

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Vol. LXV

JUNE 1960

No. 6



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

January 28, 1930

Mahapurush Maharaj was relating to K— Maharaj how he had lived with Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) in the hills. Then he (K— Maharaj) expressed a desire to go to Dakshineswar. At this Mahapurushji said: 'Yes, why not? That indeed is Jerusalem, Varanasi, Kailasa, and all that to us. The ground on which the *bilva* tree stands, the room where the Master lived, and the Panchavati are all places vibrant with life and inspiration.' Saying this, he lost himself in meditation. Then he continued: 'Go there and sit down to meditate and pray for a while; this is an auspicious day, it being Tuesday and the fourteenth day of the moon.'

January 31, 1930

It was the birthday of Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda). Mahapurushji clapped his hands as he uttered, 'Victory to Maharaj'. The talk turned to the last days of Maharaj, when he had visions about the truth that lay behind his human personality. 'The Master had declared long ago', said Mahapurushji, 'that he (Maharaj) will no longer continue

in this body when he comes to know who he really is. And in the last days, it happened exactly as the Master had predicted. He kept on saying: "Here is Kṛṣṇa standing on the lotus. Tie me with anklets" (so that I may dance with Kṛṣṇa). He went on in this strain, revealing many more facts of the state of his divine communion.'

February 2, 1930

There came a boy who wanted to give up his study and become a monk. He had failed in his school final examination. 'It is good to continue your study,' said Mahapurushji, addressing the boy, 'else, what will you do after becoming a monk—only collecting handfuls of rice from door to door or subscriptions for the poor? There are greater works for the Master than these, which you will be unable to undertake. It will be better if you study further. The Master liked education. With regard to the boys who came to him after passing the high school examination, the First Arts examination, or the Bachelor of Arts examination, he would say that they would gain success easily, for they would be able to fix their minds on

God more quickly, as they had made long efforts for concentrating their minds on their studies. They would be at an advantage if they would direct that attention towards God. But he added this also, "The passing of an examination is a 'pās' (i.e. bondage). It is not merely getting success in an examination, but forging one more fetter also". And yet he liked the boys who were educated, though the boys much advanced in discrimination, renunciation, faith, and love belonged to a class by themselves. Those that have these virtues do not roam about hither and thither; they lose themselves in *japa* and other spiritual practices. You have had your *mantra*. Now merge yourself in *japa* etc.'

February 3, 1930

Today is Sarasvatī *pūjā*. . . . Some devotees from the north-western parts had come. Asked by them, Mahapurushji said: 'Even if a thousand duties intervene, or happiness or sorrow comes, or good or bad befalls, one should lay oneself completely at the feet of the Lord twice during the day, or at least once. One must pray; everything will take the right course if only one prays to Him. Through His grace, one can get knowledge, devotion, and everything else, and the good tendencies grow and develop, while the bad tendencies recede. At last, both good and bad depart. It is like removing one thorn from the body with another. "The Lord accepts neither any vice of anybody nor any virtue".'

February 4, 1930

'I never lived in the midst of activities,' Mahapurushji said to a monk, 'and so I have not developed the knack of saying or writing to anyone the right thing at the right moment in the right manner.' When a devotee from Shillong told him of the moods of dejection that he suffered from, he said: 'As to that, my son, it will constantly be there as a natural consequence, the mind having its ebbs and flows, good and bad. In spite of this, take refuge in Him and pray to Him; then you will

get peace, though happiness and sorrow will occur for ever as a matter of course.'

February 5, 1930

Early in the morning, Mahapurushji was pacing up and down in the upper veranda, overlooking the Gaṅgā, in a very happy mood. When some monks from South India came to salute him, he said: 'I cannot walk. The body is invalid. Never mind, I am happy. I have realized that Pūrṇam, the infinite One, by the grace of Sri Guru Maharaj (the most venerable Master).' Then he chanted:

*Om pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ pūrṇāt
pūrṇamudacyate;*

*Pūrṇasya, pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāva-
śisyate.*

[Om. That (Brahman) is infinite, and this universe is infinite. The infinite proceeds from the infinite. Then (through knowledge) taking the infinite of the infinite (universe), it remains as the infinite (Brahman) alone.] And he added: 'By the grace of our Blessed Lord, you will also realize that infinite One; in fact, you have realized, you are realizing, and you will realize more. You all will know that great Truth—you who have come under the protecting wings of Sri Rānakrishna.'

February 6, 1930

It was early in the morning. Mahapurushji was singing in a sweet voice: 'Mother Kālī, you became Kṛṣṇa to dance at the *rāsa* at Vṛndāvana.' He stopped to remark: 'Ramprasad was a poet with a spiritual depth. His language corresponds to his high ideas. The historians have given him his rightful place in the Bengali literature. The Master realized Mother Kālī through the songs of Ramprasad. He used to say: "Mother, you revealed yourself to Ramprasad and Kamalakanta; would you not reveal yourself to me?" It is said that Ramprasad saw Mother Kālī in the image of Kṛṣṇa at Varanasi, which inspired him to write this song.'

February 8, 1930

When it was reported to Mahapurushji that a certain monk had undertaken hard austerities, he said: 'God cannot be realized through sacrifices, austerities, charity, or study of the Vedas; "By him alone is He realized, whom He chooses, and on whom He showers His grace". But, of course, there is the other side: "This Self is not to be realized by the weak"—the weak, the feeble-hearted cannot realize Him. In the *Gītā* also, there are teachings like this; for the relation between the *Gītā* and the Upaniṣads is stated thus: "The Upaniṣads are like cows; Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the milker; Arjuna is the calf; the intelligent people are the enjoyers of the milk; and the great nectar of the *Gītā* is the milk."'

Noticing a book in Mahapurushji's hands, when somebody wanted to know what it was, he said: '*Caṇḍī*. Last night, when I could not have any sleep, this verse came repeatedly to my mind: "This gracious Mother becomes the cause of people's release when She becomes favourably disposed." When that Goddess becomes well pleased, She grants the boon of release. That is why I am reading the verse over again in the morning.'

February 13, 1930

A monk: 'When does one's mind become one's *guru*?'

Mahapurush Maharaj: 'When that happens, the mind itself will know, and so it will tell the aspirant—that is the state beyond all doubt.' With folded hands, he added: "'My God is within me", this is the conviction that dawns on one. The *Gītā* lays great emphasis on personal effort: "One should save oneself by oneself; one should not deprave oneself. For it is oneself alone that is one's own friend or foe." Save yourself by yourself; never get dejected. The self is the friend of the self, and the self is the foe of the self. The word "self" here stands for the mind, intellect, etc. That is what is meant.'

When a monk stood up after bowing down to his feet, he asked: 'How are you?' "Bliss is in the infinite alone; there is no bliss in the

limited." Know it for a truth, my son, that happiness lies in the infinite alone; the finite cannot offer any true happiness.'

February 15, 1930

A— Maharaj had returned from a visit to the sites of archaeological interest at Rajgir and Nalanda. The talk drifted to Buddha's life, and Mahapurushji remarked: 'What renunciation and what compassion! Buddha said: "I do not want wife, son, or kingdom; I want truth." How beautiful! But all this is nothing but the play of the Mother of the universe. It is that cosmic Power that came down as Buddha, and it is She again that has appeared as Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. An incarnation is but a partial manifestation of Hers; She alone is the Infinite. This whole universe is contained in a mere part of Hers. A part of Hers has descended this time as Her incarnation; so the world is bound to be benefited. What Swamiji foretold is absolutely true; you have got to admit that. Engage yourselves in meditation—all of you. Good is bound to come by Her grace. Meditate on Her with the best wishes for all.' When the talk turned to the condition of the country, he said: 'God alone knows how things will improve and in what way. Poverty, want of unity, and wants of various kinds are there—not five men can unite for a common cause; that being so, He alone knows how the future will be shaped. As for the Master, he never worried himself about these problems. He would say, "It is all Mother's wish". He made Swamiji think of these problems; and Swamiji, too, has chalked out the path after mature thinking. The patriotism of Swamiji has descended on Gandhiji. Gandhiji's character is a model for all to imitate. Peace will be truly ensured when men of his type are born in every country.'

Asked about his health, he replied: 'My body has become invalid. But by the grace of the Master and the mercy of the Mother, I have still my speech; not only that, I have the power to think of God as well. Yes, that is sufficient-

ly present. That is enough, that is bliss. Let the body go if it wants.' The talk again turned to the condition of the country. 'What is wanted', he said, 'is love, love, love; sympathy, sympathy, sympathy.'

February 17, 1930

Mahapurushji was in conversation with Brahmachari Kedula of America, who said: 'My mother is very active, her motto being, "No work, no food".' Mahapurushji added: 'That is the same in our case as well. One must do something, be it meditation, *japa*, worship,

study, service to others, or some such thing. It is against Swamiji's principle to feed people who idle away their time.' Just then, Miss MacLeod came in, and the talk turned to the problem of supply of water and irrigation in Bengal. At last, Miss MacLeod said: 'Mr. Wilcox (an engineer) is coming. I am going to the Great Eastern Hotel. Yesterday, I had a splendid interview with the Governor. Wilcox is seventy-five. Just think of his age! Bless me.' Mahapurushji blessed her by putting his hand on her head.

THE GOAL OF LIFE

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I

The world is not a pandemonium. It is the God's world. There is perfect order in it. All life has a purpose. Man and nature each fulfil a definite purpose. In the vast scheme of the universe, which seems mysterious to us, there is perfect harmony, order, and regularity. From the God's point of view, there is neither disorder nor discord in this world. Confusion and contradiction are seen only from the point of view of the world. They are apparent, not real. In God's plan, every aspect of life has a predetermined role, the ultimate goal for each one of them being to reach the centre of the grand design, the Designer Himself. That is the goal towards which all are wending their way, consciously or unconsciously.

In this long procession, man occupies a unique position because of his psycho-spiritual development. Amongst all the forms of life, man stands nearest to God. Man is made in the image of God. In him, as he is, God's glory is manifest in a greater degree. One who

becomes fully awakened spiritually, manifesting God-consciousness to the fullest degree, becomes verily divine. The scriptures declare that the knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman. To attain that state is the supreme goal of life. Man is nearest to it. He is most competent to reach it. He has the requisite equipment in him for undertaking this spiritual pilgrimage, and is assured of success. The Upaniṣads hold out the promise that it is in the human heart that the reflection of God, the perception of Truth, becomes clearest and most distinct, like the reflection in a spotless mirror—*yathādarśe tathātmani* (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II.3.5). Human body is spoken of as the house of God, *devālaya*, 'the tabernacle of the Holy Spirit'.

All the religions of the world recognize the greatness of human life. Its glory is sung in all the scriptures. Human birth is a unique opportunity afforded to the soul in its spiritual evolution. The heart of man is the most suitable instrument for the understanding of Truth. The scriptures say that human birth becomes

possible by the grace of God. It presupposes the acquisition of great merit by the soul. It is in human birth that its progress towards spiritual emancipation becomes quickened, and by intense application it can attain its final goal. Such a rare privilege as human life therefore should not be wasted and lived wantonly. It should be put to the best service, and the highest that it is capable of should be accomplished with a sense of urgency. It is a thousand pities if man were to forget the real goal of his life and run after the mundane pleasures. Śaṅkarācārya significantly says: 'What greater fool is there than the man who, having obtained a rare human body, neglects to achieve the real end (liberation) of this life?' (*Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, 5).

In the evolutionary process, man has attained the apogee. He is the finest fruit on the tree of evolution. The soul, in its march towards God, reaches the penultimate stage in man, from where begins the final assault on the summit of God. Man perfected attains the divine status, when his moral sense becomes perfectly refined and his spiritual consciousness becomes identified with the universal divine Consciousness. Such a one is indeed a god-man, far above the ordinary run of men who labour under the shackles of ignorance of their divine essence. That being so, there is variety even among men, in their spiritual evolution. At one end of the chain stands the unregenerate man, wallowing in the sense-world, little removed from the subhuman species, and at the other end stands the god-man, the man of realization, rising far above the urges of the senses and reflecting the grandeur of divine beauty.

II

Man is in essence nothing but the spirit. His spiritual consciousness is dormant because of want of proper knowledge. Knowledge of the spirit or Self is to be had from the men of realization and from the scriptures. Having received that knowledge and intellectually grasped the nature of Truth, man should realize it

in his own life by strenuous spiritual practice. It is practice that leads to perfection and gives complete understanding of Truth. He who is fully awakened lives in the consciousness of the spirit. He becomes identified with all. 'He sees his own Self in all beings and all beings in his own Self; everywhere he sees the same' (*Gītā*, VI.29). He becomes one with all; he attains *sarvātmabhāva*. All barriers that create the notions of individuality and separateness fall off from him. He realizes that he is no other than the universal Spirit, which is the real basis of all manifold manifestation. He realizes that, in truth, it is the infinite, all-pervading Spirit that lives and functions in all forms of life; that without it nothing can live even for a moment; and that because of its presence everywhere, all activity in nature goes on in a regular manner.

The spirit alone has absolute reality. All else is merely an appearance, and has only a relative reality. There is no object or place where the spirit is not. It is ubiquitous. No life can remain without it. It is working in and through every object in the universe, animate or inanimate, organic or inorganic. The spirit alone is the ultimate truth of things. Matter is a myth. The life of the spirit is the true life. The life of matter is a delusion. The one knows no joy or sorrow, no happiness or misery. The other is beset with them. Rather, real joy is only in the spirit, which is infinite, says the Upaniṣad. There is no real joy in the finite objects of this world. Names and forms, after which man runs, are the characteristics of the world. They are not permanent. They come and go, and are liable to change. The underlying, unchanging reality behind them all is the spirit. The spirit is the warp and the woof of the fabric of the panorama of this entire creation.

To know its true nature, in its very essence, is the goal of life. Brahman or the universal Spirit, which is infinite, absolute, and one without a second, must be realized. It is Brahman that is the spiritual basis for both man and nature. To realize Brahman is tantamount to

knowing the truth about oneself, the real nature of the Self or Ātman. Ātman is identical with Brahman. Know thyself (*ātmanam viddhi*), that is the final exhortation of our scriptures. Sense-bound man must raise himself up gradually and evolve further to reach the acme of spiritual perfection. Man should become divine, radiating a spiritual aura around him. That is the purpose of all religious endeavour. That is the aim of all spiritual practice.

III

Physical pleasures and material happiness are fugitive. They come and go, bringing joy and sorrow alternately. When joy comes, man becomes elated, and when sorrow comes, he becomes dejected. All the hopes and joys of this world are evanescent. They do not give permanent peace or happiness to man. Mutability is the characteristic of this world. That is why it is called *jagat*, that which is mutable, ever changing. The whole of creation is undergoing constant and continuous change. Everything in it is subject to the sixfold mutation, known as *ṣaḍvikāra*, to wit, existence, birth, growth, transformation, decay, and death. Nothing that belongs to creation can escape this sixfold transmutation.

The realm of the mutable is ever fleeting. There is nothing permanent in its outer form. That which is impermanent cannot endure. It is unreal, *asat*. That which is unreal, which is non-existent, cannot reveal itself. It is steeped in darkness, *tamas*. The world is groping in darkness so far as the self-effulgent Reality is concerned. Death, *mṛtyu*, is the end of all that is born. Death shadows life. To conquer death means to conquer life also. Conquest of death leads to eternal life, where there is neither birth nor death. Man should seek to go beyond the region of *asat*, *tamas*, and *mṛtyu*. One of the grandest prayers of the Upaniṣads echoes this sentiment thus: 'From unreal lead me to real; from darkness lead me to light; from death lead me to immortality' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I.3.28).

To seek the real, which is self-revealing and

immortal, man is required to turn his back on the unreal objects of this world. He must turn his attention away from the things of the world and fix it on their spiritual basis, whose essential characteristics are *asti* (absolute existence), *bhāti* (self-revealing or self-consciousness), and *priya* (supremely enjoyable). The created world, finite and limited, cannot enlighten man about the uncreated Reality, boundless and infinite. When he realizes the futility of running after the world and its objects, he turns his back on them. He resorts to renunciation, *tyāga* or *vairāgya*. He withdraws himself from them, directs his search inwards (*āvṛttacakṣu*), and treads the path of renunciation (*nivṛtti-mārga*). His journey ends when he reaches the 'Truth of truth' and 'Light of lights' (*satyasya satyam, jyotiṣām jyotiḥ*), which is infinite (*pūrṇa*) and immortal (*amṛta*).

