

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Vol. LXIV

DECEMBER 1959

No. 12



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

AT THE FEET OF THE HOLY MOTHER
RECORDED BY PRAVRAJIKA BHARATIPRANA

TRANSLATED BY SRIMATI LEELA MAZUMDAR

In 1918, the Mother fell seriously ill at Koalpara. Jogen-Ma and Sharat Maharaj (Swami Saradananda) were also there. Although Radhu saw that the Mother was so ill, she went away to her husband's home. The Mother said to Jogen-Ma, 'See, Jogen, she leaves me like this!' And Jogen-Ma said: 'But why not, Mother? Have you already forgotten that you walked all the way (from Jayrambati) to Dakshineswar to be near the Master?' The Mother smiled and said, 'You are right, Jogen'. She grew better and returned to Calcutta. . . .

Sometimes, Jogen-Ma had her doubts. The Master had renounced everything, but the Mother appeared to be very worldly, always worrying about her nephews and nieces. Jogen-Ma could not understand her. While meditating beside the Gaṅgā one day, she seemed to see the Master standing before her. 'Look,' said he, 'what is that floating on the river?' It was a dead new-born child with the cord wrapped

round its body. The Master said: 'Can the Gaṅgā be polluted? Or can anything contaminate it? Know her as such, too. Have no doubts about her. She is one with me.'

Jogen-Ma returned from the riverside and took the dust of the feet of the Mother, saying, 'Mother, forgive me'.

'Why, Jogen, what has happened?'

'I doubted you, Mother, but the Master has shown me the truth.' The Mother laughed a little and said: 'What does that matter? Certainly, you will have doubts. There will be questionings, and faith will return again. That is how faith is established.'

A woman devotee used to come to the Mother at Udbodhan. The Mother loved her very much. But as her reputation was not good, many monks did not like her presence near the Mother. When the Mother was told this, she said, 'Many things float in the Gaṅgā, but is the Gaṅgā polluted by them?' . . .

The Mother then said of her own accord: 'Mind this, my daughter, one has to take refuge and wait on His mercy; then only He takes pity.'

Once, I asked the Mother about *japa*, 'How should I make *japa*?'

'It will be all right anyway you make. Always think of the Master as your own.' Then she showed the process of making *japa* on one's fingers.

Referring to the period after the passing away of the Master, when the Mother was at Vrindaban, she once said: 'You know, I prayed to Rādhāramaṇa, "Lord, let me not see the faults of others".'

The Mother always said: 'Human beings will err. One must not take that into account. It is harmful for oneself. One gets into the habit of finding fault.' Once, she said to Jogen-Mā: 'Jogen, do not look for faults in others, or your own eyes will become faulty.'

Once, at Jayrambati, the Mother said to me: 'You know, my child, when I was at Vrindaban after the Master left us, we were all plunged in grief. One night, the Master said to me: "Why do you shed so many tears? Where have I gone, but from this room to the next, that is all."

'Once, he suggested that I should initiate the boy Jogen (Swami Yogananda). I felt nervous and shy. What was this? What would people say? They would surely say, "The Mother is already making disciples of her own!" But the Master repeated the same thing for three days in succession, "I did not initiate him, you must do it". He even told me which *mantra* I should give Jogen.

'In those days, I did not even speak to the boy Jogen. The Master told me to get our Jogen (Jogen-Mā) to speak to him. She discovered that it was true the Master had never initiated him, and had, indeed, appeared to him and asked him to receive his initiation from me. He had not had the courage to tell me about it. At last, I initiated him. He was the first

I initiated. He has given me such service as no one else can, with the exception of Sharat.' ...

On another occasion, a woman disciple confided in the Mother about a difference she had with her friend. The Mother commented: 'My child, to love human beings is to suffer. Only those who love the Lord are blessed, and have no sorrows.'

Once, a lady asked the Mother to teach her how to worship the Master. The Mother replied: 'You have your household duties, you cannot do much. You have received his name, take care of it. That will be enough.'

Once, owing to Radhu's illness, the Mother was staying at the rented premises on the Bosepara Lane. I was there to look after her. One day, she asked me to make the offerings to the Master. I did not know *mantras*; so I said, 'But, Mother, I do not know how it should be done'. She replied: 'See, my child, look upon him as though he belonged to you and say, "Come, sit down, receive these things and eat of them". Imagine that he has done so. What does one want with *mantras*, when one is near one's own people? Ceremonies are like courtesies shown to the guests; for one's own, they are unnecessary.' Then she taught me a *mantra*.

Once, a disciple came and complained to the Mother, 'I have spent so much time praying and meditating, but have received nothing'. She replied, 'Can you buy spiritual things like vegetables?'

Radhu had a nervous break-down, and was staying in Koalpara. The Mother sometimes fed her with her own hands, and she would often take the food in her mouth and then spit it out at the Mother. Greatly annoyed, the Mother once said to me: 'Look, my child, this body is divine, how much can it bear? No one but God can tolerate so much. The Master never hurt me in the least, but these people worry the life out of me. If the Master cures her this time, then no more of her! See, my dear, as long as I am with them, they will not recognize me, but afterwards they will know.'

During the Mother's last illness at Udbodhan, she lost all appetite for food. She would take just a handful of rice. Once Dr. Kanjilal arrived during her meal. He thought we had given her too much rice and scolded me before the Mother, saying: 'You are no good at nursing the Mother. I shall engage two professional nurses tomorrow. You need not do anything.' Later, the Mother said to me: 'Well, does he think I shall accept any service from those women with shoes on their feet? I can never do it. You will carry on as usual. Why does Kanjilal make such a fuss about my rice? Can I eat much? He knows nothing about it.'

She now became like a child of five. When I went to feed her one night at twelve, she objected: 'No, I won't take it. You are always after me, saying, "Eat this and eat that", and sticking a thermometer under my arm!' Finding her unwilling to eat, I asked, 'Shall I then call (Sharat) Maharaj?' Sometimes, she would eat if Maharaj's name was mentioned, but this time, she was stubborn in her refusal: 'Go, call Sharat, I won't eat at your hands.'

Sharat Maharaj quickly arrived when he heard this. She made him sit near her and said, 'Stroke me a little, my son'. Then she took his hands and said, 'No, you feed me, I won't take anything from her'.

I poured milk into the feeding cup and handed it to Maharaj. Somehow, he managed to feed her a little and then said, 'Now, take a little rest and drink'. The Mother cried: 'What lovely words—"Take a little rest and drink". Why couldn't they say such things? See, how they have disturbed my son in the middle of the night. Go, my child, sleep.' And she stroked his body. Later, Maharaj arranged her mosquito net and said, 'Can I go now, Mother?'

The Mother replied: 'Yes, my son. We have given you so much trouble.'

For a few days preceding her death, the Mother stopped asking after Radhu. One day, she said to her: 'Go to Jayrambati. Do not stay here any longer.' She said to me, 'Ask Sharat to send them to Jayrambati'. I said: 'But why Mother? Can you remain here without Radhu?'

'Yes, I can easily. I have turned my mind away from her.'

I told Jogen-Ma and Sharat Mahāraj about this. Jogen-Ma went and asked her, 'Why do you want them to go?' 'Because that is where they will have to live later on. I have turned away my mind. I do not want them any more.' Jogen-Ma cried: 'Do not say such things, Mother. How can we live if you turn your mind away?'

The Mother said: 'Jogen, I have dispelled all *māyā*. No more.'

Jogen-Ma went away without adding a word and told Sharat Maharaj. He said: 'Then we cannot keep her any longer. Now that she has turned her mind away from Radhu, there is no hope.'

I was standing nearby. Maharaj said to me: 'Look here, you are always near her, see if you can bring her mind back to Radhu.'

But all our efforts were in vain. One day, she said with firmness, 'Know this that, once I have withdrawn my mind, it will never return'.

Two or three days before she left us for ever, she called Sharat Maharaj and said: 'Sharat, I am going. Jogen, Golap, and the others remain, look after them.'



HOLY MOTHER SRI SARADA DEVI

Surely, you are the most wonderful thing of God, Sri Ramakrishna's own chalice of his love for the world, a token left with his children. . . . Surely, the 'wonderful things of God' are all quiet, stealing unnoticed into our hearts; the air and the sunlight and the sweetness of gardens and of the Ganges—these are the silent things that are like you.

—FROM A LETTER FROM SISTER NIVEDITA TO THE HOLY MOTHER

The sweet aroma that issues from flowers floats only with the wind, but the soul-uplifting fragrance that emanates from a saintly personality, the purifying perfume of holiness and spirituality, floats even against the wind! It is pervasive and persuasive in character. It affects and makes responsive even refractory and reprobate souls. The effect of such a divine influence is profound and far-reaching. It not merely brings about a transformation in the tendencies and propensities of the spiritually unregenerate souls, but changes the very course of their lives and lifts them to a level of consciousness where they can live, move, and have their being in God. Sri Sarada Devi, who has been reverentially and affectionately acclaimed as the Holy Mother by the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, was such an influence. She combines in herself all the divine traits and moral excellences to such a degree that she stands as the crowning glory of the ideal of Indian womanhood. Sister Nivedita says: "To me it has always appeared that she (the Holy Mother) is Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood. . . . In her, one sees realized that wisdom and sweetness to which the simplest of women may attain. And yet, to myself the stateliness of her courtesy and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her sainthood."

MOTHER PAR EXCELLENCE

From a study of her otherwise uneventful life, two facets of her personality shine forth most prominently: one of them portrays in bold relief the very picture of purity and holiness that the Holy Mother was, and the other reflects the

motherly affection that was ever present in her towards all.

Our earthly mother, the mother who bears us and brings us up, whose incomparable love and self-sacrifice qualify her to stand above all other human relationship, even she, bestowing her best care and attention, can bring comfort and joy to us only on the physical plane. She can seldom shed light on our spiritual path. But if a great spiritual soul, like Sri Sarada Devi, assumes this highest of all human relationships—the role of the mother—the relationship she establishes with all those who come to her seeking spiritual succour and solace becomes all the more deep and divine. Such a mother's concern is not merely with the physical well-being of her spiritual children, but also with their deeper self, their inner growth. She becomes *jñānadāyini*, lifting the veil of ignorance from their vision and saturating their minds and souls with purity and holiness. She becomes *jagaj-janani*, the universal mother, working for the good and welfare of the world. She becomes *bhavatārinī*, lending a helping hand to all weary souls that are groping in spiritual darkness, and kindles the lamp of the eternal Spirit in their souls, bringing to them supreme peace and blessedness that pass all human understanding.

To the Holy Mother came numberless men and women seeking her spiritual benedictions. Her motherly love was as intensive as it was extensive. People who came to her were men and women from every walk of life. There were among them persons who were rich as well as poor, educated as well as unlettered, respectable as well as even the socially fallen. Her motherly affection did not know any bounds,

and transcended all petty barriers that separate man from man—barriers of caste, creed, nationality, or even common social and ethical notions of men.

Motherhood in its purest form, Sister Nivedita tells us, is endowed with 'a yearning love that can never refuse us; a benediction that for ever abides in us; a presence from which we cannot go away; a heart in which we are always safe; sweetness unfathomed, bond unbreakable, holiness without a shadow'. We notice all these qualities operating in full force and measure in the quiet life and day-to-day activities of the Holy Mother. There was no exclusiveness in her; she was a mother to one and all—the mother *par excellence*.

INNATE DIVINITY

The performance of the *ṣoḍaśī-pūjā* by Sri Ramakrishna, as the culmination of all his spiritual *sādhanās*, when he worshipped the Holy Mother as the manifestation of the Divine Mother Herself—a unique phenomenon, the like of which we do not come across in the lives of the great religious teachers and prophets of the world—this worship reveals to us an altogether new and significant aspect of the Holy Mother's personality. The rite of the *ṣoḍaśī-pūjā* was unparalleled in its spiritual exaltation and in its emotional appeal. It reflected the Holy Mother's willing and spontaneous copartnership in Sri Ramakrishna's mission in life. As the complement of a mighty spiritual force that was Sri Ramakrishna, who was, as it were, the epitome of the spiritual life of our sacred land, the Holy Mother, too, realized and manifested her divine stature to the fullest extent. She accepted the homage of the Master, her husband, when he literally worshipped her, installing her on the pedestal of the Deity Herself and invoking the Divinity present in her, and offered at her feet, at the end of the worship, the fruits of his austerities, his rosary, himself, and everything that was his. He concluded the ceremony by prostrating himself before the deity in front of him, his wife, and uttering the prescribed salutation. Thenceforth, Sri

Ramakrishna looked upon her as the Divine Mother, who was none other than the presiding deity in the temple.

This great event in her life made the Holy Mother not only a copartner in the spiritual eminence and responsibility of Sri Ramakrishna, but also a dynamic instrument in the fulfilment of his mission. It was her living presence and inspiration that nurtured, during its infant stage, the great movement that bears the hallowed name of Sri Ramakrishna. Even the direct disciples of the Master looked up to her for guidance and encouragement in their several spheres of work. All those who felt orphaned by the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna went to the Holy Mother for spiritual solace and consolation. She too felt that she had a responsibility towards their spiritual welfare. Thus the Holy Mother became the centre and source of unbounded love and inspiration for all who came to her.

With the gradual spread of the message of Sri Ramakrishna, devotees from far and near, eastern and western, began to flock round the Holy Mother to pay their homage to her and to worship her. Her compassionate countenance and graceful benedictions captivated their hearts, and they all felt spiritually uplifted in her presence. They felt that they were in the presence of the Divine Mother Herself.

The life that the Holy Mother lived from day to day was so silent and unostentatious that its very ordinariness and uneventful character baffle us. To the surface vision, there was nothing conspicuous about her, but deep down in her heart shone the effulgent light of divine consciousness. To Sri Ramakrishna, she was 'the representation of the Blissful Mother in human flesh'.

Glimpses of her divine personality have also been revealed to us by the words and deeds of some of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, who were themselves giants in spirituality. We shall refer to only three of them here to show how they looked upon the Holy Mother as the veritable manifestation of the Divine Mother.

Swami Vivekananda, the Master's foremost disciple, says: 'You have not yet understood the wonderful significance of the Mother's life. Without Śakti, there is no regeneration for the world. . . . Mother has been born to revive that wonderful Śakti in India, and making her the nucleus, once more will Gārgīs and Maitreyīs be born into the world.' Referring to the blessings of the Holy Mother he received on the eve of his departure to the West, where he went to spread the message of India in the light of the realizations of his Master, the Swami says: 'Mother's grace, Mother's blessings, are paramount to me. Before proceeding to America, I wrote to the Mother to bless me. Her blessings came; and at one bound, I cleared the ocean.'

Swami Saradananda, who was a lifelong General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, but who considered himself a mere 'door-keeper' at the Holy Mother's house, conversing with a devotee once said: 'I also implore and wait for her (the Holy Mother's) favour by whom you have been blessed. She can even at this moment seat you here in my place if she so desires.' In dedicating his masterly book in Bengali on Śakti-worship in India to the Holy Mother, he writes: 'By whose gracious look the author has been able to realize the revelation of Divine Motherhood in every female form—to the lotus feet of her, this work is dedicated in all humility and devotion.'

What Swami Premananda, who was well known for his surpassing love towards all, says about the Holy Mother brings out this facet of her personality very prominently. Says the Swami: 'Who has understood the Holy Mother? . . . Do you not see how many are rushing to be blessed by her? We are sending to the Holy Mother the poison we could not ourselves take. . . . Even though in a human form, she is the veritable goddess who does *lilā* for the sake of humanity. . . . With what patience, endurance, and forgiveness does she live, doing all the duties of the Mother of the house! Such an ideal has

not been manifested in the past. . . . You will realize her divine love and infinite largeness of heart. . . . Her infinite grace is on all. Getting even an atom of it, we shall become filled.'

If anyone seeks to be guided by mere objective standards of an eventful life of thought and action, then there is every likelihood of his missing the true perspective of the sublime life of the Holy Mother. True worth and real greatness are measured not in terms of the political upheavals or social changes that one can bring about, but in terms of one's spiritual potential which, by its impact, can awaken men and women to a sense of the higher values of the spirit. That is the sign of true spiritual greatness. The Holy Mother, in this sense, was the very embodiment of divine qualities and spiritual potentialities.

