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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

## SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

March 18, 1930

Mahapurushji said: 'I had no sleep last night. But what is the need of sleep? What need has the Self for sleep? The body gets rest all right. What has the Self to do with rest? When you look at the Self thus, you cease to worry about sleep and such other things.'

Today is the birthday of Swami Yogananda. Being asked about him, Mahapurushji said: 'Well, these are all divine disports. Who ever thought that you would ask about these things after such a long interval? Else, I would have tried to keep these in mind. Swami Yogananda used to meditate a great deal; his eyes would be red as a result. The Master said that his eyes were like those of Arjuna. And Swamiji said that they looked like the eyes of Jagannātha. He was very pure and at the same time full of humour. Balaram Babu liked him very much. When we left Varanasi at the suggestion of Pramada Babu, Yogananda continued there with a more rigorous life. (After the return of Swamiji from America) one day, in the house of Balaram Babu, he had some exchange of words with Swamiji about

social work. In a humorous mood, Swamiji said: "Who would ever have known your Master if I had not preached him?" To this, Swami Yogananda retorted, "Were he not there, you would at most be a big barrister like W. C. Banerji". As Yogananda grew serious in his talk, Swamiji became silent and broke into tears. At last, he said to Yogananda, "Yogin, how can you understand what ideas I entertain about him?" I do not know in what light the Master considered Yogananda's spiritual moods; but he used to count him among those who belonged to the divine order, and he considered him to be a man of great spiritual potentiality. When Yogananda's disease took a very bad turn, Swamiji told him, "Yogin, you recover, and let me die instead". Swami Niranjanananda would say, "Yogin, you are our crest-jewel". Swamiji took great care for his recovery. When the last moment was nearing, I asked, "Yogin, you are remembering the Master, I hope?" He replied, "I remember him more vividly—more and more".

'He loved solitude very much. He was not much fond of study, and remained satisfied

with a few books like the *Gītā*, the Upaniṣads, etc. He lived in Varanasi in front of Sitaram's *chatra* (centre for distribution of food). Once, he lived at Vrindaban with the Holy Mother. He loved the moon and the stars in the sky, and would say: "I think I belong to that world of the moon; I am not of this earth. I feel as if I am sitting in the moon with a garland of stars round my neck." Swamiji brought him in a boat across the Gaṅgā to see this monastery (Belur Math). He was like Śukadeva, a saintly man of great detachment and absolute purity. At Varanasi, he used to keep a piece of dry bread soaked in water, which used to be his food. He was kind-hearted, and practised charity quite extensively. When a family in his village became helpless after its head had died in a railway accident, Yogananda was greatly moved, and narrated the whole matter to Swamiji. I was then working under Messrs Mackinon Mackenzie & Co., and I had some money with me. I offered some of it to Yogin (Yogananda), and he took it to the family saying, "This amount of thirty or forty rupees will be enough".

'No one had any inkling of Yogin's visits to the Master at Dakshineswar; I do not remember to have seen him there during the day-time. He had not to come from Calcutta like ourselves (his home being at Dakshineswar itself). In the Cossipore monastery, we lived together. There he was given to much meditation and similar practices. The main event in his life was his service to the Holy Mother; service to the Holy Mother was the most prominent feature of his life. He had the satisfaction of serving her at Vrindaban, Ghusuri (near Belur), and Baghbazar (in Calcutta). It was he who introduced Sharat Maharaj (Swami Saradananda) to her. Sharat once said: "Yogin, I can't say that I can always follow what Naren (Swami Vivekananda) says; he talks of so many things. And whenever he deals with a subject, he speaks of it so emphatically for the time being that everything else seems to recede to the background." Yogin then advised him, "Let me tell you one thing,

Sharat, you rely on the Holy Mother and accept as truth whatever she says". . . .

'When I lived with the Master and served him, quite a number of men talked to me of various things by way of instruction; but I could not relish any. Whenever the Master opened his lips, however few the words might be, I listened with attention, and they appealed to me. I had no mind even to listen to others.'

March 20, 1930

When a disciple could not practise the *Gāyatrī mantra* in the way that Mahapurushji had instructed, he said to the disciple: 'Practise it in the way that appeals to you. Do not be rash in your effort; the Master will make you do the needful. How can there be any fixed form for *Gāyatrī*? She is the Energy of Brahman, the Mother who brought about the three worlds, though for helping the aspirants Her forms as *Brahmāṇī*, *Vaiṣṇavī*, and *Rudrāṇī* have been imagined. Tell me, how can She have any form? Proceed just as you are doing at present, everything will come out all right in course of time. At the end, the three forms will merge in the Master; then you will be taken further beyond—beyond *vidyā* and *avidyā*, beyond *jñāna* and *ajñāna*. The main thing is to go beyond name and form, where all empirical things cease, and yet from where all things emanate. For name and form have no ultimate reality. You have to reach a state beyond all these. The Master used to say, "My boy, the Mother makes one do everything. If one holds on to the Mother, She reveals everything to one in due course". Everything will come; everything will be fulfilled in time. Now carry on just as you are doing at present.'

When asked about his health, Mahapurushji said: 'I do not at all worry about all these things—whether I had any sleep, or how the body is. Let the Master and the Holy Mother keep me as they like and for as many days as they wish; or if they would not keep me, that too is all right. What have I to worry about? Let them do what they like; all that I care for



is that I should have full memory of them and devotion to their lotus feet. Aha! Bhavanath was a great lover of God. When he sang the song "I am His to be sure" etc., he would shed tears profusely.' And he himself sang the whole of it. . . . Then he continued: 'All these usual questions of yours, "How are you?", "Did you have good sleep?" do not come to my mind at all. Can there be any other thing comparable to devotion? Though Swamiji's mind had a natural tendency towards the Absolute, one day, as he sang the song "Tell me, dear friend, how far is that Mathurā (of Śrī Kṛṣṇa)", he lost himself in it completely. With such songs on his lips, he seemed to soar to a different region altogether; and then he cared little for this side of life, for this earth. Mathurā is nothing but that Absolute Itself.'

To an American devotee, Mahapurushji said: 'I am the soul. This body is like a leaf. Leaves grow, wither, and fall. That does not matter.' Then he said about an American woman devotee: 'She will now return to her country via Italy. She is as great a devotee as she is learned and intelligent. Romain Rolland's book has come out in the German language; and she will try to get more of Swamiji's books translated and published in the European languages.'

March 22, 1930

Finding that a person was rather depressed in his spiritual pursuit, Mahapurushji said: 'That is no good; never yield to despondency. That makes you extremely uneasy. You should always have this faith that you are very fortunate; for you have seen and taken refuge in these sons of the Master. "He who has seen the son has seen the father." Make your mind strong with these thoughts. Should any bad thought cross the mind, just ignore it; for the tendencies acquired in past lives remain stored up in the mind, and at times they wake up and try to push forward. Fortify your mind strongly; you need have no fear. You will get everything, everything will be fulfilled. Mere *japa* for a long time is not enough; you have

to see whether you are developing more love for God. What will mere dry muttering of a *mantra* avail? And yet even mechanical *japa* brings its own reward, for after all it is God's name. The main thing is love. There should be some such relationship as, "You are my father, mother, friend, master, inner Ruler, or the Mother of the universe; and I am yours". One should sit at ease and be calm; it is most desirable to have calmness of mind while sitting for *japa*. . . .

'It seems to me that today is the eighth day of the moon. Would you have a look at the calender? Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda), too, had a subconscious awareness like this.' Before going to bed he said: 'The Goddess who exists in every being as sleep, to Her my salutation, to Her my salutation, to Her my salutation; and Her I salute again and again.'

'It will be fine if one of you reads the *Caṇḍī*, for this is an auspicious day. It is enough if for shortness of time one should read only the *Devī-sūkta*, for in it is everything. The Master used to say that the reading of the hymn starting with "*Śakrādayaḥ suragaṇāḥ*" is as good as reading the whole of the *Caṇḍī*. I used to read the book at Varanasi; then it would take me about two hours to finish the whole of it after the necessary worship. But one can go through it hurriedly in an hour and a half or an hour and three quarters. Swami Turiyananda had the whole book in his memory, so that it took him only one hour. One cannot get the accessories for worship always at hand; still it is good if one reads with devotion and with the consciousness that one is doing so for the pleasure of the Mother.'

March 23, 1930

Mahapurushji said: 'The few days that God chooses to keep me alive out of His own will is good enough. "Since He is the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of the speech, the Life of the life, and the Eye of the eye, the intelligent men, after giving up (self-identification with the senses) and renouncing this world, become immortal" (*Kena Upaniṣad*,

I.2). Life here will last so long as that Life of the life will maintain it; then there remains only infinite Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. The body then lies down, and there it ends. What more can there be?" Saying this, he clapped his hands merrily.

When his attention was drawn to the birds, he remarked: 'Now it appears they will build their nests; they are moving about with grass and other things in their beaks. The Master had a fine saying: "Birds and fakirs have no attachment (for fixed homes). They do not move about much when they are with eggs."'

Noticing the new calender, he took it in his hand and, bowing his head at the feet of Durgā in a picture, said: 'In our earlier days, we listened to all these writings in the calender (written by way of introduction):

"To Śiva, with sweet words, says his consort Pārvatī,

Tell me of all that is in store for this year—  
Which is the planet, who the king, and  
who the minister" and so on.' ...

March 26, 1930

With the arrival of Su— Maharaj, the talk turned to the Vaiṣṇavas. Su— Maharaj had once been to Navadwip<sup>1</sup> with Swami Prema-

<sup>1</sup> Holy to the Vaiṣṇavas as the place of birth and early days of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

nanda. As Su— Maharaj related that pilgrimage, Mahapurushji added: 'On the other side (east) of the Gaṅgā, there is a place sacred to Mahāprabhu, who visited there and heard the reading of the *Bhāgavata*. There is something like a stitched cotton wrapper, called *kānthā*, which was used by him.' And he began singing:

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa,  
Hare Hare,  
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma,  
Hare Hare; and  
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma, Nitāi Gaur,  
Rādhe Śyāma.*

'Charandas Babaji has built a monastery there,' he continued, 'Raṁdas Babaji sings the *kīrtana* songs very well; they are really excellent, very appealing.'

March 31, 1930

'One should have good tendencies (*sam-skaras*) in store. But it all depends on God's grace. Can the hankering for wealth and passion be removed unless He is propitious? It is very difficult, my son, to free oneself from their clutches. Nothing can be gained unless He takes pity. The craving for wealth is even stronger than passion; the latter comes as a matter of course if wealth is there.'

## THE GĪTĀ AND ITS GOSPEL OF DHARMA

This famous *Gītā-sāstra* is an epitome of the essentials of the whole Vedic teaching. ...  
A knowledge of its teaching leads to the realization of all human aspirations.

—Śrī Śaṅkarācārya

### I

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* contains not merely a spiritual message to humanity, but has a social gospel as well. It is no doubt an *adhyātma-sāstra*, a spiritual science, primarily meant to aid man in his spiritual life and show him the path to perfection. The *Gītā* has been repeatedly referred to as *brahma-vidyā* and *yoga-*

*sāstra* in the colophon at the end of each chapter. It is *brahma-vidyā*, as it speaks of Brahman or God. It imparts to us the knowledge about the ultimate Reality. It is *yoga-sāstra*, as it describes to us the method of union with that Reality. So the *Gītā* is not only a science that describes the nature of Reality, but also presents the art of attaining that Reality.



The aim of the *Gītā* is twofold. It has a spiritual as well as a social message. The social is complementary to the spiritual. One is not divorced from the other. There is no dichotomy between the two. Rather, the former fulfils itself in the latter. In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: 'Liberation is not the isolation of the immortal spirit from the mortal human life, but is the transfiguration of the whole man. It is attained not by destroying, but by transfiguring the tension of human life. . . . His body, life, and mind are not dissolved, but are rendered pure, and become the means and mould of the divine Light, and he becomes his own masterpiece. His personality is raised to its fullness, its maximum expression, pure and free, buoyant and unburdened. All his activities are for the holding together of the world.' In the light of the *Gītā* teaching, not only all the activities of man have a spiritual goal, but the spiritual attitude permeates all his activities. Every work becomes an act of worship. The *Gītā* teaches not world-negation, but deification of all. What it teaches is self-abnegation and divinization of human aspirations. It teaches devotion, dedication, and detachment. With devotion to God, man must work in this world in a spirit of detachment, and dedicate all the fruits of work at the feet of God and in the service of humanity. This is the highest *dharma* according to the *Gītā*.

The teachings of the *Gītā* are universal in character. They are not exclusive in any manner or sense. They are applicable anywhere at any time. They can be practised by anyone in any situation. What is needed is only a correct understanding of their import and an ardent practice with faith and fervour. In this land of its birth, through scores of centuries, the *Gītā* has inspired numberless men and women to undertake great adventures in the realm of the spirit and to do noble deeds, involving great personal sacrifice, for the good of society. Its inspiration has been perennial; and its philosophy, all comprehensive. As Aldous Huxley says: 'The *Gītā* is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of

the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value, not only for Indians, but for all mankind. . . . The *Bhagavad-Gītā* is perhaps the most systematic spiritual statement of the Perennial Philosophy.'

The *Gītā* is unique in its understanding of human nature. Its doctrines are not like an inflexible steel frame into which one and all must be squeezed in order to be turned into a perfect shape. Typically reflecting the Indian attitude to spiritual life, the *Gītā* recognizes differences and diversities of individual aptitudes and attainments, tastes and temperaments, and provides several methods to suit their intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual development. It shows a path to every one according to his emotional attitude, intellectual capacity, and spiritual growth. Its teachings do not come down like a steam-roller on the spiritual life of men, reducing all to one level. Its touch is soothing, its words inspiring, and its solicitude motherly. Like a mother who knows the individual capacities of her children, and who accordingly provides for the proper nourishment of all of them, the *Gītā*, the universal spiritual Mother, offers several paths by which men can attain to God.

In no sense can the *Gītā* be said to strike a new path. The *Gītā* teachings stem from the soil soaked by the waters of the Vedic religion and philosophy. The *Gītā*, in fact, has been called an Upaniṣad. The well-known verse from the *Vaiṣṇavīya Tantrasāra* says that the Upaniṣads are the cows, and the nectar-like *Gītā* is their excellent milk. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, in the introduction to his *Gītā-bhāṣya*, says: 'This famous *Gītā-sāstra* is an epitome of the essentials of the whole Vedic teaching. . . . A knowledge of its teaching leads to the realization of all human aspirations.'

## II

The teacher of the *Gītā* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself, who is recognized as the fullest expression of the Divinity in human terms. The *Gītā* is the song of God Himself; hence is its highest authority. The chief purpose of a divine incarna-



tion is the establishment of *dharma* in society. He becomes responsible for the maintenance of the social order, as well as for directing social and individual striving towards attaining spiritual ends. As Bhagavān, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is always possessed of infinite knowledge, supremacy, power, strength, might, and vigour. He has no personal interest in the activities he is engaged in. His one interest is the good of the world, *lokasaṅgraha*. God is ever ready to help those that wish to fulfil the dictates of *dharma*. He sees to it that all social and spiritual values are preserved intact and observed by their respective votaries in the prescribed way. Evolution of man in spiritual life is through self-discipline and by fulfilling the duties of his calling, and not by upsetting or unsettling an established order or an accepted code. Growth must be by means of fulfilment and evolution. That is the way of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as taught in the *Gītā*. It particularly emphasizes that each and every one must fulfil the *dharma* of his social situation and standing. Otherwise, there will be disruption in the social order, giving rise to evil and immoral ways of life among the members of society. The chief concern of the *Gītā* is that *dharma* should be maintained properly by all persons in all the spheres of life.

The person to whom the *Gītā* is taught is Arjuna, the hero of the Mahābhārata war. Arjuna is the representative man, one of the noblest in the history of mankind, who is most competent to listen to the words of God. Śrī Kṛṣṇa taught the *Gītā* teachings to Arjuna, evidently thinking that *dharma* would widely spread when accepted and practised by men of high character.

Situations similar to the one in which Arjuna found himself often present themselves before man in his struggle for existence. Moments of despair and despondency occur in man's life. He often finds himself between the horns of the dilemma of life. He gets confused and finds it hard to choose the right course of action. Personal factors and consideration for the near and dear ones come in the way of right

thinking and correct judgement. His mind is assailed by *rāga* (attraction) and *dveṣa* (repulsion), which cloud his intellect and confuse his thinking. He is at a loss to judge calmly and take just decisions. It is at times such as these that he needs a superior guidance to lift him out of the slough of despondency, to remove the cloud of confusion from his mind, and to shed clear light on his path. The *Gītā* offers such a divine guidance to man in his day to day existence, so that he may live happily in the path of *dharma* and conduct himself in this world in a spirit of humility, detachment, and dedication to God. The content of *dharma*, according to the *Gītā*, is both the social good and spiritual welfare of man. Towards this end, the *Gītā* endeavours to prepare man and equip him morally and spiritually. It aims to bring out the best in man under a given set of circumstances, and makes him act like a man in the true sense of the term. To each according to his need, and in a manner that each is able to accomplish his *svadharma*, the *Gītā* prescribes a method at once socially suitable and spiritually beneficial.