This turning point marks the beginning of genuine spiritual endeavour. That opens the gateway to true religious life. Everything other than this is mere child's play in the name of religion, without any intrinsic worth in it. Religious life of the right sort grows on one-pointed devotion to Truth or God. One-pointed attention can develop only when the mind becomes totally dispassionate with regard to the things of the world. Total dispassion is the necessary condition for the growth of devotion to God. 'Where there is *kāma* (desire), there is no Rāma (God)', says a well-known saint. Full concentration of the mind and complete devotion to God are possible only when the distractions of the world disappear from the mind of man. Success in this results from constant and earnest application, *abhyāsa*. *Abhyāsa* and *vairāgya* strengthen the spiritual fibre of the man of religion and lead him on the right royal road to the realization of God, which is the true goal of life.

Religious life is an adventure. It demands a heroic spirit on the part of man. The weakling or the feeble-minded cannot tread the spiritual path. It is only the hero that faces the challenge of life and death. Religion offers the greatest challenge to man. It chal-

lenges him to see the hollowness of the world. It challenges him to give up all that he holds near and dear to himself. No sacrifice is great for it. It demands the supreme sacrifice, namely, the sacrificial offering of man himself at the altar of God. The limited man, with his finite ego, must sacrifice himself before he can have a rebirth in spiritual knowledge, when he has the continuous consciousness of the unlimited nature of his essential being, which is one with the eternal, universal Being, which is Truth, which is God.

IV

The spiritual evolution of the human soul is a slow process. It is marked by stages, in each of which the success achieved up to the point is stabilized and made sure. Every stage in this evolution should prove to be the spring-board for the next stage. The progress is gradual, from the gross to the subtle, from the less subtle to the more subtle, and then, finally, to the most subtle. From the physical plane, man should lift himself to the moral plane and acquire all the moral excellences, which lay a sound foundation for a truly spiritual life. Moral perfection is the condition prerequisite for spiritual life. 'One who has not desisted from bad conduct, whose senses are not under control, whose mind is not concentrated, whose mind is not free from anxiety, cannot attain this Self through knowledge' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I.2.24). Man should be moral first before he takes to the spiritual path. In this, all religions, all saints and prophets speak in one voice, without exception. Anything said or done contrary to this accepted code of religious life is a negation not only of the moral life, but of the spiritual life as well.

The mind of man should be purged of all impurities to enable it to grasp subtle things. It is only in the purified heart that the reflection of Self or God becomes clear and complete. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' The man of the senses, whose mind is attached to the gross physical world, cannot perceive the subtle truth of things. Spiritual

practice renders our perception subtle, *sūkṣma*. It is the men of the spirit that become sensitive to the workings of subtle nature. 'By the seers of subtle things, the Self is seen through a pointed and fine intellect' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I.3.12).

Spiritual life opens the gateway to Truth. It leads to the realization of God. Every religion, Eastern or Western, stresses that earnest spiritual endeavour is indispensable to the realization of God. The aim of all religions is to lead man by the hand and show him the light of Truth. All the religions warn man against the dangers and pitfalls that he has to encounter in his spiritual pilgrimage. They prescribe methods by which he can avoid the pitfalls and overcome the difficulties and dangers on the way. Suitable to the moral, mental, and spiritual equipment and competence of diverse aspirants, religion provides several methods. The expression of religious life may vary from individual to individual, but the goal of all is one and the same. The essence of all forms of religion is the same. Their aim is one, namely, the manifestation of the divine that is latent in man.

V

The sages of India, who have fathomed the depths of religious life in all directions, in all its forms, have classified spiritual endeavour into four main modes or paths: *jñāna-mārga* (the way of knowledge), *bhakti-mārga* (the way of devotion), *karma-mārga* (the way of action), and *yoga-mārga* (the way of psychic control). Man can reach his goal through devotion, meritorious action, and intellectual contemplation, by one, or more, or all of these. In truth, they are not exclusive of each other. Indeed, they can be practised by one and the same person simultaneously for an all-round, integrated growth of his spiritual life.

It is well known that human personality, his psychic being, is made up of three strands, the emotional, the volitional, and the cognitive. The differences among men are accounted for by the predominance of one or the other of

these aspects in every individual. In one, the emotional aspect predominates; in the second, the volitional; and in the third, the cognitive. So to suit these diverse temperaments, and to provide for the spiritual development of each according to his need, Indian spiritual leaders and scriptures have formulated the paths referred to above. Every aspirant is asked to go by the path that suits best his individual temperament and taste. No one should do anything contrary to his mental make-up, or go against the grain of his inner being. This is particularly emphasized. Hence has come to vogue in spiritual parlance what is known as *adhikāravāda*, or the theory of spiritual competence of individual persons.

The traditional discipline that is prescribed for the *jñāna-yogin* is known as *sādhana-catustaya*, a fourfold spiritual practice. The God of the *jñāna-yogin* is an impersonal God. He is the Self of all and the essence of everything. He is designated as Sat-Cit-Ānanda, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. He is the universal Spirit, Brahman, whose nature has already been discussed in greater detail in the foregoing sections. The *sādhana-catustaya* are: (1) Discrimination between the real and the unreal—a firm conviction should grow in the mind of the aspirant that Brahman alone is real and the universe, with all its diverse manifestations, is unreal. (2) Aversion to the enjoyment of fruits of one's actions here and hereafter—there should be a complete cessation of all desires for the gross sense-pleasures obtainable in this world or the subtle enjoyments attainable in heaven etc. Dispassion should be absolute. (3) Acquisition of the six forms of moral virtues—calmness, self-control, self-withdrawal, forbearance, faith in the words of the *guru* and the scriptures, and self-settledness. (4) Yearning for *mukti*—spiritual emancipation by realizing one's true nature.

Being fully imbued with the spirit of *sādhana-catustaya*, the aspirant approaches the spiritual teacher and hears from his lips the *mahāvākyas*, sacred dicta, which enlighten him regarding

the truth about himself. After hearing them (*śravaṇa*), he resorts to *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyāsana* (meditation), which lead him on to the realization of the Self. By knowing the Self, everything in this world becomes known. The veil that hides the self-effulgent Spirit is pierced through, and the soul of man becomes merged with the Soul of the universe. That is the culmination of *jñāna-mārga*.

The *bhakti-mārga*, the way of devotion, is more natural, more easy to practise. It is open to all. The learned and the illiterate, the high and the low, all can take to it. For man, constituted as he is, it is easier to understand and walk on the path of devotion. Man cherishes love and devotion to his parents. He has affection and regard for his friends. He serves his master with devotion and loyalty. A wife is deeply attached to her husband. All these human relationships bring joy and happiness in our daily life. They make life worth living. Man understands them and responds to them. All that the *bhakti-mārga* demands from a *bhakta* is that he should lift these relationships from the human to the divine plane. It asks him to establish these relationships with God. The God of the *bhakta* is a personal God. He has form, beauty, and infinite auspicious attributes. By His grace, anything can be accomplished. There is nothing insurmountable for one who has had the grace of God. God is merciful, and quickly responds to the prayers of a devout heart.

Of all the attitudes, that of the servant to his master (*dāsya*) is the most natural to man, limited, ignorant, and poor as he is. What can a servant offer to the master, except his devout service? The servant seeks only the pleasure of his master. So the *bhakti-mārga* urges man to serve God in the spirit of a servant and seek to please Him by devoted service. The devotee totally surrenders himself to the will of God. God is his only refuge. In His thought and doing His work, he spends his days. Prahlāda, the great devotee of God, speaks of the nine features of *bhakti* thus:

'Listening to the name of God (*śravaṇa*), chanting His name (*kīrtana*), recollection of Him (*smaraṇa*), waiting upon Him (*pādasevana*), worshipping Him (*arcana*), saluting Him (*vandana*), servitude (*dāsya*), friendship (*sakhya*), and self-dedication to Him (*ātmani-vedana*)' (*Bhāgavata*, VII. 5. 23). Through self-dedication, the devotee becomes a fit receptacle for the grace of God to descend. Then he gets the beatific vision of God, who is the repository of infinite beauty, glory, and majesty. God appears to man in the very form in which he wishes to have His vision. He has infinite forms, and comes to the devotee in that very form in which he wants Him and gives him liberation. After this, there is no more *saṁsāra*, bondage, for him. He becomes eternally free, deriving joy in the proximity and companionship of God. That is the consummation of *bhakti-mārga*.

The *karma-mārga* prescribes the way of meritorious and selfless work, *niṣkāmakarma*. Work should be performed with faith in God and in a spirit of detachment, without an eye to the fruits thereof. All work should be dedicated to God, and it should be directed towards the happiness and welfare of others. *Loka-kalyāṇa*, the good of the world, is the objective of the *karma-yogin*, not with any altruistic motive, but in the spirit of dedication to God. Work must lead to self-purification. By sublimating his lower physical nature, the *karma-yogin* strives to evolve the higher moral and spiritual qualities of his being.

Man cannot escape work. Work he must. It is the nature of action to create reaction. *Karma* must have its fruits. But that is true only if the work is done selfishly and with the idea of agency. If the performer of work is selfless, has no sense of agency, and has withdrawn himself by complete detachment and dedication, then *karma* will have no effect on the doer. The *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which presents the ideal of a *karma-yogin par excellence*, lays

great stress on two things mainly, the spirit of detachment from the fruits of action and dedication to God. Armed with these two, the *karma-yogin* should engage in work. If performed in this spirit, *karma* will not taint him. By developing detachment and faith in God, man becomes the master of work. The *karma-yogin* has nothing to gain from this world. He works for work's sake only. The *Gītā* ideal of the *karma-yogin* is embodied in Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself, who says: 'I have no duty to perform, nothing to gain in the three worlds, yet I am constantly engaged in work' (III.22). That is the ideal of *karma-mārga*, which leads to liberation through desirelessness, detachment, and dedication to God.

The path of *yoga*, as delineated by Patañjali in his *Yoga-Sūtra*, is yet another independent way to spiritual realization. It has its eight-limbed method (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*), which culminates in *samādhi*, or complete self-absorption. Though the higher reaches of *yoga* are attainable only by those who take to it as an exclusive spiritual discipline, its preliminary stages of *yama*, *niyama*, *prāṇāyāma*, etc. not only help in the moral development of spiritual aspirants, but greatly aid in the growth of one-pointed concentration of the mind, which is so necessary for any kind of spiritual progress. Therefore it is that these preliminary steps of *yoga* are recommended in all spiritual paths, whatever may be the mode of approach. They are necessary, but should be undertaken under expert guidance and with proper care.

The goal of life is God-realization, Self-realization. It matters little by what means it is attained. The spirit that is labouring under the shackles of ignorance should be liberated. Man should rise to the status of divinity. He should have the vision of the Divine. The spirit must break through the bond of matter and sing the saga of eternal freedom, full of never ending joy, permanent peace, and boundless bliss. That is the supreme goal of life.



THE PARAMAHAMSA AND GOD-KNOWLEDGE

BY SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

An expert dancer never takes a false step, inadvertently even; similarly, never is a purposeless act or a vain utterance met with in the life of a Master Supreme; even a joke that he cracks is pregnant with meaning—this is a saying of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Those who study his life find that this saying is aptly applicable to the Paramahansa himself. To what extent the Paramahansa proved himself a model to aspirants is well worth a study.

Sri Ramakrishna had been named Gadadhar by his parents. Like other boys of his age, Gadadhar attended the village school. But it cannot be said that he evinced any enthusiasm for studies. If there was anything that interested him at school, it was the companionship of his innocent mates. He attended school just for the pleasure of being with them. Up to standard three, he plodded through something like reading and writing. Though what he wrote was not much, his handwriting was excellent. He neatly executed transcribing portions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Errors in spelling, not uncommon with his age group, no doubt crept into his writing. But the script itself bears testimony to his whole-hearted application to the holy task. That script is preserved to this day at the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Belur Math, near Calcutta.

Gadadhar had an innate aversion to arithmetic. He used to plead with his teacher that he be relieved of the botheration of counting and calculating. We cannot say for certain that he was familiar with the multiplication table even. On an occasion in later days, a conversation between the Paramahansa and Mahendranath Gupta, the head master disciple of his, drifted into the realm of astronomy. The Paramahansa was at first eager to be acquainted with a bit of that science. Mahen-

dranath readily entered into an explanation with the aid of mathematics. Before he had proceeded far came the interruption: 'Enough of your mathematics, stop it. Your numbers make my head reel. The realization that the entire working of the universe is the divine play of the Lord gives me the highest satisfaction.' This shows that the Paramahansa's refined emotion was an adequate instrument to easily intuit the conclusions arrived at by others through intellect.

Gadadhar was not satisfied with absenting himself alone from school; he drew away several other boys as well. It was not that he merely played truant. A higher urge motivated him in this act. A mango-grove in the outskirts of the village was his favourite resort, where his unique inclinations had free play. When not seen in the village, he was sure to be found in that grove sporting with his companions. On a certain day, at school, the teacher noticed a striking group-absence. He inquired into the whereabouts of the missing urchins. Information came that the jolly lot was having a merry time in the mango-grove. The teacher had them brought to school at once. 'Who is the fellow who enticed you away?' demanded the teacher. When all eyes turned to Gadadhar, he politely came forward and admitted that he was behind the whole thing. 'What were you all about in the grove?' interrogated the master. 'We sang and chanted the glory of God' came the answer. With the intention of punishing the group, the teacher in a ridiculing manner made Gadadhar repeat the songs. The choir led by Gadadhar immediately burst into a moving chant. The chastisement-minded teacher could not help being touched by the fervour of the chant. The thought of punishing the absconding band had quickly evaporated from his mind. He could not but appreciate the in-

telligence, the sweetness, and the decorum in Gadadhar, indifferent though the boy was to schooling.

REVEALING INCIDENTS

At Kamarpukur, the birth-place of Sri Ramakrishna, a person of importance once arranged for a debate by scholars on a festive occasion. The victorious debater was to be amply rewarded, and the offer attracted quite a number of pundits. Arguments and counter arguments flowed out in profusion. The audience stood spellbound at the display of dialectical skill. The young Gadadhar was also in the audience. In his own way, he minutely watched the course of the debate. But amazement did not overwhelm him as it did the others. He was rather disgusted with the base motive of the learned ones there. He must have thought as he used to say in later days: 'Pooh! What kind of erudition is this? These so-called savants behave like eagles. The eagle soars high up in the sky. No other bird excels it in this regard. It is also endowed with eyes to clearly discern distant objects. But, unfortunately, its skill in flight and sight is only used to spot out decaying carcass. These savants keenly compete just in order to clutch at a few coins. And these coins are at best useful to feed the body, which is destined to be a corpse tomorrow. Does money give man devotion to God or divine insight?' He wondered what he had to do with such an education. And he decided to have nothing to do with it.

The dull-witted usually develop an aversion to learning even when young. But Gadadhar was not at all of this stagnating group. He was endowed with an uncommon intelligence. What was beyond the ken of ordinary youngsters could be clearly got at by him. His memory was extraordinary. Having heard a song but once, he could retain and reproduce it at any time; it never faded out. Music was inborn in him. His songs melted the hearts of the hearers. If he but once observed the mannerisms of people, he would reproduce them to the minutest detail. By mimicking the

peculiarities of individuals, he would convulse people and make them roll in laughter. We shall have an occasion to refer to his histrionic skill. His native genius expressed itself in an extraordinary common sense, poured out as enchanting poetry, and blossomed into soul-stirring drama. This lad who was apparently indifferent to worldly concerns was, in fact, born with an intellect bordering on intuition. No wonder that those who observed his outstanding traits stood amazed.