WINSOME SIMPLICITY

The incident relating to the 'Dacoit Father' in her early life shows how, by her naive and innocent behaviour, gentle words, and childlike trust, young Sarada brought about such a remarkable transformation in the evil intentions even of a highway man that he felt parental affection towards her! We have only to recall the situation to appreciate the gravity and the risk involved. When young Sarada found herself all alone, face to face with the desperado shouting at her at nightfall, in a vast field far from human habitation, she instantly mastered the situation and, in an endearing voice, addressed him: 'Father, my companions have left me behind, and possibly I have lost the way. Will you kindly conduct me so that I may join them? Your son-in-law dwells in the Kālī temple at Dakshineswar, and I am bound for that place to meet him. If you escort me as far as that, he will gratefully entertain you.' As this conversation was still in progress, they were joined by the wife of the brigand, who was closely following him. Sarada was greatly relieved to find that the new-comer was a woman. Correctly guessing her to be his wife, she at once took the strange woman by the hand and addressed her in an affectionate tone: 'Mother, I

am your daughter Sarada. Cut off from my party, all alone and benighted in this horrid expanse, I found myself in a terrible plight. Luckily, you and father turned up; else I do not know what I should have done for my safety.'

The 'brigand couple' stood there disarmed and transformed! Young Sarada's winsome simplicity, endearing conduct, and unflinching trust had touched their hearts. They began to treat her as their own daughter! They looked after her comforts for the night during her stay with them. Next morning, they conducted her as far as the next halting place, where she was to join the rest of her party. What a miracle of spiritual transformation! In later life, whenever this 'brigand couple' visited Dakshineswar, even Sri Ramakrishna would behave towards them exactly like a son-in-law!

MATERNAL SOLICITUDE

The love of the mother is all-encompassing. It cannot display any segments of exclusiveness, preference, or hierarchy. A mother is mother to all her children. And the Holy Mother was 'Mother' to every man, woman, and child that came to her. The motherly affection in her was always uppermost. Her solicitude for all who sought refuge in her was unlimited. Whoever came to her felt that here was one, dearer than their own kith and kin, before whom they could unburden their minds and to whom they could confide their innermost thoughts. The Holy Mother, too, bestowed her love and grace on one and all, without any distinction of rank or race, caste or creed. The following few instances, taken at random from among scores of them, reveal this aspect of the Holy Mother's maternal solicitude in a very conspicuous manner.

When the Holy Mother's house at Jayrambati was being built, a number of Muslims of a nearby village were engaged as labourers. As these labourers had a bad record previously, there was some consternation among the villagers when they saw them at work in the Holy Mother's house. But she remained unperturb-

ed. Not merely that. One day, when one of these Muslims took some bananas to her and said, 'Mother, I have brought these for the Master. Would you accept them?' the Holy Mother accepted the offering very gladly.

On another occasion, the Holy Mother took one of these Muslims—Amzad by name—into her house for a meal. When Amzad had finished his meal, the Mother tidied up the place herself. At this, Nalini Devi, her orthodox niece, loudly protested and cried out, 'O dear aunt, you lose your caste thereby!' But the Mother cut her short saying, 'Keep quiet. Even this Amzad is as truly my son as my Sharat (Swami Saradananda) himself is'.

Once the Holy Mother was requested not to allow a certain young disciple to come to her presence because of some misconduct on his part. But the mother in her would not listen to the request. She tenderly said: 'If my child gets covered with mud or dust, is it not my duty to cleanse him and take him on my lap?'

When a woman who had not led a very chaste life went to her in a mood of sincere repentance and made an unreserved confession of her sins, the Holy Mother embraced her with great warmth of feeling, uttering these words of assurance and consolation: 'Don't despair for whatever you have done. You will get over all your sinful tendencies.' The Holy Mother also gave her initiation and instructed her in spiritual practices.

When Western disciples began to come to her, after Swami Vivekananda's successful mission in the West, she accepted them all naturally and spontaneously as her own, saying, 'Those people are also my children'. She mixed with them freely and even ate and slept with them, looking upon them as belonging to the spiritual family of Sri Ramakrishna.

When the Swadeshi Movement was in full swing, a disciple had purchased only cloth of Indian make for the children of the Mother's brothers. The women of the family did not like it, and made suggestions as to what they wanted. The disciple, out of patriotic feeling,

excitedly told them, 'But what you want is all foreign cloth. How can I buy them?' The Holy Mother, who was present there, said with a smile: 'My child, they (the Western people) too are my children. I must accommodate everyone. Can I ever be exclusive? Buy the things they want.'

These instances that we have cited above are not merely passing events in the life of the Holy Mother. They are the tangible and significant pointers to the large-heartedness, liberal-mindedness, all-comprehensive vision, and, above all, the motherly affection she possessed for all. Maternal love and solicitude were the warp and the weft of her being.

A PICTURE OF PURITY

Purity in thought, word, and deed is the foundation of spiritual life. The Holy Mother's life reveals to us that she was the very embodiment of purity. Referring to his own spiritual *sādhanās* and realizations, Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'The credit for this was no less due to her' Her unsullied purity was his shield and armour. She was too pure to drag her saintly husband to a life of worldliness. She told him that she had become his wife not to pull him down from his spiritual heights, but only to help him in the attainment of his life's ideals and aspirations. If she had but desired to choose the worldly way of marital life, it was open to her. Sri Ramakrishna gave her the choice. But she was constituted differently.

The one golden thread that passes through the various beads of the Holy Mother's life, in all situations and circumstances, and which shines most brilliantly, is her perfect purity of character. We get a glimpse of the degree of excellence her spotless life had reached from her own words: 'On moonlit nights, I would look at the moon and pray with folded hands: "May my heart be as pure as the rays of the yonder moon!" or, "O Lord, there is a stain even in the moon, but let there not be the least trace of stain in my mind".'

Speaking of the immaculate character of the Holy Mother, Sri Ramakrishna has declared:

'Had she not been so pure, who knows whether I might not have lost my self-control from her inducements? After my marriage, I prayed to the Divine Mother, "O Mother, remove even the least taint of carnality from the mind of my wife". When I lived with her, I understood that the Divine Mother had really granted my prayer.'

That the Holy Mother was made of the purest stuff can be discerned from her spirited reply to Sri Ramakrishna. When the Master put her a straight question, 'Do you want to drag me down to *Māyā*?' pat came the reply, 'Why should I do that? I have come only to help you in the path of spiritual life'—a reply from a worthy wife to a worthy husband! She had come to realize the part she had to play in the drama of Sri Ramakrishna's life on earth. She had come to be united with him not for leading a worldly life, but for becoming a *sahadharminī* in the truest sense, a real helpmate and life-partner of her God-intoxicated husband. What she cherished most was to live with him, to serve him, and to mould her own life after the pattern of the Master's. The Holy Mother's was an impeccable character, like the fragrance of the fresh flower at dawn, unsmelt and untouched by man.

SPIRITUAL TEACHER

It is hardly necessary for us to add that the Holy Mother comes in the long line of the great women of India, who have shed lustre on Indian womanhood and illumined the pages of her history by their saintly life, pure character, great learning, and heroic deeds. To the India of our times, the Holy Mother's life represents something unique, something easily the highest and best in the Hindu ideal of womanhood, being as it was one of artless simplicity, piety, purity, and self-sacrifice. From her own words, 'Sri Ramakrishna left me behind to manifest the motherhood of God to the world', though it could be said that the spirit of motherhood was most dominant in the life of the Holy Mother, she stands out as having been at once

a perfect wife, a perfect nun, and a perfect teacher, discharging her various duties and functions in an accomplished manner and proving equal to the task of each role that she was called upon to assume.

Being the counterpart of the great spiritual teacher that Sri Ramakrishna was, the Holy Mother had to shoulder the responsibility of guiding many a spiritually weary soul. After the passing away of the Master, the mantle of spiritual leadership descended on her. She rose to the occasion and accepted that responsibility in all humility in the name of the Master. Sri Ramakrishna had prepared her for that task, and so it came to her very naturally. And her spiritual ministrations continued for more than three decades. Hundreds of devoted aspirants were blessed by her; and they slaked their spiritual thirst at the feet of the Holy Mother.

Her spiritual talks and conversations have been recorded by some of her disciples, both monastic and lay. These conversations, couched in a language of rural simplicity, are fully

imbued with spiritual fervour, and directly spring from a heart that is overflowing with divine wisdom. Sri Ramakrishna had said of her: 'She is Śārādā, Sarasvatī. She has come to impart knowledge. . . . She is the communicator of knowledge; she is full of the rarest wisdom.'

In fine, while concluding this brief study of the life of the Holy Mother, we wish to recall those highly significant and God-inspired words which, though addressed to a particular individual, can be regarded as her last message to this distracted and bewildered humanity: 'If you want peace, my child, do not find fault with others. Rather see your own faults. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one is a stranger, my child; this whole world is your own.'

If only wayward man learns to leave his wicked ways and listens to this piece of advice, what a happy world he can create for himself and for his fellow-beings! Will he not learn to do it?

MĀYĀ AND AVIDYĀ IN THE BRAHMA-SŪTRA

BY PROFESSOR SURENDRANATH BHATTACHARYA

Gough is perfectly right when he says that the doctrine of *māyā* is more than implicit in the Upaniṣads. But it is certainly too much to say that the doctrine is explicit in the systematized Vedānta.¹ Nowhere in the *Brahma-Sūtra* do we come across any such theory. Even the word '*māyā*' is used by Bādarāyaṇa only once, and that too to explain the nature of dream experiences. He draws a distinction between the waking and dream experiences² and characterizes the latter as mere *māyā*. This would clearly show that Bādarāyaṇa did

not take the waking experiences as illusory. The word '*avidyā*' is never used by him. On the other hand, Bādarāyaṇa takes Brahman as the material as well as the efficient cause of the world.³ And there is not the least suggestion in the *sūtras* that Brahman is the *vivarta-upādāna* (the ground of illusion) of the world. On the contrary, *sūtra* 1.4.26 unambiguously lays down that Brahman actually *transforms* itself into the world. Even Śaṅkara interprets this *sūtra* in this manner. Neither is it true that Bādarāyaṇa did not realize the difficulty of maintaining the theory of transformation.

¹ *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p. 248.

² *Brahma-Sūtra (B.S.)*, II.2.29.

³ *B.S.*, I.1.2; I.4.23; I.4.27.

To say that Brahman transforms Itself into the world would be tantamount to saying that Brahman does so either in Its entirety or in part. In the first case, Brahman would have to be supposed to be exhausted in the creation, and consequently limited. In the second case, It would be perishable, as all objects, made up of parts, are. Bādarāyaṇa raises these objections in II.1.26 and meets them by an appeal to Śruti (II.1.27). Brahman undergoes modification and yet retains Its integrity: this is possible, because Śruti says so. So according to Bādarāyaṇa, even contradictions have to be accepted as such, if Śruti supports these. In this respect, we must admit that the non-Advaita Vedāntins are more faithful to Bādarāyaṇa than the Advaitins.

Again, in *sūtras* I.2.3, I.2.8, I.2.20, I.3.5, and I.3.18, Bādarāyaṇa clearly says that *jīva* is different from Brahman. The non-Advaita Vedāntins stick to the literal meaning of these *sūtras* and preach permanent difference between *jīva* and Brahman. But *sūtras* I.3.19, IV.4.1, IV.4.3, and IV.4.4 undoubtedly imply that the true nature (*svarūpa*) of *jīva* is Brahmanhood. This Brahmanhood, however, is differently understood by different thinkers.⁴ The *svarūpa* of *jīva* remains suppressed during bondage. The non-Advaita thinkers hold that this *svarūpa* is made a gift of by God in salvation, whereas the Advaitins maintain that it is simply revealed. Here, indeed, is sufficient room for bringing in the theory of illusion. The *sūtras* mentioned last, when logically thrashed out, may easily suggest the doctrine of *avidyā*; and the Advaitin may legitimately say that, because Bādarāyaṇa holds the state of salvation as the revelation of *jīva's* real nature (I.3.19) and characterizes it as Brahmanhood (IV.4.4), he must have spoken of *jīva's* difference from Brahman on the assumption of the doctrine of *avidyā*. Apart from such an interpretation, there is no explicit advocacy for the doctrine of *avidyā* in the entire body of the *Brahma-Sūtra*. On the other hand, as we have seen, the

Sūtrakāra is explicitly in favour of the theory of real modification.

Now, all schools of the Vedānta regard the *Brahma-Sūtra* as supremely authoritative, next only to the Śruti. So whatever theory a school would propound must be in keeping with the spirit of the *Brahma-Sūtra*. That the theory of *avidyā* was difficult to fit in with the teachings of the *Brahma-Sūtra* was also realized by the advocates of that theory. Although there is no direct reference to the *Brahma-Sūtra* in the *kārikās* of Gauḍapāda, yet we may safely say that at least he had in mind those Upaniṣadic texts upon which Bādarāyaṇa framed his *sūtras*, such as I.1.2 etc. We shall see that Gauḍapāda regarded the creation of the world out of Brahman as impossible.⁵ And he says that, wherever the world is said to be produced from Brahman, it is to be regarded only as a practical means of instruction (*Kārikā*, I.18); in fact, the entire world of experience is nothing but *māyā* (*ibid.*, I.17). Śaṅkara in his *bhāṣya* takes special care to add his own remarks, whenever he finds that the *sūtra* apparently militates against his own theory. A few such remarks will make the point clear.

Śaṅkara first explains the section beginning with the *sūtra* I.1.2 to mean that Brahman is that all-knowing, all-powerful cause which produces the world, sustains it, and again withdraws it within Itself.⁶ This evidently makes Brahman qualified (*saguṇa*).⁷ And Śaṅkara remarks: 'In the Śruti, Brahman is described in two ways, sometimes as endowed with the limiting conditions of the multiplicity of the created world and sometimes as beyond all limiting conditions whatever.'⁸ This double form of Brahman is to be taken according as it is the object of knowledge or of *avidyā*. Śaṅkara, as a rationalist thinker, could not

⁴ Bādarāyaṇa also thinks the birth of Sat is unreasonable—*B.S.*, II.3.9.

⁵ *Bhāṣya* on *B.S.*, I.1.2.

⁶ *Bhāṣya* on *B.S.*, I.1.2.

⁷ *Bhāṣya* on *B.S.*, I.1.11.

⁸ *B.S.*, IV.4.5-7.

accept the contradictory descriptions as equally valid, and therefore had to adopt the theory of *avidyā* to effect a reconciliation. In explaining *sūtra* I.1.17, where *jīva* is shown to be different from Brahman, Śaṅkara remarks that this difference is from the empirical (*laukika*) point of view, but from the transcendental viewpoint (*pāramārthika*), there is no such difference. In the first *adhikaraṇa* of the second *pāda* of the first *adhyāya*, *jīva* is shown to be different from Brahman; and Śaṅkara remarks: 'With regard to this (unreal limitation of the one Self), the distinction of objects, of activity, and of agents may be practically assumed, as long as we have not learned—from the passage "That thou art"—that the Self is one only. As soon, however, as we grasp the truth that there is one universal Self, there is an end to the whole practical view of the world.'⁹ Similarly, in every case where the *Sūtrakāra* points out the difference of *jīva* from Brahman, Śaṅkara remarks that the difference is only assumed by the *Sūtrakāra* from the practical viewpoint.¹⁰ He says: 'If, now, the *Sūtrakāra* raises and refutes the doubt whether a certain passage which (in reality) refers to the Lord does refer to the individual soul, ... he does so for the following purpose. To the highest Self, which is eternally pure, intelligent, and free, which is never changing, one only, not in contact with anything, devoid of form, the opposite characteristics of the individual soul are erroneously ascribed, just as ignorant men ascribe blue colour to the colourless ether. In order to remove this erroneous opinion by means of Vedic passages tending either to prove the unity of the Self or to disprove the doctrine of duality—which passages he strengthens by arguments—he insists on the difference of the highest Self from the individual soul; does, however, not mean to prove thereby that the soul is different from the highest Self; but, whenever speaking of the soul, refers to its distinction (from the

Self) as forming an item of ordinary thought, due to the power of Nescience. For thus, he thinks, the Vedic injunctions of works, which are given with a view to the states of acting and enjoying, natural (to the non-enlightened soul), are not stultified. That, however, the absolute unity of the Self is the real purport of the Śāstra's teaching, the *Sūtrakāra* declares, for instance, in I.1.30.'¹¹

Again, where *Bādarāyaṇa* apparently advocates the theory of transformation, Śaṅkara is ready with his own explanation. He is a pure Advaitin, and he summarily disposes of all questions of creation thus: 'And to consider the matter thoroughly, a conflict of statements regarding the world¹² would not even matter greatly, since the creation of the world and similar topics are not at all what scripture wishes to teach. ... We, moreover, understand that by means of comparisons, such as that of the clay,¹³ the creation is described merely for the purpose of teaching us that the effect is not really different from the cause.'¹⁴ *Bādarāyaṇa* refers to the *Chāndogya* text (VI.1.4)¹⁵ to prove that Brahman is also the material cause of the world. The comparisons of clay etc. in those texts would naturally suggest that Śruti and, for the matter of that, the *Brahma-Sūtra* maintain the theory of transformation.¹⁶

. On this, Śaṅkara remarks: 'But—it may be said—(that would not be a mere assumption, but) scripture itself, by quoting the parallel instances of clay and so on, declares itself in favour of a Brahman capable of modification; for we know from experience that clay and similar things do undergo modifications. This

⁹ *Bhāṣya* on *B.S.*, I.3.19 (Thibaut's translation).

