



VOL. LXVI

NOVEMBER 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.



Editorial Office
MAYAVATI, ALMORA, HIMALAYAS

Publication Office
5 DEHI ENTALLY ROAD, CALCUTTA 14

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

NOVEMBER 1961

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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Vol. LXVI

NOVEMBER 1961

No. 11



उत्सिष्ट जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Belur Math, November 1, 1929

The worship of Mother Kālī had been performed with great *eclat* in the Math last night. The whole Math was agog with worship, reading of scriptures, music, etc. Many devotees and monks had come to join in the worship from Calcutta. The worship started at half past nine at night and ended at quarter to six in the morning. After the worship, the *Saptaśatī homa* also was performed in the same sacrificial fire. Mahapurushji was full of joy throughout the night; and quite often, he sent his attendants to the place of worship to get full reports of the progress made. When the worshippers started singing the praise of Kālī, he, too, joined his voice to theirs. When they sang, 'Who indeed cares for (all the places of pilgrimage like) Gayā, Gaṅgā, Prabhāsa, etc., if one's last breath is drawn in the name of Kālī' etc., he remarked, 'Aha! The Master sang this song quite often'. He himself sang the whole of it along with the chorus singers.

In the morning, he was seated in his own room. The *sannyāsins* and *brahmacārins* came there one by one to pay their respects to him.

He was still full of the joy of the previous night's worship. That joy expressed itself through every word and every act of his. A little later, the Divine Mother's *prasāda* was brought in for him; at this, he was intensely happy. But he remarked with some merriment: 'I can take nothing of this. The mere sight must be enough for me!' With this, he just touched each thing with the tip of his finger, and then, tasting it thus, he said: 'Fine, the offering has been well made.' When the attendant was removing the dish, he said: 'Mind you, keep something for the dogs, for nobody will remember them. They, too, expect something. It will give them great joy.' And he started calling his dog, 'Kelo, Kelo'.

When the talk turned to the last night's worship, he said: 'Aha! The whole Math is still full of the smell of the ghee offered in the sacrificial fire. The smell of a sacrifice sanctifies wherever it goes. How sweet a smell it is!' Saying thus, he drew in some long breaths.

In connection with the worship, a monk said: 'Maharaj, it was a great joy last night. We did not experience such joy for quite a long

time. The chorus songs also were excellent. They lasted till three o'clock in the morning.'

Mahapurushji: 'Why should it not be so? For it was the Divine Mother's worship, to be sure. She, out of Her grace, vouched happiness for all. She Herself was personally present to accept the worship. She is no ordinary mother; She is the Mother worshipped by the Master. The Master himself worshipped Mother Kālī. The Master called "Mother" that very Being which the Vedas declare as "Truth, Knowledge, Infinite Brahman", which the dualists call God, the Śāktas call Śakti, the Vaiṣṇavas call Viṣṇu, and the Śaivas call Śiva. As a result of the worship of that Mother Herself, the Master was blessed with all kinds of realization. He attained perfection in all the modes of divine communion—dualistic, qualified non-dualistic, and so on. The worship performed here has no parallel for it; here the worship is done by the monks and devotees through their devotion. Those who have wealth can perform their worship with great pomp by spending thousands of rupees; but such devotional worship as here, you will not find elsewhere. Here it was performed with heart and soul by pure-minded *sannyāsins* and *brahmacārins*. How intense was their sincerity and how deep their devotion! Mother is much pleased thereby. Most people worship Her with some ulterior motive. How many are there who worship Her without any motive, out of pure devotion alone? Here, none has any selfish desire, any ulterior motive; the worship here is merely for the pleasure of the Divine Mother. And along with that how much of *japa*, meditation, reading from scriptures, and singing have been accomplished, while the pure-hearted *sannyāsins* and *brahmacārins* themselves made all the arrangements for the worship! You cannot find such a thing anywhere else, my son. Such perfect and *sāttvika* worship is rare in this world.'

It was now about ten o'clock in the morning. A woman devotee came; she was an initiated disciple of Mahapurushji. She bowed down at his feet and enquired about his health. In answer, he said: 'No, my daughter, my health

is not good; in fact, it is very bad. It is becoming worse with the passage of time; for, after all, the body has its own law to follow, and this body has grown pretty old. Now it will gradually get destroyed.'

With tearful eyes, the devotee said: 'Father, to whom shall we go if you leave us? Where else shall we go to unburden the sorrows of our hearts?'

Mahapurushji: 'Why, my child? There is the Master, to be sure. He is residing in your very heart. He is your inmost Self, as also the inmost Self of all. Take refuge in him, pray to him. He will fill your heart with peace; he will remove all your wants. The body has to die one day or another; not a single body is immortal. It is sure as anything that this body made of the different elements will again get merged in them. Hence take refuge in the Lord who is the eternal Truth, the everlasting, unchanging, conscious Self of every being. Hold on to Him. Then you will have no fear in this shoreless sea of this world; you will easily cross it.'

The devotee: 'Father, you are my *guru*; you have been kind to me. We are assailed with various kinds of doubt, questions, and despondency. To whom can we go to get these removed? Here, while I am at your feet, I feel so much peace in my heart, so much joy. But when I think what will be my lot when you leave us, my heart begins to cry helplessly.'

Mahapurushji: 'Look here, my daughter, I have told you all that had to be told. God is the only *guru*; He is the teacher of the whole world. It was God Himself in His fullness that incarnated in a human body as Sri Ramakrishna for saving His own creatures. He brought us along with him. He lived in a human body for fifty years, bestowed his grace on innumerable persons in several ways, and left an uncommon ideal life behind for all to follow. The quintessence of the instruction imparted by him through his life, or the only thing he revealed in his whole life, is that the world is false and ephemeral, and that God alone is true and eternal. Now he is doing good to the

world through a fine body and in an invisible way. He reveals himself even today to those devotees who call on him earnestly, and he blesses them in a thousand ways. It is he who has kept us in these gross bodies. When these bodies die, we, too, shall get united with God through fine bodies, and shall live in union. We had to take the responsibility here and hereafter of all those whom we accepted as our own. If the devotees pray with pure hearts and earnestness, they will get our visions as well—in a more clear and vivid way than you see today. So, my daughter, from now on, try to have this vision inside. How long, after all, can these external meetings last?"

The devotee: 'Bless me accordingly, father, that I may see you inside and outside everywhere.'

Mahapurushji: 'That you will do; if you pray earnestly and with tears in your eyes, you will get such a vision. But you cannot have this unless there is the deepest earnestness.'

The devotee: 'Father, I have a question to ask. The scriptures declare that one cannot realize God unless one observes strict *brahmacharya*. The mind does not become pure unless there is *brahmacharya*. Now, please tell me how I can observe this. Should I be very strict about food and such other things?'

Mahapurushji: 'No, no, you need not be very strict about these matters. Only use your discrimination a little more when following the usual routine. You may well avoid those things that excite the nerves too much. Food is not meant for the mere gratification of the sense of taste; it is meant for the maintenance of the body. And the maintenance of the body is meant for God-realization. It is better to avoid those kinds of food that create mental disturbance and prevent the mind from concentrating on God. *Brahmacharya* does not mean the mere control of food. The real *brahmacharya* is the control of all the sense-organs. Unless one can do that, the realization of divine bliss is a far cry. Is it possible to get the bliss of Brahman unless one can forsake the pleasures of this

ignoble body? You are in the householder's stage of life. The Master has made the path of God-realization easy for the householders. He used to say that, after the birth of two or three children, a virtuous couple should live like brother and sister; they should forget their physical relationship, and talk about God, as though they were both servants of God. Life is not meant for the pleasure of the body. Realization of God is the goal of life. Now that you have attained this rare human birth, do not allow your life to be spent in vain. Realize the nature of the Self. The Master is your inmost Self; try to realize him. He is not just a man three and a half cubits in length; he is God Himself; he is the very Self of all creatures. Once you can realize him, your worldly bondage will be cut asunder for ever; you will not have to undergo the round of birth and death anymore. The *Gītā* says: "That is My supreme abode, going whither they return not." Realize that supreme Being; and then you will be free from this delusion of birth and death, my child. Then only you will attain the highest state. It is only by realizing Him that one gets rid of all passions and desires, attains fullness, and becomes the Self Itself. "Having obtained which, a man regards no other acquisition as superior to that."'

The devotee: 'How can one realize God?'

Mahapurushji: 'The Master used to say that God can be realized when all the three types of longing become united in one—the longing of a chaste wife for her husband, the affection of the mother for her child, and the attachment of a miser to his wealth. If one can combine all these three kinds of longing into one and direct it to God, then God can be realized. Call on Him, repeat His name, meditate on Him, and pray to Him with the sincerest earnestness. Say, "Lord, kindly reveal yourself to me, reveal yourself to me", and weep, weep, and weep. Then only He will be moved, and He will grant you His vision. For He is very mindful of those who take refuge in Him. He never forsakes one to whom He has once granted refuge.'

OUR MOTHERS

Swami Vivekananda declared: 'My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books, and in the possession of a few only, hidden, as it were, in monasteries and in forests—to bring them out, to bring the knowledge out of them, not only from the hands where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language in which it is preserved, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit words. In one word, I want to make them popular' (*Complete Works*, Vol. III. Seventh Edn., p. 290). He was as good as his promise. He did make Vedānta popular. But it would have been a very small gain if Swami Vivekananda had succeeded merely in the field of propagation of spiritual ideas. For what India needed was a leader who could give a practical shape to these for the work-a-day world. The Swami knew this, and he said: 'As I have told you, theory is very good indeed, but how are we to carry it into practice? ... The Vedānta, therefore, as a religion, must be intensely practical. We must be able to carry it out in every part of our lives. And not only this, the fictitious differentiation between religion and the life of the world must vanish, for the Vedānta teaches oneness—one life throughout. The ideals of religion must cover the whole field of life; they must enter into all our thoughts, and more and more into practice' (*ibid.*, Vol. II. Eighth Edn., p. 289). In a sense, Swami Vivekananda was the apostle of 'Practical Vedānta'. His contribution in this field is immense, and can be studied under different heads. The topic we choose this month is the relationship between the sexes, as a Vedāntin conceives it.

From the highest standpoint, there can be no difference between men and women; for there is no such distinction in the Self. 'It is very difficult to understand why in this country (India) so much difference is made between men and women, whereas the Vedānta declares that one and the same conscious Self

is present in all beings' (*ibid.*, Vol. VII. Fifth Edn., p. 214). 'In the highest reality of the Parabrahman, there is no distinction of sex' (*ibid.*, Vol. VII. p. 219). The comparatively lower position assigned to the women of his age pained the Swami very much, and he was never tired of charging his disciples and admirers with the task of uplifting women. 'Our Master, at any rate,' writes Sister Nivedita, 'regarded the Order to which he belonged as one whose lot was cast for all time with the cause of woman and the people. This was the cry that rose to his lips instinctively, when he dictated to the phonograph in America the message that he would send to the Raja of Khetri. It was the one thought, too, with which he would turn to the disciple at his side, whenever he felt himself nearer than usual to death, in a foreign country, alone. "Never forget!" he would say, "the word is: Woman and the People!"' (*The Master as I Saw Him*, Fourth Edn., p. 343).

If Swami Vivekananda was mortified at the backwardness of the women of his days, he was equally convinced of their capacity to raise themselves up; for behind them, they had the stimulating spiritual ideals embedded in the Indian literature and made real in the hoary customs and traditions of the race, as also the inspiring examples of their sisters in the past. The names of Sītā, Sāvitrī, Damayantī, Gārgī, Maitreyī, Līlāvati, Mīrā Bāī, Ahalyā Bāī, and others were household words and ever on the Swami's lips; and he dreamt of the days when India would again produce them in thousands. The question was: What relative part would be played by men in this task of progress, and what by women? A votary of freedom that Swami Vivekananda was, he had absolutely no hesitation in upholding the right of women to order their own affairs, though the help of non-interfering men from outside would be quite welcome. This followed naturally from his belief in the Vedāntic doctrine of the sameness of the

Self everywhere. Socially speaking, it is disastrous to deny Brahman in our womanhood. A bird cannot fly with only one wing; it must have two. Men and women must strive equally if society is to progress. So the Swami's considered opinion was: 'Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them. And our Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world' (*Complete Works*, Vol. V. Seventh Edn., pp. 229-30).

The first thing that women needed was education on national lines—an education that would open their eyes to the secrets of soul, mind, and nature, and inspire them with the glories, achievements, and ideals of India. Swami Vivekananda was never tired of emphasizing his belief in education as the panacea of all the present evils; it also held the promise of future progress.

And religion must be at the back of everything. An education divorced from spirituality had no attraction for him, nay, it exerted a denationalizing and degrading influence. To keep this prime need of spirituality in the forefront in all endeavours for the uplift of our women, he conceived of women's Maths (or nunneries) and the institutions of *sannyāsa* and *brahmacharya* for them. These nunneries and convents would also be centres of learning, and the nuns and *brahmacāriṇīs* would be teachers as well. At the same time, he was aware of the limitations of his time, so much so that, in order to set the ball rolling, he had to bring Sister Nivedita from the West to organize women's education. He also initiated her into *brahmacharya* to set an example to others. But in this field, as in others, he was very careful not to dictate to women. He only drew the bare outlines and inspired Nivedita to become an Indian woman through and through, and then he left her free to develop her educational institution in her own way. In his proposed nunnery also, no interference from men was to be tolerated. 'Men will have no concern with this Math', declared the Swami, though he qualified his statement by adding, 'The elderly *sādhus* of the

(men's) Math will manage the affairs of this (women's) Math from a distance' (*ibid.*, Vol. VII. p. 217). This compromise became necessary in those days, because the Swami could not get suitable women for the purpose. That was in 1901. But the point to be noted is that, even though the circumstances forced this prudential consideration on him, he was never hesitant about the ideal he aimed at. Even as early as January 27, 1900, he said: 'But the same work (i.e. missionary work of preaching and social service) I want to do on parallel lines for women. And my principle is: each one helps himself. My help is from a distance. . . . All the mischief to women has come because men undertook to shape the destiny of women. And I do not want to start with any initial mistake. . . . So, if I made this mistake of employing men to work out this women's part of the work, why, women will never get rid of that—it will have become a custom' (*ibid.*, Vol. VIII. Second Edn., p. 91).

One can very well understand the Swami's uncompromising attitude in this matter, when one remembers that this convent occupied a pivotal position in his scheme of the uplift of women on a spiritual basis. An out-and-out Vedāntin that he was, he could not sacrifice his belief in freedom and equality for any promise of immediate gain. He could not afford to be an opportunist, preaching one thing, and doing the very reverse of it.

II

The role of men, then, is to help from a distance in the way that the women themselves want it without jeopardizing their freedom, which is essential to any healthy growth. Man is not to dictate, nor is he to rob them of their initiative by mistaking their weak dependence on others as a free choice for inviting extraneous help for strengthening their own power of management. This combination of full trust in the capacity of woman with the highest honour for her personality manifests itself in a peculiar fashion on the Indian soil. Others have their own ways of looking at women and honouring

them—these often go by the single name of chivalry, centring mostly round physical and intellectual charms. But in India, it rises to the plane of worship, bowing to their spiritual worth. The woman in India becomes 'the mother', rather than a wife, a friend, or anything else.

That Swami Vivekananda was not mistaken in his appraisal of the Indian attitude was amply demonstrated by the elevated position that women were granted in all the fields of life in free India, without so much as moving a little finger on the women's part, whereas the suffragette movement and other feminist struggles of like nature in the West have not given to women all those concessions which have been spontaneously given to our women here. Here they become ministers, ambassadors, governors, managers, *entrepreneurs*, and what not, without anybody raising any objection. This is just because the shackles of centuries of foreign rule have fallen off, and the Indian genius has reasserted itself in its pristine adoration of the goddess in all women.

Let us consider this worship of the mother in women a little more elaborately. Vedānta teaches the potential sameness of all. But so long as we are on the empirical plane, we have to worship Brahman in Its cosmic manifestation, so as to reach gradually to that higher consciousness of unity. Worship means an active aspiration for a higher ideal coupled with a rejection of all that is low, vulgar, and degrading. In relation to women, this attitude of spiritual aspiration naturally takes the shape of the worship of all that is best in women. The most perfect manifestation of a woman's life lies in her motherhood—self-forgetting and self-negating love that knows no limitation, the power of protection that never shrinks back from any demand for self-sacrifice, the power of providing physical nourishment, and moral and spiritual sustenance that is in tune with Infinity Itself. And with all these go beauty, sweetness, modesty, faithfulness, and all the other divine virtues that India has adorned her goddesses with.