Two savants were once engaged in an inquiry into an abstruse religious issue. Long was their discussion on it. The lad Gadadhar happened to stand by following the trend of their inquiry. The two learned men could not arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. Then the lad humbly suggested a viewpoint and asked if it was acceptable. The savants were agreeably thrilled. They found that his viewpoint was the right one. Only a person who could take in the intricate details of the discussion would have been able to arrive at the conclusion which this lad had come to. The wonder was how this teen-ager was so easily capable of this. They realized that wisdom often came to the guileless young ones, while it lingered in the case of savants stuffed with undigested ideas.

KNOWLEDGE: SECULAR AND SACRED

He who manages to master anything and everything may become a very encyclopaedia of knowledge. But the wise ones say that one should not give one's attention to too many things. One ought to have an ideal in life. And whatever one learns should lead one to the chosen ideal. Man has neither the time nor the energy to be roaming about in the wilderness of learning. His attention should be directed to the central theme of his living.

The Vedic utterance in respect of learning runs thus: 'The Enlightened ones say that there are two types of knowledge to be pursued—the superior and the ordinary. The ordinary knowledge is that which pertains to the study of the *R̥g-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda*, the *Sāma-*

Veda, the *Atharva-Veda*, phonetics, rituals, grammar, etymology, metrics, astrology, etc. The superior knowledge is that by which the Imperishable is attained.'

This statement is contained in the *Mundaka Upaniṣad*. According to it, all the four Vedas and their branches go under temporal knowledge. This temporal knowledge pertains to the mundane which is constituted of the three *guṇas*—the three categories of equilibrium, motion, and inertia. Even the heavens, so much spoken of in the religions, are in the realm of the *guṇas* and therefore mundane. It should be noted that the four Vedas, so much adored by their votaries, are after all in the domain of the mundane. All arts and sciences fall under secular knowledge. All knowledge experienced through the five senses, the mind, and the intellect is classified as temporal. People there are with whom the eligibility or otherwise of an individual for the study of the Vedas is a veritable obsession. They base eligibility on the ground of birth. This is utterly meaningless. The enlightened hold this as ridiculous. It may as well be asked as to who is eligible to perform a surgical operation on a patient. That eligibility has no relation whatever to birth. All the qualified surgeons are eligible. The pursuit of arts and sciences cuts across caste. Similarly, whoever is intelligent and virtuous may well be taught the Vedas. Such a one, irrespective of his caste, may well become a *vedavit*—knower of Veda. Women, too, may well take to Vedic studies. There have been orientalists like Max Müller who devoted their entire life to the study of the Vedas. Not stopping there, they shared the benefit of their studies with the world. This is exactly what the Vaidikas in India have to do now as an atonement for their folly of obstructing the free flow of the Vedas.

Knowledge sacred is that which deals with the Godhead or Reality. The Real is that which does not become extinct, does not disintegrate, and does not change. For this reason, it is called Akṣara—the Imperishable. Innumerable other epithets are showered on It.

One may indeed marvel at the multiplicity of these epithets; but none of them is superfluous; every epithet carries a definite connotation. In spite of Its being defined in innumerable ways, It eludes comprehension. Comprehension of the Absolute is the hardest. But he who has soared to It becomes the knower of life in its entirety. The mystery of the projection as well as the withdrawal of the universe is truly apperceived by him alone. He may therefore be called the all-knowing one. Births and deaths become meaningless to such a knower of the Absolute. The knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman.

THE PARAMAHAMSA'S SCHOOLING

It was God-knowledge alone that the Paramahansa took to from his boyhood. He whole-heartedly pursued only what induced the God-idea in him. A boy who plays truant proves himself worthless. His mischief does not end with him; when he weans others from school, he becomes guilty of a double offence. To a superficial observer, the boy Gadadhar might have seemed so guilty. But it was not in Gadadhar's nature to do anything stealthily or in an underhand way. Nor was there ever anything in his conduct to be afraid or ashamed of. Unlike the ordinary truant, Gadadhar was sure he was making the best use of his time. He knew it was wisdom to set aside a lesser ideal in favour of a greater one. Intellectual pursuit is good; spiritual pursuit is better still. To be absorbed in devotional singing and chanting is an expression of that pursuit. It is the nature of the pious to invite others to partake of a spiritual feast. And Gadadhar was given to this from boyhood. Boldly and openly, he revelled in this divine indulgence. He was thus at the opposite pole to a mere truant.

Clay-modelling was a favourite pastime of young Gadadhar. And all the models he fashioned were of gods. Such a modelling aids concentration and absorption in thoughts of the divine. Men of his time have borne testimony to his excellence in this art. Soon after he had arrived at Dakshineswar, he made for himself

a clay model of Śiva for worship. And he was given to meditating, seated in front of that divine form. Mathura Nath Biswas, the son-in-law of Rani Rasmani, who built the temple at Dakshineswar, happened to have a look at it. He felt that the image was so fine as to induce meditateness in an observer. The proprietor desired to have the image for himself for worship. And this youth, who was treading the Paramahamsa way, willingly handed it over to him.

As a boy, Gadadhar delighted in enacting religious dramas. He would with sublime spontaneity play the part of Śrīmatī Rādhā panting with divine fervour for union with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. While thus acting, he would enter into the very spiritual mood of Rādhā. On a Śivarātri night, an actor who was to play Śiva took ill. Gadadhar was entreated to take his part. Even as the make-up was going on, his mind got lost in Śiva-consciousness. And he was in a trance all through that night. One of the most arresting features of his life was that, in the drama of life, he made no distinction between play-acting and real effort. One was as genuine, elevating, and purposeful as the other. Gadadhar's boyish and sprightly *bhajana* and the later-day soulful and transcendental *bhajana* of the Paramahamsa were of the same mode and fervour. What he did ceaselessly and tirelessly from boyhood to the last was the pursuit of God-knowledge. As the compass needle ever points to the north, his mind was ever fixed on that knowledge.

LANGUAGE IN THE SPIRITUAL FIELD

Among the world's languages, Sanskrit enjoys an acknowledged prominence. Its etymological meaning is 'that which is refined'. It is indeed a classical language, in the sense that it has reached its zenith in refinement. Like crystal, it admits of no further processing. Whatever is fully refined reveals a divine excellence. On this ground, Sanskrit is extolled as the language of the gods—*devabhāṣā*. Some people go to the extreme of fancying that it alone is the language of the celestials. Such a

fancy is ridiculous. Yet others believe (or believed) that all are not entitled to this language. Their claim is that it is the exclusive privilege of a few. This claim to exclusiveness is fantastic. As any language becomes the possession of the one who learns it, Sanskrit also is the possession of any learner of it. That all are not eligible for it is a superstition which has affected adversely the position of this civilizing language.

Many sciences of a superior order are recorded in the Sanskrit language. All the four Vedas, which are the oldest among scriptures, have been revealed in this classical language. Among the language vehicles used to convey spiritual ideas, Sanskrit assumes the foremost place; it has been made use of for the highest philosophical inquiry. Technical terms pertaining to the Vedānta philosophy have all got set in this language. Parallel words, precise and pregnant, have not been coined by any one in any other language. This language alone is heir to all this glory. Still, a false notion in regard to this language obtains even among a section of the learned. They claim that a student of Sanskrit alone is capable of grasping the Vedānta philosophy. This is as unreal as the view that a child cannot understand its tie with the mother before picking her tongue. These unimaginative people further hold that the very study of this language is tantamount to the pursuit of the Divine. This is as ridiculous as holding that the reader of a textbook on geography has become a world-traveller. They also blindly believe that one who is a stranger to Sanskrit is necessarily a stranger to the spiritual path. This, again, is as laughable as saying that a person who has not studied anatomy and the function of the bowels cannot digest food! The hollowness behind these fantastic claims to the indispensability of Sanskrit had to be exposed. And it was given to Sri Ramakrishna to do this.

Sri Ramakrishna's schooling was such that in later days he remembered neither to read nor to write. His mother tongue, Bengali, he spoke in a rustic fashion. An example may be cited.

'Narendra' was the original name of Sri Ramakrishna's world-famed apostle, Swami Vivekananda. The name 'Narendra' got shortened into 'Naren', in endearment. But the village folk used to utter it as 'Loren' instead. And Sri Ramakrishna in the manner of a typical villager stuck to 'Loren'. It is worthy of note that while his language was not scholarly, his ideas were superb. His great spiritual thoughts have now gone to all parts of the world, his sayings having been rendered into several languages. He held that while ideas are the essence, language is but a container. 'O Man, you are not able to behold the stars in the heavens in broad daylight. For that reason, would you conclude that there are no stars in the firmament of day? While yet in ignorance you do not cognize God; dare you on that account say there is no God?'—this is a saying of Sri Ramakrishna. Into whatever language this gets rendered, the grandeur of the idea remains intact. The modern world is given inordinately to language-polish. It hardly ever looks for and imbibes great ideas. As against this trend, Sri Ramakrishna gave all attention to ideas, and hardly any thought to mere polish in language. Educationists will do well to ponder over this.

'I know no Sanskrit. But what of that? The Mother Divine has blessed me with intuitive knowledge. I am ever in contact with Reality'—thus did Sri Ramakrishna state his position in regard to Sanskrit learning. He once paid a visit to Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, the great savant of Bengal. 'Vidyasagar' means an 'Ocean of Learning', and the Pandit was really such. In the course of the interview, the Paramahansa, in a mood of abstractedness, spoke thus: 'It is possible for man to define and explain everything mundane. But Brahman, the Absolute, alone remains uncomprehended by the human intellect, and that which defies comprehension defies definition as well. That which is defined gets defiled by the spittle of the tongue, becomes *ucchiṣṭa*. Brahman alone, never having been tongue-touched, has not become

defiled, *ucchiṣṭa*.' In this unique manner, he explained the incomprehensibility of Reality by the human intellect. And, again, in his own original way, he explained the immensity of Reality: 'Once, an ant went to a hill of sugar. One grain filled its stomach. Taking another grain in its mouth, it started homeward. On its way, it thought: "Next time, I shall carry home the whole hill." That is the way shallow minds think. They do not know that Brahman is beyond one's words and thought. In the comprehension of Reality, the human intellect is very much like this ant. Sages like Nārada and Śuka could at best help themselves to a sip of the ambrosia of the infinite ocean of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Whoever can fathom the depths of cosmic Consciousness?' Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar listened to this exposition with rapt attention. He was amazed to note that not even in the Upaniṣads could one come across utterances of this exalted kind. As Sri Ramakrishna was, fortunately, not book-learned, he bore no borrowed ideas. His intuition, free from the colouring of book-learning, made him a towering example of direct contact with Reality.

THE PARAMAHAMSA'S UNIVERSALISM

Religionists vie with one another in claiming that God in His entirety has been revealed to their sect alone. They further assert that their path alone leads to a full knowledge of Reality. This is conceit and nothing else. Other paths, they aver, are but halfway approaches to the Divine. Amidst this tangle of sectarian assertions, Sri Ramakrishna stands unique in the universalism which he arrived at as a result of his all-phase contact with Reality. In his own words, the moon is the 'Uncle Moon' of all children. To the children of the poor, the children of the rich, the children of the refined, the children of the rustics, the children of this land, and the children of that land, to all children, there is but one 'Uncle Moon'. God is similarly everybody's. All are equally entitled to call on Him. He is accessible to

pure love. The pure see Him ever seated in their hearts.

To contend that one's own religion is superior to another's is a sign of immaturity in knowledge. They who have faith in the immensity of God's cosmic plan dare not say so. The creation as well as the sustenance of this all-pervading universe is the work of God. Varieties in religion form a part of His plan. He knows, more than man does, which religion suits which temperament. In tending His children, He surpasses all earthly mothers. A mother has several children. She prepares food to suit their varying needs and tastes. In a much more perfect manner, the Lord has provided His creation with varying faiths. They who pick holes in other's religions waste away precious time. They know not God's design. Great is the benefit they derive if instead they zealously practise their own religion. Genuine devotees are they who recognize merit in all of God's religions. The Paramahamsa's universalism lies in his attunement to the divine plan.

God lets Himself be called by any name. He may be viewed as an expansive lake with many ghats. One group gain access to it down a ghat and help themselves to what they call 'water'. Another group reach it through a second ghat and avail themselves of what they term 'jala'. Yet another group step down a third ghat and fill their cans with what they style 'aqua'. In this manner, innumerable parties make use of what they term *pāni*, *vāri*, *nīr*, and so on. Here are many names indicating the one stuff that quenches thirst. Similarly, the designations Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahman, Allah, Jehovah, Father in Heaven, Tao, all indicate the one Reality. Quarrelling over names is mere folly. Know the Reality and call It by any name. This is the very height of God-knowledge, as reached and preached by the Paramahamsa.

THE WAY OF THE GREAT ONES

It has already been pointed out that superior knowledge (*parā vidyā*) pertains to the Divine,

and that ordinary knowledge (*aparā vidyā*) pertains to the mundane. The greater the knowledge, the fewer are the people who cognize and pursue it on right lines. Charlatans there are who, while pretending to adhere to the pursuit of sacred knowledge, actually wallow in the mire of worldliness. Such pretentious conduct is an act of disservice both to the knowledge and its votaries. Posing to be given to high idealism, they tarnish that very idealism by their hypocrisy. But what the great ones, few though they may be, offer through their way of life is inspiring and instructive to society.

Without the least self-consciousness about it, these great ones are models worthy of emulation. Their genius turns all secular activities into sacred ones. Arts and sciences, usually centring round worldly concerns, are oriented by them towards divine destinies. Tradition holds that the philosopher's stone is capable of transforming base metals into gold. And this philosopher's stone is none other than the sublime life of the perfected ones. These great ones transform any action into an adoration of the Divine. The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* provide two illustrious examples. A prolonged banishment, which was suddenly sprung on Śrī Rāma, was calmly accepted by him and alchemized into a saga of supreme spiritual achievements. Śrī Kṛṣṇa taught Arjuna the divine art of transmuting the killing of the grandsire and the *guru* into an act of adoration of the Almighty. It is the attitude behind an act that sanctifies or defiles it.

The Paramahamsa laid repeated emphasis on one's getting into the right attitude, for that is the only key to divine knowledge. Once the right attitude is got, the mind, of its own accord, gets transformed into the mould of the spirit. Swami Turiyananda was one of his apostles. From his boyhood, the Swami's peculiar trait was to shun, in all possible ways, any contact with the other sex. He had his daily life planned in such a manner as to be totally dissociated from womankind. Motherless that he was, he chose to cook his own food.

He was evolving into a sterling character. In purity, he was of Śukadeva's eminence. He was the very embodiment of continence. Such a rigidity in self-control is a thing to be admired; but the Paramahansa had to give this disciple a warning in regard to his attitude behind the rigidity. 'It is not possible for you to save yourself by abhorring those of the other sex. You should instead view them all as the emblems of the Cosmic Mother'—this was the Master's injunction to him. The implication was that a mere physical aloofness from the opposite sex does not suffice for the practice of continence. Over and above this dissociation, the cultivation of an attitude of reverence for all women as manifestations of the Divine Mother ensures a powerful safeguard. This very same reverent attitude to the other sex was inculcated by the Paramahansa in women as well. What befits and what really saves aspirants is the recognition of spirit and not flesh in the other sex.

One of the grand teachings of the Paramahansa is: Seek the Noumenon with the aid of the phenomenon. The idea is that Divinity is to be sought in and through the things of this world. And he himself resorted to this method in all of his spiritual strivings. Image-worship, regarded by some as grotesque, proved an unerring aid in his case. There were people who questioned him why he viewed stone and clay as God. But he held that such an objection

was meaningless. 'Why should an image be thought of as stone or clay? A child does not see in its mother a frame of flesh, blood, and bones. Never does it address the mother as O skin, O blood, O bone! In the manner in which the child beholds the mother, one ought to behold God in the image. The man who views the image as inert matter becomes himself inert. He who recognizes Life in it himself evolves into Life. It is the attitude that moulds man.' Such was the philosophy of the Paramahansa in respect of using the mundane for divine ends. Modern science is coming up towards this concept of matter being an expression of spirit.

