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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

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



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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Belur Math, January 1, 1924

It was the first day of the year, and they were observing the *kalpataru* day at the Kankur-gachhi Yogodyana.¹ At the Math also, there was arrangement for the special worship of the Master and offerings to him. From early morning, devotees were streaming in, and more so as it was a public holiday. They assembled in Mahapurushji's room, after saluting the Master. He, too, talked with them on various subjects with evident delight. A devotee saluted him and said: 'Happy new year!' Mahapurushji replied smilingly: 'Happy English new year; for our own new year is on the first of Vai-śākha. Today is the new year according to the English calender. See how our minds work under the influence of English education of a hundred and fifty years. We are almost losing our distinction, our national traits. This is not just because we are a conquered nation; that we have been for quite a long time. The Mohammedans could not destroy our national

life even after a long rule of seven or eight centuries. But such is the magic power of the Western civilization, and such are the skilful ways adopted by the Western people in instilling their ideas into us, that we cannot even perceive that they are out to uproot our culture and religious beliefs. That is how this great nation has become so much Westernized in such a short time, and that in every respect. Gradually, our way of thinking also has changed. The worst evil is that the whole Hindu race has lost faith in its Vedic religion. The common idea that prevails is that all that is contained in our *sanātana* (perennial) religion is false and imaginary, and that whatever the standard-bearers of Christianity say is gospel truth. They were out for converting the whole Hindu race to Christianity, but God willed otherwise. Had this perennial Vedic religion been wiped out, then spirituality itself would have been banished from this world. That is why the Lord Himself incarnated as Sri Ramakrishna for the sake of protecting this eternal religion. He started his spiritual practice with that very worship of God in the image which the Christians and others in our country who

¹The day on which Sri Ramakrishna blessed the devotees at the Cossipore garden-house, fulfilling their spiritual hankerings, like the mythological *kalpataru*, the wish-fulfilling tree.

had been influenced by the Western ideas derided as idolatry. His practice of the spiritual disciplines of all the faiths and his success in all of them have struck the whole world with wonder. As a result, even the great savants of the West now humbly acknowledge the greatness and the grandeur of the Vedic religion of India. As a consequence of this, the attention of even the blindly imitative Indians has been drawn to the life of the Master, and with that to their own religion. The atmosphere in this country began to change from the very day of the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. The Indians are gradually regaining faith in themselves, which they had lost. As a result of the wonderful work of the Master in the spiritual field, the soul power of India has been reawakened. You will find that India will make wonderful progress in every direction. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) declared that religion forms the backbone of India. That backbone had been broken, as it were; and consequently, India became weak in every respect and lagged behind others. The Master's advent has set right that backbone again and reinvigorated it. Now India will make the world wonder at her achievements not only in religion, but also in all other spheres.

'The Master has roused the power of the Spirit that moves the whole universe. The world will, in course of time, realize what he has done for it. Aha! What a good fortune it was for us to have been in close association with God Himself—to have seen, touched, and served the Master! His touch has made our lives blessed. Those also will be blessed who have not seen him, but who have accepted his message, and are moulding their lives accordingly—who have accepted him as their life's ideal. He is the epitome of all spiritual endeavours; he is the Lord of the three worlds; his grace knows no limit; he is the fulfiller of all desires. He bestows all things according to the sincere desires of his devotees—be it virtue, prosperity, enjoyment, or liberation. How can I speak of him fully?'

The devotee: 'On this day, he assumed the

role of the wish-fulfilling tree (*kalpataru*) and showered his grace on quite a number of devotees.'

Mahapurushji: 'Why should he have been a *kalpataru* on this day alone? Why should it be so? True to say, he is a *kalpataru* for ever. His only work is to shower his grace on all creatures. We have seen it with our own eyes how he blessed innumerable people in so many ways every day. Yes, it is true that on that particular day, in the Cossipore garden-house, he blessed quite a number of devotees all at a time. In that sense, this day has a special significance; for it was on this day that the devotees felt palpably his infinite grace through that one incident.'

The devotee: 'Maharaj, were you present there on that day?'

Mahapurushji: 'No, I was not. As a matter of fact, none of the monastic disciples of the Master was present there at the time. The Master was then seriously ill; our hearts were then full of the spirit of renunciation. He was then passing through such a critical period of illness that we kept vigil by turns all the twenty-four hours of the day. The lay devotees would come during the daytime according to their convenience, and they would arrange for the medicines, diet, and all other necessary expenditure. But we shouldered the entire responsibility of nursing him. And along with that proceeded our intense spiritual practice. The Master also encouraged us very much in this. He would call us individually and guide us on the right path; he kept himself informed about the progress made in our meditation and the kind of visions each one of us was having. At night, Swamiji would sit with us in meditation round a blazing fire under the sky, and sometimes we would also sing devotional songs. The whole night passed thus in divine ecstasy, while serving the Master by turns. Since we had to keep awake at night, most of us used to have a nap after our lunch. On that day, too, after lunch, we were having a nap in the small room adjacent to the hall below, when, for the first time at

Cossipore, the Master came down in the afternoon for a stroll in the garden. It was a holiday, and many devotees were present in the garden. Seeing the Master downstairs, they followed him in great delight. He was walking slowly towards the gate of the garden, when Girish Babu, after prostrating himself at his feet, began to sing his glory with folded hands. These words, replete with sincere devotion and faith, sent the Master into a deep *samādhi* even while he was standing. Finding him in such a divine mood, the devotees started saying in great joy: "Victory unto Sri Ramakrishna; victory unto Sri Ramakrishna", and saluted him again and again. Gradually, the Master's mind regained outer consciousness to some extent, and he turned his benign eyes on them and said: "How best to bliss you! May you all be enlightened!" No sooner had he uttered these words, than the devotees felt an upsurge of ineffable bliss within themselves. They exclaimed repeatedly: "Glory unto Ramakrishna, glory unto Ramakrishna", and saluted him as they were saying so. He, too, still in that state of divine absorption, touched almost all of them one by one, saying: "May you be enlightened!" As a result of that divine touch, all the devotees felt wonderful spiritual stirrings inside them. Some of them were lost in meditation; some danced with joy; some wept; and some shouted his glory like people gone mad. That was all an unimaginable sight, and there stood the Master looking at them all with great delight. Their uproar of joy roused us from our sleep. We rushed out and saw the devotees behaving all around the Master like a group of lunatics, and he himself was looking at them graciously with a smiling face, full of affection. When we reached there, the Master's mind had returned to the human plane, but the devotees were still in their ecstatic mood, intoxicated with divine bliss. Later on, we learnt the whole thing by asking the devotees. All of them acknowledged that the Master's touch had brought them wonderful spiritual realization, and that that experience had lasted quite a long time. And why should

not his touch be as effective as that? Was he not God Himself? Even that day, the Master did not touch one or two, but said that they would have it later. From this, it is clear that nothing happens unless the time is ripe. One has to wait for the right moment.'

The devotee: 'Maharaj, he can surely turn people's minds godward by his mere wish and make their hearts pure. Why does he not do so? If his grace be contingent on one's spiritual effort, then how can one say that his mercy is without limits?'

Mahapurushji: 'Yes, what you say is true. I talk thus, because that is how it strikes me. In reality, God is not to be attained through any effort. Or, to be more correct, we cannot even assert that He is attainable at all, for He is the very Self of everybody, He is the soul of all souls. Spiritual practices merely serve to remove the coverings over the inner vision, and (when they are removed) the soul knows its own reality and becomes one with the inmost Self. It is precisely because He frees the creatures from the bondage of ignorance that they become blessed with a longing for realizing Him—this is His grace. But it is true that everything occurs according to some rule and order. To expect otherwise would be like the vain effort of trying to make a man of a child all of a sudden. It is through the gradual development of the body and mind that the child reaches and transcends the stages of boyhood, youth, manhood, and decrepitude; similarly, the divine experiences come to a man in an order and by stages. The development that comes naturally is the right one, and its effect is lasting. It goes without saying that God can, in His own mercy, liberate all the souls in the twinkling of an eye, for He is all-powerful. As a matter of fact, however, He does not do so. He rules the whole world under the same law, and He hardly allows any exception to it unless there be some very cogent reason. At the same time, His mercy is unconditional; there is no doubt about that. Had you but the slightest idea of His infinite mercy and love for His creatures, the very question as to

how He can be an infinite ocean of grace could never have arisen in your mind. That He incarnates Himself out of compassion for His creatures is the greatest proof that His love is limitless; that shows that He is an infinite ocean of kindness. He is ever content; He has nothing to seek for; and yet, out of mercy, He engages Himself in the task of saving the creatures. He has only one disposition, and that is mercy—love. Can anybody ever explain how merciful He is? It is a thing to be realized. The Master used to say: "If a man but tries to proceed one step towards God, He comes nearer to him ten steps more." Such is His mercy!

Never have any doubt about His grace; never allow even such a thought to cross your mind. Go on calling on Him with love; His grace will make your heart and mind full. Can such a realization come in a day or all of a sudden? It will all come in time; you will get all this in due course. Even we could not have got any idea of how kind God is to us, if we had not seen the Master. He would be all eager, he would shed tears, to bestow his mercy on others. Who indeed craves for His mercy with all sincerity? Men are mad after worldly enjoyment. Anyone who earnestly wants divine joy surely gets it.'

RABINDRANATH : OUR NATIONAL POET

People all over the world are paying their homage to Rabindranath. The centenary celebrations of the poet's advent are marked with spontaneity everywhere. It is pleasing to see that men of almost all shades of faith and opinion, of all strata and occupations, have joined together to offer their love and respect to the great poet. The occasion is a festivity, where each individual is delighted to perceive the possibility of his becoming free from geographical limitations and narrow feelings of national distinctness. Beyond his own self, entangled as he is in the complexity of modern civilization, man finds his aspiration for universal kinship fulfilled in the poet, who had broken through all stifling barriers and attained freedom. This is a feeling experienced neither through any intellectual effort nor under any calculated tutoring; the feeling is direct and simple like life itself. It is caused by the music of truth. Its symphony lulls the busy senses and the intellect, and truth fills the heart directly. It is simple, because 'when truth is known, life is simple'. The world-wide celebrations are the expressions of universal joy, because man recognizes his own glory in the light emanating

from the poet's personality. It is rapturous and stimulating for India, because she has been able to kindle that light and dedicate it to humanity. It has been possible for India to stem out from the soil and blossom forth in heavenly fragrance and brightness, and invite all to share her nectar and be delighted in her glory, because she could feed herself on the sunshine of her faith in universality and get sustenance from the mighty current of the spirit flowing through man and nature. Rabindranath's life is an expression of India's perennial aspiration for universality and truth. Today, people all over the world hear the poet sing the invocatory song of a glorious future for humanity, and everyone feels the morning breeze of a universal awakening.

India was passing through dreadful dreams of a long stormy night. But the dismal darkness was a sure prelude to the coming glorious day. Through the voice of Rabindranath, the morning birds signalled the daybreak—the dawn was welcomed. Rabindranath came at a time when India was reasserting herself, when, after a delirious forgetfulness, she was awakening to her spiritual legacy and the mission she was to fulfil in the world. In that

period of her spiritual awakening, there were unmistakable signs of a complete renaissance of her national life; and the poet was one of the eminent vanguards to herald the new epoch of her history.

II

India, from the very core of her heart, believes that the universe is the manifestation of the supreme Deity, which is Truth itself. Hence it is that the people of the land look upon life and its activities as a continuous worship of God. In India, for ages, art, philosophy, and religion have flourished as the expressions of man's devotion and dedication to the supreme One. Man here has always endeavoured to transcend his individual limitations by devoting himself to the pursuit of art, philosophy, and religion, and has tried, through these, to establish communion with the Absolute. India is a land of poet-philosophers, and Rabindranath is one of her greatest sons in poetic vision and philosophical outlook.