India has always adored this motherhood. The monk stands before the cottage with a begging bowl in his hand and the prayer for food in his mouth: 'Mother, please give me alms.' The stranger accosts even the smallest girl with 'Mother'. In the family, the mother's position is the highest; the wife, howsoever elderly she may be, has to bow before the mother's will. Motherhood gives the stamp of sanctity and approval for women's leadership in social and domestic affairs. Divinity Itself is recognized as the Mother in India. And little girls are formally worshipped as goddesses, as part of more elaborate ceremonies.

The ideal was always there. But it is only in recent years that it has been very forcefully brought to the forefront by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. We know Sītā, Sāvitrī, Damayantī, and others for their chastity, fidelity, spirituality, and many other ennobling feminine qualities. But seldom were they regarded as the veritable manifestations of motherhood itself. Kausalyā and Yaśodā were there, to be sure, but they were adored as the mothers of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, rather than of all beings. For the thoroughgoing conception of each woman as a veritable manifestation of the Divine Mother, and adopting this truth as an active principle for the reorientation of society in the present age, the credit goes mainly to Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Sri Ramakrishna worshipped even his own wife as the Divine Mother Herself, and all women, irrespective of how society considered them, were mothers to him. That, too, was the relationship that he would like to see established among others as well. When Swami Turiyananda, then Hari in his early twenties, said with some bravado that he hated women, and could not even bear their mere presence, Sri Ramakrishna rebuked him and corrected him by saying: 'The fool that you are! Why should you hate women, the veritable images of the Divine Mother? Honour them, worship them mentally, and then only will your mind be purified.' Even women of ill fame aroused that feeling in Sri Ramakrishna's mind, and he made no secret of this.

This was the very reverse of the traditional outlook of a monk, as recorded in literature. There women are denounced as the doors to hell. Sri Ramakrishna had the prophetic vision to discover that, though this condemnation might serve at times to guard against any waning of the monastic spirit, it could not serve as a lever for the uplift of society as a whole. That required a more positive approach.

Swami Vivekananda inherited this from his Master and preached it broadcast as a leaven for the uplift of the future society in India as well as outside. In his own life, he demonstrated it almost daily in the West. When, after his thundering victory at the Parliament of Religions, many women rushed to Swami Vivekananda to be spiritually elevated by a mere touch of his garment, and showed honour to him in several ways, an old lady stood looking at the scene and thinking in her mind, 'My lad, if you can resist that onslaught, you are indeed a God!' History shows how he did withstand that. A few days later, when his hostess Mrs. Lyons thought it her duty to warn this very popular and inexperienced young man from the East about the lure of the West, Swami Vivekananda assured her by telling that she need have no anxiety on that score, as he had been used to being fanned all night by damsels in Rajas' palaces in India. And who does not know of his reaction to the song of the nautch girl at Khetri? He also worshipped the Muslim boatman's little daughter in Kashmir as Umā herself. To his disciples, he declared so often that, while in the West, he felt that the Divine Mother Herself was ever leading him by the hand. It is not strange, therefore, that Swami Vivekananda, the prophet of the Motherhood of God and the divinity of all women, preached to this present age this old but untried principle as the basic fact on which the relationship between the sexes should be established for the betterment of human society as a whole. In it lies the promise of the future.

III

Swami Vivekananda spoke for both the East

and the West. He knew that each had something to contribute to the development of the other. If the West could profit by taking note of the Eastern ideal of womanhood, centring round motherhood, the East also could profit by adopting something of the freedom in social activities, partnership in the wider fields of life, wide culture, and other active virtues that the Western women command. The true spiritual emancipation for the Indian woman presupposed, according to his philosophy, her freedom from absolute bondage to femininity. He recognized no sex in truth. 'He would never tolerate', writes Sister Nivedita, 'any scheme of life and polity that tended to bind tighter on mind and soul the fetters of the body. The greater the individual, the more would she transcend the limitations of femininity in mind and character; and the more was such transcendence to be expected and admired' (*The Master as I Saw Him*, p. 350).

But if he were ever called upon to choose either of the two, needless to say that he would side with his India of olden days. 'He could not foresee a Hindu woman of the future entirely without the old power of meditation. Modern science, women must learn; but not at the cost of the ancient spirituality' (*ibid.*, p. 347). 'The frivolous, the luxurious, and the de-nationalized, however splendid in appearance, was to his thinking not educated, but rather degraded. A modernized Indian woman, on the other hand, in whom he saw the old-time intensity of trustful and devoted companionship to the husband, with the old-time loyalty to the wedded kindred, was still to him the ideal Hindu wife' (*ibid.*, p. 346).

It was very characteristic of him that he saw the best side of everything anywhere, rather than its darker aspects. If he adored Indian womanhood, so did he admire the women of the West: 'I have never seen women elsewhere as cultured and educated as they are here (in America). . . . I have seen thousands of women here whose hearts are as pure and stainless as snow. Oh, how free they are! . . . Here men treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence

they are so prosperous, so learned, so free, and so energetic. But why is it that we are slavish, miserable, and dead? The answer is obvious. ... And how pure and chaste are they here!' (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, 1960, pp. 71-72).

The contrast convinced him that the future of humanity lay in the wise combination of both the ideals by the orientals as well as the occidentals. He admired some aspects of the Western society; still he made no secret of it that the West suffered from a lack of appreciation of the true worth of the mother, as the East suffered from a lack of encouragement to its womanhood to look beyond the immediate task of bringing up the children and being busy with the household chores.

Some of the drawbacks of Indian society drew fire from him. He could never tolerate child-marriage, curbing the liberty of women by men, and such other evils that hampered the growth of the India of his days. But the refrain of all his talks was that men should not interfere in women's affairs further than providing the right type of education based on spirituality and guided in accordance with the genius of our people. 'With such an education,

women will solve their own problems. They have all the time been trained in helplessness, servile dependence on others; and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the slightest approach of a mishap or danger. ... In the present day, it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence. See how grand was the Queen of Jhansi!' (*Complete Works*, Vol. V. p. 342).

In fact, India need not be too eager to borrow from the West; neither need the West be so to have her ideal from the East. For India also had her active type of women, as the West had hers of the meditative type. But circumstances have promoted and brought to the forefront a particular type in a particular clime, rather than the other. Let us compare notes and learn to improve each region according to its own genius. The comparison will make each region conscious of a forgotten or neglected side of its own life, and thus encourage it to make a fresh effort to resuscitate the dormant values. In all this, however, let us trust our women and believe that freedom based on true culture and education will not lead them astray, rather it will help them manifest the divinity latent in them.



THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIAN ART—1

BY SRI P. SAMA RAO

As in a cloth that has been starched the starch appears to be one with it, through mistake, similarly, the oneness of *Iśvara* (endowed with *māyā*) and Brahman or their mutual attribution of one another is due to illusion.¹

I

All art is an involuntary contemplation of the Divine in His own delectable aspect of *mādhurya*; and especially so is Indian art, where there has been no conspicuous divorce-ment between the ways of the Lord and those of His created beings that seek to emulate Him

in a perfection both of thought and expression. If the general spiritual activity that strives to attain the Lord after transcending the triple *guṇas*² and all duality is the genus, the artistic activity which patterns the human relation unto Him in beautiful and tangible forms and shapes is its species. It is only through an all-absorbing

¹ Vidyāranya, *Pañcadaśī*, VI.193.

² *Sāttvika*, *rājasika*, and *tāmasika* qualities.

love unto Him—selfless and consecrated—which knows neither the outer nor the inner, that one achieves the Divine with the greatest ease.³ That God is the actual theme of all art is suggested by Śrī Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra* (I.1.20-21), when he points out that 'Brahman is the real theme of secular as well as spiritual songs'. For God manifests Himself in Nature and art in the form of beauty—in the object and in the subject, in Nature and in Spirit. Beauty is the shining of the 'Idea' through matter. Only the soul and what pertains to it is truly beautiful, and therefore the beauty of Nature is only the reflection of the natural (*svābhāvika*) beauty of the Spirit. The beautiful has only a spiritual content, and the spiritual must appear in sensuous form.⁴

Art is therefore a *yoga*, one-pointed meditation on the Godhead, through a process not so distinctly patent as latent, which merges in an Advaitic identification, as it were, the subject with the object, or the knower with the known and the knowledge.⁵ Beauty is the perception of the Infinite by and in the finite.⁶ But, for the perception of the truly beautiful, the artist's soul also should become beautiful with selflessness and genuine consecration;⁷ for it is not the artist who by his knowledge or skill produces the beautiful, but it is the idea of beauty in him that does it, and he is but an agent of the Beautiful.⁸ Thus the highest art is hieratic in essence, in all the three stages of conception, execution, and achievement. Genuine art is concerned with the becoming, rather than the being of oneself, and is therefore kinetic; and in its perfection, Truth (Reality) is made perceptible. In Christian phraseology, it is a 'declaration of Resurrection'—true and simple—of the individual self to the universal Self through sensuous forms and sounds.

The highest art is an expression of the supreme Truth, the Noumenon, standing behind the fleeting phenomena of the universe. The artist, like the Lord, the Leveller, is the unifier of all things, and the compromiser of all seeming contradictions. With his powers of seeing through things, he knows what is true and what is false. The only true thing is that which is immutable. He is a seer and a prophet,⁹ and an unacknowledged legislator of the world.¹⁰ He is the *śilpin* and the song-bird of the universe, who with his rhythmic forms and notes of melody directs order into disorder. He is a painter who, while painting himself in on the canvas, paints all other creation as well in a ritual of adoration of the Godhead for the well-being of all (*loka-saṅgraha*). He is a divine harp, on which the fingers of his *iṣṭadevatā* play to evolve a melody for the solace and betterment of all His creation.

The mind of man is perhaps the greatest of God's creation, for without it there is no apprehension at all. It is the link between the subject and the object. It joins the earth with heavens and what is beyond them. With its ethereality, it blends them all into a sublimity that is characteristic of only the Absolute. This amounts clearly to an experience of the oneness of things, participating, however, in the joys of aspiration and becoming. This participation is the bed-rock of all aesthetic experience and expression; for

Where dwells enjoyment there is He,
With still a flying point of bliss remote,
A happiness in store, afar, a sphere
Of distant glory still in view.¹¹

God is an immortal embodiment of bliss,¹² out of which he creates and maintains the worlds.¹³ But He, like Kālī in the cloud of her own tresses, often conceals Himself behind His creation. It is only through a participation in such a bliss that the human being also can create

³ Śaṅkara, *Śataślokī*, 69.

⁴ Hegel.

⁵ Schelling; *Agni Purāṇa*; *Kiñcit Vistāra Sādhanā*; *Sukranītisāra*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Devo bhūtvā devaṃ yajet.*

⁸ See footnotes 5 and 6.

⁹ *Kavirmanīṣī*; *Agni Purāṇa*, CCCIX. 10.

¹⁰ Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*.

¹¹ Robert Browning.

¹² *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II. 7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, III. 6.

his own things of 'beauty—a joy for ever',¹⁴ and thereby come face to face with the Lord. But the aesthetic experience of the Godhead is as varied as one's own *saṁskāra*. To put it the other way: 'When the canvas is unrolled, the picture becomes visible. Similar is the universe which remains latent in the Lord. He makes manifest in accordance with the works of the various beings in their previous lives.'¹⁵ This explains the difference in the quality of art-products, for the aesthetic experience as well as its concretization (expression) is directly proportional to the artist's *adhikāra* (qualification) to render it. Since art is a glamorous expression of Truth, which is indivisible, in adequate terms, it does not allow gradation. There can therefore be a masterpiece only in relative terms, but not in the absolute sense. A thing can be a piece of art or none.

The attainment of the ideal, or the 'Idea' as Hegel would have it, in luscious form or phrase or melody or conduct is directly dependent upon the unquestionable means employed to achieve it. The object of logical knowledge is Truth; the object of aesthetic knowledge is Beauty. Beauty is the Perfect (the Absolute) recognized through the senses—physical and intuitional; Truth is the Perfect perceived through reason; Goodness is the Perfect reached (in conduct) by moral will.¹⁶ These may be equated roughly to the *bhakti*-, *jñāna*-, and *karma-mārgas* of spiritual endeavour. But these triple aspects of the Godhead—Truth, Beauty, and Goodness—mean one and the same, ultimately. They all lead to one and the same goal, that of the realization of the Self.

Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty,
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.¹⁷

'The law and aim of all art is beauty', but not that beauty which is separated from and independent of goodness, as Wincklemann would put it. In order that the Idea may shine

through matter, and thereby attain to its essential beauty, there ought to be beauty of form, beauty of pose, and beauty of expression, all cohering in one another as a condition precedent. The Indian ideal of 'Sāntam, Śivam, Sundaram' is therefore not only the bed-rock of all aesthetic endeavour, but also a spring-board for a dive into the Infinite.

This primal or primordial Idea, at once the basis of all thought and concept, of every form and note, is beyond description. It is the Word. It is a nebulous embodiment—if we could say so in our intellectuality—of every excellence and perfection in all realms of perception.¹⁸ Even the subtlest logic and intuition could only touch the hem of its immensity. The perfect artist could, however, get glimpses of its all beautiful essence through the chinks of his own spirituality. It is the cosmic consciousness of the divinity in him alone that can apprehend its immutable and transcendent beauty or *mādhurya*. To be more exact, the artist's creation, if perfect, is a transliteration, rather pure and simple, of the Ineffable in a script and language of his own. His technique is not a superimposition over his subject, but a coalescence with it.

Self-realization consists of divinization and the attainment of the Godhead in the Dvaitic manner, and of a non-cognizable merger into Him, the Absolute, in an Advaitic way. The Absolute, which is the only Real, is essentially beautiful and blissful.¹⁹ For aesthetic 'Vedānta affirms the nature of the Sat as the Sundara, and defines the good of life as communing with Beauty and enjoying its Bliss'.²⁰ All true art is therefore a celebration of Lord's beauty in manifold ways, through word, form, deed, melody, etc.

The Śilpa-śāstras are contained, it is said, in the *Sthāpatya-Veda*. The Śāstras describe a *śilpin*²¹ as one who should have understood the *Atharva-Veda*, the thirty-two Śilpa-śāstras, and

¹⁴ John Keats, *Endymion*; *Pañcadaśī*, VI. 198.

¹⁵ *Pañcadaśī*, VI. 183.

¹⁶ Baumgarten; Friedrich Schlegel.

¹⁷ John Keats, *Ode on the Grecian Urn*; also *Endymion*; also Pagano, *Goodness Is Inner Beauty*.

¹⁸ *Bhagavad-Gītā*, VII and X.

¹⁹ See footnotes 12 and 13.

²⁰ P. N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of the Beautiful*.

²¹ The human creator—*Kavirmaniṣī*.

the Vedic *mantras* by which the deities are invoked. He should be one who wears a sacred thread, a necklace of sacred beads (*rudrākṣa* or *tulasī*), and a ring of *kuśa* grass on his finger;²² delighting in the worship of God, faithful to his wife, avoiding strange women, piously acquiring a knowledge of various sciences²³—such a one is indeed a *śilpin*. The painter is further enjoined to be 'a good man, not a sluggard, not given to anger; holy, learned, self-controlled, devout, and charitable'. The Śāstras lay down rules of honesty for the craftsman, holding out that an honest and skilful builder will be reborn in noble families, and that the dishonest will fall into hell. The casting of hollow images was forbidden, as they would prove disastrous to the craftsman and his family, as well as to the donor and his family.²⁴ In the *Bṛhat Saṁhitā*, it is said that 'if the craftsman makes an image with a thin belly, there will be famine in the land; or, if his hand slips and injures the image, he will receive a hurt in a like manner'.

Art may be compared to a vast mosaic or tapestry we build or weave out of the infinite forms that arise out of our own *guṇas*.²⁵ Just as the elements combining in homogeneity cannot be discerned, so in the best mosaic or tapestry the margins of their component pieces merge imperceptibly into one another, like the coalescence of sound-notes in a great symphony. *Samarasa* or rhythm and a great tranquillity are therefore the qualities of the best work of art. A mind estranged from this *samarasa* cannot therefore create any masterpiece.

God is the greatest creator. The cosmogeny is a materialization of the subtlest into the gross. It can well be compared to the four stages in the painting of a picture before it is accomplished. In a painting, (1) the piece of pure white canvas is the basis; (2) it is stiffened with a coating of starch; (3) the outlines are drawn in black or red with a *lekhanī*; (4)

²² Symbolic of *dikṣā* and self-purification.

²³ Astrology, palmistry, physiognomy, Tantras, Vastuśāstra, etc.

²⁴ *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*; *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*; *Bṛhat Saṁhitā*; etc.