All branches of art were utilized by the Paramahansa for the adoration of the Divine. All activities of life were transmuted by him into acts of worship. All lives were to him manifestations of the Cosmic Life. In the phenomenon, he cognized nothing but God and His play. As man evolves into divinity, the external world also undergoes a corresponding change to him. When man fully takes the mould of God, nature also reveals itself as God to him. When the human is shed, the Divine alone persists, subjectively as well as objectively. When Divinity alone is cognized in the seeming phenomenon, it is God-knowledge. And it was this knowledge that the Paramahansa pursued right from boyhood.

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

BY DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

Philosophizing in India has never been the function of an exclusive group; it is more generally widespread here than anywhere else in the world. Princes and peasants, industrial magnates and workers, literates and illiterates, those who make a living with their brains and those who labour with their bodies, all seem to have their philosophical moods. A serious

nation such as ours cannot but love the abstract and the universal. It is true that we, too, have our lighter moments, and take our pleasures in the concrete. But there is something in the racial unconscious that keeps telling us that the procession of the particulars that we call the world is bound to pass away yielding no real happiness. Like a double-edged knife,

this character may cut both ways. If it is interpreted wrongly, it will turn us into a nation of fatalists and life-haters; if its true and lofty significance is understood, we will rise again on a fresh wave of culture and contribute our share to the survival and progress of man. When the great minds of India ask us to realize the transitoriness of the finite world, they do not mean to make us scorn the world or quit it in a hurry; on the contrary, they want us to exalt the world by recognizing the reality behind it, which is infinite and eternal.

Whenever this truth was grasped, we had a renaissance in India. There are signs that we are awakening to this grand truth once again. The political independence we gained ten years ago was itself a consequence of this new awakening. Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayananda, Sri Ramakrishna, and Swami Vivekananda in the last century laid the foundation of a new age in our country. All of them roused India to a realization that slavish imitation of alien thought-patterns and modes of conduct meant spiritual suicide. All of them threw new light on the ancient religio-philosophic ideas and ideals of India. It was clear from their teachings that Vedic religion and Vedāntic philosophy were designed not for the exclusive benefit of a few people who would seek their selfish salvation, but for the generality of mankind, so that it could evolve and pass into nobler realms of being. It was his application of these teachings to the affairs of our national life that made Gandhiji the Mahatma of our age, and led to our freedom from British domination in 1947. In the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence, we find reflected the reverence for life and the emphasis on right means for achieving legitimate ends that are characteristic of all shades of Indian thought. *Ahimsā* and *satya* constitute the common legacy of the Indian philosophical mind. The great contribution that Gandhiji has made to Indian philosophy lies in the fact that he has shown the efficacy of these virtues even in the field of politics, nay, the need for making political action spring from them. It is the Gandhian

teaching about non-violence and truth as the regulative principles of public life that is behind the efforts of our Prime Minister in making *pañcaśīla* prevail in international affairs. And it is the same that is the power behind the *bhūdāna* movement of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, whose aim is to bring about a silent economic revolution in our country.

It is significant that a feature which is distinctive of Indian philosophy—its practical aim—is observed to characterize the present Indian renaissance too. Philosophy in India has never been a mere view of life; it has always been regarded as a way of life as well. Even the Nyāya, which is an ultra-rationalistic system, holds that attaining freedom from sorrow, *apavarga*, is the end of philosophy. A well-known Upaniṣadic text declares: 'Not he who has not ceased from wickedness, not he who is not tranquil, not he who cannot concentrate his mind, nor even he whose mind is not composed can reach the Self through knowledge.' Since the goal of philosophy is transformed life, good conduct is believed to count for more than set doctrines. In all the schools of Indian philosophy, insistence is laid on the need for moral discipline as a prelude to profitable philosophic inquiry. It is true that in the academic halls of philosophy today even in India no such insistence is laid. But it is admitted, theoretically at least, by the present-day Indian philosophers in general that the purpose of philosophizing is not arm-chair theorizing, but realization of the highest value. They seem to concede the ancient Indian tradition in this regard, viz. that philosophy is a *sādhana* (way to the ultimate Reality).

A small section of the teachers of philosophy in India, however, would not endorse this tradition. These professors believe that we have had no genuine philosophy in India—philosophy in the modern Western sense. According to them, what we have had is religion, dogma, uncritical doctrine, and not a disinterested investigation into the nature of things. They would like to see Indian philosophy begin altogether a new career, effacing all that is past.

Let us commence with universal doubt, they seem to say, even as Descartes is claimed to have done in Europe ; let us start with the Year One in philosophy, for philosophy has had no history in our country.

Fortunately, the general philosophical opinion in our country does not agree with the minority group. Dr. Radhakrishnan and others, who founded the Indian Philosophical Congress in 1925, elected Dr. Rabindranath Tagore—not an academic philosopher—as the president of the first session. The great poet set the tone of modern Indian philosophy, when he declared even at the outset of his presidential address: 'The only thing which encourages me to overcome my diffidence, and give expression in a speech to my unsophisticated mind, is the fact that in India all the *vidyās*—poesy as well as philosophy—live in a joint family. They never have the jealous sense of individualism maintaining the punitive regulation against trespass that seem to be so rife in the West.' A glance at the proceedings of the successive sessions of the Indian Philosophical Congress will reveal that the spirit of Indian philosophy has not only been maintained, but has also been enriched by critical considerations and evaluation of Western schools of philosophy.

Thanks to the introduction of the English system of higher education a century ago, our students of philosophy in the universities have been learning much more about Western philosophy than about Indian thought. Even today, Indian philosophy occupies less than twenty per cent of the content of philosophical studies in most of our universities. Whenever an Indian teacher of philosophy goes to the West on a visiting appointment, his Western colleagues are astonished at the knowledge that he possesses of the details of Western metaphysics. Their astonishment is all the greater, because they seem to know very little of Indian philosophy. The histories of philosophy written by Western thinkers totally ignore Indian or Eastern philosophy. Some of these writers justify the title *History of Philosophy* on the ground that, east of the Suez, there never was genuine

philosophy. It is only a few philosophical historians like Bertrand Russell that give to their work such an appropriate title as *A History of Western Philosophy*. Although over-emphasis on European philosophy in our universities has led to a comparative neglect of Indian thought-systems, the knowledge of the West that has thus been gained is serving the purpose of broadening the outlook of Indian thinkers and giving them a training in critical evaluation of rival views of reality.

Mention may be made here of the publication of *History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western* in two volumes (1952) under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Government of India. Most of the contributors to these volumes are Indian thinkers ; and the *History* is so designed as to be 'truly representative of the growth of human thought in the different civilizations and cultures of the world'. What made the then Union Minister of Education, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, take the steps that resulted in the publication of the *History* was the realization that Indian philosophy should be studied in the context of world philosophy. In his address to the All India Education Conference in 1948, the Minister observed: 'No one can today deny the supreme achievements of the Indian mind in the realms of metaphysics and philosophy. It is true that recently Indian philosophy has been introduced as one of the subjects in Indian universities, but it has not gained the position it deserves in the general history of the philosophy of the world.' Proposing to appoint a committee, with Dr. Radhakrishnan as Chairman, for the purpose of writing a history of philosophy, he said in the course of the budget discussions for 1948-49: 'Honourable Members are also aware that Indian philosophy is one of the proudest possessions of human civilization. In our college histories of philosophy, Indian philosophy is, however, relegated to an obscure corner. In order to get a true perspective of philosophy, it is necessary that a student should know of the great contributions of India, along with the developments which took place in Greece and

modern Europe.'

The living forms of classical Indian philosophy are the main schools of Vedānta and some of the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava philosophies like the Śaiva-Siddhānta and the Pāñcarātra. Current Indian philosophy is influenced by one or the other of these forms. Most of the participants in the philosophical debates, both in and outside the Indian Philosophical Congress, belong to these several schools, either by inheritance or by adoption, and they expound their particular systems with zest and fervour. In the classical age, each system had to contend with only the other indigenous systems. In the modern age, the Western modes of thought also have entered the field of contest. The result is that quite a few of the modern Indian philosophers are engaged in the study of problems relating to comparative philosophy. The West, too, is now getting increasingly convinced of the need for world-philosophizing. In the second East-West Philosophers' Conference that was held at the University of Hawaii, Honolulu, in 1949, India was adequately represented, and the contribution made by the Indian members of the Conference was highly appreciated by the Western and the other Eastern delegates.

Ever since Śaṅkara came to consolidate Advaita Vedānta as the summit of the Upaniṣadic philosophy, he has occupied the centre of the Indian philosophical scene. After him, his followers, while accepting his central philosophy, have expounded it in several ways that range from subjective idealism to near-realism. Probably, to name them by these 'isms' is not quite correct. What deserves to be noted is that there are doctrinal differences among post-Śaṅkara Advaitins; and these differences have become possible because of the spirit of accommodation that pervades Advaita. It is evident that even those thinkers of the theistic schools of Vedānta in the classical age who differed from Advaita were profoundly influenced by Śaṅkara. The very fact that every major philosopher after Śaṅkara pays great and close attention to his teachings, either for expound-

ing them or for refuting them, shows the pre-eminent place that is Śaṅkara's in the history of Indian philosophy.

The contemporary situation in the philosophical world in India is not much different. Many of the Indian philosophers are exponents of Advaita. Some are critical of Advaita, especially of the doctrine of Māyā. Generally following Sri Aurobindo, they interpret Māyāvāda as a doctrine of negation and reject Śaṅkara as an impossible ascetic. Sometimes, in the proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress and in the papers of learned journals, battles royal are waged between the supporters of Māyāvāda and the advocates of Līlāvāda. It is one of the problems of the future to determine how much Sri Aurobindo has been influenced by Śaṅkara.

Many of the contemporary Indian philosophers would seem to have had contact with some sage or other. Although spurious claimants to sainthood are not unknown, there are some genuine saints even today in India. One of the great sages of recent times was Sri Ramana Maharshi. In him, we had a contemporary *jīvanmukta*, a living commentary on the most sublime texts of the Vedānta. The simple and direct method of self-inquiry that he taught attracted aspirants from both the East and the West. Though not schooled in metaphysics, Eastern or Western, Sri Ramana Maharshi became, by virtue of his realization, the inspirer of the highest type of metaphysical inquiry in many. Scattered all over the country, there are large and small groups of enthusiasts for some saint or other. Sometimes, there is the danger of these groups giving rise to closed cults. But on the whole, it must be stated that the *āśramas* are playing their part well in popularizing the philosophical ideas of our ancient culture.

One of the better organized monastic institutions is the Ramakrishna Order, founded by Swami Vivekananda in the name of his Master. The Swami himself was a pioneer in spreading, both in this country and abroad, the neo-Vedānta movement characteristic of the present

renaissance. Apart from the charitable, educational, and allied activities that go on at the different centres of the Order, there is a considerable volume of study and publication of significant texts. The main philosophical ideas disseminated by the members of this Order are those of Advaita Vedānta as confirmed by Sri Ramakrishna. But as there is no opposition between Advaita and the theistic approaches to Reality, these latter also are advocated by them.

Although the chief trends in contemporary Indian philosophy are to be traced to the Vedāntic traditions, it is not as if they contain nothing more than these traditions. The philosophical India has never worshipped time for the sake of time. Kālidāsa says, with reference to poetry, that not all that is old is good, nor all that is new, despicable. We have already referred to the new influence of Western thought

on contemporary Indian philosophy. More and more attention is being paid today to the application of the philosophical ideas to social problems. The *Gītā* ideal of *karma-yoga* is increasingly sought to be pressed into service in all departments of corporate life. One of the possible developments of Indian thought is in the direction of social philosophy that will meet the challenges of the present, while exploiting fully the riches of the past. As Dr. Radhakrishnan said in his presidential address to the Silver Jubilee Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress in 1950; 'Indian philosophy can contribute to the restoration of a really human culture only by renewing itself, by transforming itself more radically than it has done. It will include all that is perennially valid in the ancient systems and express them in ways that are relevant to the contemporary situation. Let us realize that all life, including the intellectual, is perpetual rebirth.'

THE POETRY OF ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARA—2

BY SRI P. SAMA RAO

(Continued from previous issue)

III

Verse is usually the natural form of inspired utterance, while prose is that of logical one. Delight felt in the enjoyment of beauty is selfless; its expression is inspired, in the sense that it is not so much willed as it is often the effect of some power brooding over and acting through the self. This feeling of ecstasy is rhythmic; and it intuitively chooses a medium most fitting and similarly rhythmic to air itself out. Besides, verse being a mnemonic form, it is generally adopted for purposes of instruction to be remembered and assimilated.

Śrī Śaṅkara's works in verse may roughly be grouped as under:

(a) The purely Vedāntic and philosophical—*Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, *Upadeśasāhasrī*, *Śataśloki*, *Aparokṣānubhūti*, *Ātmobodha*, *Svātmanirūpaṇa*, *Vijñānanauka*, *Nirvāṇaṣaṭka*, *Kaivalya*, *Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra*, *Vākyavṛtti*, etc.

(b) The philosophico-ethical—*Carpaṭa-pañjarikā*, *Dvādaśa-pañjarikā*, *Kāśī-pañcaka*, etc.

(c) Hymns or psalms on both the personal and impersonal Godheads—Śiva, Viṣṇu, and their emanations, such as Candrasekhara, Gaṅgādhara, Nṛsimha, Varāha; various Śaktis, like Pārvatī, and her emanations, such as Annapūrṇā, Tripurasundarī; and addresses to one's own mind or self, such as *Śivānandalaharī*, *Saundaryalaharī*, *Haristuti*, *Hariśaraṇaṣṭaka*,

Śivaprātaḥsmaraṇa, *Śivapañcākṣarī*, *Vedasāra-śiva-stotra*, *Śivanāmāvalyaṣṭaka*, *Śivamānasa-pūjā*, *Devyaparādhakṣamāpaṇa*, etc.

(d) *Dhyānas* or meditations intended as aids for the realization of the personal Godheads, like Śiva, Viṣṇu, Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī, Kālī, Durgā, Gāyatrī, etc. They are also meant as directions to *śilpis* (sculptors) for the making of proper images of Godheads and for use in the ritual relating to their consecration in temples.

(e) *Rakṣās* or spells intended to ward off evil spirits, such as *Śiva-bhujāṅga-stotra*, *Subrahmaṇya-bhujāṅga*, *Rāma-bhujāṅga*, *Lakṣmī-bhujāṅga*, etc.

This division is not quite exclusive, for Śrī Śaṅkara was a great spiritual poet and a *tāntrika* who had realized the Supreme in every bit of creation. Even in his monistic meditations, the beauty and the blissful nature of the Godhead is referred to. 'Śāntam, Śivam, Sundaram' was his slogan for righteous conduct. These are the great qualities of his poetry too.

Śrī Śaṅkara's twin hymns, *Saundaryalaharī* and *Śivānandalaharī*, are ecstatic pieces quite befitting their subject-matter. He celebrates the font of all Beauty (Prakṛti) in one, and the font of all Power (Puruṣa) in the other, and declares that each is ineffective without the other.

From the standpoint of high poetic quality, these twins on the stem of Brahman are indeed blissful. The self-effacement effected by them has no shades in its complexion. They are like the flooding of intensest light that wipes out all marginal lines of things. The second half of *Saundaryalaharī* is an ecstatic expression of the peerless feminine qualities, physically rapturous and suprasensuous, of the Divine embodied in the Devī. *Śivānandalaharī* is one sublime song of the Absolute and the Infinite, embodied in Maheśvara, in the triune aspects of 'Satyam, Śivam, Sundaram', in supramental and suprasensuous syllables, all joined together in devotional ecstasy. Here, it is the sublime melody of Śiva's masculinity and yogic nature that is celebrated. The symbolism employed

here is not that of the *tāntrika* first half of the *Saundaryalaharī*, but is purely yogic, and relates more to higher planes of the sensuous, intellectual, and psychic qualities of the Divine, rather than to His physical aspects. And all these are sublimated into bliss in the poetic crucible of Śrī Śaṅkara.