The *Gītā* addresses itself to man *in* the world, but not to one who is *of* the world. Worldliness must disappear from the mind of man before the teachings of the *Gītā* are able to make their impress upon it. Whereas worldliness is an impediment to spiritual growth, the world with all its problems provides opportunities to man to face life squarely and to overcome its challenges, physical, moral, and spiritual. It is in and through life, and not through seeking escape from it, that the *Gītā* urges man to realize its grand message of social good and spiritual welfare to man and society. The *Gītā* was taught not in a secluded place, away from busy life, but right in the centre of a battlefield, when great political, social, moral, and spiritual issues were at stake. The *Gītā* teachings roused Arjuna to his sense of duty and enabled him to discharge his *dharma* in the proper spirit. The Mahābhārata war was fought to re-establish *dharma* on this earth, and the battle-field itself came to be known as



*dharma-kṣetra*. Similarly, in our individual lives in this world, which to us is the *dharma-kṣetra*, the *Gītā* teachings enable us to become established in *dharma* and to discharge our duties and obligations in the proper spirit, which will be conducive to our social good as well as spiritual welfare.

### III

*Dharma*, according to the *Gītā*, has a two-fold purpose. One of them relates to the life of man in the context of society; and the other relates to the spiritual life of man, preparing him for attaining the *summum bonum* of life. *Dharma* in the social context regulates human conduct and casts individuals into right type of moulds of character by inculcating in them social and moral virtues. It is the sense of *dharma* in each individual member of society that urges him to conduct himself with dignity and becoming demeanour in relation to his fellow-beings. When *dharma* is preserved and practised, it confers on man and society health, wealth, and happiness. Progress and prosperity follow in quick succession as a matter of course. If *dharma* is lost sight of, the social cohesive force becomes weak, the social structure crumbles, and the whole thing comes down with a crash. *Dharma* is the life-force of the social being; it holds society together. It maintains law and order in society and brings harmony in the social relationship of its members.

*Dharma* has a wide connotation. Its dictates are varied. There is no one social *dharma* for all. As a matter of fact, *dharma* in the context of society varies from individual to individual. No two individuals may have the same *dharma* to perform. Everyone's *dharma* is determined by the social situation in which he finds himself. This has led to the concept of *svadharma*, so eloquently spoken of in the *Gītā*. Every member of a society, every member of a family, has his own *svadharma*, which he is expected to discharge truthfully and to the best of his understanding and ability. Those who rule the state have their *dharma* to perform; the citizens

have their *dharma*. Those who educate society have their own *dharma*. The parents have their *dharma*; so have their children theirs. Every man and woman, old and young, in whatever situation or station he or she may be, has a *dharma*, which he or she must fulfil in order to contribute to the security, safety, and stability of society. Each one must perform his *svadharma* to maintain harmony in society. Otherwise, the social fabric will be torn to pieces, bringing untold sorrow and suffering to one and all. Hence it is that *dharma* should form the basis of society, if it is to remain stable and endure for a long time.

In the Indian tradition, which the *Gītā* represents at its best, *dharma* is chiefly looked upon as a social value, though, in its higher aspect, it has a spiritual value as well. The several *Dharma-śāstras* that we have in this country are all formulated to aid in the orderly functioning of the state as well as in the growth of happy relationship among its constituent members. *Dharma* is conceived as moral law, which operates in the diverse spheres of the social organization. It controls and guides the workings of society, without giving rise to any kind of internal friction or external upheaval. In the absence of *dharma*, there is bound to be confusion and chaos in society.

*Dharma*, on the social plane, aims to attain social welfare, *abhyudaya*. By means of injunctions and prohibitions, *dharma* directs human activity, so that each unit in society may fulfil its function and contribute to the general good of society. In a well-ordered society, every member, in whatever profession, however high or low, and whatever be the nature of function, is expected to do his duty—his *svadharma*—so that no disruption may be caused in its smooth running. When every member in a society discharges his allotted duty, there is no likelihood of confusion arising out of competition, malice, or jealousy. Each does his stipulated duty, and thus adds to the strength of the social structure. In assigning work to every one, the *Gītā* upholds the principle of *guṇa* and *karma*, inborn tendencies



and talents. Each one, according to his *guṇa* and *karma*, must perform his duty and contribute to the general welfare of the community. This is the principle of *svadharma* based on *guṇa* and *karma*, which is fundamental to the concept of *dharma* in the *Gītā*.

*Dharma* has a spiritual goal as well. While it is pre-eminently a social value, it does not lose sight of the spiritual. *Dharma*, it should be understood, is not an end in itself. It subserves a higher end, namely, spiritual perfection, the *summum bonum* of life, *niḥśreyasa*. Social virtue is a means to the happiness of all. It serves an end. A good and virtuous man is no doubt a powerful force for the good of society. Acquiring moral virtues is only a means leading to the higher end of spiritual perfection. Spiritual evolution, individual as well as social, is the final goal of *dharma*. That is the finale of all ethical and moral life.

#### IV

We have in the *Gītā* a very significant expression, '*dharmyāmṛtam*', which combines together the two values—social and spiritual—that we have been discussing hitherto. The expression refers to a life that is both *dharmya* and *amṛta*, i.e. a life imbued with *dharma* and aiming at *amṛta*. *Amṛta* here stands for *amṛtatva* or immortality. As said earlier, *dharma* is a value in the context of the social life of man; and *amṛta*, immortality, is a value in the context of the spiritual life of man. The *Gītā* advocates the coexistence of these twin values in one and the same person. The religion of the *Gītā* combines both *dharma* and *amṛta*. *Dharma* must lead to *amṛta*, and *amṛta* should inspire *dharma*. *Dharma* is a preparation for *amṛta*, and *amṛta* infuses life into *dharma*. *Dharma* without aiming at *amṛta* is a purposeless pursuit. To aspire after immortality without basing our life on *dharma* is like building a structure without any foundation. *Dharma* must fulfil itself in immortality. Righteous living must have a goal, which is immortality in the words of the *Gītā*.

Social virtue is not an end in itself. It must fulfil itself in the attainment of spiritual perfection. Spiritual life is not to be lived in isolation, away from the world. The good of the world and one's own spiritual good must be combined. That is the ideal. The soul-uplifting power that is generated by leading a truly spiritual life must be made to flow into society to work for its moral and spiritual upliftment. Social life and spiritual life must strengthen each other, enriching the total life of man and bringing it to complete fruition. One is incomplete without the other. The two together in their full expression bring about a total integration of the human personality. The *Gītā* upholds the ideal of such a perfect human being, who becomes a shining example for others to follow. Such persons become endowed with all those ennobling qualities which form the direct means to immortality. Constantly established in *dharma*, they become heirs to immortal bliss. Referring to them, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: 'They, verily, who follow this immortal law (*dharmyāmṛtam*, the way of life established in *dharma* and leading to immortality) endowed with faith, looking up to Me as the Supreme, and devoted—they are exceedingly dear to Me.' In this statement of the *Gītā*, we have its unique message of the combination and coexistence of the two ideals of *dharma* and *amṛta*.

#### V

The *Gītā* takes a complete view of man. It is as much concerned with his social good as it is with his spiritual welfare. It works for both his *abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyasa*. For this, it unfolds the way of fulfilment through *dharma*. It does not advocate the method of negation or running away from life. It is extremely human in its approach to life's problems, and offers solutions that are within the possibilities of man. Life on earth should be lived happily and for a higher purpose. Happiness and prosperity in life is *abhyudaya*. The higher purpose is *niḥśreyasa*, the highest bliss of spiritual life, to attain which man should



discipline himself and constantly strive. The *Gītā* urges man to work for and achieve both these ends.

Life's circumstances and situations are the training ground for the spiritual development of man. To make the best of circumstances and to turn them to spiritual advantage ought to be the aim of every person who sincerely seeks solace and satisfaction in things spiritual. The *Gītā* teachings transform life itself into a continuous spiritual *sāadhanā*. From this point of view, there is nothing that is merely secular. The distinction between the secular and the spiritual vanishes. Every act of man, when performed in the true spirit of the *Gītā*, will be converted into an act of worship, and will confer spiritual blessings on the performer of the act. This, certainly, is not a world-negating attitude. The *Gītā* offers the right attitude towards the world, endows man with the spirit of dedication and detachment, and engenders in him the qualities of self-effacement and self-sacrifice. Everything is done for the good of others and dedicated at the feet of God.

The *Gītā* is looked upon as a manual of human conduct, social as well as spiritual. It exhorts every man to proceed on the spiritual path from where he stands, and offers to guide

him on the path that suits him best. It has a way for every type of mind and every type of spirit. Its supreme purpose, however, is to turn man Godward and make him attain the highest good. How it is to be done, what are the methods of doing it, how is one to equip oneself for the task, and other details form the subject-matter of the various chapters of this sacred text. To transform the entire life of man into one long spiritual striving is the ultimate goal of the *Gītā*. It does not divide life into segments having different values, social, ethical, and spiritual. Man should endeavour to pursue all these values simultaneously.

Life is a continuous stream in which the waters of spirituality must flow without any break, wending its way towards God. The *Gītā* does not negate life. On the other hand, it enriches life by bringing a new meaning to it and making it truly enjoyable and purposeful. The *Gītā* accepts life as it is, gives a higher turn to every aspect of its manifestation, and leads it to its final goal, namely, God. It is this gospel of the *Gītā* that has been described as 'the sovereign science, the sovereign secret, the supreme purifier, immediately comprehensible, unopposed to *dharma*, very easy to perform, and imperishable'.

## ĪSVARA AND HIS MĀYĀ—2

BY SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

(Continued from previous issue)

### 9. *The cosmic and the individual aspect of māyā. Īśvara and the jīva.*

Thus, *māyā* can be viewed in the cosmic and also in the individual aspect. The cosmic *māyā* or the *māyā* associated with Īśvara is pure because of the full predominance of *sattva* over *rajas* and *tamas*. It does not obscure His consciousness in the least, but serves as the

manifold power (*śakti*) of the Creator. Īśvara manifests and governs the whole universe by His very presence without any effort. His knowledge and rulership are natural and unconstrained. So the Upaniṣad says: 'He has neither body nor organs. No one is known to be His equal or superior. His sovereign power is declared (by the Vedas) to be manifold, and



His creativity through knowledge and might is spontaneous.<sup>31</sup> He is the maintainer of *dharma*, the destroyer of sin, and the master of all blessed qualities.

*Māyā* that is associated with the individual soul is often distinguished from the cosmic *māyā* by the term *ajñāna* or *avidyā* in a restricted sense. Because of the preponderance of *tamas* over *sattva* and *rajas*, the individual *māyā* or *ajñāna* is impure. It obstructs the *jīva*'s self-knowledge and creates the seeming ego-idea. It is the cause of his bondage. Consequently, his power is insignificant, and his knowledge limited or false. The creation of the universe, physical and mental, is due to cosmic *māyā*. The individual *ajñāna* or *avidyā* is particularly responsible for the lack of discrimination between the self and the not-self. The finite self (*jīvātman*) is related to the body-mind complex through *ajñāna*, its limiting adjunct. Just as the *jīvātman* with *ajñāna* superimposed functions as an experiencer and doer, so *Īśvara* (the supreme Self) with *māyā* superimposed is the Creator. In either case, the nature of the relation between *caitanya* and *jaḍa* (spirit and matter) is the same.

As long as the *jīva* clings to the ego-idea, he remains in bondage in the domain of *māyā*. But when he forgoes it and surrenders the ego to the supreme Self, the Lord of *māyā*, he attains liberation in union with Him. So says Śrī Kṛṣṇa : 'Verily, this divine *māyā* of Mine, constituted of the *guṇas*, is hard to overcome. But those who take refuge in Me alone cross beyond it.'<sup>32</sup> The Lord of *māyā* is the liberator from its bondage. Bondage and liberation both are in the realm of *māyā*. Neither has any meaning in Nirguṇa Brahman, which is absolutely free. *Māyā* or *ajñāna* with *tamas* or *rajas* preponderant keeps man in bondage; with *sattva* preponderant, it leads to freedom. These are like dark and bright aspects of *māyā*, and are sometimes distinguished as *avidyā* (in a restricted sense, of course) and *vidyā*. It is said: '*Avidyā* leads to mortality

and *vidyā* to immortality. Brahman, who (as *Īśvara*) controls *vidyā* and *avidyā*, is different from both.'<sup>33</sup> Says Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava: 'Know *vidyā* and *avidyā* to be My powers, which are respectively the cause of liberation and bondage of the embodied souls. The two are the initial products of My *māyā*.'<sup>34</sup>

10. *Īśvara, the Lord of māyā, is the all-pervading, all-transcending Being.*

It has already been noted that *Īśvara*, though holding *māyā* with all its ramifications, is in no way affected by it. Such is His mastery over it. As illustrated by Śaṅkara: 'Just as a magician is not at any time affected by the magical illusion produced by himself, since it is unreal, even so is the supreme Lord unaffected by the world-appearance.'<sup>35</sup> The purpose of the analogy is, of course, not to present *Īśvara* as a master-magician, but to convey the sense of His absolute purity and immutability even as the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the manifold universe. Another apt illustration is given by Sri Ramakrishna: 'The snake is not affected by the poison in its mouth, but those who are bitten are affected. Similarly, *Īśvara* is not affected by His *māyā*, though the finite selves are under its spell.'

The point is that Creatorship is not the very essence of *Īśvara*. It is but His extrinsic characteristic (*tatastha lakṣaṇa*). Intrinsically, He is immutable, immovable, non-dual Brahman, beyond all diversities and distinctions. It is only in relation to the world-appearance arising from the adjunct *māyā* that non-dual Brahman is the all-knowing and all-powerful Ruler of the manifold. The phenomenal world is real to the individual (*jīva*), but cannot be reckoned as his creation. The existence of *māyā*, its origin, is a fact from his position. With individual *ajñāna*, there must be cosmic *māyā*. The one betokens the other as the fruit betokens the tree. This does not mean, of course, that cosmic *māyā* exists because of in-

<sup>31</sup> *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, VI.8.

<sup>32</sup> *Gītā*, VII.14.

<sup>33</sup> *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, V.1.

<sup>34</sup> *Bhāgavata*, XI.11.3.

<sup>35</sup> *Brahma-Sūtra*, II.1.9, commentary.



dividual *ajñāna*. It is individual *ajñāna* that derives from cosmic *māyā*, and not cosmic *māyā* from individual *ajñāna*. Apparently, Brahman is their locus. Brahman with the adjunct of *māyā* is Īśvara, with the adjunct of *ajñāna* or *avidyā* is the *jīva*. Thus Īśvarahood is invariably linked with *jīvahood*. Both are the apparent aspects of Brahman, the ultimate One.

Īśvara is ever related to the *jīva* as Ruler to the ruled. They are coexistent and without beginning. As observed by Śaṅkara: 'And He (Īśvara) stands in the empirical realm in the relation of the Ruler to the cognizing souls called *jīvas*, which are really one with His own Self (just as portions of ether inside jars are one with the universal ether), but are limited by the combination of the body and the senses composed of names and forms brought forth by *avidyā*. Therefore, the Lordship of Īśvara, His omniscience, and His omnipotence are relative to the individualization due to limiting adjuncts derived from *avidyā*, while, in reality, such expressions as the ruler, the ruled, omniscience, and so forth do not apply to the Self, from whose being all adjuncts are wiped out by right knowledge.'<sup>36</sup>

11. *The tripartite relative order disappears in the Absolute (the unconditioned Brahman).*

The fact that Īśvara as the supreme Lord is not the ultimate Reality is proved by the crowning mystical experience of an illumined soul. Īśvarahood is ever related to the cosmic manifold, which is associated with *jīva's* empirical self rooted in *ajñāna*. As the knowledge of the true nature of the Self dawns upon man, he realizes not only the falsity of his identity with the psycho-physical garment, but also the falsity of the psycho-physical garment itself, nay, of the entire world of experience.

As long as an individual knows himself to be a physical or a psycho-physical being, he dwells in the realm of phenomena, and cannot see the Reality underlying them. But when he becomes aware of his subjective self, the experi-

encer and sustainer of the psycho-physical system, he perceives his affinity with the supreme Being, who supports and manifests the phenomenal world. Gradually, he recognizes his transcendental self, the basis of ego-consciousness, as the unchanging witness of the ever-changing physical and mental events; then he realizes his unity with the all-pervading supreme Self. Finally, this experience culminates in the identity or the complete oneness of the two as integral, undivided, limitless, absolute Consciousness, where all distinctions of the knower, the known, and the process of knowing are obliterated, and wherein the individual souls, the objective universe, and even the supreme Lord dissolve.

The following remark of Śaṅkara is pertinent: 'Moreover, when the consciousness of the identity (of the individual soul with the supreme Being) is aroused by such instruction of their identity as "That thou art", then the finiteness of the individual soul and the creatorship of Brahman vanish at once, because all experience of difference proceeding from wrong knowledge is annihilated by perfect knowledge.'<sup>37</sup>

12. *Īśvara is the highest manifestation of the Absolute. The unconditioned and conditioned Brahman.*

One should not, however, come to the conclusion that Īśvara is no more real than the phenomenal world. Actually, He is the impersonal, absolute Brahman, beyond all trace of *māyā*, and is ever aware of His transcendent being as such. Though associated with *māyā* and its modifications, He is not affected in the least, being totally detached. He is the One most adorable as the highest manifestation of the Absolute on the relative plane. 'Free from attachment (the Self) is unattached', says the Upaniṣad.<sup>38</sup> Īśvara is extolled as one with the attributeless Brahman: 'He is the formless, self-luminous Being, unborn, existing within and without, having no *prāṇa* or mind, pure,

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, II.1.22, commentary.

