature, i.e., non-different in character, as we find in the case of clay and its products, pots etc., or gold and its products, bracelets etc. But this world of sentient and insentient

beings is not of a similar nature with Brahman. The sentient world is made up of souls with limited knowledge, full of imperfections, and subject to suffering. The insentient world is non-intelligent and subject to change. As distinct from these two worlds, Brahman is omniscient, all-knowing and free from all imperfections. It enjoys unbroken blessedness. It is of the nature of intelligence, changeless etc. An effect cannot be of a dissimilar nature or different in character from the cause. That Brahman and the world are of contrary nature is further known from the scriptures also. 'Brahman became intelligence as also the non-intelligent' (*Taitt.* 2.6); 'Brahman is existence, intelligence, infinitude' (*Taitt.* 2.1); 'Seated on the self-same tree, one of them—the individual soul—sunken in ignorance and deluded, grieves for its impotence' etc. (*Mu.* 3.1.2). Vide *Śvet.* 1.8 and 4.7 also. The two, viz. Brahman and the world, being of contrary nature, the relation of cause and effect cannot exist between them, as an effect cannot be of a different nature or character from the cause. On the other hand the Pradhāna and this world of insentient matter are of similar character and so it must be assumed to be the cause of the world. Kapila Smṛti, therefore, is more authoritative than Manu and others which are irrational.

It may, however, be said that the world of matter also has intelligence, as can be gathered from texts like, 'The earth said to him' (*Taitt. Sam.* 5.5.2). The next Sūtra answers this plausible objection.

अभिमानिव्यपदेशस्तु विशेषानुगतिभ्याम् ॥२११६॥

5. But the reference is to the presiding deities, on account of the special characterization (as deities) and entering.

The word 'but' refutes the objection raised. The reference in these texts cited is to the presiding deities, as is known from the special characterization as deities in the scriptures. 'That deity willed: Well, let me, entering into these three deities' etc. (*Ch.* 6.3.2); here fire, water, and earth are characterized as deities.

Vide *Kau.* 2.14 also. 'Entering' in the Sūtra refers to the text, 'Agni, having become speech, entered into the mouth' etc. (*Ait.* 2.4), where Agni and other deities are described as having entered into the sense-organs as their presiding deities.

So one cannot refute the fact that Brahman and the world are of different character, which shows that the world cannot be an effect of Brahman. Therefore in agreement with the Sāṅkhyan Smṛti confirmed by reasoning, the Vedānta texts must be assumed to teach that the Pradhāna is the material cause of the world.

दृश्यते तु ॥२११६॥

6. But it is seen.

The word 'but' refutes the view expressed in the previous two Sūtras.

The argument that Brahman and the world being of different character, the relation of cause and effect cannot be established between them contradicts experience. For we do see that things of contrary nature are related as cause and effect, as for example worms which are produced from honey, scorpions from cow-dung etc. It may be said here that the relation of cause and effect exists only with respect to the material part in both. This argument cannot hold. For equality of character necessary to establish the relation of cause and effect means, according to the opponent, that those qualities which distinguish the cause from other things must persist in the effect also. This rule does not hold good in the case of worms born from honey, for the special qualities which distinguish the cause, viz. the honey, from other things are not seen in the effect, the worms. So it is not unreasonable to hold that the world which is of a different nature from Brahman can yet be Its effect.

असदिति चेत्, न, प्रतिषेधमात्रत्वात् ॥२११७॥

7. If it be said that (in that case) (the effect is) non-existent (in the cause); (we say) no, there being a denial only (of similar characteristics between cause and effect and not of oneness of substance).

It may be objected: If Brahman and the world are of different nature and yet related as cause and effect it would mean that the world, the effect, was not existent in the cause, the Brahman, the two being quite different. We reply that it is not so. For what is denied is merely the rule that there should be similarity of characteristics between the cause and the effect. But we do accept their oneness of substance, as we find in clay and pots, or gold and bracelets. The world is not altogether different and separate from the cause, the Brahman. Therefore what we say is that the same substance, the cause, becomes modified into the effect but may or may not have similar characteristics.