²⁵ *Pañcadaśī*, VI. 1-2.

then the forms so sketched are painted with appropriate colours. 1, 2, 3, and 4 are the conception, preparation, execution, and achievement respectively. In metaphysical terms, Brahman (Cit or pure Consciousness) in association with *māyā* (the spirit of illusion) becomes the internal ruler (*antaryāmin*), forms Himself the connecting link of all subtle bodies (*sūtrātman*), and attains to a cosmic body containing in Himself the aggregate of all gross bodies (*virāt*). Just as in the painting of an aerial perspective, important, middling, and unimportant objects are marked by their positions, so in the Paramātman, all animate things, from the four-faced Brahmā down to a blade of grass, and all inanimate objects are distinguished, as high, middling, and low tones are distinguished in music.²⁶

It is to the attainment of *samarasa* or poise that an artist should strive by way of preparation. Since creation is by God, its components are symbolic of divinity, and stand for the infinite qualities of the Godhead we often import into our infinite conceptions of Him. If the artist is godly and perfect with the knowledge of the sixty-four Śāstras, and lives always in the Divine in the manner described by Śaṅkara,²⁷ the crystallization of his thoughts of God cannot but be adequately symbolic of Him, too, and transfigure Him with perfection. In other words, the artist's mind must be cultivated and cleansed of all dross, so that all good and beneficial influences from outside and from inside, aesthetic or philosophical, may reflect themselves fully therein. The *sādhaka* must realize in thought the four 'infinite moods of friendliness, compassion, sympathy, and impartiality, the quadruple rhythms of the universe'. He must then contemplate on the emptiness or non-existence of all things, for 'by the fire of the idea of emptiness, it is said, these (things) are destroyed beyond recovery of the five elements which constitute individual consciousness'.²⁸ As Goethe puts it: 'He who

²⁶ *Ibid.*, VI. 1-3, 5.

²⁷ Śaṅkara, *Śataśloki*, 12; *Śivamānasapūjā*, 4.

²⁸ *Uttara-Gītā*, II. 5.

attains to the vision of Beauty is from himself set free.' Laurence Binyon explains the reason: 'We, too, should make ourselves empty that the great Soul of the universe may fill us with its breath.'

After creating a vacuum in himself, the *sādhaka* must invoke the desired divinity by the utterance of the appropriate *bīja-mantra* (forming the symphonic structure). Thereafter, the *dhyāna-mantra* relating to the deity to be portrayed has to be meditated upon, so that the divinity may form himself or herself clearly on the tablet of the *sādhaka's* mind, like a reflection, which he should copy in his own work.

This ritual shows in its essentials the psychological process of imagination, which Jung in his *Psychology of the Unconscious* has called 'concentration'. This concentration is the willed introversion of a creative mind, which, 'retreating before its own problem and inwardly collecting its forces, dips at least for a moment into the source of Life, in order there to wrest a little more strength from the mother for the completion of the work', and the result of this reunion is a 'fountain of youth and new fertility'. This means, in spiritual practice, the cultivation of a perfect void in the mind, a pristine blankness synonymous with mindlessness or selflessness, in order that God's lustrous glory immanent in creation might transfigure itself therein in imitable forms of manifold beauty. In other words, tranquillity (*samādhi*) must be attained by a cessation of all activity, that is, a transformation of the kinetic into the static equilibrium,²⁹ for the attainment of *ānanda* (bliss), which is the very essence of Brahman.

All sounds denoted by letters in their primeval forms (*bindus*) are immanent in the Lord. The primeval sound is divided by *bindus*. The sound that emanates from the *anāhata-cakra* gives birth to *dhvani*; *jyotis* is immanent in *dhvani*; *manas* (ethereal mind) is immanent in the *jyotis*; it is only when *manas* gets merged in the all-pervasive Absolute (Viṣṇu) that the ultimate goal is attained.³⁰ For He

alone is the Potent, the most Ancient, and the Eternal. Thus the suggestion of the eternal in either the graphic or the sound form is the supreme function of the artist; for it is bliss that is the font of all beauty, which alone can create beauty. So it is the beauty in the artist's soul alone that can project itself into forms of beauty, like the spider weaving out its fragile gossamer.

In a descent of the Absolute (qualitylessness) to godliness (qualityfulness), Īśvara represents excellence of every quality.³¹ Art is a representation of excellence in quality. As Hsieh Ho, the great Chinese artist (sixth century A.D.), puts it, the ideal in every great work of art is 'whether or not the work exhibits the fusion of the rhythm of the Spirit with the movement of living things'; this, when translated into philosophical language, only means whether or not the work reveals the Self (Ātman) within the form (*rūpa*). A modern critic, Holmes, amplifies the above test: a work of art should reveal 'the qualities of Unity, Vitality, Infinity, and Repose' (Satyam, Śāntam, Sundaram), or the rhythm or 'the economy of the Spirit'. The presence of this Spirit is Beauty; it is the content, this movement of the Spirit which is the universal subject-matter of art. Every thought, every dream, every sound, and every act has its own form and rhythm. It bears its own impress of the author when rendered into an artefact. In its sublimity and blissfulness, it is verily the most beautiful representation of a divine quality in an endeavour to merge itself in the Divine. Therefore, 'on the huge canvas of the Self, the self itself paints a picture of the manifold worlds, and the supreme Self seeing but Itself enjoys immense delight'.³² The artist, in thus commemorating His qualities—great, small, and terrible—in his own creations with a vision—steady, calm, and equable—does, in fact, commemorate his own yogic being. For he can comprehend the Infinite 'in a drop of woman's tears', and in the shuffling crawl of the tiniest worm. His works of art therefore

²⁹ *Ibid.*, I.15; also I.32.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, I. 40-42.

³¹ *Bhagavad-Gītā*, X and VII. 8-13.

³² Śaṅkara, *Svātmanirūpaṇa*, 95.

leave in their trail sweet vestiges of light, which enure as real beacons for the storm-tossed (*samsārins*), desperately striving to reach their haven. Thus he also lays down the perfect way for *mumukṣus*.

True art has its springs in the 'imitation' of God's manifestation in Nature, through instinct and intuition. The artist, in such an 'imitation', does not merely copy out the physical reality before him, but goes into the very heart of his subject and interprets his own subjective reaction to its essence. Art is therefore an interpretation of the artist's soul at an aesthetic point of time, and its unexpressed or undesigned aim is the education not only of the mind and the heart, but of the whole man.³³ In a work of art, the question 'What' interests men far more than the 'How'; and 'beauty can never learn to understand itself';³⁴ and much less its votary, unless he has grown into beauty itself, and is one with it. A well-known authority therefore lays down this injunction on the artist: 'Even a mis-shapen image of God is to be preferred to an image of a man, however charming.'³⁵ If the principle of God's creation cannot be fully explained, the human creativeness can be; that is because the best worship of the Divine is through the emulation of the Divine. In the highest art, the mundane pleasure is sublimed into the religious *ānanda* that is endless and unconscious of itself. 'It is not a passion, but an ecstasy, a going out of ourselves and being in the Spirit',³⁶ a condition insusceptible of analysis in terms of pleasure or pain that can be felt by sensitive bodies or souls.³⁷ The end of all art is to spiritualize man and draw him nearest to the Source of creation (*sālokya*, *sāmīpya*, and *sārūpya*). Plato reasons it out thus: 'We are endowed by the gods with vision and hearing, and harmony was given by the Muses to him that can use them intellectually, not as an aid to irrational pleasure as is nowa-

days supposed, but to assist the soul's interior revolution, to restore it to order and concord with itself. And because of the want of measure and lack of graces in most of us, rhythm was given us by the same gods for the same ends,³⁸ ... and while the passion evoked by a composition of sounds furnishes a pleasure of the senses to the unintelligent, it (composition) bestows on the intelligent that heartsease that is induced by the imitation of the divine harmony produced in mortal motions.'³⁹ The heartsease of Plato is the same as the 'intellectual beatitude' which our *Alaṅkāra-śāstras* (*Sāhityadarpaṇa*, *Dhvanyāloka*, etc.) declare as consisting in the *rasāsvādāna* (tasting of the flavour) from a work of art, a direct experience 'congeneric with the tasting of God'. For He alone is the Rasa (Flavour, Beauty). The higher the artist ascends the ladder of his *sādhanā*, the subtler his being becomes, till finally, having attained to his subtlest after a *katharsis* (purging of all passions and selfhood), he is absorbed into the undecipherable subtlety of the Absolute, which is all-pervasive, and which 'is', yet 'is not'.⁴⁰ This *katharsis* is strictly an effacement of all dirt and foreign matter encrusting and defiling the perfect transparence of the indeterminate mind. It is a sacrificial purgation and purification consisting in a separation of the soul from the body. In other words, 'it is a kind of dying to which the philosopher's life is dedicated'. The *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* voices this in a charming way: 'Whoever understands the manifest and the unmanifest as both in One, and going together, he, by overcoming death through the manifest, attains immortality through the unmanifest.'

An Indian artist has no predilections whatsoever. He loves light as much as darkness and deems them equally necessary in his picturization of an enduring quality. He is therefore a solver of contradictions in his own formful way. His sole aim, in the words of Hokusai, is 'to grasp the mystery of things, unravel the tangled

³³ Fichte; William Morris; Schelling.

³⁴ Goethe, *Maxims*.

³⁵ Śukrācārya.

³⁶ A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Figures of Speech and Figures of Thought*.

³⁷ *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, III. 2-3.

³⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, 47, D.E.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 47, 80-B, 90-D.

⁴⁰ *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*.

web of things', and discover Truth. He is another Pūṣan, who is sought to lift the golden bowl from over the face of Truth, so that we may behold it in all its native purity.⁴¹ The Spirit alone mattered to the Indian artist, and not the physicality. The Western art, fundamentally based upon the Hellenic culture, is not concerned with the expression of the innate Spirit. It is concerned chiefly with the physical existence, and deems that only beautiful which pleases the physical senses. In the words of Ramaswami Sastri: 'The Greek type of culture is the finest flower of the human aspect of the divine, and the Indian type of culture is the finest flower of the divine aspect of the human.' Creation is therefore 'not a making of something out of nothing, or of one thing out of another, but a self-projection of Brahman into the conditions of space and time. Creation is not a making, but a becoming in terms and forms of conscious existence'.⁴²

II

Music, dance, poetry, painting, sculpture, and architecture are the keystones of art. In a way, they relate to the five aspects of Sadāśiva, the ever auspicious. Architecture is the *ensemble* of the rest. Melody in the form of rhythm is the essential link and the common spring of them all. Music and poetry are all-dimensional like space, while sculpture is three-dimensional, and painting two-dimensional. As Goethe puts it: 'Word and picture are correlatives which are constantly verging upon each other, as we see from figures of speech and similes. And so, at all times, that which was said or sung inwardly to the ear had likewise to be presented to the eye.'⁴³ Yet, there is poetry without figure of speech, which is itself a single figure of speech, the great silence of the Absolute, incarnating itself as Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrti and imparting wisdom to the universe.

Of these arts, music and poetry are perhaps

the most abstract, but the most emotive: most abstract in that the greatest amount of imagination and intuition has to be expended to derive their message. These touch the heart more directly than either sculpture or painting, where we have to pierce through their material media—line, shape, form, colour, etc.—for knowing that which is represented. Poetry sung to tune and time-measure is music. Indian music owes its origin to primeval Sound (Nāda) or Śabda Brahman, denoted by *Om*. This *Omkāra* is the parent of the Vedas, *svaras*, and every other form of creation in the three worlds.⁴⁴ It is made up of three sounds *a*, *u*, and *ma*, which are symbolic of the trinity—Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Śiva respectively (also *sāttvika*, *rājasika*, and *tāmasika guṇas* respectively).⁴⁵ According to the Vedas, 'All fine arts are for the culture of the soul', for the *bhāva* and the *rasa* which have to be depicted in them are verily of the essence of God Himself.

Music is the most popular of the arts, because it is most emotive. While the Western type is based on harmony, the oriental and the Indian types are based on melody. Music is the best aid for self-realization through *bhakti-mārga* (path of devotion). Jayadeva, Keśava-dāsa, Rāmaprasāda, Kabīr, Tyāgarāja, Kṣetra-jña, Kanakadāsa, Purandaradāsa, the Dīkṣitars, Vidyāpati, etc. are a few of the *vāggeyakāras* who realized God through music. Bharata and his chief interpreter Śārṅgadeva give a very comprehensive definition about the composition of songs and their rendering by artistes. Śārṅgadeva defines the composer and the singer as *vāggeyakāra*, one who is clever in the joining together of only melodious and appropriate words (*nādamāya*) and sweetly singing them in consonance with *bhāva*. According to him, the *vāggeyakāra* must have a perfect knowledge of the science of melodious sounds; mere knowledge of grammar will not do. He must use words only in their normal import, as laid down in authoritative lexicons. He must be a linguist,

⁴¹ *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*, 14.

⁴² Sri Aurobindo, *Commentary on the Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*.

⁴³ Goethe, *Maxims*. Vedas, Upaniṣads, Mantras, Dhyānas, Bible, etc.

⁴⁴ *Dhyānabindu Upaniṣad*.

⁴⁵ *Ākāro Viṣṇurūpaṅca, Ukāro Brahma rūpakam, Makāro Bharga rūpaṅca, Sarvamoṅkāra rūpakam*.

and be fully aware of the various metres and their *bhāvas*, *sthāyi-bhāvas*, and *anubhāvas*. He must possess a clear knowledge of the diverse *alaṅkāras* (figures of speech), and use them aptly befitting his subject. He must be learned, too, in *Kalā-sāstra*, *Saṅgīta-sāstra*, and other branches of knowledge. He must be a master also of *nṛtya*, *gīta*, and *vādyā* (dance, song, and instrumental music), and his voice must be clear, mellifluous, sweet, and capable of rendering every nuance or grace in sound. He must know the hundred and eight *tālas* and the complexion of every *svara* (note). Śārṅgadeva also sums up the musician's character: the singer must be dispassionate and friendly, for anger makes his voice rough, and an inimical temperament disturbs his tranquillity. *Dveṣa* (enmity) reacts against him. He must be harmless and sweet tempered to one and all. He must be discriminative and be aware of the complexion of every *bhāva* and *rasa*. He must be able to sing in the three *sthāyis* (scales)—*mandāra*, *madhyama*, and *tāraka*—with the greatest ease. He must be a *gamaka-prauḍhi* (master of tremolo, capable of rolling the *svaras* with melodious grandeur in his throat). Śārṅgadeva classifies the *vāggeyakāras* into three grades: (a) *uttama* (best), who is proficient all round; (b) *madhyama* (middling), who can only compose, but is not proficient in linking up proper words; and (c) *adhama* (inferior), who is only clever in joining words, but deficient in musical notation.⁴⁶

In this connection, something has to be said about *alaṅkāra*. In common parlance, the word is taken to mean 'decoration'—*bhūṣaṇa* or ornamentation. This implies mostly a superimposition over the subject for the sake of effect and attraction. Beauty has its own charm, and needs no accentuation that way. Beauty is innate, and is not made beautiful. It has only to be expressed adequately. It needs no proclamation or confirmation. It is the very essence of the subject. It proclaims itself in its own nature and function. The external decoration

(*bhūṣaṇa*) should not therefore detract from its essence. In other words, the ornamentation through physical symbols, such as the *kaustubha*, *nāgābharāṇa*, *vaijayantīmālā*, *ruṇḍamālā*, *caṇḍrakalā*, *brahmakapāla*, *kalpalatā*, *nīpa*, *mandāra*, *trīśūla*, *khetaka*, *vajra*, *kumuda*, *paraśu*, *akṣamālā*, *ḍamaru*, *khadga*, *khaṭvāṅga*, etc., can only suggest the essential quality of the subject in concrete terms for a proper understanding of it. Otherwise, the ornamentation adds one more layer to the illusion already veiling the Truth. In music, *alaṅkāra* often takes the form of nuances (graces)—*gamakas*, *mūrchanas*, and *saṅgatis*—all consistent with the basic symphonic structures of the *rāga* or melody.