To go through Rabindranath's works is to soar high in the realm of the spirit; yet not cut off from mother earth. To the Indian mind, nature is never divorced from the spirit. Both are eternally united, and out of this blissful union flows the panorama of creation. The Upaniṣadic seers perceived man's individual life as a part of the infinite Life flowing through the universe. Rabindranath sings in tune with this perception, while feeling himself as much a part of the world as a particular colour is inseparable from a whole spectrum. In his poems, he reveals himself as one with nature, in ecstatic adoration of God. In his music, we feel the throb of life in things, and by his dedication to God, we are drawn to the soul within matter. As honey is a transformation of the ingredients collected by bees, and the transformation takes place within them, so also the facts of nature and the flow of mind are recreated into poetry, being soaked in the spirit flowing through nature and the poet himself. His devotion opens the gates of the mysterious universe before his vision, and the Infinite

reveals itself to him through the hints and whispers of nature. The music flowing out of his inspired and intuitive heart touches the chord of every human heart, and creates a responsive echo of the same note. The poet has become universal, since even the inarticulate, through his music and poetry, can understand the voice of nature, can hear and talk to mountains and mists, flowing waters and flowering trees. Readers often get lost in the fervent prayer of the poet. Perhaps, for the moment, the great One flashes in all its glory in their mind. It seems as if the poet had spoken the very words that they had so long been searching for; had sung the very music that had been struggling, as it were, to flow out of their own hearts. All feel the poet to be their own—he expresses their own hopes and aspirations, their own feelings and sentiments, their own intuitions and realizations.

III

With a deep faith in the Real, and a passionate feeling for everything in nature, Rabindranath reached the height of communion with it, which brought him out of himself. He has given expression to this intense feeling in many of his poems, like 'Nirjharer Svapnabhaṅga', 'Balākā', etc.

Rabindranath believes that love is the expression of the supreme Being in its desire to become many. Love is limited in its manifestation through particular persons, but it is one with the universal love which connects all creation with its Master. The whole world appears to the poet as a great festivity, where everyone is invited to join and feel one with others in universal love. The discord of day-to-day life disappears before his conception of truth, which expresses itself in beauty and joy. His feelings echo those of the Upaniṣadic seers: 'All this—whatsoever moves on the earth—should be covered by the Lord.' 'He is verily the source of joy.' 'From Bliss, indeed, all these beings originate; having been born, they are sustained by Bliss; they move towards and merge in Bliss.' He is aware that the ever

beautiful Deity is the common source of all beauties seen in all forms, as well as of the consummate beauty that is revealed before a poet's intuition. He feels the presence of the supreme One, whose love binds all together; and the poet sings:

*Bisvasāthe joge jethāy bihāro,
Seikhāne jog tomār sāthe āmāro.*

'I am ever in communion with you, wherever you are in union with the universe.' The apparent separateness between God and the world fades away before his poetic vision, and he is overwhelmed by his faith in the presence of the supreme Consciousness throughout creation. In the quivering of the blade of grass, in the twinkling of the dew drop, in the clear blue of the sky, in the fresh green of the thicket, in the whisper of the flowing rivulet, and in the brightness of the sunshine, as well as within his own pulsating heart, the poet feels the touch of the Eternal. The universe appears to him as moving in the ecstatic rhythm of divine Love.

IV

In Rabindranath, we come across the eloquence of supreme Beauty, supreme Goodness, and supreme Truth. Each of these elements becomes complete when it comes in spontaneous unison with the other two; and the supreme ideal comprises all these, through which man expresses himself in joy, goodness, and knowledge. Rabindranath excels in expressions that nourish our emotion, strengthen our will, and enlighten our intellect. His creation is a music, superb in *tāna*, *māna*, and *laya*. It flows out in the glory of God, professing His dignity manifest in man.

Throughout his writings, we find innumerable testimonies to his faith in God. His conviction is that the universe is not without God, but it is His play of joy, His creation of love. Matter is nothing but the adored toy in His game, and has its value because He delights in the game. The poet feels himself to be a playmate of the Divine.

Beauty is revealed in the expression of truth. Truth is beauty and beauty is truth. Rabindranath's language is beauty itself, and it is full of meaning. It is transformed into music by virtue of the strength of its inward flow, which speaks for the truth in man. As an expression of beauty, it becomes a perfect art and radiates joy. So, even tragedies and the hard life of the world join the flow of his music and get polished in its current and softened in its profound compassion. Nothing human is ugly to the poet. From the particular, he soars high to the universal; and what appears as low in its environmental limitations finds its proper value when perceived and expressed by him in its right place in the universal perspective. His clarity of vision enables him to see beauty even in things that appear otherwise to ordinary men. His right state of mind expressed in true art transcends the gross vulgarity of unrefined minds. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says about true art: 'It lifts us from the clamorous assault of sense and frees us from the torrent of external impressions.' Art cannot flourish in its true nature if it is tainted by crass materialism and is bereft of subtle values. It is never a mere narration of human limitations and failings. Art is a creation, and flows from the heart. It is an inheritance of values. The poet himself explains the inheritance of values as consisting of 'the ideals of simplicity of life, clarity of spiritual vision, purity of heart, harmony with the universe, and consciousness of the infinite personality in all creation'. Creative art draws man towards this inheritance and stimulates him in his lofty aspirations. Indian art, through its noble tradition, bears testimony to this purposefulness. It is more effective than sermons and instructions, laws and codes, because it is truth itself in the form of beauty, flowing from an inspired heart and going direct to the hearts of all. To an artist, with faith in such purposefulness, nothing in the world looks unnecessary, and he cannot become pessimistic.

Successful art is an expression of optimism. To Rabindranath, even sufferings and torments

are the affectionate chastisement by God, who is ever eager to make man perfect, so that he can feel himself one with Him. Tears are as dear to the poet as ecstatic joy. Sufferings and misfortunes bring man back to God from his unwholesome association with lower life, like a mother forcibly bringing her child to her warm lap from mud and dirt. This sense of divine purposefulness makes the writings of Rabindranath dynamic in spirit and beautiful in form. In his own words: 'Poetry is not a mere matter of feeling or expression, it is the creation of form. Ideas take shape by some hidden subtle skill at work within the poet. This creative power is the origin of poetry. Sensations, feelings, or language are only its raw material.' 'The creation of beauty is not the work of unbridled imagination. Passion, when it is given full sway, becomes a destructive force, like fire gone out of hand.'

Music is not the row of a crowd. Poetry cannot flow out of unrestrained emotion, uncultivated intellect, and untrained will. True art is an expression well balanced in emotion and reflection. Riotous thought, unrefined emotion, and unrestrained passion can find expression under the camouflage of art and poetry, music and literature for a while. They only intoxicate man causing injury to his personality. They can seldom create true poetry or real art.

To a real artist, to a poet of vision, life is a vow. He expresses his true being through his creation, and not the objects that attract the greedy eye or satisfy the hungry passion of uncultivated lives. Rabindranath speaks of this idea in his *Gitanjali* thus:

'Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs.

'I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my thoughts, knowing that thou art that truth which has kindled the light of reason in my mind.

'I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart and keep my love in flower, knowing

that thou hast thy seat in the inmost shrine of my heart.

'And it shall be my endeavour to reveal thee in my actions, knowing it is thy power gives me strength to act.'

How fervently he aspires to keep himself pure, his intellect awake to truth, his emotions directed towards God, and his actions in tune with the source of all power! This characteristic of his thought renders his creation highly elevating for all men and for all time.

V

Rabindranath felt an urge not only to act for the supreme Good, but also to dedicate himself for the good of humanity. He was not content only with his hymns to the one God in the high heavens; he sang the glory of God in man. He shared the sobs and smiles, pains and pleasures of the world at large. When in communion with God, he felt no fear to live with humanity and its toiling life. A life indulged in idleness and pleasure, and segregated from the worries of day-to-day living, was not after his liking. Though he was far above the common men, yet he lived as one among them. His words reveal that he was not blind to the hard realities of life:

*Eso, chede eso, sakhi, kusumāśayan,
Bājuk kaṭhin māṭi caraṇer tale.
Kato ār karibe go basiyā birale
Ākās-kusumabane svapan cayan.*

'O friend, leave aside the bed of flowers; feel the hard earth under your feet. How long will you sit to collect dreams in the solitude of ethereal flower-garden?'

Rabindranath was not a poet of the dream-land. The suffering and helplessness of the masses pained him acutely. Many of his writings are full of this feeling. He was grieved at the sad plight of his countrymen, and sang the music of confidence and hope for better days:

*Kabi tabe uthe eso, jadi thāke prāṇ
Tabe tāi laha sāthe, tabe tāi karo āṅi dān.*

*Baḍo duḥkha, baḍo byathā, sanmukhete
kaṣṭer saṁsār
Baḍoi daridra, śūnya, baḍo kṣudra, baddha,
andhakār. . .*

E dainyamājhāre, kabi,

Ekbār niye eso svarga hote biśvāser chabi.

‘O poet, then rise up, if you feel, take your life with you, dedicate that today. In dismal unhappiness and acute pain, the distressed world stands before you; it is utterly poor, empty, narrow, entangled, and dark. . . . To that helplessness, O poet, bring the vision of confidence from heaven.’

His devotion to truth and beauty kindled the flame of compassion in him. His burning love goes out to everyone—the hungry and the sick, the poor and the afflicted. His invocation of the higher spirit still echoes: ‘O sun, rise upon the bleeding hearts blossoming in flowers of the morning, and the torchlight revelry of pride shrunken to ashes.’ He exhorts his countrymen ‘to put language in bewildered, bemused, and mute lips, to raise hopes in weary, parched, and broken hearts’.

Rabindranath’s conception of the Absolute is not an abstract one. He believes in the immanence of the supreme Being. He is pre-eminent among the lovers of men, when he sings:

‘He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle, and even like him come down on the dusty soil!’

VI

Being conscious of the divine immanence, Rabindranath was remarkably keen about social justice. He realized that civilization cannot thrive where the higher values of life are ignored. He says: ‘Our desires blind us to the truth that there is in man, and this is the greatest wrong done by ourselves to our own soul. It deadens our consciousness, and is but a gradual method of spiritual suicide. It produces ugly sores in the body of civilization.’

He keenly felt for the political emancipation of his own country. He knew for certain that India in fetters, with all her lofty ideals and valued treasures, would never be able to serve humanity. Under the domination of a foreign power, she could never discharge her duties towards others. True, Rabindranath did not join in active politics, but his feeling observations and passionate writings powerfully influenced our political thought and roused the youth to devote themselves to our national emancipation. To him, India was like a mother. She nourished and protected her children with affectionate care. India stood before the poet in all her glory with her diverse children bound to her in faith and affection. Our national anthem is a vivid picture of our motherland skilfully painted by him on the canvas of the nation’s mind.

But, to Rabindranath, India is not to become a nation in the narrow sense of the term. To him, nationality has a greater value and a wider implication. His idea of a nation is that it should be a living unit, living for, and dedicated to, the service of the whole, viz. mankind. Accordingly, the goal of a nation does not lie in its ever-increasing desire for making wealth and wielding power, but in subordinating the selfish pursuits of each nation in the interest of humanity as a whole. ‘As the mission of the rose lies in the unfoldment of the petals which implies distinctness, so the rose of humanity is perfect only when the diverse races and the nations have evolved their perfected distinct characteristics, but all attached to the stem of humanity by the bond of love.’ He calls upon his own nation to rise: ‘Let us stand firm and suffer with strength for the True, for the Good, for the Eternal in man, for Thy kingdom which is in the union of hearts, for the freedom which is of the soul.’ Highlighting the peculiar characteristic of the Indian tradition, he says: ‘We shall realize that only through the development of racial individuality can we truly attain to universality, and only in the light of the spirit of universality can we perfect individuality.’