अपीतौ तद्वत्प्रसङ्गादसमञ्जसम् ॥२११॥

8. On account of the fact that at the time of dissolution (the cause becomes) like that (i.e. like the effect) (the doctrine of Brahman being the cause of the world) is absurd.

Objection: If really the Brahman,—which is all-knowing, whose every desire is fulfilled, who enjoys unbroken bliss and who is free from all imperfections—be the cause of this world of a contrary nature, and both be made of one substance, then the imperfections of the world, like ignorance, being subject to Karma etc. will surely be connected with Brahman. The result would be that contradictory qualities as given by the Vedānta texts would be attributed to the same substance, thereby reducing their teaching to an absurdity. A few Vedānta texts are cited here. 'He who is all-knowing' (*Mu.* 1.1.9); 'Free from sin, old age and death' (*Ch.* 6.1.5); 'Of these two, one eats the sweet fruits' etc. (*Śvet.* 4.6); 'On account of its impotence it laments bewildered' (*Śvet.* 4.7). The Vedāntin may say that as Brahman has in both the causal and effected states the world of sentient and insentient beings for Its body, the imperfections of the world found in Its body do not affect It. But the relation of soul and body cannot exist between Brahman and the world, for in that case the imperfections due to embodiment will affect

It. Moreover embodiment is meant for the enjoyment of the fruit of Karma and this is made possible through the senses which abide in the body made of elements and sustained by Prāṇa. But Brahman is not subject to Karma, nor has It sense-organs to experience enjoyment dependent on the senses, nor does It depend on Prāṇa for life. Vide *Śvet.* 3.19; *Mu.* 2.1.2. Moreover Vedānta texts clearly declare that Brahman has no body: 'Without hands and feet It grasps and hastens' etc. (*Śvet.* 3.19).

न तु दृष्टान्तभावात् ॥२११॥

9. But not (so) on account of the existence of illustrations.

The word 'but' refutes the view expressed in the last Sūtra. Imperfections do not affect Brahman and so the teachings of the Vedānta texts are not an absurdity. One substance can exist in two different states having good and bad qualities separately in the two states. Brahman has for Its body the world of sentient and insentient beings and Brahman is its Self in both the causal and effected states. The imperfections of the world, the body, do not affect Brahman, the indwelling Self, nor do the good qualities of the Self, the Brahman, affect Its body, the world. In the human being the changes and imperfections of the body like birth, childhood, youth, old age etc. do not affect the soul, nor do the qualities of the soul like intelligence, pleasure etc. extend to its body. That Brahman has for Its body the world of sentient and insentient beings in both their subtle and gross conditions and that It is its inner Self is clearly declared by the scriptures. 'To whom the individual self is the body' (*Br.* 3.7.22—*Mādhyan.*); 'To whom the Avyakta is the body' (*Sub.* 7). So in both the causal and effected states Brahman is not affected by the change, ignorance, being subject to Karma etc. which belong to the world, nor do the qualities of Brahman like all-knowingness, being free from all imperfections etc. extend to the world.

Moreover the definition of a body as given

by the opponent is defective. A body is not necessarily a means for enjoying the fruit of Karma. For the Lord takes forms at His pleasure without being subject to Karma. So do released souls. Vide *Ch.* 7.26.2. Nor are these bodies made of the elements. 'The body of the Highest Self is not made from a combination of elements' (*Mahābhārata*). So we define 'body' thus: 'Any substance which a sentient soul controls completely for its own purpose and is in a subordinate relation to the soul, is the body of that soul.' In this sense all the sentient and non-sentient beings constitute the body of Brahman as they are subordinate to It and controlled and supported by It for Its own purpose. Texts which say that Brahman has no body mean only that It has no body due to Karma.

