



VOL. LXVI

OCTOBER 1961

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR  
AWAKENED INDIA

By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or  
all of these the vision of the Paramatman is obtained.



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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Vol. LXVI

OCTOBER 1961

No. 10



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

## SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

*Belur Math, May 4, 1929 (Continued)*

The mother: 'I do not know much about the life of the Holy Mother. I have not read either her life or her teachings. Kindly tell me something about her. I am very much interested to hear.'

Mahapurushji: 'The Holy Mother was the mother of all. Her kindness, her forbearance, and her patience were wonderful. How little of her do we ourselves know! But she has out of her mercy let me realize that she is none other than the Mother of the universe. None can understand her real nature, unless she in her mercy reveals it to us. First Yogen Maharaj (Swami Yogananda) and then Sharat Maharaj (Swami Saradananda) attended to her needs. I had also the good fortune of cooking for her once, when on a visit to Jayrambati. That was many years back, a few years after the Master had left the body. The Holy Mother was then at Jayrambati. Swami Ramakrishnananda was with me and also another monk, I forget who it was. Perhaps, it was Swami Subodhananda. We all went to see the Holy Mother at Jayrambati. In those days, the devo-

tees seldom visited Jayrambati, and the journey, too, was extremely difficult. We had informed the Mother earlier. It pleased her greatly to have us there. Forthwith, she became very busy about feeding us properly and making us happy in every way. Jayrambati was a small village, where nothing could be had. Nevertheless, the Mother had arranged for milk, fish, and various kinds of vegetables. She knew that the people of Calcutta were used to drinking tea; so she arranged for our tea as well. We spent the whole day in great delight. We had a fine bath in the Talpukur tank. The Holy Mother (being very bashful) would not come out in the open before us, nor would she talk with us. At night, when we had gone to bed after dinner, I planned with Swami Ramakrishnananda that we should cook for her. Next morning, when we broached the question before her after tea, she at first laughed at the idea, and said: "How can that be, my sons? I am your mother; it is my duty to cook for you. And here you are wanting to cook for me instead! You will hardly be able to bear the smoke in the kitchen." With such words,

she wanted to dissuade us. But we did not mind her objection, and were firm in our resolve. As a last argument, I said: "We come from Brāhmaṇa homes; so why should you have any objection to taking food cooked by us? The Master also accepted cooked food from us." Ultimately, she had to agree. Swami Ramakrishnananda and myself cooked, and the Mother was highly pleased with the food.'

The mother: 'Maharaj, so you cooked for the Master as well?'

Mahapurushji: 'Yes, my daughter. The Master, being very ill then, was staying at Cossipore for treatment. We all lived there with Swamiji, and served him all the twenty-four hours by turns. We all had our food there, for which Suresh Babu made the necessary arrangement. There was also a cook. Once, when he fell ill, we had to cook by turns. The food was very simple—rice, dal, vegetable soup, and so on. Our mind was then in such a state that we did not give much thought for food, and we were satisfied with what came to hand easily. On the one hand, the Master was seriously ill, and on the other, our own minds were afire with spiritual realization. One night during that period, it was my turn to prepare *roṭi*, dal, and a vegetable curry. When I added the spices to the curry, the Master smelt it from his room above, and said: "Who is it that is cooking tonight? The spices smell so nice!" When he heard that I was cooking, he said: "Oh, fetch some of it for me." He partook a little of this that night. He was then suffering from pain in the throat, so he could hardly take anything. A little bit of semolina boiled in milk would be given to him, which he ate with great difficulty. Sometimes, he could not swallow it at all. Over and above this, he was so constantly in divine moods and *samādhi* that he hardly had any external consciousness. What happy days we spent there at Cossipore when engaged in the services of the Master and in intense spiritual quest! It seems as though the Master courted that disease in order to bring us all together and give shape to his future organization. How can ordinary

mortals penetrate into the deep purposes with which an incarnation comes to this earth?'

Saying this, he became silent and sat quiet for some time. Then he resumed slowly: 'Yes, my daughter, I was talking to you about Jayrambati. We stayed with the Holy Mother for three days that time in great joy. Her affection was boundless. She was extremely busy from morning till night so that we might not have the slightest discomfort. As for myself, I had lost my own mother in childhood, and I had almost forgotten what motherly love is. But at Jayrambati, I got a taste of that affection. On the third night, I had fever accompanied with shivering, and it increased as the night advanced. In the early hours of the morning, I told Shashi Maharaj (Swami Ramakrishnananda): "Brother, no more of this here. If I live here with my fever, I shall be only burdening the Holy Mother with greater worries. We shall bid farewell to the Mother in the morning and leave this place. After that, I do not care what happens." He, too, agreed to the proposal. As soon as the day dawned, we three saluted the Mother and left Jayrambati. At first, the Holy Mother would not agree to our departure so soon. But, when she found that we were insistent, she kept silent.

'I walked with difficulty a little distance from the Mother's house, when we came across an empty bullock cart. We hired it up to Arambag, and all the three of us got into it. In the cart, I was almost unconscious. At noon, the cart was stopped at a village, from where some hot water was procured. Finding me in that condition, a villager suggested that my fever would come down if I was given some juice of *bel* leaves. As we had no medicine with us, we had to act according to his advice. He brought some juice of *bel* leaves and gave it to me for drinking with hot water. The other Swamis finished their lunch with some parched rice purchased from the village. After this, we resumed our journey, with my fever showing no sign of abatement. When we reached Arambag, a doctor was called in, and he said

after examining that it was malaria. I was struck with wonder at his diagnosis. From where could malaria have come? I had no such fever for the last ten or fifteen years, though I had it in my boyhood. As a matter of fact, I had been living after that illness outside Barasat (the birth-place of Mahapurushji) for many years before I met the Master. At Barasat, I had once a severe attack of malaria. When I recovered a little, I went out for a change to the north-western parts of India. I was then fourteen or fifteen years old. Later on, I seldom visited Barasat, particularly avoiding the malaria season. So, when the doctor said that it was malaria, we concluded that the long bath in the Talpukur tank at Jayrambati might have activated the old malaria bacilli in my body. Whatever that might have been, we had to stay at Arambag for some days for my recovery, and then we returned to Calcutta.'

*Belur Math, August 9, 1929*

Swami Y—was to leave for Madras today. So, when he saluted Mahapurushji in the morning, he said: 'So Y—is leaving today. He has been in this monastery—this place of the Master—for many days this time. Well, I bid you good-bye now. You are devoted to the Master; he will be with you wherever you go. He lives among his devotees wherever they may be.'

At some other time, in the course of a discussion with a monk about the Math and Mission, Mahapurushji remarked: "Truth alone triumphs and not untruth." Truth has always been victorious, my son, and it will always be. This is all divine play. After leaving the gross body, the Master now lives in this Saṅgha (this Order of monks). Now, he lives as the Saṅgha. This is what Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) said. That you and all the devotees of the Master have gathered here from far-off centres will certainly bear some good result. The Master is still protecting this Saṅgha; and by creating a little stir now and then, he lets us know that he will protect it for ever. It

was at the behest of the Master himself that Swamiji established this Saṅgha; and he placed on it the onerous duty of spreading the Master's universal religious ideas throughout the world. Rest assured that nobody will be able to harm this organization. Even if somebody comes with hostile ideas, the Master will change his mind. He will make all understand the true spirit, maybe even through opposing circumstances. Men with their limited intellects are naturally liable to commit errors; but he is merciful to all. Sinner or sufferer, nobody is outside the pale of his grace. Has not Swamiji declared: "The current of whose love flows uninterruptedly down to the lowest pariah"? He forgives all. It is for saving all, down to the pariah, that he came down as Sri Ramakrishna. You must have read about Jesus Christ. For the very people who crucified him, he prayed to the Father in heaven: "Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That supreme Brahman Itself has now come down as Sri Ramakrishna. We have seen with our own eyes how infinite was his forgiveness, how wonderful was his mercy. As for the Holy Mother, there can be no comparison for her—she is none other than the Mother of the universe. I have even heard it related that, when someone came and reported to her that somebody had committed the most unmentionable and damnable crime, the Mother heard the whole report without uttering a word. Then the reporter requested the Mother: "If you summon him and take him to task a little, it will be good." To this, she replied: "My son, you can well talk like that, but I am his mother. To you, he may be an offender, and so detestable, but to his mother he is not so. Being his mother, how can I hate my son?" So wonderful was her forgiveness! All these are still before our eyes. That is what we, too, have learnt. We have to learn all these from the lives of the Master, the Holy Mother, and Swamiji.' As he spoke these words, his voice became choked, and he stopped suddenly. After some time, he sang:

'Sing the glory of the Lord of the universe,  
the One adorable to all;

The one Deity who protects the three worlds  
—the ocean of love, the beautiful, the  
leader of all life;

The charmer of the minds of His servants,  
the bestower of good, the giver of learn-  
ing, wealth, and intelligence.

The devotee begs of Him with folded hands:  
"Do please fill my thirsting heart with  
love."'



## RENUNCIATION AND SERVICE

Swami Vivekananda proclaimed: 'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels, and the rest will take care of itself' (*Complete Works*, Vol. V. p. 228). Others before him had spoken of renunciation as the means for individual liberation. Swami Vivekananda raised it to the status of a national ideal and policy. Saints and sages had laid stress on service as the most perfect channel for the inflow of spiritual illumination. Swami Vivekananda equated it with spirituality itself. Others, again, had thought that renunciation was incompatible with social activities. Swami Vivekananda made them go hand in hand with one another. That was no small contribution in the fields of both ideology and practice.

All the great religions of the world have emphasized the need of formal renunciation. The Buddhists carried it to the extreme, so much so that Swami Vivekananda was constrained to charge Buddhist monasticism with the guilt of enervating the Indian masses by a false lure of easy salvation through a mere outward show of rejection of the world. Jesus Christ was a monk, who urged his disciples to follow him by renouncing everything. But Christendom saved itself from the error of the Indian Buddhists by ignoring that call for all practical purposes. Swami Vivekananda's task was to save and give practical shape to this spiritual ideal and at the same time to protect the masses from misguided indolence masquerading as spiritual achievement. He could not

ignore the soul's natural hankering for spiritual flights beyond worldly preoccupations. Hence his work was to canalize this urge in a constructive way that would most effectively ensure free play to the soul's aspirations and yet safeguard social welfare and progress. The solution lay in joining together renunciation and service, quietism and action, individual aloofness and social usefulness. His motto was: 'For one's own salvation and for the good of the world.'

To achieve this difficult task, Swami Vivekananda had to make a fresh evaluation of renunciation itself. To him, as also to the teacher of the *Gītā*, renunciation did not mean mere external rejection, but a state of spiritual repose and freedom from being disturbed by one's environment, both mental and physical. Defining renunciation, Swami Vivekananda says: 'The two motive powers of our actions are (1) what we see ourselves, (2) the experience of others. These two forces throw the mind, the lake, into various waves. Renunciation is the power of battling against these forces and holding the mind in check. Their renunciation is what we want. ... Again, the experience of the worldly-minded teaches us that sense enjoyments are the highest ideal. ... To deny them, and not to allow the mind to come to a wave form with regard to them, is renunciation; to control the twofold motive powers arising from my own experience and from the experience of others, and thus prevent the *citta* (mind-stuff) from being governed by them, is *vairāgya* (re-

nunciation)' (*ibid.*, Vol. I. pp. 208-9). In this definition, renunciation comes to mean self-mastery, or freedom from being swayed by external forces. Needless to say that this differs from the ordinary conception of renunciation as a mere negative attitude of discarding or running away from something. Swami Vivekananda was a prophet of strength, and his definition of renunciation has the impress of his personality.

Along with this conception of masterful freedom, there is the other idea of positive achievement. As a matter of course, we have to renounce something when we want something else, maybe something better than what we have. As we ascend a ladder, the lower rungs are automatically left below. Renunciation, considered from the objective standpoint, is a rejection of the world; but from the subjective point of view, it is a positive spiritual gain; nay, to the mind advancing along the path of spiritual progress, the horizon expands constantly, and the vision widens to give newer values to the things at hand and put them in their proper perspective. There is no feeling of loss at any time; rather, there is a feeling of a fuller and more satisfying acquisition. In such an aspirant, the divine bliss gradually replaces the hankering for the little bits of worldly pleasure. As his personality expands, he feels a repulsion for the pettinesses of this world. Truly has the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* declared: 'Bliss is verily in the Infinite; in the finite there is no joy.' 'Every human being has an ideal of infinite pleasure', says Swami Vivekananda. 'To manifest the Infinite through the finite is impossible, and, sooner or later, man learns to give up the attempt to express the Infinite through the finite. This giving up, this renunciation of the attempt, is the background of ethics. . . . Ethics always says, "Not I, but thou"' (*ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 62). And he asks: 'How can religion or morality begin without renunciation itself?' (*ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 343). In another place, he says: 'The ideal of renunciation nowhere attains such a height as in the teachings of the Vedānta. But, at the same

time, dry suicidal advice is not intended; it really means deification of the world—giving up the world as we think of it, as we know it, as it appears to us—and to know what it really is. Deify it; it is God alone' (*ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 146).

So the idea of renunciation starts with the simple act of giving up; then through the psychological facts of the case, it carries us to a certain mental attitude; this, again, is reinforced, from the philosophical standpoint of reality, by the conviction of the presence of the Infinite and the illusoriness and unreality of the finite. And the consummation is reached in the spiritual recognition of the divinity of all, where all hankering is quietened and the finite mind attains a natural devotional bent for offering everything, including itself, at the feet of the Deity, the Infinite. What started as an act of petty giving up finds its fulfilment in a complete resorption in the infinite and blissful reality behind everything. Renunciation here becomes not simply a means, but an ideal in itself. It is no wonder, then, that Śaṅkarācārya should have equated renunciation with full enlightenment in several places in his commentaries. Renunciation, in this conception, has nothing to do with avoiding life. 'To live in the world', says Swami Vivekananda, 'and not to be of it is the true test of renunciation' (*ibid.*, Vol. V. p. 272).

We are not considering formal renunciation in this context, nor do we imply here any adverse criticism against it. We are rather concerned here with subjective attitudes that make it possible for it to join hands with service; and this not for any personal benefit, but for the good of all. Philosophically speaking, we really reject nothing here; rather, everything finds its true place within the ambit of infinity. Everything becomes reorientated; our whole outlook becomes deified; and we stand in the presence of God.

## II

We now turn to the other side—to service itself, which renunciation reinforces. The idea



of service is not so foreign to the modern world as the idea of renunciation. In fact, all activities are now termed 'service'. The government serves the people, the railroads serve the passengers, the industrialists serve the consumers, and so on and so forth. The idea implied is that the individuals in all these fields act not merely for personal gain, but also for the good of the people for whom they work; nay, the idea is gaining ground that the receivers profit more in such transactions, and the givers renounce their share of the gain to that extent. So far so good. The modern world, too, in a sense combines renunciation with service. But Swami Vivekananda's conception could not stop at that alone. He imported into this relationship a super-mundane outlook. The givers, according to him, were worshippers, and the recipients Divinity Itself under those diverse garbs. Service, as Swami Vivekananda looked upon it, had no touch of selfishness, no touch even of compassion. His philosophy of service, as also his philosophy of renunciation, flowed from his realization of the divinity of all. One has not to give to another, one has not even to help another, but one has to worship God coming to one in the guise of a supplicant. Out of the fullness of his heart, the giver is to worship that God by removing a felt want and thank him for offering such an opportunity for self-purification. In this conception, renunciation and service are but the obverse and the reverse of the same coin.