All the different emotional facets of devotion, *smaraṇa*, *śravaṇa*, *cintana*, *dhyāna*, and *arpaṇa* (*Śivānandalaharī*, 81), according to the Bhāgavata *sampradāya*, indirectly in *Saundaryalaharī* and directly in *Śivānandalaharī*, are adverted to, together with their inevitable fruits, the attainment of *sārūpya*, *sālokya*, *sāmīpya*, and *sāyujya*, which indicate the realization of the Divine, step by step, up the spiritual ladder (*ibid.*, 28). In fact, all high poetry is a narration of one's own personal kinship with the Divine through human and superhuman gamuts of experience, all amounting, in short, to a perfect consecration unto Him. A perfect devotee is the real seeker of liberation, for his attachment to the Lord is free, spontaneous, and natural as the gliding

Of the swan into the lotus-garden; and like
The thirsting of the *cātaka* daily
For the raindrops; and like the poignant
desire

Of the *koka* for the chubby sun;
And like the pining of the *cakora* for
The silvern moon (*ibid.*, 59);

and like a heap

Of the *aṅkola* seeds flying back
To their parents; and like the chaste wife
Consecrate unto the service of her Lord;
And like the needle to the magnet drawn;
And like the river flowing into the arms
Of her sea-lord (*ibid.*, 61).

Śrī Śaṅkara defines this consecration as that feeling unto God which is exclusively conscious of His immanence in whatever the devotee thinks or feels or does, and at all moments of his existence. Thus Śrī Śaṅkara stresses with similitudes drawn from nature that devotion to the Godhead is not only natural, but a prime necessity for all redemption.

Just as in the world of nature spring ushers in a new life and a new joy, devotion to the Lord in the human world quickens a sense of melody in it. This joy is not fugitive, but everlasting. It has not only the possibilities of blossoming into virtues and benign actions, but also of obtaining for the devotee the necessary grace of the Lord, with the help of which he could realize himself and become one with Him.

The Lord is the font of infinite bliss. Yet He cannot enjoy Himself all alone. He therefore creates His own Spouse (Prakṛti); and of His blissful union with Her, manifold worlds are created for His own delectation. The good and the bad contribute equally to His enjoyment (*ibid.*, 66). This thought, if logically pursued, leads to the inference that there is absolutely nothing like sin in the world, so long as we realize that we are His creatures, that our actions are manoeuvred by Him for His own pleasure, and consecrate ourselves, our thoughts, our desires, our dreams, and our aspirations, all in the spirit of the *Śataślokī* (12) and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (XVIII. 66). In a more concentrated manner, Śrī Śaṅkara suggests the true dedication to the Lord in *Tripura-sundarī-vedapāda-stotra* thus:

Wherever my mind, there be Thy form,
Wherever my head, there be Thy feet.

Devotion, pure and simple, is like the consecration of a chaste wife unto the services of her lord. She is the necessary inspiration and aid for the attainment of *mukti* by the householder. So, Śrī Śaṅkara entreats for the bestowal of a 'chaste, well-bred, modest, submissive virgin of a bride for the devotee, as an instructive partner, to make the best of life'. His own dedication to the Lord in his *Śivamānasapūjā* is uniquely sublime:

Thou art my Ātman, my intellect is Girijā;
My sense-organs are Thine attendants;
This body is Thy temple; ministering to the
enjoyment
Of the objects of the senses is my worship
to Thee;
My sleep is *samādhi*; all my moving about on
foot

Is the act of performing the rite of *prada-
kṣiṇa*;

All the words spoken are hymns to Thee;
Whatever works I do are Thine worship, O
Śambho!

If the verse of the *Śataślokī* (12) is abstract, this one, which illustrates true dedication in terms of our daily existence, is certainly concrete.

In human consideration, devotion is in a vicious circle. The devotee hunts for the Lord, and the Lord hunts for the devotee. The hunt becomes complete only when the hunter (knower), the hunt (knowledge), and the prey (known), all become one in the impalpable dissolution of one into the other. But till then the Lord's kindly grace, sometimes unfelt by the devotee, flows over him with the ardent solicitude of the mother to her child. Hence Śrī Śaṅkara solicits the Lord's grace in the most tender lines: 'Lord, like a fond mother, place me in the cradle of Thy grace and rock me to rest and quiet' (*Śivānandalaharī*, 62).

The wail of the true devotee is not stilled with the Lord's granting him any earthly felicity, for he wants Him and not His benefits. And all felicities, save that of grace at His feet, are fugitive and finite.

We are irrepressibly reminded of Shelley's sublime line 'Life like a dome of many-coloured glass' by Śrī Śaṅkara's exhortation to the Lord requesting Him to dwell in the humble hut of his mind, kept clean, open, and beautified thus:

Thou embodiment of Bliss,
Deign to reside in the tent my mind has
Now become, what with the sturdy pole
Of my dispassionate endeavour to discover
The Truth. The pole is strongly tied with
the ropes
Of my triune qualities. Its canvas
Is multihued and embroidered
With lotuses many that lovely reflect
The qualities and my own traits acquired
In past births. The tent is open, mobile.
It has been planted on spiritual soil, and is
On the royal way. But my mind yet stained,

However, with my past yearns still for felicity! (*ibid.*, 21)

This is both a sublime confession and a wondrous image of the quality of the mind fit enough to receive the Lord.

Devotion is childlike and wondrous (*ibid.*, 58, 89, 90). It is not conscious of gifting itself away. It is unable to bargain with the Lord for any return in terms of earthly felicity. It therefore craves only for the service at His feet with a logic of its own (*ibid.*, 87).

O Śambho! When Thy food is poison,
When Thy jewel is the great serpent,
When Thy garb is the elephant's hide,
And Thy vehicle, the old, old bull,
What earthly felicity could I
Expect of Thee?

Though the *bhakta* may not be conscious, yet we know that the Lord's feet are verily the home of the *kalpaka*, the *kāmadhenu*, and the *cintāmaṇi*; and Kubera, the lord of wealth, is ever by His side. True devotion therefore knows only itself and never the manner or the wherefore of it.

Could poetry ever climb to any higher altitudes of either lusciousness or sublimity than in the lines explaining Śrī Śaṅkara's derivation of Mallikārjuna (*ibid.*, 50), or the divine parallel between Naṭarāja and the peacock (*ibid.*, 53), or the supramental vignette etched on our minds of the Lord's dance (*ibid.*, 54), or his illustration of the Advaitic Truth (*ibid.*, 58) in his exhortation:

Though the sun, the beloved of the lotus,
Is one, yet he breaks into many through
The dark of the worlds and shows himself
out.

Thou art a million suns all rolled into one,
but yet

Art not seen. How wonderful! My
ignorance

Is never too dense for Thee. Efface it, O
Lord,

With Thy dazzle, and grace me with Thy
vision.

Peace and tranquillity are conditions prece-

dent to any spiritual realization. Spiritual struggle is the march from darkness (ignorance) to light (illumination), i.e. from *tamas* (blackness) to *sattva* (whiteness or colourlessness). The blue tint, being just the intermediate hue between the black and the white, is the most appropriate emblem for a tranquil mind or ethereal beatitude. Colourlessness and transparency are the qualities, if it can be said, of the Absolute. All the virtues of great peace and tranquillity, such as bliss, non-attachment, dispassion, are embedded in the various shades of the blue. Viṣṇu of etheric immanence is blue in complexion, while Brahmā of the most dynamic creativeness is red, and Śiva, the paragon of yogic constitution, is of the dazzling hue of a colourless crystal. Śiva's throat, with the *kālakūṭa* poison, necessary to destroy all grossness and sin of worlds, is called Śrīkaṅṭha, an auspicious neck. The peacock is the sublime embodiment of beauty and grace; and every shade of the blue is found in its make-up. This bespeaks itself, symbolically, of some level or other of the spirituality or beatitude attained. The white swan transfigures the attainment of Paramapadavī (Brahmanhood).

Not much of aesthetic sensibility is needed to realize how appropriate the image of the peacock dancing on the eve of the breaking of the monsoon is for the glamorous Naṭarāja. The flow of the Lord's grace over a yearning devotee is akin to the blissful shower of rain over parched earth. The deep blue tufts of the bird's crest are truly like the rain-charged clouds; and the snake-ornament (*bhujāṅga-valaya*) playfully dangling from the Lord's body is nowise dissimilar to the live snake with which the peacock is seen at play during its own dance. The streaming tresses of the Lord decked here and there with the *nīpa* and *kalpaka* blossom, and filigreed against the skies, resemble and enspell people to the same extent as the softly tinted, blue-eyed, tail-end feathers of the bird spread out fanwise during its play. Both the Lord and the bird are blue-necked, and their dwellings are in mountainous regions. On seeing the rain-cloud, the bird shuffles out

to dance; while the Lord does His own ecstatic one on seeing His beloved Pārvatī, who bears the blue of the monsoon cloud in Her complexion. Could there be more rapturous vignettes of the Lord than of verses 46, 48, and 55, or humbler portraits of the poet himself than in verses 85 and 90, of *Śivānandalaharī*? For instance,

There is indeed a high mansion begemmed
At Thy lotus feet of gentle red. They are
floodlit
With their own shine, and that of their
crescent nails,
And that of the silvern rays of the waxing
moon
Of Thy crown. Thy feet are ever tended
By the swannery of evolved souls. (*ibid.*, 46)

IV

It is to the inexhaustible motherhood of the Divine, to Pārvatī, that *Saundaryalaharī* (The Wave of Beauty) is addressed. This hymn, like Śrī Mūka's *Pañcaśatī*, is the most venerated and adored. For aught that may be said, Śrī Śaṅkara and Śrī Mūka have the same sublime devotional vein in them.

The hymn is a glorification of divine Beauty through its earthly prototypes in all their details of physical charm and being. It has its basis in Śāktism, where the Mother as the primal Energy assumes the functions of creation, preservation, and destruction of worlds. Without Her, the manifestations of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara cannot take place. She is therefore the source of Being and Becoming to both gods and men. It is in this light that Śrī Śaṅkara regards the manifestations of the Devī as Kālī, Bhavānī, Pārvatī, Umā, and Śaṅkarī. He has dealt with Her beauty not in the physical erotic sense, but in the highly etherealized conception of *ṛta* or harmony both in the biological and psychical realms; for She

Suckest dry the nectar from the moon
Sustaining the universe, a lotus-flower,
And stealest into it again serpent-wise,
Bathing the worlds with the nectar-flow
From Her lotus-feet, the adored of Gods.
(*Saundaryalaharī*, 10)

'She is God's body; and the sun and the moon are Her twin breasts, Her two eyes, and Her twin ear-rings.' Thus the poem is a praise of the quintessential beauty of the Mother of the Universe in lines that shimmer with the white heat of the loftiest imagination and a realization of the 'container-form' of All (*ibid.*, 32).

The Devī pictured to us by Śrī Śaṅkara is the highly ethereal Spirit who is absorbed in the creation of beauty through Her own supersensuous elements. This beauty seems to be the bait employed by the Master-Angler to draw up the fish of the erring from out of the waters of *saṁsāra* and unto Himself. This is the 'erotic' sense of Śrī Śaṅkara's, contradistinguished from that of either Amaruka or even of Kālidāsa. As Śrī Śaṅkara intends it, he would

Like the sweet *cakora*-wise
... drink ever the moonlight
Of Truth and Bliss, that flows
From the One Being, compounded
Of the Devī and Her Lord. (*ibid.*, 37)

Thus he, the protagonist of Nirguṇa Brahman, through *saguṇopāsanā*, appeals for the grace of the Absolute.

Many of the poetized portraits of the Devī in this hymn celebrate the suprasensuous charm of Her limbs, one by one, and of Her ethereal personality. Her movements, Her poses, Her jewelry, and the different shades of the red hue aglow on Her face, hands, lips, bosom, eyes, nails, etc. are all symbolic of Her inimitable grace that can alone harp concord into discord. There is a passionate vein of Advaitism in all these beatific delineations; for, though the Vedāntins call Her Lakṣmī, Vāṇī, and Pārvatī, She is none of these. In sooth, She is the moony-crescent

Of all knowledge adoring the crown
Of Parabrahman, the One Lord of worlds.
She is also the 'divine mistress of illusion', through the filmy shades of which men see Her different (*ibid.*, 97).

The hymn is full of ecstatic addresses to the Devī, an example of which may here be given, an over-all picture of Her as it were:

O Devī!
 With the golden girdle tinkling in Thy waist,
 That is slim and arched like the crescent
 moon's, ...
 With face refulgent like the autumn moon's,
 And armed with goad, arrows, *pāśa*, and
 bow,
 And with the *raudra* spirit of Śiva
 Who slew the *tripurāsuras* fearful,
 May Thou show Thyself, and to our eyes be
 bound. (*ibid.*, 7)

This is indeed a meditative piece (*dhyāna*).
 To Śrī Śaṅkara, physical beauty is *kāmic*,
 in the sense that it is the basis of all creation.
 The description of each part of the Devī's
 person is a 'gem of the purest ray serene'. The
 roseateness of Her body is neither the simple
 red nor the red of the rose. It is the happy
 blend of rose, the pink of lotus, and the chrome
 of the virgin gold. It is a transparent haze
 that pierces through the 'blanket' of Śiva's
 transparency. It bathes the worlds with the
 liquid radiance of the baby sun at morn, light-
 ing up the countless veils of pearly twilight.
 Her neck cranes out

Like the flexile stalk of lotus, bearing light
 The lotus of Her resplendent face (*ibid.*, 68)
 when She lifts it to Her Lord's. The neck is
 the seat of sound; and the three creeping lines
 therein, resembling the three black-beaded
 strings of *maṅgala-sūtra*, are also symbolic of
 the primal Nāda in its triune *sthāyis* (scales)
 of *ṣaḍja*, *madhyama*, and *gāndhāra* (*ibid.*, 69).
 The three lines on Her abdomen are gentle
 creepers like the cardamom tendrils.

Śrī Śaṅkara's metaphors have sweet mythol-
 ogies of their own. The navel is both an
 erotic and a yogic centre. To him, it is as
 much an essential item of woman's beauty as
 her face. A deep navel magnetizes him.
 While adverting to the Devī's navel, Śrī Śaṅ-
 kara suggests its unplumbed depth in the fol-
 lowing episodes:

When Śiva with the fire of His third eye
 burnt
 Cupid, he for asylum ran and hid
 Deep down in Thine navel, O Mother! ...

Like Gaṅgā's whirlpool Thy navel is deep;
 It is the fertile bed for the creeper of that
 hair-line
 Which buds into spheres of Thy golden
 breasts;
 It is Agni's sacrificial pit from which
 Cupid's fire flares up; and it's the palace
 Of Ratī's romantic airs, and delight's deepest
 cave
 To which Thy Lord Śiva ever adjourns.
 (*ibid.*, 76-78)

The faint and fragile hair-line, which starts
 from between the breasts and culminates in the
 navel, is dark like the waters of the Yamunā,
 and is bewitching a lover. Out of the fullness
 of the breasts that press each other so hard
 that no room is left between them, and out
 of the fact that the Devī's breasts are founts
 of the purificatory nectar, by drinking which
 Her sons, the auspicious Vināyaka and
 Kumāra, remained innocent of passion and its
 ills, the poet has woven this lovely tale of the
 hair-line:

The dark nymph Yamunā finds it hard
 To pierce her way through Thy hill-like
 breasts;
 She, however, succeeds at last, and comes
 through
 In a faint dark line of hair, and refuge
 finds
 In the mauvish depths of Thy navel, O
 Mother! (*ibid.*, 77)

Could there be a more pious sanctification of
 human parts? Her eyes are similarly sancti-
 fied. They are large and luminous like the
 petals of a white lotus. From out of them
 flow the three beneficent streams, Śoṇā (red),
 Gaṅgā (white), and Yamunā (black), purify-
 ing our mortal existence.

In fine, it is the Motherhood of God that
 has informed this glorification of divine Beauty
 in *Saundaryalaharī*. If the function of art be,
 as Oscar Wilde has beautifully put it, 'to stir
 the most divine and remote of the chords which
 make music in our soul', these twin hymns of
 Śrī Śaṅkara have not failed in that purpose.