स्वपक्षदोषाच्च ॥२११०॥

10. And because of objections (against) his own (Sāṅkhyan) view.

The defect of absurdity in reasoning applies to the Sāṅkhyan view also. According to the Sāṅkhyas, creation begins due to the nearness of the Prakṛti to the Puruṣa and the consequent superimposition of the qualities of Prakṛti on the Puruṣa (soul) which is pure intelligence and free from all change. If nearness of the Prakṛti means the mere existence of the Prakṛti, then even in the case of the released souls this superimposition of its qualities on the released souls will be there and consequently there will be no release at all. If nearness means some change in the Prakṛti which causes this superimposition, then it would lead us into a contradiction, the change in the Prakṛti being the cause of the superimposition and again superimposition being the cause of the change in the Prakṛti which results in the evolution of the world process. While the Vedānta view has been explained satisfactorily, the Sāṅkhyas cannot get out of this absurdity and so their view is based on error and has to be discarded.

तर्काप्रतिष्ठानादपि ॥२१११॥

11. Also because reasoning has no sure basis (it cannot upset the conclusions of the Vedānta).

As the Sāṅkhyan view is refuted by the Bauddhas and others through reasoning, there is no sure basis for reason on which one can depend. The arguments of one can be refuted by another more intelligent. So Reasoning without the help of the scriptures is not dependable. So the Sāṅkhyan view, based merely on reasoning, cannot upset the Vedānta view based on the scriptures.

अन्यथाऽनुमेयमिति चेत्, एवमप्यविमोक्षप्रसङ्गः

॥२११२॥

12. If it be said that it should be reasoned otherwise (so as to get over the defects); (we say) even so there will result the contingency of non-release (for the defect cited).

It may be said that the conclusion of the Sāṅkhyas can be arrived at through a different process of reasoning which would eliminate the defects shown by the Bauddhas and others. We reply it is of no use, for arguments given by any one are capable of being stilted by another more intelligent and expert in fallacious arguments. So mere reasoning cannot lead us to any sure conclusion. Therefore in matters supersensuous scriptures alone are authority. Reasoning which goes against them is no proof of knowledge and cannot contradict scriptural texts.

TOPIC 4

THE LINE OF REASONING AGAINST THE SĀṅKHYAS IS VALID AGAINST OTHERS LIKE THE ATOMISTS

एतेन शिष्टापरिग्रहा अपि व्याख्याताः ॥२११३॥

13. By this (i.e. by the arguments against the Sāṅkhyas) the remaining systems (like that of the Atomists and others) not accepted by the Vedas, are explained.

By this argument against the Sāṅkhyas, viz. that mere reasoning has no sure basis, all other systems like that of the Atomists, Bauddhas, Jinas and others, not based on the scriptures, are also refuted. It may be said

that all of them agree on the point that atoms are the ultimate cause of the world and so they do not contradict each other; and there is therefore no room for the argument given against the Sāṅkhyas in their case. We reply that though they are all agreed about the ulti-

mate cause being atoms, yet they all differ from each other as to the nature of these atoms and so there is no sure basis. Hence they are also refuted by this argument against the Sāṅkhyas.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Referring to the poem, 'Your Child', Brahmachari Yogatma Chaitanya writes: 'Instead of writing these new translations in the traditional metres of English poetry, I am trying the experiment of using what is known as syllabic verse, where not the number of strong beats but merely the number of syllables is the determining factor of each line. In this way I hope to come very slightly closer to the spirit of Bengali verse, in which also syllabic count (as in French) determines the line structure.' . . .

Dr. Albin R. Gilbert is a great psychologist and scholar, deeply interested in Indian culture and religion. He was originally professor in Prague University. He is at present Associate Professor of Psychology in Wheaton College, Norton, Mass., U.S.A. He is an outstanding leader of Interamerican Psychological Congress, and a member of many national organizations. 'Sri Ramakrishna's Significance for Western Thought' is the text of a speech he delivered in Providence, U.S.A., on the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. Of what value are the 'superconscious experiences' and the 'uncontrolled ecstatic inspirations' of a great soul like Sri Ramakrishna 'in a highly active and competitive culture' such as ours today? How are they going to benefit mankind, immersed as it is in the ordinary walks of life? In his sweet, direct, and persuasive way, Dr. Gilbert shows us clearly that the 'desperate outcry' of the hour is; 'Raise a

mountain of God in the midst of humanity', as taught and exemplified in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. We are deeply thankful to the Professor and to Swami Akhilanandaji of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Massachusetts, Boston, for sending us this article for publication in *Prabuddha Bharata*. . .