<sup>38</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III.9.26.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, II.1.14, commentary.



beyond the indestructible cause of causes (the undifferentiated Prakṛti).<sup>39</sup> Arjuna praises the Lord: 'Thou art the Imperishable, the ultimate One to be realized. Thou art the supreme support of the universe. Thou art the undying guardian of the eternal *dharma*. Thou art the primal Being, I believe.'<sup>40</sup> So does Uddhava: 'Thou art the supreme Brahman, limitless like the sky, the transcendent Being beyond Prakṛti.'<sup>41</sup> The Lord thus speaks of His complete transcendence: 'As the mighty air, moving everywhere, ever rests in *ākāśa* (etheric space), in the same manner, know thou, all things rest in Me (without affecting Me).<sup>42</sup> 'Never do these acts (of creation, preservation, and dissolution of the universe), O Arjuna, bind Me, because I remain unattached to them, as one unconcerned.'<sup>43</sup> 'As I am beyond the destructible (the manifest universe) and transcend the indestructible (the undifferentiated Prakṛti), so I am renowned in the world and in the Veda as the supreme Being.'<sup>44</sup>

Metaphysical investigation also points to the truth that the ultimate Reality is non-dual and non-relational, and cannot be attained by intellectual knowledge. That which faces any 'other' must be limited. It is said in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*: 'That is Infinite, where one sees no other, hears no other, knows no other; that is finite, where one sees any other, hears any other, and knows any other. It is the Infinite that is immortal; it is the finite that is mortal.'<sup>45</sup> In intellectual knowledge, the relativity of the subject and the object prevails; the object is known in relation to the subject, and the subject in relation to the object. So it fails to reveal the true nature of either. Intellect cannot go beyond the range of relative knowledge. It cannot reach the Absolute that underlies and transcends the subject and the object relation.

The end of knowledge is to be attained in intuitional experience, in which the subject and the object merge into non-relational integral consciousness revealing the Absolute. The ultimate Reality is neither subject nor object, neither substance nor attribute, neither cause nor effect. It is beyond all conditions and relations. Relation signifies dependence in some form or other. It also implies something beyond the related. *Īśvara*, as the supreme Lord, is relative to the world, and cannot be the ultimate Reality. As such, He is '*Aparam* (conditioned) *Brahmā*' and not '*Param* (unconditioned) *Brahmā*'. But the conditioning is apparent, being due to *māyā*.

13. *Any difference is irreconcilable with absolute unity. Māyā solves the metaphysical crux. Its inscrutability is its special characteristic.*

Most philosophers concur on the Upaniṣadic view that the fundamental reality is the limitless, undivided One. Nevertheless, plurality is undeniable. It is all that we perceive, externally and internally. What is the exact relation between the manifold of experience and the absolute One? How can unity and multiplicity, the Infinite and the finite, Being and becoming be reconciled? This has proved to be a puzzling metaphysical problem. Some eminent philosophers, both Eastern and Western, for instance, Bhartṛprapañca, Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Jīva Gosvāmin, Hegel, Bosanquet, and Bradley, have sought in different ways to harmonize the order of becoming with the ultimate Being, to accommodate diversity in the fundamental unity. In their view, the Absolute is not free from internal differences and relations. It is not pure identity of being.

But non-dualistic Vedānta finds no actual relation between the cosmic manifold and the absolute unity of existence. The relation of conjunction is unimaginable. No causal or any other relation of inherence can be logically determined. The uncaused, immutable One cannot be the cause of any 'other'. The Absolute cannot be both changeless and changeable, undivided and divided, conscious and unconscious.

<sup>39</sup> *Mundaka Upaniṣad*, II.1.2.

<sup>40</sup> *Gītā*, XI.18.

<sup>41</sup> *Bhāgavata*, XI.11.28.

<sup>42</sup> *Gītā*, IX.6.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, IX.9.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, XV.18.

<sup>45</sup> VII.24.1.



Any difference in the oneness of Being is untenable. If unity is real, the difference must be false, because they are mutually contradictory. To explain contradiction is the function of philosophic reason. It cannot accept as final truth what it aims to dissolve. So the manifold cannot inhere in the Absolute as its part, or mode, or attribute, or feature, or function, or potency.

As far as the human intellect can apprehend, finite existences have actually no place in the unbroken fullness of the Infinite. The Absolute is free from all differences and relations, internal as well as external. Yet, as a fact of experience, plurality is undeniable. So Vedānta explains it as a mere appearance due to the mysterious limiting principle, *māyā*. That the relation between the cosmic manifold and the ultimate Reality can neither be established by reason nor denied is the implication of *māyā* in Advaita Vedānta. It is the strange association of appearance with Reality. Says Sureśvarācārya: 'The characteristic of *avidyā* is its very inscrutability, that it cannot bear proof. Otherwise, it would be a reality.'<sup>46</sup> The illusion of a snake on a rope is a fact, which admits of no explanation. If it could be accounted for, it would be a reality. 'This (cosmic) illusion is groundless,' says the same author elsewhere, 'it is contrary to all reason. It stands no scrutiny, just as darkness stands not the sun.'<sup>47</sup> 'If you investigate this world of *māyā*, it vanishes', says Sri Ramakrishna.

14. *Māyā produces the jīva and jagat through two different kinds of adhyāsa (apparent superimposition).*

This association of the apparent with the real is signified by the term '*adhyāsa*' (superimposition). *Māyā* is the mysterious principle that brings it about. *Adhyāsa*, as defined by Śaṅkara, is the projection or the erroneous ascription of something where it does not exist.<sup>48</sup>

As we have already noted, there are two distinct types of *adhyāsa*.<sup>49</sup> (1) the mistaking of one thing for another, and (2) the ascription of the attribute of one thing to another. A classical example of the former is a rope mistaken for a snake, and of the latter is a white conch appearing yellow when seen through a yellow glass. In the first instance, one thing appears as another; the rope appears as the snake. In the second, a thing appears different; the white conch appears yellow. In both cases, there is apparent identification of the true and the false without any change in their character. The rope does not partake of the nature of the snake, nor does the snake of the rope. The whiteness of the conch is not affected by its apparent yellowness, nor is yellowness by whiteness. The world of experience and the *jīva* are two distinct cases of *adhyāsa* in point. As the world of experience is superimposed on Brahman, so is *jīvahood*. In neither case does Brahman undergo any change. The world as well as the *jīva* is essentially Brahman.

*Māyā* veils Reality and projects the world-appearance. The apparent manifold rests in Brahman like the reflection of a city in a mirror. The mirror in the illustration is all that exists, the reflected city is but an appearance. To give another example, the whole phenomenal world is superimposed on Brahman like the illusory snake on the rope. Just as the illusory snake has no existence apart from the rope, its basis, so the world of phenomena has no existence apart from Brahman, its substratum. Just as the appearance of a snake in a rope does not mean a dual existence, because the rope alone exists actually, so the world-appearance implies no duality of existence, because Brahman is all that exists. Just as the rope is in no way affected by the illusory snake, so Brahman is in no way affected by the world-appearance. Just as the snake disappears when the rope is discovered, so does the world-appearance vanish when Brahman is realized. But the world-appearance does not obscure Brahman

<sup>46</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣyavārttika*, 181, as quoted in *Vidvanmanorañjinī on Vedāntasāra*. The second line of the verse is different in the Ananda Ashrama edition.

<sup>47</sup> *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, III.66.

<sup>48</sup> *Brahma-Sūtra*, Introduction to his commentary.

<sup>49</sup> We are considering *arthādhyāsa*, leaving out *jñānādhyāsa*.



completely. In and through the world of phenomena, the 'being' or 'is-ness' of Brahman is ever manifest. The phenomena appear to be real because of the Reality permeating them; the Real appears to be phenomenal because of fleeting names and forms superimposed.

Brahman is the very being, the Self, of the phenomenal world. Throughout the world of names and forms, the product of *māyā*, the Self exists, shines, and is ever dear. The world is not merely a transformation of *māyā*. It is Brahman, the self-luminous, supreme Consciousness, immutable, and free from duality, that appears through *māyā* as the variegated ever-changing world of phenomena. It is *adhyāsa* of the first type.

The appearance of Brahman as the *jīva* is the second type of *adhyāsa*. The infinite Consciousness appears as finite or individualized consciousness through *ajñāna*. The finite self ascribes to itself the characteristics of its psychophysical adjunct, which is a part of the phenomenal world. Thus, the limitations of the finite self are attributed to the supreme Self. So the Unlimited appears as limited, the Unchanging as changing, the Immortal as mortal, the Unborn as born, the Pure as impure, the Free as the bound. Freed from *ajñāna*, the *jīva* realizes his very self as Brahman, whereas the world dissolves into It.

#### 15. *Māyā is beginningless, but comes to an end.*

Although Brahman is the sole reality in the absolute sense, yet from the position of the individual, the non-dualistic teachers have taken into account the following six categories: (1) the *jīva*, (2) *Īśvara*, (3) the difference between the *jīva* and *Īśvara*, (4) *māyā*, (5) the association of *māyā* with its locus Brahman, and (6) Brahman. They are all considered beginningless (*anādi*).<sup>50</sup> The first five are the primal categories of the relative order. Their beginning is indeterminable within the domain of relativity. Beyond it is the Absolute, where they are non-existent. So the question as to the origin of the *jīva*, *Īśvara*, or *māyā* does not

arise. They are interrelated. All differences vanish when *māyā* is dispelled by the knowledge of Brahman, the Absolute. 'When the individual soul, sleeping under the spell of beginningless *māyā*, is awakened, he then realizes the non-dual Self, beginningless, dreamless, sleepless.'<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, one may ask: Where does *māyā* come from? It is to be noted that our inquiry into the origin of the universe cannot go beyond *māyā*, the potential condition of the manifold. To predicate a cause of *māyā* is to lead to infinite regress (*anavasthā*). Like the seed and the sprout, the universe moves from the unmanifest to the manifest state, and from the manifest to the unmanifest state. It continues eternally. Neither nothing nor something else can be the origin of *māyā*; which is unique and unaccountable. So *māyā* has no beginning.

Then again, it is absurd that the individual soul under the spell of *ajñāna* will ascertain the beginning of *māyā*, which is at the very root of the individualization of the Self. When self-knowledge is attained, *māyā* disappears. There is no trace of the universe or its origin, *māyā*, in the ultimate Reality, supreme Brahman. 'No duality is there', says Gauḍapāda.<sup>52</sup> Though the beginning of *māyā* cannot be determined, it proves to be *mithyā* when we investigate into its nature. 'That is *māyā* which does not really exist.'<sup>53</sup>

It is not beginningless in the sense in which Brahman is. Otherwise, it would have been a reality, and there would have been no end of it. So says Gauḍapāda: 'If the world has no beginning, it cannot have an end.'<sup>54</sup> As the non-existence of an object (a chair, for instance) previous to its creation is beginningless, so is *māyā*. Just as the prior non-existence (*prāgabhāva*) of an object has no beginning, but has an end at its creation, similarly, *māyā*, though without beginning, comes to an end when self-knowledge is attained. Since *māyā* has no beginning, the question, why does *māyā*

<sup>51</sup> *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, I.16.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.75.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.58.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.30.

<sup>50</sup> Vide *Siddhāntaleśa-saṅgraha*, I, Kṛṣṇānanda Tīrtha's commentary.



exist, is pointless. All 'whys' are in *māyā*, the domain of *ajñāna*. So none can be finally answered. The 'why' of *māyā* cannot be answered within *māyā*, and beyond *māyā* there is no room for the question.

The following remarks of Swami Vivekananda are pertinent: 'The question—what is the cause of *māyā*?—is contradictory. Our position is that the Absolute has become this relative only apparently, that the Unconditioned has become the conditioned only in *māyā*. By the very admission of the Unconditioned, we admit that the Absolute cannot be acted upon by anything else. It is uncaused, which means that nothing outside Itself can act upon It. First of all, if It is unconditioned, It cannot have been acted upon by anything else. In the Unconditioned, there cannot be time, space, or causation. That granted, your question will be: "What caused that which cannot be caused by anything to be changed into this?" Your question is only possible in the conditioned. But you take it out of the conditioned, and want to ask it in the Unconditioned. Only when the Unconditioned becomes conditioned, and space, time, and causation come in, can the question be asked. We can only say ignorance makes the illusion. The question is impossible. Nothing can have worked on the Absolute.'<sup>55</sup>

16. *The question why Īśvara creates the world is untenable. He is all-free. The meaning of līlā.*

Similarly, it is useless to ask why Īśvara creates the world. He who is all-free is free to create as well as not to create. No cause can prevail on Him. So the Vedas say: 'Who can know it truly, and who in this world can truly say whence arises this diversity of existence, and why?'<sup>56</sup> We must not forget that for the All-powerful creation is no work at all. He creates out of the fullness of freedom and joy, without

any effort, spontaneously, as if it is His very nature. It affects Him in no way. Throughout the whole course of creation—projection, preservation, and dissolution—His purity, immutability, and blissfulness are not impaired in the least. Īśvara is all-sufficient; He has nothing to gain by creation; He has no unfulfilled desire to fulfil; and yet He acts. Though He has no necessity, still He creates. So it is said: 'His act of creation is in mere sport (*līlā*) as in the world.'<sup>57</sup> As explained by Śaṅkara: Just as in the world a king, whose desires are satisfied, engages himself in pastimes sportively, without any object to achieve, just as a man breathes naturally without motive, similarly, God conducts the course of creation naturally without any purpose whatsoever, as if it is a mere sport (*līlā*). It is to be noted that He creates neither out of necessity nor automatically. According to Gaudapāda, the creation is neither for His enjoyment nor for His diversion. It is His very nature to create. Says he: 'This (the act of creation) is the very nature of the divine Being. What desire can He have whose desires are ever attained?'<sup>58</sup>

Indeed, God creates in full freedom. The term '*līlā*', by which Vedānta characterizes the creative activity of Īśvara, is very significant. It implies His complete transcendence along with His immanence. Unrelated, He abides everywhere. Unmoved, He moves everything. He acts, still He does not act; because there is no effort, nor necessity, nor purpose in His work. The universe proceeds out of His joyousness, so to speak. From the viewpoint of the egoistic self, the world is a conglomeration of multiple things and beings, a welter of dualities and differences. From the viewpoint of the transcendent supreme Self, the whole universe is the manifestation of one Reality—pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. The world appears as *līlā* only when we can view it from God's position.

Though Īśvara has no objective in the act of creation, still it serves a twofold purpose for

<sup>55</sup> *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. V (Seventh Edition), p. 276.

<sup>56</sup> *Rg-Veda*, X.129.6; *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, II.8.9. Cf. T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Sec. 100 (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1906): 'The old question, why God made the world, has never been answered, nor will be. We know not why the world should be; we only know that there it is.'

<sup>57</sup> *Brahma-Sūtra*, II.1.33.

<sup>58</sup> *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, I.9.



the *jīva*. It provides him with experience and leads him to liberation. The whole universe is a moral order working in that direction. The evolution of life is a movement towards the *jīva's* progressive self-realization.

We conclude the essay with the citation of Śaṅkara's poem on *māyā* (*Māyāpañcaka*):

Expert in making the non-existent appear as existent, *māyā* creates the differences of *Īśvara*, *jagat*, the world, and the *jīva*, in *Ātman*, pure Consciousness, free from all imaginings, undivided, unparalleled, without component parts, and eternal!

Expert in making the non-existent appear as existent, *māyā* instantly debases, by a show of wealth and the like, human beings that are no better than quadrupeds, alas! even though they have threshed out hundreds of Vedic and Vedāntic texts!

Expert in making the non-existent appear as existent, *māyā* causes the non-dual *Ātman*, all-awareness, of the nature of Consciousness and Bliss, to enter into, and constantly wander in, the ocean of the world composed of the elements—such as ether, air, fire, and so forth!

Expert in making the non-existent appear as existent, *māyā* brings forth such ego-ideas and delusions as 'I am a Brāhmaṇa', 'I am a Vaiśya', 'my son', 'my wife', 'my home' in *Ātman*, which is blissful Consciousness and is devoid of all distinction of caste, colour, and merit!

Expert in making the non-existent appear as existent, *māyā* creates such distinctions as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and the like in Brahman, undivided as It is, and, alas! utterly confuses even the learned with these notions of differences!

## THE POETRY OF ŚRĪ ŚAṅKARA—4

BY SRI P. SAMA RAO

(Continued from previous issue)

### VII

'*Prapañcasāra*' may freely be translated as 'the essence of worlds perceived and unperceived'. This essence is neither an unmitigated sweet nor an unrelieved bitter; it is neither a continuous song nor a protracted wail. It is an alchemy of opposites, an emblem of the Absolute when viewed from quality.