¹² See *Tai.U.*, II.1, *Chā.U.*, VI.2.3.; *Pra.U.*, IV.4.; *Ai.U.*, IV.1.2; *Tai.U.*, II.7; *Bṛ.U.*, I.4.7; etc.

¹³ *Chā.U.* VI.1.4.

¹⁴ *Bhāṣya* on I.4.14 (Thibaut's translation). Cf. Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*, III.15.

¹⁵ *B.S.*, I.4.23.

¹⁶ In fact, non-Advaita Vedāntins accept this suggestion.

⁹ *Bhāṣya* on *B.S.*, I.2.6 (Thibaut's translation).

¹⁰ See *B.S.*, I.2.11-12,20; I.3.7,42; I.4.6,22; II.1.22; II.3.39-40,43.

objection—we reply—is without force, because a number of scriptural passages,¹⁷ by denying all modification of Brahman, teach it to be absolutely changeless (*kūṭastha*).... For to the one Brahman, the two qualities of being subject to modification and of being free from it cannot both be ascribed. And if you say, “Why should they not be both predicated of Brahman (the former during the time of the subsistence of the world, the latter during the period of reabsorption), just as rest and motion may be predicated (of one body at different times)?” we remark that the qualification “absolutely changeless” (*kūṭastha*) precludes this. For the changeless Brahman cannot be the substratum of varying attributes. And that, on account of the negation of all attributes, Brahman really is eternal and changeless has already been demonstrated. ...

But, it is objected, he who maintains the nature of Brahman to be changeless thereby contradicts the fundamental tenet, according to which the Lord is the cause of the world, since the doctrine of absolute unity leaves no room for the distinction of a Ruler and something ruled. This objection we ward off by remarking that omniscience etc. (i.e. those qualities which belong to Brahman only in so far as it is related to a world) depend on the evolution of the germinal principles called name and form, whose essence is Nescience. ... Belonging to the Self, as it were, of the omniscient Lord, there are name and form, the figments of Nescience, not to be defined either as being (i.e. Brahman), nor as different from it, the germs of the entire expanse of the phenomenal world, called in Śruti and Smṛti the illusion (*Māyā*), power (*Śakti*), or nature (*Prakṛti*) of the omniscient Lord. ... Thus the Lord depends (as Lord) upon the limiting adjuncts of name and form, the products of Nescience. ... He stands in the realm of the phenomenal in the relation of a ruler to the so-called *jīvas* (individual souls) or cognitional selfs (*viñānātman*), which, indeed, are one with his own

self. ... Hence the Lord's being a Lord, his omniscience, his omnipotence, etc. all depend on the limitation due to the adjuncts whose self is Nescience; while in reality none of these qualities belong to the Self whose true nature is cleared, by right knowledge, from all adjuncts whatever.¹⁸ ... In this manner, the Vedānta texts declare that, for him who has reached the state of truth and reality, the whole apparent world does not exist. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (V.14, 15) also declares that in reality the relation of the Ruler and the ruled does not exist. That, on the other hand, all those distinctions are valid, as far as the phenomenal world is concerned, scripture as well as the *Bhagavad-Gītā* states.¹⁹ ... The Sūtrakāra also asserts the non-difference of cause and effect²⁰ only with regard to the state of Reality; while he had, in the preceding *sūtra* (II.1.13), where he looked to the phenomenal world, compared Brahman to the ocean etc.; that comparison resting on the assumption of the world of effects not yet having been refuted (i.e. seen to be unreal). The view of Brahman as undergoing modifications will, moreover, be of use in the devout meditations on the qualified (*saguṇa*) Brahman.²¹

It has already been pointed out that Bādarāyaṇa raised certain objections in *sūtra* II.1.26 against the theory of modification and met them by an appeal to Śruti. But Śaṅkara is not satisfied, and he says that even the holy texts cannot make us understand what is contradictory (namely, that Brahman is absolutely changeless and partless and yet It undergoes modification). However, the difficulty is thus met by Śaṅkara. He remarks: “The alleged break in Brahman's nature is a mere figment of Nescience. By a break of that nature, a thing is not really broken up into parts, not any more than the moon is really multiplied by appearing double to a person of defective vision. By that element of

¹⁷ *Br.U.*, IV.4.25; III.9.26; III.8.8.

¹⁸ See *Chā.U.*, VII.24.1; *Br.U.*, II.4.13.

¹⁹ Cf. *Br.U.*, IV.4.22; *Gītā*, XVIII.61.

²⁰ *B.S.*, II.1.14.

²¹ *Bhāṣya* on *B.S.*, II.1.14 (Thibaut's translation).

plurality which is the fiction of Nescience, which is characterized by name and form, which is evolved as well as non-evolved, which is not to be defined either as the existing or the non-existing, Brahman becomes the basis of this entire apparent world with its changes and so on, while in its true and real nature, it at the same time remains unchanged, lifted above the phenomenal universe. And as the distinction of names and forms, the fiction of Nescience, originates entirely from speech only, it does not militate against the fact of Brahman being without parts. Nor have the scriptural passages which speak of Brahman as undergoing change the purpose of teaching the fact of change; for such instruction would have no fruit.²²

That later Advaitins also realized the difficulty of finding support for the doctrine of *avidyā* in the *Brahma-Sūtra* will be apparent

²² *Bhāṣya* on *B.S.*, II.1.27 (Thibaut's translation). Also see *B.S.*, II.1.33.

from their attempts at defining the term '*upādāna*' in various ways.

Thus, it will be seen that the *Brahma-Sūtra* does not explicitly stand for the theory of illusion. On the other hand, quite a large number of *sūtras* and the general thesis of the book would rather lend support to the doctrine of modification, although a strictly logical interpretation of some of the *sūtras* and a rational attempt at reconciliation would naturally lead to the theory of illusion (as has been pointed out by Śaṅkara). We think Bādarāyaṇa simply stated the views of the Upaniṣads (and incidentally of renowned thinkers), and did not think it necessary to explain the apparent contradictions of the Upaniṣads. We may therefore conclude that even the *Brahma-Sūtra* did not build a system out of the materials supplied by the Upaniṣads, in the strict sense of the term. The credit of building the system of the Vedānta must be given to Śaṅkara, though Gaudapāda was the pioneer in the field.



THE GĪTĀ AS A GUIDE TO HUMAN CONDUCT

BY SWAMI KIRTIDANANDA

Human conduct involves not merely the external, physical behaviour of man, but also the workings of the subtle, inner mental processes accompanying them. The latter are of greater importance, for it is they that decide the course of the former. The *Gītā* discusses the problem of human conduct on both the levels.

The external scene that unfolds itself to our view at the beginning of the *Gītā* is that of two armies arrayed against each other, ready for battle. On the one side are the Pāṇḍavas, standing for justice and right; on the other, the Kauravas, standing for injustice and might. The earlier portions of the *Mahābhārata*, of which the *Gītā* is a part, reveal that Duryodhana, the Kaurava chief, and his companions have,

through iniquity and fraudulence, deprived the Pāṇḍavas of their kingdom, to which they are entitled by birth, descent, qualification, and the laws of the land at the time. The Pāṇḍavas are the rightful heirs to the kingdom, but Duryodhana has taken possession of it by unfair means, and is bent upon retaining by might and force what he has gained by cunning and deception. He is encouraged in his evil design by his friends and some of the relatives. Appeals to their sense of justice, persuasion, words of reconciliation, all fail to make an impression on the evil genius of Duryodhana and party. Every conceivable attempt is made by the elders on both sides to avoid war, but without any result. Even the friendly mediation of

Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself proves fruitless. In the last resort, war is decided upon for restoring their lost kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas. None except Duryodhana and his friends is eager for the fight; everyone else dreads its consequences. But all other methods having failed, war is accepted as the sole means of rescuing and re-establishing *dharma*. Arjuna, too, puts his seal of approval on it. And he comes to the battle-field with the determination to give the toughest battle of his life, knowing fully well that that is the only way to bring the recalcitrant and the unwilling to their knees and uphold the cause of *dharma*. But at the last moment, he is suddenly overcome by a feeling of commiseration for the enemy, among whom he notices his own kith and kin and his erstwhile teachers and friends. His conviction becomes unsettled. He throws down his bow and arrow, refuses to fight, and begins to justify his action by specious arguments. At the end of the *Gītā*, however, we see him up on his feet again, roused to action and ready to fight.

What is it that brings about the change in Arjuna? Externally, nothing has changed. The armies have stood where they were. The attitude of the enemy has not altered. None of the people whom he detested to kill, and whose presence was the cause of his sorrow and grief, have withdrawn from the field. Therefore the cause for the change in his external conduct is to be found not outside, but inside Arjuna, in his inner approach to the situation outside. The external reactions of Arjuna are only the symptoms of a deeper malady which afflicted him within.

Intellect, emotion, and will are the three inseparable constituents of the human psyche, and mind functions in all these three levels. Every external act of man has its counterpart, or better still, its roots, in the workings of these three aspects of the mind. The sudden and quite unexpected break-down of Arjuna at the commencement of the war provides an apt example of this. His actual abandonment of the weapons and his decision to withdraw from the battle mark the failure of his will-power or the

volitional aspect of his personality. His will-power fails, because of an untimely outburst of emotion. He refuses to fight, being swept off his feet by a misplaced pity, kindness, and sympathy for the miscreants and perpetrators of evil in the opposite camp. The uncontrolled and undisciplined emotion gets the better of him in the moment of crisis, resulting in his being carried away by a wrong sense of values, as is indicated in his forlorn attempt to justify and rationalize his outward behaviour by specious arguments. His intellect gets clouded by the strong attachment born of the feeling of 'me' and 'mine', and his judgment goes awry.

The circumstance which necessitated the imparting of the instruction contained in the *Gītā* to Arjuna may be an extraordinary one, not to be met with in everyday life. But the situation or the problem that confronted Arjuna just before the commencement of the war, on the battle-field of Kurukṣetra, is not unusual in the happenings of the workaday world. What is more, the subsequent psychological reactions or the consequent physical responses of Arjuna in such a situation are typical of the behaviour of ordinary men and women confronted with the conflict of duties, caught in a dilemma as to which line of action would be to their best interest. What is the standard by which a person can decide definitely the proper course of action he should take when he is in doubt?

Normally, human conduct is guided by the restrictions, inhibitions, and injunctions imposed by society, state, and the religious church, or the institution corresponding to it where there is no organized church. In deciding what is the right course of conduct, or the wrong, in a particular situation, man ordinarily refers to and goes by the laws or codes of conduct framed and approved by these three authorities. These laws or codes of conduct are his usual sanctions of morality. Social custom and etiquette, state legislation, and religious dicta are for him the standards for proper behaviour. In case of disobedience, there is always the fear of social ostracism, of punishment from the ruling power in the state, or of the strictures of the re-

ligious church with the threat of divine retribution and vengeance taken by it. And the ordinary human being would seldom dare to think of opposing the dictates of these three authorities. While doing anything out of fear is always reprehensible, the fact remains that communal life would be full of disharmony, strife, disturbance, and chaos, if not impossible, were the members of the community not to be constrained by respect for any of these authorities. And it is generally not advisable that anyone should break the laws by which society or state or religion, of which he is an inalienable limb, is regulated.

So much for the virtues of these ordinary guides of human conduct. Conformity to them conduces to the smooth administration of the state and ensures a well-knit, organized, and disciplined society or religious community. But such organization is seen in the animal world too, and in certain instances to a greater degree of perfection. That in itself is no guarantee to the growth of the moral sense in man. Often, an unthinking submission to the laws of society, state, or church hinders the progress of man. Moreover, these three authorities—society, state, and church—are effective only in keeping in check the external behaviour of man. The laws prescribed by them are ineffective in dealing with the thoughts of men, however foul the thoughts may be. They become operative only when man has translated his foul thoughts into action. They are the external factors which influence and determine man's conduct. They cannot serve as universal standards by which the actions of persons can be judged everywhere. They are relative in character, inasmuch as they are confined to individual societies, states, and religions. And no two societies are built on the same pattern or guided by the same code of conduct. Broadly speaking, the aim of every society, state, or religion may be said to be the same, in so far as they all work for the happiness and welfare of the individual. But when we come to an examination of the outward customs, manners, and habits of people, which go to constitute their external conduct, the diver-

gence becomes marked. Even on the question of what constitutes the good and welfare of the individual, opinion differs from society to society, country to country, and religion to religion. What one society holds to be moral, another society ridicules as immoral. A course of conduct viewed as leading to the good of man by one religion is discouraged as improper by another religion. So also are the laws of different states at variance with one another. A particular action regarded as completely legitimate in one country is condemned as obscene and unworthy of a human being in another country. All this only indicates how insufficient and unsatisfactory are these normal guides of human conduct to serve as general standards for the whole of humanity.

Closely connected with the question of the standard of morality and conduct, there is the question of the goal of all human conduct. The two are not entirely separate questions; they are one and the same thing expressed differently, the obverse and the reverse of the same coin. The main problem in the study of human conduct is: What is the supreme end for which man strives? Or, more correctly, what ought to be the supreme end for which he should strive? It is observed that the generality of mankind is stirred to action by the pleasure motive—some by the physical pleasure, others by the higher mental and intellectual pleasure. Proceeding on the basis of this observed fact, the advocates of hedonism, utilitarianism, and altruism contend that pleasure or happiness, which is the goal sought after by man instinctively, is also the goal to be sought after by him consciously. Only ego-centric hedonism confines this pleasure principle to the gross physical pleasure of oneself, whereas utilitarianism and altruism extend it to include the intellectual pleasure also and take into consideration not merely the pleasure of oneself, but of others too.

Arjuna defends his conduct by an appeal to the enlightened hedonistic or utilitarian and altruistic approach to the problem of human conduct, on the one hand, and to the ordinary guides of human conduct enumerated above,

on the other. A seeming plausibility attaches to Arjuna's arguments, because he exhibits therein his spirit of renunciation and unselfishness. Of course, the veracity of Arjuna's unselfishness and sincerity is beyond dispute. He has often in the past used his Kṣatriya prowess and valour for the good of others, even at the risk of his own interests. Even here, in his arguments, he only speaks of sacrificing his own pleasure and enjoyment for the sake of others, who happen to be his sworn enemies. 'I seek not victory, nor sovereign power, nor earthly joys. What good are sovereign power, worldly pleasures, and even life to us, O Govinda?' are his words pleading his unwillingness to fight. But, in the next few verses, he betrays his strong leanings towards utilitarianism and altruism: 'Those for whom we would desire sovereign power, earthly joys and delights are here arrayed in battle, having renounced life and death—preceptors, sires, grandsires, sons, and even grandsons, uncles, fathers-in-law, brothers-in-law, and other kinsmen. These I would not kill, O Madhusūdāna, even though they slay me, not even for kingship of the three worlds, much less for an earthly kingdom. What *pleasure* can there be in slaying these sons of Dhṛtarāstra, O Janārdana? Sin only can be our lot, if we slay these, usurpers though they be. It does not therefore behove us to kill our *kinsmen*, these sons of Dhṛtarāstra. How may we be *happy*, O Mādhava, in killing our own relatives?'