Even a few decades ago, it was a common sight in certain temples, big as well as small, to see men who combined scholarship and devotion regularly practising various spiritual disciplines from the early hours of the morning. That served as a 'free' object lesson to all sections of the temple-going population, specially children. Some of these steady seekers used to sit in the roofed hall facing the shrine, repeating hymns or silently meditating on the deity of their choice. Others, with suitable light clothing, preferred to face the rising sun, and on the bare stone slabs make prostrations, matching the 'eight' stages of each complete movement with the chanting of devotional poems like *Sivānandalahari* or *Saundaryalahari*. Those who have tried it, or will venture to do so now, will realize what it means in terms of will power and physical stamina,—let alone sheer memory or spiritual recollectedness—to be able to carry out, *daily*, a *minimum*, of *one hundred such prostrations!* Devotees who practised this form of discipline could be easily identified outside the temple precincts by means of the thick black skin formed on their forehead and other parts of the body by continuous rubbing

against the hard surface of the floor. The onrush of 'modern fashions', with their altered time-schedules for the whole day, particularly morning hours,—which leave little room for prayers or quiet thinking,—has almost made the old-type chanting and prostrations things of the past! We are grateful to Prof. M. K. Venkatarama Aiyar, M.A., for giving us, this time, a highly interesting and detailed study of one of Ācārya Śaṅkara's 'twin' poems, namely *Sivānandalahari*. He has touched upon many important aspects of Indian philosophy in general and of the great Ācārya's writings in particular. Adoration of Śiva is shown properly in the light of the principle of Iṣṭa, or Chosen Ideal. 'It is really the Brahman of the Vedānta who is worshipped as Śiva or Viṣṇu or Devī or any other God. These Gods are only supports to meditation on the Highest.' It is pointed out that 'the poet freely draws from his store of purāṇic lore to elucidate the various shades of bhakti', and handles them 'so skilfully' that they acquire 'a new complexion' altogether. 'To the mill of inspired religious imagination everything is grist.' The article is full of significant remarks like 'Dying to selfhood is the indispensable precondition of bhakti', or 'In our country religion is the matrix of all sciences and arts, including poetry and music'. Select stanzas have been lucidly translated, adding thereby to the value of the presentation. . . .

Swami Sambuddhananda is the President of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Bombay. 'Where All Religions Meet' is the gist of a speech delivered by him at Dacca. In his short article the Swami points out how there is very little difference in the fundamental principles behind the divergent external practices of various religions. The recognition of this fact, the Swami emphasizes, would make the followers of each religion look upon the followers of all others 'as their own flesh and blood' and 'spiritual kinsmen'. As the Swami aptly shows, the term 'religion' cannot convey all the beautiful implications of the Sanskrit term 'Dharma'. . . .

We are, most of us in our present state of

knowledge, dualists in actuality. The Advaitic position that the Ultimate Reality is One without a second constantly raises in us doubts such as: How could we account for the differences we experience between different individual souls and different objects? These and many other doubts of a similar nature, which are as old as humanity, have been answered in the traditional manner by Maṇḍana Miśra in his *Brahma-Siddhi*. We are thankful to Dr. S. S. Hasurkar, M.A., Ph.D., Sāhityācārya, for making those answers available to us. Readers will notice that the ancient Sanskrit style of the Bhāṣyas of the great Acāryas has been retained in the English also. . . .