To give effect to his ideas and to inculcate the living spirit of the Upaniṣads in others, he devoted himself to the building up of Visva-Bharati. His aim was to create an institution of learning, where students from all parts of the world would assemble and breathe the soul-elevating atmosphere of its surroundings and live in an environment of true spiritual life. They would be disciplined in conduct and refined in taste and thought, so that their hearts would be receptive to the note of universal harmony. Explaining the ideal of Visva-Bharati, he said: 'The age has come when all artificial fences are breaking down, only that will survive which is basically consistent with the universe.' And the universe was to him the wonderful manifestation of the glorious spirit.

VII

Rabindranath's mind is vast and all-embrac-

ing. His poetic creation touches every aspect of human life. Every thought and desire, every emotion and aspiration, every pain and joy of life finds a touching echo in his creation. The universal appeal of his lofty thought transcends all the barriers of race, religion, or language. Rabindranath stands as the national poet of our country. As a true son of the soil, he was saturate with the spirit and culture of India. And true to the genius of India, he loved all the peoples of the world. Through his songs and poetry, stories and novels, he inspires man to rise to the realm of the Highest. To read Rabindranath is to come in intimate contact with the spiritual current of India and to feel elevated thereby. India's mission is to 'be and make'. In this mission of hers, the voice and the vision of Rabindranath, our national poet, are an unfailing guide on her path and an inexhaustible source of inspiration for her work.



SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(A BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE)

BY MR. A. K. BROHI

When the history of the awakening of modern India comes to be written, a handsome tribute is bound to be paid by the historian of the future to Sri Ramakrishna, in recognition of the signal services that he rendered to the cause of vivifying, fecundating, and enriching the spiritual heritage of India. For, judged by any standard, Sri Ramakrishna was a remarkable man indeed, and he has, in my opinion, left an indelible mark on the religious life of India. And even as perceptive a scholar as Albert Schweitzer, in his study entitled *Indian Thought and Its Development*, has been compelled to concede that his generalization concerning the character of Indian thought as being 'a world and life denying

philosophy' is subject to the all-important qualification that the philosophico-religious attitude of Sri Ramakrishna, and of his disciple Vivekananda, is an exception to the rule formulated by him, in that theirs is fully and squarely a world and life *affirming* philosophy.

It would be recalled that, according to Schweitzer, 'World and life affirmation consists in this: that man regards existence as he experiences it within himself, and as it has developed in the world as something of a value *per se*, and, accordingly, strives to reach perfection in himself, while within his own sphere of influence, he endeavours to preserve and further it'. 'World and life negation', on the other hand, 'consists in his regarding existence

as he experiences it in himself, and as it is developed in the world as something meaningless and sorrowful, and he resolves, accordingly, (a) to bring life to a standstill in himself by mortifying his will-to-believe and (b) to renounce all activity which aims at improvement of the conditions of life in this world. World and life affirmation unceasingly urges men to serve their fellows, society, nation, mankind, and, indeed, all that lives, with their utmost will and in lively hope of realizable progress. World and life negation takes no interest in the world, but regards man's life on earth either merely as a stage play in which it is his duty to participate, or only as a puzzling pilgrimage through the Land of Time to his world in Eternity.'

Whereas, by and large, Indian thought, belief, and practice are orientated in a philosophy which is concerned with the contemplation of the Absolute, and the Indian religious impulse is primarily engaged in a mystical mission of securing the merger of the individual Ātman in the life of the Brahman, in Sri Ramakrishna, and through him more effectively in his disciple Vivekananda, the contemplation of the Absolute, the quest of the individual to be lost in the Absolute, is reconciled with man's obligations to labour here below on earth and his duty to crusade for the realization of the *eternal* in the *world of time*. The characteristic passage from the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, which is often cited as a measure of support for the way in which Sri Ramakrishna attempted a confluence between the ontological validity of the idea of the timeless Absolute and, in the sphere of its manifestation in man's history, its role as an active, creative, preserving, and destroying *power*, is the following:

'When I think of the supreme Being as inactive, neither creating, nor preserving, nor destroying, I call Him Brahman or Puruṣa—the impersonal God. When I think of Him as active, creating, preserving, destroying, I call Him Śakti or Māyā or Prakṛti—the personal God. But the distinction between them does not mean a difference. The personal and the

impersonal are the same Being, in the same way as milk and its whiteness, or the diamond and its lustre, or the serpent and its undulations. It is impossible to conceive of the one without the other.'¹

This synthesis attempted by Sri Ramakrishna, regarded from the point of view of Indian philosophy, was revolutionary indeed, and the fact that it was articulated by an inspired sage lent to it an appeal which was bound to lead up to a large-scale practice of the gospel of inspired action. Here, for the first time, was an Indian sage whose consciousness was anchored in the soil of the spirit, and who was at the same time dedicated to the task of inciting men to bring to the service of the spirit all the heroic labour and sacrifice that were essential to incarnate it in history.

It is, I submit, from this perspective that the historical significance of the role of the Ramakrishna Mission is to be appreciated. The Ramakrishna Mission is, if I perceive its significance aright, dedicated to the programme of securing the awakening of India's *head* and *heart*, by admonishing men and women of India to *affirm* life by establishing conditions on earth in terms of which the life of the spirit may come to be realized by all and sundry, instead of its being regarded, as has been the case down the ages, as a monopoly of the privileged few.

II

Many have argued that this programme of securing the awakening of India by establishing institutions dedicated to the cause of promoting education, health, and good living by the common man is, to a great extent, the result of the impact of the growth of humanistic sentiment of the modern West on the mind of India, and it is not infrequently emphasized that even Vivekananda, who became the pioneering spirit and triumphant missionary in the cause of this awakening, was himself influenced considerably by the example of the

¹ See Romain Rolland, *The Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 66.

modern West. Did not Vivekananda, it is pointed out, repeatedly declare: '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'?

It is no doubt true that Vivekananda himself had travelled extensively in Europe and in America, where he had met some of the most leading personalities of the age in which he lived, and it is but natural that he should have brought back to India as a result of this experience this gospel of inspired action by man on earth.

Vivekananda, as is well known, was essentially a man of *action*, a master of *karmayoga* by temperament, but his inclination to respond to the mystical pull of his being in the traditional Indian style was fairly strong. This mystical urge would have made him a mere *sannyāsin*, had it not been counteracted by the way in which Sri Ramakrishna, thanks to his world and life affirming philosophy, channelled its direction. Vivekananda's sensitivity to the misery of the teeming millions of India was engendered in him by the impact that the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna made on him. It is true that he resolutely resisted all attempts to involve him into some political movements of the day, but short of that, he did all he could to incite the Indian people to establish more hospitals, more schools, and to publish literature for the benefit of the reading public of India to propagate the gospel of inspired action. It is, I submit, necessary to realize that the receptivity of Vivekananda to the example of the West was, in a large measure, engendered by the teachings of his master. Sri Ramakrishna opened new avenues to the soul of Vivekananda; and the opening of those avenues in his soul, through which the significance of Western influences could at all be perceived by him, was in itself an astonishing achievement, and it is therefore he, and not the modern West, that was primarily responsible for the embodiment of that gospel which lies at the back of the Ramakrishna Mission, and

gives to it the capacity of transforming the Indian scene, in the light of the ideals that have been consecrated, by the way in which they were upheld and maintained by the sage of Dakshineswar.

I have said enough to prepare a way for the proper recognition of the contribution that Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have made to the moral, mental, and spiritual awakening of India. In the words of Albert Schweitzer: 'Ramakrishna, familiar as he was with the state of ecstasy, did not regard such a naturally experienced union with the Absolute as the most to be desired and highest of all experiences. He recognized that a piety which is concerned only with the ego and its absorption into the Infinite is in danger of becoming egoistic and therefore valueless. So, he forced himself to keep his thoughts directed to service within the world and made that also the duty of his favourite disciple. He opposed Vivekananda's project when he wanted to follow the example of his paternal grandfather, who, at the age of twenty-five, had left his wife and children and a high position, in order to become a hermit. He impressed on him, again and again, that he was in the world to bring the true faith to man and to serve the poor and the wretched in the spirit of love. And Vivekananda obeyed him.'

'What is great in Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is that both experience and enjoy the state of ecstasy, and yet are superior to it, and draw their final criterion for the judgement of spiritual matters from ethical thought.'²

This is not the place in which I can enter more largely upon the historical significance of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna to the awakening of India, or even portray the broad features of that powerful movement that was set afoot by Vivekananda, his greatest of disciples. If I have adverted to this aspect of the historical role which the Ramakrishna Mission has played, it is only because I propose to place it as a preface to what I am going to

² Albert Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and Its Development*, p. 219.

say about the essential character of Indian art and culture in general, and the impetus which its growth has hitherto received, and is likely to receive in future, from the inspired teachings and enlightened action of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, respectively.

III

Indian art and culture, broadly considered, are the direct manifestations of the Indian mind's *exclusive concern with the Absolute, the timeless*. This world view, in the words of a recent study offered to us by one of the most perceptive Indologists that I know—Amaury de Riencourt—is clearly stated as follows: 'The philosophic Vedānta doctrine, by far the most influential philosophic system in Indian civilization and the most representative of the Indian temper, states that ultimate Truth lies beyond the illusionary world of *māyā*. This illusionary world is composed of the objective world of "forms", *rūpa*, and of the corresponding subjective world of "names" or "notions", *nāman*. The combination *nāma-rūpa* includes both the individual man with his mind and senses, and the objects of his perceptions and thoughts—in other words, the entire world, subjective and objective. Furthermore, *all* Indian schools of thought, including the Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, and Mahāyāna Buddhism, emphasize that language and logic are completely inadequate to the task of transcending *nāma-rūpa*, whose basic unreality is due to the fact that it is transient. The seeker after ultimate Truth, after the permanent and timeless, after pure Being, in other words, looks upon this unreal, transient, and ephemeral world as having the "form of Becoming" (*bhāva-rūpa*). So that Becoming—the process of time, i.e. history—is essentially unreal. Since the whole spatial world of nature is caught in the inexorable flow of time, from creation to dissolution, everything becomes as unreal as the Becoming that underlies it. The phenomenal world is made of the same stuff as dreams. What deludes us into believing that this world is real is ignorance (*avidyā*), the

subjective counterpart of *māyā*, and ignorance is the root of time. Philosophy's task is to overcome this ignorance, promote knowledge (*vidyā*), and thus tear away the veil of illusionary *māyā*.³

From the standpoint of Indian thought, it is easy to emphasize the leading feature of Indian art and culture, an undertaking which apparently has not hitherto received much attention at the hands of even the most, shall I say, sophisticated of its critics.

The life of thought in man has two basic coordinates which, for want of better expression, are to be characterized as the *outer* and the *inner*: (a) thought is either engaged in trafficking into the concourse of external order of things and discovering the laws in terms of which their movement, evolution, or development can be comprehended, with a view to designing *action* for securing the adjustment of individual life to outer environment, or (b) it is a pure inward activity, an inner movement *simpliciter*, in which case it is capable of being employed as a serviceable means for plumbing the hidden depths of man's spiritual being. When the thought-life is pressed in the service of *action*, it *analyses* the external world of Nature (which term, in this context, includes all that we conveniently understand by Nature plus man's body and mind), discovers the laws that seem to regulate its behaviour, and disentangles the categories or archetypal patterns in terms of which the movement or evolution of Nature's processes can be comprehended. But when the thought-life is directed inwards, it enables man to become increasingly *conscious* of the divine ground of his life, and ultimately enables him to secure liberation of his empirical self by securing its merger or fusion or identification with the universal spirit. Both of these are legitimate activities of the thought-life, but historically speaking, Western humanity appears to have fallen a victim to an excessive specialization of the thought-life in the service of action; and the

³ Amaury de Riencourt, *The Soul of India*, p. 107.