The world is now full of such thoughts as the struggle for existence, the survival of the fittest, and so on, borrowed from Darwinism, and believed in as gospel truths. The world, according to the present-day conviction, progresses through competition; and Nature, though a blind force and devoid of any selective power and predetermined direction for good, still somehow works mechanically for the betterment of human society, or, rather, that section of human society that deserves this boon. Such a materialistic philosophy is the very antithesis of what Swami Vivekananda preached. According to him, society progresses through mutual help

and co-operation, based on love and esteem, which, again, flow from the fundamental unity of all creation—felt as a reality in life. That basis of unity is his Brahman, conceived of not as a blind inert force, but as the essence of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, expressing Itself on the empirical plane as the omniscient, omnipotent, just, loving, and lovable God. Our duty is to serve this God in His various manifestations, not out of any selfish consideration, not even out of any humanistic motive, but simply because God demands our spontaneous worship, and because the finite expression of Brahman—which each individual is—wants to get reabsorbed into its own infinitude. Service is only an outer expression of that inner urge.

In this combination of self-abnegation and service lies the promise not only of individual mental tranquillity and perfection, but also of international peace and fulfilment of human destiny. It was this selfless idea of service that prompted the India of olden days to spread her spirituality to all the then civilized nations through the vehicle of love and cultural intercourse, rather than sword and fire. It is this spirit, again, that should inspire the more advanced nations in their ministrations to the less advanced ones. This idea elevates international relationship to a higher plane beyond any considerations of race, colour, or creed. The African is not only the brother of the European, but he is the European's own Self seen under a different set of circumstances. That Self is not to be pitied, but to be roused through respectful adoration. The African's present state of degradation matters little. The African has every promise of equalling all others through others' help, for in him is the same Divinity, though in a latent state. The same can be said of the Asians and of all the peoples of the under-developed countries.

Again, in Swami Vivekananda's philosophy, the helper gains more than the person helped. He gains in moral and spiritual stature; and one can well understand that he gains materially as well; for the fund of goodwill that he creates all around is sure to yield him a good return in

future. In fact, international help ensures a better future for the helping nation.

Swami Vivekananda is also convinced that real service can issue out of this idea of unity alone: 'When, at least, the central idea is, however, arrived at, that the sum total of all love is God, that the sum total of the aspirations of all the souls in the universe, whether they be free or bound, or struggling towards liberation, is God, then alone it becomes possible for any one to put forth universal love. ... Loving the world and doing it good will all come easily then; we have to obtain this power only by loving God first; otherwise, it is no joke to do good to the world' (*ibid.*, Vol. III. pp. 81-82). How true this is can be well understood if we but look at the contemporary world, which is divided into two blocs, each of which is solicitous for the uplift of the backward countries out of a mixed motive of help and winning them over to its own side, strengthening thereby its economic, political, and strategic position. This is not real service; and though this process may seem luring for the present, its ultimate result is bound to be bad for all concerned; and even for the bloc that resorts to such a dubious method can it hardly be beneficial. Let us again remember the declaration of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*: 'Bliss is verily in the Infinite; in the finite there is no joy.' Unless human relationship is built on the foundation of this unity of all, there can be no lasting and all-comprehensive peace.

### III

So far, we have a clear idea of what Swami Vivekananda meant by renunciation and service. To him goes the credit of joining the one to the other in the field of daily life, a task not easy by any means. We have shown that these two have common grounds so far as mental attitudes and metaphysical background are concerned; for both are based on self-denial and the unity of all creation. As such, they can easily come together. But the reconciliation was not so easy in his time in the actual field of traditional religious practices.

The question was put to him: 'Some say, "First of all become a *siddha* (a man of God-realization), and then you have the right to *karma*, or work for others", while others say that one should work for others even from the beginning. How can both these views be reconciled?' Swami Vivekananda's answer was: 'You are confusing one thing with the other. *Karma* means either service to humanity or preaching. To real preaching no doubt, none has the right except the *śiddha puruṣa* (the man of realization). But to service every one has the right; and not only so, but every one is under obligation to serve others so long as he is accepting service from others' (*ibid.*, Vol. V. p. 319). Two ideas stand out clearly from the above excerpt. First, though a perfected soul alone can be a true *guru*, serving his disciples on the spiritual plane, every one has the right to undertake works, both secular and spiritual, in a spirit of service for his own spiritual betterment. For instance, one can explain the scriptures to others with the idea that he is thus worshipping the Nārāyaṇa in them; or, one may even preach religion under the conviction that one is doing this in a spirit of helpfulness to one's audience or, maybe, for the clarification of one's own ideas and thus saving one's own soul. Secondly, some sort of service is incumbent on all, and even the all-renouncing monks have to do something in return for the support they get from society. Here, again, we speak not of the *sannyāsins* who have realized the Self, but of those who are on the way to this and who need some practice to make the ideal real to themselves.

The doubt was again expressed from another point of view: 'Can *jīva-sevā* (service to beings) alone give *mukti*?' And the answer was: '*Jīva-sevā* can give *mukti* not directly, but indirectly, through the purification of the mind. But if you wish to do a thing properly, you must, for the time being, think that that is all-sufficient' (*ibid.*, Vol. V. p. 325). This was in strict conformity with Śaṅkarācārya's philosophy. But Swami Vivekananda's outlook expressed itself even here in his phrase 'all-

sufficient'. In fact, any means for God-realization must be accepted with faith and full enthusiasm as all-sufficient at least for the time being. Without that whole-hearted acceptance, no spiritual means can yield its fullest result. And as for all-sufficiency in an absolute sense, the non-dualist asserts, from the philosophical point of view, that liberation is not the product of anything, so that the question of all-sufficiency of any means cannot arise in this sense. Liberation is natural to the soul, so that if selfless service cannot promise liberation, nothing else also can. All other means are meant for removing ignorance; and so also is service.

Swami Vivekananda said: "The essential thing is renunciation. Without renunciation, none can pour out his whole heart in working for others. The man of renunciation sees all with an equal eye and devotes himself to the service of all. Does not our Vedānta also teach us to see all with an equal eye? Why then do you cherish the idea that the wife and children are your own, more than others?" (*ibid.*, Vol. V. p. 382).

Once, in the course of a discussion on service to others, a disciple said to the Swami: "So, after all, it comes to this, sir, that unless this state of *jīvanmukti* (freedom even while living) is attained, work for the sake of others can never be pursued in the truest sense of the term." To this, the Swami replied: "Yes, that is what the Śāstras say, but they also say that work or service for the good of others leads to this state of *jīvanmukti*. Otherwise, there would be no need on the part of the Śāstras to teach us a separate path of religious practice called the *karma-yoga*" (*ibid.*, Vol. VII. p. 113).

Theories apart, it is so easy to fall into the trap of self-deception. From the fact that one has accepted the path of spirituality by renouncing worldliness in one's own way—be it by just becoming a religious man or a monk—it does not follow automatically, from the subjec-

tive point of view, that one is actually and for ever practising spirituality all one's life. Appearances are too often deceptive. "Well, the truth is this: the knowledge of Brahman is the ultimate goal—the highest destiny of man. But man cannot remain absorbed in Brahman all the time. When he comes out of It, he must have something to engage himself in. At that time, he should do such work as will contribute to the real well-being of people. Therefore do I urge you in the service of *jīvas* in a spirit of oneness" (*ibid.*, Vol. VII. p. 197). And then comes Swami Vivekananda's own pertinent question: "Which are greater—those who are coming forward in the service of humanity, regarding them as the Ātman, those who are continent since early age, who are the moving embodiments of renunciation and dispassion, or those who like flies are at one time sitting on a flower, and at the next moment on a dung heap?" (*ibid.*, Vol. VII. p. 263).

Last of all comes out the Swami, the prophet of renunciation and service, in his true colours, throwing aside all logic and prudential considerations to forget himself in the service of others for the sake of service itself: "We shall have to work, giving up altogether all desire for results. People will call us both good and bad. But we shall have to work like lions, keeping the ideal before us, without caring whether "the wise ones praise or blame us" (*ibid.*, Vol. VII. pp. 231-32).

Work is worship. We have to work for the sake of work; and not even considerations of liberation must deflect us from our determination. Even the hankering for personal liberation has a touch of selfishness. Swami Vivekananda's own life was a perfect example of the combination of the twin ideals of renunciation and service. May his noble life and lofty teachings inspire earnest men and women everywhere to devote themselves to a life of true renunciation and service for the good of others!

# THE UTTARA-KĀṆḌA OF THE VĀLMĪKI RĀMĀYAṆA

BY DR. A. D. PUSALKER

There are several scholars—both Indian and foreign—who hold that the entire *Uttara-kāṇḍa* of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* is a later interpolation in the epic.<sup>1</sup> The grounds advanced in support of the view are as follows.

(i) The *Uttara-kāṇḍa* was composed after the other *kāṇḍas*.

(ii) The *phalaśruti* at the end of the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa* (VI.128.117) clearly shows that the genuine *Rāmāyaṇa* came to an end there, and the subsequent portions were added later on.

(iii) The first table of contents in the *Bāla-kāṇḍa* makes no reference to the subject-matter of the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*, indicating thereby that, at the time of the composition of that table, the *Rāmāyaṇa* did not contain the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*, which is included only in the second table of contents in the *Bāla-kāṇḍa*, which was obviously composed after the interpolated *Uttara-kāṇḍa* was taken to be a part of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

(iv) The extent of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is stated to be 24,000 stanzas divided into 500 cantos, whereas the extant seven *kāṇḍas* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* exceed the number of stanzas and cantos assigned to the genuine *Rāmāyaṇa*.

(v) The *Rāmopākhyāna* in the *Mahābhārata* makes no reference to the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*.

(vi) The style of the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* is distinct from that of the genuine *kāṇḍas*.

(vii) There are several stories in the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* which run counter to the accounts given in the genuine *kāṇḍas* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Before subjecting these arguments to a critical examination, let us turn to the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* itself and deal with its contents with a

view to finding out whether the entire *Uttara-kāṇḍa* is spurious, or there are some portions which can be termed genuine. Briefly summarized, the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* deals with the following.

1. In the first 34 cantos is given a detailed account of Rāvaṇa describing his parentage and birth; penance and boons from Brahmā; defeat of Vaiśravaṇa and capture of Puṣpaka; curses by Nandi and Vedavatī; campaigns of conquest and curse by Anaraṇya; encounter with Yama and defeat of the sons of Varuṇa; capture of several maidens and married women and curse by Nalakūbara; defeat of Indra by Meghanāda and receiving boons from gods; defeat of Rāvaṇa by Kārtavīrya Arjuna and Vālin (1-34).

2. Account of the birth and life of Hanūmat (35-36).

3. Departure of the guests assembled for coronation and return of Puṣpaka to Vaiśravaṇa (37-41).

4. Desertion of Sītā: On the plea of fulfilling her longings (*dohada*), Rāma asks Lakṣmaṇa to leave Sītā at the hermitage of Vālmīki, on account of the public scandal about her. Lakṣmaṇa acquaints Sītā with the facts after they reach Vālmīki's hermitage after crossing the Gaṅgā. Lamentations of Sītā. Vālmīki gives asylum to Sītā. Sumantra points out to Lakṣmaṇa the real reason of Sītā's banishment (42-52).

5. Stories of Nṛga, Nimi, and Yayāti (53-59).<sup>2</sup>

6. Account of Śatrughna: Rāma sends Śatrughna against Lavaṇa through pressure from Cyavana. Śatrughna passes one night in the hermitage of Vālmīki, and during the same

<sup>1</sup> Bulcke, *Rāmākathā*, pp. 120-22, 407; Jacobi, *Das Rāmāyaṇa*, pp. 26, 28 ff., 64; Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, I. p. 495 ff. In the following footnotes, references to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, unless specifically indicated otherwise, are from the Nirnayasar Press Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Besides, there are thirteen cantos (viz. five between canto 23 and 24, five between canto 37 and 38, and three between canto 59 and 60), known to be interpolations, which have been excluded in the commentaries, and these have not been numbered in the texts of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

night were born Kuśa and Lava. While returning to Ayodhyā after twelve years, after killing Lavaṇa and founding Madhupurī, Śatrughna listens to the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the hermitage of Vālmīki. After seeing Rāma at Ayodhyā, Śatrughna returns to Madhupurī (his kingdom) (60-72).

7. Killing of Śambūka, a Śūdra, who was performing penance (73-76).

8. Accounts of Śveta and Daṇḍa (77-82).

9. Glorification of the Aśvamedha (83-90).

10. Disappearance of Sītā: Kuśa and Lava sing the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the assembly at Naimiṣa. Hearing that Kuśa and Lava were sons of Sītā, Rāma sends a message to Vālmīki, inviting Sītā to prove her chastity before the assembly. Sītā's ordeal. Mother Earth takes Sītā with her. Rāma's vain pleading for her return. Kuśa and Lava sing the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*. Dissolution of the ceremony. Death of mothers (91-99).

11. Campaign of conquest: Takṣa and Puṣkala, sons of Bharata, found kingdoms respectively at Takṣaśilā and Puṣkalāvati; and sons of Lakṣmaṇa in Aṅgadvīpa (Aṅgada) and Candrakānta (Candraketu) (100-102).

12. Death of Lakṣmaṇa: Kāla reminds Rāma of the resumption of his original form of Viṣṇu. Lakṣmaṇa enters the place where Rāma and Kāla were in conference, and then, banished by Rāma, goes to Sarayū and is carried to heavens (103-106).

13. Rāma establishes Kuśa in Kuśavati and Lava in Śrāvastī (107).

14. After crowning his sons Subāhu and Śatrughātin, Śatrughna returns to Ayodhyā. Sugrīva installs Aṅgada and goes to Ayodhyā with the *vānaras*. Vibhīṣaṇa and Hanūmat are granted immortality by Rāma (108).

15. Rāma and his brothers assume the form of Viṣṇu; and *vānaras*, the parts of the gods. Citizens return to Ayodhyā from the Sarayū. *Phalaśruti* (109-111).

Of these, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 are evidently interpolated in the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* at a later date, because they do not satisfy the elementary test of genuineness, in that they do not form an integral part of the Rāma-story, and

break the continuity of the account. Thus, the stories of Rāvaṇa and Hanūmat, with which the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* opens (Nos. 1, 2), and the legends of Nṛga, Nimi, Yayāti (No. 5), of Śambūka (No. 7), of Śveta and Daṇḍa (No. 8), which come later, are nothing but Purāṇic materials bodily incorporated in the *Rāmāyaṇa*—the most favourite stock in trade of later interpolators. These impede the smooth flow of the narrative, and are easily discernible as subsequent additions. Similar is the case with the glorification of Aśvamedha (No. 9). Further, the departure of guests (No. 3), already mentioned towards the close of the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*,<sup>3</sup> which is its proper place, has been repeated in the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* for the sake of connecting the additional matter of the stories of Rāvaṇa and Hanūmat with the main story in the genuine *Uttara-kāṇḍa*. As a matter of fact, the genuine *Uttara-kāṇḍa* begins with the desertion of Sītā, narrated in Canto 42.

Besides these interpolations, there are thirteen cantos in the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*, as indicated in Footnote No. 2, which are also later additions, as all commentators uniformly regard them as spurious, and do not comment on them.

The object of Vālmīki in composing the *Rāmāyaṇa* was to give a complete account of Rāma. As will be indicated later, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as taught to Lava and Kuśa, ended only with the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa* and the coronation of Rāma. From the opening canto in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, we learn that Nārada told Vālmīki about the life of Rāma up to his re-acquisition of Sītā and of the kingdom.<sup>4</sup> Whatever came to pass later is couched in the future tense.<sup>5</sup> The third canto of the *Bāla-kāṇḍa* tells us that Vālmīki completed the story by adding details about Rāma's coronation, and also accounts of Śatrughna and Lakṣmaṇa, repudiation of Sītā, birth of Lava and Kuśa, Aśvamedha, installation of Lava and Kuśa, and the passing away of Rāma.<sup>6</sup> These later happenings certainly

<sup>3</sup> *Rām.*, VI.128.84-86.