The point here is not that Arjuna does not care for his own pleasure, but he speaks of pleasure and enjoyment—the most physical even, for that is for what Duryodhana and party have forced the war—as if they are the yard-sticks by which to measure the justness of a cause. Arjuna shows his concern merely for the physical well-being of his opponents. He is estimating the entire turn of events in the light of *bhoga* (enjoyment), *sukha* (happiness), and *prīti* (pleasure). His arguments show that he is thinking of the war and its results only in terms of winning back the kingdom for his worthy brother and of the end of the troubles

and misfortunes that have dogged him, his brothers, and wife all along. He forgets for the moment that the real and more important issue of the war is the upholding of the principle of *dharma*, that winning back the kingdom is just a symbol of the conquest of *adharma* by *dharma*.

True, Arjuna further in his arguments shows his eagerness for the protection of *dharma*, when he vividly pictures to Śrī Kṛṣṇa the imminent danger to *dharma* and the disastrous effects that are sure to ensue from the extinction of *dharma*. But the *dharma* he is so solicitous for is the traditional, tribal or social, religious, and kingly morality. His concern is for the preservation of the family and social ties (*kuladharmā*), avoidance of intermixture of races and castes (*jātidharma*, *varṇasaṅkara*), and prevention of acts which are, on the surface, treacherous in the eyes of the state and sinful and leading to hell in the eyes of religion.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa dismisses these arguments of Arjuna as being unworthy of the noble, disgraceful, and conducive neither to his own good, here and hereafter, nor to that of those for whose sake he is disconsolate. He, however, does not indulge himself in condemning and decrying Arjuna or his standpoint. Knowing that repudiation and crying down are not the ways of putting a person on the right track, he exhorts Arjuna with the stirring words: 'Yield not to unmanliness, O Pārtha; ill doth it become thee. Cast off this miserable faint-heartedness and arise, O Parantapa.' This crisp remark of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, devoid of all verbal controversies as to the merits or demerits of the different canons of conduct cited by Arjuna, contains Kṛṣṇa's formula for the guidance of human conduct. The first and foremost characteristic of upright conduct is this not yielding to unmanliness. Human conduct should always proceed from strength and courage, not the physical, brutal strength, but the strength born of the knowledge of one's own real nature and of the purpose of human life. If a man's conduct is in keeping with the highest destiny of a human being, referred to by Kṛṣṇa as 'manliness', then

it is proper; otherwise, it is not. The outward mode of behaviour of man will vary with the varying conditions of life—with birth, status, position, capacity, and qualification. But this destiny is coeval with his very birth as a human being, if not with creation itself, and it is not dependent on such adventitious factors as sex, religion, caste, race, and utility. Man's conduct must always correspond to this destiny of his.

Utilitarianism, altruism, rules of morality enunciated by society, church, and the state represent definite stages in the onward progress of mankind towards this destiny. These have their validity and usefulness in their own place in the life of man. But they are not the final goal of his struggles. There is a still higher call of morality and conduct to which they must all give place. They are only the stepping stones, take-off grounds for flights into the higher regions of morality. They prepare man to listen and act up to the call of this higher morality. This higher morality is what is known as *mokṣadharmā*, the morality which leads to the emancipation of the spirit from the thralldom of matter. The sanction for this higher morality comes from within man himself. It is based on the eternal and imperishable nature of man. The physical, the mental, or the intellectual aspects of man do not exhaust the whole of his personality. The exterior is only an infinitesimal part of his true being, just a semblance of it. The physical body is ever subject to change and destruction. Though more enduring, the mental or the intellectual constitution of man, too, is not permanent. To build up the edifice of one's conduct on the flimsy foundations of the truth of the body and mind is not a sign of wisdom. To make the fleeting joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains of the body and mind the regulator of one's conduct definitely does not bespeak of one's maturity. Thinking people cannot fail to recognize, behind and beyond the evanescent and transient world of nature, behind the individual body and mind, the permanent entity by which

the visible and the invisible universe is pervaded

Man unconsciously acknowledges his belief in the existence of this permanent entity in his everyday dealings with the world. The body and the mind of a grown up person are not the same as they were at birth or in infancy; and they will not remain the same when he becomes old. The form of his body and the contents and constitution of his mind and intellect certainly undergo a profound change as he advances in age. But the world does not, for that reason, regard him as a different person. It calls him by the same name and treats him as if he is the same person throughout. The person himself, too, does not make any distinction between the 'I'-consciousness of his childhood and the 'I'-consciousness of his manhood. In the midst of growth, development, and change, there persists in man a continuum of his personality—not entirely of body or mind. That is the *Ātman*, the unchangeable, ever existent, and eternal Self, of which the body and the mind are but the external coverings.

Pleasure and pain and the experience of all the dual things belong to the body and mind; the *Ātman* is not affected by them. 'It, the weapons do not wound, no water wets It, no wind doth dry it.' Death is not far different in nature from the transformation of body and mind during the growth from infancy to old age; it is like man casting off the worn out old clothes in order to put on new and fresh ones. It is inevitable that everything that is born should die. The embodied one in the body of every being (*dehin*), however, is beyond all harm and destruction. That does not mean that man should hasten the natural process of death or be callously indifferent to the misery and suffering of others. The emphasis is not on the negative aspect of the instruction, but on the positive, namely, the realization of the presence of the *Ātman* in everyone. Temporal birth and destruction, momentary pain and pleasure, should not be the criteria to judge the right-

ness or the wrongness of an action. The conduct of man should be in consonance with this eternal and ever-abiding nature of man. Every action of his should be an attestation to the presence of the Ātman in himself and others. That mode of conduct is worthy of emulation which helps man to express his own infinite nature. Man should adjust his conduct accordingly. Success and failure on the material plane are of equal value from this standpoint. Man should not lay any special emphasis on the one or the other, but should welcome both as helpful factors in his progress towards the realization of the Ātman.

The awareness of good and evil, of right and wrong, of beauty and ugliness is inherent in the very make-up of man. This is fairly evident from the fact that every society has felt the need of insisting on its members to follow a certain code of conduct. That man does not always strictly adhere to the code, and that certain members exhibit a positive tendency to violate them, does not invalidate the truth of the above statement. Man commits crime and strays into the evil path, or acts in a way he ought not to do, because of weakness arising out of ignorance of his own true being. Ignorant of the pure and perfect nature of the Ātman and of the infinite potentiality that resides within him, man identifies himself with the body and mind as the sole reality. The pleasures derived therefrom are for him the be all and end all of existence, worthy of pursuit and possession at all costs. And for the sake of this pleasure, man is prepared to do anything and everything. That is the reason why he does not understand and act according to the fundamental command of ethics, preached by every religion and every society: 'Give up selfishness; be good and do good.'

Apart from the disparity of views as to the conception of the good, the question always crops up in man's mind: 'Why should I do good? Why should I not be selfish?' Divine behest, the promise of greater pleasure in heaven, or the fear of torture in hell are reasons not rational enough. The utilitarian maxim, 'great-

est good of the greatest number' (taking 'good' in the sense of pleasure and happiness), puts a limit on its own ideal. Man is always puzzled why he should not be among that 'greatest number'. Altruism, which asks man to work for the pleasure and happiness of others, does not explain why he should do so. If pleasure and happiness are good for others, why should they not be good for oneself? If they are not good for oneself, why should they be good for others? So, man seeks pleasure for himself at the expense of others.

Man can be good, do good, and be unselfish only when he understands that the goal of life is not pleasure or happiness, but the expansion of his own self so as to embrace the whole universe within it. This expansion of the self is the *raison d'être* of all ethics. Selfishness, which is the concomitant of the sense of 'me' and 'mine' associated with the body and mind, obstructs this expansion of the self, and so is to be avoided. This is the only logical explanation of the pleasure principle even. The pleasures of the senses and the mind are relative, momentary, and dependent on external objects. They are only the forerunners of pain and suffering. The highest pleasure or bliss is in the realization of the Ātman. The evils of society are rectified when man's conduct is based on this ideal. The comments of Swami Vivekananda on the *Gītā* verse (II.3), quoted above, bring out this point very clearly, and are worth quoting here. He says: 'As I always preach that you should not decry a man by calling him a sinner, but that you should draw his attention to the omnipotent power that is in him, in the same way does the Bhagavān speak to Arjuna. "*Naitattvayyupapadyate*"—It doth not befit thee. Thou art the Ātman imperishable, beyond all evil. Having forgotten thy real nature, thou hast, by thinking thyself a sinner, as one afflicted with bodily evils and mental grief, made thyself so—this doth not befit thee! So says the Bhagavān: "*Klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ Pārtha*"—Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pṛthā. There is in the world neither sin nor misery, neither disease nor grief; if there is

anything in the world which can be called sin, it is this—"fear"; know that any work which brings out the latent power in thee is *punya* (virtue); and that which makes thy body and mind weak is, verily, sin. Shake off this weakness, this faint-heartedness!...Thou art a hero, a *vīra*; "this is unbecoming of thee".

'If you...can proclaim this message to the world, "*Klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ Pārtha naitattvayyupapadyate*", then all this disease, grief, sin, and sorrow will vanish from off the face of the earth in three days. All these ideas of weakness will be nowhere. Now it is everywhere—this current of the vibration, and behold the magic transformation! Thou art omnipotent—go, go to the mouth of the cannon, fear not. Hate not the most abject sinner, look not to his exterior. Turn thy gaze inward, where resides the Paramātman. Proclaim to the whole world with trumpet voice, "There is no sin in thee, there is no misery in thee; thou art the reservoir of omnipotent power. Arise, awake, and manifest the Divinity within!"

'If one reads this one *śloka*—"Klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ Pārtha naitattvayyupapadyate; kṣudraṁ hṛdayadaurbalyaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa"—he gets all the merits of reading the entire *Gītā*; for in this *śloka* lies imbedded the whole message of the *Gītā*.'

This realization of the Ātman is the ideal, the *summum bonum*, which ought to be the goal of all human conduct, the ideal to which human conduct should approximate itself. But is it practicable? Is there a way of translating this ideal into practice in the day-to-day affairs of the world? 'Yes' is the answer of the *Gītā*. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* clearly expatiates on the practical aspect of this philosophy of human conduct in all its bearings in the various chapters of the *Gītā*. The practice of the presence of the Ātman, as advocated therein, is intended to effect a harmonious blending of the individual and social aspects of human conduct. The *Gītā* aims at nothing short of the development of an integrated personality, in whom the various

warring elements of his intellectual, emotional, and volitional faculties are evenly co-ordinated to the benefit of himself as well as the rest of the world.

Such an ideal personality is the *sthitaprajña*, the person whose understanding has become secure and steady. The *sthitaprajña* has passed far beyond the stage of intellectual doubt and disquisition regarding the truth about the Ātman and the Brahman, the individual self and the universal Self. To him, the reality of the Ātman is not a hearsay, but a matter of direct perception. He is ever established in the unbroken consciousness of that reality. He is said to be wide awake when the rest of the world is steeped in slumber and darkness; what is night and darkness to the rest of the world is day and light to him. Completely satisfied with the self-absorbing experience of the Ātman, he is no longer distracted or disturbed by the fleeting pleasure and pain that result from the contact of the sense and mind with the sense objects. Unlike the undisciplined man of the world, who is tossed about helplessly by the storm and stress in this sea of *samsāra*, and swayed to and fro by the attractions and repulsions of his senses and mind, he is unperturbed by the impact of the opposite sensations in nature, such as pleasure and pain, heat and cold, happiness and misery. He is compared to the vast and deep ocean, which is not affected by the waters of the various rivers rushing into it constantly from every side. Even the most subtle desires of the mind, not to speak of the gross physical desires, merge into him without upsetting his tranquillity and calmness. The delights and joys of the senses and mind are to him as nothing compared to the blissful nature of the experience of the Ātman. He is neither elated by joy nor dejected by suffering. Both, he knows, are but modes of the self-effulgent Ātman. Unattached to anything else but the Ātman, and free from hatred, lust, greed, anger, and the allied passions of the heart, he moves about in the world blessing the whole of mankind by his mere presence. Having shed all longing and the sense of 'me' and 'mine', he carries on the

activities of life that fall to his share by divine dispensation for the good of the world and to set an example to man. The *sthitaprajña* is the embodiment of perfect human conduct. Others have to mould their conduct on the model set by him. As Śrī Saṅkarācārya says in his commentary on the *Gītā* at the beginning of the section on *sthitaprajña*: ‘*Sarvatraiva hi adhyātmaśāstre kṛtārthalakṣaṇāni yāni tānyeva sādhanāni upadiśyante yatnasādhyatvāt*—Everywhere in spiritual science, those characteristic attributes of the successful *yogin* (which have become spontaneous in him by virtue of his realization) are taught as the means of attaining that state, since they are to be attained by effort.’

The teachings of the *Gītā*, though set down in familiar Indian surroundings, and abound in imageries, illustrations, metaphors, and similes peculiarly Indian, yet transcend the limitations of time and place and break through the barriers of race, religion, and nationality. Though they breathe through and through the spirit and atmosphere of Hinduism, and issue out of an entirely Hindu religious and philosophical background, they have a significance beyond the

bounds of the geographical, linguistic, or racial divisions and diversities. The message of the *Gītā* touches the central problem of the human heart. Everyone—man or woman, the most ignorant or the most learned, the downtrodden or the highly placed, the abject sinner or the seeker after truth—can derive benefit from its message. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the divine author of the *Gītā*, is least interested in propounding any system of philosophy, either one already prevalent or a new one; nor does he preoccupy himself with the exposition and recommendation of the theological dogmas and doctrines, ceremonies and rituals of any particular religion. The concern of Kṛṣṇa, when he preached the *Gītā* to Arjuna, was not to prescribe a rigid code of conduct or issue a list of commandments, to be unquestioningly followed by a particular individual or a particular section of humanity for all time to come. Kṛṣṇa was a believer in the growth and development of the individual and that of groups of individuals, and not in their abiding by certain traditional customs and laws. In the *Gītā*, he does not speak of or for this religion or that religion, but the one religion of mankind, namely, the religion that lifts the individual to an awareness of his own divine nature.



THE MEANING OF BHAKTI IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RĀMĀNUJA

BY DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

In the *Vedārthasaṅgraha* of Śrī Rāmānuja, *bhakti* is described as the knowledge which elicits excessive adoration and attachment to the ultimate Reality, as a result of which the devotee becomes absolutely disinterested in all the other objects of the world.¹ It is further said that God is the highest Being, and as such He

¹ *Vedārthasaṅgraha* (Ed. S. Sum P. S. Rama Misra Sastri), p. 152.

naturally becomes the dearest treasure of a human heart. Meditation on God or a full knowledge of the nature of God generates love and transforms *dhyāna* into a form of love and affection.²

Bhakti, according to Rāmānuja, is not simply an emotion of love and respect devoid of knowledge; it is a special form of knowledge

² *Ibid.*, p. 152.

that fills the heart of an individual with a deep feeling of attachment for the supreme Divinity. He has thus equated *bhakti* with *dhyāna* and *upāsana*, emphasizing thereby the importance of the rational aspect in it. *Bhakti* always presupposes a thorough knowledge of the ultimate Reality as taught in the Upaniṣads; but it is not mere knowledge devoid of feeling. It has been stated in the *Śrī-Bhāṣya* that *bhakti* is a form of loving meditation on the nature of God.³ Here, too, Rāmānuja has stated that *dhyāna*, which is identical with *bhakti*, is synonymous with *upāsana* and *vedana*.⁴ *Upāsana* means concentration of mind wholly on God as described in the Upaniṣads,⁵ and no other thought should disturb the mind during *upāsana* or *dhyāna*.⁶ God being the most beloved object, thoughts regarding Him also are very dear and pleasing to the devotee, and naturally, therefore, these pleasant thoughts keep his mind continuously occupied. This is *bhakti*.