Indians, by and large, have fallen victim to an exclusive preoccupation with the power of thought, with a view to pressing it in the service of man's *personal* salvation. Western thought is scientific and historical; and the Indian, mystical and symbolical in its manifestation. Western outlook is melioristic, exoteric, and humanistic, whereas Indian outlook is quietistic, esoteric, and transcendental.

IV

Western art, as I look upon it, is the triumph of the thought-life's external movement, for it portrays the deliverance of man's aesthetic perception within the framework of norms that are peculiar to the exteriorization of man's thought-energy. Indian art, on the other hand, is the triumph of the interiorization of man's thought-life, and symbolically reflects the vision of the timeless Absolute as experienced by a highly evolved individual.

This contention can be well illustrated by the way in which, for example, the significance of Indian music is to be differentiated from that of Western music. Indian music, as contradistinguished from Western music is, as is well known, lacking in *content*; as Western critics complain so often, Indian music is repetitive, monotonous; for them, at any rate, it has no *wealth of detail*; everything here is blurred, and no note is sharply defined. This judgement is correct, if you regard Indian music from the Western perspective. Indian music, Western critics justifiably complain, is without *harmony*, and it uses, and that also half-heartedly, multitudes of microtones. But, then, in the theory of Indian music, what is relevant is to concentrate on the *interval between notes, rather than on the note itself*, for Indian music is primarily an attempt to articulate silence, to give to the spirit of silence a framework, in which it should be contemplated as a symbol of the timeless Absolute. With us—I say 'us', because Indian and Pakistani music is the same—the musical note is struck as if in an attempt to stab the soul of silence, just to make it bleed

and thereby compel our recognition of its being. The important phase in musical procession of sound, in the conception of Indian music, is not sound, but the lack of it, which is realized at its best in the interval between the notes. Indian music thus creates pure melody. There is rich procession of empirical contents which shade off one into the other, but they are used by the musicians not for their own sake, but in an attempt to set them forth within the framework of eternal and omnipotent *silence*—that meta-cosmic silence that *is* and will always be. This device, which is perfected by the Indian classical music makers, is a direct expression of the thought-life at work in the inner dimension of the soul of man. I say so, because I believe that it is not the soul which is contained in man's body, but it is man's body that is contained in his soul.

In Indian music, thus, nothing is *fixed*, since every note is a fleeting symbol of the reality lying within the depths of our soul, like a ray of light which is covered by many veils. The pauses, the intervening shades of silence between the various notes, lift as it were veils that hide the light; but the removal of each veil is only a means, the attention of the beholder all the while being concentrated on the light behind the veil—which term, as applied to the world of sound, as I have said earlier, corresponds to the *voice* of silence. The attempt by the musicians is to *improvise* from the dimension of pure inwardness the procession of notes, in order to suggest the feeling which no note either in itself or in harmonious juxtaposition with another can suggest.

How shall one point out the point of Indian music? It differs from Western music much in the manner in which a myth, regarded as a means for emphasizing the hidden meaning of life, differs from a precisely worded philosophy. Intellectual statements do not help us in comprehending its significance. Like life itself, it defies our conceptual analysis of its meaning. But in order to get near its significance, let us compare it to the waves we see

mounting up on the bosom of a turbulent ocean. It is always the selfsame wave we see moving onwards, although, at each point, its waters are continually changing. And yet, what we understand by the wave is born of the ceaseless motion of the water-content of the ocean. What is this wave, this pure form in which the movement of matter is continually involving itself? We can see it, we can feel it, but comprehend it we cannot. The sound-notes in the scheme of Indian music, like the shifting waters in the waves, are not the text, but only the pretext for our attention. The Indian musician has the vision of the wave, and tries to help its birth in the world of sound for the cognition of those who are not yet directly aware of it. In Western music, on the other hand, the emphasis is on the movement of sound-content itself, and the exposition that the music gives is analogous to the exposition of the rules of the *grammar* of a language. The Indian musician is involved in a continual endeavour to communicate the poetry of sound by concentrating on the supra-sensuous silence. He is possibly hopelessly shallow in his knowledge of the *grammar* of musical expression. But why should this, speaking comparatively, be regarded as a disadvantage? At least, he has something highly significant to say; whereas his Western brother knows merely *how* to say that which he experiences by way of the play of the thought-life in its onward career in the world of matter and motion.

Indian music, like the Indian soul, is, I suggest, basically *devotional*, and I deny that there is, or can be, properly speaking, say, such a thing as *Indian martial music*. Indian music is a means of securing man's liberation through devotional response it induces him to make to the universe; it is a method evolved by the Indian mind to serve the flowering of a religious impulse which is meta-cosmic in its orientation.

Of all the art-forms, Indian thought-life succeeds in exploiting musical form the most, for the obvious reason that it is through the

very formlessness of its medium of expression that the vision of spiritual Reality is capable of being effectively suggested. Other arts that use plastic or, comparatively speaking, more tangible media for the expression of aesthetic feeling, from the point of view of aesthetic expression, are to that extent limited. It is, for this reason, also true that the best means for expressing the significance of Indian music is *instrumental* and not *vocal*; and this is so, because, in the latter case, the medium of expression is loaded with *conventional significance*, since the human voice, as contradistinguished from the impersonal note on musical strings, is more limited. The Indian classical *khyāl*, for instance, is sung without any *verbal* meaning being communicated, and is in the nature of a device to make the vocal music approximate, as much as possible, to the instrumental, and thus to free it from the limits of conventional lexicographic meaning.

V

In offering the foregoing observations, I am not attempting to drive a tight wedge between Western and Indian art-forms, but only to suggest a point of view from which their individuality could be contemplated. The music of the future, I suggest, will have to move along the lines of a synthesis between the Absolute lying at the back of creation and its empirical manifestation in time, in the way that has been, on another plane, suggested by Sri Ramakrishna. It is not just the synthesis between Western art-form and the Indian art-form that I am thinking of at the moment in this context; and so, the term 'synthesis', as used here, does not really do justice to what I have at the back of my mind. All I am anxious to point out is that the *music of the future would be stereoscopic*, for it would use the Western and the Indian music forms in a manner in which our percipient consciousness uses the two eyes we have in realizing a new dimension of Reality which cannot be independently yielded by either of them. But this development, I surmise, will take place with the pri-

mary emphasis on Indian art-form, since Indian music is more closely related to the hidden ground life than is the Western one.

Western music is music of space, and has a 'geometrical' quality of 'spreadoutness' about it, and, regarded from the Indian perspective, has lot of wealth of detail, but is lacking in depth. It uses notes in the sense of one excluding the other; and the musical effect is secured by contemplating them simultaneously, as though you were seeing a landscape of sound. Its harmony is based on the coexistence of the notes; and if the symphonic effect is secured at all, it is because the individual listening to it projects into it his *sense of duration* and sees in it a succession of fixed and well-defined harmonies.

The starting point in the evolution of future art-forms will always be represented by the Indian co-ordinate of thought-life; but that co-ordinate will now have to move out of its own dimension into another sphere of manifestation. Just as a point moving out of itself gives us a *line*, and a line moving out of itself gives us a *surface*, and a surface moving out of itself gives us a *cube*, so also the inner movement of the thought-life, of which the Indian mind is so richly possessed, is now to be lifted out of itself, and, perchance, Western techniques of articulating harmony might have an important part to play in this direction. Then, perchance, will the Taj Mahal in the world of sound be born.

The point of Western art is best typified by representational arts *par excellence*, like painting and architecture; for the outward-bent Western mind, these forms offer the best means of setting forth the significance of its aesthetic perception. But even Europe is beginning to realize that representational arts like painting have to be freed of the limits which are inherent in the representational process; and Europe is now moving in the direction of the art of abstract expressionism. But modern art, although it is avowedly abstract, does not express life, for the simple reason that its prac-

tioners, by and large, have not experienced the in-break of the spirit in them. Modern painters appear to me, in their expression, to be like children playing the part of Hamlet; they say something which they themselves do not understand. Only to the extent that they are unconscious instruments at the service of the spirit can they become the means for the communication of the life of the spirit. If they can help at all, they do so in spite of themselves. The telephone wire does not become a *creative personality*, simply because some one happens to speak by means of it! The psychic structure of the soul-life of modern artists is like a mirror reflecting an image, and since it is completely passive, the collective unconscious of the race uses it as a serviceable slave for the articulation of its primeval archetypal forms. It is therefore that I say that only the highly evolved person, if he could master the techniques perfected by the West, can help humanity forward. All great art therefore is religious in its significance; it is absolute, but *not abstract*. Modern art is avowedly abstract only in the sense that it is divorced from life!

VI

In offering these ideas on a day like this to those present here and, through them, to those who are not present here, I am taking advantage of the atmosphere and the setting which an occasion like the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna provides. There is, at the base of this whole choir and furniture of the universe, a fundamental unity of life, which underlies all empiric forms that are its specialized manifestations, and serve it as a means for its joyful activity; to grasp this essential unity is to see the point of specialized variations on the theme of the manifestation of the spirit. Sri Ramakrishna, the sage of Dakshineswar, emphasizes this essential unity of religious life, even as Islam does, and both of them agree in maintaining that the contemplation of the essential unity of life has *to be made the informing principle of human action for the pur-*

pose of making history. We have to transform our social environment to reconstitute political order and to reorientate economic processes obtaining in that order in the light of this spiritual ground which lies at the base of creation. This work has to be done by God's vicegerents on earth—by men and women. This has to be done by *all* of us; spiritual life is not the monopoly of a class or section of a people in a given society. And what is more, this has to be done *here and now*. Man's participation in divine Life is not a distant goal, but, as Islam teaches, the Kingdom of God is to be realized on earth through the labour of man. If we do not keep our eye on the essential unity of life, we misapply our energies and involve ourselves in wasteful friction and end up in making a mess of life. To be virtually anchored in the essential unity of life, and with that thought as a basis, to reflect that insight in all we do here, is a mark of wisdom, and is the highest available ideal for men to reflect

and to realize. Sri Ramakrishna's example is great and salutary precisely for this reason, and Vivekananda reflected it by taking only one step forward. Other steps are still to be taken, and they are being taken by the Ramakrishna Mission that Vivekananda founded. Or else, how do you explain the Ramakrishna Mission at all sponsoring an exhibition like the present one? It is a measure of its practical utility that the Ramakrishna Mission does not discard the fostering of a passion even for enjoying aesthetic experience. And this it is able to do consistently with its contemplation of the essential unity of life as the underlying principle of human activity here below, and this venture therefore provides the basic illustration of its competence to bring about an awakening of the moral, mental, and spiritual life of India.

I, as a Muslim, have sympathy with this approach, because it is the one that Islam brought to its votaries many hundreds of years ago.



BUDDHA AND THE MODERN AGE

BY DR. PARESH NATH MUKHERJEE.

Gautama, the Buddha, whom Rabindranath Tagore describes as 'the greatest man ever born', and to whom Albert Schweitzer refers as 'not a reformer, but a revolutionary'¹ in the domain of thought and action, profoundly influenced the history and culture of this country for all time. The modern age can ill afford to dispense with his life and teachings. He has a message for the modern age and for all time to come.

The Buddha made his appearance at an age when degeneracy had set in; when the old values were being revised; when social unity was threatened by the appearance of different

sects; when people, forgetting the spirit of religion and good life, were fighting over useless ceremonies and rituals. Thus, before his advent, there was anarchy, chaos, and degeneracy in the domain of thought. People were groping in the dark, and there was need for a man of clear sight and perception of the true realities of life, who could lead the then degenerate society out of the mire. In our own days, we find that a very similar situation has arisen, when the old values are being fast revised, when social chaos and moral anarchy have appeared as a result of rapid changes in society, when degeneracy and laxity have already set in and infected every aspect of life. Thus, a situation has arisen where a Buddha is

¹ Albert Schweitzer, *Die Weltanschauung der Indischen Denker Mystik und Ethik*, p. 102.

needed to arrest the process of degeneration. However, no Buddha for the modern age is yet in sight. But if no Buddha is born in this age, the eternal and everlasting message of Gautama, the Buddha, exists to help the present age, as it did in the days gone by. The Buddha himself emphasized the point that, after he was gone, his religion and message would remain to lead the people. So, we should have no difficulty in following the line of action chalked out by him.