(To be continued)

VEDĀNTA AS A SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY—3

BY DR. PRAVAS JIVAN CHAUDHURY

(Continued from April issue)

6. THE THIRD AND FINAL STAGE OF SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY

(i) *The Main Principle: The Dream Analogy*

To improve the situation discussed in the last section, we may conceive God's mind as our real and fundamental mind, our empirical minds being modes of it, as one's dream mind is a mode of one's waking mind. So that this philosophical theory replaces the analogy of the telepathic hallucination by auto-suggestion found in dreams and imaginative recreations.

When one catches oneself dreaming, as it happens when one just rises from one's dream, or one's temporary fantasy-thinking or day-dreaming into which one slips even in the midst of one's work, one is aware of two minds in one's self. One mind causes certain perceptions in the other which takes them for given realities, while the former mind enjoys them from behind and remembers them when they are gone with the dissolution of the dream and the dream mind. The dream mind, for instance, blindly and passively suffers the pleasure and pain, the hopes and fears of the dream world; but the individual waking mind, which is not really asleep or quenched during the dream, and which excites the dream objects, often with elaborate artistry, subtly and actively enjoys the sufferings of the dream mind. This interpretation of the phenomenon of the dream may be confirmed by a little introspection, and the modern theory of dreams as wishful thinking supports it.

Again, the fact that we are sometimes struck by some extreme absurdity of a dream situation, and begin to doubt it even in the dream and eventually wake up, and the fact that we

can wake up from sleep at an intended time support our theory of two minds involved in the dream. Now, these two minds are but two aspects of a single mind, one the original waking mind and the other its dream mode. The mind in a dream state assumes a self-forgetful and passive mode, takes the self-projected objects for real ones, and suffers the feelings associated with them, instead of enjoying them as fun. Something of this kind occurs in our aesthetic state also, when we are said to enjoy disinterestedly the objects and feelings depicted in some piece of art. The duality of our mind in such a situation is very manifest, for we both weep for and delight in the sufferings of a tragic hero in a theatre. We do not rush to help the hero on the stage, for we are aware that it is a make-believe affair, yet we are not totally indifferent to him. We have two modes of awareness in one person or two selves in one body. They are not wholly separate, rather one is the assumed mode of the other.

We can now think in an analogical manner of the universal mind, said to be causing perceptions in our minds, as immanent in us, our individual minds being so many assumed modes, largely unself-conscious. So that the difficulty, felt in the second stage of our philosophic venture, about the externality of the cosmic mind is overcome. Again, the charge of duplication of the perceptual objects by means of God's ideas is avoided, for now our own mind, so to speak, projects the perceptual world directly without the mediation of the ideas. Moreover, some crucial facts support this theory rather than the theistic one.

We can well imagine that the degree of the unself-consciousness of the cosmic spirit in its

assumed modes may vary with the latter, so that while some individuals may be quite unaware of the world being their own projection, others may have an awareness in various degrees of this situation. Now, while many saints and philosophers felt and spoke of their utter dependence on God for everything, there have been many, particularly in the East, who realized a sense of identity with God. The Upaniṣads have affirmed this identity between the individual and the universal Spirit. 'Thou art That' is the message of the Upaniṣads. Śaṅkara, Madhusūdana, and other thinkers of the Advaita school have sought to strengthen this message with rational arguments, while a long line of saints have claimed to have realized its truth. Rabindranath Tagore, the poet-philosopher of modern India, believed in and sang of the God-man (Nara-Nārāyaṇa) with the Bāuls of Bengal, a sect of mendicant friars. He rightly commented on the Christian faith that the absolute transcendence of God over man and the world is not that which Christ and other Christian mystics preached. Christ says, 'I and my Father are one'; and St. Anselm writes of 'the God-man who is necessary for salvation of man and who cannot be made by the conversion of the one into the other or the co-mixture of both into a third, defacing both', and stresses that 'the same person shall be perfect God and perfect man'. It seems that the experience of God as a transfiguration, and not a transportation from the finite and the temporal to the infinite and the eternal, from becoming to being, is what the Jews originally believed in. The Greeks, particularly the Platonists, changed this original faith in an immanent God.

Further supports of our theory are provided by instances of supernormal mental powers, such as extra-sensory perception, precognition, thought-reading, thought-transference, hypnotism, and psycho-kinesis. One eminent worker in para-psychology, which deals with such phenomena, ends his book with the remark that the possibility of mystical divine union and of immortality springs from the very nature of

human personality (G. N. Tyrrell, *The Personality of Man*).

(ii) *The Nature and Scope of This Theory*

We must not be dogmatic and ontological in this theory, which is offered in a scientific spirit as a postulate, picturable on the analogy of our dreams and aesthetic experience, and more or less adequate in co-ordinating and understanding our experience. The mystical experiences mentioned above are only partially confirmatory of our hypothesis, which may have to be revised in the light of some fresh and more pervasive kind of experience. The experience of the mystics cannot settle the issue, for who can tell that they touched the bottom of experience?

Seen in the light of this philosophical theory, the scientific quest is but after structures or plans of things that are projected by our own essential or foundational mind which prompts and enjoys this quest from behind. There is no external substance to be discovered as realized by modern scientists. The older ones, therefore, were more self-forgetful modes of our over-mind. The gradual awareness on the part of modern scientists about the illusory nature of substance, of causality, of absolute and infinite space and time, and of absolute determinacy and completeness of a world-picture, is to be interpreted in our philosophy as a manifestation of a gradual self-recollection of the cosmic spirit through them. The spirit comes back to its own self in the scientist as he reflects upon his discipline. In fact, philosophic reflection of the right sort, which seeks to delve into our obvious experiences to expose their underlying hidden structures and to picture them by suitable analogies or models, is, in this philosophy, to be interpreted as the rising of the cosmic spirit in the reflective philosophers from the dream of life. 'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting', said Wordsworth; and Plato, too, believed in such a state of affairs. Empirical knowledge is thus a process of self-awareness on the part of the self-oblivious spirit, which loves to lose itself into a world of dream to

beguile itself, but which is never totally lost, and loves to come back by stages to its original self-awareness. The scientists and the philosophers represent in their intellectual search the different degrees of the awakening of the spirit. We shall see in the sequel how the moral, aesthetic, and religious men also represent in their activities the same process of awakening, in which, we think, consists the cultural advance of humanity.

The sceptical tendency in modern scientific thought, which does not have faith in strict determinism, substance, certainty and completeness of empirical knowledge, is the mark of true insight in the thinkers who are rising to the awareness of the essential freedom of the cosmic mind immanent in them. This mind, being rational and purposive, as we postulate, explains the marvellous order and uniformities in the worldly phenomena, but it being a free creative spirit, there is no real necessity behind the regularities observed in nature and no bar against contingency and spontaneity. Freedom and chance are thus basic features, while necessity and rule, which science adopts as its methodological presuppositions, are only provisional, though pervasive, aspects of the world. These conceptual schemes of science or categories of the empirical mind are no more than mental habits, as Hume would maintain, and they may change with different cultures or stages of evolution of the mind. Kant's idea of a fixed human nature or rationality and, so, of permanent and necessary categories, is a piece of dogma unsupported by our experience and critical thought. The categories are mental moulds into which our experience is put as it is received by our mind, and, as such, they must be relative and not absolute. The revision of the basic categories of thought in modern science supports this view about them and brings us at their edge to conceive of a cosmic mind that is above the categories and creative of them. This mind is unspeakable in empirical terms; it is the formless spirit or Brahman of the Upaniṣads, who is described as the eternal, the pure, the free, and as full

of extraordinary bliss. These characters are not empirical. We are led to think of them as characteristics of the cosmic spirit immanent in us, because this spirit, as the author of all empirical characters, cannot itself be the subject of any one of them. The characters attributed to Brahman in the Upaniṣads have their faint analogies in our empirical experience, but they have to be conceived as of a transcendental order.

(iii) *The Relation of This Philosophy to Traditional Mysticism*

The basic tenets of our scientific philosophy agree with those of the Upaniṣads and some other mystical faiths. Of course, we believe in a non-dualistic interpretation of the Upaniṣads, such as is offered by Śaṅkara and his followers, including Swami Vivekananda of modern India.

The method we have followed in our philosophical inquiry is, positively, that of analogy, and negatively, that of cancelling the analogy to posit a non-empirical entity. This is the method of science at an advanced stage, where we have to understand some complex phenomena with the postulate of a suitable model, and yet have to reject almost all the characters of the postulated entity that our analogical or pictorial thinking prompts us to attribute to it. The case of the electron or the wave in new quantum mechanics is in point. This is also more or less the method followed by Aquinas, who employed both analogy and the way of negation. This is also the implicit method of the Upaniṣadic seers, who, while engaged in explaining their insights to us, lead us to the thought of an absolute spirit on the analogy of empirical objects, only to cancel the empirical features in it thus introduced for the sake of exposition only. This procedure is known in Vedānta philosophy as *adhyāropāpavāda*, meaning figurative superimposition followed by subsequent negation.

Thus Brahman is said to be known in a sense, but not known in another. Brahman is known, as the *Kena Upaniṣad* (II. 4) says, in

every empirical knowledge as its condition; and Aquinas, too, wrote, 'All cognitive agents know God implicitly in everything they know' (*De Veritate*). Here the analogy of a support to a thing is implicitly assumed. Brahman is not known as an ordinary thing is known, but it is also not unknown for that reason. We know the transempirical feature of the world on the analogy of an empirical situation, with the awareness that it is but an analogical knowledge that we have and that the entity or principle itself is never known in its own nature. Brahman is conceived of on the analogy of our own mind that works our dreams from behind. But we cannot really know, in the strict sense of direct verificatory acquaintance, this cosmic principle and its characters, like freedom, creativity, purity, and bliss.

We cannot understand by the analogy of our dream situation how the cosmic mind adopts a dream mode in which every dream mind feels itself to be conscious. In our dreams, we cannot speak of other persons we dream about to be conscious beings. So that the cosmic mind has to be thought of to a large extent abstractly without any analogy from our familiar experience. We can have very remote analogy from the artistic activity of a dramatist, who, while writing a play, may be said to be at once assuming the roles of various characters, which are so many diverse modes or poses of one single person underlying them. We can also think of the case of a multiple personality in this connection. Because of this transcendent character of the cosmic principle, the Upaniṣadic seers and the Vedāntic philosophers stress the need of a direct verification of it in some extraordinary kind of experience.

As explained at the outset, we do not attach much importance to this part of the programme, for ours is a scientific philosophy, where the remote possibility of direct verification of our postulated entities does not increase the validity of the theory, which mainly rests on its adequacy as an explanatory principle. Though we do not deny this possibility of direct verification and also the psycho-social need for

it, yet we do not think that we can have for our theory as much inter-subjective verification as we have for public objects. So that we, as scientific philosophers, must be content with the adequacy and plausibility of our theory, which can never be asserted as a final truth and reflective of some invariant ontological trait of nature. In keeping with the scientific method and spirit, the philosophic theory of the cosmic mind immanent in our individual minds is but an abstract postulate, having only a faint and remote analogy in our experience, which is to be understood and validated in terms of the observable features of the world that appear to be co-ordinated and explained by this postulate. It is meaningful by virtue of the above situation, and so in a special and restricted sense only. It is certainly meaningless in the sense of direct and complete verifiability or intuitability.

The Vedic mystics might have meant by the ontological being or reality of Brahman their absolute faith in Brahman as the explanatory principle of the universe and in the extreme good of humanity in accepting this principle. So that the obviously descriptive statements in the indicative mood in regard to the principle may be taken to stand really for descriptions of the personal faith of the mystics and of their value judgements and prescriptions. There is a controversy within the Upaniṣadic tradition itself over the question whether the aphoristic statements of the seers that read like statements of facts are to be taken in their literal sense or as injunctions. Śāṅkara and other non-dualistic interpreters, whom we have followed in our reading of a non-dualistic philosophy in the Upaniṣads, have taken them in the literal and descriptive sense, thus making out of them an ontology. But this would make the Vedic seers and the Vedānta philosophers dogmatic, while a deontological and valuational interpretation put on the aphorisms of the seers regarding the ultimate principle would make them more open-minded. However, we need not concern ourselves much with this historical matter, and would rather

hold in a neutral manner that, whatever the Vedic seers and the Vedānta philosophers might have really meant, we can always separate the two aspects of their teachings, one expressive of their personal experiences, faith, ontological assertion, and valuational judgement and prescriptions; and the other expressive of their strictly rational or scientific approach to the philosophical problem.

We believe that, from the point of view of an intellectual philosophy, which like science inquires into the secret of nature in a very open manner, resting on nothing but the ordinary experience of mankind in general, the second aspect of the teachings of the Vedic seers and the Vedānta thinkers is more significant. From this point of view, which is rather pedestrian, the extraordinary realizations and value-preferences and injunctions of some particular individuals, howsoever great otherwise, cannot contribute much to the validity of a principle, which must be treated as a theory of greater or less acceptability by virtue of its relative adequacy in correlating and explaining certain observable features of our experience. The modern scientist admits an element of choice and decision involved in the acceptance of a particular theory, which has, actually or possibly, several alternatives. So that he cannot assert his own theory as an objective truth, but only as a proposal or best postulate to be judged by others in terms of its adequacy or fruitfulness in comprehending our experience. A scientific statement can be shown to be but a proposal or prescription in the disguise of an assertion of a state of affairs, and the theory proposed has a wide fringe of vagueness and choice, in the sense that it is capable of further definition and development in the light of fresh facts and one's sense of relevancy of, or selective emphasis on, them in connecting them with the theory. Any scientific concept is thus open-textured, capable of re-definition. We have already noticed this aspect of science in the earlier parts of this essay.

We thus see that, though we do not claim any absolute certitude or truth for our philos-

ophy, we can consider it as more reasonable than other philosophies which are not constructed, in the spirit of science, on the basis of a more inter-subjectively acceptable experience and methodology. Our scientific philosophy thus seems to be more readily and universally acceptable than any other philosophy which banks too much on other kinds of experience and methods than those of science. And, fortunately for us, our philosophy raised on science in a very open and straightforward manner agrees with the basic teachings of the Vedic seers and the Vedānta thinkers. Those teachings and the tenets of our own philosophy thus support each other.

(iv) *The Relation of This Philosophy to Our Cultural Disciplines*

We have already noted that scientific and philosophical inquiry, which marks the evolution of the human mind, appears in the light of our philosophy to be a gradual awakening of the cosmic mind in us. It is the mind's re-collecting of its own creations. Nescience is a forgetting and science is reminiscence. For how can we know anything which is utterly foreign to us? Now, just as the cultivation of science and philosophy marks the progress of our mind from sleep to waking, so does the cultivation of arts, morals, and religion. Artistic activity consists essentially in the disinterested contemplation of sensuous qualities and forms of things and of the emotive attitudes associated with human life. This means that the artist considers the world in a detached, impersonal manner with regard to its human aspect. Art humanizes nature, as Wordsworth told us; and we see that it is universal humanity with which the artist approaches and tinges nature. Moreover, the artist seeks to communicate to others his artistic inventions containing his insights into the human significance of the world, and thus his art unites him with others and his appreciators with one another. So that art unites mankind, as Tolstoy told us. Now, this impersonality and the sense of fraternity with the world humanized and intimate-

ly relished through art, and a feeling of oneness with others effected by it, are certainly conducive to our realizing the truth that the world of things and human beings is but the creation of our essential self. 'Beauty is the bridge between man and nature', said Tagore; and art as an expression of beauty must be helping us to the awareness of the essential oneness of ourselves and the world of objects. So art is an instrument of true culture, which, in our philosophy, consists in awakening us from the dream of life to an awareness of the world as our own imaginative play, and, so, to perfect knowledge, freedom, and power.

The moralist also represents an upward movement of our mind towards awakening from this dream of life. He, too, like the artist, curbs his individual self to go beyond it in sympathy and love to commune with others. Morality is self-socialization; it is a progress towards a realization of the highest truth about nature and life. Our capacity to take up the position of others and to share their joys and sorrows, as if they are ours, is an implicit proof of the validity of our philosophical position. Our individual selves, which are but dream modes of some one cosmic self, are not really self-subsisting entities, but derived ones; and this is shown in such moral experiences, as well as artistic ones, where our individual selves seem to burst their boundaries and melt into each other. So that moral practices and attainments are preludes to further spiritual progress, leading to the final awakening of the lower dream self to the higher wakeful one, the cosmic creative self.