This work of Śrī Śaṅkara is not quite esoterically Tāntric, although it contains graphic recipes for warding off human ills, physical and mental, and provides the Vedic ritual for obtaining one's *iṣṭadevatā's* grace for that purpose. The protagonist of Nirguṇa Brahman that he was, Śrī Śaṅkara yet devotes an entire work to the ritualistic worship of the qualityful gods and goddesses and his own concretizations of the abstract principles like Gāyatrī, Triṣṭubh,

Anuṣṭubh, etc. He justifies himself, however, with the truth: 'This universe in *mūla-prakṛti* is peopled with and dominated by the influences, good and bad, of planets like the sun and the moon. Nay, its evil destiny as well as the forms of creation are spelt by them. Their evil influences can be countermanded only by appeasing them and obtaining their grace through proper meditation on them and through ritualistic worship like *homa* (sacrifice) etc. It is by such means alone that the universe can obtain every felicity and grow lusty' (*Prapañcasāra*, XXXIII.62). This is certainly in the Vedic way.

Literature is mainly concerned with words; and great is its efficacy spiritually, if it is strung of words the seed-syllables of which denote the eternal qualities such as infinity, power, sweet-



ness, beauty, etc. of the Godhead, or the changeless values of life derived therefrom. The words may not be merely picturesque; their essential content should be *nāda*.

According to the Vedas, 'All fine arts are for the culture of the soul', for the *bhāva* and the *rasa* which they engender are verily the essence of God Himself. So all fine arts, including music and dance, must be redolent of God (*dhvani*). This redolence called *dhvani* emanates from sound nascent in the *anāhata-cakra*. *Jyoti* is immanent in *dhvani*, and the pure mind is immanent in *jyoti*. It is only when this pure mind (*Brahma-mānasa*) gets merged in the all-pervading Absolute that one realizes oneself (*Uttara-Gītā*, 40-42). There is no music in the joining together of either unmelodious words or inappropriate or inadequate ones, or those of unmelodious sense. Śrī Śaṅkara had realized this too well when he stressed the synchronization of the musical sound with the musical instrument when it is struck: 'The sounds that proceed from striking the instrument are not heard separately, but only in conjunction with the striking. So, too, this universe, whose efficient cause is illusion (*Māyā*), is manifest, as it were, in conjunction with Brahman. But when that Brahman is inwardly realized, nothing will remain the object of perception.'

*Prapañcasāra* is full of *mantras* and *dhyānas* of gods, goddesses, and their *śaktis*. *Mantras* are mnemonic verses, the spiritual efficacy of which depends upon their right chanting. *Mantras* and *dhyānas* are necessary for proper meditation on the Divine.

To a mystic like Śrī Śaṅkara, contradictions such as light and darkness, good and bad, etc. do not exist, because the universe which contains them is by and in itself phenomenal. He sees divine Bliss everywhere. Even the *māraṇa homas* and the recipes of seduction, based on the potencies like the *aṇimā*, *mahimā*, etc., have been righteously prescribed only to thwart and remove evil from the world for its own happiness. This is sought to be achieved through the potencies of various deities and spirits, who re-

flect the infinite potency of Brahman piecemeal.

Śrī Śaṅkara was an artist to the core. His poetic responsibility lay in invoking only Truth and Beauty, into his own mind, before he sought to publish them to the world. As described in the *Uttara-Gītā*, 'The mind must be full (*avicchinna*) and untorn by other desires; it must be sensitive and receptive, pure and devoid of either *saṅkalpa* or *vikalpa*, and powerful enough to apprehend the Godhead in its own tranquillity' (32-33). It is also necessary that there must be a perfect identification of the subject with the object, before the forms contemplated are duly impressed on and evolved from out of the mind in all the glory of their essential truth. Art creations and high poetry are products of such an identification. As Hegel has remarked, in such an identification 'the subject becomes its own object and the object its own subject'. This transformation, especially in the *Prapañcasāra*, has been divine in its nature, and cannot fail to tangibly work for *lokakalyāṇa*, the peace of the world.

Śrī Śaṅkara follows the tradition, but has his own invocatory preludes to his works. Many of his *mantras* and *dhyānas* have adopted the Vedic moulds, and he improves upon them wherever he deems it necessary. And, in every case, whatever he imagines or intuits has its own individual primordial confirmation, which is indeed glowing and ecstatic.

In a way, Śrī Śaṅkara's *Prapañcasāra* may be regarded as an Āgama. It is an encyclopaedic survey of the quintessential qualities and symbolic forms of various godheads and abstract rhythms like *Gāyatrī*. Śrī Śaṅkara's *dhyānas*, besides being products of his poetic crucible, are spells from the standpoint of spiritual and secular efficacy.

Just as Agni's grace is invoked for cleansing our hearts of all impurities, Gaṇapati's grace is solicited for the removal of any obstruction to the realization of our aspirations. Agni is seven-tongued, and has his seven *śaktis*, Padmarāgā, Suvarṇā, Bhadrālohitā, etc. He is of the complexion of the purest gold, is three-eyed, multi-faced, and decked in gold garlands.



But he is emaciated, and wears *jaṭāmakuta* (*Prapañcasāra*, VI.69, 72-73, 88).

While the Upaniṣadic *dhyāna* of Gaṇapati is prosaic and simply factual, Śrī Śaṅkara's is a piece of charming poetry (*ibid.*, XVI. 49), with the same essential details. Only *nāga-yajñopavita* and *padmāsana* are additions.

Although Śrī Śaṅkara invokes different god-heads for different ends, yet Bhāratī as Vāgdevī is his presiding deity over every literary venture of his. His depictions of Bhāratī (Sarasvatī), Lakṣmī, and Dakṣiṇāmūrti also closely follow their Upaniṣadic portraits, but are more elucidative. They are of the same beatific glow. Bhāratī's description seems to be the most comprehensive of them all. An instance may be cited (*ibid.*, VII.3):\*

O Devī! Thou art complexioned like the  
moon-lily;  
Thou art three-eyed and seated in a blown  
lotus;  
Thou glow'st like the full moon amid dark  
clouds;  
Wearing as Thou dost the rosary, *ṣṛka*,  
and pot of nectar,  
And tablet and pen in Thy lotus hands ; ...  
Thy face is endowed with the light  
Synthetized of the *pañca-ṣaḍ-varṇas*;  
*namaste, Bhāratī!*

As a protector from evil, the goddess is seated in a blown lotus holding book, pen, and *vara-dābhaya mudrās* in her hands. She wears the moon on her *jaṭāmakuta*, and has the complexion of the *mandāra* blossom (*ibid.*, VIII.46). As Vāgeśvarī (patron-deity of speech), the cleanser of mind, she is of the hue of camphor, and holds rosary and *varadābhaya mudrās* in her hands (*ibid.*, VIII.70). As a giver of felicity, she is decked with moon's crescent on her head, and bears book, *vīṇā*, *amṛta-kalaśa*, and rosary in her hands. She bestrides a swan, smiles tenderly, and is ever fresh and pure of countenance (*ibid.*, VIII.58). As a deity who would grace one with her presence (*prasanna-devatā*), she is of delightful appearance, ever smiling like the tender moon, and clad in

*kṣaumāmbaras*. The *Sarasvatī-rahasyopanīṣad*, however, has its own depictions, substantially different and less poetic. According to it, she is Vāñī (Voice),

An auspicious One, complexioned in the  
gold  
Of the *campakā* flower, and with a body  
Decked in garlands, ... and hands nectar-  
spilling.

But the Upaniṣadic seer's address to her is intriguing:

Thou art the swan seductive fresh like the  
bride  
In my Brāhmic garden; roam as Thou wilt  
freely  
In my mind every day ever, and for  
ever!  
Thou who art decked in wreaths of pearls  
And bearest the rosary, *aṅkuśa*, *pāśa*, and  
*pustaka*  
In Thy hands, and art of the all perfect  
• whitish hue,  
May Thou dwell in me for ever, and for  
ever!  
Thou hast a tender neck as fragile as  
The lotus stalk, and lips fully luscious and  
red,  
Thou art decked in manifold ornaments;  
Thou shalt reside on the tip of my tongue,  
My Mother Sarasvatī, ever and for ever!  
Prostrations to Thee whose locks are  
dressed  
*Kuntala*-wise, and who art the prime  
inspirer  
Of Brahmā's decrees! May Thou appease  
my earthly  
Troubles with the river-waters of Thy  
merciful grace!

For his depiction of the goddess of wealth, Śrī Śaṅkara has borrowed some verses from the *Saubhāgya-Lakṣmyopanīṣad*, and added his own to them. He seems to have regarded as peerless this common verse: 'May she who is lotus-eyed, who is fresh and pure like one bathed in supernal waters, ever protect us! She holds a



lotus each in her two hands and bears *varadābhaya mudrās* in the other pair of hands. Her locks are bound with strings of red gems, and she is engarbed in the purest white.' To make her portraiture more luscious and comprehensive, Śrī Śaṅkara adds some verses of his own, according to which the goddess, who is all-auspicious, has lotus eyes, lotus hands, and holds lotuses in her hands; hers is the body whose glow lights up the worlds; and she delights to deck herself with *graiveyas* and in wreaths of pearls. Her bodice and *makūṭa* are also begemmed variously. She is a protector from evil, and she is dazzling with her *graiveyas*, *aṅgadas*, *kaṅkaṅas*, *kuṅḍalas*, *hāras*, and begemmed *mauli*. She is complexioned virgin gold, and holds *pāśa*, *śaṅkha*, *cāpa*, and *puṣpa* in her hands. As the divine spouse of Viṣṇu, she is of dark complexion, and is clad diversely. She simply glows with her beauty enhanced by the creeper-strings of gems she is wreathed in all over (*ibid.*, XII.4,12).

Although Pārvatī is the acme of beauty and tenderness like every ideally devoted wife, and is unassuming and unshowy of her charms like Sītā, her emanations as Bhuvaneśī, Mahiṣāsura-mardini, Kātyāyanī, Kalī, Bhadrakālī, Vindhya-vāsinī, etc. are all terrible in their aspects, because these are assumed to overawe evil in her righteous function of destroying it for *lokakalyāṇa*. Śrī Śaṅkara describes her *saumya* aspect in charming simplicity:

Glowing peerless with the light of the  
moon be-crowned,  
Complexioned all over in the tender hue  
of the *bandhujīva* flower,  
And decked in red blossom and adored of  
mortals,  
Thou art, O Pārvatī, the ever auspicious  
One!  
Thou hast a horseman at the tip of Thy  
hand;  
Thou art three-eyed, and gracious in eye;  
Thou art of the hue of the virgin gold,  
And art flexile and tender like the  
creeper

That clings; Thou glowest like the full  
moon.

As against this calmness, we have the terrible portraits of her, too, as Kātyāyanī, Bhadrakālī, etc. Kātyāyanī is three-eyed, befanged, and clad in greyish hide, holding *śaṅkha*, *kheṭa*, *astra*, and *triśūla* in her hands. She is ever accompanied with virgin Śaktis. She is a terror to her enemies in her form of dazzling lightning (*ibid.*, XXIX.8). No less ferocious looking is Bhadrakālī, or Vindhya-vāsinī, or Nṛsiṃha. Befanged, three-eyed, and with tresses trailing against the skies, Bhadrakālī bears *kapāla*, *paraśu*, *damaru*, *triśūla*, and *kula* in her hands, and is decked in a wreath of *kiṅkiṇis* round her neck. She surprises all with her terrible halo (*ibid.*, XXX. 81). Vindhya-vāsinī Durgā is simply terrible bestriding a lion on its shoulders. Her dark blue complexion is like that of clouds, and she bears *śūla*, *bāṇa*, *gadā*, *cāpa*, *pāśa*, *kheṭa*, etc. in her hands. Her *kirīṭa* is dazzling, and has on it etched streaks of Gangetic waterfall (*ibid.*, XIII.69).

Śrī Śaṅkara's Nṛsiṃha has sharp fangs and a deep tongue (lolling). His eyes glower like the sun and the moon. The garlands round his neck burn like embers. His tresses are dishevelled like a regular cloud. He is wrapt in tasting the blood of Hiranyakaśipu, whom he holds down across his powerful thighs with his claws. He bears *śaṅkha* and *cakra* in two of his hands, and his other two hands are clawing the contents of the demon's abdomen (*ibid.*, XXVIII. 7). The Pañcavakra-Śiva (*ibid.*, XXIV.4), the eternal One who survives through manifold *kalpas*, and the yielder of every felicity, is three-eyed in each of his five faces, and complexioned in the transparency of a colourless crystal. He bears *śūla*, *ṭaṅka*, *ghaṅṭā*, and *pāśa* in his hands, and the moon on his *jaṭā*. He is installed in a lotus. His five emanations—Aghora, Tatpuruṣa, Īśāna, Vāmadeva, and Sadyojāta—are no less sublimely described. Aghora has fearful fangs, and is red like the *mandāra* blossom. He has in his hands a rosary (*vedākṣa-mālā*) and *abhaya mudrā*. His left side is red like *kāśmīra*. In his other hands are *pāśa*, *aṅ-*



*kuśa*, *damaruka*, *khaṭvāṅga*, *śūla*, and *kapāla* (*ibid.*, XXV. 5). Tatpuruṣa is also fearsome, with his complexion of the dazzling lightning, three eyes, and four hands, which bear *varadābhaya mudrās*, Vedas, and *kuthāra*. He is *pañcānana* (*ibid.*, XXV. 16). Sadyojāta is also terrible, and bears in his hands *kuthāra*, *mṛga*, and *varadābhaya mudrās*. He is decked in manifold gems and installed in a lotus. He is clad in a tiger's hide; and he too is *pañcānana*. He has a halo compounded of the shine of pearls, *ratnas*, etc. (*ibid.*, XXV. 41).

Śrī Śaṅkara's description of Mahā-Viṣṇu is that of a cosmic personality (*virāṭ-svarūpa*). Though it is not so elucidative as the portraits given of him in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* or the *Bhāgavata Purāna*, it is still as sublime as that of Pañcānana-Śiva. Mahā-Viṣṇu is an embodiment of Agni's fires and is glowing all over. He bears in his long hands *gadā*, *śārṅga*, *khadga*, *śaṅkha*, *hāla*, *musala*, *śūla*, *śakti*, *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa*, *kulīśa*, *ṭaṅka*, and *cakra* (*ibid.*, XXIV.20). His *kirīṭa* flashes with the gems in it. He is decked in *kaṭi-sūtras*, *keyūras*, *graiveyas*, and strings of beads, and is dazzling on account of them all. He covers the entire earth and heavens with his form (*ibid.*, XXIV. 21). He is red in complexion and clad in red garbs. He is befanged, and bears *cakra*, *śaṅkha*, *gadā*, and *śārṅga*. His *kirīṭa* is round and glowing as his *cakra*. There is still another portrait of Viṣṇu in *Prapañcasāra*, XXIV. 22.

Ardhanārīśvara and Gāyatrī have also their own unique spells. Ardhanārīśvara bears the purificatory Gaṅgā in his *jaṭā* concealed, and has in his eight hands the *nāga*, *paraśu*, *śūla*, *khadga*, *vahni* (deluge-fire), bow, and arrows. He is rather sharp in expression. He has all the glamour and gusto of a perfect lover (*ibid.*, XXVII.3). Gāyatrī has been limned in lines of dazzling rhythm, supremely singular. Complexioned red like the *mandāra* blossom, her face shines like the full-blooded moon. She wears a *makūṭa* that sparkles with the manifold gems therein. She is meditative in expression, and holds lotus, *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa*, and *kapāla* in

her hands. She is a charming youth, yet terrible (*ibid.*, XXVIII. 61).

As against these terrible aspects, how tender, gentle, and luscious as the spring are the portraits of Kṛṣṇa, Manmatha, and Candra? Kṛṣṇa, the child vanquisher of Pūtanā and Śakata, is jewelled all over with gems and strings of golden bells, and he is of the hue of bluish waters. His face is a full blown lotus, and his hands are pink lotuses again (*ibid.*, XVII.47). Manmatha's is no less delicious (*ibid.*, XVII.4). Here we feel the tender fronds of spring. We are taken in by his charm and the season's rejuvenescent melody. Manmatha dwells in the heart of blossoms, and is lit up by their glow. He is decked all over by luminous gems and flowers, and is installed in a lotus blossom. He has in his hands bow, arrows, *pāśa*, all of his own making (*ibid.*, XVII.4).

Śrī Śaṅkara's poetic touch is not sparing even in his mystical interpretation of *yantras* or graphical spells, which he recommends for spiritual liberation and achievement of earthly felicities. One or two of such may be instanced: *Samvāda-yantra* and *Viṣṇu-pañjara-yantra*. Even the most esoteric like the *Sudarśana-cakra* (*ibid.*, XXI.20) and the *Varāha-cakra* (*ibid.*, XXII.18) have their own peerless charm. In *Samvāda-yantra*, the Śakti is ensconced amid the petals of the kingly white lotus, which shines like the full moon, and is milky in complexion. She is three-eyed, and holds in her hands *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa*, and *varadābhaya mudrās* (*ibid.*, XXX.46).