Schweitzer points out that, like St. Paul, the Buddha did not want to reform society, but his main interest was to reform man, and that this was the greatest weakness of his teachings.² Of course, there is no doubt that he laid great emphasis on the reform of man, the creation of what we may call the complete man, and the morally and ethically upright, if not religious man. But it is difficult to agree that he was not a social reformer, or that he was indifferent to society. The organizer of the Saṅgha was surely not indifferent to society. Probably, a real weakness in his teachings or attitude, from modern standpoint, was that he regarded women as inferior to men and as incapable of getting the same position in society as men. His reply to Ānanda, as to why women should not be given equality with men, was: 'Jealous, Ānanda, are the women; foolish, Ānanda, are the women.' He also said: 'Weeping is the strength of the children; anger is the strength of the women.' When, very much against his will, he had to accept the nuns in the Saṅgha, he told Ānanda that, as a result of this concession, the life of his religion would be cut to half. The nuns were always treated as inferior to the monks in the Buddhist Saṅgha. Whatever may be the justification for this attitude of the Buddha, there can be no gain-saying the fact that it is not a progressive idea for the modern age. But, certainly, the warning sounded by the Buddha has its great utility in making us cautious, so that equality and liberty may not degenerate into licence and immorality. Thus, we may accept the Buddha

as a very good guide for the modern age without blindly following him in all points. For, as the famous French historian P. Masson Oursel points out, 'to copy it should be absurd'.³ Probably, the Buddha felt, what an eminent French historian and thinker felt about France during the revolutionary period, that too much liberty and intellectuality often degenerate into gross immorality.⁴ We must guard against such dangerous possibilities.

Another great message of the Buddha that is much needed in the world today is his teaching of *ahimsā*. *Ahimsā*, as preached by the Buddha, and developed to its highest point by the Mahāyāna school, became the 'supreme tenet of his political action'.⁵ *Ahimsā* was also developed by the Jains, and it was not absent in the Sanātana Dharma, in spite of its recognition of animal sacrifice. But the chief credit of Buddhism was to have popularized it in the domain of politics, as also of personal ethics in those days. This great possibility was amply demonstrated by Aśoka. Today, this important teaching of the Buddha has a very great utility, when the rank materialistic civilization is about to disintegrate human society on the widest possible scale and in the most heartless manner.

The Buddha was not a blind fatalist, but he stressed the element of human responsibility in our actions. His last advice to Ānanda was not to take recourse to any external refuge, but always to hold fast to Truth 'as a lamp' and to fall back on one's own resources. This healthy approach was kept up and further developed in later Buddhist thought. Thus, Nāgasena made known the fatality of *saṃsāra* to the Greek king Menander in the following manner.

Menander: 'Nāgasena, you speak of *saṃsāra*. What is *saṃsāra*?'

Nāgasena: 'A being born on this earth and there dies; dies here, he is reborn elsewhere,

³ P. Masson Oursel, *La Pensee en Orient*, p. 213.

⁴ D. Mornet, *La Pensee Francaise au XVIII^e Siecle*, p. 29.

⁵ Henri Arvon, *Le Bouddhism*, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 88.

and there dies et cetera. There is the *samsāra*.'

Menander: 'Give me a comparison.'

Nāgasena: 'A man eats a mango and plants the seed; from this seed grows a huge mango tree, which bears fruits. A man eats one of the fruits and plants the seed. From it grows a mango tree et cetera. ... It is *samsāra*.'

This argument leads on to the important doctrine of *karma*.

Menander: 'Why are not all persons alike? Why have they short or long lives? Why are they energetic or unhealthy, handsome or ugly, influential or powerless, rich or poor, of high birth or low birth, intelligent or foolish?'

Nāgasena: 'Why are not all plants alike in height and structure?'

Menander: 'For the difference in their grain.'

Nāgasena: 'Likewise, men are different by reason of their different acts. The Buddha has said that "the beings have for their patrimony their *karma*; they are the inheritors, descendants, the parents, the vassals of their *karma*. It is *karma* which divides men into superiors and inferiors.'

So, it is not a blind and inexorable fate that inflicts punishment on men in the most atrocious and unjust manner, but it is man's own acts that take him to heaven or to hell as he richly deserves. This very truth is forcefully impressed in the teachings of the Mahāyānist savant Śānti Deva of the seventh century A.D., when he writes: 'He who compels another man to work for him shall have slavery as his punishment; he who imposes on himself the task of working for others shall have real power as reward.'⁶ And he further advised his followers: 'The interest (good) of all beings should henceforth be your only thought.'⁷ The saintly idea that is impressed here is that a man should work for the good of society and mankind. This is a gospel of which the modern age has far greater need than the ancient days ever had. In a progressive scientific age, where industrial development is very rapid, unless people develop a highly moral and dis-

ciplined mentality and attitude, there is going to be a disaster unprecedented in the annals of mankind. Not only the men in governments and the leaders, but every man and woman in society must be aware of every *karma* (action) of his or hers, and must so order it and control it as not to wreck, but to make the civilized world. Shorn of fanaticism and power politics, the modern world should adopt the humanitarian scientific attitude of Buddhism, so that mankind and human civilization may be saved.

The teachings of the Śākyamuni were surely not meant for the ancient days alone, but have a far greater bearing on our own days. They are eternal and universal. In the *Dhammapada*, the instruction is: 'Avoid all evil, cherish good, purify your thoughts—these are the teachings of the Buddha.'⁸ Further instruction is: 'Never does hatred cease by hating, but it is overcome by love. This is the ancient law.'⁹ Then, again, the simple but important truth is impressed upon our mind (although we so often forget it): 'It is the iron's own rust that destroys it; it is the sinner's own acts that take him to hell.'¹⁰ Alas, how often we forget that we are always rotting and decomposing in our own rust! These are not empty sermons of the past, but vital and living principles for the present as well as for the future.

It is therefore that M. Henri Arvon has written with great force: 'Less ambitious than a religion and more widespread than a philosophy, Buddhism is, according to the happy definition of La Vallee-Poussin, a discipline.'¹¹ This discipline we need today, more than ever before, to save a disintegrating materialistic civilization from moral anarchy and chaos. The French savant rightly affirms: 'The Śākyamuni goes to deliver men of their defects and evils, without any support of God, by an intellectual energy and goodness that before him no God (ever) possessed.'¹²

⁸ *Dhammapada, Buddha-vaggo*, 5.

⁹ *Ibid., Yamaka-vaggo*, 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid., Mala-vaggo*, 6.

¹¹ Henri Arvon, *Le Bouddhisme*, p. 23.

¹² P. Masson Oursel, *La Pensee en Orient*, pp. 116-17.

⁶ Śānti Deva as quoted in *ibid.*, p. 77.

⁷ Śānti Deva as quoted in *ibid.*, p. 78.

DHARMA AND MOKṢA

BY DR. K. C. VARADACHARI

Recently, two scholars, Dr. J. A. B. Van Buitenan and Dr. David H. H. Ingalls, in the well-known journal *Philosophy East and West* (Vol. VII. pp. 33 ff.), studied the relationship between the two *puruṣārthas* of *dharma* and *mokṣa*, and arrived at two different conclusions. Both of them proceeded to analyse the two concepts from the point of view of traditional expositions contained in the basic works of the different schools. Of course, the modern notions of these two concepts or terms have undergone serious changes.

Usually, *dharma* is derived from the original concept or root 'ṛta', which stands for the cosmic law that upholds the worlds together; and *dharma* is held to be the law inherent in all things and beings, each according to its nature. Indeed, if we are interested in the fortunes of the meaning of this word 'dharma', it should prove quite a mine of speculative or imaginative thinking. It is equally clear that this *dharma* concept has been adopted by certain major schools, interpreting it according to their respective metaphysics or ethics. In many minds, this *dharma* has remained as an ethical concept, but it has an a-ethical import also.

If it is argued that *dharma* means what *ṛta* stands for, and also the law inherent in all things and beings, conferring to each its individual law (whatever this might mean), then *mokṣa* appears to be in contradiction with it, as *mokṣa* is a going beyond all reign of law into the realm of freedom from all conditions and limitations. Here, again, there is an abstract way of interpreting the term, for going beyond or transcending all *dharma* is the negation of all *dharma* or conditions or law, including even self-law or self-regulation. Another interpretation is the concrete sense of controlling all beings and things by the principle inherent in each and every one of them. Thus, to know the law

and to act accordingly is to be able to use all things freely and without ignorance of their usability. This is the concept of a *dharma-siddha*, one who is the master of all *dharmas* and, as such, sovereign over all.

However, this is not accepted, because the whole nature is a world of perpetual change and is under the law of life and death. And all the mastery over the sciences (laws or *dharmas*) of things and beings is of no avail in the field of real experience or in freedom from the bodily existence experienced in death.

It is not the laws of things that are considered to be *dharma*, but the proper technique of using the laws for surpassing the limitations of things on one's freedom that is *dharma*. This is the naturalistic explanation. However, this naturalistic interpretation of *dharma* yielded place to the moral or ethical necessity of distinguishing in human acts the welfare and ill-fare of man and his society, and a new concept of moral or ethical rightness became included under 'form' or 'law', equally universal in the fields of ethical life or human conduct as the laws of nature are in the fields of natural life and being.

Actions became distinguished as lawful or unlawful, and *karma* became distinguished as *dharma* or *adharma* in a general sense. The first view of *karma* is action, which is the general term for all actions, including *dharma*. A subtle perception or insight showed to the ancients the view that all natural action is *dharma*, because it cannot violate the universal law. It is only at the level of the human being, or generally life, that the freedom to go wrong or move away from the ultimate law seems to develop. This experience of the freedom to err or to commit error in all life, and of the capacity to learn, leads to what in ethical life has been the fruitful source of the growing awareness that all action is not to be considered

to be included in the concept of *dharma*. Earlier, thus, *karma* meant sacrificial activities known as *dharma*, since sacrifices themselves were voluntary activities chosen for growing into the worlds of Reality and light and delight (*svārgakāmo yajeta*). These were rituals counselled by the Vedic ritualists. The whole of creation, however, was likened to a great rite (*kratu karma*), which was based on the imixture of the two concepts of *ṛta* and individual rite performance. *Karma*, restricted to the performance of Vedic sacrifices and such duties as are necessary for each individual in that scheme of ritual hierarchy, had to be performed for the sake of *loka-saṅgraha* or world welfare. Thus was included the ethical concept of duty with the cosmic function of order. It is wrong to consider that *ṛta* is an act of creation or *pravṛtti*; nor is it a concept enfolding the process of *nivṛtti*, though both these connotations seem to have played their part in the development or evolution of this concept.

All creation, according to later thinkers, is *pravṛtti* of the Prakṛti; even the *Puruṣa-sūkta* hymn (Hymn of Creation) is interpreted creationistically (as *dharma pravṛtti*). The *nivṛtti-dharma* is thus distinguished from the *pravṛtti-dharma*, though it will be patent that here *dharma* is used in a comprehensive way to suggest the right way of living in the creative process, as also the right way of living in the involutive process (*laya*). These several meanings have inter-crossed and have led to a series of confusions.