Many people refuse to "pass beyond the frontiers of the mind." They feel themselves more or less secure as long as they can stay in the level where they can compare, contrast, reject and accept various concepts and theories. Some also regard "mystic experience" as "the characteristic of an outmoded philosophy and pathological psychology." Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt., of Karnatak College, Dharwar, ably answers these and other views propounded by the critics of mysticism. With apt quotations drawn from a wide range of writings, he shows that "mysticism is latent in the depths of the world's sub-conscious" and that "it has developed under the shade of every great religion, sometimes outside the church and at times inside the church." He takes his stand on the Indian systems that are based on "direct experience", on "verifiable truth", "not opposed to science or reason". Mysticism clearly avoids the errors and dangers into which Naturalism, anti-religious humanism, and "dogmatic theology" are leading mankind. But does not mysticism make people lazy or pessimistic? Dr. Rao answers by pointing to "the great work of the active mystics, the crusaders of God." "The truth," says he, is that "the mystic outlook combines in fine and proper proportion the executive and reflective aspects of life." It combines

“the vision of the Yogi and the executive ability of the commissar, the bow of Arjuna and the grace of Kṛṣṇa” . . . Mystic experience “is, in fact, the “steel frame behind all types of religious structures.” . . .

In ancient India ‘Truth was Beauty’. But why is it that Indian artists seem to have ignored anatomical truth altogether? Why should eyes, fingers, waist or busts be given unusually long, slender or developed shapes? Sri Paresh Nath Mukherjee, M.A., Member of Asiatic Society, answers some of these questions in his brief and lucid account of the Art of Ajantā. In Ajantā ‘we have art with life in it, human faces full of expression, limbs drawn with grace and full of action’,—expressions of ‘freedom’ naturally springing in the hearts of artists who were all ‘self-controlled’. ‘The artist was a yogi, a priest, no ordinary man.’ His object ‘was to sublimate life, not to debase it.’ There is a ‘peculiar blending of Divinity and Humanity’ in it. We thank the writer for explaining these aspects in clear and chiselled terms. . .

The meeting and intermingling of different races and cultures on the soil of India has brought in its wake two lines of development. On the one hand there was great religious conflict as well as political upheaval. On the other it led slowly but steadily to a ‘spiritual renaissance’ resulting in the synthesis of the best in each culture and religion. While zealous fanatics and political conquerors fought and wrought terrible destruction, saint-seers, the ‘prophets of religious humanism’, strove their utmost to bring about ‘assimilation and fulfilment’ through their message of ‘equality and fraternity’. Prof. S. B. Mookherji, M.A., of Khalsa College, Amritsar, has, this time, illustrated this principle of ‘synthesis’ in his short and beautiful sketch of the life and message of Lalla Yogeśwarī who inspired alike the Hindus and the Muslims of Kashmir at a time when synthesis was a crying need and people were willing to work for it. Surely such creative forces can emerge even now to hold together and strengthen the anxious millions.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THRESHOLDS OF EXISTENCE. BY UPTON CLARY EWING. *Philosophical Library, New York.* Pp. xiii+286. Price \$3.75.

In the face of the ‘intrinsic behaviour of a selfish, cruel, and carnal nature’ with its ‘fiendish methods’ of survival, how can creation of life on this earth be conceived to be the handiwork of a ‘benevolent and compassionate God’, as some religions do? On the other hand, are the explanations of science such as are contained in the notions of ‘natural selection’ and the ‘survival of the fittest’ or such as that it is the ‘effect of a non-directed synthesis of casually-formed molecules’ due to ‘chance’ in any way satisfactory? Finding the answers to both these questions wanting and deficient, the author offers his own theory of ‘Incidental Inception’ as a ‘logical solution’ to the mystery of the origin of life. All things appear ‘in their inception’ ‘subject to the incidental behaviour of

certain mind-like properties stimulated by Thotonic energy.’ This ‘Thotonic energy’ is a hypothetical ‘force’, a ‘non-material volitional agent’, which provides the necessary ‘incentive’ for the ‘spontaneous creation’ of the separate species of plant and animal life. This leads the author to consider the universe as being ‘psychic’, ‘somewhere within which’ there is ‘supreme concentration’ of this Thotonic power as a ‘complement’ to a ‘great intellect’ which may be the ‘nucleus of all nuclei’. ‘God in his self-creation exists in time as coetaneous to the universe, coessential to its function and co-progressive in its evolution.’ This conception of God, the author feels, absolves an equitable God of all responsibility for the personalized act of creation and also resolves ‘the duality of mind and life into a single factor.’ ‘Mind appears, not as a subordinate effect of a material evolution, but rather as the dynamic cause of such an evolution.’ The