<sup>4</sup> *Rām.* (Critical Edition), I.1.70.

<sup>5</sup> *Rām.* (Cr. Ed.), I.1.75-76.

<sup>6</sup> *Rām.* (Cr. Ed.), I.3.28-29.

form an integral and essential element in the story of Rāma, and the *Rāmāyaṇa* would be incomplete in their absence. So, it is clear that the later life of Rāma after his coronation is essential to complete the story of Rāma, as intended by Vālmīki.

For a clear appreciation of the problem, however, it is necessary to know the extent of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as taught by Vālmīki to Lava and Kuśa. From the fact that the *Rāmāyaṇa* was sung before Rāma at his sacrifice, it is evident that the later life of Rāma subsequent to the sacrifice, viz. the ordeal and disappearance of Sītā and the later events, did not form part of the Rāma-story sung out to him, as they were still to happen. It is also clear that Lava and Kuśa did not know their relationship to Rāma, as Vālmīki had simply told them to give out that they were his disciples.<sup>7</sup> Rāma came to know that Sītā gave birth to twins from the story recited by Lava and Kuśa,<sup>8</sup> while to the latter, their relationship with Rāma was not clear till the ordeal of Sītā.<sup>9</sup> So, it would be a reasonable inference that the *Rāmakathā* taught to Lava and Kuśa by Vālmīki ran up to the coronation of Rāma, or up to the end of the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*, as is also indicated by the opening canto of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. 'Ṣaṭkāṇḍāni tathottaram'<sup>10</sup> also confirms that the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* was composed after the completion of the first six *kāṇḍas* and after they were put in circulation.

The foregoing discussion clarifies our position in the matter of the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*. It is not proposed to prove that the entire *Uttara-kāṇḍa* is genuine. Further, we do admit that the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* was composed after the other *kāṇḍas*; but that does not, of itself, exclude the possibility of Vālmīki's authorship of the genuine portion of the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*, which has already been indicated.

Now, let us turn to a critical examination

of the points urged against the genuineness of the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*.

(i) As regards the first point, the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* was, no doubt, composed after the first six *kāṇḍas*; but, as already shown, the portion of the *Rāmāyaṇa* recited by Lava and Kuśa at the sacrifice of Rāma ended with the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*, and Vālmīki completed the later story of the life of Rāma subsequently and brought it to its natural close. This does not, of course, mean that the entire *Uttara-kāṇḍa* is an interpolation.

(ii) The so-called *phalaśruti* at the end of the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*<sup>11</sup> is itself an interpolation. As a matter of fact, all the stanzas after 91, in the last canto of the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*, which include the *phalaśruti*, are later additions. In the first place, as mentioned in the commentary *Tilaka*, Kataka (Yogīndra) has no commentary on all but the last two stanzas comprising the *phalaśruti*, which indicates that these stanzas did not form part of the *Rāmāyaṇa* version commented on by Kataka. Then, the *phalaśruti* speaks of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as composed by Vālmīki in ancient times,<sup>12</sup> which no one would take as coming from Vālmīki. Further, Rāma is said to have performed sacrifices with his sons and brothers,<sup>13</sup> while so far there is no reference to any son being born to Rāma. These factors go against the genuineness of the *phalaśruti* (at the end of the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*), which has been taken to mark the end of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and on the basis of which it is argued that the entire *Uttara-kāṇḍa* is spurious.

(iii) When we find that the extent of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as recited to Rāma, was only up to the end of the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*, as the subsequent events were still to happen, the first table of contents<sup>14</sup> can be justified on the ground of its being appended to that portion at that time; and the subsequent table of contents<sup>15</sup> was prepared after the completion of the entire

<sup>7</sup> *Rām.*, VII.93.12.

<sup>8</sup> *Rām.*, VII.95.2.

<sup>9</sup> *Rām.*, VII.97.5.

<sup>10</sup> *Rām.*, 1.4.2, which occurs as an interpolation in the Critical Edition on p. 36 as 196\*.

<sup>11</sup> *Rām.*, VI.128.105-22.

<sup>12</sup> *Rām.*, VI.128.105, 110, 111, 114.

<sup>13</sup> *Rām.*, VI.128.97.

<sup>14</sup> *Rām.* (Cr. Ed.), I.1.8-76.

<sup>15</sup> *Rām.* (Cr. Ed.), I.3.3-29.

*Rāmāyaṇa*. As a matter of fact, both tables of contents, as in the case of the *Mahābhārata*, were the work of later writers, and are unreliable for the purpose of deciding about the authenticity of any portion of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

(iv) The argument about extent from the stanza in the *Bāla-kāṇḍa*<sup>16</sup> is not applicable to the present *Rāmāyaṇa* including the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*, as it contains 645 cantos and 24,335 stanzas, as compared to 500 cantos and 24,000 stanzas as required by the stanza in question.<sup>17</sup> If we take 500 cantos up to the end of the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*, then the number of stanzas would be about 20,000 only. So, the argument based on this stanza enumerating the extent of the *Rāmāyaṇa* proves nothing as to the spuriousness of the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*. It may be observed that this stanza appears as an interpolation in the critical edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as No. 196\* after I.4.1.<sup>18</sup> Kataka regards this as an interpolation, though he comments on it, while *Tilaka* quotes Kataka as considering this stanza as spurious. No conclusions of any kind can therefore be derived from this stanza.

(v) The argument that the original *Rāmāyaṇa* ended with the coronation of Rāma, because the *Rāmopākhyāna* in the *Mahābhārata*<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Rām.*, I.4.2.

<sup>17</sup> These figures are according to the calculations of 'Mahārāṣṭriya' (*Śrī-Rāmāyaṇa-Samālocanā*, II. p. 500). The Critical Edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* states that the Bengali version and the N.W. version have 672 and 666 *sargas* with about 23,930 and 24,202 verses respectively (I. Introduction, p. xxx), while the southern recension in its two versions has 645 and 648 *sargas* with 24,049 and 24,272 verses respectively (p. xxxii).

<sup>18</sup> *Rām.* (Cr. Ed.), I. p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> *Mbh.*, III. 258-76.

does not carry the story any further, overlooks an important feature of the *Rāmopākhyāna* that by its very nature the *Rāmopākhyāna* is restricted in its scope. Its purpose is not to give a complete account of Rāma, but simply to illustrate how people fallen in misfortune do, in turn, gain happiness. It is therefore unnecessary for the *Rāmopākhyāna* to pursue the story any further once its purpose is served. The history of Rāma, which Vālmīki purports to give in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, however, is not complete unless all the incidents connected with Rāma's life are recorded till he departed to heaven.

(vi)-(vii) No doubt, there are differences in style as also contradictions between the first six *kāṇḍas* and the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. But it is to be noted in this connection that these relate, more or less, to the portions from the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* which we have shown to be interpolated. It is, of course, difficult to agree about differences in style, as sometimes the nature of the topic requires different treatment, and sometimes subjective elements come into the consideration of style. As stylistic consideration forms but a part of the major arguments, and as no definite decision can be arrived at regarding style, we may treat this argument as of minor importance and draw no conclusions therefrom. As regards contradictions, it is seen that most of the contradictions are found in the portion which we have shown as added later to the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the entire *Uttara-kāṇḍa* is not spurious; the part of the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* which deals with the story of Rāma, as indicated above, is genuine, and comes from Vālmīki.

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I do not know of any books anywhere which have exercised such a continuous and pervasive influence on the mass mind as these two (the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*). . . . Every incident and story and moral in them was engraved on the popular mind and gave a richness and content to it.

# ŚRĪ KRṢṢṢA: THE DIVINE TEACHER OF HUMANITY

BY SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's influence on the life and thought of the Indian people has been both extensive and intensive. He is one of those persons who are regarded as divine incarnations. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the two heroes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, have commanded the love and reverence of India for thousands of years. They embodied such high character and noble life that they have found a permanent place in the hearts of her people. Great men, because of the great spiritual force they acquire, not only draw people to themselves, but send out currents of this force into the world and society, which become manifest in time in all the different aspects of life, ushering in a new epoch. Thus the culture of a country is deeply influenced by such personalities. We always find that, with the advent of spiritual giants, there is an efflorescence of culture in the several spheres of national life; of course, principally, the spiritual life of the nation is affected. The force they generate strengthens man at the core of his being, and its effect flows into all his activities in different directions. After the advent of Buddha and Christ, we find men taking up the theme of their life and teachings, and their influence becomes manifest in all the activities of life. Similar was the case with Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa; whether we look at religion or philosophy, art or architecture, painting or sculpture, music or dancing, poetry or drama—to whatever aspect of cultural life we may turn—we can discern the tremendous influence that these divine personalities have exercised on the nation.

In the case of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, some people doubt his historicity. There is a reference to one Kṛṣṇa in the Vedas, but it is not clear to which Kṛṣṇa it refers. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, which is assigned to the twelfth or the thirteenth century B.C., there is a reference to one 'Kṛṣṇa-

Devakīputra' (son of Devakī). Devakī was the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mother as well. There is therefore a possibility that he could be the same Kṛṣṇa who taught the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. According to tradition, the Mahābhārata war took place about 3100 B.C. After the passing away of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who took part in the war, the *kaliyuga* (iron age) began—some 5,000 and odd years ago. Scholars, however, put the date of the Mahābhārata war at the eleventh or the twelfth century B.C. Even then, for three thousand years or more, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been powerfully influencing the national life of India.

Now, we always find that these great teachers are the embodiments of their own teachings. What gives power to their teachings is that they live the life. There is a dynamism about their teachings. The *Gītā* is a compendium of his teachings well illustrated in the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself. So, let us make a brief excursion into his life, for that will enable us to understand his teachings better.

In the *Bhāgavata*, we find that Śrī Kṛṣṇa possesses a great power of attraction from his very boyhood. He grows up in the sylvan surroundings of Vṛndāvana near Mathurā, among cowherd boys and girls, who are all charmed by his sweet and strong personality and who always gather round him, making him their leader. He plays with them and saves them from several dangers and difficulties. There was his uncle Kāṁsa, who had usurped the throne of his own father. He was very cruel—like Herod in the Bible—and used to tyrannize over people. He made several attempts on young Kṛṣṇa's life. Finally, Kṛṣṇa kills him, saves the people from his oppression, and restores the kingdom to the rightful person. Thus the people are attracted to him, and they find in him a friend of the poor and the lowly, the suffering and the oppressed, and a terror to the wicked.



The sweetness of his personality charms the *gopīs*; and his greatness creates admiration and reverence in them and elevates them. Their physical attraction to him is transmuted into spiritual devotion. As they come into closer contact with his spiritual charm, wherein they find divinity fully manifested, they are ready to dedicate their whole life at his feet and forget themselves.

This charm of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is universal. All through the *Mahābhārata*, we get glimpses of his great personality. He grows up as a great hero. He puts down evil people, and is always ready to fight evil. He is always on the side of righteousness, and is ever engaged in doing good, wanting nothing for himself. He fights on the side of the Pāṇḍavas against the evil-minded Kauravas. When the war is won with his help, he has no desire for power. He installs Yudhiṣṭhira on the throne. While kings and rulers bow at his feet, he is completely detached. All people flock to him for help and guidance, yet he is unattached.

As we find in all great teachers, he combined in himself opposite characteristics. Being a great fighter, he was essentially a man of peace. Though he was ever ready to put down evil, in his heart reigned peace. He spared no efforts to reconcile the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas. Only when the Kauravas proved intractable did he consent to fight. The Kauravas would not give to the Pāṇḍavas even a small portion of the kingdom, although it was rightfully theirs. 'Not even a needle-point of space will I give', said Duryodhana. So, Śrī Kṛṣṇa felt that injustice should not be allowed to prevail; then the war ensued. And what a combination of humility and greatness was Śrī Kṛṣṇa! He was humble enough to act as the charioteer of Arjuna, and there was also the instance of the *rājasūya* sacrifice, to which all kings and nobles were invited, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa was prepared to wash the feet of guests.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's personality is versatile. He combines strength and humility. He is loving and kind to the good, and a terror to the wicked.

He is a devoted son and friend; he is a wise philosopher and a man of action. His personality is a harmonious combination of head, heart, and hands—all wedded to spirituality. No wonder, then, that he is considered an incarnation of God in his very lifetime by the sages. His many-faced personality is well depicted in the *Bhāgavata*. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a mere boy, King Kāṁsa plots to kill him and organizes a wrestling match, choosing the best wrestlers in the kingdom to challenge the heroic Kṛṣṇa and his brother. Kṛṣṇa comes with his brother Balarāma. Then, according to the plot, an elephant is made to charge on the boys as they are entering the arena. But Kṛṣṇa is so nimble and strong that he moves aside and puts the elephant to death. Then, the *Bhāgavata* goes on to describe how Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears to the different personalities assembled there, as he enters the arena with his brother calmly as if nothing has happened: 'To the other wrestlers, who had assembled to kill him, he appeared like a thunderbolt, making their hearts quake with fear; to the spectators, he appeared as best among men; to the ladies, he was the very embodiment of love; to the cowherd boys and girls, as their playmate; to the wicked kings, he seemed as a chastiser; to Vasudeva (his father), he was like a child; to Kāṁsa, he appeared as Death personified; to the ignorant, something superhuman; and to the great *yogins*, he appeared as the highest Reality Itself.'

Thus, at the same time, he appears to different people in his different aspects. To combine these different qualities is a great thing. It is something more than just the different views of a person by different people. Śrī Kṛṣṇa combines in himself the human as well as the divine. The mind is struck with awe and wonder at this manifestation of divine power. The name 'Kṛṣṇa' comes from the root '*kṛṣ*' meaning 'to attract'. He attracts the souls of men. Seeing him thus attracting people of various outlooks towards himself, one has the feeling, 'Here is a man who has gone beyond the

frontiers of his skin and become universal'. He is looked upon as a divine being. He is great as a *yogin*; he is great as a man of action; and he is great as a man of renunciation. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa points out in the *Gītā*, the man who renounces all attachment is a real *sannyāsin*, not simply the one who externally gives up the world. So, Kṛṣṇa is an example, not only to the householder, but to the *sannyāsin* also. He teaches the fullness of life at all stages. He harmonizes all the forces within man—the physical, the moral, the mental, and the spiritual. He gathers together and harmonizes these forces within himself, and sends them out in a stream to enrich the life of the people. This stream is the *Gītā*, which bears the imprint of this harmony.

In the *Gītā*, we have an integral view of things. Every chapter is called a *yoga*. They are all various paths, various ways of finding Reality. In India, people devoted to spiritual life had practised for centuries various spiritual disciplines. But there seemed to be an apparent conflict among these various paths. Śrī Kṛṣṇa taught that there was no conflict among them. They are but different paths to the same Reality. The selfsame Spirit is the underlying truth behind all; and it is the goal of all spiritual *sādhana*. The *Gītā* shows this again and again in different ways. We find described in the different chapters of the *Gītā* characteristics of realized men through different paths, and we find that these characteristics are almost the same, and have much in common. A man of realization is unattached to everyday happenings, and is not swayed by pain or pleasure, loss or gain, or such other opposites. He has a calm mind and an unruffled spirit; with an unclouded vision, he keeps his mind always fixed on the goal. Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches: Follow any path; each one of them takes man to the goal by building up his character in terms of the highest Reality.