Śrī Śaṅkara's portrait of Dakṣiṇāmūrti is in strict conformity with the Upaniṣadic one (*Dakṣiṇāmūrtyopaniṣad*, 3, 5, 6). But he, however, adds the following by way of poetic embellishment and elucidation (*Prapañcasāra*, XXVI.33). According to him, the World-Teacher Dakṣiṇāmūrti is seated in a blossomed lotus with moon's crescent in his *jaṭā*, and holding rosary (*vedākṣamālā*) and *pāśa* in his hands. He is in an instructional pose (*jñāna mudrā*). His complexion is that of the roseate pearl, or red crystal, soft glowing. His eyes are shining



like the moon. According to the Upaniṣad, the Benefactor of Worlds is three-eyed, and seated in *bodha mudrā* on a *bhadrāsana* beneath an *aśvattha* tree instructing *munis* like Śuka. His limbs are long and his shoulders powerful. His complexion is the red of the milk (newly boiled), and outshines the moon. He has a serpent coiled round his waist, and he holds *jñāna mudrā*, *mṛgā*, and *paraśu* in his hands (*Dakṣiṇāmūrtiyoṣad*, 5). In a second picture of the same Upaniṣad (3), we see him of the complexion of a transparent red crystal, holding in his hands a rosary of pearls, *amṛta-kalaśa*, and *jñāna mudrā*. He is three-eyed, has the slender waist of the deer, and is decked in manifold gems. He wears the moon in his *jaṭā*. In a third portrait (6), he is smeared all over with glowing *bhasma*, and looks rather pale white in complexion. He bears the moon in his *jaṭā*, and holds *jñāna mudrā*, rosary, (*akṣamālā*), *viṇā*, and *pustaka* in his hands, which are like lotuses. He is in yogic attitude. He is seated in *vyākhyāpīṭha* (a disquisitionary pose), duly attended on by *munis*. The opening verse of Śrī Śaṅkara's hymn is an epitome of the Vedāntic monism in a sublime key:

To him  
 Who having realized his own immutable  
 self,  
 And sees thereby the universe as contained  
 in him alone,  
 As a city reflected in a mirror, and knows  
 that  
 As a dream in sleep, conjured up by Māyā  
 or illusion,  
 And who on spiritual illumination has thus  
 become  
 Incarnate as the blessed teacher Dakṣiṇā-  
 mūrti,  
 My salutations.

A true preceptor is he who is dispassionate, righteous, wise, and all-merciful. His intelligence 'vibrates outside through the eye and other sense-organs, like the bright light of a great lamp placed inside a jar with many holes'. It illuminates the entire universe with its shine

and thereby dispels the darkness enshrouding the soul. This, in a nutshell, is the poetic glory of the hymn, which is also highly spiritual.

### VIII

Thus Śrī Śaṅkara has loaded every rift with gold in his conceptions of the Highest and the Absolute. He is quite aware that his investiture of the Nirguṇa Brahman with poetic personality is blasphemous, for in his efforts to describe It, he has delimited the Limitless and the Eternal. He has confessed, however, to his guilt in terms of pious humility: 'I committed my first sin, O Lord of the Universe, by ascribing form to the formless; praising with laudation that which is indescribable, I committed the second sin; locating in a particular temple and locality the great Lord of the Universe, I committed my third sin; O Lord of the Universe, pardon me for my triple sin.'

From the human and lay standpoint, the highest excellence can only be brought home through lesser excellences by way of comparison and contrast; and the real *yogins* are few and the fakes many. And fewer yet are the *yogins* who apprehend the Truth in and through the music of their own minds. As declared by the *Dhyānabindopaniṣad*: 'The Lord symbolized by the *Oṅkāra*, and who is unperturbed and of the size of one's own thumb, lies ensconced amid the petals of one's own lotus-heart, with a shine of His own akin to the radiance of a light steady and unshaken' (19); and the *yogins* see the Lord only in the lotuses of their own minds, and do not need His icons. It is only to help the ignorant that the *pratimās* have been improvised.

Besides, there is no one particular approach to Truth. The approach is as variant as is one's own *saṁskṛti* and *saṁskāra*. Thus *iṣṭa-devatārādhanā*, as a preliminary step, is necessary in the scheme of spiritual *sādhana*. Śrī Śaṅkara, a world-teacher as he is, had to concretize his own indisputable conceptions of the Absolute in terms at once clear, simple, sensuous, and sublime. That was both his own necessity and glory. No less has been ours, too,



for understanding his most comprehensive message.

Śrī Śaṅkara's poetry is great, and greater than that is he himself, because he has made

Audible a linked lay of Truth,

Of Truth profound, a sweet continuous lay,

Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes. (S. T. Coleridge)

(Concluded)

## AVIDYĀ IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RĀMĀNUJA

BY DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

The word 'avidyā' has been used by Rāmānuja in two different senses: metaphysical and ethical. *Avidyā* appears in almost all the systems of Indian philosophy, though there is a great divergence of opinion regarding its specific nature. In the Sāṅkhya, *avidyā* has been termed *aviveka*, which is intellectual, in the sense that it is a mistaken knowing of the self as the body. The Nyāya-darśana, too, gives an intellectual interpretation of *avidyā* or *ajñāna*. Śaṅkara-Vedānta, on the other hand, has recognized *māyā* or *avidyā* as the objective matrix of the world and has described it as *bhāvarūpā*, *anirvācyā*, and illusory (from the transcendental point of view). This *avidyā* theory of Śaṅkarācārya has been severely criticized by Rāmānuja, who does not believe in the existence anywhere of anything bearing resemblance to the *avidyā* of Śaṅkara.

### *Metaphysical Meaning of Avidyā in Rāmānuja's Philosophy*

In the metaphysics of Rāmānuja-darśana, Prakṛti itself has been called *avidyā*, since *acit* is the principle that prevents the soul from realizing its essentially conscious nature. Prakṛti, being unconscious, is naturally opposed to *vidyā* or knowledge (*navidyā*). It is the material cause of the world and is *triguṇātmikā* like the *avidyā* of Śaṅkara; but as a category, Prakṛti of Rāmānuja possesses a status wholly different from the status of the *avidyā* of Śaṅkara. In the philosophy of Advaita, *avidyā* is a terminable principle and is not the ultimate

truth. It possesses freedom to put forth appearances only and not to create a real world. The knowledge of Brahman not only reveals the falsity of the given world, but it also implies the falsity of *māyā* or *avidyā*, as nothing else can remain before the 'advaita-Brahman'. But Prakṛti of Rāmānuja, though called *avidyā* in a particular sense, is real and, as such, it is beginningless and endless. The only speciality about its reality is that it is real as a mode of God, from whom alone it derives its substantiality and meaning. Unlike the *avidyā* of Śaṅkara, Prakṛti is not *nāmadheyatvamātra*. On the contrary, it is the metaphysically real cause of all modifications of the world.

In the opinion of Rāmānuja, the world that we always see, feel, and touch as real must be admitted by us as true; so it is improper to hold that a substantial world like ours has, as its primary stuff, a wholly illusory principle. So Rāmānuja has raised sevenfold objections against the *avidyā* theory of the Advaita school, which are known as *saptavidhānupaṣṭi*. These seven charges against the illusion producing *avidyā* are: *āśrayānupaṣṭi*, *tirodhānānupaṣṭi*, *svarūpānupaṣṭi*, *anirvacanīyānupaṣṭi*, *pramāṇānupaṣṭi*, *nivartakānupaṣṭi*, and *nivṛtṭyanupaṣṭi*. Let us now explain these *anupaṣṭis* one by one:

### *Āśrayānupaṣṭi*

The first objection is that there can be no substratum (*āśraya*) for *avidyā*. Neither the individual soul nor Brahman can serve as a



basis for the principle of illusion. The individual soul or *jīva*, being itself a creation of *avidyā*, cannot be regarded as its substratum. To trace the locus of the individual soul is to commit the fallacy of mutual dependence. Brahman also cannot be the locus of *avidyā*, as it is supposed to be self-luminous. Self-luminosity cannot be supposed to be enveloped under any condition. This is because, if self-luminosity is believed to be covered, there will be nothing else, since Brahman is nothing but this self-luminosity. Thus, as there is no locus for *avidyā*, it is absolutely meaningless.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Tirodhānānupapatti*

The second objection is that if we believe in *avidyā*, then we have to believe also in the obscuration of pure Consciousness, which is really absurd. Brahman has been admitted as self-revealing Consciousness. Being *svayamprakāśa*, it can never be subject to any kind of obscuration. Obscuration means two things: firstly, counteraction of a barrier preventing origination of knowledge and, secondly, destruction of knowledge. But pure knowledge is not a product, and so it is not liable to destruction. It is eternal and persisting. How or why the self-revealing pure Consciousness makes itself obscure by *avidyā* is an insoluble riddle of the Śāṅkara-Vedānta.

#### *Svarūpānupapatti*

The third charge is: *Avidyā* itself is obscured by nature. As a positive entity, *avidyā* cannot be admitted as real; because, in that case, the philosophy of Śāṅkara will cease to be a philosophy of non-dualism. Further, *avidyā* cannot be regarded as the unreal cause of an unreal world, since such an admission will result in committing the fallacy of infinite regress (*anavasthā*). If the false knowledge of the false world is caused by a false *avidyā*, then this knowledge of the false *avidyā* must be due to another, and so on.<sup>2</sup> If it is held that

*avidyā* is revealed by Brahman, even then the situation does not improve. Brahman is eternal, and so *avidyā* will always be eternal and, as such, will always be known by the individual souls. Since *avidyā* will never terminate, there will be no liberation for the suffering souls of the world.

#### *Anirvacanīyānupapatti*

The fourth charge is brought against the *anirvacanīya* theory of indefinability. Things of the world are always experienced either as *sat* or as *asat*. A thing which is *sadasadvilakṣaṇa* can never be an object of experience. It is no use describing any category as *anirvacanīya*, when such a category can never be logically established on the ground of any kind of evidence. To assert that an indefinable category can be an object of knowledge is equivalent to courting the absurd position that all things can be the objects of all knowledge.

#### *Pramāṇānupapatti*

The fifth objection against the *avidyā* theory is that it is not supported by any *pramāṇa*. Since *avidyā* is *sadasadvilakṣaṇa*, it cannot be known by perception, which is only capable of giving us the knowledge of an entity or of a nonentity, and never of any that is *anirvacanīya*. Since there is nothing to serve as the *liṅga* of this *anirvācyā avidyā*, it cannot be known through inference either. Finally, it cannot be known through scriptural testimony, for the scriptures describe *māyā* as the real world-producing power of God.

#### *Nivartakānupapatti*

According to the Advaita school, nothing short of the knowledge of the undifferentiated, attributeless Brahman can uproot *avidyā* totally and finally. But such knowledge is impossible. Knowledge always involves discrimination and determination. So *avidyā* can never be removed.

#### *Nivṛtṭyanupapatti*

This is a charge against the Advaita theory of liberation. *Brahmajñāna* is not (according

<sup>1</sup> *Śrī-Bhāṣya* (Edited and published by T. Srinivasa Sarma, Bombay, 1916), I.1.1.

<sup>2</sup> *Vedārtha-saṅgraha* (Published by Dr. J. Prasad, Varanasi, 1924, second edition), p. 76, see gloss by Sudarśana Sūri.



to the Advaita school) the knowledge of Brahman, but it is knowledge that is Brahman. This is pure knowledge, and it is different from the knowledge of identity, which is called *nivartakajñāna*. According to Rāmānuja, this *nivartakajñāna*, being different from Brahman, must be regarded as a form of *avidyā*, since anything different from Brahman falls in the realm of *avidyā*. In the view of the Advaita school, this *nivartakajñāna* destroys *avidyā* and then destroys itself, like a blazing fire which, after destroying a forest, destroys itself. This, however, is not sound and admissible according to Rāmānuja. This is because we find that, in the case of fire burning a forest, ashes remain when the fire is extinguished. Here, too, if we hold that *avidyā* can be burnt, we must also admit necessarily that *avidyā* will continue to exist in the form of its ashes. Absolute liberation therefore is wholly unattainable.

#### *Further Elucidation of the Unjustifiability of Śaṅkara's Avidyā*

In fact, the category of *avidyā* as expounded by Śaṅkara baffles our attempts to understand it. All of us know and firmly believe that a positive entity is that which becomes an object of some form of knowledge. Since *anirvacanīyatva* can never be experienced in any form, it is an absurd hypothesis. If it is held that the knowledge of an entity or of a nonentity can also yield to us the knowledge of something which is neither an entity nor a nonentity, then all things will become the objects of all knowledge. This is, no doubt, a very anomalous philosophical position.

Rāmānuja further holds that it is pure knowledge that should be regarded as being opposed to *avidyā*, and so Brahman, as pure knowledge, ought to stand as a contradictory to *avidyā*. The positive experience of *avidyā* should therefore be followed by the negation of Brahman, for two contradictory principles cannot be felt as positive at the same time. In fact, to hold that Brahman is hidden by *avidyā* is to admit that the nature of Brahman as self-revealing Consciousness is destroyed. Pure

self-revelation is never a product, and its concealment means simply that it is destroyed. Further, if concealment means partial covering up of Brahman, then Brahman will cease to be partless, and that will go against the fundamental position of Advaita Vedānta. Nor can it be maintained that, being hidden by *avidyā*, Brahman is only indistinctly manifested, because revelation itself cannot be described as distinct or indistinct. The question of distinctness and indistinctness arises with regard to the object of revelation.

Further, the use of the prefix 'a' in *avidyā* or *ajñāna* undoubtedly implies that it can be understood only by a reference to the cognition of the nature of knowledge or, to state briefly, *ajñāna* presupposes *jñāna*, and is relative to knowledge (*jñāna-sāpekṣa*). If darkness is considered as being opposed to light, then darkness cannot be understood without presupposing the knowledge of light. Cognition of non-existence of a jar presupposes the knowledge of the existence of the jar. One who knows the jar is alone capable of having a cognition of the non-existence of the jar.

Moreover, if the Advaitins hold that *avidyā* or *ajñāna* can be removed by the knowledge of the falsity of everything other than Brahman, then ignorance will simply mean knowledge of the reality of the world; and in this sense alone *ajñāna* or ignorance can be held as contradictory to knowledge. So it is not the non-knowledge of the true nature of Brahman that will be removed by the knowledge of the falsity of the world, as these two do not have the same object, and cannot therefore be treated as contradictory to each other. If they are non-contradictory, one cannot be the destroyer of the other. So the assertion that a knowledge of the true nature of Brahman invariably leads to the destruction of ignorance is not logically justifiable.

Lastly, it has been held by Śaṅkara that *avidyā* or *ajñāna* can be perceived directly; and, as evidence, he has referred to such perceptions as 'I am ignorant', 'I do not know myself or any other'. In the opinion of Rāmānuja, however, such perceptions do not prove



the immediate and direct experience of *ajñāna*. On the other hand, they simply refer to the *prāgabhāva* (prior non-existence) of the knowledge of an object. To be directly perceptible, *ajñāna* must refer to some specific object of which there is ignorance; and this cannot be, since, in that case, *ajñāna* itself will disappear because of the knowledge of the object. If no specific object is referred to by *ajñāna*, then it cannot be perceived, for like pure contentless knowledge, pure contentless ignorance, too, can never be directly apprehended. The experience of 'I did not know anything during deep sleep' is an inference grounded on the absence of memory of any knowledge during *susupti*. It is not a proof of the direct apprehension of *ajñāna*. Hence *avidyā* or *ajñāna*, in the sense of a positive but false and illusion-producing entity, cannot be upheld. For Rāmānuja, therefore, Prakṛti is the only real and positive *tattva* that can very well be called *avidyā* and can also be regarded as the real cause of a real world.

#### *Ethical Meaning of Avidyā*

In the ethical realm of his philosophy, Rāmānuja has used the word '*avidyā*' in the sense of *varṇāśramakarmas*,<sup>3</sup> which bring about the expansion and contraction of the *dharmabhūtajñāna* of the individual souls. *Avidyā*, in this sense too, is a positive entity possessing the power of obscuring *dharmabhūtajñāna* and creating thereby the false sense of agency in the *jīva*. The attitude of the individual soul towards the world therefore becomes distorted. The individual thinks himself to be the lord of the world, while the main purpose of the world seems to him to be simply to cater to his various needs and comforts. *Avidyā*, in the form of *karma*, thus becomes the generating cause only of the *bhoga* (experience) of the individual souls, and not of the *bhogyā* which is Prakṛti. Due to the inadequate expansion of the *dharmabhūtajñāna*, the individual develops a false attitude towards the universe, and instead of admitting God as the ultimate source

of everything, he considers himself to be the controller of the world. In the sense of *karma*, therefore, *avidyā* is a principle of obscuration. In this sense, *avidyā* can be treated as a third power, besides *kṣetrajñā-śakti* and *prakṛti-śakti*.

Now, all these deliberations on the meaning of *avidyā* lead us to believe that in the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy, *avidyā* has not been used in any rigid and fixed sense. Anything that stands in the way of self-realization and God-realization, or anything that develops in the soul a strong yearning for the ordinary pleasures of life, may be called *avidyā*.

#### *Objections against Rāmānuja's Refutation of Avidyā*

Mahāmahopādhyāya Sri Anantakrishna Sastri has raised some objections against Rāmānuja's refutation of *avidyā* in his valuable book *Śatabhūṣaṇī*. We have already noticed that, in the opinion of Rāmānuja, knowledge is opposed to ignorance, and, as such, ignorance is never revealed by it. On the contrary, knowledge always destroys ignorance.

The author of *Śatabhūṣaṇī* has refuted this charge by asserting that pure contentless knowledge is not opposed to *ajñāna*. It is only the phenomenal knowledge which is contradictory to *ajñāna*, and cannot therefore exist with it. The experience of 'I do not know' reveals *sāmānyajñāna* of the Ātman, and this is not opposed to *ajñāna*. On the other hand, ignorance is revealed by this sort of awareness.