RELATION BETWEEN BHAKTI, JÑĀNA, AND KARMA

From the above, it is clear that Rāmānuja has recognized a very close connection between *bhakti* and *jñāna*, or devotion and knowledge. In fact, it appears to us that, in the opinion of Rāmānuja, knowledge may be regarded as the cause of *bhakti*. Knowledge is the very foundation of *bhakti*; it is *jñāna* that produces *bhakti* and also nourishes and enriches it. In the process of attaining liberation, an individual should first of all try to acquire a true knowledge of his self, thereby distinguishing the soul from all its necessary accompaniments and also from all other inanimate objects of the world. When he acquires the true knowledge of his pure *aham*, and also understands that this pure *aham* is only a mode of the supreme Personality on which it fully depends, he succeeds in realizing his true being in relation to the ultimate source

of the world. Naturally, therefore, he will feel intense love and affection and reverence for God, in whom he lives, moves, and has his being. This is *bhakti*, and this *bhakti* can remain fixed in the mind only through constant meditation, thinking, and reflection on the nature of the supreme Being.⁷ *Bhakti* therefore consists of knowledge, intense affection, and respect. The essence of *bhakti* lies in complete self-surrender to the highest Being, who is the Lord and Protector of the whole universe. Such a surrender takes place only when the individual self realizes his own nature, the nature of God, and also the nature of his relation to the supreme Reality. Love cannot spring forth in the heart of a man unless he knows the nature of the object he is going to love. So, knowledge is necessary for the emergence of *bhakti* in the heart of a worshipper.

Not only *jñāna-yoga*, but also *karma-yoga* is necessary for the awakening of *bhakti* in the heart of a man. It is the disinterested performance of *nitya* and *naimittika karmas* that purifies the mind of an individual and makes him fit for grasping the ultimate truth. *Karma*, according to Rāmānuja, is a thing that should not be abandoned at any stage of life. Even when a person resorts to *bhakti-yoga*, he has got to perform all the activities which are most suited to win the favour of God. Both *jñāna-yoga* and *karma-yoga* are necessary forerunners of *bhakti*, and as such they are regarded as doors to *bhakti*.⁸ Disinterested and continuous performance of *nitya* and *naimittika karmas* removes all impurities from the heart of an individual and prepares the way for the emergence of such knowledge as is needed for the production of *bhakti*.⁹ The importance of disinterested action or *karma-yoga* for the purpose of self-knowledge and self-realization has been emphasized by Rāmānuja in his commentary on the *Gītā*, III.2. In his opinion,

³ *Śrutaprakāśikā*, commentary on *sūtra* I.1.1.

⁴ *Śrī-Bhāṣya*, IV.1.1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, IV.1.8.

⁶ *Bhagavad-Gītā*, IV.4, Introduction.

⁷ *Śrī-Bhāṣya*, I.1.1.

⁸ *Yatīndramatadīpikā*, (Ed. V. G. Apte), VII. pp. 61-62.

⁹ *Ibid.*, VII. p. 62.

knowledge is indeed an important part of disinterested action,¹⁰ and as such both are mutually inclusive.

The most important requirement for the performance of disinterested action is the complete dissociation of the soul from the ego-consciousness or *ahaṅkāra*, which is a product of Prakṛti. It is because of the identification of the self with the ego-consciousness that an individual thinks of himself as the doer of actions and enjoyer of all sorts of worldly experiences. He must be able to practise *karma-yoga* by dissociating his self wholly from the ego-centric desires. This happens to him only when the light of self-knowledge illuminates and purifies his heart, i.e., when he feels and realizes that the soul is essentially different from the body-mind system. Disinterested action has therefore been described as action illumined by the light of self-knowledge. In commenting upon the *Gītā*, IV.18, Rāmānuja has interpreted the word 'akarma' in the sense of *ātma-jñāna*. He has stated that action illumined by self-knowledge assumes the form of knowledge; and knowledge purified by disinterested performance of action assumes the form of action.

Therefore, knowledge is not alien to *bhakti* and *karma*. On the other hand, it is an important ingredient of both devotion and disinterested action. In the first stage, knowledge is needed to purify all the actions of the devotee. In this stage, the devotee realizes that his soul is different from the body and the sense-organs, which are the vehicles of action, and that his sole purpose in life is to please God. He understands that Prakṛti is not his *āśraya* and that the bodily self associated with all the organs is an object to be shunned. This knowledge of the soul helps him to give up the sense of agency of all worldly activities and also to make his mind completely free from the desire to enjoy the fruits of such actions. In the second stage, the true knowledge of the self, as well as the knowledge of its non-relation to Prakṛti as the substratum, ripens into a firm

faith in God as the individual's sole source and support. His mind is now illumined with the light of the knowledge of his true relation to God. Here, all philosophical interpretations of the relation, such as *śarīra-śarīrin*, *prakāra-prakārin*, *śeṣa-śeṣin*, are directly felt by him. Naturally, therefore, this knowledge of *amśa-amśin* generates in his mind a deep devotion and love for God, as He is now looked upon as the individual's only refuge. At this stage, knowledge becomes the cause of *bhakti*. In the final stage, when knowledge deepens into the highest form of *bhakti*, it assumes the form of constant meditation, thinking, and reflection on the *svarūpa* of God.

Thus, when a man attains a full knowledge of his absolute dependence on God, he at once shifts his attention from worldly objects to God; gives up his egoism totally; performs actions with complete *vairāgya*; and meditates constantly on the nature of God. A question may be asked here: What form of God is constantly contemplated upon by the devotee in the stage of *paramā-bhakti*? On this point, it is really difficult to make clear and definite suggestions. Still, by following the philosophical trend of Rāmānuja, we may say that the devotee visualizes God, first of all, as one possessing infinite auspicious qualities, devoid of all faults, blissful, and merciful; and by repeated meditation on God, the devotee gradually loses all sense of difference. There remains neither the feeling of *grahīṭṛ* nor the feeling of *grahaṇa*. The devotee becomes fully immersed in the *grāhya-rūpa*. The different qualities of God get merged into His one form. Though the qualities are present, there is no feeling of any distinction between the substance and its attributes. All differences are totally lost in this stage. This is the last and final state of *bhakti-yoga*, when the worshipper feels no difference between himself and God; acquires all the fundamental characteristics of his ideal; and finally realizes Him as his own self. The non-dualistic consciousness of the liberated soul is expressed in the feeling, 'I am Brahman with-

¹⁰ *Bhagavad-Gītā*, IV.4.

out any division.¹¹ This non-duality, however, does not mean *svarūpa-aikya*, but *viśiṣṭa-aikya*, in which the self is realized as an inseparable mode of God, who is its only support and substratum. By the acquisition of equality of attributes with God, the individual soul also becomes as pure as Brahman (*Brahma samāna śuddhi*). This stage of *mukti* reminds us of the stage of *samāpatti* described in the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali. Here also, the devotee places himself wholly in God and thereby gets merged in Him; there is no other object for him except God. Psychologically considered, this stage is a stage of *advaita*. *Bhakti* in this stage is *upāya-bhakti*, and there exists an experienced unity between the devotee and God. Difference exists only ontologically as the self is naturally different from God. Experiences are two, though experience is non-dual.

SEVENFOLD LIMBS OF BHAKTI

Rāmānuja has enumerated sevenfold *sādhana*s which lead to *bhakti*. These are: (1) *Viveka*, which means purification of the body by taking only such food as has not been spoilt by *jāti* and *āśraya*. In other words, in order to keep one's body pure and spotless, one should take only *sāttvika* food. (2) *Vimoka*, which means freedom from passion and anger, as these two are the great obstacles in the path of *bhakti*. (3) *Abhyāsa*, which means continuous remembrance of the presence of God as the indwelling principle with a pure body and a purified mind. (4) *Kriyā*, which refers to the fivefold duties that a *mumukṣu* has got to perform according to his ability. (5) *Kalyāṇa*, which refers to virtue or innerside of duty. It consists of *satya* or truth; *ārjava* or purity in thought, word, and action; *dayā* or kindness; *dāna* or benevolence; and *ahiṃsā* or non-violence. (6) *Anavasāda*, which means freedom from all sorts of despair, dejection, etc. (7) *Anuddharṣa*, which is the absence of too much excitement on account of pleasure and too much depression on account of pain.

The sevenfold *sādhana*s of *bhakti* lead to that

state of *anubhava* which is just prior to the final realization of Brahman, and which possesses fullness, vividness, and liveliness of perception.¹² When such a vivid experience of God takes place, the heart of the devotee becomes full to the brim with intense love, respect, and yearning for that supremely beloved object. This is *parā-bhakti*, which blossoms into *paramā-bhakti*, when the devotee succeeds in winning the grace of God. When the object of his love fully responds to his call, he forgets everything, gives up all *dharmas*, and seeks refuge in the loving heart of his beloved God

DIFFERENT FORMS OF BHAKTI

From the above description, it would seem that *bhakti* can be classified into *sādhana-bhakti* or *upāya-bhakti*, *parā-bhakti*, and *paramā-bhakti*.

Sādhana-bhakti is more of the nature of knowledge than of love and longing. This is the stage when the *mumukṣu* purifies his mind by practising *śama*, *dama*, etc. with a view to attaining a true knowledge regarding his own self, regarding God, and regarding the nature of his relation to God. This is the stage of *āt-māvalokana*, which necessarily results in a true realization of the nature of God. In this stage, *bhakti* is a firm faith in the existence of God as the repository of eternal values, and this faith is generated in the mind of the *mumukṣu* after seeing the transitoriness of all things, including the effect of the Vedic sacrifices. *Sādhana-bhakti*, though primarily of the form of knowledge, is still termed *bhakti* and not *jñāna*, as the *mumukṣu* here does not seek God as a means to the realization of the true nature of the Self as the ultimate Reality, as is done by a *jñāna-yogin*.

To the followers of *bhakti-yoga*, God in all stages is believed to be the supreme Reality, and self-knowledge is supposed to be related to God-knowledge as its necessary means. As God is worshipped here as Bhagavān, His worship, whether in the form of disinterested action

¹¹ *Śrī-Bhāṣya*, IV.4.4

¹² *Yatīndramatadīpikā* (Ed. V. G. Apte), VII. p. 63.

or in the form of a search for divine knowledge, is always termed 'bhakti', as the word 'bhakti' is derived from the root 'bhaj', meaning worship of God or divine service. If search for God-knowledge or self-knowledge is viewed as a means to the attainment of the supreme Being, then this is also nothing but bhakti. When, as a result of the continued practice of śama, dama, etc., the mind of the devotee is purified, and with a pure mind he remains wholly absorbed in the continuous meditation on God, then a very vivid and lively mental visualization of God takes place. The devotee gets a glimpse of divinity, which acquires the clearness and liveliness of perception, and this results in the realization of the Divine as his own inner self. This is the stage in which his faith in God is strengthened and brightened by the glow of love, respect, and admiration. Devotion in this stage is called *parā-bhakti*; and this, in due course, through the stage of *parā-jñāna* or union, deepens into *paramā-bhakti*, when the devotee, being united with God, becomes mad with love and longing for Him. He does not care for anything else except the grace of his beloved Master, and is always anxious to maintain his intimacy with Him.

In the stage of *paramā-bhakti*, the devotee places his heart in the heart of God and dedicates all his actions to Him. *Paramā-bhakti* is the finest flower of devotion, and in essence it seems to be identical with *prapatti*—a path prescribed for those persons who are incapable of going through the different stages of *bhakti-yoga*. In the state of *paramā-bhakti*, God is looked upon as the only centre and source of the life of the devotee. *Bhagavad-rāga* then becomes the sole music of his life, as he is completely immersed in the enjoyment of the bliss of the Paramātman.

MEANING OF PRAPATTI

Prapatti literally means seeking the protection of God after realizing that He is the only saviour of this sorrow-stricken world. In the third *adhyāya* of *Śrī-Bhāṣya*, Rāmānuja has stated that the different forms of *vidyās* are the

alternative means to God-realization. *Prapatti* or *nyāsa-vidyā*, being one of the forms of *vidyā*, is therefore a means to *mokṣa* or liberation. In the *Yatīndramatadīpikā*, it has been stated that *prapatti*, which is synonymous with *nyāsa-vidyā*, consists of the following five limbs:

1. *Ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ*, i.e., the will of the *jīva* should be attuned in such a manner that it will always be in harmony with the divine will.

2. *Prātikūlyasya varjanam*, i.e., renunciation of everything that will incur the disfavour of God.

3. *Rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāsaḥ*, i.e., firm faith in God as the saviour of all.

4. *Gopīrtvavaraṇam*, i.e., acceptance of God as the only hope of liberation.

5. *Ātmanikṣepakārpaṇyam*, i.e., complete self-surrender to God in all humility.

According to the *Yatīndramatadīpikā*, *nyāsa*, *śaraṇāgati*, etc. are synonymous, and these terms also stand for a particular form of knowledge.

In the *Gadyatraya*, Rāmānuja has said that the *prapatti* state also involves a consciousness of one's sins and short-comings, and is therefore associated with the feeling that the devotee is a worthless and helpless servant of God and is extremely eager to attain salvation through His grace alone. The devotee here feels like a dry leaf at the mercy of the wind. He has no purpose or will of his own; he is simply carrying out God's purpose in this world. This is the attitude of the *bhagavad-śaraṇāgata*, and such a devotee is delivered from all sins and sorrows by God Himself.¹⁸

God is the *śeṣin* and *jīva* is the *śeṣa*; and true *śeṣatva* consists in the realization of the fact that the individual soul has nothing, does nothing, and desires nothing, but divine service and divine bliss. The feelings of 'I', 'my', and 'mine' are totally lost, and the individual soul subsists wholly in God and exists for His satisfaction only. It is this attitude that enables

¹⁸ See Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Gītā*, IX.27.

the devotee to act always in harmony with the divine will and to give up everything that displeases God. A complete surrender of individuality and egoistic impulses is what is called *prapatti*, and this, when effected, eliminates all sense of difference. The worshipper becomes wholly immersed in the manifold manifestations of his divine Lord. He takes delight in placing himself entirely in the hands of God, just as a child clings whole-heartedly to its mother for safety and proper nourishment. Thus when *prapatti* sanctifies the heart of a devotee, he at once surrenders his whole nature to God, and, consequently, freedom from selfish desires, equal-mindedness, and love for all arise in his mind. Devotion is perfect in this stage; and forces of attraction and repulsion, friendship and enmity, pleasure and pain cease to have any influence on him. The last *śloka* of the twelfth chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* says: 'Those devotees are exceedingly dear to Me who, clinging firmly to Me, follow this immortal wisdom with faith and respect.'

PRAPATTI AND PARAMĀ-BHAKTI

From what has been considered above, it is clear that, so far as the essential ingredients are concerned, there is no difference between *prapatti* and *paramā-bhakti*, which is the culmination of the path of *bhakti-yoga*. The only difference is that *bhakti-yoga* is a synthetic process that combines within itself both *jñāna-yoga* and *karma-yoga*. *Prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*, on the other hand, is a simple and direct approach to God through self-surrender, love, and humility. The absolute self-surrendering attitude, dedication of everything to God, complete elimination of the ego-sense, and supreme love for God are present in both the forms. While, as a method, *bhakti-yoga* is a long and laborious process, *prapatti* is a simple method, in the sense that here the devotee is not in need of any external *sādhana* to purify his outer organs. A simple moment of serious and sincere offering of oneself to God is considered enough. Since it is immediate and non-laborious, it is regarded as superior to *bhakti-yoga*. In his com-

mentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (XVIII.66), Rāmānuja has explicitly stated that *prapatti* is actually the culmination of the method of *bhakti-yoga*, and *bhakti-yoga* will not be complete unless it results in pious resignation. In the *Yatīndramatadīpikā*, *prapatti* is described as a form of knowledge, and thus it is not in essence different from *paramā-bhakti*, which the devotee attains by following *bhakti-mārga*. This *prapatti* or *paramā-bhakti* is 'immortal bliss', which the devotee acquires by the grace of God and by sacrificing his ego. Both *prapatti* and *paramā-bhakti* result in the emergence of an attitude which makes the devotee feel and act as if his personality does not exist.