All the great spiritual teachers of the world realized Truth themselves first before preaching it to others. They found their identity with the

Divine, which is the real nature of all mankind, of all beings. The divine Reality is the substratum of all existing things, and, as such, can be found in all things. But in man, its manifestation is more and clearer. In the case of one who has had the highest spiritual attainment, it is most manifest, because his personality has become spiritually transparent. He pierces through the veil of physical nature and perceives the spiritual reality underlying all existence. We cannot penetrate into nature by aeroplanes and rockets, no matter what speed they may attain; we can wander about in space for ages, but we can never find an end to space or go outside it by physical means. We have to break through ourselves and go to the core of our being by penetrating into the deeper layers of our personality, if we want to make a breach in nature. And that is what the great teachers have done. They form, as it were, a door through which we can pass to the other side, through which we can see beyond the relative existence and get a glimpse of the Infinite. When they reach this state, they find their identity with the divine Reality within. Jesus says, 'I am the way'. If we go to him, we can see the other side. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says the same thing, 'I am the way and the goal'. Here, he speaks identifying himself with the Divine. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as that divine Being, says, 'Come unto Me, and I shall free you from all sin'. 'Those who take refuge in Me will cross over the phenomenal existence.' It does not mean that we have to go to Kṛṣṇa or Christ as persons, but we can take recourse to Kṛṣṇa or Christ to realize our own divine nature. These are eternal paradoxes. They are, indeed, great personalities; yet their teachings are so impersonal that they are applicable to humanity as a whole. Though they taught in particular social contexts, their message has a universal aspect about it. Kṛṣṇa may have taught the Hindus, or Jesus may have taught the Jews, according to the context in which either of them lived, but the message of both is for the whole of humanity. They make their appeal to man on

the basis of his being; they appeal to man as man. That is why they are called *jagad-gurus*—teachers of the world.

This universal character is very well found in the *Gītā*. It approaches man on the basis of the constituents of his personality, on the basis of his psycho-physical and spiritual nature. There is no sect or creed in the *Gītā*. It declares again and again: 'Though men may worship any other god, yet they are worshipping Me. All the paths, O Arjuna, lead in the end to Me.' Some people say that they are monotheists, that their god is the only god, and condemn all other gods. Their very condemnation indicates that they are polytheists, for they believe that there are other gods to be condemned. Monotheism does not consist in rejecting other gods, but in incorporating them into one God, or recognizing them as the forms of one God, for there is only one God. If the so-called polytheist believes that God can appear in many forms, and that in worshipping Him in many ways he is worshipping the only God that is there, then that polytheist becomes a true monotheist. So, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that, since in reality there are not many gods, those who worship the other gods will also reach the same goal in the end.

Of course, it depends on the way of worship. If worship is performed for material welfare, God will give material welfare. All get what they want, but worship of God out of pure love leads to the goal, to God Himself. When he says 'come to Me', Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks as identified with that divine Being. Kṛṣṇa as a human personality is comparatively only a small being, but when he identifies himself with the cosmic Divinity, which he has realized as his own true being, he is eternal, infinite. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: 'If you worship Me in spirit and in truth, you get the highest benefit. Otherwise, you will go through various stages and will ultimately come to Me, the divine Spirit.' So, different people may worship God in different ways, but if a man worships with faith,

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, 'I increase his faith in that particular line'.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa has two aspects: Śrī Kṛṣṇa the person and Śrī Kṛṣṇa the divine Spirit that dwells in everything. As the universal Spirit, there is no personal worship necessary, because God is everywhere, God is everything. But very few are prepared or fit for the worship of the impersonal aspect. We cannot succeed in this path until and unless we are able to divest ourselves of personality, and conceive ourselves as pure Spirit. So, most people take to the easier path and begin with the worship of the personal God. Buddha taught the impersonal aspect, but within a few years of his passing away, he himself was deified by his followers. It is difficult to worship the impersonal Reality. Kṛṣṇa, as personal God, gives the assurance: 'Those who think of Me constantly, I shall look after their welfare—I shall free them from sin.' Of course, sin cannot touch the Spirit; only the body, the mind, and the intellect are affected by all kinds of blemish. The light of the Spirit is always beckoning us towards itself; sin cannot touch the core of our being. Even without the intervention of a personal God or saviour, redemption is assured, because the Spirit cannot be touched by sin. Yet, as persons, we think we are sinful, limited beings. And here is that great Being, who has projected the universe, saying to us: 'Come unto Me, surrendering everything; I shall free you from all sin, do not grieve.' 'O Arjuna, My devotee will never perish.' If we have recourse to God and surrender ourselves completely, we will gradually realize our spiritual nature. This is our birthright which even death cannot take away. As Śaṅkara says: 'None can destroy the Self, not even God.' God cannot destroy the Self, because He cannot destroy Himself, Himself being the Self of all beings.

That is the solace offered by the divine Being, the personal God. But those who do not want a personal God will wash off all sin by knowledge: 'Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.' And what is that knowl-

edge? It is that our own true nature is Spirit untouched by sin. Both aspects are there; we must either make self-effort or depend upon a personal God.

Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* takes life as a battle. Arjuna refused to fight, and Kṛṣṇa asks him: 'Where does this unmanliness come from, O Arjuna?' We have to fight this battle of life; the teaching of external renunciation is not for all. Millions of people live and work in the world. Is there no hope for them? Kṛṣṇa teaches 'work in a spirit of detachment'. Even those who have risen above the necessity of work would do well to work without desire. Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself worked incessantly, and he gave the reason why it is important that we should work. He told Arjuna: 'It is the nature of human beings to emulate the great ones; you must be an example before society; therefore you also must act. But act with detachment and without desire for the fruits of your action.'

Generally speaking, we have zest in life because of attachment to things. Ordinarily, our activities spring from attachment, and are accompanied by restlessness. We are driven by desires, and so we are goaded into activities. We are slaves to our desires; and it is not possible to sit quiet, because we have not found our true personality. We are riding the body without being able to control it. When the mind is not controlled, it is like an uncontrolled horse, which jumps about and throws us off. When we do not attain the fulfilment of our desires, we may sink into a mood of apathy and our body may sit quietly; but inside, the mind is restless, ready to burst forth at a suitable moment. We do not find peace. What is the remedy? Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: Give up all selfish desire. Work for work's sake, do your duty for duty's sake, and love for love's sake. We have to cultivate this attitude basing our activ-

ities on the universal Spirit, the source of all joy. We should not imagine that we can obtain pleasure from any other source. It is not the senses that give pleasure; the Spirit is the source of all joy. Any pleasure that we may experience through the senses is only in consequence of the Spirit underlying all things. The mind becomes quiet at the moment when a desire is satisfied. Only when the surface of an expanse of water is free from ripples can the reflection of the sun in it be seen clearly; when there are ripples, the reflection is broken up into tiny fragments. Similarly, when the mind becomes stilled for the moment when a desire is satisfied, we get a glimpse of the Spirit in a flash. In that glimpse, we come in touch with the source of all joy, and we experience happiness. But soon the mind rises again into waves, lashed by desires, and becomes unhappy, having lost the vision of the Self. Material things do not give us pleasure. It is the *ānanda* (joy) of the Self that percolates through all our senses and mind and intellect. When we take our stand on this Self and act in a spirit of detachment and dedication, we find mental rest and spiritual joy. When we work for profit, our attention is focussed on little things, but when our work is based on the Infinite, all work is uplifted. It is then that all activities become spiritual, and work becomes equal in value to worship.

The *Gītā* concludes with the statement: 'Where Kṛṣṇa, the lord of *yoga*, and Arjuna, the fighter, are conjoined, there will result all good, victory, prosperity, and best polity.' When our mind is fixed on the supreme Reality, when we have become lords of *yoga* and masters of unselfish and detached action, and when all our powers are used for the good of society, then all prosperity, material and spiritual, will follow as a matter of course. Kṛṣṇa symbolizes *yoga*, and Arjuna activity; and when these two are combined, they must triumph.

# TOWARDS GREATER UNDERSTANDING

BY DR. S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA

A glint of hope shines through the thickening darkness that is every day enveloping our contemporary world, when we see that great and noble thoughts are taking shape in the minds of wise men both of the East and the West. True it is that there is *apartheid*, there is colour prejudice, there is caste prejudice, there is cold war, there are political differences not yet made up; yet, there are not wanting men in the modern world, men of 'the still, small voice', who are whispering to us a message of hope for the future of humanity. In the thinking of the choicest intellectuals of the contemporary world, there is a visible progress in three main directions:

(1) In the direction of greater inter-religious understanding and increasing realization that all the historical religious systems of the world have their own values and validities and their own specialities, and that what is desirable is a fellowship of the different faiths and not their fusion into one.

(2) In the direction of an increasing recognition of the fact that scientific knowledge is not knowledge *ne plus ultra*, that a *mere* mechanized and technological civilization is not enough for the well-being and happiness of mankind, and that the higher moral and spiritual values should have an important and influential role in the ordering of human affairs.

(3) In the direction of an increasing realization of the fact that the pattern of the future civilization of humanity, the civilization to come, will be neither entirely Oriental nor entirely Occidental, but one resulting from a cross-fertilization of the best cultural values of both, a *world civilization* in the truest sense of the word.

In the lines that follow, I shall dwell on these three points, one by one.

## I

Professor Woodbridge O. Johnson of Park College, Missouri, contributes a very thoughtful and enlightening article on 'The Coming Copernican Christology' in the October 1960 issue of *The Hibbert Journal*. In this article, he makes a plea for the acceptance of a new Copernican Christology, growing under the impact of our advancing scientific knowledge of the expanding universe and the growing acquaintance by the West with the great Asiatic religions and leaders of religious thought. The 'Copernican Christology', he tells us, 'is gaining a wider and wider hearing with men of other faiths like Ramakrishna, Baha'u'lla, Suzuki, and Radhakrishnan speaking eloquently on its behalf' (p. 12). The older Christology is described as 'provincial' and is said to be 'culture-centred rather than humanity-centred, since it restricts God's active concern for men to the Jewish culture of the Near-East, allowing Him only an indirect interest in the rest of mankind. It is also geocentric rather than heliocentric, for it is still postulated on the Ptolemaic world view, which holds that earth is both spatially and axiologically the centre of space-time, and which ignores the growing probability that other people needing spiritual salvation inhabit other planets in other solar systems in other galaxies' (pp. 10-11).

The writer of the article points out that, in the light of Copernican Christology, foreshadowed in the writings of Tillich, 'Jesus Christ is no longer the one and only, complete, and final creating and saving word of God. His sovereignty is limited to this "wayside planet". He is but one among other instances of the eternal Logos becoming flesh in a divine kenosis. He is not the only supernatural saviour, but one of a plurality of saviours sent forth to save a plurality of intelligent races of beings on a

plurality of worlds throughout the flow of time' (p. 13).

Not a whit of the greatness of Christ is lost, we should like to add, by recognizing him as one of the several saviours sent to humanity; and not a whit is added to his greatness by insisting that he is the one and the only saviour humanity has ever received.

The said article concludes with these wise words: 'The new Christology, if and when it becomes dominant, should transform the intolerant provincialism of Christianity into a new humanity and a new insight into the wideness of the Divine mercy' (p. 20).

What a great stride forward since the days of Edward Caird! Seventy years ago, even a man of the eminence of Edward Caird maintained, in his celebrated Gifford Lectures, *The Evolution of Religion* (1893), under the influence of Hegel and his dialectical method, the view that the varied forms of religious life revealed in history are steps in the development of the religious Idea whose crowning fulfilment is the religion of Jesus.

Books on the philosophy of religion that are being written today by Western writers do not confine their data to Christianity alone or to any single religious system, but draw largely from other religions and base their generalizations on wider surveys. A recent book, to mention only one amongst many, *Reasons and Faiths*,<sup>1</sup> is a commendable illustration of this catholic attitude. According to the author of this book, there are three essential strands in all religious discourse, and the divergences in the different faiths are traceable to the relative importance which is given to one or other of these and the ways in which they are combined. These three strands are: (1) the numinous, with its dominating concept of 'the holy', which cordons off the religious from other domains; (2) the mystical; and (3) the incarnation strand. What deserves to be particularly noted is this that the author draws a good deal

of doctrinal illustrations from Brāhmaṇistic and Buddhistic sources and registers a complaint against philosophers of religion confining to Christianity alone.

Thanks to the activities of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, the Theosophical movement, the activities of the World Fellowship of Faiths, and, from the academic side, to the impetus given to the *philosophical* study of religion by the universities, the world seems to be now well on the way towards increasing inter-religious understanding. 'We must understand the experience of people', says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, 'whose thought eludes our categories. We must widen our religious perspective and obtain a world wisdom worthy of our time and place. Religious provincialism stands in the way of a unitary world culture, which is the only enduring basis for a world community. . . . To neglect the spiritual unity of the world and underline religious diversity would be philosophically unjustifiable, morally indefensible, and socially dangerous.'<sup>2</sup> Again: 'The different religious traditions clothe the one Reality in various images, and their visions could embrace and fertilize each other so as to give mankind a many-sided perfection—the spiritual radiance of Hinduism, the faithful obedience of Judaism, the life of beauty of Greek Paganism, the noble compassion of Buddhism, the vision of divine love of Christianity, and the spirit of resignation to the sovereign lord of Islam. All these represent different aspects of the inward spiritual life, projections on the intellectual plane of the ineffable experiences of the human spirit. . . . The different religions take their source in the aspiration of man towards an unseen world, though the forms in which this aspiration is couched are determined by the environment and climate of thought. The unity of religions is to be found in that which is divine or universal in them, and not in what is temporary or local.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *This Is My Philosophy* (Edited by Whit Burnett), p. 358.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 360-61.

<sup>1</sup> Ninian Smart, *Reasons and Faiths* (Routledge and Kegan Paul & Co.)

## II

I now come to the second point. That scientific knowledge, valuable though it is, is not knowledge *ne plus ultra*, but a brand of knowledge having its own limitations was pointed out as far back as 1927 by Sir A. S. Eddington in his famous Gifford Lectures, *The Nature of the Physical World*. Said Eddington: 'Whenever we state the properties of a body in terms of physical quantities, we are imparting knowledge as to the response of various metrical indicators to its presence, *and nothing more*.'<sup>4</sup> Again: 'Life would be stunted and narrow if we could feel no significance in the world around us beyond that which can be weighed and measured with the tools of the physicist or described by the metrical symbols of the mathematician.'<sup>5</sup> Eddington was not content with pointing out the limitations of scientific knowledge. Going further than that, he said: 'We all know that there are regions of the human spirit untrammelled by the world of physics. In the mystic sense of the creation around us, in the expression of art, in a yearning towards God, the soul grows upward and finds the fulfilment of something implanted in its nature. ... Whether in the intellectual pursuits of science or in the mystical pursuits of the spirit, the light beckons ahead and the purpose surging in our nature responds.'<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Werner Heisenberg, Director of the Max Planck Institute for Physics in Göttingen, concluded a speech delivered to the students of the Göttingen University on July 13, 1946 with these memorable words: 'Take from your scientific work a serious and incorruptible method of thought, help to spread it, because no understanding is possible without it. Revere those things beyond science which really matter and about which it is so difficult to speak.'<sup>7</sup>

Jacques Maritain voices the spirit of the age, calling for a reconciliation between science and

wisdom, when he says: 'I am convinced that what the world and civilization have lacked in the intellectual order for three centuries has been a philosophy which would develop its autonomous exigencies in a Christian climate, a wisdom of reason not closed, but open to the wisdom of grace. Today, reason must battle an irrational deification of elemental and instinctive forces that threatens to ruin all civilization. In this struggle, reason's task is one of integration; understanding that intelligence is not the enemy of mystery, but lives on it; reason must come to terms with the irrational world of affectivity and instinct, as well as with the world of the will, of freedom, and of love, and the supra-rational world of grace and of divine life. ... The problem proper to the age we are entering will be, it seems, to reconcile *science* and *wisdom*. The sciences themselves seem to invite intelligence to this work. We see them stripping themselves of the remains of materialistic and mechanistic metaphysics which for a time hid their true features. They call for a philosophy of nature, and the wonderful progress in contemporary physics restores to the scientist the sense of mystery stammered by the atom and by the universe.'<sup>8</sup>

## III

Coming to the third point, the idea of a *world civilization* is now taking roots in the minds of thoughtful people both in the East and in the West. The days of 'East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet' are now happily passing over. World conferences and programmes for cultural exchange between the different countries are the order of the day. The UNESCO, the three East-West Philosophers' Conferences held at Hawaii in the recent past, the institution of the journal *Philosophy: East and West* (published by the Hawaii University Press), and other events point to the fact that the world today is astir for a new world order. Lewis Mumford writes: 'He who is one hundred per cent an American

<sup>4</sup> A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, p. 257.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 327-28.