Further, it has been pointed out by the same author that ignorance is not a negative category according to Advaita. The prefix '*a*' here does not imply non-existence of knowledge prior to the apprehension of an object. This particular prefix is used here to denote that ignorance is opposed to phenomenal knowledge obtained through the uses of *pramāṇas*.

The third charge brought against Rāmānuja by Sri Sastri is that, according to Rāmānuja-darśana, it is the *dharmabhūtajñāna* that is contracted and expanded by the *karmas* of the *jīvas*. *Dharmabhūtajñāna* is self-revealing and is not revealed by *dharmabhūtajñāna*. Since

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.



contraction of *dharmabhūtajñāna* cannot bring about a corresponding contraction of the *dharmībhūtajñāna*, something else besides *karma* has got to be accepted with a view to explaining the obscuration of the *dharmībhūtajñāna*.

Lastly, it has been stated by the author of *Śatabhūṣaṇī* that, in the philosophy of Rāmānuja, *karma* has been regarded as the cause of the expansion and contraction of the *dharmabhūtajñāna*, which are simply the effects. Being an effect, expansion of the *dharmabhūtajñāna* will not be able to destroy *karma*. Unless *avidyā-karma* is destroyed, liberation cannot be attained.

#### Objections Met

The objections stated above are no doubt grave, but they are not unsolvable.

In the first place, it may be pointed out that Rāmānuja has understood and explained knowledge in a manner which is altogether different from the standpoint of Śāṅkara-Vedānta. According to Rāmānuja, knowledge always refers beyond itself to objects and subjects, and is never revealed in the absence of objects. It has a referential transcendence. It always reveals an object besides its own nature. Śāṅkara has admitted as ultimate and pure that consciousness which is wholly differenceless and contentless; but Rāmānuja denies altogether the existence of such knowledge. Even the knowledge of a liberated soul is not contentless. God Himself becomes the content of knowledge of an emancipated spirit. Therefore there is no such thing as pure *nirvisaya-caitanya* serving as the substratum of ignorance. *Ajñāna* of a particular object is always contrary to the knowledge of that particular object. As such, it is also a destroyer of that knowledge. Now, as knowledge and ignorance are incompatible, knowledge can never be the revealer or substratum of ignorance.

Moreover, Rāmānuja has never admitted the existence of a *jñāna-svarūpa* Ātman, totally devoid of the attitude of knowing. Whether bound or liberated, awake or asleep, the soul

is always revealed as the knower, though the contents of knowledge are relative to different psychological states or stages through which an individual soul passes. Unless the self is admitted as a form of knowledge only and not as a knower, the existence of pure, differenceless, contentless consciousness cannot be established; and if such a consciousness is not established, there cannot be any locus for *ajñāna*.

In fact, by following also the Advaita line of thinking, we shall not be able to have a glimpse even of any differenceless consciousness at any stage of our life. Brahman itself is known through the *vṛtti* of *antaḥkaraṇa*, and, as such, in *Brahmajñāna*, Brahman will become the object of that specific *vṛtti* of *antaḥkaraṇa*. How can we then believe in the existence of a knowledge which does not involve a reference to any object?

Secondly, if 'a' in *avidyā* or *ajñāna* implies that it is contrary to knowledge obtained through *pramāṇas*, then it is evident that *ajñāna* cannot be submitted to any proof. As such, *ajñāna*, as expounded by the Advaita philosophy, is unestablished by any *pramāṇa*.

Thirdly, in the opinion of Rāmānuja, the experience of 'I did not know myself' does not imply a perception of *ajñāna* during deep sleep. In deep sleep, pure *aham* becomes the object of knowledge of an individual soul. Since *antaḥkaraṇa* remains inoperative during deep sleep, there is no memory; and in the absence of memory of our knowledge of pure *aham* during *suṣupti*, each one of us feels as if he did not know even himself in that stage. The knowledge of 'I am' persists uninterruptedly in *suṣupti*, and so *dharmībhūtajñāna* is never veiled. The presence of the *dharmabhūtajñāna* only remains unmanifested because of the absence of the specific objects of our phenomenal knowledge, and the question of assuming the existence of a separate principle of obscuration for *dharmībhūtajñāna* does not arise.

Lastly, Rāmānuja does not seem to have felt the need for assuming the existence of a separate principle to serve as the destroyer of *karmas*. *Karmas* will be automatically destroy-



ed as soon as their effects will be produced. In other words, it can be said that *karmas* will be destroyed by their results. The performance of the *gyotistoma* sacrifice results in the attainment of heaven. As soon as heaven is attained, that particular sacrifice comes to an end.

Moreover, when expansion of *dharmabhūtajñāna* is complete, all attachment to worldly pleasures and pains ceases immediately. The fire of knowledge destroys completely all *sañcitakarmas* and *kriyamāṇakarmas*. *Nityanaimittikakarmas*, too, when directed towards God or towards the expansion of *dharmabhūtajñāna*, are automatically destroyed when the effects sought for are produced.

### Conclusion

To conclude, we can say that the use of *avidyā* in the sense of *karma* is not an innovation brought about by Rāmānuja. Śaṅkara, too, in his commentary on verse 9 of the *Īśā Upaniṣad*, has interpreted *avidyā* in the sense of *vaidikakarma*.

Truly speaking, *avidyā* in some form or other has been recognized in other systems of Indian philosophy as well, and everywhere we find that

*avidyā* assisted by *karma* has been accepted as the cause of this diversified universe.

In the Sāṅkhya, for example, *avidyā* has been called *aviveka*, and it has been viewed as a double-edged category. On the one hand, *aviveka* has been treated as the operative power of an independent Prakṛti, which impels it to evolve and dissolve whenever necessary; and on the other hand, it has been held as the cause of the self's attachment to the world. *Avivekīprakṛti*, however, needs the help of the law of *karma* to produce diversities of this world of experience.

In the Advaita Vedānta, too, *māyā*, *avidyā*, or *ajñāna* has been viewed as the principle of objectivity and creativity; but it has been made dependent on God, who is its master. This changeable matrix of the world in the form of *māyā* or *avidyā* is regulated and shaped by the Lord of *māyā* (Īśvara) in accordance with the law of *karma*.

Rāmānuja, perhaps feels that, since creation and dissolution cannot take place unless *avidyā* is assisted by *karma*, it is therefore proper to identify *avidyā* with *karma* and to hold that *karma* is the cause that brings about diversities in the experiences of the individual souls.

## GANDHIJI'S PATHWAY TO PEACE—2

### PEACE EXTERNAL

BY SRI M. S. DESHPANDE

In our earlier article, we discussed Gandhiji's pathway to peace internal—peace in individual life. Let us now turn to an understanding of his pathway to peace external, viz. peace in the lives of societies, nations, and humanity in general. Societies, like individuals, had also their own conflicts from time immemorial. No period of recorded history throughout the world was entirely free from such conflicts. The peace of every society was endangered and dis-

turbed by a variety of conflicts. There were religious and cultural conflicts, political and economic conflicts; in fact, there were various kinds of conflicts in all walks of social life. These conflicts were, at times, of a moderate type. At other times, they assumed a terrible shape, so terrible that they resulted in bloody revolutions, shaking the very foundation of the social structure of the nation where they made their appearance. Such being the case, the



imperative need of finding out ways and means for the proper resolution of such conflicts and introduction of peace in society has attracted the attention of all the great savants of all the times and climes.

In the beginning, these conflicts appear to have been resolved on the basis of superior strength—the strong subduing the weak and surviving by suppressing and eliminating his adversary. But as societies evolved culturally, brute strength appears to have given place to moral, intellectual, and spiritual strength. However, the principle that was followed by these enlightened persons also was the same, namely, elimination and substitution. In their respective spheres, these leaders tried to eliminate the conflicting factors by substituting a fresh one, which they considered to be all-inclusive and capable of removing the conflict on account of its supposed all-inclusiveness. History tells us that such attempts not only did not succeed in eliminating the conflicting factors, but they added one more to the lot.

This unfortunate experience called forth new efforts on the part of leaders of humanity to find out fresh principles that would bring about better results and a lasting peace. The principle that was discovered by our seers, but neglected so far, attracted their attention; and they seriously tried to make use of it, because, after careful investigation, they found it to be scientifically correct and sound. This principle is the principle of harmony, which is nothing but an extension and application of the principle of integration to society. What is integration to an individual, that is harmony to society. Integration is harmony in individual life; while harmony is integration in social life. Though names are different on account of their different spheres of application, they are one and the same.

This harmony is not uniformity; it is not identity; it is not unity of diversity, but unity in diversity. It is not oneness without a second, but oneness with the second. It is a fine combination—a sweet intermingling of various things of the same class, without the

loss of their special identity. It is well known that the word 'harmony' has been imported originally from the province of music. A fine blending of different notes giving out enchanting music was called harmony in the beginning. Later on, the term was being applied to all delightful combinations. People began to speak about the harmony of colours, harmony of *rasas*, harmony of sentiments, thoughts, and relations. Not only that; they have recently realized the great potential blessing which this principle embodies, and have been trying to make the best use of it in straightening and improving the relation between individuals as well as groups of individuals.

Just as the principle of integration of personality plays an important part in Gandhiji's pathway to peace in the individual, this principle of harmony plays a prominent role in his pathway to peace in society. Gandhiji's philosophy of God-realization helps in the integration of personality and consequently brings about internal peace. In the same way, his philosophy of Sarvodaya or Universal Brotherhood is capable of promoting harmony and peace in society. His Sarvodaya philosophy is mainly derived from the principle of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Hence we may even call it the philosophy of Universal Brotherhood. Gandhiji believed strongly that 'the world is moving towards Universal Brotherhood, when mankind would be one nation'. Gandhiji advocated 'not the good of the few, not even the good of the many, but the good of all, as we are made in His own image'. It is this broad, universal outlook, which Gandhiji had inherited from his philosophy of God-realization and Universal Brotherhood, that enabled him to find out fresh, effective remedies to solve the several problems in the different spheres of social, national, and international life. Let us try to have a glimpse at some of the details of his solutions.

Religion, which first made its appearance in the individual and social life as a messenger of peace and goodwill, later on proved to be, on



account of its distortion, a source of eternal conflict, even of bloody wars. The great *avatāras* and prophets, saints and sages, who had given their message of love and peace through religion, must be looking with horror at the abominable use to which their benign blessing has been put by the erring, thoughtless humanity. Religious fanaticism has led men to hate one another, not to love one another. Love of one's own religion is now expressed in terms of hatred of others' religions. The very instrument meant for the spread of love has become an instrument for the propagation of hatred. Strange indeed are the ways of man!

Gandhiji had all this dire and rich experience to learn from. So he never attempted to introduce a new religion in place of the existing great religions of the world. He believed and declared that all these religions are God-given and necessary for the people for whom they were revealed. He discovered, after prayerful search and deep study, that all religions were true and also that all had some error in them. He found that all worship the same God, that the Spirit is the same, and that names and forms alone are different. 'The soul of religion', he says, 'is one. It is encased in many forms. The final goal of all religions is the realization of this essential oneness of Spirit.' He asked people to follow their own religion—their own *svadharma*—by understanding its spirit. At the same time, he wanted all to cultivate broad toleration based on the proper understanding of other faiths. 'True knowledge of religion', says Gandhiji, 'will break down the barriers between faith and faith, and cultivation of tolerance for other faiths will impart to us an understanding of our own. People of different faiths will be better by contact with one another, and the world will be a better place to live than today.' Thus, through the spread of mutual understanding, toleration, and respect, Gandhiji hoped to create harmony in the sphere of religion.

In the matter of culture also, Gandhiji advocated 'harmony and not a mere external unity brought by force'. He aimed at a fine synthesis

of the old and new cultures, both of the East and of the West. 'Our new culture should be constructed', he says, 'on the foundation of the past, enriched by the experience of the centuries. It should be a synthesis of the different civilizations which have influenced India and have naturalized here.' 'Wise assimilation and not thoughtless imitation should be our goal.' Both the East and the West, he maintained, should mutually exchange what is good in them and reject the evil. Still he wanted all to love other cultures, but live their own. 'I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.' Thus Gandhiji allowed other cultures to blow, but not to blow ours away.

Gandhiji's politics was entirely different from the politics of the current brand. It was based on truth and love, not on deceit and hatred. He wanted to build political states on the foundation of truth and love. He considered a state or a nation to be a big family, consisting of a number of self-governing villages. 'In this structure,' he says, 'composed of villages, there will be ever-widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre would be the individual, always ready to perish for the village, the village ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle, of which they are integral units.' At the same time, Gandhiji wanted to extend this 'nation-law' to the whole world and consider it as a family of nations, as one indivisible, undivided family. The time is ripe for it, he says, because the wonderful inventions of science have reduced the distance of space and time and brought humanity closer.

Gandhiji advocated a broad nationalism leading to internationalism. His conception of *svarāj* was never narrow. It was prepared to undergo any amount of suffering for the benefit of the world. 'In the *svarāj* based on non-



violence,' he says, 'no one should suffer for want of food and clothing. They should be freely available to all, as God's air and water are. Everyone from the king to the poorest citizen must prosper. Nobody is anybody's enemy. All can read and write, and their knowledge keeps on growing from day to day. Sickness and disease are reduced to the minimum.' 'I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there will be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities live in perfect harmony. This is the India of my dreams.' Such is the *svarāj* which Gandhiji wanted to build for the welfare of the world.

Gandhiji's economy is based on ancient Indian traditions, which, if worked out in details, may give to the world a sound plan of peace, security, and progress. It is built on these four corner-stones: (i) simplicity, (ii) non-violence, (iii) sanctity of labour, and (iv) human values.

Simplicity in life is the first principle which Gandhiji advocates. Modern civilization makes bodily welfare the object of life. It increases animal appetites and goes to the end of the earth in search of their satisfaction. Gandhiji totally detests this mad desire. So he wants to set limits to our indulgence and advises us to lead a life of plain living and high thinking. Gandhiji does not consider complexity to be the sign of progress. He discourages 'wreckless pursuit of wealth', which undermines character and human values. He stresses the need of decentralization and localization of industries.

The second principle of Gandhian economy is non-violence. He wants India to develop along the bloodless non-violent way that comes from simple and godly life. Localization of industry, according to him, is sure to bring about this sort of development, which is at the same time not incompatible with wider nationalism and with still wider internationalism in the sphere of thought and culture.

Bread labour is the third principle which underlies Gandhiji's economy. Labour is the law of Nature. We are expected by Nature to earn our bread with the sweat of our brow. Our real happiness consists in the proper use of our hands and feet. 'If all laboured for their food and no more,' writes Gandhiji, 'there would be enough food and enough leisure for all.' Machine has its place in life, but it should not be allowed to kill man. Says Gandhiji with extreme regret: 'We are destroying the matchless living machines, i.e. our own bodies, by leaving them to rust and trying to substitute lifeless machinery for them.' 'By using machines, men go on saving labour, till thousands are without work and thrown on the streets to die of starvation.' Gandhiji detests this 'lure of leisure'. Leisure is good and necessary, according to him, up to a point, beyond which it becomes a veritable curse by turning the vacant mind into a devil's workshop. Gandhiji advised all to earn by labour and eat with pleasure.

Gandhiji substituted moral and human values in place of money values. He made no distinction between economics and ethics. 'The value of an industry should be gauged', he says, 'less by the dividend it pays to the sleeping shareholders than by its effects on the bodies, souls, and spirits of the people employed in it.' The *khādi*-spirit meant to Gandhiji 'a fellow-feeling with every human being on earth'. It represented, according to him, human values, while mill-cloth represented metallic values.

Gandhiji advised the capitalists to regard themselves not as owners, but as trustees of their wealth and use it for the service of society. He also asked labour to organize themselves, develop their skill and gift of intelligence, and have confidence in their capacity to secure a fair deal. At the same time, he wanted the rich to learn and teach contentment, as happiness was largely a mental condition. The rich should not try to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor, and the poor should not envy the rich. They should constitute a great family living in unity and harmony and working in loving co-operation for mutual material and



moral welfare. This is the ideal which Gandhiji tried to inculcate throughout his life.

In the social sphere, Gandhiji tried to remove caste-prejudices by explaining the correct significance and value of *varṇāśrama*. 'Hinduism startled the world', he says, 'by its discovery and application of the law of *varṇa*. When Hindus were seized with inertia, abuse of *varṇa* resulted in innumerable castes.' So he considered the four divisions alone to be fundamental, natural, and essential. However, Gandhiji considered untouchability to be a crime against humanity—a curse eating into the vitals of Hinduism—a sin of which the sooner Hinduism purges itself, the better it is for itself. Thus did Gandhiji want to establish harmony among the social groups of India.

Gandhiji also tried to introduce harmony in human relations, i.e. between man and man, man and woman, by giving them a correct idea about their respective places and duties in social life. The two misconceptions that have poisoned their harmonious relations are (i) the conception of superiority and inferiority, on the one hand, and (ii) that of equality, on the other. The second conception was, in fact, introduced and advocated to counteract and remove the evil effects of the first. In God's universe, there is place for everyone and everything; there is none high or low. But narrow arrogance tried to assert its superiority by treating the weak as inferiors and introduced this poison in the body politic. Soon the conception of equality was powerfully inculcated to wipe out the dire effects of the former conception. But, unfortunately, this second principle also lost its proper significance in course of time. It was misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misapplied.