Similarly, religion, in its essential form, being the expression of our yearning for unity with the spirit that creates and governs the world, is a sign of our awakening. Religious attainment is said to be a home-coming, and the God of religion is but the creative spirit of nature, whom the devotee seeks to realize as his very own. Many institutionalized religions regard God as our father, and they hold that we are as much dear and necessary to Him as He is to us. He dwells in us, and we dwell in Him.

This is a very near approach to the monistic theory we have advanced here, which thus explains and justifies religion in terms of its transcendental psychology, just as it does other cultural disciplines, namely, science, philosophy, art, and morality. Thus, religious practice, in its essential aspect and purified of its many affectations, is an important form of human culture.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

We believe, and we have shown elsewhere, that this philosophy can also successfully answer the philosophical questions about the origin and nature of knowledge, about materialism *versus* idealism in metaphysics, and about the freedom and immortality of the self.

The intelligent reader of this essay, who may be interested in such more technical problems of philosophy, may himself guess our answers in the light of what he has learned about our fundamental theory. He can also settle for himself certain other questions that may arise in connection with our philosophy, for instance, the question of placement of actual dreams in our philosophical scheme. We have constructed our theory on the partial analogy of our dream experiences, but what about them? We may indicate briefly that they are generally expressions of our desires not finding expression in our waking life. Just as we do not ordinarily relish much of our waking experiences of life, which are (as said in our philosophy) enjoyed subtly from behind by our inner self, similarly much of our dream experiences appear unpleasant in the dream state, but are relished by our individual self. This can be certified by introspection. But there are many experiences and such marvellous constructions, and also some precognitive dreams, that cannot be owned by the individual self and must be ascribed to the cosmic self. This self, then, projects one order of objects to perceive in one dream mode, which is our waking state, and another order of objects to perceive in a second degree dream mode. Of the latter objects, however, some *appear* to be produced and

enjoyed by the individual mind from behind. This creative activity and self-expression and aesthetic enjoyment of the individual self in dreams are only apparent and derivative from an ultimate point of view. The empirically observed creativity in, and enjoyment of, dreams with regard to the individual self forms the basis of our theory of the cosmic self as creative and enjoying, but, if the theory is accepted, the above characters of the individual self become illusory. So that we come to the interesting conclusion that, if our philosophical theory is true, then the empirical fact that forms the basis and working model of this theory is but an appearance. But the cosmic mind can well be credited with creating that appearance in our individual minds, in order that there may be a recollection or coming back of the individual self to the original one. The dream experience thus plays an important role in our life. By reflecting on it, we can very easily grasp the secret of our world and life and, so, eventually rise from the dream of life.

Another question that may arise in the mind of our readers and prove disturbing is related to the element of subjectivity that we have admitted in our philosophy, in spite of its being constructed on the basis of our ordinary public experience and its following the most acceptable method, that of science. This subjectivity is undeniable, for, even in advanced science, there is no clear inter-subjective judgement to be had on the relative adequacy of a theory in respect of others. The principles of logical simplicity and comprehension are not sufficiently clear and unambiguous as working rules. So that complete objectivity is an unattainable ideal in science and scientific philosophy. But this element of subjectivity and freedom cannot upset a scientific philosopher, who must admit that the cosmic spirit that is coming to its own in our philosophic enterprise cannot be expected to be working uniformly in every mind. So, while some minds may be very quick and clear in their philosophic insights, others may be slow and confused. Thus disagreements are apt to be there in our philosoph-

ical conclusions. Our own philosophy is offered as a tentative proposal, and we do not know how far it will receive acceptance from others. Various elements of taste, temperament, and cultural traits enter into one's philosophical construction, where, as we noted earlier, a sense of relevancy of facts or selective emphasis plays an important role. We cannot seize and eliminate all these underlying factors that influence our philosophical construction. Therefore it is that not argument nor coercion of any kind, but friendly persuasion should be the mode of philosophical communication. Our own method of philosophy starts from the common experience of man and follows the most universally acceptable scientific method in order to attain inter-subjective validity, and we are aware of the subjective elements entering in our philosophy. We only hope that others will come to agree with it and thus reinforce our faith in our free choice and preference involved in our philosophy. Viewed in the light of this philosophy itself, our belief in a social criterion of truth and, so, adoption of the scientific method, and our hope for inter-personal acceptance of our theory, imply a belief that the cosmic spirit stages a come back through a large section of intellectual beings, who will sooner or later come to appreciate our theory that leads one's thought to this spirit beyond the veil of this dream or *māyā*.

Of course, we do not mean to say that our philosophy will have to be tested for its truth by the judgement of *all* sorts of people. Such a test cannot be demanded. A certain minimum agreement in aims and attitudes of life must be granted in persons in order that they may at all proceed to discuss fruitfully the issue we have raised in our philosophy here. We cannot possibly argue with and persuade gross materialists or radical positivists, who will not catch any sense in our deliberations. Thus viewed, truth is subjective to some extent, and total universality or social validity is an impossible ideal. In terms of our own philosophy, we will describe this situation as the result of the love of diversity of the cosmic

spirit, which works so uniformly in many spheres, and yet produces so much diversity in the world, rare and uncommon things, accidents and contrary movements. So that, while some people are seen steadily to move towards an awareness of the spiritual truths and to their salvation, thus representing the withdrawal or come back on the part of the cosmic spirit from its dream state, others are sinking into the dream state. This mystery cannot be described in our traditional logic, for how can the same spirit both rise from and sink into its dream mode, or how can one assume many modes at once? Here, we are faced with the problem of revising our traditional logic to suit our purposes; and in this matter, we can be guided by the example in recent physics. For the electron, too, of quantum mechanics seems to behave in a manner that can be described only in a three-valued logic and not in the two-valued 'either—or' one. In other words, the electron can be said to be at some particular place and yet not be exactly there, for it has a probability of being located there. Our cosmic spirit or Brahman can be lost in a dream mode in some individuals who are blind worldly people, opaque to any spiritual light, while it can be awakening at the same time in other people who are on the way to true enlightenment. We must note, however, that strictly speaking no one is totally blind and opaque, for every individual mind is after all a mode of the cosmic spirit, which may at any time choose to rise from the dream. Salvation of the individual self, thus, may be quite sudden or accidental, without any effort or preparation on his part.

In the light of our philosophy, then, everything we find in the universe is as it has been willed by Brahman and, so, good and beautiful from an ultimate point of view. Moreover, we individuals are but created and ruled by this cosmic will. So that no effort may be made by us to improve the state of things. But one must realize this ultimate truth and identify oneself with Brahman itself to be quite content with the world about oneself. One will

then have no duty, but only a contemplative joy in one's life that will be like a dream. But short of this complete realization of the philosophic truth, one must feel the urge to act upon one's environment in order to change it. So that one must do honestly what one feels to be one's duty. To sit idle and take things as they are, to tolerate what one really believes to be evil, but insincerely calls passing shadows or illusions, is intellectual dishonesty and moral cowardice. One must rise to the highest point of our philosophical truth through the intermediate stages of mental culture that lead one from the ordinary mental outlook to the extraordinary one.

Thus, though we have not laid any stress on the matter of direct verification of our theory in one's experience for the reasons indicated before, namely, this experience must be of an extraordinary sort so far very difficult to obtain and even imagine in a sufficient measure by a good number of persons, yet such a verification is necessary for the application of this philosophy. For action, one needs firm personal faith in some world-view or philosophy, and this faith can be generated by a first-hand realization of the latter, which may first be taken as a theory with some provisional antecedent faith. The realization of the Vedic philosophy through *sādhana* has been stressed by all the Vedic seers and the Vedānta philosophers, and we whole-heartedly support them. Only, we would like to point out that, from our scientific point of view, this subsequent verification in personal experience, and, so, any possible falsification, too, has very little to influence the matter of validity of the theory, which rests on its adequacy as a suitable framework of concepts to co-ordinate and explain very indirectly some of the marked features of our experience. The verification or falsification is socio-psychologically significant for this simple reason that a theory, whether in science or in philosophy, is not held by the human mind in a purely theoretical attitude to satisfy one's intellectual curiosity only, rather it is

quickly employed as a guide to action. Now, as we saw above, it is not fair and proper to put our philosophic theory to practice without a thorough realization of it, for it may then serve to justify one's dull inaction and cowardly submission to what one knows to be evil. We submit here that the realization of the truth of our philosophy or Vedānta can

come gradually, as we honestly act and suffer in the world according to our best lights, provided we keep our minds constantly observant, reflective, and open. It is thus that the mind is gradually lifted to a rarefied state and one gains the extraordinary vision of the principle that one initially entertained as a plausible theory.

ŚRĪ-BHĀSYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from previous issue)

CHAPTER III

SECTION II

In the previous section, the waking state of the soul, its transmigration to different spheres and return to this world, and its consequent sufferings in the state of bondage were described in order to engender a spirit of renunciation. Now, in order to create a desire to realize the Lord, the present section deals with the infinite auspicious qualities of the Lord, who is free from all imperfections.

In order to show the soul's imperfections further from its suffering in the dream state also, as well as to show the Lord's wonderful power in creating the dream world for the enjoyment of the particular soul, the first topic is begun. Though the dream state of the soul, which shows its imperfections like its waking state, ought to have reasonably been included in the previous section dealing with the waking state, yet, as the topic discusses the wonderful power of the Lord, it is quite in the fitness of things to include this dream state in this section, which deals with the Lord's auspicious qualities.

TOPIC I

THE SOUL IN THE DREAM STATE

सन्ध्ये सृष्टिराह हि ॥३१२१॥

1. In the intermediate state (i.e. the dream state) creation (is by the soul), because (the Śruti) says so.

The Śruti says, 'There are no chariots, nor horses to be yoked to them, nor roads there, but he himself creates the chariots, horses, roads, etc. . . . For he is the agent' (*Br.U.*, IV.3.10). The question is whether this creation is by the individual soul or by the supreme Lord. The intermediate state refers to the state of dream, for the Śruti says, 'The dream state, which is the third, is at the junction of the two' (*Br.U.*, IV.3.9). In this state, the creation is by the soul, for the Śruti says, 'He is the agent', by which the soul is referred to.

निर्मातारं चैके पुत्रादयश्च ॥३१२२॥

2. And some (recensions state the individual

self to be) the creator and (the objects of desires there stand for) sons etc.

Some *śākhās* or Vedic recensions clearly say that the soul is the creator of dream objects. 'He who is awake in us shaping objects of desire (*kāmas*) while we are asleep' (*Ka.U.*, II.2.8). '*Kāmas*' does not mean mere desires, but objects of desires like sons etc., as can be gathered from the previous texts: 'Ask for all *kāmas* according to your wish' (*Ka.U.*, I.1.25); 'Ask for sons and grandsons that will be centenarians' (*Ka.U.*, I.1.23).

मायामात्रं तु कात्स्न्येनानभिव्यक्तस्वरूपत्वात् ॥३।२।३॥

3. But it is mere *Māyā*, on account of its (soul's) true nature not being manifest fully.

'But' refutes the view of the previous two *sūtras*.

The creation in dreams is by the Lord, and it is His *Māyā* only. As the dream world is experienced only by a particular soul, and lasts for some time only, this creation is wonderful; in this sense, it is called *Māyā*, but it is not illusion. True will etc., the natural traits of the soul, are manifest only in the state of perfection and not in the state of bondage or *samsāra*. Therefore it is not possible for the soul in bondage to create objects in dreams. The person mentioned in *Br.U.*, IV.3.10 and *Ka.U.*, II.2.8 is not the soul, but the supreme Self, as His characteristics are referred to both at the beginning and at the end of the text, 'He who is awake in us, and goes on creating desirable things even when the senses fall asleep, is pure. He is Brahman. . . . All the worlds are fixed in Him; none can transcend Him. That is that' (*Ka.U.*, II.2.8). So, we have to take, in conformity with this text, that *Br.U.*, IV.3.10 also refers to the supreme Person.

If in its real nature the individual self is free from all imperfections, then why does it not manifest itself? The next *sūtra* answers this.

पराभिध्यानात्तु तिरोहितं,

ततो ह्यस्य बन्धविपर्ययौ ॥३।२।४॥

4. But according to the wish of the supreme Lord, it is covered, for from Him (the Lord)

are its (the soul's) bondage and freedom.

The word 'but' refutes the objection. It is according to the wish of the supreme Person that the true nature of the soul is hidden. Due to the sinful *karma* of the soul, its essential nature is hidden by the Lord. That is why the scriptures say that the bondage and release of the soul come from the Lord: 'Whenever he finds freedom from fear and rests in that invisible, bodiless, inexpressible, unsupported Brahman, he reaches the state of fearlessness' (*Tai.U.*, II.7). 'This one indeed enlivens (people)'; 'Out of His fear the wind blows' (*Tai.U.*, II.7, 8).

देहयोगाद्वा सोऽपि ॥३।२।५॥

5. And that (covering of the soul's true nature results) also from its connection with the body.

The covering of the soul's true nature results from its connection with the body made of gross elements or fine elements in the state of creation and dissolution respectively. As its true nature is covered and not manifest, it is not able to create the dream objects. They are created by the Lord for the retribution of the soul and are experienced only by that particular soul. *Ka. U.*, II.2.8 therefore can apply only to the supreme Lord.

सूचकश्च हि श्रुतेराचक्षते च तद्विदः ॥३।२।६॥

6. But yet it serves as an omen according to the Śruti; (and) expert dream-readers also say (thus).

A further reason is given to show that the dream world is not created by the soul. Dreams often forecast coming events, good or ill fortune (*vide Chā. U.*, V.2.8). The expert dream-readers also say that dreams forecast good and evil fortune. If the dream world were the creation of the soul, then it would fashion such dreams only as would forecast good fortune and not ill fortune. Hence, the creation of the dream world proceeds from the Lord only.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Sri Ramakrishna's life was ever attuned to God-knowledge. He pursued only those things that induced the God-idea in him. All the activities of his life were transmuted into acts of worship. This aspect of the Master's life is described in the article 'The Paramahansa and God-knowledge' by Swami Chidbhavananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Tapovanam, Tirupparaiturai, Tiruchi District, Madras State. . . .

A distinguished scholar and author of several books, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D., is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Madras. His article, included in this issue, makes a very instructive study of the 'Contemporary Trends in Indian Philosophy'. . . .

The second part of Sri P. Sama Rao's article on 'The Poetry of Śrī Śaṅkara' deals with the two well-known hymns of Śaṅkarācārya, *Śivānandalaharī* and *Saundaryalaharī*. The first hymn celebrates Śiva, the 'font of all Power'; and the second hymn celebrates Devī, the 'font of all Beauty'. . . .

In the third and concluding part of his article on 'Vedānta as a Scientific Philosophy', which is continued from the April issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*, Dr. Pravas Jivan Chaudhury discusses the third and final stage of scientific philosophy. Here, he presents the Vedāntic theory of the cosmic spirit on the analogy of our dream experience. The world, including our individual lives and minds, is a projection, a dream of the cosmic spirit. The truth of the Vedānta can be realized by moral culture and spiritual practice.

INDIANISM OR BHĀRATA-DHARMA

Human civilization is the growth of millenniums. It is the outcome of the struggles of several segments of humanity to evolve towards a better life. Every people has made some contribution to the sum total of world culture

that man has inherited today, each in its own specialized domain and in a way characteristic of its peculiar self-expression. Each people developed a particular line of thinking and formulated its own *Weltanschauung*—its attitude to life, its way of life, as well as its view of life. Thus the cultural stream of humanity includes the elements of several tributaries that have contributed to its enrichment on the social, ethical, and spiritual planes. The most outstanding among these tributaries may be designated as follows: Indianism or *Bhārata-dharma*, Hellenism, Hebraism, Sinism, Arabism, Europeanism, and Africanism.