<sup>7</sup> *Vide This Is My Philosophy*, p. 210.

<sup>8</sup> *Vide ibid.*, pp. 252-53.

or a Russian, a German or a Frenchman, a European or an African or an Asiatic, is only half a man: the universal part of his personality, equally essential to his becoming human, is still unborn. Every act that softens the egoistic claims of nations and accentuates the unity of mankind adds another foundation-stone to the new world that we must now build.<sup>9</sup> 'I dreamed', said Tennyson long before, 'that stone by stone I reared a sacred fane, a temple, neither pagoda, mosque, nor church, but loftier, simpler, always open-doored to every breath from heaven, and Truth and Peace and Love and Justice came and dwelt therein.' Let us hope that we are on the way towards the materialization of this dream.

In conclusion, I wish to make it clear that I

<sup>9</sup> *Vide ibid.*, p. 33.

do not deny the inestimable value of science in the progress of human knowledge and in advancing the happiness of mankind, but would only add that it leaves out significant domains of human experience, where the human spirit should be allowed to move untrammelled and gather its harvests of wisdom wherewith to supplement the benefits of science. I do not deny the value of any religion whatsoever, but would wish every one to shed its bigotry and view problems from a wider philosophical perspective and review its dogmas in the context of advancing knowledge. I believe that both the East and the West have their cultural values, and it would be to the advantage of both to be influenced by each other. That thinkers and wise men in the East and in the West are increasingly realizing these essential truths affords hope for the future.

## THE PARAMAHAMSA AND THIS AGE OF ADVERTISEMENT

BY SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

There are two phases of *dharma*—the Law. One is the eternal; and the other, the one applicable to the age. In Vedāntic parlance, the former is *sanātana dharma*, and the latter *yuga dharma*. The former prevails unaffected by the march of time, while the latter has to conform itself to changing times. The Paramahansa drives this distinction home through an illustration. Gold has its value at all times. Coins are minted of this gold; and the minting varies with the change of rulers. With the change of rulers, the old coins go out of currency; but the value of the gold in them is not affected thereby. *Sanātana dharma* is the gold, and the various mintings it takes are the *yuga dharmas*. The *yuga dharma* of one age may or may not suit another age. Great ones hail on

earth age after age to propound the *yuga dharma* most suited to their times.

It is inevitable that new customs and usages gain ground in society with the march of time. Because these are new, people are not able to discern whether these are or are not in conformity with the Law. The vast majority take these new usages to be good and desirable. A new practice there is these days which has penetrated to the core of the modern society. It may aptly be called the craze for advertisement. So much so, the present times may be called the 'Age of Advertisement'. Advertisement has in recent years evolved into a technique; and it is indeed very lucrative. There is no one in this world who does not seek wealth. All possible ways and means are ransacked by



the modern man in order to add to his wealth and possession. The technique of advertisement has gained an unparalleled position among modern modes of earning money. People take to it as one of the finest jobs. It is a business which makes no inroads whatever into the callings of others. Now, newborn as this art is, is it to be viewed as *yuga dharma* or as something else?

#### THE OMNIPRESENCE OF ADVERTISEMENT

Modern days are such that, as one walks along a street, one cannot help seeing advertisements on the walls on either side. Something more; the space above is not spared. These advertisements hang there in festoons. A glance at the newspaper brings to one's notice advertisements more than anything else. Magazines and periodicals are no exception. Even books of value have not escaped the subtle penetration of this modernity. Vehicles seem as if specially intended to carry and convey advertisements. Modern lamps not only give light, but also exhibit advertisements. Even temples have not been free from this infiltration. The worshipper, who goes there to give his entire mind to God, is forced to divert his attention to this novelty. A maze of advertisement wherever one turns one's attention is the order of the day. The money spent on this craft is incalculable. Every factory, every producing centre, every movement, every association is obliged to set apart a large slice of its resources for making its existence known to the people through advertisement. Is there, in these days, any concern or calling that does not seek to be blazed?

#### ITS OMNIPOTENCE

What indeed is there that cannot be achieved with the weapon of advertisement? The advertiser attempts to present a useless thing as all-useful. A good-for-nothing article, obviously injurious to the human system, is pictured by his genius to be highly beneficial. In order to market an over-produced crop in a country, a new taste for it is created by him in the

people of other countries. Wholesome grain, which stands in the way of the marketing of spurious articles, is labelled by the many-edged weapon of advertisement as wholly detrimental to health. It is capable of thwarting the good and boosting the bad. It can make as well as mar.

People of today take to all sorts of ways of making money. The medicine man, the lawyer, the astrologer, the fortune-teller, the vocation coacher, the examination tutor, the beauty specialist, the fashion promoter, the body decorator, the pretender to supernatural power—these and many more of this kind thrive on people's credulity. The unwary people do not know how far these 'experts' are genuine. The unenquiring people are merely guided by the all-powerful advertisement. The ingenious advertiser thus succeeds and thrives. Competent though one may be, if one fails to advertise oneself properly, that one thrives not in any calling. Charlatans are shown off as genuine and worthy.

The press is today a power all over the world. Magazines and propagandist books are produced now in mushroom abundance. A vast number among them happen to be unworthy of perusal. In fact, they are to be eschewed as untouchables. All the same, they have a roaring sale because of crafty advertisement. An instance will drive home this point. An author published a fine handbook on cookery. But unfortunately it found no market. Thousands of copies of it lay idle. A clever publisher purchased its rights at a nominal price. 'What a young woman of twenty ought to know' was the new title he gave it on the cover. He advertised the book accordingly. In two or three months, all the copies were sold out. Arresting captioning is a vital aspect of advertisement. What is there then which advertisement cannot do?

Nations of the world are today eager to create international relationships, though these relationships are often vitiated by the bloc mentality. Advertisement of a propagandist type

serves as a powerful weapon to create prejudice of every kind. By sheer propaganda, a good country not infrequently gets labelled as a bad one. A really good-for-nothing country is boosted up by interested agencies. The printed matter relating to a country is very often a misguide to one who tries to know that country. There is a maxim in the political world that an untruth consistently dinned eventually becomes truth. This all-powerful alchemy of advertisement has the power to make a hell of heaven and a heaven of hell.

Nations today become belligerent as a matter of course. A world war is a recurring affair, and advertisement is the most dangerous weapon in the hands of war-mongers. If a powerful nation has an evil design on a small neighbouring country, that poor little country is first charge-sheeted as a menace to human welfare. A further allegation is made that, unless this foul spot is forthwith seized and set right, there is bound to be a world conflagration. Thus starts a world war. And the first casualty in a war is truth. Very often, war today is won through bluff, rather than through bomb.

#### IS ADVERTISING AMORAL?

To the casual observer, right and wrong seem quite easy of discernment; but, actually, to sift the right conduct from the wrong is rather difficult. Even the enlightened are bewildered in this matter. An act in itself is neither good nor bad. The circumstance and the motive are the only factors that count in the classification. This principle may well apply to the modern instrument of advertising. The modern world has placed inordinate faith in this instrument, and the chief vehicle of advertisement is the newspaper. The modern man finds his daily life incomplete without the newspaper. It has become to him as indispensable as food and drink. The modern man is more regular in poring over the day's newspaper than in saying his daily prayer.

But among the moderns, Sri Ramakrishna was the solitary figure who stoutly refused to have

anything to do with the advertisement-blazing newspaper. His view amounted to this that one who is on the path of righteousness should not even handle a newspaper. He would not even allow the bringing in of newspapers to his proximity. He would go to the extent of purifying with the Gaṅgā water a place tainted by the touch of the newspaper. While the modern world places so much faith in the newspaper and views it as indispensable to living, this saint struck an altogether different note. In his humorous way, he recounted an incident, bringing home the grip on the modern mind of the newspaper. A house was reduced to ashes in a particular place. An eyewitness pathetically reported the matter to a friend. But the friend could not bring himself to believe it. 'It cannot be so. There is no mention of it in the newspaper', was his refutation. This is how the modern mind works—what is not revealed in the newspaper cannot be true. The Paramahansa was keen enough to note this intellectual servility. There was no point of contact between the newspaper blaze and the Paramahansa's exalted living. The Paramahansa emphasized that the supreme purpose of human life was the building of character. Advertisement does in no way help the refining of the mind; rather, it is a hindrance. The Paramahansa's conviction was that the craze for advertisement ill went with spiritual striving. Strange though this attitude may seem to the modern man, he has all the same to get to the Paramahansa way if he is earnest about self-refinement.

#### LIFE INTENSE BUT UNADVERTISED

Sri Ramakrishna's life may well be termed a rapid 'pilgrim's progress'. He never gave any publicity to the godward journey he was on. Even as a boy, he had begun this great march. Remaining absorbed in contemplation all by himself in unfrequented cremation grounds was a favourite occupation of his. At other times, utterly indifferent to secular studies, he would gather his chums and resort to a mango grove adjoining his native village, there to be lost in

the pathos of religious song and in the delight of religious dramatization. But people in general, and even an elder brother of his, did not take well these ways of his; they only saw that he was drifting aimlessly. However, this lad of uncommon ways never for a moment felt like explaining himself to the folk who thought he was a religious vagabond. Even an attempt at self-explaining savours of self-boosting, which is but personal advertising.

For a year or two before Sri Ramakrishna became a priest at the Kālī temple, his elder brother, actuated by money motive, had made him conduct worship in a few shrines in private homes. A youth commissioned to such a job tries to please people in order to safeguard his remuneration; he further tries to show off his parts, so that he may always be in demand. But this was exactly what young Gadadhar (Sri Ramakrishna's boyhood name) cared not to do. He took no note of the people who observed him at worship, nor did he think in terms of officiating at a number of homes in a day. A shrine a day was enough for him, and he was totally lost in the worship there. To carve a career for himself was never his concern. As such, the thought of impressing himself on others never crossed his mind.

#### LOST TO THE WORLD IN GOD-LUNACY

The mentally deranged are the only ones in the world who never think in terms of seeking approbation. They remain untouched by praise and censure. And this is an unmistakable mark of lunacy. This mark came to Sri Ramakrishna in the tempestuous days of his life at Dakshineswar. He accepted priestly work merely as an aid to his spiritual practices, and never as a means of livelihood as others do. He was labelled a madcap by the rest of the temple employees. The reason was that he became oblivious to the world, to his bodily sustenance, and to everything else of normal life. People *just suffered his ways, though they transgressed all convention and decorum.*

Years rolled on, he being engulfed in this

seeming lunacy which was really a spiritual tempest; and in and through it, he was evolving in divinity. In his spiritual ripening, he simply exemplified a law of nature in self-perfection. Everything in nature strives in its own way, unobtrusively and steadily, for self-fulfilment. The pearl-oyster at the bottom of the sea quietly strives to reach fullness. A piece of diamond buried in the womb of the earth is ceaselessly transforming itself into excellence. A tree in the forest, quite in tune with its nature, steadily grows and matures. These and everything else in nature progress towards perfection with no advertisement. Does man become an iota the better because he advertises? The real evolution in man is more in his psyche than in his physique. Advertisement is no aid at all to refinement of mind. Day in and day out, for years, the Paramahansa sought to cast his mind in Godhood. Every other concern was blotted out. It is the life that one lives and not the publicity that one seeks that matters in the spiritual field. Being mad after God, the Paramahansa became Godman.

#### THE BEES SEEK THE BLOSSOM

'Ants come of their own accord to where sweets are kept. The power to attract is inherent in the sweets. The bees readily present themselves to the blossom that opens. Likewise, spiritual aspirants instinctively resort to a person who has attained Godhood'—these are the words of Sri Ramakrishna. And in a noteworthy way, these apply best to himself. For years together, he was absorbed in spiritual disciplines, and had reached Paramahansahood. Ripe that he was for spiritual dissertation, thirsty souls from all directions came to him. It is held that the law of gravitation functions spontaneously in the material world. It has to be noted that this force functions much more effectively in the moral realm. Perfection-seekers do somehow get drawn to the perfected one. *And the relationship that ensues is all sublime and sweet.* The aroma of the enlightened one acts as a catalytic agent. The hungry

in spirit get automatically fed and nourished in his holy presence. This law of the spiritual realm is a heightened application of the mundane law of affinity. Advertisement is more a hindrance than a help to this spiritual union. This being so, the Paramahansa simply lived his exalted life unmindful of publicity and recognition. And those that were to be his were divinely drawn to him.

#### WHAT HURT THE PARAMAHAMSA

Brilliant students like the prospective Vivekananda were spontaneously attracted to the Paramahansa; and there was a celestial charm in the relationship that developed between the Paramahansa and these youngsters. Master though he was to them, no consciousness of it did ever rise in his mind. If by chance he was addressed *guru*, that epithet would hurt him immensely. It was as unbearable to him as being sawn through the head. 'Who is whose *guru*? The Lord is the only *guru* to all beings', was his repudiation. Though a *guru* to the core, he abhorred being styled so. It was the utter absence of egoism that made him behave this way. He was pained if anybody lauded him to another. The Paramahansa's way was never the way of publicity-lovers. Someone wanted to know from him as to how he should be addressed. 'You address me even as you address all other people', was his response. He fully approved of his being called a devotee. He was quite content with being just one among all.

#### A SUPPLICATION OF HIS

Innumerable were the spiritual visions that came to the Paramahansa. This was but natural, because Nature reveals herself in and through a medium in accordance with its refinement. Every experience that he had was pregnant with spiritual meaning. One of his many contacts with the Divine is relevant to the theme we are now in. No detail of spiritual revelation was left unrepresented to this arch-aspirant. As a mother suckles and feeds

her baby in tune with its growth, the cosmic Mother made the Paramahansa the experiencer of all phases of spirituality. He once had a vision of the Mother carrying to him a basketful of wreaths. 'What is it, Mother, that Thou art bringing to me?' he enquired. 'Name, fame, and reputation in abundance am I bringing to you. Will you accept them, my child?' queried She. Her ever dependent child received a rude shock. In trance though he was, he spat out in disgust and remonstrated: 'Mother, I am entirely dependent on Thee. Is it not Thy duty to offer me nothing but the good? Dost Thou not see that, to the extent I accept reputation, I shall be obliged to divert the mind from Thee? Why dost Thou seek to distract my mind to worldly glamour? I spurn this offer of yours.' 'Please do take it away from me this very moment. I desire nothing but unflinching devotion to Thee. Do not please infatuate me with fame, and foul me'—thus did he piteously supplicate. Advertisement-seekers are those who give themselves over to name and fame. That fame-seeking is a stumbling block on the path of spirituality was the conviction of the Paramahansa.

#### WARNING A DEVOTEE

In this age, which is beset with a mania for showy advertisement and publicity, the Paramahansa chose to live a life completely untouched by it. The spiritually inclined were the only ones with whom he was actively in touch. He sought the saintly and shunned the public gaze. Among his chosen ones was Girish Chandra Ghosh, the famous Bengali dramatist of his times. The remarkable thing about Girish was that he was reclaimed from the depths of sin to sainthood, by the benign grace of the Paramahansa. With the zeal of a convert, this dramatist-devotee started extolling to the people the saving power of the Master. He began to openly group him with the world-saviours. This fuss of his came to the ears of the Paramahansa, who gave him a note of warning: 'Publicity is a thing which suits not my constitu-

tion. By exposing me to public gaze and admiration, you are only paving the way to my quick dissolution. You may freely advertise me, if it is your intention to bring a quick end to this body. It is better to quit the world than live in it in vain, purposeless publicity.' Girish did not fail to catch the gravity of the warning; and he stopped airing his convictions.