Gandhiji tried to correct both these conceptions. He told that there is both equality and inequality in life. 'Equality', he maintains, 'is of souls, not of bodies; of opportunities, not of capacity.' Really, Nature abhors equality. Its beauty and grandeur consists in rich variety. Therefore Gandhiji wants us 'to realize equality in the midst of this apparent inequality' and

to feel kinship with everyone in the world and try to promote the happiness even of the humblest of human beings.

Gandhiji considered woman as a companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. 'Man and woman are equal in status, but not identical. They are a peerless pair complementary to each other. Both are entitled to a supreme place in their own sphere of activities. Man is the bread-winner, woman is the keeper and distributor of bread. Man is active, woman is passive.' 'The art of bringing up the infants of the race is her special and sole prerogative. Without her care, the race would be extinct.' 'Woman is an incarnation of *ahimsā*—infinite love, which means infinite capacity for suffering.' 'If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women.' Therefore Gandhiji advises women to transfer their love to humanity, consider spiritual union as the ideal of marriage, occupy a proud position by the side of man as mother, and teach the art of peace to the warring world.

To inculcate the above-mentioned principles among the people and to resist and eradicate evil tendencies in them, Gandhiji used two effective means, viz. education and *satyāgraha*. 'If we are to reach real peace in this world,' says Gandhiji, 'and if we are to wage real war against war, we shall have to begin with the education of children. We shall then go from love to love and peace to peace until at last all the corners of the world are covered by them.' But he says: 'Our education must be revolutionized. The brain must be educated through the hands, and the brain should awaken the soul.' 'Useful labour', according to him, 'develops a balanced intellect, which presupposes a harmonious growth of body, mind, and soul. Literary education should follow and not precede the education of the hand.' The religion of truth and *ahimsā* should be imparted along with cultural education, especially through the examples of teachers' lives.

Gandhiji also wanted us to make full use of art, music, and literature for giving man a fine heart-culture. 'There is an art that kills,' he



says, 'and an art that gives life. True art must be an expression of the soul and must help the soul to realize its inner Self.' 'Life is greater than all art', he observed; and he considered the man whose life came nearest to perfection as the greatest artist. Noble life was, according to him, the foundation of art. He advocated the propagation of such art for giving proper culture to the hearts of all.

It is admitted on all hands that evil exists in this world. It is the real cause of so much misery here. To Gandhiji, goodness misplaced is evil, no doubt. Still his soul refused to be satisfied so long as it was a helpless witness of a single wrong. He also thought that he would never know God if he did not wrestle with and against evil, even at the cost of life itself. Hence he found it absolutely necessary to resist and supplant evil for the spread of peace and goodwill on earth. And the weapon he devised for this was 'the matchless weapon of *satyāgraha*'. Gandhiji called *satyāgraha* 'truth-force, love-force, or soul-force'. 'We may use this weapon', he says, 'in any sphere of life and to get rid of any grievance. It purifies one who uses it as one against whom it is used.' His *satyāgraha* presupposes self-discipline, self-control, self-purification, and a recognized status in the person offering it. It requires special training. Any Tom, Dick, and Harry cannot and should not use it. 'The purer he is and the more he suffers, the quicker the prog-

ress. The purer the suffering, the greater the progress towards freedom, God, and religion.' The spirit of non-violence, which is the soul of *satyāgraha*, ought to take the form of purest love, ever fresh—an ever-gushing spring of life expressing itself in every act. Ill will cannot stand in its presence. 'God is the shield of the non-violent.' 'Non-violence is the summit of bravery—the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known.'

'A *satyāgrahi* must never forget', says Gandhiji, 'the distinction between evil and evil-doer.' He must hate the sin and not the sinner. He must always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, *himsā* by *ahimsā*. There is no other way of purging the world of evil. 'A *satyāgrahi* has no power he could call his own. All the power he may seem to possess is from and of God.' 'If I could popularize the use of soul-force,' says Gandhiji, 'which is but another name of love-force, in place of brute-force, I know I could present you with an India that could defy the whole world to do its worst.' 'India is less in need of steel weapons; it has fought with divine weapons; it can still do so. . . . India can win all by soul-force.' Such was Gandhiji's firm faith in the supreme efficacy and value of *satyāgraha* in resisting and overcoming evil in life. This, in short, is the nature of the pathway to peace external chalked out by Gandhiji.

## THE CONCEPT OF AHIMŚĀ IN THE GĪTĀ

BY SRI S. N. RAO

The hero of the Mahābhārata war was Arjuna. He did not lay down his bow and arrows because of his faith in *ahimsā* as an infallible truth. He was more in a dilemma than in despondency. He saw his grandsire Bhīṣma, his *guru* Droṇācārya, and many friends and relations who did no harm or injury to the Pāṇḍavas, all arrayed against him. He thought

it would be a sin to fight or kill them in battle. He thought there would be no joy or glory in a kingdom won under such conditions. He was not sure of his duty or *dharma*—to fight or not to fight. He was full of conflicts in his mind. He was never a coward even in his dreams. His love and reverence for his elders was there. His ambition to regain his kingdom was also



there. He was not without compassion and consideration for his kinsmen. Overwhelmed by these factors, he was perplexed; he was confused about his duty (*Gītā*, II.7). His loyalty to truth and his allegiance to *dharma* were steady enough, but his mind was not sure where that truth and *dharma* lay. He knew that the primary element in *dharma* was neither *himsā* nor *ahimsā*, which were only the means for the establishment of *dharma*.

In the state of mind in which he found himself, while recognizing his limitations, his awareness and his sensitive nature gave him a vision, and that vision gave him a faith and a hope that his friend and companion Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone had the capacity to lift him out of the slough and perplexity into which he had fallen. He therefore at the outset surrendered himself to that divine guidance. That initial surrender was with faith and hope. His final surrender, at the end of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's discourse, was a realization bereft of fear, bereft of doubt, and bereft of ignorance regarding his duty. Endowed with full understanding that he was no more than a medium and an instrument in the hands of the Divine, in the cosmic set-up for a cosmic purpose, he fought and won with no personal likes and dislikes, and free from the trammels of the limited ego, his empirical self.

Non-violence is purely a physical concept, and it does not convey the full meaning contained in the Sanskrit term '*ahimsā*'. The core of *ahimsā* is complete absence of anger, hatred, or jealousy; it is purely an *ādhyātmic* concept. Total absence of self and selfish motive is the test of the *Gītā* concept of *ahimsā*. It is in this sense that *ahimsā* is equated with truth at its highest level, and is regarded as the highest principle in life. In the establishment of truth and *dharma*, it often happens that violence does take place. Non-violence through violence, *ahimsā* through *himsā*, is the law of Nature even on the physical and the biological plane. On the ethical and the spiritual plane, when Śrī Rāma killed Rāvaṇa, and when Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed Kaṁsa, it was undoubtedly violence, but there was no hatred or jealousy. All divine in-

carnations have done *himsā*, have done violence, but those acts were not acts of violence motivated by any selfish desire or by hatred. They were meant for the establishment of *dharma*, and the tyrants who were killed attained liberation.

Physical violence in some form or other is an everyday fact in the universe, and the sin attached to it comes not from the fact of violence, but from motives of desire, hate, and self-aggrandizement that prompt and precede that act of violence. Violence and non-violence are only the means, not the ends. Conditions and circumstances dictate whether violent means are necessary or non-violent means would suffice. Ethics and morality are in the mind and the motive, not in the surface action. Nature's laws are self-acting. In the working of those laws, we see both violence and non-violence operating in the universe. In the workings of Nature, we see both creation and destruction, with the principle of preservation thrown in between as a connecting link. The central teaching in the *Gītā* is the performance of duty for *lokasaṅgraha*, for the maintenance of truth in consonance with the cosmic purpose, without any hatred and attachment. Violence and non-violence, in a purely physical or biological sense, have no primary relevancy in that teaching. What is insisted upon in that performance is a complete surrender to the Lord without any selfish motive. Śrī Kṛṣṇa never justified either violence or non-violence as such. How can anyone be said to be violent when he is moved to think, feel, and act under a supreme cosmic sense with no trace of 'me' and 'mine'?

The teaching of Śrī Kṛṣṇa gives us the correct way of thinking, leading to the correct way of acting. It is not a dry doctrinaire philosophy, nor an eerie exposition of a mystic religion unworkable in actual life. Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the two great characters depicted in our Purāṇas, are two supreme examples of the application of the principle of *ahimsā* in real life. They were true *satyāgrahis*. It is not the *tāmasic* indiscriminate *satyāgraha* which we see frequently enacted



with sickening gusto in our post-independent era. What is *satyāgraha*? Literally translated, it is moral indignation against all inequity and and injustice, entirely impersonal and completely devoid of hatred and jealousy. Moral indignation demands moral armament when it comes to practical application, and moral armament involves moral violence, which gives a spiritual uplift both to the *satyāgrahi* and the person against whom *satyāgraha* is directed. That is exactly what happened to the tyrants who fell in battle against Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The principle of *ahimsā*, in its practical application, demands *satyāgraha* of such a nature. Otherwise, *ahimsā* would remain a mere fad, a futile slogan, and a sentimental namby-pamby affair.

Bhagavān Buddha said: 'He who deserves punishment must be punished. Those who go

to war on a righteous cause after exhausting all means of preserving peace are not blame-worthy.' Sir Arthur Keith writes: 'Nature keeps her human orchard healthy by pruning, and war is her pruning fork.' Dr. Radhakrishnan observes: 'We live in an imperfect world where all men are not saints, and force has to be used to keep the world going. If we say that the criminal's personality should not be violated, if we treat the gangster's life as sacred, we are acquiescing in evil. We cannot judge the use of violence as evil or as good by looking at it in isolation. There is a great difference between the knife of a surgeon and the knife of a murderer. *Dharma* is the ruling principle, and force or violence ministers to its decree. Force is not the law giver, but a servant of the law.' Here we have a lucid exposition of the concept of *ahimsā* according to the *Gītā*.

## ŚRĪ-BHĀṢYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from previous issue)

### TOPIC 5

#### THE NATURE OF THE SUPREME BRAHMAN

In the preceding topics, the experience of pleasure and pain by the soul, in the various states (described above) which are brought about by its connection with the body, has been described. In this topic, the nature of the supreme Brahman, as being free from all imperfections and as possessing infinite blessed qualities, is declared. It is shown that the supreme Brahman, though as the inner ruler is connected with the body presided over by the soul, yet is not, because of this connection with the body, affected by pleasure and pain like the soul. The imperfections of the soul and its suffering would lead men to dispassion; and the nature of Brahman, as free from imperfections and as having blessed qualities, would create in men a desire to attain Him.

No doubt it was shown in the *Brahma-Sūtra*, I.2.8, I.2.22, and II.1.14 that Brahman, not being subject to *karma*, was free from all imperfections of the soul, though embodied like it. But then *karma* does not directly bring about the imperfections of the soul, but it brings about the soul's connection with a body; and it is this connection of the soul with the body that causes suffering etc. to the soul (*vide B.S.*, III.2.5). So it is immaterial whether this connection is brought about by *karma* or voluntarily. So long as this connection with the body is there, the being abiding in it will be affected by imperfections. A person who of his own accord walks into a filthy place will nevertheless be contaminated by the filth. So, though Brahman's connection with the bodies as their inner ruler is a voluntary one, yet It cannot escape the imperfections which result from this connection.



This view is refuted by the next *sūtra*.

न स्थानतोऽपि परस्योभयलिङ्गं सर्वत्र हि ॥३१२११॥

11. Not even on account of place (is there any imperfection) in Brahman, because throughout (the scripture It is described) as having a twofold characteristic.

The supreme Brahman is not contaminated by imperfections like the soul, though It abides in the earth, the soul, etc. as their inner ruler. Why? Because throughout the scripture, Brahman is described as having a twofold nature, viz. being free from all imperfections and as possessing all blessed qualities. 'This is the Ātman, free from evil, free from old age, free from death, free from sorrow ... whose desire is True, whose resolve is True' (*Chā. U.*, VIII.1.5); 'Who is omniscient in general and all-knowing in detail' (*Mu.U.*, I.1.9); 'Without any stain etc.' (*Śve.U.*, VI.19); 'His nature is full of all the blessed qualities ... where all evils, sufferings, etc. do not exist' (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, VI.5.84-85).

भेदादिति चेत्, न, प्रत्येकमतद्वचनात् ॥३१२१२॥

12. If it be said on account of different states (the supreme Brahman as the inner ruler is affected by imperfections), (we reply) not so, because with respect to each of the states, the Śruti says the opposite of that (i.e. imperfections).

A further objection is made. The soul is by nature free from all imperfections (*vide Chā.U.*, VIII.7—Prajāpati's instructions), but due to its connection with different bodies like divine, human, etc., it is affected by imperfections. Similarly, Brahman, though possessing the twofold characteristic, yet due to Its connection with different bodies as the inner ruler, cannot escape imperfections. The latter half of the *sūtra* refutes this view and says, 'It is not so'; for every text in which the Lord is described as abiding as the inner ruler also says that He is immortal, thereby denying all imperfections in Him. The true nature of the soul, however, is obscured as long as it is connected with the body (*vide B.S.*, III.2.4 and 5). Therefore the supreme Brahman, though con-

nected with bodies, is not affected by imperfections.

अपि चैवमेके ॥३१२१३॥

13. Moreover, some (teach) thus.

Some recensions of the Vedas (*śākhās*) directly teach that, though the soul and Brahman are connected with the selfsame body, yet the soul alone experiences pleasure and pain, while Brahman is not affected like that. 'Two birds of beautiful plumage, inseparable friends, cling to the same tree. One of them eats the sweet fruit, while the other looks on without eating' (*Mu.U.*, III.1.1).

It is the soul's embodiment in human, divine, and other bodies that causes its subjection to *karma*. Similarly, Brahman would also be so subjected by embodiment. How can It be free from *karma* and not be enjoying its fruit?

अहूपवदेव हि तत्प्रधानत्वात् ॥३१२१४॥

14. Verily (Brahman is) merely formless, since It is the principal agent with respect to that (revealing of names and forms).

Though Brahman by entering into bodies human, divine, etc. is connected with those forms, yet by Itself It is altogether formless and therefore not subject to *karma*, as the soul is due to its embodied condition. Why? Because It is the chief agent in the revealing of names and forms suited for bringing about the soul's enjoyment of the fruit of its *karma*. It abides in all bodies for the fulfilment of the soul's enjoyment and not for Its own enjoyment. 'Verily, what is called *ākāśa* is the revealer of name and form. That within which they are is Brahman' etc. (*Chā.U.*, VIII.14.1). Being the chief agent in the differentiation of name and form, It is different from them.

Therefore Brahman has a twofold characteristic.

प्रकाशवच्चावैयर्थ्यात् ॥३१२१५॥

15. Even as Brahman is of the nature of consciousness (so also It has these characteristics); (the texts) not being devoid of meaning.

Texts like 'Brahman is existence, knowledge, infinite' declare that Brahman is undifferentiat-



ed consciousness. How can it have a twofold characteristic? This objection is refuted by this *sūtra*. Even as Brahman is regarded as essentially of the nature of consciousness and self-luminous to preserve the authority of the text quoted above, so also to keep intact the authority of texts like 'Who is omniscient in general and all-knowing in detail' etc. (*Mu.U.*, I.1.9) (*vide* also *Śve.U.*, VI.8), we have to take that Brahman has a twofold characteristic. For they, too, are not without meaning.

आह च तन्मात्रम् ॥३॥२॥१६॥

16. And (the text quoted) says so much only.

The text 'Existence, knowledge, infinite is Brahman' declares that Brahman has consciousness for its essential nature, but does not negative the other attributes of Brahman declared by other texts.

दर्शयति चाथो अपि स्मर्यते ॥३॥२॥१७॥

17. (The scripture) also shows (this, and) thus also (is it) stated by the *Smṛtis*.

The *Śruti* declares that Brahman is free from all imperfections and endowed with numerous blessed qualities. 'Who is the supreme Lord over all lords' etc. (*Śve.U.*, VI. 8); 'His great power is described to be of various kinds' etc. (*ibid.*, VI.9); 'Who is partless, free from actions, tranquil, faultless, taintless' etc. (*ibid.*, VI.19); *vide* also *Mu.U.*, I.1.9. The *Smṛti* also says so: 'He who knows Me, birthless and beginningless' (*Gītā*, X.3); 'I am the origin and dissolution of the whole world' (*ibid.*, VII.6); 'Beyond Me there is naught' (*ibid.*, VII.7); and so on.

Thus, under all conditions, Brahman is declared to possess the twofold characteristic, and He is not affected by the imperfections of the various conditions.

(To be continued)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The second part of Swami Satprakashananda's article, included in this issue, concludes his lucid exposition of 'Īśvara and His Māyā' from the non-dualistic viewpoint. The complete article forms a chapter of the Swami's prospective book now under preparation. . . .

The *Prapañcasāra* of Śaṅkarācārya is 'an encyclopaedic survey of the quintessential qualities and symbolic forms of various god-heads'. It is full of *mantras* and *dhyānas* of gods and goddesses. Sri P. Sama Rao's fourth and concluding article on 'The Poetry of Śrī Śaṅkara' describes some of the well-known Hindu gods and goddesses as depicted in the *stotras* of the *Prapañcasāra*. . . .