CONCLUSION

Thus it follows that both *bhakti-yoga* and *prapatti* are regarded by Rāmānuja as commendable methods for the attainment of *mukti*, and that both of them are identical in so far as the essential ingredients are concerned. The mention of *bhakti-yoga* and *prapatti* as two methods, despite their very close affinity, unfolds before us a picture of the social conditions of our country at that remote age. Vaiṣṇavism grew on the soil of India to fight Buddhism on the ground of *bhakti*. The liberal spirit of Buddhism and its non-observance of caste distinction and sex distinction in the sphere of religion were the pillars on which the wide popularity of Buddhism rested at that time. In the eleventh century, Rāmānuja, the great Vaiṣṇava philosopher, became anxious to open the gate of salvation even to the lowest classes and also to remain faithful to the spirit of the Brāhmaṇical religion. Only the three higher castes were allowed to study the Vedas and practise *vaidika* rites. With a view to keeping harmony with the traditional religion of the age, Rāmānuja opened the path of *bhakti-yoga* to the three higher castes. The lower castes, who were debarred from *vaidika-jñāna* and *vaidika-karma*, could not adopt the path of *bhakti-yoga*. So the path of *prapatti* was introduced for all the others, so as to enable them to adopt

Vaiṣṇava customs and manners without in any way violating the principles of the Brāhmanical religion. The goal is the same; the essential ingredients are identical. But while *bhakti-yoga* is the approach through philosophical knowledge, action, love, and respect, *prapatti* is the approach to God through faith and selfless love, accompanied by an attitude of self-surrender and resignation.

If philosophy is to be a science of liberation, then it must be able to give full satisfaction to the religious instincts of man. In other words, true philosophy should aim at bringing about a happy and effective reconciliation between knowledge and devotion.

Buddhism, despite its broad outlook and catholic spirit, could not serve as a perennial source of inspiration to the suffering humanity, due to the fact that the *sādhana-mārga* of the Buddhists was a path of cold, strenuous self-culture, and not a process of blissful union or identification with the supreme Reality. The concept of God was totally banished from the early Buddhist philosophy, and in the absence of a loving God, *bhakti* cannot ripen into its finest form. In the Buddhist way of virtue, remarks K. J. Sanders, 'when we go through *Dhammapada*, we find ourselves in a moonlit world, beautiful yet cold, . . . our hearts are not stirred by any assurance of the reality of the unseen'. Rāmānuja, on the other hand, gives us the conception of a living and loving God. To him *Saguṇa Brahman* is the highest category of both religion and philosophy. As such, in his hands, the gulf between philosophy and religion is completely bridged over.

Moreover, Rāmānuja has made provision for the liberation of those persons who have committed great sins and have thereby forfeited their right to *vaidika* actions. Such persons can have recourse to the *prapatti* method. If a man succeeds in offering himself sincerely to God, the sins of his past criminal and immoral actions will be wiped out at once. Complete dispassion and sincere faith in God are the two things that bring man very close to Him. The soul of man is essentially pure and is linked with God. It is because of this fact that even a hard criminal, in the midst of his various crimes, suddenly catches the glow of God and realizes the utter viciousness of his deeds, by performing which he has sinned against his true self and also against God. He suddenly wakes up from his sinful slumber and falls sincerely at the feet of God, who is rich in mercy and whose very essence is compassion and love. Instances of such sinners becoming great devotees of God are not rare in the history of Indian philosophy and religion. Sincerity is the best offering that one can make to God. God also draws erring men to Himself only if they approach Him with sincerity and faith. Rāmānuja opened the path of salvation to all persons by permitting them to enter into the fold of the Vaiṣṇava religion. He was not, in fact, a revolutionary; he really did the work of a reformer. He was most anxious to keep his religion in tune with the *vaidika* religion. At the same time, he opened the door of religion to all persons without any distinction. This liberal spirit of Vaiṣṇavism enhanced the prestige of this religion to a very great extent; and because of this, it continued to be a powerful and popular religion in India till the middle of the eighteenth century.



He who has truly surrendered himself at the feet of God should not bestow any thought on his future, which is entirely at His disposal; for the least anxiety felt in that connection betrays the hypocrisy in his self-surrender. . . . Let not the performance of your duties be regarded as a means for achieving worldly ends, but consider it as service rendered to the Supreme Being.

—Śrī Rāmānuja

CHRISTIAN RELIGION AT ITS MYSTICAL HEIGHTS

BY SRI ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

With the progress of empirical sciences and the growth of a matter-of-fact attitude to life, it has become increasingly difficult to talk on the problems of metaphysics, ontology, and mystical religion. Nurtured on topical journals, sensational films, and exciting sense-bound literature, man finds it difficult to believe in a supersensual and supernatural world. God is either denied or brought down to the anthropomorphic level. It is at this juncture that the great mystics of Catholicism can point out to us a religion at its mystical heights. It is from that God-summit-angle that we have to view our matter-of-fact problems in economics, politics, and sociology, not *vice versa*. For it is by seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness that everything else is added unto us, not the other way round.

Prior to the emergence of Christian mysticism, we hear of the Eleusinian mysteries of ancient Greece and of the mysticism of Plato, Plotinus, and Philo. Pseudo-Dionysius of Aeropagite echoes Greco-Christian mysticism at its best in his *Mystical Theology*, which together with his *De Divinis Nominibus* and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* exercised great influence on Christianity until the late Middle Ages. From internal evidence, modern critics attribute the above three works to an unknown author of the fifth century, and not to the first century, as the author was then falsely identified with the convert of St. Paul, Denys the Aeropagite.

Before entering the sanctuary of mystical religion, it is worth while asking: What is mysticism, after all? Empiricists and positivists see nothing but mist and fog in mysticism, a lack of clear thinking and matter-of-fact attitude towards life. Some others identify mysticism with occultism, theosophy, clairvoyance, and esoteric spiritualism. Then, there is a naturalistic mysticism which poet Wordsworth describes in his verses, and Francis of Assisi, at times, in

his *Canticles*. Then there is a school of thought which, transcending naturalistic mysticism, regards Catholicism as the quintessence of mysticism. Dean Inge quotes no less an authority as Harnack as saying, 'Mysticism is Roman Catholic piety in its extreme form'.

Excluding these near approaches to mysticism, we come to western saints who have experienced and described mystical religion at its best. From the utterances of these mystics, we can arrive at some kind of definition of mysticism, which is the communion of the soul with God, a direct perception of Godhead, the relish and realization of the ultimate Reality by the spirit of man. A. B. Sharp, in his book on mysticism, defines mysticism as 'a direct contact of the soul with transcendental Reality, a direct and objective intellectual intuition of transcendental Reality'. He also quotes an American professor, A. Seth, as saying: 'Mysticism is the endeavour of the human mind to grasp the Divine Essence or the Ultimate Reality of things, and to enjoy the blessedness of actual communion with the Highest. It maintains the possibility of direct intercourse with the Being of beings.'

St. Augustine and St. Thomas upheld that Moses and St. Paul beheld the Essence of God while still on earth. Genuine ecstasy in the lives of saints is the outcome of that direct vision or intuition of the ultimate Reality, far transcending the realms of the senses, of discursive thought, and of logical reasoning. Pseudo-Dionysius says: 'Do thou, in the intent practice of mystic contemplation, leave behind the senses and the operations of the intellect, and all things that the senses or the intellect can perceive, and all the things which are not and things which are, and strain upwards in unknowing, as far as may be, towards the union with Him who is above all being and knowledge. For, by increasing and absolute with-

drawal from thyself and all things in purity, abandoning all, and set free from all, thou wilt be borne up to the ray of the Divine Darkness that surpasseth all being' (*Mystical Theology*, Chapter I).

Besides philosophical reasoning and theological faith, mystics maintain that there is a direct way to perceive Truth and become one with it, which is God. In fact, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas only echoed the teachings of earlier mystics, specially of Denys the Aeropagite, when they pointed to the mystical way as the most direct and quickest way to reach God. Denys has said: 'Besides the knowledge of God obtained by process of philosophical and theological speculation, there is that most divine knowledge of God which takes place through ignorance, in the union which is above intelligence, when the intellect, quitting all things that are, and then leaving itself also, is united to the superluculent rays, being illuminated thence and therein by the unsearchable depth of wisdom' (*De Divinis Nominibus*, VII. 3).

St. Augustine, in one sentence, gives us the idea of the mystic intuition of God. He says: 'My mind, in the flash of trembling glance, came to Absolute Being, to That Which Is' (*Confessions*, VIII. 23). Only God is 'That Which Is'. Only God can say, 'I am Who Am', as per Mosaic revelation. The direct vision of that *God Who Is* is mysticism. This search and discovery of God is far better made inside the human soul than without. Outside is the vestige and image of God; but within the soul is the sanctuary and ground of God. Says Augustine again: 'And being admonished by them (the Platonists) to return into myself, I entered even into my innermost self, Thou being my guide. I entered and beheld with the eye of my soul, above the same eye of my soul, above my mind, the Light Unchangeable—and Thou didst beat back the weakness of my sight, streaming forth Thy beams of light upon me, most strongly, and I trembled with love and awe' (*Confessions*, VII. 16).

From the common experience of mystics, we

gather that mystical religion develops in the soul as we withdraw from the sense-bound world. We become blind to the world outside, so that we may see the Kingdom of God within. We become dead to the world, so that we may live with God in His life and light. St. Gregory the Great says: 'In that species whereby God speaks beyond all words and more secretly and immediately by an ineffable speech, where whoso sees Him will not live with that life with which we mortals live in the bodily senses; but unless he be in some sort dead to this life, whether as having wholly departed from the body, or as being so withdrawn and alienated from the carnal senses that he knows not whether he be in the body or out of the body, he is not rapt and uplifted to that vision' (St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, XII. 27, 55).

It is in dying to worldliness that we become alive in godliness. It is in closing our eyes to the world that our mind awakens to the vision of the Invisible. To the extent we could abstract ourselves from created beings and pleasures, we could enjoy the bliss of contemplation of the uncreated essence of God. Or as Thomas à Kempis says: 'This is the reason why there are found so few contemplative persons, because few know how to separate themselves wholly from created and perishing things' (*Imitation of Christ*, III. 31).

Even among those who are vowed down to the blessedness of contemplative life, few, very few only enjoy the vision of God. Even the contemplatives enjoy the ecstasy of the vision of God only momentarily, and on rare occasions. St. Bernard, himself a mystic of the first order, vouches for this when he says: 'In this life, the happiness of contemplation is enjoyed only rarely and momentarily; contemplatives alone can experience the freedom of enjoyment, but only in part, and in small part, and on most rare occasions.'

All sincere, pure, and struggling souls in quest of God catch a glimpse of Him, however faintly, in this mortal life, which is a foretaste of life eternal in God. If friendship and love in this

world is bliss, then the union of the soul with God is a thousand times more blissful, when we become one with God through grace and love. This union is never in essence, as monists and pantheists would have it. Says Francis of Sales: 'When the union of the soul with God is most specially strict and close, it is called inhesion or adhesion, because by it the soul is caught up, fastened, glued, and affixed to the Divine Majesty, so that she cannot easily loose or draw herself back again' (*Treatise on the Love of God*, VII. 3).

Mystical religion, by its very nature, tends to the union of the soul with God, not through metaphors and mirages, but in actual reality. Mystical religion of the union of the soul with God is the crowning consummation of the struggles of a devout soul to purify herself from worldly contaminations and seek light from above. The classical stages of purgation and illumination should precede the unitive way, which is the royal road to mysticism. It is a vital experience transcending human descriptions. Expressions always fall short of experience; and mystical religion is the vital experience of God within the soul of man. Augustine Baker, a Benedictine mystic, says: 'According to the doctrine of mystics, this union passes above both the understanding and will, namely, in that supreme portion of the spirit which is visible to God alone, and in which He alone can inhabit, a portion so pure, noble, and divine, that it neither hath nor can have any name proper to it, though mystics endeavour to express it by divers, calling it the summit of the mind, the fund and centre of the spirit, the essence of the soul, its virginal portion' (*Holy Wisdom*, p. 533).

Although mystical experience cannot be adequately described, from the unanimous teachings of the mystics, we have to conclude that religion at its mystical heights is literally union of the soul with God. It is only the degree of that unitive experience that differentiates mystics from mystics, as different pieces of iron receive different degrees of heat from fire accord-

ing to the nearness of the metal to the furnace. Blossius (Luis of Blois), a Benedictine abbot, has given us a graphic picture of this union of the soul with God. He says: 'It is a great thing, an exceeding great thing, in the time of this exile to be joined to God in the divine light by a mystical and denuded union. This takes place where a pure, humble, and resigned soul, burning with ardent love, is carried above itself by the grace of God, and through the brilliancy of the divine light shining on the mind, it loses all consideration and distinction of things, and lays aside all, even the most excellent images, and all liquefied by love, and, as it were, reduced to nothing, it melts away into God. It is then united to God without any medium, and becomes one spirit with Him, and is transformed and changed into Him, as iron placed in the fire is changed into fire, without ceasing to be iron. It becomes one with God, yet not so as to be of the same substance and nature of God' (*Spiritual Mirror*, Chapter II).

As a consequence of this blissful union of the soul with God, man realizes that every happiness outside of God is sham happiness, and that all besides God is 'vanity and affliction of the spirit'. The innermost core of the soul is touched by God and God alone. This touch and taste of God is the bliss of contemplation, which is the essence of mystical religion. Says St. John of the Cross, a Carmelite saint: 'This knowledge consists in a certain contact of the soul with the Divinity, and it is God Himself who is then felt and tasted, though not manifestedly and distinctly, as it will be in glory. But this touch of knowledge and of sweetness is so deep and so profound that it penetrates into the innermost substance of the soul. This knowledge savours in some measure of the divine essence and of everlasting life' (*Ascent of Carmel*, II. 26).

When the sweetness of things divine intensifies in the soul, the sweetness and fascination of created objects diminishes, until, in divine ecstasy, all worldliness is conquered or killed. Richard of St. Victor, a Canon Regular of St. Augustine, has written: 'The third grade of love

is when the mind of man is rapt into the abyss of the divine light, so that, utterly oblivious of all exterior things, it knows not itself and passes wholly into its God. And so in this state is held in check and lulled to deep sleep the crowd of carnal desires.'

Carnal desires and worldly love are either lulled to sleep or killed through the intensity of divine rapture experienced in the vision of God, imperfectly in this world through mystical religion, and perfectly in the world to come, in the beatific vision. Mystic trance is far more blissful than poetic genius or artistic creations, because it is the Infinite that becomes the life and light and love of the soul. No wonder, then, that mystics sought every opportunity to indulge in this poetic romance of the soul with God. Says St. Augustine: 'This I often do, this delights me, and as far as I may be freed from necessary duties, unto this pleasure have I recourse. And sometimes Thou dost admit me to an interior experience most unwonted, to a wondrous sweetness' (*Confessions*, X. 65).

The Word of God being the 'Light that enlightens every man that comes into this world', it is obvious that the mystical touch of the soul with God is found in the lives of ancient Greek seers.

Porphiry says that, during the six years of his service and discipleship, he saw Plotinus, his master, going into ecstasy four times. St. Augustine vouches for the mystical trance of the great pre-Christian philosophers. Augustine calls Plato, Plotinus, Philo, and their likes as 'great and almost divine men'. Plotinus, who was very much instrumental in bringing Augustine to Christian faith, said: 'When, after having sought the One, the soul finds itself in its presence, it goes to meet it and contemplates it instead of itself. When in this state, the soul would exchange its present condition for nothing, no, not for the heaven of heavens; for there is nothing better, nothing more blessed than this. It judges rightly and knows that it has what it desired, and that there is nothing higher. It is not deceived in its happiness; it fears no

evil while it is with the One, or even while it sees Him, though all else perish around it, it is content, if only it can be with Him. So happy it is' (*Plotinus*, VI. 7. 34).

Plato, that master mind and patriarch of idealistic philosophy and mysticism in the West, has written: 'The soul, when using the body as an instrument of perception, that is to say, when using the senses of sight or hearing or other senses, is dragged by the body into the region of the changeable, and wanders, and is confused. But, when returning to herself, she reflects, then she passes into the other world, the region of purity and eternity, and immortality and unchangeableness, which are her kindred, and with them she ever abides when she is by herself and is not let or hindered; then she ceases from her erring ways, and being in communion with the unchanging is unchanging. And this state of the soul is called wisdom' (*Phaedo*, 79).