However, we see that the *pravṛtti-dharma* invariably has been suggested as leading to the gradual growth of ignorance and sloth and to the failure of consciousness itself. The duties of each individual, and those pertaining to each caste member, irrespective of pain or pleasure, gain or loss, honour or dishonour, produce results for the betterment of the social order. The organic unity of the state or society depends on this basic performance of duty by every member, irrespective of fruits. This is the meaning of the disinterestedness of mind

in the performance of duties. Obviously, there are other duties not covered by these lists of duties (*kartavya karma*). There has hardly been any counsel to give up these. The performance of sacrificial duties, as well as individual functional and relational duties to the hierarchy of the universe, is absolutely for the realization of true emancipation (*mokṣa*) from the bondage of births and rebirths. The *puṇya* and *pāpa* concepts have both a restricted sense and a wider meaning, as including happiness or reward, or denying them.

The ancients held that *dharma* itself leads to *mokṣa*, in the sense of leading one to liberation from the bonds of rebirths or the chain of continuous births and deaths or transmigration. Transcendence of human life seems to have been the one definite aim which the *karma-yoga* or performance of *karma* (*yajña*) is said to lead to. Of course, it was later held to lead only to the purification of the entire psychic being, which liberates the consciousness from its thralldom to sensory life and desires connected with it. The positive explanation of this kind of life is said to be the *sthita-prajñatā* established in the inner self. This is the negation of all activity that tends to preserve the present state or produce the future states. This is said to be the arising of *jñāna* or *bodhi*. When once *karma* and *dharma* get opposed to each other, it is clear that the *cakra* or wheel of the former is the reverse of the latter; the former becomes *adharma-cakra*, and the latter *dharma-cakra*; the former leads to rebirths etc., and the latter to emancipation.

Jñāna-yoga is, of course, the *dharma* of the soul that has sought transcendence over life's fitful fever. It is the perfection of knowledge, which realizes that activity, as such, is an outgrowth or overflow of a need outside oneself that leads to the cycle or chain of activities placed in relation to one another as causes and effects. It was realized also that this chain is cyclical and not merely a continuous unilinear process or progress. In a sense, though *jñāna* itself is a kind of activity, it is a different kind of activity than that which is sought to

be controlled and directed in *karma-yoga* through disinterestedness. Indeed, it can be shown that *karma* is a search for the completion of oneself in that which is not-self; as such, it is a kind of selflessness. This is *avidyā*, and *vidyā* is that which will restore the self to itself or pull back the self to its selfness. This is the basic metaphysics behind *jñāna-yoga*. It may be pleaded that a combination of *karma* and *jñāna* is available to all individuals in everything, and all that is needed to make them lead to *mokṣa* or liberation is to tie or yoke or centre them in the Self, through detachment from the world of one's creation (not-self) and attachment to one's Self or God.

This, however, is yet a long way off to the real *dharma* that liberates. It is *bhakti-yoga* that shows the way out of the impasse of conflict between the two *yogas* of *karma* and *jñāna*, an impasse which the *jñāna-karma-samuccaya-vāda* or conjointment of action and knowledge cannot overcome. The devotional activity reaffirms the knowledge relation between the Absolute and the individual in the system of Reality, and proceeds to fulfil itself through the activity that refunds all to the All or Absolute. Thus the edges of *karma* and *jñāna*, the fear of being caught up in attachment, and the necessity to perform one's duties as long as one is here are removed. *Dharma* and *mokṣa* seem to get reconciled and realized. But we have almost said that *jñāna* means *mokṣa*, for it seeks to free itself from all the limitations of terrestrial life. The means turns out to take the shape and fullness of form of the end itself. Surely, even *mokṣa* is a means, rather than an end, for freedom is for fuller being, rather than an end in itself. *Dharma* is really *dharma*, only because it leads to *mokṣa*; and *mokṣa* is real *mokṣa*, only when it leads to the freedom in the being of the Absolute and the Absolute becomes the end, the sole end of all means (*dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa*). Thus, it is basic to a proper understanding of Indian thought or idealism that we should clearly perceive that the so-called *puruṣārthas* are of an instrumental nature,

rather than of an intrinsic nature.

No wonder that a life of *dharma* is a life of enlightenment amidst the life of ignorance. It has raised problems of most serious concern which the Dharma-śāstras have with luminous clarity tried to solve (even like the *Republic* of Plato in Ancient Greece); but the temporal malaise of modern thinkers has seen here a historical record, rather than an idealism. Albeit the modern hedonistic or utilitarian egalitarianism or socialism has imposed the most heavy strain on human reason—it has become a continuous affair of discovery and politico-social law-making—it is an adventure without rider or compass, except the inward craving to realize the impossible unity of means and ends of incompatible nature. The realistic and pragmatic trends of the modern world, even its materialism, have all revealed the impossible or Utopian idealism to be their end.

A fresh thinking about the means and ends would lead to a rethinking of our premises. It does not mean a return to the past, but a return to a metaphysic of stable realizations or revaluations. Metaphysics got devalued in an empiristic age, which refused to recognize any metaphysics and contented itself with the pragmatic expedient of probabilities (mathematically scored) in exchange for certainties. We have begun to delight in uncertainties and to see in these a freedom which will please the adventurer and the yet unbeaten youth. However, new duties have lost all character of obligatoriness, and we rebel against all law or imposition of responsibility as being arbitrary and experimental.

The quest for certainty, however, does not mean loss of freedom. It is here that serious thinkers even of the world metaphysics or real metaphysics have perceived that freedom is a means and no end. All that the ancient thinkers claimed for freedom was something much more definite. It is union with the Highest; it is mergence in the Highest; it is mergence that does not entail a re-emergence—a return to the state of ignorance. The religious seer corrected the abstract concept of freedom by show-

ing it to be real freedom—a freedom that does not lead to bondage, a freedom which at the beginning led to the non-selfing of the self, or to the identification of oneself with the instruments and objects of one's ignorance or activity.

The convergence between the Vedāntas on this point is very clear. Śrī Saṅkara argues for the utter mergence in the Absolute without name and form as liberation; it is from that state that there is no return. Śrī Rāmānuja claims that it is certainly a union or *sambandha*, which is a most luminous relationship of *śarīra-śarīrin* (body-soul) in or between oneself and God (considered as the absolute Self of all). Śrī Madhva holds that it is the full enjoyment of inseparable service of God. No one who has attained this freedom can be thought of as being apart or different from the Whole or God or the Absolute. It is the non-return to the life of ignorance; it is a life in Knowledge. One's activities are within and for the Absolute, and not for oneself. It is this last point that leads to the concept of transcendent *dharma*, a *dharma* for God, rather than for human society and man.

Ancient thinkers did not consider that service of man was the end and aim of life, but that the service of God was the final aim of life. They experienced a freedom of that God-world and God, which is incomparable. All freedom here is, in a sense, a bondage to the negative; all *dharma* is a limitation of the free spirit of divine existence. It is true that the author of the *Vedānta-Sūtra* himself speaks the voice of the liberated, when he declares that in all respects, except with regard to universal activities, the soul reaches equality with God (*jagad-vyāpāra varjam*); and this apparent discrepancy is not something that need register the limitation of the soul as such.

Dharma and *mokṣa* are, however, dynamic concepts, and whilst they have a twofold play in the planes of all existence, there is a subtle change of places in the ascending series. Thus, the *dharma* of a particular order becomes the *mokṣa* of a lower order, and the *mokṣa* of a particular order becomes the *dharma* of a

higher order, when it gains concreteness in its function as a member of that higher order. As such, there is undoubtedly a relativity and change of meaning in the terms themselves. It is significant that this principle is usually forgotten in the interpretation of the concepts. It is not a play of words as such. The ancients thought of two concepts like *ṛta* and *satya*, and held that one supports the other according to the actual plane and time of being.

The concept of *dharma* with the concept of *satya* has enfolded in its double stress the equal necessity of both preservation of order and its growth into a higher order. This organic conception yields a more fruitful appreciation of the Hindu view which reveals in the *varṇa-dharma* and *āśrama-dharma* this play of the dynamic with the social. It leads to what has been known as the gradual growth into higher levels of awareness of the links with the ultimate *satya* or *satyasya satyam*. This means that a true *dharma* plays a unique part in involving *mokṣa* as a dynamic principle of spiritual evolution; and without it, it leads to what in recent times has been called the closed society. Further, this *dharma* concept is not a horizontal or social organization of the whole world of humans, but a vertical ascent into planes of being above the human.

The Hindu thought thus reveals not the dialectic of *dharma* and *mokṣa* as opposites; rather, it reveals the inward necessity of each to the other in a different sense, as fulfilling and supporting and evolving newer patterns of freedom and newer patterns of *dharma*. All these newer patterns of *dharma* and *mokṣa* were, in a sense, envisaged by the ancient seers. They are not altogether new, though their descriptions are verily left to each individual seeker. Individual effort and dedication and evolution proceed upward only when the two are supporting and reinforcing each other, and not by playing the one against the other. The Hindu thought shows *mokṣa* as the superior partner of the life of *dharma*, revealing itself as the continuous opening out and ascending

elan of spiritual life in India. That which, on the other hand, seeks to reverse this ascent by pointing to the descent in freedom is a doc-

trine of false pleasures and illusions of enjoyment and happiness, which is bound to squeeze out the life of growth.

MUSIC, DANCE, AND DRAMA IN THE VEDIC AGE

BY PRINCIPAL JOGIRAJ BASU

The term 'Veda' comprises Saṁhitā, Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka, and Upaniṣad. Hence Vedic age means the sum total of all the periods or phases of the vast Vedic literature. We shall make an attempt to give here an outline of the vocal and instrumental music, dance, and drama that obtained in the age that covers a long passage of time from 5000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.

Indian music shares with Indian poetry the glory of being one of the finest of fine arts and stands unique among the musical achievements of the world. So far as the West is concerned, the only country which has achieved great things in the domain of music is Germany. Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Mendelssohn, and Schubert are names to conjure with. Germany was great in music, as Greece was in architecture and sculpture, and Italy in painting. Germany is not maintaining its supremacy in music today. But India's music has been the essence of her life, and is as vital and great today as it was in ancient times.

Music as an art has been cultivated in India for more than three thousand years. The chant is an essential element of the Vedic ritual; and the reference in later Vedic literature, the scriptures of Buddhism, and the Brāhmaṇical epics shows that it was already highly developed as a secular art in the centuries preceding the beginning of the Christian era.

The sanctity in which music is held in India can be inferred from the current saying: 'There is nothing higher than music.' The words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa delivered to Arjuna on the battle-

field of Kurukṣetra have been termed '*Gītā*', which means 'song' or 'sung'. In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the Lord says to Nārada: 'I reveal myself there where my devotees sing my praise.' Sarasvatī is the goddess of both learning and music. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute called *muralī*, Nārada's *vīṇā* (lute) called *mahatī*, and Sarasvatī's lute called *kacchapi* have acquired wide celebrity in Indian literature.

The art of music of the present day is a direct descendant of the ancient schools, whose traditions have been handed down from generation to generation with comment and expansion of the guilds of the hereditary musicians. While the words of a song may have been composed at any date, the musical themes communicated orally from master to disciple are essentially ancient. In his masterly work *Music in England*, Eric Blom remarks: 'Unfortunately for history, music was for centuries transmitted by ear and by tradition, and even when some system of notation was in use, it long remained so inexact as to serve merely as a rough reminder of what was already known to the performers from aural (i.e. by ear) teaching.' This observation of Blom holds good in the field of Indian music as well.

It is easy to write about post-Vedic music, because we have such outstanding works on the subject as Śārṅgadeva's *Saṅgītaratnākara*, Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Rāmāmātya's *Svaramelakalānidhi*, and the like. In English also, there are several books on post-Vedic music. But it is difficult to write about Vedic music, particularly vocal music, as there is no such

outstanding work on the subject. In the following lines, an attempt is made to give an outline of the Vedic music as gleaned from a study of the Vedic literature.