According to our ancients, each of the *saptasvaras*—*sa*, *ri*, *ga*, *ma*, *pa*, *dha*, *ni*—as well as each *rāga*, which is composed out of their combination in both the ascendant and descendant scales, has its own *rūpa* or psychic form in two manifestations: (a) the invisible, called the sound or symphonic form (*nādamaya-rūpa*), and (b) the visible, called the image form (*devatāmaya-rūpa*). Nārada lays down: 'The images of the melodies emanate from the supreme Deity (Brahman), and their function is to worship the supreme Deity itself.' So, the melodies and their types condensed into *rāgas* are not, in the words of O. C. Gangoly, 'human creation, but only the formulae enunciated by the deities themselves for the meditation and worship of the supreme Deity'. This explains how and why each *rāga* has its own *bija-mantra*, made up of the permutation and combination of the *saptasvaras*, and its distinctive *bhāva* or emotional appeal. It need not be said that this emotive quality is quite consistent with the *śaktitva* of the deity. Like the sculptor or the pictorial artist invoking the deity to image forth in his mind, the singer also invokes through appropriate *dhyānas* the *Nādasvarūpiṇī* to form herself on his mind and emanate therefrom with all her glorious attributes. This invocation is called *avatīrṇa*. The *rasa* or the aesthetic emotion is the soul of the *rāga*, and that fills the singer's body after a successful invocation. Each of the *saptasvaras* has its own pictorial form—

⁴⁶ Śārṅgadeva, *Saṅgītaratnākara*.

that of its presiding deity; and each of them has its own *bhāva* to convey in consonance with its own distinctive spirit or quality in the nature of the *triguṇas*. In consequence, the sounds *sa*, *ri*, and *dha* are symbolic of heroism, wonder, and resentment; *ga* and *ni* of sorrow; and *ma* and *pa* of love and humour. Just as, in the science of colours, different elementary colours mixed in different proportions give rise to different compound tints, these *svaras* also give out different *rāgas* of different emotive values when so combined. Just as there are seven primary colours in the colour scheme, there are seven primary notes in the sound scheme. Just as we get white or non-colour in combination of perfect proportions as prescribed,⁴⁷ so in the scheme of sounds, these different notes in their perfect combination produce the primeval melody, *Om*, the sound symbol of Brahman who is Nirguṇa. Only a few examples of these pictographs can be included here: *sa*, *pa*, and *ni*, among the notes; and *kedārikā*, *prathama-mañjarī*, *hindola*, and *kānaḍā* among the *rāgas*.

Sa: She is a beautiful goddess possessed of *triśaktis*—creation, protection, and destruction; she, an embodiment of bliss, is white complexioned, two-handed, and red-eyed. She is decked in white raiment and wreaths of pearls, and is smeared all over with white sandal-paste. She is the yielder of *aṣṭa-siddhis*, and bliss to her devotees. She is the patron of *ātma-vidyā*, and the sole subject of *gāndharva* hymns. She dazzles like multi-million lightnings.

Pa: This lovely goddess, who is possessed of *triśaktis* (creation, protection, and destruction), and who is the embodiment of bliss, is lotus-eyed, two-handed, and dressed in multi-coloured raiment. She is smeared all over with red sandal-paste. She wears a garland of red lotuses, and is decked in *hāras* and *keyūras* set with gems and beads. She is the yielder of *dharma-ārtha-kāma-mokṣa*. She has the complexion of the autumnal full moon.

Ni: This goddess dazzles like multi-million lightnings. She is of dark complexion, four-

handed, cross-eyed, and smeared all over with dark sandal-paste. She is decked in dark raiment, and has her tongue lolling.

Kedārikā: This lovely damsel of perfect limbs has just done her bathing. With water dripping down her long and thick tresses, she climbs up the steps of her marble pool to fetch her raiment. While so doing, she casts tremulous looks around to see if anyone is watching her.

Prathama-mañjarī: This represents 'the spirit of the early monsoon, which lends to the trees and shrubs their first new shoots for the year, and is visualized in the dramatic story of a damsel who had come out to her garden; frightened by cloud and lightning, she runs for shelter under her pavilion'.

Hindola: This is pictured as a fair youth intoxicated and amused with the beautiful damsels around him—some playing music and some joking at him—who rolls on the ground in boisterous laughter.

Kānaḍā: Seated beneath the *aśoka* tree, this beautiful damsel, well-decked and slim like a golden creeper, sheds tears of separation from her lord, who has not yet returned to her.

If philosophy discovers Truth through a dialectic process, art does so through a sublimation of emotions, till heart is swept into heart, and all hearts into the one cosmic Heart in a tornado of bliss. The main function of all art is therefore to re-combine the different arcs of 'broken light into a perfect round of it'.

This divine purpose of art in a different context, however, has been laid down expressly by Bharata in his *Nāṭya-śāstra*. According to him, the art of dancing is a synthesis of the different essences of the four Vedas. Brahmā, having borrowed *svaras* from the *Ṛg-Veda*, music from the *Sāma-Veda*, acting (*abhinaya* of *bhāvas*) from the *Yajur-Veda*, and *rasas* (flavours) from the *Atharva-Veda*, composed the *Nāṭya-śāstra* in the twilight period (in between two *kalpas* or cycles of time) for the re-establishment of *dharma* on all its four feet, so that in the *Kṛta-yuga*, which is to immediately follow, people may be set up in exemplary conduct reflecting

⁴⁷ Humboldt's disc.

the Divine in their activities. Thus the art of dance was calculated to propagate righteousness in the achievement of the four ideals of life (*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*). Dance was regarded as the manifestation of truth and righteousness, so that people who not only participate in it, but also witness it with due *śraddhā* (ardour) may be reclaimed into eternal virtues.⁴⁸ So, the art of dance is a science approved by all the Śāstras, and appeals to the eye, the ear, and the heart. The heart is the centre of the Paramātman (supreme Soul). It therefore follows that only the virtuous and the beautiful should participate in it, although it enacts the various phases of life at different levels, and also different *bhāvas*; for its central content is an emulation of the Divine. It is only those persons who have an acute vision and a subtle imagination, who are physically perfect and handsome, and who are discriminative and fearless that can manifest the diverse *bhāvas* perfectly, as Nandikeśvara puts it. Besides, the dancer must be learned in the Śāstras, music, and *vādyas*; he must have clear utterance and must be capable of rendering the faintest shade of *bhāvas* adequately and truly. He must have been born of a respectable family, be sweet-tempered, and have a melodious voice.⁴⁹

According to Nandikeśvara, the *danseuse* (*nartakī*) should be free, youthful, sharp witted, smart, and beautiful. She must be proficient in *tāla* and *laya*, perspicacious in the manipulation of hand and bodily poses, and quite graceful in action. She must have spacious eyes, and be well decked with ornaments. She must be able to keep pace with the instrumental music played to time; her face should be vivacious and smiling like a lotus. She should be neither too tall, nor too short, neither too stout nor too lean and emaciated; she should be sleek and charming.⁵⁰ She must also have come of a respectable family. The same writer sets out certain prohibitions, too. The *nartakī* should not be ugly; she should not have white-shot

pupils, hunchback, white or grey hair, and thick lips; for the secret of *abhinaya* lies in making the intangible tangible, with the movement of limbs and the manipulation of hand-*mudrās*, and in the ideal correspondence between the *mudrā* and the look (directed to it), between the look (vivifying the mind) and the mind, and between the mind (portraying the *bhāva*) and the *bhāva* (suggestive of the *rasa*).⁵¹ Thus the art of dance is a synthesis of *vāk* (speech), *manas* (mind), *karana* (physical movement), and *laya* (grace). *Bhāratī* is the mode of *vāk*, *sātvatī* of *manas*, *ārabhatī* of physical movement, and *kaiśikī* of grace, according to Bharata. Since there cannot be a manifestation of beauty in dance without participation in it by women, *kaiśikī-ṛtti* is not possible without them. So, to the hundred and eight male dancers, all sons of Bharata, like Śāṇḍilya, Kohala, Bhramara, Trīśikha, etc., twenty-four *apsarasas*, like Mañjukeśī, Saudāminī, Devasenā, Kalamā, etc., were added in Brahmā's creation. In the heaven's concert arranged for the welfare of worlds, they all danced together under the direction of Bharata and to the accompaniment of songs by Nārada etc, and to the instrumental music of Svāti etc. But the unique dancer, the originator of the *kaiśikī* mode, is, however, Śiva, who, as Naṭarāja, manifested creation, maintenance, and destruction, all at one stroke in the immediate presence of his Devī, his sole inspirer.

In fine, the art of dance may be deemed the physical counterpart of the convolutions of bliss that surge up and down the body. It enables the finite soul to lean with inimitable grace on the infinite Soul, and hug, as it were, the ultimate Being with all the poetic ardour of a perfect lover.

The art of dance as practised in India is prehistoric. The many Tāntric texts, Bharata's *Nāṭya-śāstra*, and its many commentaries, like *Abhinayabhāratī*, *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, etc., elucidate its principles truly. *Abhinaya* is the harmonious acting evolved out of *nṛtya* (dancing with poses), *gīta* (songs), and *vādyā*

⁴⁸ Bharata, *Nāṭya-śāstra*, I. 14-15, 17.

⁴⁹ Nandikeśvara, *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, 34-35.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 26-29.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

(instrumental accompaniment). *Abhinaya* is divided into four parts: (a) *āṅgika* (physical gestures and poses), (b) *sāttvika* (emotional), (c) *vācaka* (oral delivery of songs), and (d) *āhārya* (the external, meaning costume and decoration). Each of these contributes adequately to the correct manifestation of the *bhāva*. Each has its own rhythm, and *abhinaya* is a concord of them all.

The ancient theatre of the Hindus consisted of the greenroom, the stage, and the audience hall, and was mainly of three patterns: (a) rectangle or oblong, (b) square, and (c) equilateral triangle. Each of these was further classified into (i) *uttama* (best), (ii) *madhyama* (middling), and (iii) *adhama* (inferior). All were raised after *bhū-parikṣā* on auspicious sites, and consecrated duly to the Godhead at auspicious hours. They were regarded as the holy playground of the gods. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Indra, Agni, and other *dikpālas* were duly propitiated as their guardian deities in all directions. Brahmā guarded the centre, Indra the wings, and Agni was the chief guardian deity.

Every display of dance was held under the immediate presidentship of a wise man of great affluence and discrimination, who was learned in music and dance, charitable and kind, sweet tempered and proficient in politics. He used to be invariably the king of the locality, and he was accompanied always by his prime minister and his court pundits.⁵² The theatre was appropriately decorated all round with paintings and sculpture of beautiful men and women in dance poses, and with floral creepers. 'Immovable like the Meru and powerful like the Himālaya', was the invocation uttered at the laying of its foundation.⁵³ Viśvakarman, the architect of the gods, built the first theatre of the Hindus on four square-faced pillars representative of the four main castes—Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra—which were the limbs of ancient society. He consecrated the South-East to the Brāhmaṇa, the South-West to

the Kṣatriya, the North-West to the Vaiśya, and the North-East to the Śūdra. This symbolized the welfare of our ancient society. The stage faced the East, and the audience directly opposite to it, the West. In ancient Hindu polity, the king was regarded as the viceroy of God, and he governed his kingdom as His trustee. Towers and domes in miniature, similar to the ones on temples, were permitted to be built only over palaces and court-halls, and not over domestic residences of the people. From the order observed in theatres in the assignment of seats to royalty, its ministers, and other important people directly concerned with state-governance, it must not be inferred that ordinary people were not allowed to witness the display and thereby get instructed and amused; for the exhibition was meant for *loka-kalyāṇa*, and not for the pleasure of any particular section of the people.

As Mārkaṇḍeya observes: '*Prakṛti* and *vikṛti* come into existence through the variation in the form of the supreme Soul. That form of Him which is scarcely to be perceived is called *prakṛti*. The whole universe should be known as *vikṛti*, i.e. as modification of Him when endowed with form. Worship and meditation of the supreme Being are possible only when He is endowed with form. . . . The best position of the supreme Soul is to be imagined without form. For seeing the worlds, (He) possesses eyes closed in meditation.'⁵⁴ Without a knowledge of the art of dancing, the rules of painting are very difficult to be understood by one who is not acquainted with music. In dancing as well as in *citra* (sculpture in the round, relief, and painting), the imitation of the three worlds is enjoined by tradition. The eyes and their expression, the limbs and their parts all over, and the hands have to be treated as said before in dance.⁵⁵ Or, rather, the dance poses of limbs and hands are regarded as the ideal for form and expression.

(To be continued)

⁵² *Ibid.*, 21, 22.

⁵³ Bharata, *Nāṭya-śāstra*, II. 61-62.

⁵⁴ *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (Translated by S. Kramrisch), Part III. chapter 46.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, chapters 2 and 35.

RELIGION IN INDIA

BY DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

Inaugurating the Canada-India Reactor at Trombay in January last, the Prime Minister of India, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, pointed out to the sculptured figure of Maheśamūrti at the Elephanta Caves, right across on the sea, and said that that figure symbolized one aspect of power, the spiritual, while the reactor represented the other aspect, namely, the scientific; and he added that if they succeeded in striking a balance between these two aspects, it would be good for the world. Speaking subsequently in New Delhi on the occasion of the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom, the Prime Minister observed that the mere glory of money would not take the country very far, and that there would be real glory only when, along with material prosperity, there was developed the strength of mind, soul, and heart. It is this synthesis of the spiritual and the so-called material values that Indian culture has been striving to accomplish through the ages.

The State of India, it is true, is a secular Republic. But secularism in this context does not mean opposition to spirituality, or insensitiveness to the deeper values of life. As the Report of the University Education Commission of 1948-49 puts it: 'To be secular is not to be religiously illiterate. It is to be deeply spiritual and not narrowly religious.' All that is meant by saying that the State is secular is that it is not theocratic, that it does not discriminate between religion and religion. Article 15 (Clause 1) of our Constitution reads thus: 'The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them.' For a State to be secular in this sense, it will be clear, is to be highly spiritual. One of the worst forms of anti-spirituality is discrimination based on prejudice or partiality. When it is practised by a State, it is productive of much evil and great harm. When a religious thinker advocates it, he turns

out to be an enemy of religion. Fortunately for India, its religious and political leaders have on the whole stood out for harmony and understanding in religion.

It is well known that 'Hinduism' itself is a name for a federation of faiths. From the sages of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads and the teacher of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* to the modern saints like Ramakrishna and Ramalingam, all the great ones have urged that truth is not the monopoly of any single creed or cult, and that just as the tastes vary, so do the approaches to the Godhead vary. What is known as the *anekāntavāda* of Jainism recognizes the need for difference in standpoints. The Buddha employs the story of the blind men and the elephant to teach the meaninglessness of sectarian quarrels. A great emperor, Aśoka, who was a convert to Buddhism, made it known to his people that they, who belonged to the different religions and cults, should live together harmoniously. 'He who does reverence to his own sect', says Aśoka in one of his inscriptions, 'while disparaging the sects of others, with intent to enhance the splendour of his own, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own.' That the Republic of India carries the influence of the ideals of Aśoka is borne out by the fact that it has adopted two of the emperor's emblems, the Pillar of Lions and the Wheel of Dharma. Mahatma Gandhi, the architect of our freedom and Father of the Nation, expresses the spirit of Indian catholicity when he says: 'I should like to see all men, not only in India, but in the world, belonging to different faiths, become better people by contact with one another and, if that happens, the world will be a much better place to live in than it is today. . . . I do not expect the India of my dream to develop one religion, i.e. to be wholly Hindu or wholly Christian or wholly Mussalman, but I want it to be wholly tolerant

with its religions working side by side with one another.'

History has shown that India is a fertile soil for the growth of religions, and that it has accommodated faiths of even alien origin. Hinduism is the oldest religion of India, and is professed by about eighty-five per cent of its population. The vitality of Hinduism, which has enabled it to adjust itself to changing conditions without losing its soul, is remarkable. The richness and variety of this religion have made it acceptable to different types of minds. Hinduism has been one of the most accommodative of religions. The waves of reform and even of revolt that have arisen in it have, after fulfilling their function of catharsis, resolved again into it. It is by a process of constant renewal that Hinduism has succeeded in preserving its fascination and strength. Two other world-faiths have had their origins in India. Jainism is the faith of an influential minority, and has close affinities with Hinduism. Buddhism, born in India, went abroad and became the religion of a great number of peoples. Like Hinduism, to which it is bound by kinship, Buddhism allows of a variety of creeds, and hence has a powerful appeal to varying temperaments. Besides these faiths of indigenous origin, other religions, too, have found a place in India. Islam was known in parts of India much earlier than the Muslim conquests. But during the Muslim rule, its influence spread, and it gained a large number of converts. The same thing happened to Christianity also during the British period. According to the Census Report of 1951, the Muslims constitute 9.9 per cent of the population of India, and the Christians 2.3 per cent. The followers of Zarathustra, driven out of their homeland Persia, found an asylum in this country. Similarly, groups of Jews came to our shores, and found that they could practise their faith in peace. Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that, from the dawn of history, India has served as a meeting-place for the world's major religions, and as a laboratory for significant religious experiments. Through processes of cross-fertilization, hybrid faiths have

come into existence in the different parts of the country and at different times, commanding the allegiance of sections of the Indian people.