There is a remarkable passage in Plato where he calls all men and women to come back to their deeper sense and divine wisdom in God, after they have performed all their duties in the world and experienced the vanity and illusion of everything created. It is equally a call to us who are distracted in the workaday battles of life; and it points out the way to abiding peace and bliss within the soul of man. Plato says: 'Let those who have distinguished themselves in every action of their lives and in every branch of knowledge come at last to their consummation. The time has now arrived at which they must raise the eyes of the soul to the Universal Light which lightens all beings, and behold the Absolute Good, for that is the pattern according to which they are to order the State and the lives of individuals, and the remainder of their own lives also, making philosophy their chief pursuit' (*Republic*, VII).

Even a positivistic and matter-of-fact philosopher like Aristotle, the famous disciple of Plato, goes into lyrics and poetry when he speaks of the blessedness of the soul in communion with God, which is the essence of mystical religion.

In his *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, there are several passages which bespeak of the mystic bliss of the soul in communion with God. He says: 'Happiness is the activity of the highest part of our nature; but the speculative is the highest, as the intuitive reason is the highest of our faculties, and the objects with which the intuitive reason is concerned are the highest of things that can be known. There is no virtuous activity so pleasant as the activity of wisdom or philosophic reflection. Speculative activity will be the perfect happiness of man, if perfect length of life is given it. But such a life will be too good for man. He will enjoy such a life not in virtue of his humanity, but in virtue of some divine element within him. . . . The activity of God, being pre-eminently blissful, will be speculative; and, if so, then, the human activity most nearly related to it will be most capable of happiness. The life of man is blessed in so far as it possesses a certain resemblance to God's speculative activity' (*Ethics*, I. 3).

St. Thomas Aquinas literally follows this line of argument when he deals with the question of happiness and blessedness in his two *Summas*, *De Veritate* and *Quodlibetales*, and in his commentaries on Aristotle and the Scriptures.

The blessedness, the inward peace and joy springing forth from the depths of mystical religion, certainly is not exclusively meant for the few saints we have quoted. It is meant for all of us. Such a busy, intellectual controversialist like Blaise Pascal reached his spiritual summits in a hidden mystical trance. When Pascal died in A.D. 1662, underneath his bed was found a scrap of parchment stitched into the lining of his doublet. On it, there was a rough drawing of a flaming cross, around which were found written these words: 'In the year of grace 1654, Monday, 23rd November, the day of St. Clement Pope and Martyr . . . the eve of St.

Chrysogonus and others, from about half past ten in the evening till about half an hour after midnight:

FIRE

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,
Not of the philosophers and the learned.

Certitude. Joy. Certitude. Emotion. Sight.
Joy.

Forgetfulness of the world and of all outside
of God.

The world hath not known Thee, but I have
known Thee.

Joy! Joy! Joy! Tears of Joy.

My God, wilt Thou leave me?

Let me not be separated from Thee for ever'

—(Facsimile in Abbe Bremond's *Sentiment Religieux en France*, IV. 368).

Here is Blaise Pascal at his mystical heights, not Pascal the intellectual and controversialist, the author of *Provincial Letters*, but Pascal the child of God, the lover of God.

The worldly people fancy that mystical religion is negative, i.e., it denies the world and the self. Mystical religion at its best does mean mortification of the senses, self-denial almost to the point of crucifixion of flesh and of the *Homo sapiens*. But such a crucifixion is the prelude to resurrection, the budding of the soul and spirit of man into the boundless realm of freedom, joy, and bliss which could be found only in God.

This is the flight of the soul from worldliness to godliness, from the confusion of the many to the integration of the soul with the One, the One without a second—*Ekameva advitīyam*—as the Upaniṣads say. Religion, at its best, is mysticism, which is the life of light and love of God.



VEDĀNTIC IDEALISM AND MARXIAN MATERIALISM

BY SRI R. PRABHAKAR

No two systems of philosophy could be more incompatible at first sight than the dialectical materialism of Karl Marx and the idealism of the Vedānta, and Marx himself would have dismissed the Vedāntic concept of Māyā as a typical attempt to explain away the hard realities of existence, confirming his view that religion is the opium of the people. But to the Vedāntin, viewing the world as Māyā, there is a familiar ring about the Marxian dialectic—the theory that contradictions are inevitable, and that evolution takes place by the clash of opposites, through the unending cycle of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Swami Vivekananda, in his thought-provoking address ‘Māyā and Illusion’, has pointed out that the fundamental contradictions of human experience constitute the essence of Māyā, and develops this idea in his characteristic forceful language.

‘These tremendous contradictions in our intellect, in our knowledge, yea, in all the facts of our life, face us on all sides. A reformer arises and wants to remedy the evils that are existing in a certain nation; and before they have been remedied, a thousand other evils arise in another place. It is like an old house that is falling; you patch it up in one place and the ruin extends to another. . . . It is like chronic rheumatism; you drive it from the head, and it goes to the body; you drive it from there, and it goes to the feet. . . . The least amount of material prosperity that we enjoy is elsewhere causing the same amount of misery. This is the law. . . . And this is Māyā’ (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, II. pp. 93-94).

‘Thus we find that Māyā is not a theory for the explanation of the world; it is simply a statement of facts as they exist, that the very basis of our being is contradiction, that everywhere we have to move through this tremendous contradiction; that wherever there is good, there must also be evil; and wherever there is

evil, there must be some good; wherever there is life, death must follow as its shadow; and everyone who smiles will have to weep, and *vice versa*. Nor can this state of things be remedied. We may verily imagine that there will be a place where there will be only good, and no evil, where we shall only smile and never weep. This is impossible in the very nature of things; for the conditions will remain the same. Wherever there is the power of producing a smile in us, there lurks the power of producing tears. ‘Wherever there is the power of producing happiness, there lurks somewhere the power of making us miserable’ (*ibid.*, II. p. 97).

Marx in his theories of dialectical materialism and the class war only revealed these contradictions in one particular sphere, that of socio-economic relations. He put forward the view that, historically considered, every system of production contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Feudalism brings into existence the *bourgeoisie* which, in due course, destroys feudalism and builds up the capitalist system. Capitalism, in turn, creates its own enemies—the militant propertyless proletariat which will one day overthrow capitalism and establish the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, paving the way for communism. Though this dialectical process—this cycle of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis—is unending by its very nature, Marx did not attempt to predict the antithesis of communism or the nature of the ultimate synthesis, if any.

A Vedāntin may not accept the above interpretation of history, but it does not necessarily conflict with the Vedāntic thought. To a Vedāntin, the contradictions noted by Marx would only illustrate the ‘play of Māyā’ in one particular field of human experience, though Marx, as a confirmed materialist, would have rejected any such interpretation. We can even

imagine Swami Vivekananda summing up the Marxist version of history with his oft-repeated statement, 'And this is Māyā'. The Vedāntin may not accept the inevitability of class war and violent revolution; the Marxist may reject the concept of Māyā. But there is an underlying assumption common to Vedāntic idealism and Marxian materialism—the view that contradictions are woven into the very texture of the universe, whether these contradictions are the result of the 'dialectical process' or the 'play of Māyā'.

How, if at all, are these contradictions resolved? Is there any ultimate synthesis which will once for all end this cycle of thesis and anti-thesis? To this question, Marxism has no definite answer. Marx made no attempt to predict the course of the dialectical process beyond the establishment of communism. Presumably, a communist system will give rise to contradictions, like feudalism and capitalism which preceded it; but Marx felt that there could be no fruitful speculation on the nature of these contradictions, or on the possibility of an ultimate synthesis.

The Vedānta, however, does believe in the possibility of a final synthesis which will reconcile all contradictions, but this can never be achieved so long as we function on the plane of Māyā. Any effort to do so will be self-defeating, for contradictions constitute the essence of Māyā. Since it is these contradictions which give rise to our political, social, and economic problems, every attempt by reformers or scientists to solve them only creates fresh problems. To give an illustration: medical science by its achievements in the prevention and cure of diseases has no doubt reduced the death-rate and increased the expectation of life. But this has created a fresh and even more serious problem—that of over-population which, according to Dr. Julian Huxley, constitutes a greater menace to humanity than the hydrogen bomb. There seems to be something like a law of the insolubility of problems, corresponding to the law of the indestructibility of

matter in the realm of physical science. Scientists tell us that matter cannot be really destroyed; that what appears to be the destruction of matter is only a change in form. Similarly, when we apparently succeed in solving a problem, it only reappears in another form. This may not be very encouraging to enthusiastic reformers and revolutionaries who swear by one 'ism' or another, but it is, nevertheless, a truth demonstrated time and again by experience.

'Every period of history has given birth to thousands of men and women who have worked hard to smooth the passage of life for others. And how far have they succeeded? We can only play at driving the ball from one place to another. We take away pain from the physical plane, and it goes to the mental one. It is like that picture in Dante's hell where the misers were given a mass of gold to roll up a hill. Every time they rolled it up a little, it again rolled down. . . . We cannot add happiness to this world; similarly, we cannot add pain to it either. The sum total of the energies of pleasure and pain displayed here on earth will be the same throughout. We just push it from this side to the other side, and from that side to this, but it will remain the same, because to remain so is its very nature' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 'The Ideal of Karma-Yoga', I. p. 110).

If there can be no real solution of problems, if we only create new problems in trying to solve the old, are we to abandon all efforts to better the lot of humanity and assume the role of passive spectators? Have the long line of reformers and idealists struggled and sacrificed in vain? For one thing, they could not have acted otherwise. They were moved by an inner compulsion to alleviate the sufferings of their fellowmen, rather than by a shrewd calculation of consequences. Would any statesman worth the name relax his efforts to promote world peace thinking that abolition of war would lead to over-population? Again, though the objective results of our efforts to promote the wel-

fare of our fellowmen may be doubtful, their subjective results are truly profound. To quote Swami Vivekananda again, 'And, above all, what is the use of doing good work? ... If it is true that you cannot do good without doing evil, and whenever you try to create happiness there will always be misery, people will ask you, "What is the use of doing good?"' The answer is, in the first place, that we must work for lessening misery, for that is the only way to make ourselves happy. ... In the second place,

we must do our part, because that is the only way of getting out of this life of contradiction' (*ibid.*, 'Māyā and Illusion', II. pp. 98-99). Wrestling with problems for which there is no real solution, absorbed in problems which are not our own, we subdue and ultimately transcend our little egos and pass into a realm beyond Māyā; and in that realm, those who have torn the veil of Māyā assure us, all contradictions are reconciled and all diversity resolved in the ultimate Unity.

ŚRĪ-BHĀSYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from previous issue)

An objection is raised that, if the soul is a part of Brahman, then It would be affected by the defects of the soul. The following *sūtra* answers this objection.

प्रकाशादिवत् नैवं परः ॥२१३१४५॥

45. But as in the case of light and so on, the supreme Lord is not like this i.e., like the soul).

Though a distinguishing quality of a substance is a part of it, yet we observe differences between the two. Though light is a part of the object of which it is a quality, yet the object is different in nature from its quality, the light. So also, though the soul is a part of Brahman as Its body, still the essential nature and characteristics of the two are not one. Hence the Lord is not affected by the pleasure and pain experienced by the soul.

स्मरन्ति च ॥२१३१४६॥

46. The Smṛtis also state that.

Parāśara and others declare that the world of sentient and insentient beings is a part of Brahman, like light. 'Just as the light of fire

placed in a place spreads all round, so is this world the power (*śakti*) of the Lord' (*Viṣṇu Purāna*, I. 22. 56). So also is the soul declared to be the body of the Lord: 'All these are Hari's body' (*ibid.*, I. 22. 38); 'All those are His body' (*ibid.*, I. 22. 86).

अनुज्ञापरिहारौ देहसम्बन्धाज्ज्योतिरादिवत् ॥२१३१४७॥

47. Permission and exclusion (result) from the connection (of the soul) with the body; as in the case of fire etc.

An objection is raised that, as all souls are equal, being parts of Brahman, why then are some permitted to study the Vedas, while others are excluded from it. The *sūtra* says that this is because of the soul's connection with a pure or impure body. Though the fire is one, yet the fire from a household is acceptable, while that from the funeral pyre is rejected.

असन्ततेश्चाव्यतिकरः ॥२१३१४८॥

48. On account of the non-extension of each soul (beyond its body), there is no confusion (of the results of actions).

The souls being atomic are different in different bodies and are limited to those bodies. So there is no confusion of the results of actions done by them, i.e., the results of the action done by one do not affect another soul. This would not have been possible if the souls were Brahman in ignorance or limited by *upādhis*. For the same Brahman being in connection with ignorance or the limiting adjuncts, there would have resulted the confusion of the results of actions.

आभास एव च ॥२१३१४९॥

49. And their arguments are fallacious.

Moreover, the arguments put forward by those who hold that the soul is Brahman covered by ignorance are all fallacious. They say that Brahman, which is pure consciousness, is covered by ignorance, which means that Brahman loses this essential quality of consciousness. That would mean destruction of Brahman Itself. The word 'and' in the *sūtra* points out that this theory contradicts various scriptural texts, like 'Of these two, one eats the sweet fruits with relish, while the other looks on without eating' (*Śve. U.*, IV. 6); 'There are two, the one the Ruler and the other the ruled' (*Śve. U.*, I. 9); and so on. Even if this difference is due to limiting adjuncts based on ignorance, still as Brahman is one which connects Itself with all the different adjuncts, the confusion of the results of actions is inevitable.

An explanation is sought to be given, so that this difficulty pointed out above may be got over. If we regard the *upādhis* as real and not due to ignorance, then, in that case, the various spheres of experience of different souls can be explained as due to beginningless *adṛṣṭas*, which are the causes of these limiting adjuncts. The next *sūtra* refutes this view.

अदृष्टानियमात् ॥२१३१५०॥

50. There being no fixity about the unseen principles (*adṛṣṭas*) (there would result confusion of the spheres of experience).

As the unseen principles (*adṛṣṭas*) have Brahman for their substratum, there can be no rule that a particular *adṛṣṭa* operates in a particular soul; so the confusion of the spheres of experience is inevitable. Neither the *upādhis* nor *adṛṣṭas* can differentiate Brahman, which is one.

अभिसन्ध्यादिष्वपि चैवम् ॥२१३१५१॥

51. And even as regards resolve etc. (it would be) like this.

For the same reason as given in the previous *sūtra*, there can be no definite restriction as regards resolves etc. also. They, too, cannot create differentiation in the one Brahman.

प्रदेशभेदादिति चेन्नान्तर्भावात् ॥२१३१५२॥

52. If it be said (that this distinction results) from (the difference of) place, (we say) not so, on account of (all adjuncts) being within (all places).

A further argument is given to show that, though Brahman cannot be differentiated by the *upādhis*, yet as these *upādhis* are connected with distinct places in Brahman, confusion of the results of actions would be averted. The *sūtra* refutes this view. As the *upādhis* move here and there, all places get connected with all *upādhis*, and so this confusion cannot be averted. Moreover, the pain or joy connected with any particular place will affect the whole of Brahman, as It is one.

This and the previous two *sūtras* refute the view of those who hold the absolute unity of Brahman.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

'Māyā and Avidyā in the Brahma-Sūtra' is the fourth in the series of scholarly articles on *māyā* and *avidyā* that is being contributed by Professor Surendranath Bhattacharya, M.A., formerly of Bihar National College, Patna. . . .

The essence of the *Gītā* teaching is that the perception of the Ātman in everyone should form the basis of all human conduct, and not hedonism or utilitarianism, and not even altruism, though noble in itself at a particular level. This is the theme of the article on 'The *Gītā* as a Guide to Human Conduct' by Swami Kirtidananda, who is closely associated with the publication of *Prabudda Bharata*. . . .

Śrī Rāmānuja, the great philosopher-saint of India, upholds the ideals of *bhakti* and *prapatti*, devotion and self-surrender, for the man who aspires after God-realization. According to him, *bhakti* succeeds the twofold training of the mind by *karma* and *jñāna*. 'The Meaning of Bhakti in the Philosophy of Rāmānuja' is the subject of a learned discussion by Dr. Anima Sen Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., of Patna University. . . .