VOCAL MUSIC

Music, both vocal and instrumental, was well known in the Vedic age. First, we shall take up the discussion about the vocal music. The *Maṇḍūkā-sūkta* or 'Frog-hymn' of the *Ṛg-Veda* (VII.103.7,8) refers to the musical chanting of the Brāhmaṇa priests engaged in the extraction of the *soma* juice. Different vocal sounds are carefully analysed in the said hymn, as also elsewhere. Singing is often mentioned as adapted to different ends, such as chanting, reciting, hymning, etc.

The *Sāma-Veda* is a standing monument to the wonderful skill and originality of the ancients in the science of vocal music. The Lord says in the *Gītā*: 'I am the *Sāma-Veda* among the Vedas.' The essence of the *Sāma-Veda* is chant; hence the word 'gāna' always accompanies the word 'sāman'.

The *Ṛk-prātiśākhya* refers to the three octaves and the seven notes.

Before the birth of a child, a ceremony is observed known as *sīmantonayana*. In that ceremony, the husband parts and lifts the hairs of his wife's head with twigs of the sacrificial fig tree, and the wife is asked to sing a song merrily. In the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom sings a *gāthā*, a particular type of song, after the treading on the stone by the bride. The vogue of the musical recitations of the *Sāma-Veda* is responsible for the rule in the *Gobhilagr̥hya-Sūtra* that the *Vāmadeviya-gāna* may be sung, by way of a general exception, at the end of every ceremony. The lute-players are asked to play the lute in the ceremony of *sīmantonayana* referred to above; and four or eight women, who should not be widows, perform a dance in the marriage ceremony to the accompaniment of music.

The terms 'gāna', 'gīti', 'udgāna', 'saṅgīta', etc. are found in the Vedic literature, and all these terms signify vocal music of different

types. The Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas refer to village music, *grāmageya-gāna*, and forest music, *araṇyageya-gāna*, as distinct from *sāma-gāna*.

The vocal music of the *Sāma-Veda* is a distinct trait of the Vedic music. The *sāma-gāna* or *sāma* music was created by adding notation to the *Ṛg-Vedic* chant. At its early or incipient stage, it had three notes only, which, according to some authorities, were *niṣāda*, *ṣaḍja*, and *pañcama*; some others, again, hold them to be *pañcama*, *gāndhāra*, and *ṣaḍja*. Somanātha (A.D. 1609), in his work on Indian music entitled *Rāgavibodha*, holds these to be the three notes of the early *Sāma-Vedic* era. Veṅkaṭamukhi, another authority on Indian music, also holds the same view. In the later period of the *Sāma-Vedic* age, the scale of music came up to seven notes. Ramaswami Aiyer, in his learned introduction to *Svaramelakalānidhi*, a well-known book on music by Rāmāmātya, observes: 'The scale of the *mārga* music ordinarily ranged from one to four notes, but during the later *sāman* period, rose to seven notes.' These seven notes of *sāma* music or chant were styled as *krūṣṭa*, *prathama*, *dvitīya*, *tr̥tīya*, *caturtha*, *mandra*, and *atisvārya*. Nārada, the author of phonetics, and Sāyaṇācārya, the famous commentator of the Vedas, term these seven *sāma* notes as *prathama*, *dvitīya*, *tr̥tīya*, *caturtha*, *pañcama*, *ṣaṣṭha*, and *saptama*. When these seven notes were applied to *mārga* music, they assumed the present nomenclature of *ṣaḍja*, *ṛṣabha*, *gāndhāra*, *madhyama*, *pañcama*, *dhaiyata*, and *niṣāda*. Kallinātha, in his commentary on Śārṅgadeva's monumental work on Indian music *Saṅgītaratnākara*, bears testimony to the truth of this statement. He remarks: Seven notes in *sāma* chanting go by the names of *krūṣṭa*, *prathama*, etc. (referred to above), and these correspond to the notes ranging from *ṣaḍja* to *niṣāda* respectively.

There was a difference of opinion amongst scholars regarding the prevalence of *mārga saṅgīta* in the Vedic era, but now it is agreed on all hands that it did exist in the Vedic age.

Some authors on music have identified *mārga* music with the classical music of India, but, notwithstanding various points of similarity, the two differ from each other. The classical Indian music was partially influenced by Persian music in the Moghul court, whereas *mārga saṅgīta* shakes itself free from any such Muslim or foreign influences; rather, a slight Dravidian influence is felt in *mārga* music. Authorities on Indian music like Swami Prajnanananda, Ramaswami Aiyer, and others categorically assert that *mārga saṅgīta* existed in the Vedic age. In unmistakable terms, Aiyer observes: 'I venture to call "mārga" Vedic music.' Śārṅgadeva's *Saṅgītaratnākara* also lends support to this view, and the famous commentator Kallinātha accepts the Vedic origin of *mārga* music. The raw material of *mārga saṅgīta* was mainly drawn from the *Sāma-Veda*.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Various types of instrumental music are mentioned in the Vedic literature. The *Ṛg-Veda* mentions *viṇā*, *vāṇa*, *karkari*, *duṇḍubhi*, etc. The first two fall within the category of stringed instruments, whereas the fourth one is a kind of drum. The instrument called *vāṇa* was a hundred stringed or *śatatantrī* instrument, and none save and except an expert musician with deft fingers could play on it. A musician who could rightly handle a *vāṇa* was called exceptionally gifted or expert (*atikuśalī*). The Vedic seers were admirers of Nature, which fired their imagination and captivated their minds with its eternal message of beauty and charm. They had a keen ear for natural music, and heard it in the rustling of leaves, rippling of streams, warbling of birds, pattering of rains, raging of storms, etc. Thus the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* says: 'When it rains hard, one can hear the sound of *sāma* chant as it were' (XI.2.7.32). Likewise, the raging of storm through forests has been described in the *Ṛg-Veda* as the collective deity Maruts (gods of wind) playing on the musical instrument *vāṇa*. The trees of the forest stand for strings or chords of the lyre *vāṇa* in this poetic imagery.

In Greek mythology, too, wind blowing through the trees is conceived as Aeolus, the god of wind, playing on his harp.

The *Sāma-Veda* mentions flute-players, lyre-players, lute-players, conch-blowers, drummers, etc. Lute-players are enjoined to play on the lute in the ceremony known as *śimantonayana*. The *Ṛg-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda* mention *āghatī* or cymbal, which accompanied dancing.

The lute or *viṇā* was looked upon as a symbol of grace or fortune and was held in esteem as such. Says the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*: 'The lute is, indeed, a symbol of *śrī* or grace' (XIII.1.5.1). When a man attained prosperity, the lute was played in his honour. Those who sang in accompaniment to the lute were called *viṇā-gāthī*. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* observes: 'A Brāhmaṇa lute-player sings three strophes composed by himself striking up *uttara-mandrā* tune' (XIII.4.2.8). On this point, Eggeling says that it is 'literally, the upper deep one, i.e. perhaps one the upper chords of which are pitched in the upper notes of the lower key'. The term '*uttara-mandrā*' may be constructed either with the lute or with the tune. Besides solo lute-playing, mention is also made of master lute-players playing in chorus called *viṇā-gaṇa-giṇa*. (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII.4.3.3). Two kinds of *viṇā* are mentioned in the Vedic literature: *picolā* and *audumbarī*. A third type is also referred to in some texts, called *kṣoṇī*. The Brāhmaṇa texts also refer to flute (*veṇu*) and to clapping of hands (*karatāli*) to keep time with music and song. Both *viṇā* and *vāṇa* contained all the seven notes found in the *sāma* chant.

The *Ṛg-Veda* mentions another musical instrument, called *karkari*. We read in the *Ṛg-Veda*: 'O Śakuni (vulture), you make a sound like that of the instrument *karkari*, when your wings flutter during flight' (II.4.3).

Two kinds of drums, *duṇḍubhi* and *bhūmiduṇḍubhi*, are mentioned. The sound of the pestle striking the mortar, while threshing corn, has been compared to the sound of drums proclaiming victory in the *Ṛg-Veda*. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, we find drums keeping time

with chariot-race or horse-race called *ājī-dhāvana* (V.1.5.8). The same book records the fact that seventeen drums were used simultaneously in the *vājapeya* sacrifice (V.1.5.6); sometimes drums accompanied chantings of *sāma* (V.1.5.17).

Flutes made of reed, called *nādī*, are mentioned in the *R̥g-Veda* (X.135.7). Flute-playing was a common pastime, and originated from the pastoral life of that age.

Instrumental music went by the name of *vādītra*, whereas vocal music was called *gīta*. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* mentions *gīta* and *vādītra*. When we have dancing in addition to vocal and instrumental music, it is called *saṅgīta*.

The particular bath or ablution ceremony known as *avabhṛtha*, which formed the final part of the sacrifice, included dance and music, both vocal and instrumental, that is to say, the ceremony was attended with *saṅgīta*. Both men and women took part in the music and dance in this ceremony, while going to take bath.

DANCING

Dancing was called *nṛtta* or *nartana*. The word '*nṛtta*' is also spelt as *nṛtya*. Pāṇini tells us that *nṛtya* refers to the dance of human beings, whereas *nṛtta* stands for the dance of non-human beings, which included gods, demi-gods, and animals. But this distinction was not in vogue in the Vedic age.

The dancing of maidens is mentioned in Vedic hymns. Men also participated in dancing. The *R̥g-Veda* (X.76.6) refers to the dance of men by way of simile.

While dancing, the dancers sometimes held aloft bamboo-poles poised on their fingers or palms. A *R̥g-Vedic* hymn (I.10.1) reads: 'O Śatakṛatu, singers sing for you; worshippers propitiate Indra; admirers hold you aloft a bamboo-pole.' The *Yajur-Veda* also refers to *vamśa-nartin*, i.e. a pole-dancer or acrobat.

The *śailūṣa* included in the list of victims at the sacrifice called *puruṣamedha* in the *Vāja-*

saneyi Samhitā means an actor primarily, and a dancer secondarily.

The *R̥g-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda* enjoin that the musical instrument called *āghatī* or cymbal should accompany dancing.

Four or eight women, who should not be widows, perform a dance in the marriage ceremony. The restriction in the case of a graduate or *snātaka* that he is not to practise or enjoy instrumental or vocal music and dance shows the popularity and wide celebrity of music and dance in the Vedic age.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* observes: 'Days and nights rotate and follow each other in a regular rhythmic manner like dancing' (V.22.10). This passage lends support to the view that there were prescribed rules for dancing.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (III.2.4) mentions dancing attended with singing and lute-playing. The texts repeatedly assert that dancing and singing are arts to be practised by women and not by men.

As to the origin of music and dance, a story is narrated in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts. Once the *gandharvas* stole *soma* from the gods, and the latter failed to persuade them to give back the same. The gods knew that the *gandharvas* had a weakness for women, and hence they approached Vāk or the goddess of speech to help them in the matter. They invented the arts of singing and dancing, and trained Vāk in those arts to dupe the *gandharvas*. Vāk dressed herself gorgeously showing off her beauty and vanity, and cajoled *soma* out of the *gandharvas*' hands by deluding them with her beauty, vanity, song, and dance. Relating this story, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* remarks, 'Vanity is ingrained in woman', and 'Music and dance are ladies' arts'.

DRAMA

Though full-fledged dramas are not met with in the Vedic literature, there is no denying the fact that the origin and inception of drama may safely be traced in the Veda. Max Müller, Winternitz, Sylvain Levi, Macdonell, and

other famous Indologists of the West hold the view in common that the *saṁvāda* hymns of the *Ṛg-Veda* are the germs of the future full-fledged drama. *Samvāda* means dialogue, which is an essential element of drama. The dialogues between King Purūravas and Ūrvaśī, Yama and Yamī, Saramā and Pani, Sūrya and Sūryā, recorded in the *Ṛg-Veda*, are dramatic in character. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI.5.1) narrates the story of Purūravas and Ūrvaśī through dialogues, questions, counter-questions, and repartees in such a graphic manner that the total effect is highly dramatic in tone.