author pictures the nature of the future evolution as that of finding "within" the 'spirit of God' which 'transcends all methods of practice' and which 'knows neither race, creed, or colour, but speaks gently in a universal language of compassion, remorsing the wayward and gladdening the virtuous.'

S. K.

THE WORLD AS POWER. BY SIR JOHN WOODROFFE. Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras-17. Pp. viii+414. Price Rs. 15/-.

The yeoman service rendered by M/s. Ganesh & Co. in the cause of Indian culture, religion, and philosophy, is too well-known for repetition. Among their many valuable and standard publications, those pertaining to Tāntrik literature need special mention. In the present volume are brought together, under one cover, the first five books of the series, *Power As Reality*, *Power As Life*, *Power As Matter*, and *Power as Causality and Continuity*, published by them separately earlier. In these, the learned author makes a clear and thorough exposition of the 'Doctrine of Śakti or Power' as 'the infinite reservoir of Energy, the Pūrṇa or the Complete, the Full, the Whole, the ultimate Reality'. Though the object has been to explain the 'general philosophical principles' 'from the Śākta-Vedānta standpoint', the views of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya-Yoga are also examined. For 'those who would understand Vedānta must also know both Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.' In fact these Systems 'are really One system', and 'not wholly separate and mutually contradictory as commonly supposed.' They are the 'three chief presentments' of Indian Thought, 'suitable to various types and grades of mind', 'Six Ways in which intellectual approach is made to that Full or Whole Experience, which transcends mind and its operations.' The general principles of these systems have been enunciated and discussed throughout 'with reference to the thought of the day', and not 'as things which have been and are gone' and are as such 'wholly unrelated to, and without value for current thought.' 'An examination of Indian Vedāntic Doctrine shows that it is in important respects, in conformity with the most advanced scientific and philosophic thought of the West, and that where this is not so, it is Science which will go to Vedānta and not the reverse.'

S. K.

INDIA'S ANCIENT LITERATURE: AN INTRODUCTORY SURVEY. Pp. 55. Price Re. 1.

J. KRISHNAMURTI: AN INTRODUCTION. Pp. xv+56.

Both by KEWAL MOTWANI, M.A., Ph.D. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras.

The first book gives us a general picture of the spiritual, ethical, and social ideals of ancient India as portrayed in the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad Gitā, Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Āgamas and Tantras, Purāṇas, the Smṛtis, and the Science of Rāja Yoga. The second presents us with a brief account of a 'few biographical facts' in the life of Krishnamurti, with a chapter each, dealing with his teachings and their impact on the world. The author has a simple, direct and expressive style.

S. K.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN THE NETHERLANDS. VOL. I, Nos. 1-4, 1957. Bulletin of the Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Co-operation. (Royal Netherlands Embassy).

This Bulletin has been started with the hope of bringing about healthy 'contacts' by 'stimulating and increasing' the interest of the readers in a wide variety of subjects in the field of higher education and research in the Netherlands. These periodicals give a general outline and concise account of the work being carried on in the different branches of science in that country.

SRI RĀMAKRISHNA DIPAM. The Magazine of the R. K. Mission Boys' Schools, Thyagarayanagar, Madras-17.

As the Editor says, "There is a joy in achievement and good work is its own reward." He and his contributors, young and old, deserve congratulation for bringing out this excellent number. It contains, most appropriately, short accounts and pictures of eminent persons—dead as well as living—who have laboured hard to build up the vast network of educational institutions in Thyagarayanagar. The students have written in English, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Sanskrit. The Tamil essay on "Śaṅkara Vijayam" deals with His Holiness, Jagatguru Śrī Chandraśekharendra Saraswati Swamiji of Kamakoti Pīṭham, Kānchi. Facing it is a nice tri-coloured picture of His Holiness.