The contemporary situation in regard to religion in India is not at all depressing, contrary to what one might expect. The religious renaissance that started in the nineteenth century, with the coming into existence of Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, and the Ramakrishna Movement—to mention but a few—has become pervasive, gaining depth at the same time. The greatest force making for all-round progress in the present century was, of course, Mahatma Gandhi. The sheet-anchor of all his activities was religion. He considered politics to be a discipline for gaining perfection; and therefore he sought to spiritualize politics. He showed to the world how political ends could be achieved through non-violence. Through methods that were scrupulously clean, he led the Indian people to their political freedom and to a new spiritual awakening. The spirit of Hinduism permeated every fibre of his being, and his one great wish was to find light and joy and peace through Hinduism. The Mahatma will ever be remembered for his lifelong campaign against the accretions that had gathered round Hinduism due mostly to the accidents of history. The most serious blot on Hinduism was untouchability. Right from the beginning of his public career, Gandhiji was convinced that if untouchability stayed, Hinduism would go. The first great blow was administered to this evil in the far South, when the Maharaja of Travancore made his Temple Entry Proclamation in 1937, throwing open the doors of the temples in his realm to all Hindus. With the coming of independence to India, almost all the temples are now accessible to the 'Harijans'—the name given by Gandhiji to the sections of Hindus who were considered to be untouchables. Untouchability itself has been declared illegal by the State.

India is a land of temples; the temple is the centre of every village community in this country. In the course of the last few years, several old temples have been renovated, and many new ones have been constructed. Festivals con-

ected with the temples have become more popular. Greater numbers of people are seen to go now on pilgrimages, thanks to better and quicker means of travel. Holy places like Badrinath on the Himalayas, for instance, are being visited by more pilgrims. And it is gratifying to note that men in high places are setting a good example by undertaking such pilgrimages themselves. Another phenomenon that one finds in India today is the increase in the number of devotional meetings and religious discourses everywhere. The religious organizations and the monastic orders are quite active. A good deal of work in the field of sacred publication is in progress. Serious attempts are

being made to provide for proper training of the priests and prospective leaders of religion. And what is more important than anything else is that great sages and seers continue to appear and inspire the people, inculcating in them a taste for holy living and contemplative life.

The state of religion in India today, it may be said with confidence, is pretty sound. It is true that there are elements that make for profanity and discord, and that there is need for eternal vigilance and persistent right endeavour. But looking at the way things are moving, by and large, one may safely predict that India will not lose her hold on religion, and that she will continue her quest for spiritual values.



THE SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTER OF EAST AND WEST—3

BY DR. JACQUES ALBERT CUTTAT

IV. THE EAST-WESTERN DIALOGUE

If that is true, I can turn my attention now—in spite of my lack of competence—to examine our encounter from the opposite side, from the Eastern point of view, at least in principle. In principle, I fail to see any reason why the spiritual East should not, in its turn, open itself from within to the biblical hemisphere, why it should not also reach out for its complementary values and accept to be enriched by them, especially by those enhancing the inter-personal sphere and the objective side of reality.

1. *No Full Encounter up to the End of the Nineteenth Century*

To this, Hindus and Buddhists often object that all these biblical values and approaches are already included in their tradition and scriptures and even surpassed by them; this attitude reminds one of the defensive reaction of Christian exclusivists in the opposite sense; the irresistibly growing presence of the West in Asia should rather induce them not to stop at the afore-

said assumption, but to check it. Even if it is true, Hindus, Buddhists, and other Asiatics have nothing to lose, but only to gain by reacting to the spiritual West as to a providential challenge to revive some of their own traditional dimensions, which Asia—also spiritual Asia—may have forgotten or neglected in the long course of its immemorial history, those dimensions, namely, which the West, otherwise also forgetful of its tradition, has kept alive and developed. Why should Asia refuse a dialogue in which the only thing which both spiritual hemispheres are asked to give up is their ignorance about each other?

If we now turn to concrete facts, i.e. to Indian history, we see that India's real dialogue with the spiritual West is not older than about eighty years, and that this interreligious encounter is intimately related with India's political rise to national independence, with India's awakening to the full awareness of its indivisible cultural and political personality, i.e. of its international vocation. India's first confrontation with the spiritual West as a whole increased

her national self-consciousness, which, in its turn, inclined India to join the spiritual dialogue. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, the monotheistic—Jewish, Christian, and Moslem—communities of India lived side by side with Hindus and Buddhists, tolerated by them, but also spiritually unrelated to them. In tolerant India, there is no such thing as the thirteen centuries old Chinese anti-Christian tradition. Whether the Jewish, Christian, and Moslem communities originated in India by immigration, conversion, or invasion, the relation in India of monotheism with the Asiatic spiritual hemisphere was mainly that of two or more coexisting monologues. In the sixteenth century, Emperor Akbar, who, according to Max Müller, was 'the first who ventured a comparative study of the religions of the world',¹⁰ organized inter-religious debates, which were not continued by his successors, and had no lasting impact. In the seventeenth century, the bold attempt of the Jesuit Father De Nobili to start a full Hindu-Christian dialogue was turned down in Rome by his Dominican opponents. Indian Sufism is not a mutual Hindu-monotheistic encounter, but rather an absorption of the Moslem concept of a personal God by the Hindu ways towards an impersonal Divinity, a sort of conversion of Islam to Hindu spirituality; and a conversion, as such, is not the beginning of a dialogue, but rather the end of it, especially in old India.

2. Vivekananda's Opening of the Dialogue

The real encounter of Hindu spirituality with Christianity, prepared by Ramakrishna in the way described above, started with his ardent disciple Vivekananda. Received as a spiritual hero by the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, Vivekananda conveyed to the West the message of the universality of Hinduism, in which all religions seemed to him to converge as into a supra-religious spiritual synthesis; at the same time, however, he absorbed in the West, more and more consciously, some true biblical values which were

¹⁰ Quoted by S. Radhakrishnan in *East and West in Religion* (London, Fourth Edition, 1958), p. 32.

new to him and less easy to integrate into his synthesis than he had first assumed. He had inherited from his Master a spiritual plasticity, which enabled him to be impressed by the specifically biblical stress on the highly spiritualizing nature of a relation to God—and through God to the neighbour—conceived not as ultimately impersonal, but as ultimately interpersonal. He seems to have growingly realized that this concept implies, in apparent contradiction to Hinduism, that the objective side of the universe corresponds to something ultimately real, not reducible to a dream. It was the biblical hemisphere which made Vivekananda increasingly, albeit reluctantly, aware that the world of concrete things and concrete persons which confronts us is a place for spiritualizing action, not only of spiritualizing detachment, a place made for a spirituality of response to finite positive values, not only of global retreat from the finite as a bulk of disvalues; he never forgot his first glimpse at a world approached as real creation to be fulfilled by man's co-creative cooperation with its Creator, where space and time, where God-intended dimensions in which and by which finite things have to be done, not merely to be undone and dissolved in a spaceless and timeless Beyond. He also saw that all these values and perspectives, in spite of being contained in some way or other in the Vedas, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, and the Purāṇas, had been treated as belonging to a lower level and thus remained basically foreign to Hindu and Buddhist social consciousness. In an excessively severe judgement, he writes: 'No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such lofty strains as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the neck of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism.'¹¹

His familiarity with the West induced him to attempt the revival of those neglected interpersonal values by developing the Hindu 'way

¹¹ Quoted by A. K. Brohi, formerly High Commissioner of Pakistan in India, in his address delivered on the 1st January 1961 at the opening of the Ramakrishna Cultural and Educational Exhibition at the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore District.

of love' (*bhakti-mārga*) on partially Christian lines and by laying unprecedented stress on the social aspect of the Hindu spiritual 'way of action' (*karma-mārga*), described by the *Gītā* as action done with an inner detachment or renunciation of its fruits and as work dedicated to Kṛṣṇa. Vivekananda's untiring exhortations to his people all over India started a movement conversely similar to the above-mentioned 'Oriental Renaissance' in Europe, and which might be called a 'Monotheistic Renaissance' in Asia. He met strong resistance provoked by the inveterate Indian tendency consisting in either loving the world too much, too egoistically, when they are profane or in the first two stages of the Hindu way of life, or, once they awaken to spirituality or enter the last stages, making an abrupt inner *volte-face* by which they turn entirely away from the world, from social responsibilities, work and fellow-beings being considered as *māyā*, devoid of spiritual value.

Leading Indians today, desirous to see India achieve industrialization and material and social progress without abandoning its spirituality, see no way out of the following dilemma: should India keep its traditional virtue of contentment at the price of backwardness and starvation, or accept and even foster discontentment as a necessary incitement to material progress, even at the price of materialism and gradual extermination of India's spiritual personality?

3. *Progress and Spirituality: Nehru, Aurobindo, Tagore, Radhakrishnan, Gandhi*

This seems to me a wrong alternative. The problem is not one of contentment or discontentment, but one of a new *spiritual* approach to the outer world, of a new inner relation to objects breeding contentment without indifference, and productive activity without discontentment, nor restless activism. To achieve this aim, India should perhaps boldly proceed on the way paved by Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, by endeavouring to integrate more and more into *yoga* and *sādhanā* all human relations to concrete objects and to the inter-personal, eminent-

ly ethical sphere. This realm of objective values, material or personal, which tend to be ignored or underestimated by the Hindu and Buddhist sweeping ways of liberation based on the equation of existence and suffering, this realm of finite yet true spiritual values fully disclosed by the biblical concepts of creation, incarnation, and redemption, should only be transcended after having been fully acknowledged as such and inwardly assimilated; for all true values belong to God, all are spiritualizing, all have to be taken seriously; to ignore them by a premature leap to pure interiority may deliver from the world, but might also make blind for God's infinite richness; it might impoverish spiritually, not only materially. This shows that India's technical and social progress, by developing instinctively a more positive, more spiritually integrating relation to matter and neighbour, could indirectly open Indian eyes and hearts to many hitherto unperceived theocentric dimensions of daily life; however, the result will only be spiritual and not materialistic, if pundits and *gurus* rethink and deepen all moral implications of *bhakti-* and *karma-mārgas*.¹² Would they ask the West and obtain from it to perform its technical assistance with a minimum of awareness of the providential spiritual complementarity between both hemispheres, our economic co-operation would become a part of the East-Western spiritual dialogue and receive its full significance. I like to think that this is what Pandit Nehru has more and more in mind in his repeated recent statements, by which, quoting Vinoba Bhave, he declares science without spirituality as amoral and exhorts to unite them.

A spiritual Master of India, whose long stay in the West enriched him precisely in this direction, is the late Sri Aurobindo; once retired from his political career after an overwhelming mystical experience in prison, he undertook to combine the Hindu cosmogony of descending

¹² Cf. This surprisingly 'biblical' exclamation of Tukārāma, a pure Hindu: 'Cursed by that knowledge which makes me coincide with Thee, I love to have precepts from Thee and prohibitions.' (Quoted by J. Correia-Afonso in *The Soul of Modern India* [Bombay, 1960], p. 7G.)

emanation with the eminently biblical concept of the world process as a basically ascending evolution. This also was the result, not of a mere importation of Western perspectives, as some have thought, but of a revival and expansion of the old Purāṇic doctrine of the ten successive *avatāras* of Viṣṇu. These periodical multiform descents of the compassionate Viṣṇu, the cyclical saviour of this world periodically threatened with decadence and destruction, follow a movement upward from Fish and Tortoise to higher animals, and from those to Dwarf and to full human forms. As far as I know, never before the recently started dialogue of India with the West had the attempt been made to extend this ascending movement of the whole cosmos.

Rabindranath Tagore, this mighty Bengali tree opening freely its branches upwards, eastwards, and westwards as all trees deeply rooted in their native soil, depicts a *sannyāsin* who, brought back by a little girl from pure inwardness into the play of life, discovers that 'the great is to be found in the small, the infinite within the bounds of form, and the eternal freedom of the soul in love'.¹³ Tagore, writes Jawaharlal Nehru, 'has been India's internationalist *par excellence*, . . . taking India's message to other countries and bringing their messages back to his own people'.¹⁴ His revolutionary insistence on life as a great gift, his vision of love as the essence of inter-personal communion, sound more biblical than Hindu to Western ears; yet Tagore untiringly disclosed them as the main intention of Hindu scriptures.

All these recent spiritual tendencies and achievements, all these new outlooks and new remembrances, born of India's talking and listening to the West, converge in the philosophical works of the Vice-President of India. Dr. Radhakrishnan's brilliant writings seem to me to prepare the ground for a synthesis which has yet to be achieved within Hinduism itself, and which would greatly help the dialogue to become a full and reciprocal encounter of the

hemispheres at their spiritual summits: the synthesis of Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, that is, of the Hindu way of love (*bhakti-mārga*) and of the Hindu way of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*); in other words: the synthesis of God approached as the Absolute in Person and of God conceived as the impersonal Absolute. These two antithetic Hindu spiritualities appear to me to be still somewhat unrelated, perhaps because they are not sharply enough distinguished.

Mahatma Gandhi, a great admirer of Ramakrishna, is sometimes said to have 'received from the Sermon on the Mount his doctrine of non-violence'.¹⁵ This view is contradicted by the fact that Gandhi, when asked in 1909 by Reverend Doke about the origin of his concept of *ahimsā*, quoted the following old Hindu verses which he had learned at home in Gujarati: 'For a drink, give back a full meal, for a greeting, honours without number. . . . The truly noble knows only brothers, he retaliates evil with goodness.' However, equally wrong seems the opposite view (defended by O. Wolff, *loc. cit.*) declaring Gandhiji's concept of non-violence entirely devoid of Christian influence. Pro-Western exclusivists share with their pro-Eastern syncretistic antagonists the same simplifying tendency to make of 'Christian influence' and of 'Hindu influence' one of these false alternatives on which the world lives and which obscures the higher polarity between them. Gandhiji also wrote: 'I can say that Jesus occupies in my heart the place of one of the great teachers who have made a considerable influence on my life.'¹⁶ This tends to prove that Christ, this unique Pole of the monotheistic hemisphere, has at least helped the architect of independent India to actualize and to bring, for the first time in history, to concrete political life an

¹⁵ For instance, by the syncretist philosopher of religion Friedrich Heiler; quoted by Otto Wolff in *Indiens Beitrag zum neuen Menschenbild* (Rowohlt, Hamburg, 1957), p. 68.

¹⁶ Quoted by N. B. Sen in *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi, 1960), p. 52. Spiritual influences always imply a free response to values. Some sociologists miss the point by treating them in analogy to the instinctive growth of habits, to the impact of climate, or to 'contagion'.

¹³ Quoted by S. Radhakrishnan, *op.cit.*, p. 140.

¹⁴ *The Discovery of India*.

age-old dimension of Hinduism, this homeland of the highest spiritualities of Asia. No wonder that Gandhiji's concept of non-violence has, in its turn, profoundly influenced contemporary Christian thinkers.¹⁷

The Carolingian Christian Empire has been shaped according to the *City of God* of Saint Augustine, who brought the biblico-Asian spiritual dialogue to its first climax fifteen centuries ago. In Gandhiji and his above-mentioned disciples, this same dialogue shapes the political structure of modern India.

A genuine 'dialogical' encounter reveals increasingly the two spiritual hemispheres as being, in reality, spiritual dimensions of man as man, whether Eastern or Western, and the tension between *enstasis* and *ekstasis* as a tension between two poles inseparably present in every human being. Reflecting in men a mysterious divine antinomy, these spiritual poles constitute the human person as a full person, i.e. as self-transcending interiority polarized by another interiority. They have to remain always in

¹⁷ For instance, Pie Régamey O.P., *Non-violence et Conscience chrétienne* (Cerf, Paris 1958).

tension, yet in a non-violent, inwardly transforming tension which unifies the whole person and enables man, brought to real peace with himself, to bring real peace to others. 'Non-violence is more than peace', Pandit Nehru once told me; it is more than absence of war. So is biblical Love.

East and West should meet like two spiritual persons. Persons are not 'problems' to be solved, but inexhaustible 'mysteries' to be explored. The point is not to come to a final agreement; the point is to understand the other as other, more and more, which is love. East and West are like two persons who, having lived long together like strangers, begin to discover that they love each other.¹⁸ The dialogue will never end. Lovers are never tired to meet, to listen, and to talk.

¹⁸ As Gaston Fessard explains in a penetrating work on Hegel, Marx, and Christian spirituality, all human relations—individual, social, and political—are shaped by the 'dialectics of Man and Woman' (analysed by Marx himself) as much and in a deeper way as by the Hegelian 'dialectics of Master and Slave'. See *De l'Actualité historique* (Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), Vol. I. pp. 163 ff.

THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY DR. (MRS.) KIRTI DEVI SETH

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, having himself realized the Vedāntic truth—the divinity of man and the spiritual oneness of the universe—had handed it to his favourite disciple Swami Vivekananda. The greatness of Swami Vivekananda lies in the fact that he 'taught this truth with authority and not as one of the pundits'. The reason was that he himself had reached the depths of realization, and came back from this state only to make its secrets known 'to the pariah, the outcast, and the foreigner'.

As the educational philosophy of any individual is dependent on his philosophy of life,

we shall, in the first instance, deal very briefly with the chief characteristics of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of life. He believed in the Vedānta philosophy of India. According to him, the main characteristic of Vedānta is: 'It is perfectly impersonal; it does not owe its origin to any person or prophet; it does not build itself around one man as a centre. Yet it has nothing to say against philosophies which do build themselves around certain persons.' 'The Vedānta philosophy, as it is generally called at the present day, really comprises all the various sects that now exist in India. Thus there have

been various interpretations, and . . . they have been progressive, beginning with the dualistic or Dvaita and ending with the non-dualistic or Advaita.¹ Thus, according to Swami Vivekananda, the different expressions of Vedānta, like Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, and Advaita, are not antagonistic to one another; nor are they absolute systems, but only stages in the progressive realization of higher and higher ideals by the human mind 'till everything is merged in that wonderful unity which is reached in the Advaita system'. It can be expressed in yet a simpler form that the many and the one are the same reality. The individuals realize this reality either in its oneness or in its diversity, according to the different attitudes of their mind at different times. Sri Ramakrishna also has expressed this view in these words: 'God is both with form and without form. And He is that which includes both form and formlessness.'

Another fact which enhances the greatness of Swami Vivekananda is that he has given a very practical shape to the Vedānta philosophy. If the many and the one are the same reality, then not only all forms of worship, but also all kinds of work are paths to realization. There need not be made any distinction between sacred work and secular work. 'To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion. To have and to hold is as stern a trust as to quit and to avoid.' This realization made the Swami one of the greatest preachers of *karma-yoga*. For him, *karma* is not divorced from *jñāna* and *bhakti*, but is the medium through which *jñāna* and *bhakti* are expressed. The workshop, the study room, the farmyard, and the field are also, like the cell of the monk or doors of the temple, fit places for the meeting of God by man. To him, 'there is no difference between service of man and worship of God, between manliness and faith, between true righteousness and spirituality'. Swami Vivekananda himself said: 'Art, science, and religion are but three different ways of expressing a single truth.'

¹ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I (Ninth Edn.). pp. 386-87; 356.

'In the two words equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up.'² For him, Vedānta is not hostile to the sciences. 'When the scientific teacher asserts that all things are the manifestations of one force, does it not remind you of the God of whom you hear in the Upaniṣads? As the one fire entering into the universe expresses itself in various forms, even so that one soul is expressing itself in every soul and yet is infinitely more besides.'³ Both Vedānta and science maintain common principles: 'The first principle of reasoning is that the particular is explained by the general, the general by the more general, until we come to the universal. . . . A second explanation of knowledge is that the explanation of a thing must come from inside and not from outside.'⁴ The Advaita satisfies these two principles. Hence Swami Vivekananda calls his Vedānta religion, for religion is one with philosophy in India. He says: 'What is needed is a fellow-feeling between the different types of religion, . . . between types of religious expression coming from the study of mental phenomena—unfortunately even now laying exclusive claim to the name of religion—and those expressions of religion whose heads, as it were, are penetrating more into the secrets of heaven, though their feet are clinging to earth . . . the so-called materialistic sciences.'⁵ Swami Vivekananda's religion is universalism and spiritual brotherhood. He says that each system, whether 'religious' or 'lay', 'represents one portion of universal Truth and spends its force in converting that into a type'. As 'man never progresses from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lesser truth to higher truth', the Swami's religious watchword is 'acceptance' and not 'toleration'.

In the spirit of fraternity, Swami Vivekananda says: 'I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all; I worship God with every one of them. . . . Is God's

² Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 326.

³ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. II (Eighth Edn.). p. 140.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I. pp. 368-69.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. II. pp. 68-69.

book finished, or is it still a continuous revelation going on? It is a marvellous book—these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. . . . We stand in the present, but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present, and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the future.’⁶

There is ample room for the development of human personality in Swami Vivekananda’s religion. He believed in the ancient sayings of the Upaniṣads: ‘Whatever exists in this universe is to be covered with the Lord.’ Since God is to be found in all living beings, each man should unfold the divinity that lies in him. ‘Each soul’, said Swami Vivekananda, ‘is potentially divine.’ The goal of life is to realize this divinity within by a thorough control of nature, inner as well as outer, which can be achieved by any of the four *yogas*—*karma-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, or *rāja-yoga*.

It is true that the realization of divinity or the knowledge of Brahman is the ultimate goal, the highest destiny of man. ‘But man cannot remain absorbed in Brahman. Such absorption is only for exceptional moments.’⁷ That is a very rare condition and difficult to attain, and does not last for long. How then will man spend the rest of his time? That is why, having realized this state, ‘the saint sees the Self in all beings and in that consciousness devotes himself to service, so that any *karma* (work) that was yet left to be worked out through the body may exhaust itself. It is this state which has been described by the authors of the Śāstras (scriptures) as *jīvanmukti* (freedom while living)’.⁸ It is from this point of view that

Swami Vivekananda has laid stress on universalism and spiritual brotherhood. The latter implies love and service to fellow-beings. In the philosophy of the Swami, ‘to serve, to love is to be the equal of the one served or loved’. Swami Vivekananda always regarded service as the fullness of life. As each one carries God within himself, Vedānta asks everyone to have faith in himself. ‘He who does not believe in himself is an atheist’, says Swami Vivekananda. ‘But it is not a selfish faith. . . . It means faith in all, because you are all. Love for yourselves means love for all, for you are all one.’ On the basis of this spiritual oneness of humanity, Swami Vivekananda believed in bringing together the East and the West. With this end in view, he founded the Ramakrishna Math and Mission which have branches in India and abroad, and they have been working out the Swami’s ideas with considerable success.

Swami Vivekananda has approached philosophy from a synthetic standpoint, and this very outlook is reflected in his educational philosophy. He has made it clear that for self-realization the individual need not shun society. The highest goal can be realized while doing one’s duties in the world in the right spirit. In that case, there is no difference between religious and secular activities. There is no antagonism between contemplation and activity. In other words, knowledge, action, and devotion are related with one another.

Quite in keeping with the Indian tradition, Swami Vivekananda upholds self-realization as the highest aim of life, and naturally, of education. Another name for self-realization is the attainment of freedom or *mokṣa*. In his *Karma-yoga*, the Swami says: ‘Everything that we perceive around us is struggling towards freedom, from the atom to the man, from the insentient, lifeless particle of matter to the highest existence on earth, the human soul. The whole universe is, in fact, the result of this struggle for freedom. . . . Everything has a tendency to infinite dispersion. All that we see in the universe has for its basis this one struggle towards freedom; it is under the impulse of

⁶ Quoted by Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 309.

⁷ Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 317.

⁸ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. VII (Fifth Edn.). p. 113.

this tendency that the saint prays and the robber robs. When the line of action taken is not a proper one, we call it evil, and when the manifestation of it is proper and high, we call it good. But the impulse is the same, the struggle towards freedom. The saint is oppressed with the knowledge of his condition of bondage, and he wants to get rid of it; so he worships God. The thief is oppressed with the idea that he does not possess certain things, and he tries to get rid of that want, to obtain freedom from it; so he steals. Freedom is the one goal of all nature, sentient or insentient; and consciously or unconsciously, everything is struggling towards that goal. The freedom which the saint seeks is very different from that which the robber seeks; the freedom loved by the saint leads him to the enjoyment of infinite, unspeakable bliss, while that on which the robber has set his heart only forges other bonds for his soul.⁹ Hence the main function of education is to help man to choose the right kind of freedom.

'Materialism, says the voice of freedom, is a delusion. Idealism, says the voice that tells of bondage, is delusion. Vedānta says you are free and not free at the same time; never free on the earthly plane, but ever free on the spiritual.'¹⁰ Freedom is within the possession of man, but he is not always conscious of it. The difference between the wise and the ignorant man is that the former is conscious of freedom, while the latter does not know it. The aim of education is to make man conscious of the presence of this freedom, which he should utilize for his salvation and for the realization of the ultimate reality. Education is thus the conscious process of attaining freedom.

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL AIMS OF EDUCATION

The struggle for the attainment of freedom (*mukti*) on the part of man points towards his real nature and also towards the proper relation

between the individual and society. Is there any antagonism between the individual and society? The concept of individuality differs in East and West. In the West, a controversy is going on since the time of Plato as to who should gain supremacy, the individual or society. In the present times, the greatest upholder of individuality, Nunn, has tried to reconcile the claims of the two in the concept 'self-realization'. Though starting from the biological standpoint that the selves have their individuality, he later on adopts the idealistic contention that they cannot realize themselves except in society. According to the Advaita Vedānta, there does not arise any need for bringing about a synthesis between the individual and society, because, if the individual knows his real nature, the conflict between the two is automatically resolved.

The main reason for the conflict between the individual and society in the West is that people there associate individuality with the body. According to the Indian idealistic view of Vedānta, says Swami Vivekananda, 'Individuality would be lost if it were in the body'. 'A drunkard should not give up drinking, because he would lose his individuality. A thief should not be a good man, because he would thereby lose his individuality. No man ought to change his habits for fear of this. . . . Neither can individuality be in memory. Suppose, on account of a blow on the head, I forget all about my past; then, I have lost all individuality; I am gone. I do not remember two or three years of my childhood, and if memory and existence are one, then whatever I forget is gone. That part of my life which I do not remember, I did not live. That is a very narrow idea of individuality. We are not individuals yet. We are struggling towards individuality, and that is the infinite, that is the real nature of man. . . . It is only the Spirit that is the individual, because it is the infinite. No infinity can be divided; infinity cannot be broken into pieces. It is the same one, undivided unit for ever, and this is the individual man, the real man. The apparent man is merely a struggle to express,

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I. pp. 106-7.
¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII. p. 32.

to manifest, this individuality which is beyond; and evolution is not in the Spirit.¹¹

The German philosopher Hegel, says Swami Vivekananda, has misrepresented this theory. Hegel said that the manifestation will become higher and higher until men attain perfect manifestation and become perfect beings. Perfection means infinity, and manifestation means limitation. The theory of Hegel leads us to a contradictory concept, which means that we shall become 'unlimited limiteds'. All the religions of the world accept that man has been degenerated from his higher state to the state of the animal, and now he is trying to get out of this bondage. But we will never be able to perfectly manifest the infinite as we are. It is utterly impossible to be perfect here while we are bound by the senses. In order to become perfect here, we have to reverse the order by which we got into this state. We will attain perfection in time, but only by giving up this imperfection. Renunciation is the only means to this end. Renunciation means 'the death of the separate self' and the realization of the real individuality.

Unselfishness or doing good to others is the central idea of all ethical systems. When the absolute unselfishness is reached in a man, he becomes infinite, which is the real man. 'Our reality, therefore, consists in the universal and not in the limited. ... People are frightened when they are told that they are universal Being, everywhere present. Through everything you work, through every foot you move, through every lip you talk, through every heart you feel.'¹² From this standpoint, there seems to be no antagonism between the individual and society. If the real individuality or personality is developed in man through education, then both the individual and social aims of education would be fulfilled.

METHODS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY

Man is perfectly free to cultivate his person-

ality in this world. Swami Vivekananda, while emphasizing the personality of man above his thought and its vehicle, remarks that the words alone cannot always produce an impression. 'Even thoughts contribute only one-third of the influence in making an impression, the man, two-thirds.'¹³ It is the personal magnetism of the man that influences. This fact is borne out by the evidence of history, which only demonstrates that it was not so much the thoughts and words, but the personality of the leaders that impressed; 'the real thoughts, new and genuine, that have been thought by them in this world up to this time are only handful'. Hence the aim of all education or training should be 'man-making'. Such a man can do anything and everything he likes.

In ancient India, efforts were made to discover the laws which developed the human personality. The science of *yoga* claims that, by proper attention to these laws and methods, anyone can grow and strengthen his personality. This practical doctrine is the secret of all education, and can have universal application.

Just as different sciences have their own methods, in the same way, religions, too, have their methods. The method of attaining the end of religion is called 'yoga' in Indian philosophy, a word derived from the Sanskrit root 'yuj', meaning 'to join'. *Yoga* is meant to join us to our reality, God. There are various *yogas* or methods of union adapted to the different natures and temperaments of men. We can classify the important ones in the following way under four heads.

(1) *Karma-yoga*: The manner in which one realizes one's own divinity through selfless work performed in a spirit of dedication.

(2) *Bhakti-yoga*: The realization of one's own divinity through devotion to, and love of, a personal God.

(3) *Rāja-yoga*: The realization of one's own divinity through the control of mind etc.

(4) *Jñāna-yoga*: The realization of one's own divinity through the path of knowledge.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II. pp. 80-81.

¹² *Ibid.*, Vol. II. pp. 79-80.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 14.

These are all different paths leading to the same centre, viz. God.

The various systems of *yoga* do not conflict with one another. A strenuous and sincere practice is sure to lead a person to the final goal through any of these. The secret of success is in practising. There are three stages which one has to undergo in order to realize the Self in every *yoga*. First, one has to hear, then think, and finally practise. One has to hear about it in order to understand it. If anything is not clear, as it is difficult to understand everything all at once, it will become clear after constant hearing and meditating over its import. In reality, no one can be taught by anyone else. Every individual is his own teacher. The external teacher helps only to arouse the teacher within the individual to work and understand things, which will be made clear to the person by his own power of perception and thought.

The science of *yoga* helps man to become perfect, to become a *jīvanmukta*. The ideal of *jīvanmukti* involves within itself the concept of universal brotherhood. But this brotherhood has its root in spirituality. God resides in each one of us. Hence we are all related to one another by a spiritual bond. So each one should have *śraddhā* towards others, and this *śraddhā* towards others can be developed only when an individual has *śraddhā* in himself. *Śraddhā* in oneself is an essential factor in the development of one's personality.

THE AIM OF EDUCATION—'MAN-MAKING'

On the basis of what has been said above, it can be stated that each individual, if he wants to achieve the highest aim of life, viz. *mukti*, has to cultivate his personality. What is meant by personality? Vedānta philosophy points out that each individual is divine by nature. Hence the aim of life should be the manifestation of this inherent divine nature of man. This, indeed, is the goal of true education.

Pointing out the defects of the modern system of education, which was negative in character, Swami Vivekananda said: 'Education is not the amount of information that is put into your

brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. . . . If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in the world, and encyclopaedias are the *ṛsis*.'¹⁴ 'The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?'¹⁵ So the Swami emphatically pleads: 'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.'¹⁶ 'The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making. . . . The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow.'¹⁷ 'The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education.'¹⁸ 'What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and the secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean meeting death face to face.'¹⁹ 'It is a man-making religion that we want. . . . It is man-making education all round that we want.'²⁰

THE MEANING OF EDUCATION

In Swami Vivekananda's own words, 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man'.²¹ He had firm faith in the Vedāntic theory of the Ātman that all knowledge, whether secular or spiritual, is inherent in man. So in psychological language, 'to learn' is 'to discover'. All knowledge and all power are in the human soul. They remain covered. 'When the covering is being slowly taken off, we say, "we are learning", and the advance of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III (Seventh Edn.). p. 302.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII. p. 147.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. V (Seventh Edn.). p. 342.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV (Seventh Edn.). p. 490.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 190.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 224.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV. p. 358.

knowledge is made by the advance of this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man; the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant; and the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-knowing, omniscient. . . . Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out.²² In the case of Newton, the falling of an apple was the suggestion which revived in his mind all previous links of thought, and he could finally discover a new link among them, which is called the law of gravitation. The human soul is the source of all knowledge. Education helps in discovering and manifesting the knowledge which is pre-existing in the human soul through eternity. Such a conception of education has some resemblance to Pestalozzi's definition of education as the manifestation of the inherent faculties of man.