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ALSO SHUNS ADVERTISEMENT

In shunning cheap publicity, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna's foremost disciple, walked the way of the Master. The Swami's activities in the West and the East covered a period of a mere nine years. In that short span, he spoke a lot and wrote much. But references to the Master are rarely found in his speeches and writings. He kept the personality of the Master in the background, and presented only the principles of which the Master was the embodiment. Only on one occasion did he speak on the Master; and this he did hesitatingly and under compulsion from an earnest group of people who were anxious to know about the Master of the illustrious Swami. His sentiment was that the personality of the Master was too sacred to be made public.

The teachings of the Paramahansa are inseparable from the life he lived. His life is the best commentary on Vedānta. Vedānta as lived by the Master was what Swami Vivekananda gave to the world. It was never his intention to popularize his Master's personality; all that he did was to broadcast only the principles which constituted his personality. In this matter of shunning fame, the disciple was a replica of the Master. An exalted life has to be intensively lived, and people ought to be induced to live such an intense life. It should be based more on principles than on personalities. It is the common tendency to place personality in the forefront that eventually develops into advertising. Swami Vivekananda, who walked in the footsteps of the Paramahansa, always presented

the principles and not the personality of his Master.

Another incident in Swami Vivekananda's life stresses that he was every inch the prototype of his Master. Providentially, he went over to America. It was Providence again that made him present Hinduism, the Mother of Religions, to the Parliament at Chicago. In a day, he became world famous. His portrait was displayed in street corners. Newspapers started blazoning him. Swami Vivekananda shuddered at this turn of events. He had no wink of sleep that night. With tears streaming, he grieved: 'The shackle of publicity is now forced on me. I have now permanently lost the bliss and freedom of unknownness. The gaze of the world is annoyingly on me. How nauseating is this fame! This world-wide popularity is verily an obstacle to the quiet ministry of spirituality.' Thus he lamented his lot.

Many a modern man is only too anxious to get himself blazoned in the columns of the newspaper. People there are who pay heavily to get their speeches reproduced in newspapers. They also pay for photographic publicity. Such is the modern drift. Quite contrary to all this, Swami Vivekananda recoiled from 'newspaper-humbbug'. He viewed it as a hindrance to his vow of renunciation. Here is a lesson for us, both from the Master and the disciple. Just as spiritual aspirants hold worldly desire to be their arch-enemy, they should hold that newspaper blazoning also is their arch-enemy. Spiritual refinement comes in in direct proportion to the eschewing of publicity. There is no life-purpose more potent and lasting than man's giving himself over to self-perfecting. And following it as a shadow come name and fame. The model for modern man is the Paramahansa's abundant life, utterly bereft of advertising. His life is an elaborate commentary on the Upaniṣadic statement: 'A wise man desirous of immortality shuts out extroversion, and gets introverted into the glory of the Self.'

# THE SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTER OF EAST AND WEST—2

BY DR. JACQUES ALBERT CUTTAT

## III. THE WEST-EASTERN DIALOGUE

As surprising as it may sound, such an authentic dialogue has already taken place long ago in the West. Prepared since the fourth century B.C. by social, cultural, and even spiritual contacts between India and the pre-Christian Western Antiquity, these still largely unexplored initial relations of the West with Asia came to a spiritual culmination during the first five or six centuries of Christianity, namely, in the *patristic period*, the period of the 'Fathers of the Church', some of whom were spiritual giants. In their quality as inspired interpreters of Judeo-Christian Revelation, they elaborated the huge edifice of Christian doctrine on the threefold foundation of Greek beauty and philosophy, of Roman sense for justice and political order, and—last but not least—of Hellenistic mysteries, gnostic speculations, and other Near-Eastern religious intuitions. Since the secularizing Renaissance, the Greek and Roman elements of Christian doctrine and Western civilization have been overstressed at the cost of the Hellenistic, specifically mystical, element. In fact, this Hellenistic background has also contributed to shape decisively the basic categories and inner unity of the Occident. And what has been even more and is still widely ignored under the narrowing influence of a certain Western spiritual provincialism is the fact that this Hellenistic building-stone of Christian culture, specially the neo-Platonist metaphysics of Alexandria, is, in reality, an Asiatic spiritual dimension of the patristic thought and therefore of the West.

### 1. *The Augustinian synthesis*

Let me illustrate this by the spiritual evolution of the greatest thinker of Christian Antiquity, Saint Augustine, the most powerful architect of Western spirituality, culture, and civilization after Saint John and Saint Paul.

His famous conversion (in Milano in 386) is too often described as a sudden leap from Manicheism, a rather materialistic form of gnosticism, to pure Christianity. One has not given due consideration to the fact that, at the end of his Manichean period and shortly before his dramatic conversion, Augustine had discovered Plotinus, the summit of neo-Platonism, whose influence is crucial on Christian and Islamic spirituality (Meister Eckhart and Ibn Arabi, for instance, are deeply Plotinian), an influence of which Augustine was one of the main channels. Indeed, Augustine did not only read some books of Plotinus; he confesses that through them he awakened for the first time to the knowledge of an immutable and absolutely spiritual God.

Now, modern scholars of Plotinus agree that his philosophy and cosmology is surprisingly close to Vedānta, closer than to Aristotle and even Plato. The Plotinian world-process is an emanation and manifestation of the divine Unity, unfolding itself simultaneously as macrocosm or 'great (outer) universe' and microcosm or 'small (inner) universe', strictly related to each other in such a way that the human body corresponds analogically to the whole physical universe, that the individual soul is a counterpart of the 'cosmic soul', and that the human spirit is a counterpart of the universal Intellect (Nous). These two parallel, horizontally connected hierarchies are, in their turn, vertically related to the transcendent 'One' by an inner ontological continuity deriving from their ultimate identity. Like in Vedānta, the way leading to this supreme Identity of all subjects and objects in their thou-less precosmic Reality is an ascending concentric retreat, a contemplative withdrawal from all objects, including the empirical ego. Plotinian spirituality is a way back to the primordial coincidence of the divine Centre of the universe with one's own

innermost divine centre. This blissful coincidence, often wrongly described as *ekstasis*, is, in fact, a radical *enstasis*, a pure interiorization, a *samādhi*, which Plotinus has known four times. According to recent researches, Augustine practised this Plotinian *enstasis* several times, and his conversion took place *after* those mystical experiences.

Now, his conversion was nothing but an overwhelming encounter with the personal God of the Bible, with the Absolute in Person, experienced in faith as transcending even metaphysical unity and ultimate interiority. He describes this absolute transcendence in his *Confessions* (written in 399), the only metaphysical and theological treatise written throughout, not about God, but *to* God. In other terms, Augustine, even after having reached a pure inwardness of the Eastern type, remained confronted with God as absolute Thou, because, as he says in a sentence which became classical for Christian spirituality: 'Thou, Lord, was more interior to my innermost and superior to my summit.' His Plotinian 'pure interiority' blossomed out in 'mutual interiority'; his union with God culminated, not in fusion, but in communion. Such ultimate 'transcending of one's self', as Augustine says, this self-transcending towards the other, became decisive for the Western concept of the human person as basically inter-personal. As Gabriel Marcel says: 'To exist as a person means to make oneself by surpassing oneself towards another person.' The example of Augustine's conversion shows, among many others of the patristic period, that Christian spirituality, far from excluding or rejecting Eastern spirituality, has, in fact, been deepened and enriched by it; but it also shows that this is only true when this East-'West' dialogue takes place at the spiritual summit of both hemispheres.

## 2. *The modern resumption of the encounter*

After the patristic period, the Christian dialogue with spiritual Asia came to an end for more than a thousand years; from about the seventh to the eighteenth century, Europe re-

mained culturally and spiritually isolated from Asia. Not that Asia was absent, but its presence to European thought remained 'incognito'. Spiritual Asia, as it were, went underground. Its presence took many disguised forms—for instance, the Plotinian influence on Christian mystics and philosophers (Eckhart, Tauler, Suso,<sup>4</sup> Spinoza, Boehme), or occult movements like the Cathars, the Patarins, the Illuminados, the Brothers of the Free Spirit, the hermetists and alchemists of the Renaissance, and other occultists. Its most important incognito was the Eastern interiority as a dimension integrated in European thought itself. In spite of numerous geographic, economic, and even religious contacts and exchanges since the sixteenth century, it was not before the end of the eighteenth century that European intelligentsia began to know Asia from within. Then only Asia's spiritual incognito was suddenly unveiled by the publication of the first translations of its sacred books—of the Upaniṣads, of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, and later of Buddhist and Taoist scriptures.

The impact on European mind of this huge discovery was tremendous. Nothing describes it better than the expression 'Oriental Renaissance' (borrowed from Schopenhauer by R. Schwab), for, like the Renaissance of pre-Christian Antiquity in the sixteenth century, this discovery was a rediscovery; it was the rediscovery, but this time far beyond the seas, of the same Asia which had lived unperceived in Western souls for twelve hundred years. A sort of collective psychological shock resulted from the disclosure, not of a bygone antiquity, but of a living world of deep religiosity, high mystical insights, ascetic heroism, immemorial myths and symbols entirely new and yet strangely familiar to us; Asia emerged before our eyes like a distant mirror reflecting in magnified proportion our own forgotten past. Europe realized abruptly how much spirituality is inherent to all men and to all cultures of

<sup>4</sup>The *Tercer Abecedario* of the Franciscan Ossuna, whose influence was decisive for St. Theresa's (of Avila) first mystical experience, is a method of recollection through pure interiorization.

all times. Our dialogue with the Eastern spiritual hemisphere started anew on a much broader scale.

From the point of view of the inter-religious encounter, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are closer to the patristic period than the twelve centuries lying between them. The first leader of the new dialogue was the founder of the German Romantic School, the Sanskritist Friedrich von Schlegel, soon joined by Herder, Goethe, Novalis, Schelling, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and later by Wagner and Nietzsche. The revival of idealism in philosophy and the rise of romanticism in Western literature and art are unthinkable without this encounter with the sacred East. Baron Eckstein—whom Heine surnamed 'Baron Buddha'—shifted this wave of enthusiasm from Germany to France. Victor Hugo, Michelet, Lamartine, Vigny, and the symbolist poets were—at least temporarily—overwhelmed by the Oriental Renaissance.

However, our second dialogue with Asia started in a rather chaotic way. The brilliant and passionate French philosopher, Priest Lamennais, had to be condemned by Rome for threatening to dissolve Christianity in a boundless and timeless ocean of vaguely known Oriental religions. Most of the leading Western thinkers, largely dechristianized, had lost the pearl of Greco-Christian heritage—the truly spiritual approach to rationally unsoluble paradoxes and antinomies by 'thinking in tension', the intellectual faculty 'to distinguish without separating' in order 'to unite without merging'.<sup>5</sup> Thus, no mutual understanding, no real encounter was possible between the 'pro-

Western' and the 'pro-Eastern' European partners of the new East-West dialogue, both being incapable to disclose the viewpoint of the other by 'suspending' its own. In the pro-Western camp; the spiritual horizon was narrowed by self-righteousness and the wrong identification of the universality of the Bible with that of Western culture; in the pro-Eastern camp, composed mainly by agnostic philosophers (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Hegel), occultists, and theosophists, the outlook was restricted by resentments against Western civilization and against the Church, as well as by a more or less conscious desire to elude the burden of the *ego* and of biblical ethics by escaping into a supra-moral and supra-biblical, allegedly Eastern, mostly self-fabricated gnosticism 'beyond good and evil', 'beyond all religions'. Our new encounter with spiritual Asia started as a dialogue of deaf persons.

A great deal of order came into the matter thanks to Frazer's *Golden Bough* and to the publication in Oxford (from 1859 onward), by the great Max Müller, of the *Sacred Books of the East*. This monumental collection of forty-nine volumes, together with the works of the French Sanskritists, provided at last the scientific basis for an impartial comparison between the main religions of the world, a field in which great scholars among missionaries (like Abbé Dubois) had been the first patient pioneers. The first university chair of history of religions was founded in Geneva in 1873, an example soon followed by other universities of Switzerland and by those of the Netherlands, France, and Germany, then of England and America. Among the Pleiad of brilliant authors who brought comparative religion into the realm of science in the twentieth century, I mention here only Dr. Radhakrishnan, because his 'Spalding Lectures' at Oxford—published in 1939 under the title *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*—are the work of the first Asiatic appointed to a Western university chair. The rapidly growing interpenetration of Eastern and Western cultures made an authentic dialogue more and more urgent and un-

<sup>5</sup> This is the formula by which the Fourth Oecumenical Council, held at Chalcedon in 451, distinguishes the two mutually irreducible natures of Christ (the human and the divine) with a view to stressing their supernatural inner unity (in Christ as indivisible Person). The recently rediscovered impact of this formula on the faculty to 'think in tension', which has stamped Western thought, including modern scientific thought, has been analysed by Denys de Rougement in the brilliant chapter 'From Nicea to the Atomic Age' of his book *Aventure occidentale de l'homme* (Paris, Albin Michel, 1957). See also my *Encounter of Religions* (Desclée, New York, 1960), pp. 75-79 (on 'antinomic knowledge').



avoidable. The scientific approach is a necessary condition for it, but not a sufficient one, for objective information is one thing, and objective confrontation and judgement is quite another thing. It requires an approach from within, i.e. a minimum of spiritual life. Such approach has followed in this century three very different lines, corresponding, again, to the two already analysed extremes and to a more difficult middle path.

3. *Three Western attitudes today: defensive (exclusivistic), surrendering (syncretistic), and 'dialogical' (receiving)*

Brilliant authors like H. Massis and A. Koestler (in his recent *The Lotus and the Robot*), 'conservative' writers, and many theologians and missionaries treat Eastern spirituality as inferior or pagan in a scornful sense; their exclusivism is less aggressive, proselytic, and self-assured than the old one, more defensive and somewhat depressed, but equally isolating. Concern for the threatened humanistic culture, rather than for the Christian spiritual universality from which it sprang, an often high but one-sided religiosity, and a certain lack of intellectual charity make them feel uncomfortable in front of the truth expressed by Augustine as follows: 'The very thing which is now called the Christian religion ... never failed from the beginning of human race up to the coming of Christ in flesh. Then the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christianity.'

In the second, syncretistic line, the defence of Western values has capitulated, as it were, in favour of the opposite extreme, that of surrender to Eastern values. It is the approach of universally minded and highly gifted thinkers like A. Huxley, R. Guénon, and to a certain extent A. Toynbee. There, the common sacred ground, the *basic* unity of Eastern and biblical spiritualities, is sweepingly transformed into a coincidence, identity, or fusion of their respective *summits*; universality is mistaken for absence of determination, because the approach is unilaterally intellectual, inhumanly metaphys-

ical, and therefore also spiritually incomplete.<sup>6</sup> They forget that 'the dignity of man consists', as Pascal says, 'not in surmounting his limits, but in becoming conscious of them'. In their anti-Western eagerness to reconstruct intellectually with Eastern elements an esoteric Christianity (or Judaism, or Islam), they indulge in an unconsciously 'magic' play of inter-religious equivalences and often artificial equations, overlooking that, as Aristotle wrote, 'true equality consists in treating unequally unequal things'.