The theory of *avidyā* is one of the fundamental problems in Indian philosophy. All the Vedānta schools offer their own explanations of this theory in tune with their respective philosophical positions. The Viśiṣṭādvaita

view is presented in a perspicuous manner by Dr. Anima Sen Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., of Patna University, in her article entitled 'Avidyā in the Philosophy of Rāmānuja'. . . .

In his second article on 'Gandhiji's Pathway to Peace', Sri M. S. Deshpande describes Gandhiji's recipe for 'peace external', i.e. for bringing 'peace in the lives of societies, nations, and humanity in general'. Sri Deshpande's first article, dealing with 'peace internal', appeared in the July 1960 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*. . . .

An act is looked upon as violent or non-violent not by its outward expression, but by the inner motive behind the act. *Himsā* and *ahimsā* are only the means, not the ends, the goal being the establishment of *dharma*. That this is 'The Concept of Ahimsā in the Gītā' is explained in a brief but lucid article by Sri S. N. Rao, of Ootacamund.



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

A CRITIQUE ON THE VIVARAṆA SCHOOL: STUDIES IN SOME FUNDAMENTAL ADVAITIST THEORIES. BY BRATINDRA KUMAR SEN GUPTA. Agents: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta-12. 1959. Pages 278. Price Rs. 12.

The Advaita Vedānta received its grandest exposition at the hands of Śrī Śaṅkara. Two of his disciples Padmapāda and Sureśvara, commented on his works; and these became the founders of two schools of thought. Padmapāda's school is known after his commentator as the Vivaraṇa school of Advaita. Sureśvara's school did not catch the attention of the philosophers. It was Vācaspati's commentary on Śaṅkara's *Vedānta-Sūtra-bhāṣya* that gave rise to the Bhāmatī school.

The Vivaraṇa school is phenomenalist absolutism. It began with Padmapāda's *Pañcapādikā*. Prakāśātman commented on it, and this is the *Pañcapādikā-vivaraṇa*. This was followed by Vidyāraṇya's *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*, which text formed the basis of Akhaṇḍānanda's *Tattva-dīpana*.

Dr. Bratindra Kumar Sen Gupta has offered in this volume a brief summary of the first *varṇaka* of the *Vivaraṇa*. He has relied on Vidyāraṇya's text more closely. The work is in ten chapters, and these follow the order of the topics discussed in the *Vivaraṇa* and the *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*.

The first *varṇaka* in the *Vivaraṇa* gives an exhaustive exposition of *adhyāsa*. Here we have the epistemology and metaphysics of Advaita. Just as the *Brahma-Sūtra* attacks the Sāṅkhya too often, and just as *Bhāmatī* attacks Bhedābheda (identity-indifference), the *Vivaraṇa* too often attacks Prabhākara's system of Mīmāṃsā.

Dr. Sen Gupta has faithfully followed the text. He has presented the theory of error, the nature of Self, the nature of *ajñāna*, and other problems. The Pratibimbavāda (reflection theory of the Self) is explained in the concluding two chapters. Here he is unduly critical of Vācaspati and others. The Avacchedavāda, the Pratibimbavāda, and the Drṣṭi-srṣṭivāda, all appear in Śaṅkara's great commentary. And in the *Vivaraṇa*, we are told that these are all intended to be mere illustrations, which should not be strained too far; for the *Vivaraṇa* admits that the argument from analogy is the weakest.

Dr. Sen Gupta's book is a good introduction to the Vivaraṇa school of Advaita. The book would have been better had the author paid some attention to the improving of the expression.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

LANGUAGE AND PSYCHOLOGY. BY SAMUEL REISS. Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16. 1959. Pages 299. Price \$3.75.

In the preface to this interesting volume, the author condemns the mechanical viewpoint in dealing with the problem of language. It is proposed to press modern psychology into service. But the author restricts himself to the principle of *association* in handling the problems relating to meaning. It is well known that association psychology is outmoded. Even so, credit is due to the author for bringing the light of psychology (it may be only a thin pencil of light, still it is light!) into the dark regions of language study known as semantics.

In twenty well-knit chapters, the author gives us forty-six clusters of words, each arranged in such a way as to bring out the associated sequence of meaning running through it. A careful analysis of these clusters reveals the factors operating in the process of language creation and communication. Metaphor-creation (chapter V); sound-to-meaning linkage, that is, the process by which the sound of the word is identified with its meaning (chapter VII); and dynamism of this linkage, which reveals action and movement (chapter VIII), are some of the factors thus elucidated. A few of the succeeding chapters deal with the anatomy of meaning. The psychological basis of meaning receives fairly adequate treatment, and the controversial problem of *imageless thinking* is also discussed. Some attempt is made in chapter XVIII to enter into the forbidding regions of epistemology.

In the appendix, the author extends his concepts to the Japanese language.

It is rather surprising that such a well organized book should lack a list of contents. This defect must be immediately set right.

PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE BEAUTIFUL. BY P. N. SRINIVASACHARI. Published by Sri Krishna Library, Mylapore, Madras 4. 1959. Pages 90. Price Rs. 2.

Scholar and author, the late Sri P. N. Srinivasachari was the principal and professor of philosophy at Pachaiyappa's College, Madras. His contribution to the philosophic thought of the country, particularly to Viśiṣṭādvaita, is quite great. This is one of his substantial and valuable works.

The mind of the author has worked under a deep conviction regarding the synthetic attitude of the Indian mind in all spheres of culture and learning.



The book is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is devoted to a thorough analysis of the nature of the beautiful. The second chapter discusses critically the various standards of aesthetic criticism bringing into light their inherent merits and demerits. The third chapter deals with the metaphysics of the beautiful, whereas the fourth and fifth chapters are devoted respectively to a discussion of the Vedāntic view of the beautiful and a mystic description of God as supreme Beauty and Bliss.

While discussing the metaphysics of the beautiful, the author remarks: 'Owing to the Hindu genius for synthesis, its theory of the beautiful has been free from the antagonism existing in Western thought between realism and idealism, between romanticism and classicism. It recognizes the value of objectivity, the infinite being glimpsed through the finite. It stresses, at the same time, the value of authority and spontaneity of inner intuition, and overcomes the ugliness of sensual life.'

Subjective and objective standards of beauty, idealistic and realistic views, and classicism and romanticism as expounded in the aesthetics of the West have all been fully discussed. The evaluation of the subjects discussed is commendable. A critical exposition of the speciality of Hindu aesthetics has added much to the value of the book, and is the distinctive contribution of our author.

The close relationship between aesthetics and religion, admitted explicitly in the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy, has been lucidly dealt with by the author. The moral ruler of the universe, who is also the object of supreme love and devotion, is one with *bhuvana sundara* or the supreme Beauty. God is the supreme artist; creation and destruction are two modes of His artistic activities. The author says that beauty, love, and bliss can be distinguished, but they can never be divided or separated. The three are one, and these three are blended in the form of Brahmānanda or ineffable supreme Bliss.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF TYAGARAJA.  
TEXT IN DEVANAGARI AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF  
THE SONGS OF TYAGARAJA BY C. RAMANUJACHARI,  
AND AN INTRODUCTORY THESIS BY DR. V. RAGHAVAN.  
*Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras-4. Pages 206+623. Price Rs. 10.*

In India, music has always been looked upon as a *sādhana* to achieve the one goal of life, viz. the realization of God, and not merely as a set of ordered system of sounds producing a pleasing effect on the hearers. In fact, attainment of perfection in music has been placed next only to *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. It is said that music was created by Brahmā himself out

of the Vedas, and the great sponsors of music were divine beings like the Gandharvas and Vidyādhars. Sages like Nārada and Bharata disseminated music in this mortal world.

To saint Tyagaraja, *nādoṣānā* or the practice of music is a worship unto his *iṣṭadevatā*, Śrī Rāmacandra. His music gives expression to his thoughts and emotions, his joys and sorrows. His compositions reflect his hopes and despair, as well as his gratitude to the Divine, in perfectly got up music. It will not be wrong to say that his songs portray various incidents of his life and his reactions to them. Many instances can be cited in this regard. A well-known incident tells us of what spiritual stuff Tyagaraja was made. When his brother asks him to go to the ruler of Tanjore to get wealth through his music, Tyagaraja declines to propitiate human beings for the sake of earthly gains in preference to the grace of God. The song he composed on the occasion—*Nidhi cāla sukhamā?*—pours forth his utter disgust at the thought of 'marketing music', and shows clearly the one supreme purpose of music, that of singing the glory of God.

The details of Tyagaraja's life are, unfortunately, not available, though he lived only in the last century. Whatever material is given in the book under review is due to the untiring efforts of the late Sri C. Ramanujachari, who contacted the direct disciples of Tyagaraja and collected a number of songs of the saint as handed down in the *paramparā*. A gifted musician, an excellent actor, and an able administrator, Sri C. Ramanujachari, along with his brother, the late Sri C. Ramaswami Iyengar, Founder-Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras, came in contact with the inspiring personality of Swami Vivekananda and some other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Sri C. Ramanujachari became Secretary of the Home after the demise of Sri C. Ramaswami Iyengar, and worked heart and soul for the institution till the last day of his life. It is only in the fitness of things that a great lover of music and a devout person like him should undertake such a stupendous task as the publication of this volume on Tyagaraja.

Dr. V. Raghavan's 'Introductory Thesis', covering more than 200 pages, is a masterly analysis expounding the meaning and message of the compositions of Tyagaraja. All the aspects of his personality—as a musician, a composer, a devotee, and, above all, as a *bhāgavata* broadcasting the sacred name of God—have been dealt with in an authentic manner. There is not a single theme in the works of Tyagaraja which is left untouched by the scholarly treatment of Dr. Raghavan. His *Thesis* has greatly enhanced the value of the book, and is sure to draw people towards Tyagaraja and his devotional songs.



Tyagaraja's compositions are many and varied. They are all full to the brim with devotion. *Rāga* and *anurāga* go hand in hand in all his songs. There are, on the whole, 565 pieces in the volume. The text of each song is given in Devanāgarī characters, followed by an English translation of the song by Sri C. Ramanujachari. The translation is quite simple, and it is in prose form. The songs included in the volume are arranged according to a scheme of classification, which is given at the close of Dr. V. Raghavan's *Thesis*. The scheme is very significant, inasmuch as it brings out the character and content of the songs in proper perspective. Two alphabetical indices of the songs, in Devanāgarī and English, given at the end of the book, will be found useful for ready reference.

The book carries a Foreword by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who, while paying his homage to this saint-musician, says: 'This learned and scholarly work is bound to extend the influence of Tyagaraja on the minds and hearts of our people.'

Every lover of music, every devotee of God, ought to be grateful to the publishers for this precious volume on Tyagaraja. It is a laudable attempt to uphold the cause of real classical devotional music.

SWAMI STHITATMANANDA

## HINDI

VIŚVAJYOTI (SVĀSTHYA VIŚEṢĀŅK). VOLUME IX. No. 1. Published by Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, P. O. Sadhu Ashram, Hoshiarpur, Punjab. Pages 128. Price Re. 1.50.

This year, *Viśvajyoti* has devoted its special number to the problem of health—physical, mental, and moral. The articles are very instructive, and deal with the various aspects of the healthy growth of the body and mind of man. A sound mind in a sound body makes life more enjoyable and endurable. In our present complex society, where everything is becoming mechanized, people in general are losing sight of the importance of physical labour and culture of the body, which are so essential for the growth of the mind in tune with the development of the body. For a man to grow to his full stature, there should be an all-round growth of his being, physical, mental, and moral. Otherwise, he becomes a lop-sided personality.

The articles have kept the prevailing conditions in the country in view; and the problem of health is studied against the background of Indian tradition and culture.

SWAMI NIRGUNANANDA

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA (COIMBATORE DISTRICT)

REPORT FOR 1958-59

The following are the various institutions run under the management of the Vidyalaya:

*Residential High School:* During the year under review, the High School had a strength of 175. In addition to the usual academic course, the school provides for multipurpose courses in engineering, agriculture, and science. Hindi is taught as a compulsory subject in lower forms and as an optional subject in higher forms. In the lower forms, woodwork and gardening are taught as crafts. A science club, annual sports and intra-mural games, the language associations, the students' court and parliament, the students' co-operative store, A. C. C. camps, manuscript magazines brought out on festive occasions like Dipavali, Sarasvati Puja, and Pongal, and training in music and painting are the extra-curricular activities provided for the students.

*The Gandhi Basic Training School:* Has three sections with a total strength of 96 students. Spinning and weaving are the main crafts taught in the school, gardening, tailoring, and bee-keeping being subsidiary. The students conducted a night school at Perianaickenpalayam Harijan colony. In addition, they used to entertain the villagers by organizing one-act plays, instrumental music, singing, folk dancing, *bhajan*s, etc. To gain practice in teaching and also to observe village life at close quarters, the trainees spent nearly five weeks in the villages. Three seminars were conducted for head masters of basic schools in the area. Once in two months, conferences of teachers of basic schools, in which the actual problems of class-rooms were discussed, were held.

*T. A. T. Kalanilayam Senior Basic School:* Strength: boys: 323; girls: 195; teachers: 15. Spinning and weaving are the crafts taught. Students are also taught vegetable gardening. They conduct hand-written magazines.

*The Teachers' College:* Was started in 1950. Strength in the year under review: 48. Attached to



the college, there is a school extension department, which provides in-service training to teachers of secondary schools to improve techniques of teaching. The college has a well-equipped audio-visual section, and there is also a research department.

*The Maruthi College of Physical Education:* Strength: 85 students (17 in the higher grade and 68 in the lower). The college conducted a play festival in which 1,000 children from 15 schools participated.

*The Rural Institute:* (a) School of Engineering: Total strength: 155; (b) School of Agriculture: Total strength: 16; (c) College of Rural Higher Education: Total strength: 104.

*Industrial Section:* Consists of a workshop which provides training in various aspects of mechanical and electrical engineering. Electric motors of horse power 1 to 10 and some textile machines and parts are manufactured in the workshop. The workshop is also equipped with a high tension power house costing Rs. 40,000.

*The Social Education Organizers' Training Centre:* Started functioning in 1957. The training course is for five months. The trainees are deputed by the four South Indian States—Madras, Mysore, Andhra, and Kerala. During the year under review, a total number of 75 students underwent training. The field work programme consists of organization of literacy centres, reading rooms, library, study groups, and seminars for the youth, the farmers, the Panchayat members, and the school teachers. The trainees also get training in organizing recreational and cultural activities in the villages and in taking socio-economic surveys.

*The Sitamani Memorial Dispensary:* Serves the medical needs of the educational colony and the surrounding villages. It is well-equipped with the latest scientific apparatuses, such as X-ray, Ultra-violet and Infra-red rays, etc. Total number of patients treated: 30,900. Operation cases: 166.

*Publications:* The Vidyalaya has brought out a book entitled *World Teachers on Education*, besides publishing a quarterly news bulletin and the reports of the various seminars organized by it.

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, VARANASI

### REPORT FOR 1958

*Indoor General Hospital:* Total number of cases admitted during the year: 3,309. Details of treatment: cases cured: 2,714; relieved: 148; discharged otherwise: 201; died: 123; remained at the end of the year: 123. Total number of surgical cases: 646.

Total number of ghat and roadside cases: 59. Daily average number of beds occupied: 102.

*Refuge for Aged and Invalid Men and Women:* Though it has a capacity to accommodate 25 men and 50 women, it was possible to maintain only 9 men and 22 women during the year, for paucity of funds.

*Out-patients' Department:* Total number of new patients treated in the department (including Shivala branch): 66,295; repeated cases: 2,28,009. Daily average attendance: 810. Total number of surgical cases (including injections): 46,146.

*Outdoor Relief to Poor Invalids and Helpless Ladies:* Number of persons who received monthly pecuniary help: 108. Total expenditure: Rs. 2,257.87 nP.

*Relief to School-going Children:* Twenty-eight students were given monthly help in the form of school fees and food. Books and clothing were also occasionally given. Total expenditure: Rs. 1,131.11 nP.

*Special and Occasional Relief:* Food, and occasionally cash relief, was given to 549 stranded travellers. Total expenditure: Rs. 1,015.68 nP. Besides, 100 cotton blankets, 6 woollen blankets, 61 dhotis, and 90 yards of shirting were distributed among 227 persons.

*Milk Canteen:* On an average daily 700 persons (children, nursing and expectant mothers, sick and aged invalids) were given milk. Total quantity consumed: 600 cartons. Besides, 191 persons were given prepared barley and sago.

*Holy Mother Centenary Memorial Fund:* Nearly 426 books and 60 exercise books etc. were distributed among 88 poor students from the sum of Rs. 231, accruing from this fund.

*Pathological Laboratory:* Details of tests carried out: blood: 4,196; urine: 2,988; stool: 3,043; sputum: 60; widal test: 328; kahn test: 486; aldehyde and antimony test: 144; blood sugar: 168.

*Mahesh Chandra Bhattacharyya Memorial X-ray and Electrotherapy Department:* Number of cases examined: chest: 915; bone: 167; barium meal: 7; shortwave therapy: 155; fluoroscopy: 157; infra-red ray: 10; ultra-violet ray: 30; urinary bladder: 10; cholecystography and philography: 9.

### *Some of the Immediate Needs of the Home of Service:*

- Endowment for beds in the indoor hospital:
 

Surgical Ward	Rs. 6,000 per bed
General Ward	Rs. 5,000 per bed
Invalids' Home	Rs. 4,500 per bed
- A ward for male department Rs. 1,50,000