Swami Vivekananda's view of the teaching process is also in keeping with the Vedāntic view of the soul, and has resemblance to that of Froebel, the famous mystic educational philosopher of the West. Both compare the child to a plant. Just as the banyan-seed contains the potentiality of developing into a big banyan-tree, in the same way, in the protoplasmic cell lies coiled up the gigantic intellect. Just as the plant grows according to its own nature, so does the child. Just as we have only to provide the plant with the body-building material and protection, and the plant will assimilate and grow by itself, so in the education of the child, we have only to remove the obstacles in his way and provide scope for his growth, so that the latent tendencies in him may not die due to lack of opportunity. A child educates himself. The teacher's function is merely to awaken the knowledge inherent in him and to guide him, so that he may apply his intellect to the proper use of his hands, legs, ears, and eyes. The teaching must be modified according to the needs of the pupil, because past lives mould the tendencies of individuals, and the teacher should keep in view the individ-

ual tendencies. Special inclinations should be encouraged; and not even the most hopeless is to be discouraged. 'Positive ideas' are to be inculcated in the minds of the children. 'Negative ideas', like telling them that they would never learn anything or that they are fools, only weaken them. They need to be encouraged with kind words. 'If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and arts, in everything, we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will be able to do these things better', is the advice of Swami Vivekananda.

SUBJECTS OF STUDY

We have already mentioned about the synthetic attitude of Swami Vivekananda towards philosophy. For him, to aspire after the realization of the highest aim of life does not mean that the individual should be cut off from all worldly activities. In fact, the highest aim is to be realized through the vehicle of this body and also while living in this world. Hence he wants all those subjects to be included in the curriculum which are necessary for a successful adjustment in the world. 'What we need, you know, is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that may develop industries, so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save something against a rainy day.'²³ The Swami has given very practical suggestions as regards the curriculum. He stresses the need of the study of the various branches of knowledge of our country; this shows his great love for our national and cultural aims of education, but in order that the nation may keep pace with the progress of the advanced countries of the world, he recommends the study of the English language and Western sciences. He

²² *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 26.

²³ *Ibid.*, Vol. V. pp. 368-69.

also realized the need of technical education, because the material prosperity of a nation depends on the development of its industries. Swami Vivekananda wanted the material progress of our country along with her spiritual life.

THE METHOD OF EDUCATION

Concentration of Mind: Concentration of mind is the only method by which knowledge can be acquired. It is the very essence of education. To achieve success in any field, this is the only method. From the lowest man to the highest *yogin*, all use this method to attain their desired end.

It is due to the lack of concentration of thought that human beings commit blunders. 'The trained man or mind never makes a mistake.' It is the difference in the power of concentration that makes difference between man and man, between the highest man and the lowest man. It is this very factor which makes difference between men and animals. Those who train animals know how difficult it is to train them, since they forget very quickly what is taught to them.

The power of concentration being the key to the treasure-house of knowledge, the question arises as to how to acquire it. We know that it is very difficult to concentrate our mind on any object, since innumerable impulses and thoughts enter the mind and disturb it. It is *rāja-yoga* which teaches us how to control our mind. It is the practice of meditation which leads to mental concentration.

Swami Vivekananda is convinced that the very essence of education is not the collection of facts, but the concentration of mind. He says: 'If I had to do my education over again, ... I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a proper instrument, I could collect facts at will.'²⁴

Brahmacarya and Śraddhā: The power of concentration can be acquired through the observance of *brahmacarya* for a period of twelve years. It is a source of great intellectual

and spiritual power. 'Chastity in thought, word, and deed always, and in all conditions, is what is called *brahmacarya*.'²⁵ Unchaste imagination is as bad as unchaste action. Swami Vivekananda would attribute the present unsatisfactory condition of the country to want of continence. Hence the need of the hour is that every student should be trained to practise absolute *brahmacarya*, without which *śraddhā* or faith in one's own self cannot come. Again, like concentration, it is the difference in *śraddhā* which produces difference between man and man. If one thinks oneself weak, one will become weak. 'This *śraddhā* must enter into you. Whatever of material power you see manifested by the Western races is the outcome of this *śraddhā*, because they believe in their muscles; and if you believe in your spirit, how much more will it work!'²⁶

Our children should be taught from the time of their birth—'this life-saving, great, ennobling, grand doctrine'—to have faith in themselves; since they are all the children of the Almighty, sparks of the infinite divine fire, they can do everything. It was this faith in themselves in the hearts of our ancestors that had given birth to our glorious ancient civilization.

Gurukulas: Swami Vivekananda totally agrees with the ancient system of education, in which the pupils used to live with their *gurus*, there being constant personal contact between them; and knowledge was not sold.

The teacher and the taught should be possessed of certain ideal qualities. The taught should have purity in thought, word, and deed. He should have a real love for knowledge and a spirit of perseverance. He should have faith in his *guru*, but not a blind faith. He must exercise his critical faculty too. The teacher, on the other hand, should know the spirit of the scriptures. He must be perfectly pure, because he exerts his influence on the taught. The teacher should teach not with any ulterior motive, i.e. name or fame, but simply out of pure love for the students.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 190.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 319.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. VI (Sixth Edn.). pp. 38-39.

EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER-FORMATION

Swami Vivekananda attaches great importance to the aim of character-formation in the life of a student. A man's character is the sum total of his tendencies. It is the tendencies of the individual which determine his character. Happiness and misery leave their different impressions on man's mind, and it is these impressions in their totality which give shape to his character. Thoughts play an important part in the formation of character. In some cases, misery is more helpful than happiness in this direction. If we study the biographies of great men, we find that, in many cases, it was misery rather than happiness, poverty rather than wealth, blows rather than praise, that kindled the innermost light of their heart.

Man's mind can be compared to a lake. Just as waves in a lake rise and then subside, but do not die out completely, in the same way, when the various activities and thoughts agitating our mind subside, they do not die out completely; instead they leave their impressions. There is every possibility of these impressions being revived later on. If these impressions are not visible on the surface, they invariably work beneath the surface, subconsciously. The sum total of these impressions determines a man's character. 'If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good; if bad, it becomes bad.' For instance, if any man hears constantly bad words, thinks bad thoughts, indulges in bad deeds, then his mind is imbued with bad impressions, and these impressions unconsciously guide his behaviour and shape his character. Good thoughts and good actions shape the character of an individual in such a way that he will never be inclined to do evil deeds. A man's true character is judged not by watching him do great deeds, but by seeing his everyday actions. For, at the time of great calamities or other such moments, even ordinary persons rise to some kind of greatness. But, in fact, he alone is great whose character is great in all situations and under all circumstances.

When a large number of these impressions, either good or bad, cohere in a person, they give

rise to certain strong habits. On the basis of these habits and impressions of the previous births, character is formed. What we are at present is due to our habits. There is only one remedy to control bad habits, and it is to cultivate good habits. In order to do that, man should be constantly engaged in entertaining noble ideas and doing good deeds. It should never be said that a certain individual is bad, because he merely represents a bundle of bad habits, and his bad habits can be replaced by good habits.

On the basis of what has been said above, we can conclude that we are ourselves responsible for our character. We should not blame any god or man for our bad character. We should not also think that we cannot improve without the grace of God or without the help of any other being. The fact is that we human beings are like silkworms. Just as a silkworm shuts itself inside the cocoon spun by itself, in the same way, a man binds himself in the network of his own actions and, feeling himself bound due to ignorance, cries for help from outside. We do not need any outside help to be relieved from this bondage; in fact, this help will come from inside ourselves, if we just exert ourselves for it. A man can rise higher if he exercises his will power. The power of will plays a significant role in the formation of character.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

'Religion is the innermost core of education.' But by religion, Swami Vivekananda does not mean any particular religion. Following his great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, the Swami believes in the Vedic concept: 'Truth is One; sages call it by various names.' Śrī Kṛṣṇa also says in the *Gītā*: 'Whoever seeks me by whatever path, of him do I make the faith firm and unwavering.' Again: 'Howsoever do men resort to me, even so do I serve them. O Arjuna, know that all paths have been worked out by me.'

Religion is realization: A man cannot become a surgeon merely by studying books; similarly,

the mere study of scriptures cannot make us religious. By simply looking at a map, one cannot satisfy one's curiosity to see a particular country. In the same way, by simply reading religious books, one cannot understand religion or realize God. One should experience religious truths for oneself. As maps can no doubt arouse our curiosity to get more perfect knowledge, so can sacred books do in the case of religion.

'Temples and churches, books and forms are simply the kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough to take higher steps. . . . Religion is not in doctrines, in dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation; it is being and becoming; it is realization.'²⁷ Such realization is possible through the heart alone. 'It is the heart which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach; it goes beyond intellect and reaches to what is called inspiration.'²⁸ Hence the heart should be cultivated, because it is through the heart that the Lord speaks. One of the glaring defects of the modern system of education is that it is purely intellectual; the heart, having been left uncared, makes men extremely selfish and heartless.

The first requisite, in order to become truly spiritual, is to make our body strong, for physical weakness is the source of 'one-third of our miseries'. Swami Vivekananda's advice to the youth of the country is: 'First of all, our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. You will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the *Gītā*. . . . You will understand the *Gītā* better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Kṛṣṇa better with a little strong blood in you. You will understand the Upaniṣads better and the glory of the Ātman, when your body stands firm upon your feet and you feel yourselves as men.'²⁹ 'Strength is goodness and weakness is sin.' 'Infinite strength is religion.'

Strength can be attained by following the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. It is the only scripture in the world where is mentioned the word '*abhaya*' (fearless) again and again, and this adjective is applied either to God or to man. 'The Upaniṣads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be vivified, made strong, energized through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable, and the downtrodden of all races, all creeds, and all sects to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upaniṣads.'³⁰

The Upaniṣadic philosophy contains the greatest truth, as it gives us strength; and this is the test of truth—anything that makes us weak physically, mentally, and spiritually should be rejected. Hence another requisite for realizing religion is to tell the truth boldly. 'All truth is eternal. Truth is the nature of all souls.' 'Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all-knowledge; truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating.'³¹

HOW TO IMPART RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The method that is helpful in religious education 'is to introduce the worship of the great saints'. Examples of incarnations, prophets, and saints of the past, like Rāmacandra, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Christ, as also of recent times, should be placed before the students as the ideals to be followed. But in the present context of the country, the character of Hanumān, who represents the ideal of service and leonine courage, should be held as the ideal; and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the teacher of the *Gītā*, and Śakti, the Divine Mother, should be worshipped. The Vṛndāvana aspect of Śrī Kṛṣṇa should be kept aside for the time being, because it will not help in the regeneration of the country. Effeminate forms of music like *kīrtana* etc. should be stopped at once, and the people should accustom themselves to listen to the *dhrupad*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 43.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 412.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 242.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 238.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 225.

style of music. 'Through the thunder-roll of the dignified Vedic hymns, life is to be brought back into the country. In everything, the austere spirit of heroic manhood is to be revived. . . . If you can build your character after such an ideal, then a thousand others will follow. But take care that you do not swerve an inch from the ideal. Never lose heart. In eating, dressing, or lying, in singing or playing, in enjoyment or disease, always manifest the highest moral courage.'³² 'Never allow weakness to overtake your mind. Remember Mahāvīra, remember the Divine Mother. And you will see

³² *Ibid.*, Vol. VII. p. 233.

that all weakness, all cowardice will vanish at once.'³³

This, in brief, is the educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. It contains certain principles of education of abiding value, which, if followed, will not only help in the cultural revival and national upliftment of our country, but also enhance its spiritual glory. Apart from this, these principles are of universal value, since they have been derived from a philosophy which has been addressed to mankind in general, and not to any particular sect, caste, creed, or nation.

³³ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII. p. 234.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Sri P. Sama Rao, B.A., B.L., of Bellary, who is a regular contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*, has sent a learned article on 'The Spiritual Significance of Indian Art', which we have planned to publish in two instalments. The first instalment is included in the present issue, and the second instalment will be published in the next issue. . . .

The article on 'Religion in India' by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, University of Madras, is the text of his talk broadcast by the External Services Division of All India Radio on March 4, 1961. We are reproducing it here with the kind permis-

sion of the Director, External Services Division, All India Radio, New Delhi. . . .

The thought-provoking article on 'The Spiritual Encounter of East and West' by Dr. Jacques Albert Cuttat, Ambassador for Switzerland in India—the first two instalments of which appeared in the September 1961 and October 1961 issues of *Prabuddha Bharata*, respectively—is concluded in this issue. . . .

In her article on 'The Educational Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda', Dr. (Mrs.) Kirti Devi Seth, M.A., M.Ed., D.Phil., of Allahabad University, deals with some of the fundamental principles of education found in the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, which are of abiding value.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

EXISTENTIALISM AND INDIAN THOUGHT
By K. GURU DUTT. Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1960. Pages 92. Price \$2.75.

The two contemporary movements of European philosophy are logical positivism and existentialism. After the Second World War, existentialism has become a rage with the continental intellectuals. Its popularity is on the increase, and several European thinkers have added to its prestige. This little book under review examines the main doctrines of existentialism in its historical perspective. The broad outlines of the existentialist doctrines in Pascal, Soren Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche are described clearly in the first chapter. The existentialists' dislike of system, their insistence on inwardness and liberty, their faith in the individual's existence, and their revolt against all forms of impositions are all well brought out. In the second chapter, we have a very competent and clear summary of the complex doctrines of the theistic and the atheistic thinkers among modern existentialists. We get here clear accounts of Jaspers, Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre, and Gabriel Marcel. The author has given us the conclusions of these thinkers. Because of the limitations of space, the accounts appear to be sketchy, but none the less they inform us well about their distinct contributions. It is known to students of philosophy that giving a summary of this complex system is no easy work. Mr. Dutt deserves the gratitude of all those who do not have the patience or the time to read the extensive literature on the subject for giving in this book the gist of this philosophical movement. The statements of Mr. Guru Dutt have not sacrificed precision for the sake of popular presentation of the subject.

Mr. Guru Dutt, a distinguished exponent of Hindu philosophical thought, has attempted a comparison between Indian thought and existentialism. He draws comparisons between existentialism and the Upaniṣads. He finds a close affinity between the 'inwardness' of outlook of the Upaniṣads and the existentialists. He quotes the celebrated passage of the *Kāṭha Upaniṣad* (IV.1). The existentialist distinction between the authentic and unauthentic choice has its parallel in the Upaniṣads also. Similarly, many other interesting points of affinity have been brought out clearly. The book is a useful addition in the field of comparative philosophy.

DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

**KEY NEXT DOOR AND OTHER CITY
TEMPLE SERMONS.** BY LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD.

Published by Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., London E.C.4. 1960. Pages 255. Price 15s.

Open where you will and read any sermon at random, you feel that the words strike you with an irresistible force. You see in the book the character and action of one who has walked with Him, of a *bhakta* who has seen his *iṣṭa-devatā*.

In the twenty-five sermons delivered in the sacred Temple of London, Leslie D. Weatherhead has a word for everyone—for the proud scientist (pp. 221-30), for the sorely stricken (pp. 54-59), for the sceptic and the agnostic (pp. 142-52; pp. 241-47), and for the believer who is not quite sure (pp. 70-77). And he has some very striking things to say about prayer (pp. 101-11), immortality (pp. 241-47), and spiritual freedom (pp. 190-201). Every sermon is penetrating and convincing, and reveals the person of Christ. The gospel is timeless; but a generous understanding of modern patterns of thought, through which the immortal gospel is presented by Weatherhead with unswerving faith, is really remarkable.

The reviewer's attention was caught by one or two profoundly significant passages. Weatherhead says: 'Sometime ago, I had a dream. ... I was to be offered a personal interview with Christ, and I thought, "Ah! I will ask Him this. I will ask Him that". ... Believe it or not, in the glory of His presence, it was not that I forgot to ask Him anything. It seemed utterly unnecessary and meaningless' (p.19).

Listen to this: 'If we can make time daily to dwell quietly, for even a few moments, in the presence of God, and assert those qualities in God which are the opposite of the emotions which destroy our peace, we can banish the latter and allow the former to take their place' (p.237).

Listen again: 'God is calling you to come to Him. He understands you. He loves you. He wants you. He will receive you' (p.211). Did not Sri Ramakrishna say that God is our very own? The more you draw nearer to Him, the more you feel He is your own.

We can accept and cherish every idea, every sentiment conveyed in these precious sermons. But one thing we cannot understand. To the Indian mind, the subtle vein of exclusiveness found in some sermons is jarring. We hold that no religion can lay any claim to the exclusive possession of the path to salvation. The key to the door of the Divine is available to everyone, without restriction of caste, creed, race, or religion.

PROFESSOR P. S. NAMU

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA. BY A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR. *Published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State. 1960. Pages 150. Price Rs. 2.25 nP.*

A better title for this dedicated and inspired brochure would be 'My Transformation by Bhagavan Sri Ramana'. Ignoring chronology, quite justifiably, Sri Mudaliar narrates, in simple but telling language, how the sage weaned him away, slowly and steadily, from the world and its sense pleasures, and led him to the path of self-realization. Miracles, ordinary incidents, meetings with other devotees are all related to show how 'a saint can do anything if he wishes'. Starting from the time when the author received 'initiation by look', and tracing the stages by which he was drawn to the Maharshi, and coming to the time when the final self-surrender took place, Sri Mudaliar keeps us spellbound by recounting simple incidents at the concrete level. But these incidents have a profound meaning for those who care to dive deep into them.