I call the third approach 'dialogical', because, by avoiding either of the first two extremes, its aim is a mutual encounter, a real dialogue. It has been undertaken—with unequal success—by men whose biblical faith did not close, as in the first case, but open their eyes to all spiritual values of the Orient, and whose loving knowledge of the East did not weaken, as in the second case, but deepen their biblical spirituality, and who remained genuine Christians as well as genuine scholars, like R. Otto, H. Kraemer, Tillich, A. Schweitzer, de la Vallée Poussin, O. Lacombe, H. de Lubac, M. Eliade, R. C. Zaehner (the successor of Dr. Radhakrishnan at Oxford)—in India itself, the Fathers Dandoy and Johanns, S.J., the late *sannyāsi*-abbot Mouchanin, and his followers today.<sup>7</sup> They all endeavour, in various degrees, to look at Brahman and Buddha through Christian eyes, as well as at Christ through Hindu or Buddhist eyes.

They respond to the Eastern challenge by an inner gesture, which is neither a defence nor a surrender of their own spiritual heritage, but a real answer, arising out of more, not of less, faith and love, a full monotheistic reply. As our Eastern spiritual brothers are first of

<sup>6</sup> This 'metaphysical' or 'traditionalist' school seems to know only of a universality conceived in analogy to the reversible world of space and things, and of a basically 'extensive' infinity (infinite=unconditioned, unlimited, unqualified); it passes in silence over the infinity of 'comprehension' abiding in the intrinsic *quality of values* (infinite=perfect, supremely qualified, unique); there, universality is conceived in analogy to the irreversible world of time and persons.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Mahieu and Bede Griffiths, the founders of the *sannyāsi*-monastery of Kurishumala (Kerala), among many others.

all created in the image of the same God, some of these writers think that we should first of all listen to them and to their scriptures as to possible messengers of a challenge addressed to *ourselves* by the very God of the Bible. Consequently, our first question should be: 'What message is conveyed to us through the East?' and not: 'What is our message to the East?'—a question which comes only after the first, if the spiritual dialogue has to be genuinely spiritual and a genuine dialogue. Then only does the encounter find its inter-religious 'sacred space', in which the highest values of both hemispheres can freely circulate. How much Western spirituality can be and has been enriched by this inner attitude is clearly shown by the already mentioned example of Augustine, whose eminently biblical union with God was deepened by 'assuming' the eminently Eastern dimension of interiority.

There are other Eastern spiritual riches of providential significance for the monotheistic hemisphere. I would centre them around an intuition largely forgotten in the West, the intuition of *symbolism* in its full and genuine meaning, the sense of the symbolic *essence* of all things.

#### 4. *Biblical realism enhanced by Eastern symbolism*

A symbol, in its true sense (still alive in the traditional East), is not a conventional sign; it is the finite expression of the infinite, the only means to evoke and convey realities which cannot be expressed directly. In this perspective, the world around us, things, plants, landscapes, animals, men, and the sky are not only what they are in themselves or in relation to us, but also what they *signify*, what they are in relation to their ultimate eternal source. Modern science and technology have their root in the biblical conception of man called to rule over nature, to be the free king of a world created as real in itself, not as illusion; if the conquest of nature is divorced from its spiritual finality, if man's transforming power, ceasing to be his act as a free image of divine Freedom, becomes

an end instead of a means to glorify God by freely conforming the world to God's creative call, as it happened in the post-medieval West, then the human domination of things, because merely human, becomes Promethean, i.e. ungodly and therefore also inhuman. In such a de-spiritualized technocratic civilization, man, confronted only with products of human skill, lives in a world which refers him no more to its spiritual dimensions, but only to himself, a spiritually opaque world of egocentric structure. Eastern landscapes, villages, and small towns, not to speak of Hindu and Buddhist sacred places, on the contrary, still seem to point to a reality beyond them and beyond the empirical ego; nature, customs, and dresses are, as it were, more *transparent* to the sacred than ours, a fact which explains the tremendous appeal to modern Westerners of books and exhibitions on Asiatic art, traditions, and landscapes. They fill a gap; they satisfy the same spiritual nostalgia as do in the West the monuments of medieval sacred art. Profane Western music, poetry, and art are a vicarious refuge for this ontological longing, which, in the West, is only fully appeased in liturgy. These two Western parallels to Eastern symbolism—medieval art and liturgy—clearly show that the true lesson of the Eastern world of myths and symbols to the spiritually starved Westerners is not to escape from the allegedly sinking ship of traditional Occident into a mysterious oriental paradise, but to restore and integrate into modern perspective our own traditional symbols enriched by Asiatic dimensions, to revive the biblical transparency of the universe to the Divine; more precisely: to arouse from the subconscious and to re-integrate the biblical vision of creation as a 'cosmic liturgy', i.e. as a universal *symbol* which is *also* and ultimately an *inter-personal message*, because its divine model is an absolute Person. Eastern symbolism is a challenge to renew, at the magnified scale of modern science and technique, Saint Paul's awareness of man's responsibility for the destiny of the universe, of man's mandate to fulfil the world's culmination in God as in its creative

and attracting Pole. Should we not respond by striving to remake, at this enlarged scale, the old Franciscan, remarkably cosmical experience of the sun, the moon, and the elements as our real brothers and sisters, i.e. as omnipresent manifestations of an inaccessibly transcendent and yet eminently paternal creative power?

If the absolute distance between creation and Creator is an inter-personal distance, an absolute relation, a supra-cosmic infinite in which God posits in front of Him free creatures and a real world made out of nothing, as in the metaphysics of the Bible, then the world can become transparent to the Divine without being reduced to an unreal mirage; it remains fully real, a real symbol which, by its very subsisting finite reality, far from relativizing the absolute reality of the infinite Model, suggests and enhances its inconceivably greater reality.

##### 5. *Christian experience of incarnation enriched by Hindu approach to avatāras*

In Christian view, this 'symbolic' transparency of the finite reality to its infinitely more real Model reaches its climax in Christ, the God-Man, the supreme Paradox in whom all relative and temporal relations of symbols to the Absolute become themselves absolute and eternal. Totally divine and totally human in one and the same infinite person, Christ, in Christian experience, is in person, words, and deeds the absolute symbol of the Absolute, the Face of God, the objectively incarnated mirror of the 'Abyss of the Father', i.e. of the trans-objective depths of God. Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, i.e. 'descents' or 'manifestations' of the Divine; they are not, in Hindu view, real incarnations. The commonly accepted translation of *avatāra* by 'incarnation' is superficial and utterly misleading, because Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are not described as having really suffered and died. In the *avatāra*, God does not, as for Christians in Christ, become really man; He only appears in human form and remains, behind and beyond this earthly appearance, purely divine and unaffected by human vicissitudes. The concept of incarnation, what-

ever the syncretists may think, has to be sharply distinguished from the concept of *avatāra*, yet only distinguished in order to unite both at a deeper level, like all true values, and not to separate or isolate them from each other, whatever the Christian exclusivists may think. To understand this, the Christian should have the intellectual charity to look at an *avatāra* with Hindu eyes, an effort rewarded by a richer experience of the very Christian contemplation itself, which always consists in looking at Christ.

Now, the great Ramakrishna helps us immensely in such effort, because, right or wrong, he considered Christ as an *avatāra*, as much as Kālī, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Mohammed. This peak of Hindu mysticism, who was an open book, clearly tells us how a Hindu contemplates inwardly an *avatāra*. After having meditated for three days on the life of Jesus, a human form appeared to him, drew nearer to him, and he heard an inner voice addressing his vision: 'Redeemer', 'Incarnate Love', and 'Master Yogin'. Now, the decisive point is that this figure became gradually absorbed in Ramakrishna, disappeared as an 'object', and, once fully interiorized, gave him the experience of *samādhi*, i.e. the mystical awareness of the ultimate identity of his own innermost self with the divine self of the *avatāra*. In other words, the *avatāra* is not an objective Thou, as Christ is, but a symbol in the highest sense which Asia gives to this word, namely, a sacred, but mythical, i.e. ultimately unreal, dream-like support of radical interiorization, an evanescent sacred mirror of *one's own* divine self. This shows at once the difference, the analogy, and the complementariness between an *avatāra* and Christ. No Christian looks at Christ with a view to absorbing him even in his highest self, nor does he intend to merge in Christ, nor even to merge with him in God; obviously, two historically individualized persons cannot fuse or merge, nor can two real spiritual persons, whether human or divine; and this is precisely what the historicity of Christ, the unique 'individuality' of the God-Man, suggests and

makes obvious. This, by the way, points at the basic difference between Christian love and Hindu *bhakti*, for *bhakti* aims at a final fusion with God, whereas Christian *agapê* does not wish to abolish the distance from man to God or Christ; it intends, on the contrary, to deepen this infinite inter-personal distance, because it is the very breathing-space of a more infinite Love.<sup>8</sup>

However, the fact of Christ's unique historicity prevents his reduction to a timeless myth, and obliges the serious Christian to consider him as being either a charlatan or a historical, i.e. irreducibly objective, manifestation of God as absolute Thou; the fact, in other terms, that Christ is a symbol, and more than a symbol, shows that he is *also* and *a fortiori* a symbol in the full Eastern sense of the word, for the more implies the less. Thus, when we look with Hindu eyes at the incarnation in its full Christian sense, Eastern spirituality helps us to remember, to actualize, and to understand better certain neglected or wrongly understood Christian truths like Paul's exclamation: 'It is not I who lives, but Christ within me', or of Christ himself, when he says: 'The kingdom of heaven lies within you.' It discloses Christ as being *also* a perfect symbol in the Eastern sense of a holy mirror, which, by reflecting objectively, by making paradoxically visible preconscious regions of the soul, refers us back to dimensions of interiority otherwise inexorably hidden to ourselves, but always confronted, and thus

<sup>8</sup> A similar contrast distinguishes Christian charity from Buddhist *maitrî* or 'universal benevolence'; as the respective subjects of evanescent elements, the 'love'-relations must themselves be non-subsistent and evanescent, whereas charity is an ultimately real relation between ultimately real persons.

awakens us to the incommunicable mystery of the person in the Christian sense of the word. This ultimate personal centre to which Christian contemplation arouses, because it is incommunicable and therefore incapable of fusion or mergence, has a degree of interiority higher than that of the *bhakta* and closer to that of the Advaitin. The Advaitic way towards 'non-dual' identity of the Self (*Ātman*) and Brahman by pure 'knowledge' (*jñāna*) discloses an inwardness which is also incommunicable and beyond 'bhaktic' fusion, and in this sense more truly personal, but it remains unfronted, totally Thou-less, whereas Christian contemplation, at this very point, becomes utterly inter-personal by opening totally to the inwardness of God's infinite Thou.<sup>9</sup> This shows the deep polarity by which the two hemispheres are distinguished and united.

In brief, the main spiritual gift of Asia to the monotheistic hemisphere consists in compelling us, as it were, not at all to abandon or to reduce our ultimately inter-personal approach to God, but to place its starting-point at a more and more interior sphere of the soul—a providential lesson, indeed, to so many modern monotheists who dare to approach the absolute Person from a peripheral, mundane, superficial, and 'mediocre' sphere of their consciousness, and tend to conform God to the image of man, instead of conforming man to the image and resemblance of God.

(To be continued)

<sup>9</sup> On the antinomy according to which 'spiritual beings can only commune' by that which is 'most personal, most incommunicable', and on the fact that the absolute Person 'is the pole, not the antipode, of the (human) person'; see H. de Lubac's *Catholicisme* (Cerf, Paris), pp. 301, 287.

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A time may come when the local heritages of the different historic nations, civilizations, and religions will have coalesced into a common heritage of the whole human family. If that time does come, an effective judgement between the different religions may then at last begin to be possible.

ARNOLD TOYNBEE, *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, p. 296.

# EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION OF INDIA

BY SRI CHANDRA BHANU GUPTA

India is one geographical entity. One is apt to say that some sort of pervasive unity was forged out of the religious, cultural, and social bonds, but there was nothing like political homogeneity during the last two centuries, and the desideratum of the geographical, political, and economic integration was achieved only in the wake of the integration of the states into India after 1947.

The disintegration of the cohesive bond of religion and of the basic language—the Sanskrit, the thoughts that it represented, the dreams of our race that it embodied—has resulted in great emotional imbalance.

And now, we must have an emotional integration of the Indian people, so that we could be welded into one strong national unit with all its wonderful diversity.

It is not possible to spell out the political, economic, sociological, educational, and cultural foundations of integration within the compass of such an article, and I would only touch them briefly.

Indianism is still an abstraction, as the teeming millions of India have yet to organize their emotions in terms of loyalty and affection towards the entity called India.

The vital role which emotions play in individual and social life is well known, and often they are manifested through symbols like religion, mythology, poetry, music, etc.

As there is nothing like the individual in isolation or the society as an entity apart, the problem of emotional integration cannot be considered in abstraction, and has to be considered in the context of the interdependence of multiple social factors.

India is confronted with a number of contradictions, and some of the problems are also the fundamental problems of modern civilization, like the co-ordination of the interests of

the Centre and the regional units, the harmonization of the interests of labour and capital, the solution of the problem of unemployment, etc. Apart from all these, India has her own problems. Forces of atavism as reflected in linguism, parochialism, and communalism are abroad, threatening our national unity and integrity. Exhibition of sectarianism and regionalism, as manifested in the recent unfortunate events in some parts of the country, is not very flattering. We see that linguistic particularism has grown at the cost of nationalism.

Two trends are discernible in Indian politics—the rational trend towards centralization and political integration, and the other towards linguistic and cultural provincialism, which one may call ‘the romantic trend towards attachment to local soil and tradition and to the consciousness of an autonomous regional destiny’. While the intellectuals are the chief exponents of the rational trend towards prevention of the Balkanization of India, the ‘urban middle class is particularly susceptible to the romantic trend towards the integration of emotions and sentiments round a linguistic homeland’, and voices are raised for the readjustment of boundaries.

As one noted writer puts it: ‘The rational cry of an all-India centre symbolizes the distance of New Delhi; the romantic cry of the linguistic homeland signifies the vast importance of concrete and immediate entities and loyalties.’

The psychological effect of the feeling of oneness is essential, as it postulates a sense of identification with the spirit of the nation.

In the present context, the stress on an all-India nationalism; the erection of a dynamic, mobile, expansive economic system; social accommodation; and the emotional integration at the educational level to train the Indian students in the values of co-operation, altruism, mutuality, reciprocity, and fraternity—these are

some of the prerequisites of emotional integration.

One cannot help feeling that 'the emotional integration of India is not going to be a haphazard or *ad hoc* process. It requires a conscious process of the reinterpretation of collective aims. The objectives and entities of wish-fixation, which so long have been the caste, the tribe, the province, have to be replaced by the nation. This will involve the reconstruction of the values'.

But the greatest need in India today is cultural education. Rabindranath Tagore once compared Indian culture with a full blossomed lotus—'in its different petals flows the culture of different regions, and the full lotus, comprising of such components, is the symbol of our Indian culture—one, indivisible, but many-sided one'. 'If one of the petals', according to Tagore, 'is distorted or remains under-developed

or undeveloped, it affects the flower's beauty.'

And I believe the apperception and appreciation of the common heritage of our different linguistic regions would help fostering the much-needed sense of oneness.

As every community has a vested interest in social and economic development, every community has to play a positive part in national integration.

Let me echo what Pandit Nehru said: 'There is no division between North and South, East and West of India. There is only one India, of which all of us are inheritors. It belongs to all of us. . . . All the culture of India, whether it comes from the North or South or anywhere else, is our common heritage, and, what is more, the great future that spreads out before us is going to be our common heritage.' And we must not forget the lesson of Indian history. We must learn to hold together.