The chief characteristics of each of these ways of life, as well as their principal contributions to world culture, have been described by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the distinguished scholar, philologist, and linguist, in a learned paper entitled 'Indianism and Sanskrit', published in the *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* (Volume XXXVIII, parts I-II, pp. 1-33). Regarding the essential characteristics of Indianism or *Bhārata-dharma*, Dr. Chatterji writes:

'Generally, it is admitted that Indianism stands for a belief in an unseen Reality, which is arrived at either by intuitive faith or by intellectual ratiocination, or by reason and faith both. Indianism believes in the oneness of Life and Being, in one single Principle running through the universe. This Principle manifests itself in various ways; and out of a poetic reaction to these manifestations, as they present themselves to the mind of man, arises a beautiful series of myths, that is, stories or legends about the gods and goddesses and their work both in Nature and in the inner Spirit of man. The *summum bonum* in the life of man is the realization of this Principle, which is both innate and transcendent in the universe, in both the macrocosm and the microcosm. This realization is to be made both in man's inner being as well as in the outward behaviour and practices of his life. Indianism also takes note of

this tragic fact that there is sorrow and suffering in this world ; and it is the duty of man to free himself from all sorrow and suffering by either the path of knowledge and self-culture, or of faith, or of good action. This sense of sorrow and suffering has been considered also from a moral point of view ; and within the fold of Indianism has been established, though not as dogma or doctrine requiring allegiance from all, the theories of *karma* and *samsāra*, of actions in life which bring in good or bad results according as they are good or bad, and rebirth or transmigration. There has also developed in Indianism a sense of the sacredness of all life, and its attitude to life in general is marked by a great compassion and sympathy as well as active service and good-doing. The principle of *ahimsā* or non-injury is the negative expression of this sense of sacredness of life ; and on the positive side, it is characterized by *upekṣā* or ignoring evils received, *muditā* or the spirit of graciousness and happiness in all circumstances, *karuṇā* or a feeling of pity and charity, and *maitrī* or a spirit of active friendship by doing good : these are the ways of putting into practice this sense of sacredness of all life in Indianism. There is also the idea that *ṛta* or 'eternal law', or *dharma* which is generally translated as 'righteousness', but which really means 'the principle which holds together the universe', as an expression in this world of the ultimate Reality, forms the background of life and envelopes life ; and according to the Indian way of life, it is the duty of man and society to make this *ṛta* or *dharma* active and fruitful

in every sphere. Two other noteworthy characteristics of Indianism are its note of intellectualism and its spirit of tolerance. The intellectual approach to things is always advocated in the Indian way of thinking ; the commonest word for *man* in Sanskrit, which is an Indo-European inheritance shared also with the Germanic world, *manu* (*mānava*, *manuṣya*), takes note of the human being as a thinking being—*Homo sapiens*. The highest prayer of the Sanskrit world, the *Gāyatrī* verse from the *Ṛg-Veda*, is a prayer for contemplating the glory of the Creator, who is asked to direct our mind or thoughts. And toleration, or respect for other people's ideas, has always been the corner stone of the Indian way of life, when the *Ṛg-Veda* accepted the position that "That which is as a unique Being (*ekam sat*) has been described by different sages in a manifold way (*viprā bahudhā vadanti*)".

This spirit of toleration is the most fascinating feature of Indianism, which is noted for its freedom from dogmatism, bigotry, and exclusiveness, racial, cultural, or religious. Because of this spirit in the atmosphere of India, people belonging to various races and religions have sought shelter in her bosom and thrived on her soil. In the multi-coloured cultural fabric of India are represented the elements of every race or religion that has flourished in this vast country. Indianism or *Bhārata-dharma* is a composite socio-religious culture, in which each of its constituent members, while shining with its own characteristic hue, lends colour and beauty to the total picture as well.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

1. SPINOZA: THE ROAD TO INNER FREEDOM—THE ETHICS. EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY DAGOBART D. RUNES. Pages 209. Price \$3.

2. SPINOZA: THE BOOK OF GOD. EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY DAGOBART D. RUNES. Pages 121. Price \$3.

Both published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16.

Russell describes Spinoza as 'the noblest and the

most lovable of the great philosophers'. Dr. Runes, who happens to be the editor of both the books under review and a lifelong scholar of Spinoza, thinks of him as the 'Philosopher of Modern Times, as Aristotle stood as the Philosopher of Antiquity'. And as Aristotle had his Socrates, or Plotinus his Plato, so Spinoza had his Descartes. *The Road to Inner Freedom* is the logical culmination of the metaphysical, though not of the scientific, side of Descartes's philosophy. And *The Book of God* is a

signpost for *The Road to Inner Freedom*. Not only in his philosophical views, but also in his public life, Spinoza shares much with Descartes. His whole life was tormented with the fear of religious persecution for the simple reason that, like his predecessor, he defended God against atheism. Since Spinoza refused to limit God inside the synagogues and the churches, and saw Him everywhere, or saw all things as His modes, he was branded as an atheist by the pseudo-religious prophets of his age. Recently, respect for his personality has increased to a great extent, but his philosophical works still remain to be widely read. An academician of our age may become impatient with Spinoza's scholasticism, with his geometrical treatment of human actions, desires, and passions, as if they are really lines, planes, and solids. One may even wonder how such a strange idea as to prove these ordinary things through definitions, axioms, and theorems came to Spinoza's mind. However, Dr. Runes has presented Spinoza in such an idiom that even a student who is trained only in the contemporary philosophical technique may find it easy to grasp the philosophical profundity of his system.

1. Dr. Runes's title of Spinoza's *Ethics*—it is not ethics in our sense of the term, as it deals with metaphysics, psychology, and epistemology no less than with ethics—as *The Road to Inner Freedom* seems to me quite justified, as it keeps the moral aim of the philosopher open to our view. He divides the present book into five unnumbered sections: (i) The Origin and Nature of Emotions, (ii) On Human Bondage, (iii) On the Power of Intellect, (iv) On God, and (v) On the Nature and Origin of the Mind. However, in this division, he does not follow the order of Spinoza's original text. Spinoza's starting point is his metaphysics, whereas Dr. Runes begins with psychology. Perhaps, he wants to introduce to his readers simpler concepts in the beginning in order to prepare the ground for bringing in higher metaphysical concepts. Therefore his rearrangement of *Ethics* is in order. Let us see what Spinoza says in this book. What strikes us most in the first section itself is his rigid determinism. Spinoza thinks that the freedom of will and action is an illusion, 'an infant believes that of his own free will he desires milk, ... a drunken man believes that he utters from the free decision of his mind'. But such a rigid determinism has to explain the existence of the ideas of evil and sin. For, if everything is determined, these ideas are also determined. Spinoza explains this difficulty in the next section thus: 'Sin and merit are not attributes which display the nature of mind.' 'The idea of evil is an inadequate knowledge.' 'If the human mind possesses only adequate ideas, it would form no conception of evil.' So to

Spinoza there is perfect order in nature; sin and evil exist because we see things through finite or imperfect understanding. By 'perfect order' here, I do not mean that nature works with an end in view. Spinoza's spiritual determinism can never grant such purposiveness to nature. As he says: 'He does not exist for the sake of an end, so neither does He act for the sake of an end.' I have discussed only one of the many problems presented in the book, which may stimulate further interest of a serious student of philosophy.

2. This book, as Dr. Runes informs us, came to light only a hundred years ago, though it is one of the earliest works of Spinoza. Though it lacks that rigour and abstraction which *Ethics* exhibits, yet it is on a par with it in its philosophical wisdom. Spinoza displays here a great confidence about his views. While finishing the book, he inserted a note to his readers: 'If, on reading this through, you should meet some difficulty about what I state as certain, I beseech you that you should not therefore hasten at once to refute it, before you have pondered it and thought fully enough, and if you do this, I feel sure that you will attain to the enjoyment of the fruits of this tree which you promise yourselves.' The arguments of young Spinoza throughout the book are as persuasive as the arguments of the writer of *Ethics*. It deals with mostly, though not all, subjects discussed in *Ethics*. Here, as in *Ethics*, he cannot conceive of more than one substance, i.e. God. God is not a mere idea; His existence is as necessary a truth as is the triangle's being two-right-angled. Though He has infinite attributes, thought and extension may be described as His proper attributes. By proper attributes, he means that it is through them that we come to know Him in Himself. What strikes me most in this book is the view of Spinoza that not only that one should love God, but that there is no other way except loving Him: 'Many, who are otherwise esteemed as great theologians, assert that if no eternal life resulted from the love of God, then they would seek what is best for themselves, as though they could discover anything better than God. This is just as silly as if a fish were to say, "If no eternal life is to follow this life in the water, then I will leave the water for the land".' As one is determined in other ways, so is one determined to love God.

The Philosophical Library has done a great service to the philosophical world by publishing these books.

SURESH CHANDRA

THE SECRET ORAL TEACHINGS IN TIBETAN BUDDHIST SECTS. BY ALEXANDRA DAVID-NEEL AND LAMA YONGDEN. ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY CAPT. H. N. M. HARDY. Published by

Mahabodhi Society of India, Calcutta 12. Pages 128. Price not mentioned.

Tibetan Buddhism has had a distinguished career since the times of Padmasambhava, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla. Somehow, it gave an appearance of a Tāntric cult to the outside world. Still it was, and is, a living creed; and like every other creed, it has its mystic side. The practical aspect (*sādhanā*) has been a guarded secret, and only the initiated can have a glimpse of it.

In this short monograph, the authors claim to give us the secret teachings orally transmitted from teacher to disciple. A cardinal tenet of this secret teaching is the doctrine of universal flux, which was developed in the Yogācāra school. This doctrine implies interdependent origination and impermanency of all phenomena. Yet these Buddhist sects, we are told, reject the traditional concept of *ālaya-vijñāna*. The secret teaching emphasizes *Lhog thong* or the transcendent insight into Reality. This insight enables one to contemplate *nirvāṇa*. But the teacher does not teach anything. He is there only to incite the disciple to think, to doubt, and to seek.

The monograph is quite instructive, and repays a careful study.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

SRI SRI SARADA DEVI. BY P. B. JUNNARKAR. *Published by Presidency Library, 15 College Square, Calcutta 12. Pages 394. Price Rs. 5.50.*

Professor Junnarkar's biography of Sri Sarada Devi is written in a simple and easy reading style. The book bears the impress of his deep devotion to the Holy Mother and Sri Ramakrishna. He has successfully portrayed the life of the former against the background of the latter. Professor Junnarkar rightly depicts their lives when he writes, 'The keynote of their spiritual life is a complete surrender to the divine will which regulated the smallest incidents in their lives' (p. 103). The author's attempt to place the life of the Holy Mother on a wider canvas, however, has often led to digressions at the expense of the central theme of his book. For the information of the author, it may be pointed out that, accord-

ing to a letter of Swami Vivekananda, Gauri Ma led for sometime a householder's life (pp. 78-79). In p. 208, it is written, 'Monasticism embodying the principle of renunciation was therefore opposed to her very nature'. This statement seems to be an utter misconception of the Holy Mother's life, and he almost contradicts himself in p. 315. It is also indiscreet on the part of the author to measure the devotion the disciples cherished for Sri Ramakrishna. He should therefore have been more cautious in making such a statement as, 'Among the devotees, Swami Adbhutananda may be mentioned as one, next to Sri Ma, about whom it could be affirmed without reservation that he had an unwavering faith in the living presence of Sri Ramakrishna' (p. 290). Printing mistakes are rather too many, and the printing of the pictures is below standard.

SWAMI VITASOKANANDA

BENGALI

SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA: JIVANI O RACANĀDI SANGRAHA. *Published by Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home, P. O. Belgharia, Dt. 24 Perganas, West Bengal. Pages 184 (Bengali) + 79 (English). Price Rs. 5.*

Swami Nirvedananda was a distinguished monk of the Ramakrishna Order. He made a mark as an educationist, a scholar, and a writer. The book under review includes his writings lying so long scattered and some letters. The articles could not be classified, but they reveal the introspective mind of the Swami together with his wide range of learning, his intimate acquaintance with modern thought, and his abiding faith in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. He is equally at home with prose and poetry. The book can be read with profit not only by his admirers, but also by every one who is interested in Indian culture. An informative biography of Swami Nirvedananda is given at the beginning of the book.

SWAMI VITASOKANANDA

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL REPORT FOR 1959

The Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati belongs to the Ramakrishna Order, and was started by Swami Vivekananda to be a suitable centre for practising and disseminating the highest Truth in life. Though far away on the Himalayan heights, the Ashrama

has not been out of touch with life and society. It has got a publication department which has brought out quite a number of religious books; it has been publishing *Prabuddha Bharata*; and now and then it sends out preachers to different parts of India and abroad. The hospital forms a part of its activities.

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital came into being

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

The hospital stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is in the charge of a monastic member qualified for the task. There is also a qualified doctor. Service is rendered to one and all, irrespective of caste or creed, in a spirit of worship, and attempts are made to keep up a high standard of efficiency. In the hospital, there are 21 beds, 8 of them having been added in 1958-59 with the aid of grants received from the governments of Uttar Pradesh and India. But sometimes arrangements for a much higher number of indoor patients have to be made. The operation room is fitted with up-to-date equipments, and there is also a small clinical laboratory. The hospital has a gramophone and a small library for the patients.

The total number of patients treated in the indoor department during 1959 was 489, of which 425 were cured and discharged, 43 were relieved, 16 were discharged otherwise or left, and 5 died. In the outdoor department, the total number of patients treated was 19,001, of which 14,938 were new and 4,063 repeated cases.

During the year under review, 2,695½ lb. of powdered milk, donated by the Indian Red Cross Society, were distributed among 66,908 persons.

We cordially thank all our donors who, by their continued support, have made it possible for us to carry on this humanitarian work in such an out-of-the-way place. Our thanks are also due to the editors of *The Medical Review of Reviews*, Delhi, *Indian Journal of Medical Sciences*, Bombay, and *Shakti* (Hindi), Almora, for giving their journals free.

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

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

SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA
PRESIDENT, ADVAITA ASHRAMA
P.O. MAYAVATI, via LOHAGHAT
DIST. ALMORA, U.P.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA
KALLAI, CALICUT
REPORT FOR 1957-58

Educational Activities: (i) Secondary School:

Total strength: 803 (boys: 511; girls: 292). Literary and debating societies, publication of a manuscript magazine, excursions to places of educational interest, scout and A. C. C. units, and organization of youth festivals are some of the extra-curricular activities.

(ii) *Primary School*: Strength: 1957: 366 (boys: 206; girls: 160); 1958: 439 (boys: 249; girls: 190). The school organized small dramas, folk dances, and excursion parties.

(iii) *The Students' Home (for boys)*: There were 51 students in the home in 1957, and 61 in 1958.

Medical: Charitable Dispensary: Total number of cases treated: 1956: 52,859 (new cases: 11,158); 1957: 53,154 (new cases: 10,967); 1958: 51,165 (new cases: 10,450). About 10,000 lb. of milk powder, contributed by CARE, were distributed to children and patients.

Religious and Cultural Activities: Daily *pūjā* and *bhajana* in the Ashrama shrine; celebration of the festivals like *Navarātri*, *Kṛṣṇa-janmāṣṭamī*, *Śivarātri*; observance of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda; and religious classes and discourses.

Sri Sarada Sangha: This is an association of women inspired by the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi. It was inaugurated in 1955. The members of the Sangha conduct a girls' hostel, besides arranging weekly *bhajan*s and discourses. There were 6 and 9 girls in the hostel during 1957 and 1958 respectively.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA MANGALORE

REPORT FOR 1958

The Ashrama in Mangalore has endeavoured to spread among the people the ideas and ideals of Vedānta in the light of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, through discourses and lectures, and to create interest in spiritual life through celebrations, worship, and *bhajan*s. During the year under review, study classes on the *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* were conducted. Public lectures were given in different parts of the town and district. Talks on moral and religious subjects were given to the students of the Balakashrama run by the Mission. The Ashrama has published *Bhagavad-Gītā*, *Mānasollāsa*, *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*, *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, and *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma* in Kannada. The birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated with a varied religious and cultural programme. The Ashrama library issued 829 books during the year.