The brochure dispels the widespread impression that the Maharshi rarely spoke. Every page of the book is full of affectionate conversation with devotees.

A book of strength and inspiration to the believer, the brochure under review is a valuable addition to Sri Ramana literature that we have.

PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

ADVAITA AND VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA. BY S. M. SRINIVASA CHARI. *Published by Asia Publishing House, Contractor Building, Nicol Road, Ballard Estate, Bombay-1. 1961. Pages 204. Price. Rs. 12.*

Śrī Venkaṭanātha, popularly known as Vedāntadeśika, was born three centuries after Śrī Rāmānuja in A.D. 1268 at Tūppil in Kāñcīpuram. He was one of the greatest thinkers that medieval India produced, and is 'the second great figure in the history of Viśiṣṭādvaita'. His life is as inspiring as his many-sided scholarship. He showed utter contempt for worldly interests, and dedicated his long and eventful life to spiritual ministrations and to elucidate, propagate, and consolidate the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita as expounded by Śrī Rāmānuja. He was a prolific writer, and the system owes not a little of its popularity among critics as well as admirers to his exposition of it. Often, he was called upon to defend his 'system' against the charges made by his opponents. The arguments used in the debate were summarized and arranged by his disciples in the famous work called *Śatadūṣaṇī*.

The *Śatadūṣaṇī* is an important polemical work of Viśiṣṭādvaita. As the title suggests, Deśika advances

numerous philosophical arguments for systematic criticism mainly directed against the Advaita system. The dialectical criticism of Advaita by Deśika is not the first attempt of its kind. Bhāskara and Yāmuna had attacked the Māyāvāda and the theory of the Self as pure Consciousness. Śrī Rāmānuja carried forward this task with great vigour and fervour. In his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra (Jijñāsādhikarāṇa)*, he subjects the essentials of Advaita to a critical examination. During the period that lapsed between Śrī Rāmānuja and Deśika, great thinkers like Śrī Harṣa, Ānandabodha, and Citsukha developed and defended Advaita further, creating thereby new grounds of criticism. Deśika took into consideration the arguments put up by these thinkers since Rāmānuja's time, and subjected them to critical analysis in his *Śatadūṣaṇī*.

The *Śatadūṣaṇī*, though not directed against any particular Advaita work, covers more or less all the important Advaita doctrines. Śrī Śaṅkara's *Sūtra-bhāṣya*, Vācaspati's *Bhāmātī*, Vimuktātman's *Iṣṭa-siddhi*, and Śrī Harṣa's *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khāḍya* are directly referred to in the work, though one can indirectly trace the substance of the arguments of Maṇḍanamīśra, Sureśvara, Padmapāda, etc. The *Śatadūṣaṇī*, as the title suggests, should have contained one hundred arguments, but the text as available at present consists of sixty-six arguments. The remaining arguments are either lost or the term 'śata' is to be understood in the sense of 'many'.

The author, Dr. S. M. Srinivasa Chari, gives an analysis of the issues of the *Śatadūṣaṇī*, and places them in a systematic manner under eight headings: Pramāṇas, Perception, Consciousness, Individual Self, Brahman, Universe, Avidyā, and Sādhanā and Mukti. Giving a faithful and lucid exposition of the *Śatadūṣaṇī*, this thesis will serve as a useful introduction to the comparative study of Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita. The author is successful in presenting the fundamental differences between the two systems, which naturally emanate from the different standpoints adopted to solve the problems of philosophy. Though this is a polemical work, one cannot but admire the perfect temper of the book, balanced by sense and sensibility of the long and close arguments. Students of philosophy require a book that will clearly tell them something of the great *vāda*, constructive and destructive, between Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita, which is still alive. Dr. Srinivasa Chari's work, clear and smooth running, supplies this need. The book is provided with a glossary, a bibliography, an index, and a list of the arguments dealt with in the *Śatadūṣaṇī*. The printing and the get-up of the book are elegant.

SWAMI ADIDEVANANDA

THE PRACTICE OF ZEN. BY CHANG CHEN-CHI. Published by Rider & Co., 178-202 Great Portland Street, London W.1. 1960. Pages 208. Price 25 shillings.

In the post-war years, more and more people in the West—both the intellectual and the common man—are becoming interested in Zen Buddhism. Hardly a year passes without a new publication on the subject. But exceptions apart, 'the popular appeal of Zen in the West often rests upon misunderstanding, upon the lure of the exotic', as Van Meter Ames points out in an article in *Philosophy East and West*, April-July 1960. As a consequence of Zen's entry into the U.S.A. through Japan, the cultural aspect of Zen and its influence on Japanese art and people have impinged themselves upon the minds of Zen admirers in the West, rather than its spiritual and practical aspect, though a good many books on the subject have been written by great scholars like D. T. Suzuki.

The Zen, in its present form, was mainly evolved in China of the Middle Ages, and was being widely practised there. It is natural therefore that a Chinese authority on Zen should have come forward with a book on its practice 'in the hope of furthering an understanding of Zen and making things easier for those who have been searching for practical instruction'. Having received his Buddhist training in Chinese monasteries, the author, one of the leading scholars on both Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism, has done justice to his theme, and he has contributed to Zen literature a most valuable publication.

The book is divided into four major chapters: (1) The Nature of Zen; (2) The Practice of Zen; (3) The Four Problems of Zen Buddhism; (4) Buddha and Meditation.

The first chapter explains briefly the origin and working of the Zen tradition, with illustrations through anecdotes from the lives of great Zen masters. The second chapter contains a general review of Zen practice, translations of the discourses of four Zen masters, and short autobiographies of five Zen masters. Some of these discourses are as clear as any intellectual discourse on religion, while, in some others, the mysterious and the enigmatic element predominates. The autobiographies throw light on the rigours Zen practices entail, just as spiritual practices in other religions. It is clear from these that the Zen aspirant must have the initial understanding of Zen principles, and should plunge headlong into the attempt to realize the truth it preaches. The third chapter refutes the so-called unintelligibility of Zen and gives a short exposition of Zen enlightenment. It also briefly makes a comparative study of Zen and Mahāyāna Buddhism. It lays down and explains the 'four distinctions' of Zen master Lin

Chi, so as to prove the underlying system and order in the method his school (the Rinzai) follows in spiritual instructions through *koans* or seemingly irrational riddles. The fourth chapter analyses the wrong methods of human thinking and explains the three aspects of Buddhahood. The last section in this chapter gives an admirably lucid exposition of the various kinds of Buddhist meditations.

As a corruption of the Chinese word 'ch'an', which again is a corrupted form of the Sanskrit word 'dhyāna', Zen is essentially a form of meditation or spiritual practice, as introduced to China by the Indian Buddhist monk Bodhidharma (A.D. 470-543). Of course, Chinese ingenuity has transformed it by adapting it to local conditions and thus incorporating the enigmatic element into it to bring about a suddenness of effect. Therefore, principally, Zen is a method of meditation trying to awaken man to his true nature, in a sudden way, by raising intense doubts in the mind of the aspirant through a riddle or *koan*. The aspirant's work is to break through this 'doubt-sensation' and thus reach to the very essence of Consciousness. The *koan* is widely used by the Lin Chi (Rinzai) school, while the Tsao Tung (Soto) school follows the intellectual and intuitional method, more in keeping with the Mādhyamika school Buddhism, to which Zen comes nearest in its philosophy.

As an offshoot of Hinduism, Buddhism inherited many of its ideas and tenets. Zen, a Chinese adaptation of Mahāyāna Buddhism, is no exception to this. As such, it has great similarity with Vedānta, and we feel it necessary to add a few lines on this point. The main difference between the Buddhists and the Vedāntists is on the question of the former's denial of any ultimate existence. Therefore, the Buddhists were termed 'śūnyavādins' in India. But a look at the Zen principles will raise the question whether it considers the ultimate Truth as mere void, in the usual sense. For Zen masters do not attempt a description of Truth as existence or non-existence. 'It is not definable or describable. As Zen master Hui Jang has said: "Anything that I say will miss the point"' (p. 40). The quotation from *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-Sūtra* is also significant: 'The void nature of all *dharmas* is not arising or extinction, not pure or impure, not increasing or decreasing' (p. 141). The Vedāntic position is similar. Compare the verse of the *Kenopaniṣad* (II. 3), which rather reads like a *koan*: 'It is known to him to whom It is unknown; he does not know to whom It is known. It is unknown to those who know well; and known to those who do not know.' Vedānta says that Truth is *anirvacanīya*, indescribable. Śaṅkara defines It as *sadasadvilakṣaṇa* in his *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* (220). The *Gītā* says that It is neither

'being' nor 'non-being' (XIII. 12).

What Vedānta insists is that no thought is possible at all if it rests on non-existence. One has to begin the inquiry into Truth on a premise of existence, or else no inquiry is possible, like the search for a hare's horn. But this inquiry ultimately leads to Nirguṇa (indeterminate) Brahman. This kind of understanding of existence does not lead to 'clinging', the cessation of which is the indispensable precondition in Buddhism for true knowledge; and Vedānta, too, advocates the elimination of clinging to the individual self.

Another point that needs a little comment is the author's statement that Hinduism considers yogic *samādhi* as *mukti* or liberation and the highest stage of realization (p. 163). Śaṅkara explains in his *bhāṣya* on *Gauḍapāda-kārikā* (III. 39-40) that the highest Truth cannot be realized through yogic *samādhi*. It is realized through a *yoga* which is described as 'not in touch with anything'. Therefore, yogic *samādhi* is considered *mokṣa* only by a particular school of philosophy in India, and not by Hinduism as a whole.

Amongst the ten steps advocated by Zen master Yuan Chin for Zen realization (p. 45), the meaning of the sixth step that a Zen student 'should walk on the "Path of the Birds" and the "Road of the Beyond"' is obscure, says the author in his notes. It would be interesting to note that the *Mahābhārata* describes the course of a *jñānin*, a man of realization, as follows: 'Just as the footprints of birds cannot be traced in space and of aquatics in water, similar is the movement of the men of knowledge.'

All these go to show that spiritual life in the Orient has always had a common foundation. A closer study of these two systems is bound to clear much of the way both for the students of Zen and of Vedānta. As such, this book will be of great interest to students of comparative religion in India.

For Zen students in the West, we feel that this book is 'a must'. Here the author has gone into the very essence of Zen practice, avoiding all verbiage, and shown that, besides a correct understanding of Zen, guidance from an enlightened Zen master is indispensable for progress in the path of Zen. Whatever is to be told regarding Zen has been told in a simple and beautiful style, kindling the interest of the reader.

S. S.

A SEMINAR ON SAINTS. EDITED BY T. M. P. MAHADEVAN, AREA SECRETARY, UNION FOR THE STUDY OF THE GREAT RELIGIONS, INDIA. *Distributors: Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras-17. 1960. Pages 456. Price Rs. 12.50 nP.*

A seminar on saints was held at Madras, in 1956, under the auspices of the Union for the Study of the

Great Religions (India), an institution founded in 1950 for fostering better social and international understanding between the peoples of the world, through the study of the great civilizations of East and West and through promotion of ethical, philosophic, and religious education. The book under review contains the papers read at the seminar, and also the lectures arranged during the period of the seminar.

The papers deal with the lives of the saints belonging to Hindu, Mohammedan, and Christian religions, with special emphasis on the particular type of *sādhana* or spiritual practice followed by each saint. The saints selected for treatment are representative, though there are some notable omissions, the most regrettable being the life and work of Swami Vivekananda. The omission might have been occasioned by the fact that the choice of the particular saint was left to the speaker concerned. All the same, it is a thousand pities that nobody should have thought of speaking on this great spiritual luminary of our times, whose life and message, together with those of his master Sri Ramakrishna, were mainly responsible in changing the thought-current of India at the turn of the last century and in bringing about her cultural and spiritual renaissance. Let us remember that, even at this distance of time since his passing away, India needs to study and follow the Swami and his message, if she is to rise to her pristine glory; and the world, too, will benefit by it.

The speakers have made a devoted study of the saints they have chosen for presentation, and it is perhaps not in keeping with the spirit of the seminar to point out one study as superior to any other. Yet, some of them need special mention. The papers on St. Benedict by Dom Bede Griffiths, on Francis of Assisi by J. Daniel, and on St. Ignatius of Loyola by Lawrence Sundaram may be considered as models of hagiography. The lives of Sadāśiva Brahmendra, Āṇḍāl and Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār, Gandhi, and of the saints of Karṇāṭaka have been written well by the respective writers.

The three lectures delivered at the seminar, viz. 'The Role of Intuition in a Saintly Life' by Sri Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, Governor of Mysore; 'Union for the Study of Great Religions—Seminar on Saints: The Object of Our Efforts' by K. D. D. Henderson, Co-ordinating Secretary, USGR, Oxford; and 'Religion and Piety in Spinoza' by Leon Roth, form Part II of the book.

In his opening address to the seminar, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, one of the founders of the Union, says: 'Religious education depends far less on the spoken word than on the living examples set by the saints themselves, who live in God, clothed in love and immersed in service.' That sums up the value of the book.

S. K.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME MYLAPORE, MADRAS

REPORT FROM JANUARY 1960 TO MARCH 1961

The High School Section: This is entirely residential. It had 148 students at the end of the period under review. Almost all the students enjoyed scholarships or concessions in fees. Out of the 32 pupils sent for the S.S.L.C. examination, 27 were declared eligible for college courses. The boys do all the household duties themselves, and get an all-round moral and religious training. The school library had 6,691 books at the end of the year, and was utilized well. The boys were given ample opportunities for self-expression through an exhibition of paintings, drawings, and handiwork, and also various public celebrations in which they took active part. The school provides facilities for various hobbies like spinning, weaving, gardening, etc.

The Collegiate Section: Twenty-six students were given boarding and lodging facilities.

The Technical Section: This section comprises a technical institute and a workshop, and is entirely residential. Strength on 31st March 1961: 101. During the period under review, 15 students were admitted for the three-year course in automobile engineering, and 25 for the course in mechanical engineering. In the first year examination, 36 out of 43 students passed, ten of them in first class. In the final examination, 21 out of 25 students passed, out of whom two obtained first class, one of them taking the first rank in the State.

The Ramakrishna Centenary Elementary School, Mylapore: This school, having thirteen sections in standards I to V, had a strength of 428 students at the end of the year (boys: 230; girls: 198); staff: 14, including seven lady teachers.

The Higher Elementary School, Malliankaranai, Chingleput District: Mainly catering to the needs of the backward classes, agriculture is taught in this school as a pre-vocational subject. Strength at the end of the year: 171 (boys: 140; girls: 31); staff: 8. In the free Harijan hostel attached to the school, there were 41 boarders during the year.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA KANPUR

REPORT FROM JANUARY 1960 TO MARCH 1961

The following were the activities of the Ashrama during the period under review:

Spiritual and Cultural: Besides regular worship and meditation in the Ashrama shrine, religious classes were held on Sunday evenings at the Ashrama, and on week days in different parts of the city. The monastic members addressed various meetings in the city and outside. The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda were observed with programmes of *bhajan*s, worship, feeding of the poor, discourses, and public meetings. A new aspect of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda celebrations, introduced in 1961, was the speech and essay competitions for school and college students.

Educational: The Higher Secondary School for boys had 498 students at the beginning of the session. The school is known for the high standard of results it produces. The library for children and the general public contained 5,350 books on 31st March 1961. During the period under review, 5,021 books were issued.

Medical: The charitable outdoor hospital treats general diseases and ophthalmic cases. The homoeopathic system of treatment was also made available. Number of patients treated: General: New cases: 32,592; Repeated cases: 1,24,857; Surgical: New cases: 3,183; Repeated cases: 11,601; Operations: major: 54; minor: 1,314; Injections: 7,184; Electrotherapy: 50; Laboratory tests: 225. Total number of patients treated: 1,81,064. Daily average: 398.

Needs of this Ashrama:

1. Rs. 30,000 for the Ashrama kitchen and workers' quarters.
2. Rs. 25,000 for a building to house the library and reading room.
3. Donations for a new building for the school, which is to be shifted to a new premises.
4. Rs. 10,000 for the equipment of the science and biology laboratories of the school, and Rs. 5,000 for the school museum.
5. Rs. 22,500 for a new block for housing the X-ray, dental, and pathological departments.