## THE POWER OF PRAYER

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

Mahatma Gandhi, who believed in the efficacy of prayer to the end of his life, writes: 'Without it (prayer), I would have been a lunatic long ago. I have had my share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me into temporary despair, but if I was able to get rid of it, it was because of prayer.' Prayer is a natural instinct of human beings. The human heart naturally loves, and the human mind is naturally prone to believe, declared Pascal. Intellectual sophistication and faith in the omnipotence of science have undermined men's faith in prayer. Consequently, the critics of prayer have made fun of it, and run it down as a childish activity. The case against prayer arises from men who lack faith in any faculty other than scientific reasoning and syllogistic logic. They expect from prayer immediate results,

as from magic. The simple folk experience practical disappointments in the results of their prayer, and that gives place to doubt, and then to confident denial of the efficacy of prayer. From such experience, men turn to science, technology, work, money, and intelligence to obtain their desires. These hard-headed realists declare that prayer is bankrupt, since it fails to deliver the goods. The psychologist, whose prestige is growing today, sees in prayer a sort of psychological escapism. 'It is a soliloquy, a comforting monologue, a noble form of auto-suggestion.' It is good within limits, but when indulged in large doses, it takes the edge off life and makes us helpless and diffident men. Prayer, at best, is a psychological sop; it enlarges our sympathies, quiets our disturbed minds, and makes life bearable.

Some ingenious men, who do not bother

whether God exists or not, and who have a pragmatic bent of mind, look upon prayer as an exercise in developing self-confidence through the power of auto-suggestion. Prayer is to them a sort of spiritual gymnastics. Some people look upon prayer as a reflex action, a social convention, and a simple habit. One day, in Paris, a religious procession carrying a crucifix passed before the house of Voltaire. Voltaire, a confirmed infidel, lifted his hat. 'What!' the friend near him exclaimed, 'are you reconciled to God?' Voltaire replied: 'We salute, but do not speak.' Let us add: 'Some pray, but do not believe.'

Prayer, though a natural instinct in man, is a fitful impulse, and it is unregulated in most men. It is a spasmodic cry in some, and in others, it is an occasional need. Some pray only when they are in desperate straits. Some look for material gifts from God in prayer. Some are so crude as to expect God to help them in their evil ambitions and anti-social and destructive plans. Prayer is not only natural to man, but it has infinite qualities as well as indefinite degrees of excellence. There are prayers and prayers. All are not of one type or of one degree.

The instinct of prayer, which is fitful and unregulated in us, is confused and weak. It has to be intelligently directed by a persevering discipline. It will not grow like grass. Growth in spiritual life needs greater discipline than in secular arts. The great masters of prayer, the choicest of them in the East and in the West, have left us the record of their experiences, which is our best guide in the art of prayer.

Prayer arises from a deep love of God and a realization that He is the supreme value and that life is impossible without a living faith in the presence of God. It is not a God-fearing activity. It is a sense of gratefulness and love for God for all that He has done for us. The instinct for prayer is universal. Plato declared: 'Every man of sense, before beginning an important work, will ask the help of gods.' Plato not only preached this; he himself practised it. A beautiful prayer of his is: 'King Zeus, grant

us the good, whether we pray for it or not; but evil, keep from us, though we pray for it.' The *Iliad*, the greatest Greek poem, begins with a prayer. Coleridge writes: 'The act of praying is the very highest energy of which the human mind is capable.'

Prayer begins with words uttered in praise of God. It takes on the form of *japa*. *Japa* is repeating the name of the Lord. It is one of the oldest forms of worship prescribed in the Hindu religion. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā*: 'Of all the sacrifices, I am *japa-yajña*' (X.25). *Japa* grows on the crest of a deep longing for God. The *guru* must initiate one into the first utterance of the *mantra*. This stage of the prayer helps one to concentrate on God. It enables one to fix the mind on God. With resolute effort, the mind is fixed on God in the second stage. Constant meditation makes the mind reluctant to turn away from God.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares in the *Gītā*: 'The virtuous ones who worship Me are of four kinds: (1) the man in distress (*ārta*), (2) the seeker after knowledge (*jijñāsu*), (3) the seeker after wealth (*arthārthin*), and (4) the man of wisdom (*jñānin*). Of these, the wise one, who is ever in constant union with God, and whose devotion is single-minded, is the best. For I am supremely dear to him, and he is dear to Me' (VII.16-17).

This classification explains the chief types of prayer. There are those who ask God for the things of the world, e.g. cattle, wealth, abundance of food, etc. Christian writers call this type of prayer *petitionary* in its nature. The *Gītā* does not forbid this kind of prayer, though it does not rate it high. Those in dire distress, peril, and anxiety pray for help and relief. Sometimes, a crushing responsibility makes men pray in a critical period. Such men, when hopelessly tangled in difficulties, use prayer as *deus ex machina* to get out of it. The Lord does listen to the intense cry of the soul. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. That is the testimony of the *bhaktas* all over the world. Men pray when they are at their wit's end. Such a prayer is selfish in its nature. When on occa-

sions they are disappointed, these very men turn their face against prayer. Sabatier held the view that 'Prayer is religion in act'. Francis Thomson, speaking about the power of prayer, says: 'Prayer is the very sword of the saints.' Some rightly regard prayer not as an obligation to God, but as a supreme privilege, a friendship with God.

The unselfish prayer transcends the utilitarian view of prayer which tells God: 'I have done these things for you; you do, in turn, these things for me.' The worst level of prayer is asking God to punish our enemies. Samson cried: 'O God Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes' (*Judges*, 16:28). When we compare Samson's prayer either with that of Stephen's or with that of Christ's, we see the difference. The dying prayer of Stephen, as he was being stoned, was: 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge' (*Acts*, 7:60). Christ said: 'Father, they know not what they do.'

The unselfish prayer changes, in the words of H. E. Fosdick, from the 'give me' to the 'make me'. 'Make me' anew is a sign of ceasing to value God merely for the things He gives. Our prayer must be sincere, not mechanical and rigid; neither cold, nor abstract. It must be warm and human. It must be pure and unselfish. 'It is a great art to commune with God', says Thomas a' Kempis. 'We should not expect to take a try at the violin once in a while and yet make much of it.' It is more so with this fine instrument, prayer. We must take care not to reduce prayer to a pious form of habit, but we must make it a vital transaction of life. Prayer opens our life to the guidance of God. It encourages the receptive mood in us. The self-will must empty itself completely, and we should not seek God to back our self-will. Our self-will stands between us and God. Sir

Thomas Broune ends his book saying: 'Thy will be done even in my undoing.' To ask of God anything may be wrong, for we may ask the wrong thing.

The prayerful man becomes a conscious and willing instrument of the Lord. 'We must become', in the words of a modern saint, 'a flute in the hands of the Lord.' To be a flute means to become hollow. We are stuffed with passions and desires. How can the music come through the flute? We must empty ourselves of the ego, and then the Lord will play the flute. A sixteenth-century mystic expressed his view of prayer best in an epigram: 'Prayer is not to ask what we wish of God, but what God wishes us.' The highest type of prayer is to ask for nothing of God, except His grace. For man, there is no gift greater than God's grace and fellowship with Him. All His other gifts can stand no comparison with His grace. St. Augustine writes: 'Thou madest me for Thyself, and my heart is restless until it repose in Thee.'

Prayer is not mere currying favour with God, or getting gifts by coaxing Him; nor is it a transaction between God and man, buying and selling over the counter. Nor is it asking Him to do our will. It is nothing more than putting ourselves into His hands to do His will. To do His will is the work of man. The highest prayer is for a transformed life to be made in the image of God. True prayer never bypasses morality. William James concludes a lecture of his on prayer with this note: 'We hear in these days of scientific enlightenment a great deal of discussion about the efficacy of prayer, and many reasons are given to us why we should not pray, whilst others are given to us why we should. But in all this, very little is said of the reason why we do pray. . . . The reason why we do pray is simply we cannot help praying.'





## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

In his learned article on 'The Uttara-kāṇḍa of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa', Dr. A. D. Pusalker, M.A., Ph.D., Curator of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, as well as Director of its Post-Graduate and Research Department, shows that the entire *Uttara-kāṇḍa* is not spurious and that that part of the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* which deals with the story of Rāma is genuine, and comes from Vālmīki. . . .

The article on 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa: The Divine Teacher of Humanity' is based on a talk given by Swami Mukhyananda, of the Ramakrishna Order, at Kingsway Hall, London, in 1959. . . .

That, though various kinds of prejudices are still active in human relationships, there are hopeful trends in the contemporary world 'Towards Greater Understanding' is the subject-matter of the article by Dr. S. N. L. Shrivastava, M.A., D.Litt., Principal, Government Degree College, Shajapur, Madhya Pradesh, who regularly contributes to *Prabuddha Bharata*. . . .

Any kind of publicity is a positive hindrance to an aspirant who is on the spiritual path; so, he must shun all publicity; and 'spiritual refinement comes in in direct proportion to the eschewing of publicity'—this is the main theme of the article on 'The Paramahansa and This Age of Advertisement' by Swami Chidbhava-

nanda, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Tapovanam, Tirupparaitturai, Tiruchi District, Madras State. . . .

'The Spiritual Encounter of East and West' is the second part of Dr. Jacques Albert Cuttat's article, which is being issued in *Prabuddha Bharata* in three instalments. The first part of the article appeared in the September 1961 issue, and the third and concluding part will be published in November 1961. . . .

India is passing through a period of transition. While she is stabilizing her political unity by building up a welfare state on democratic principles, fissiparous tendencies of various types are showing up their ugly heads in different regions. To effectively counteract these tendencies, what is needed now is an emotional integration of our people. In this context, the article on 'Emotional Integration of India' by Sri Chandra Bhanu Gupta, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, presented in this issue, has a special significance. . . .

In his article on 'The Power of Prayer', Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt., of Government College, Mercara, Mysore State, emphasizes the point that 'the highest prayer is for a transformed life to be made in the image of God'.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUTH. BY PETER D. KING. Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1960. Pages 110. Price \$ 3.75.

The author of this interesting book is the clinical director of a mental hospital, who has direct access to the innermost recesses of a human mind. His diagnosis of the diseases from which the present

generation of mankind is suffering is thought-provoking. In the present-day world, we have a thorough knowledge of the means by which happiness and comforts of life can be gained, but we have no knowledge of the goal which each one of us should seek to reach. Life is not only pleasurable, but it is also meaningful. It has an important significance, and that significance lies in understanding the prin-

ciple of Truth. 'Truth', in the opinion of the author, 'is everything past, present, and perhaps even future; how it is; and why it is.' The author pleads that no one should take life blindly as a thing to be enjoyed and done with. Man should always seek to realize the truth of life in its different aspects. A correct understanding of the principle of Truth alone will enable a man to have that broad and sympathetic outlook on life, with the help of which he will be in a position to contribute something of value to an ideal state.

The book will be read with interest in this age of intellectual confusion and dismay.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

**THE SPIRIT'S PILGRIMAGE.** BY MIRA BEHN (MADELEINE SLADE). *Published by Orient Longmans Private Ltd., 17 Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta-13. 1960. Pages 318. Price Rs. 15.*

Pilgrimage, in common parlance, connotes a devout journey towards a sacred destination. The greatest of pilgrimages, however, is that of life itself; here a noble ideal is pursued with ardent aspiration and fervent faith. Again, the pilgrimage of life can be only on the plane of the spirit, and not of the body. Mira Behn, the English woman who joined Mahatma Gandhi and dedicated herself to the service of the oppressed millions of India, tells her own story in the book under review, where the travails of a yearning heart find vivid expression.

Madeleine, as Mira Behn was known in her earlier life, is the daughter of Admiral Slade, who became the Commander-in-Chief of the East India Station during the first world war. Born in the Victorian era, Madeleine, in her childhood and youth, was surrounded by all the regal splendour of a bureaucratic society. She was, however, utterly disinterested in such a life. This is revealed in the first few pages of the book. Since childhood, she was attracted to the beauties of Nature. Her inborn nature drew her to the fields, the farm-house, birds, and animals, while she had a marked disinclination towards machinery.

Madeleine was introduced to Mahatma Gandhi through Romain Rolland's biography of him. Beethoven's music had already created a deep stir in her heart, and that took her to the great French savant. It must have needed immense courage for a British admiral's daughter to leave her home and country and join the arch revolutionary of the British Empire of those days. Since then (1925), till the passing away of 'Bapu'—as she refers to him

affectionately throughout the book—she was one of those who were immediately and closely connected with Gandhiji. The moment she landed on Indian soil, or even earlier, she adjusted herself to the rigorous life that awaited her in her new calling. On the very second day of her arrival at the Sabarmati Ashram, one of the works allotted to her was scavenging. During her long association with Gandhiji in his *satyāgrahas*, she had to suffer imprisonment twice at the hands of the British Government.

But, though caught inextricably in the whirlpool of India's freedom struggle, her heart was searching for something deeper. Gandhiji, who had considered her as his own daughter, had quite understood this yearning in the inner recesses of her heart. Therefore, after Gandhiji's passing away, Mira Behn tried various experiments. First, she decided to devote herself to village reconstruction work on the lines indicated by 'Bapu'. Thus was Pashulok, a large-sized cattle farm near Rishikesh, started to 'develop an area or areas where men and animals combine with Nature in the formation of a decentralized society demonstrative of Bapu's ideals for World Peace'. Soon she had to leave it in the hands of the government, faced as she was with numerous handicaps. She then tried to work out her ideas at Bhilangana, a place six thousand to seven thousand feet above sea level, in Tehri District in the Himalayas; and still later, in Kashmir (Gaobal). All these came to naught owing to various reasons, one of them being her inability to see eye to eye with the governments concerned, who partly financed these schemes.

Her disappointments in these ventures and a sudden desire to scale the heights of the Spirit through the music of Beethoven took her to the Himalayas to live a solitary life, without much of activity. From her Preface to the book, it is clear that, during 1960 or earlier, she had to leave this place, too, and proceed to the forests of Baden, near Vienna, to pursue her still undefined goal. She considers this period as the third and last chapter of her life, a synthesis between the first two; and 'not a finishing, but a preparation' to 'live, absorb, and learn'. Indeed, the ship of life has to anchor at some port at last!

Mira Behn's autobiography sheds light on many important events in Gandhiji's life and portrays them vividly with intimate knowledge. Truly, it is a notable addition to the growing Gandhian literature, and we have no doubt that it will be read with interest and profit everywhere.

S. S.

# NEWS AND REPORTS

## MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

REPORT FROM JANUARY 1960 TO MARCH 1961

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

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

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

The total number of patients treated, during the fifteen months, in the indoor department was 490, of which 372 were cured and discharged, 79 were relieved, 14 were discharged otherwise or left, 9 died, and 16 remained under treatment at the close of the above period. In the outdoor department, the total number of patients treated was 14,734, of which 11,002 were new and 3,732 repeated cases.

During the period under review, 1,336½ lb. of powdered milk, donated by the Indian Red Cross Society, was distributed among 24,909 persons.

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

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

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

SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

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

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA MORABADI, RANCHI

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 1961

This centre, started in 1930, carries on philanthropic activities in Ranchi and its surrounding Adivasi villages. Its activities during the period under review were:

*Medical Work:* The homoeopathic dispensary, which also contains essential allopathic medicines, treated 15,526 patients. Diet was served to 2,418 needy patients.

*Charitable Work:* Powdered milk was distributed fortnightly to 1,620 poor people of the town and 14 adjoining villages. Besides, 100 new garments were distributed to poor and needy children.

*Educational Work:* The library contained 1,547 books in Hindi, Bengali, Sanskrit, and English. Books were issued to 512 readers. The reading room received 14 newspapers and 68 journals. Average daily attendance at the reading room was 25. Thirteen cultural meetings, 33 musical soirees, and occasional magic lantern shows were held at the library premises.

*Religious Work:* Besides daily worship etc. at the shrine, the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated, which were well attended by the public. During the period under review, 208 scriptural classes were held at the Mission premises, and 28 outside.