HINDI

KALYAN BHAKTI ANK. 'Kalyan', P. O. Gita Press (Gorakhpur). Pp. 708. Price Rs. 7/-.

Like the previous annual special numbers, this one also is a mine of illuminative information. Its value is heightened by the large number of references and quotations from different scriptures and the beautiful and attractive tricoloured pictures. The subject of Bhakti has been approached from many angles in the various articles included, e.g., as it is delineated in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, Bhagavad Gitā, Bhāgavatam, Nārada Pancarātra, Nārada Bhakti Sūtras, Śaṅḍilya Sūtras, Rāmāyaṇa,

as well as in the works of the various Ācāryas and in the lives of various devotees. There are also articles treating it in its relation to Jñāna and Karma. The book must be of universal interest inasmuch as it contains articles dealing with the

doctrine of Bhakti as found in the Śaiva, Śākta, and Vaiṣṇava literature belonging to different parts of India, and in other religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Christianity.

S. K.

NEWS AND REPORTS

CHARITABLE HOSPITAL, MAYAVATI

REPORT FOR 1957

Origin and growth

The Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati belongs to the Ramakrishna Order and was started by Swami Vivekananda—far away on the Himalayan heights—to be a suitable centre for practising and disseminating the Highest Truth in life. The Ashrama has not been, however, out of touch with life and society. It has got a publication department which has brought out quite a volume of religious literature; it has been publishing the *Prabuddha Bharata*, a high-class monthly journal in English, dealing with Vedanta and different problems of Indian national life. It runs also a hospital forming a part of its activities.

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital came into being as a sheer necessity—in fulfilment of the local needs. The condition of the villages, mostly ignorant and poor, is so helpless in times of diseases and sickness that any one who sees them will be moved to give them some relief. The regular dispensary was opened in 1903. Since then it has been growing in size and importance. Now quite a large number of patients come from a distance of even 50 or 60 miles taking 4 or 5 days for the journey.

The hospital stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is in charge of a monastic member qualified for the task. There is also a qualified and experienced doctor to assist the work and increase its efficiency. Service is done in a spirit of worship, and as such irrespective of caste or creed. A great endeavour is made to keep a high standard of efficiency. In the hospital there are 13 regular beds. But sometimes it has to make arrangements for a much higher number of indoor patients. The operation room is fitted with most up-to-date equipments and there is also a small clinical laboratory. There is arrangement for the amusement and recreation of the patients through

a gramophone. There is also a small library for those who can read.

IN THE YEAR 1957

The total number of patients treated during the year in the Indoor Department was 233 of which 161 were cured and discharged, 63 were relieved, 6 were discharged otherwise or left, and 3 died. In the Outdoor Department the total number of patients treated was 19,454, of which 12,503 were new and 6,951 repeated cases.

We cordially thank all our donors who by their continued support have made it possible for us to carry on this humanitarian work in such an out-of-the-way place.

Our thanks are also due to the Editors of *The Medical Review of Reviews*, Delhi and *Shakti* (Hindi), Almora, for giving their journals free.

We are glad to inform the general public that donations to this hospital are exempted from Income Tax as per letter No. 12834 CT/8 E/3/52-53, dated the 7th June, 1954, from the Commissioner of Income Tax, West Bengal.

OUR IMMEDIATE NEED

The growth and popularity of the hospital call for immediate increase of accommodation. Not only have the number of seats to be increased, but the laboratory also should have a more commodious room and the stock-room should be expanded. A plan has therefore been prepared for eight additional beds and a laboratory room and a stock-room, the total estimated cost being Rs. 35,500/-. Recently the Union Government has made a grant of Rs. 6,750/-. We appeal to the generous public to contribute liberally to enable us to complete the work and thus discharge our duty adequately.

All contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA
President, Advaita Ashrama
P.O. Mayavati, via Lohaghat
Dist. Almora, U.P.