The essence of mystical religion is the blessedness of the soul in communion with God. Mystics all over the world vouch for this experience of the soul. In the West, there were several mystics both among the pre-Christian philosophers and among the Christian saints. Sri Anthony Elenjittam, of Bombay, makes in his informative article a very devout study of the 'Christian Religion at Its Mystical Heights'. . . .

Vedāntic idealism holds the view that the contradictions that we notice in the world are a 'play of Māyā', whereas Marxian materialism explains that contradictions are the results of the 'dialectical process'. But an underlying assumption common to both is that contradictions are woven into the very texture of the

universe. These views of 'Vedāntic Idealism and Marxian Materialism' have been compared and contrasted in a brief but interesting article by Sri R. Prabhakar, Lecturer in History, Government Arts College, Ootacamund.

THE BIRTH OF A NEW ERA

The fresh impetus that the study of material science got in the West during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly in the seventeenth century, 'the great century of Galileo and Newton', is a landmark in the history of humanity. In the centuries following, science has made rapid advance in its various branches, leading to the rise of what is known as modern science. Our own twentieth century marks the climax of the progress made by science so far. It is *the* age of science. Today, there is no notable country, either in the West or the East, which has not felt the impact of modern science in some form or other. The influence of science can be seen everywhere in some aspect of life.

Modern science, at the present moment, has come to mean for man two things in general. On the material plane, it has become symbolic of plenty and prosperity. Today, science and technology are synonymous with improved living conditions, high standard of life, increased income, and more leisure; diverse forms of recreation, sports, and amenities; better health and better opportunities for, and easy accessibility to, the acquisition of knowledge. On the intellectual plane, modern science signifies the triumph of reason over faith and belief. This is the bright era that has been ushered in by modern science.

But a brighter and a more glorious era is yet to dawn on mankind. The creation of this new era is not the work of science. Indeed, this era begins where the era of science has finished its task. The creation of this new era has been necessitated by the limitations and short-comings

of modern science, or rather, because of the failure of man to recognize the limitations of science and to make proper use of the remarkable achievements of modern science and the benefits it has conferred on him. Two of the greatest contributions of modern science to the well-being of man are the scientific method with its special emphasis on reason for finding out the truth and the invention of the speedier means of communication, travel, and transport. But, unfortunately, man has failed to take the real advantage of both these contributions; on the contrary, he has put them to wrong service. The scientific method is greatly efficacious in ridding religion of its superstition and dogmatism and in purifying it to that extent. Thus far is its usefulness and no further. But modern science, while it has carried out this part of the job fairly effectively, has shown an inclination to throw the baby away with the bath-tub. Consequently, religion has come to be regarded as an unnecessary encumbrance on man, and materialism has gained supremacy in his thoughts. This tendency on the part of man has persisted, in spite of the efforts of many leading scientists themselves to counteract it. So also the quick means of travel and communication have brought the people of different nations closer geographically, economically, and politically, but they have not been able to bring them together emotionally. The physical proximity has made the distinctive features glaringly visible, so much so that man is unable to notice the common thread of human aspirations and divine nature running through the whole of humanity. And that is why hatred, suspicion, superciliousness, and intolerance still rule the hearts of men.

The new era that is in the making should be free from all these defects, and it can be free from them only when man recognizes the intrinsic divine nature that is inherent in every soul and the spiritual oneness of all existence. The new era must enable man to regard himself as both rational and spiritual. And in the creation of this new era, the responsibility of religious men

and philosophers is the greatest. So it was in the fitness of things that an International Conference of Philosophers was held last August, in Mysore, under the joint auspices of the International Institute of Philosophy, which has its headquarters in Paris, and the Indian Philosophical Congress. Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India and himself an eminent philosopher, who presided over the conference, briefly outlined the features of this new era that is in the process of being born and emphasized the role of philosophers in its creation. 'They were all participating', he said in the course of his address, 'in the birth of a new era, in the formation of a new society which would have diversity without discord and distinctiveness without any kind of hostility. Political and economic arrangements alone would not be able to bring about this new order. As a matter of fact, science was speaking universal language, and people in the East were looking to science and technology as something which would relieve them of cramping toil and drudgery. The East and the West were relative terms. In the East, they had different cultures with their own distinctive pattern. So also they had in the West. Recent developments in the West were in science and technology, and these had given rise to the impression that the East is backward, unscientific, and metaphysically minded, while the West was progressive in character. These characterizations were misleading, and they might have some validity if one confined oneself to the developments during the last 300 or 400 years. If they took a long historical review, they would find that in the East there were eminent scientists and great religious leaders. Science, which was said to be a distinctive characteristic of the West, and religion, as the characteristic of the East, were to be regarded as the essential aspects not merely of every culture, but of every human individual. He had in him a rational side and a spiritual side also. The two things were the aspects of every human being.

'Latterly, they had revolts against philosophy represented by positivism and existentialism.

One was motivated by science, and the other was motivated by religious quest. The two things were complementary aspects. We cannot have mere reason without vision. We therefore require that the two sides should go together.

'It was essential for any kind of philosopher to be both rational and spiritual—to be both positivist and existentialist. He must be a full whole man. He must have reason to apply to certain experiences which were offered. All their knowledge proceeded on faith, hope, and trust. . . . Man was incomplete as he was. The

human being had in him the spark of the Divine, and unless they recognized this, they could not account for the marvellous progress they had achieved so far. Each one of them had to regard himself as both rational and spiritual. He (Dr. Radhakrishnan) had no doubt that the conference would discuss all these matters and help them to establish the foundation of a new world order' (Quoted from *The Hindu*, August 30, 1959).

Not only the philosophers, but all thinking men in every field of activity have to strive to usher in this new world order.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SAMBANDHA-VĀRTIKA OF SUREŚVARĀ-CĀRYA. EDITED, WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION, INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND EXTRACTS FROM THREE UNPUBLISHED COMMENTARIES, BY T. M. P. MAHADEVAN, M.A., PH.D. *Published by the University of Madras, Madras. 1958. Pages xxvi + 611. Price Rs. 25.*

Advaita philosophy has the good fortune of enlisting to its cause some of the best philosophical minds in India and abroad. And it is quite in line with this that we have the present valuable work from the pen of Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, well known everywhere for his thorough grasp of his subject, both Eastern and Western.

As the tradition goes, Sureśvarācārya was a direct disciple of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, and he wrote his *Vārtika* on the commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* by his Master. The *Vārtika* is a voluminous work in verses; and the *Sambandha-vārtika*, which constitutes its introductory portion, is but a tenth of the whole work, and has no less than 1,137 verses.

The *Sambandha-vārtika* was first translated by Sri S. Venkataramana Aiyar and published in *The Pandit*, and was reprinted in 1905 by Messrs Lazarus & Co. But this work had few explanatory notes, without which it is difficult to follow the verses dealing with philosophical problems and couched in terse metrical sentences. The present work has removed this defect by adding explanations to almost all the

texts, and quoting from three commentaries. The translation is faithful and lucid, and with the help of the explanations the reader can easily grasp the ideas. Sureśvara is often quoted by his successors, and his works are greatly honoured by all students of Vedānta. He was one of the oldest master-builders who raised the glorious structure of Advaita Vedānta.

The book derives its name from the *sambandha* or relation it establishes between the two sections of the Vedas on rituals and knowledge. By a thorough analysis, Sureśvara refutes the views of those Mimāṃsakas and pseudo-Vedāntins who would combine rituals with knowledge for the purpose of bringing about liberation. All shades of opinion come under his scrutiny, and are totally rejected. His final view is that knowledge alone can remove ignorance and lead to *mokṣa*, which is not, however, different from the Self. Incidentally, he also clears our ideas about the Self, cognition, cognizer, liberation, etc.

The volume is a valuable contribution to the Advaita literature in English.

S. G.

THE ABSOLUTE BEING. BY JORGE TALLET. TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY BEVERLY THURMAN AND THE AUTHOR. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16. 1958. Pages 74. Price \$ 3.00.*

Since the Vedic times in India, and since the time of Plato in the West, there have been many varieties of absolutism. Even the realist system of the Vaiśe-

ṣika argued for the universal concept of Being (*sattā sāmānya*); and Maṇḍana argued for *mahāsattā*. The absolutist is wedded to the reality of his concept of Being; and Being, consequently, is both an epistemological fact and an ontological reality in such a system. During this century, however, there are many reactions against the Absolute. And it is therefore heartening to find the voice of Tallet from Cuba arguing for the reality of the absolute Being.

This brief monograph is in five sections, and it is planned to make the reader reconsider the traditional systems of thought. The definitive reason of existence, he argues, is total Existence or absolute Being. It is a unity of infinite possibilities, among which some may be completely or nearly actualized. Some of these actualized possibilities make up our phenomenal universe. This phenomenal or subjective system of manifestations enables us to construct mentally a probable inferential system, which is capable of taking us to the absolute Being. Both Being and non-Being make up the absolute Being. Reality thus is a coherent system. In explaining this position, Tallet has proceeded systematically avoiding all references to, and controversies with, others. The monograph is sketchy, but illuminating.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

THOUGHTS FOR TIMES LIKE THESE. BY S. RALPH HARLOW. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16 1957. Pages 181. Price \$ 3.00.*

Human history appears to be moving in curved lines, falling and rising, having its own rhythmic cadences, as spiritual and material values came to overthrow one another. As science and technology advanced, or as human liberty was thwarted by unequal socio-economic factors, materialism captivated the minds of the people. Since crass materialism moves on the road to the ego-centric predicament, a few enlightened souls have come forward propagating the spiritual values. But there are two varieties here. One group consists of those truly enlightened souls who do not distinguish one traditional religion from another. The other group is peopled by partisans of some one specific religion. Now, Mr. Harlow endeavours in this book to apply the Judeo-Christian ethic to some of our modern problems in social relations, politics, and religion. In the thirty-five chapters of this work, he acts like a missionary. Thanks to his zeal, he does not allow his mind to stray outside Judaism and Christianity. Each chapter reads like a sermon from the pulpit based on some biblical passage or other which is given at the beginning.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

LET ASIA SPEAK. BY D. N. ROY. *Published by*

Oriental Book Company, 56, Mirzapur Street, Calcutta-9. Pages 375. Price Rs. 6.

Volumes have been written and spoken on the benefits (!) of colonialism. Apologists have waxed eloquent on them. French colonialists sing the paean of 'mission civilizzatore'; the British, of 'the white man's burden'; and the German, of 'Kultur'. But resurgent Africa and Asia, the happy hunting ground of the Western colonial powers till the other day, have a different tale to tell, a tale of poverty, of ignorance, and of the denial of the fundamental human rights. It is, in a word, a black saga of 'man's inhumanity to man'.

Western colonialism, motivated by greed and power-lust in the main, has done more harm than good to humanity at large. In the volume under review, Dr. D. N. Roy successfully refutes the contention of the advocates of colonialism. He quotes chapters and verses from the writings of eminent scholars and experts to show that Asia in the East, the horizon from where the sun rises, is the cradle of human civilization. The Western impact submerged her. Reduced to slavery, impotence, and helplessness, she sank deeper and deeper into degeneration and degradation. Untold miseries and sufferings were her lot

But Asia and Africa are fully awake today. Resurgent Asia and Africa are on the march. They will know no rest till the last bastion of colonialism and imperialism has been washed off by the rising tide of nationalism. Colonialism has been liquidated in many places in Asia and Africa. In others, it is fighting a last-ditch battle. Europe is being steadily pushed back to her natural frontiers.

We congratulate the learned author and his publishers for a timely and valuable publication.

PROF. S. B. MOOKHERJI

EVIL WROUGHT BY THE ENGLISH MEDIUM. BY M. K. GANDHI. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pages 51. Price As. 4.*

As the publisher's note says, the brochure under review is a selection from Gandhiji's writings on the medium of instruction in India. It is now universally admitted that education must be imparted through the mother tongue of the learner. Gandhiji wrote thirty-one years ago: 'It (the foreign medium) has sapped the energy of the nation; it has shortened the lives of the pupils. It has estranged them from the masses. It has made education unnecessarily expensive. If this process is still persisted in, it bids fair to rob the nation of its soul. The sooner, therefore, educated India shakes itself free from the hypnotic spell of the foreign medium, the better it

would be for them and the people' (*Young India*, 5th July 1928).

To read Gandhi is as ennobling an experience as it was to hear him when he was in our midst. The

editors of selections from Gandhi have been rendering a great service to the nation and to humanity at large

PROF. S. B. MOOKHERJI

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE VEDANTA SOCIETY, ST. LOUIS, U.S.A. REPORT FOR 1958

Sunday Services: Swami Satprakashananda, Head of the Vedanta Society, St. Louis, spoke on different religious and philosophical subjects in the Society's chapel. Groups of students from Washington University, the University of Missouri, Lindenwood College, Concordia Seminary, the United Hebrew Temple, and the Shaare Emeth Temple attended the services. They were accompanied by their teachers. Swami Akhilananda of Boston and Swami Ritajananda of New York were guest speakers on May 18 and July 20 respectively. The lectures were suspended during the hot season for six weeks. The total number of Sunday lectures was forty-five.

Meditation and Discourses: Every Tuesday evening the Swami conducted a meditation and gave a discourse on the Upaniṣads. The *Svetāśvatara*, the *Kēna*, and the *Muṇḍaka* were taken up successively during the year. Students from different religious and educational centres attended the meetings. The Swami answered questions after the talk. The total number of Tuesday classes was forty

Occasional Lectures and Discourses: The Swami was invited to speak on Hindu religion and philosophy at the following places: (1) The First Presbyterian Church of Ferguson, Mo.; (2) Concordia Seminary (Theological College); (3) Ladue Chapel, Clayton, Missouri. Questions were answered by him on each occasion.

About eighty senior students of the Riverview Gardens High School, accompanied by their teacher, visited the Vedanta Society as a part of their education programme for studying major religions. A special meeting was arranged for them in the Society's chapel. The Swami spoke on the main tenets of the Hindu religion and answered questions.

Anniversaries: To celebrate the birthdays of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Christ, Śaṅkarācārya, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and such festive occasions as the worship of the Divine Mother Durgā, Thanks-giving Day, Christmas Eve, and Good Friday, special meditation, worship, and devotional services were conducted.

Library: The lending library was well utilized by

the members and friends of the Society. More than one hundred books were received as gifts.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION KHAR, BOMBAY

REPORT FOR 1957 AND 1958

The activities of the Mission during the years under review were as follows:

Religious and Cultural: Besides the daily worship at the Ashrama shrine, and observance of the birthdays of the great saints and prophets belonging to different religions, scriptural classes were conducted by the Swamis at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, Dadar, Bombay, on Saturdays, and at the Ramakrishna Mission, Khar, Bombay, on Sundays.

Educational: (a) *Students' Home:* Eighty students, studying in colleges and university, were admitted during 1957-58. Scriptural classes were held by the Swamis for the boys, and moral instruction was given by the superintendent of the Home.

(b) *Shivananda Library and Free Reading Room:* The library contains more than 8,000 books on philosophy, literature, science, history, ethics, etc., and the reading room receives 70 dailies and other periodicals in English, Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, and Tamil.

Medical: The Charitable Hospital: Total number of patients treated: outdoor: homoeopathic section: 1957: 1,66,979; 1958: 1,34,692; allopathic section: 1957: 45,347; 1958: 31,102; Ayurvedic section: 1957: 11,487; 1958: 11,900; indoor: 1957: 51; 1958: 25; pathological department: 1957: 810; 1958: 914; X-ray department: 1957: 9,317; 1958: 5,046; major operations: 1957: 12; 1958: 8; minor operations: 1957: 2,071; 1958: 2,444.

Philanthropic: Relief Work: Villagers, affected by the 1956 earthquake in Anjar and the surrounding areas of Kutch, were resettled in 1957 in three newly constructed villages. Financial aid was given in 1957 to the flood relief work in West Bengal and Andhra, and for scarcity relief in East Pakistan.

29,779 lb. and 18,900 lb. of powdered milk received from CARE and UNICEF were distributed to 2,480 and 1,500 children and poor adults respectively in 1957 and 1958.