There is a theory that long before Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which is dated eighth century B.C., there existed a book containing the rules of dramaturgy in the Vedic age, and it is to this book that Pāṇini refers as *Nāṭasūtra* of Sage Śilali in one of his *sūtras*. This work has not been discovered till today. We have already mentioned that *śailūṣa*, included in the list of victims meant for *puruṣamedha*, primarily means an actor.

In the *somayāga* or *soma* sacrifice, the creeper *soma*, which was very rare and procured with great difficulty, was purchased from a non-Aryan by the priests. As price for the *soma* creeper, they used to give a calf to the non-Aryan. Now, this calf was the symbol of speech or *vāk*. When speech is taken away from man, he becomes dumb. So, when the

non-Aryan led the calf away, the priests were deprived of their voice, and remained dumb. To regain speech, they beat the non-Aryan with a bamboo-pole and brought back the calf. The non-Aryan with his dark complexion was regarded as a symbol of ignorance and darkness. It was a sham show, and formed part of the sacrifice. Here, we distinctly find Indian drama emerging from its chrysalis and gradually taking shape.

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI.6.1), we meet with a concrete presentation of abstract attributes by way of allegory. There, reverence or *śraddhā* is represented as a beautiful and graceful lady, whereas wrath or *krodha* is represented as a terrific figure—an ugly man of dark complexion with yellow eyes and repulsive features. The beginnings of the allegorical play may be traced here, which culminated in such allegorical dramas (*rūpakanāṭaka*) as *Prabodhacandrodaya* and the like in the classical age.

The fact that the human soul transmigrates, i.e. leaves one body and again assumes another in its next birth, has been compared, in some of the Upaniṣads, to an actor changing his dress and playing different roles on the stage. Moreover, the *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad* mentions a *nāṭa* or actor changing his dress and painting himself in the green room. This fact proves the prevalence, development, and popularity of dramatic shows in the Upaniṣadic age.

THE ĀLVĀRS AND THEIR RELIGION OF LOVE—1

BY SWAMI SMARANANANDA

It is generally held that Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism began with Śrī Rāmānujācārya, the propounder of the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy. But very few outside the peninsular India know or remember that Vaiṣṇavism in the South had a long history that can be dated back 300 to 500 years before Śrī Rāmānuja. The Ālvārs, who laid the foundation for the later Vaiṣṇavite movement,

were the pioneers of this religion of love. Both Śrī Rāmānuja and the earlier *ācāryas* have acknowledged their indebtedness to the Ālvārs.*

Along with the rest of the country, South India was feeling the impact of Jainism and

*Much of the material for this article is taken from the Tamil book *Bhakti-Pūṅgā* by Sri G. Ethirajalu Nayudu, published by Messrs. Bhaktan Karyalayam, Madras 5.

Buddhism during the few centuries before, and in the early centuries of, the Christian era. Brāhmaṇism was on the wane, and even the kings of the South accepted either the one or the other of the new religions. But, as time rolled on, these faiths, based more on ethics than on metaphysics, gave way before the longing of the people for a religion in which they could pray to God and express their hearts' innermost feelings. Often, the new teachings were misunderstood, giving rise to degenerated forms of religion and many vile practices. It was during this period that the inspired devotees of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, with sweet melodies in the popular tongue on their lips, wandered through the length and breadth of the Tamil land. The *bhakti* movement slowly gained ground, and even the rulers of the Pallava, Cola, Pāṇḍya, and Cera kingdoms changed over to the mother religion, in a new form. Thus was set in motion a new revival of Hinduism, with a special stress on devotion to Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa and His incarnations as the chief tenet.

THE ĀLVARS

The precise dates of the different Ālvārs cannot be determined. But it is generally agreed that they lived at different periods during the three centuries beginning from A.D. 500. Their influence was mainly confined to the Tamil-speaking areas ruled by the four kingdoms mentioned earlier. According to tradition, the Ālvārs were twelve in number. It is significant that most of them were of humble parentage, and did not attach any importance to caste. However, the pure character of their lives inspired by divine love endeared them to the people, and differences of caste or position were washed off before this flood-tide.

It was their *bhakti* literature that attracted Śrī Nātha Muni (A.D. 824-924), the first of the *ācāryas* of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, towards them. The doctrine of self-surrender (*prapatti*), later developed by the *ācāryas*, was derived from the Ālvārs. The *ācāryas* were orthodox Brāhmaṇas, well-versed in Sanskrit and Tamil. They had a thorough knowledge of the Vedas, the Upa-

niṣads, and other scriptures of the Sanātana Dharma. Various shrines dedicated to the forms of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa were under their control. Śrī Rāmānuja belonged to this line of *ācāryas*. Śrī Nātha Muni took upon himself the task of popularizing the songs of the Ālvārs. He classified and arranged them metrically, to be chanted in the temples side by side with the Vedic hymns. These poems of great beauty are known by the name *Divya Prabandham*, numbering over four thousand.

The twelve Ālvārs were: Poigai, Bhūtattār, Pey, Tirumaḷisai, Nammālvār, Madhurakavi, Kulaśekhara, Periyālvār, Āṇḍāl, Tondaradip-
poḍi, Tiruppāṇ, and Tirumaṅgai.

THE FIRST THREE ĀLVARS

Tradition holds the first three Ālvārs, Poigai, Bhūtattār, and Pey, to have been born in the same month on successive days.

The incident relating to their first meeting and how the Lord graced them together at a time is an interesting episode.

A stormy night it was. The sky was overcast, and a heavy downpour was imminent. A devotee was hurriedly walking across the dry sands of the Pennār river, notorious for quick floods. Hardly had he reached the other bank of the river, when rain broke out. Wet, he sought shelter for the night in a lonely hut lighted with a dim oil lamp. The door opened. He was shown a bed and told that one person could sleep there. With prayers on his lips, he lay down; but within a few minutes, there was another knock at the door. The newcomer, too, was admitted inside and shown the only bed occupied by the first one, telling that two could sit there. Fortunately for the first, the second, too, was a devotee, and they fell to conversing about the glories of the Lord. Again, there was a knock, and the hospitable door was opened. The third stranger also was shown the same bed and told that three could pass the night there standing. The storm was raging fiercely, and the bleak lamp was blown out. Everything was shrouded in darkness. Now, a fourth one pressed them all within the

narrow space available. Unable to see, they questioned his identity, but got no answer. Then the first devotee sang:

The earth the container, sea-water is oil,
And the bright sun the lamp; this garland
Of words I dedicate to the Lord of lights,
the dispeller of all darkness.

They felt as if the room was brightened, when the second devotee sang:

Love the container, longing the oil,
And thought of the Lord the wick;
With these I light the lamp of knowledge
to Śrī Nārāyaṇa.

No sooner had he uttered this, than a bright light adorned the little cottage. There the Lord appeared in all His glory before the three devotees. The third devotee sang rapturously:

Him have I beheld. Golden is His person
And splendrous His coloured apparel;
Blessed am I today with the vision
Of the One, with conch in His hands.

Poigai Ālvār obtained that name, as he was born in a sacred pond in Kanchi. In literary Tamil, *poigai* means a pond. The second was born in Mahabalipuram on the sea coast, a few miles from Madras. His complete absorption in divine remembrance, oblivious of his surroundings like a ghost, earned him the name 'Bhūtattār', meaning 'ghost-like'. The third was born in Mayilai, modern Mylapore, a part of Madras city. He used to dance and weep while singing the names of the Lord, and got the name 'Pey', denoting a ghou. He considered those who remained forgetful of God as ghouls. Each of these Ālvārs wrote a hundred verses in classical Tamil. These form part of the four thousand verses of the Ālvārs.

Poigai Ālvār, venerated as the rising sun of the *bhakti* movement, dedicated his poems to the different incarnations of Viṣṇu. But the incarnation as Kṛṣṇa was dearest to his heart. He would seek only His feet, if he is to seek anything; and he would sing only His praise,

if he is to sing the whole day. The Ālvār's intense devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not cloud his vision from the underlying oneness of all divine forms. He shows that the forms of Viṣṇu and Śiva are the two aspects of a single Reality. In later literature, we find that Śrī Rāmānuja considered that he 'lit the lamp of *bhakti* with the wick spun of the threads of ancient religion and classical Tamil and removed the darkness around'.

Bhūtattālvār sings in praise of the love the Lord has for His devotee. His grace is boundless. He even leaves His abode like Tiruveṅgaḍam to dwell in a devotee's heart. The Ālvār cites the example of how the Lord saved the elephant Gajendra from the jaws of the crocodile. He never allows His devotee to come to grief. The Ālvār ends his work with the question, 'Is there any measure to Thy grace?'

Peyālvār, too, sings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He sorrows that the child Kṛṣṇa ate mud, was suckled by a demoness, and, when He did swallow a little butter, was bound by the rope of the shepherdess. He stresses the need of a purified mind in order to have continuous remembrance of the Divine. The five senses should be locked up by the lock of intellect. And once pure devotion takes root in one's heart, need one perform austerities by dwelling on a mountain peak, remaining under deep water, or sitting amongst five fires, asks the Ālvār. The rain-bearing clouds, the emerald's green, or the play of colours in the evening sky, all these remind him of the resplendent form and colour of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His catholicity becomes evident when he sees Śiva of long tresses, whose abode is Kailāsa, dwelling along with Nārāyaṇa, in the deity of Tirupati—Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara.

Many of the later Ālvārs visited the birth-places of the first three, and felt themselves sanctified. These forerunners of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, indeed, set the scene for the advent of more apostles of devotion in the Tamil land.

TIRUMALISAI ĀLVĀR

The birth of Tirumalaisai Ālvār is shrouded in mystery. A basket-maker, who went to cut

cane from the jungle, found him as a little child lying amidst the bushes. Glad at heart, he brought the baby home and presented him to his wife, who became his foster-mother. The boy grew up, learning his godfather's trade. But, coming of age, he began wandering through different lands and turned a *siddha*. Soon, he was disillusioned by the miracles and magic practised in a *siddha's* life. Successively, he took to the religious practices of Buddhism, Jainism, and Śaivism. During these wanderings, he came across Peyāḷvār, tending a temple garden. He found him planting some saplings upside down and pouring water from a leaking can. Amused, he questioned him derisively, 'What sort of ghoulishness is this?' Peyāḷvār replied that he did so only to demonstrate the ghoulishness of Tirumaḷisai, who wasted his days in aimless wanderings and worthless discussions about innumerable creeds. The reply brought a new meaning in life to Tirumaḷisai. The futility of vain polemics dawned on his mind. He accepted Peyāḷvār as his *guru* and plunged headlong in the practice of *bhakti* to Śrī Nārāyaṇa. He selected a place in what has now become Triplicane in Madras city. Then, the place was a quiet hamlet on the sea-shore. His heart was filled with peace, and he felt the grace of the Lord in his home-coming after practising so many creeds.

In those days, there lived one Kaṇikaṇṇan at Kanchipuram, the capital of the Pallavas. He was greatly devoted to Tirumaḷisai Āḷvār, and had accepted him as his preceptor. The Pallava monarch, infatuated by the beauty of a young damsel, wanted to regain his lost youth. He therefore begged Kaṇikaṇṇan to bring his *guru* to Kanchi in the hope that the Āḷvār's spiritual power would bring about his physical transformation. But Kaṇikaṇṇan told him, without mincing words, that neither he nor his *guru* would have anything to do with such a proposal. The infuriated king ordered him out of Kanchi. When the Āḷvār learnt of this, he addressed Śrī Varadarāja, the presiding deity of Kanchi, thus:

O Lord, Kaṇikaṇṇan is going,
Why should Thee stay back?
Disgusted, I, too, am leaving,
Rise, I pray, with Thy serpent bed.

It is said that Śrī Varadarāja left Kanchi and followed the Āḷvār. The capital was deprived of all its splendour, and looked like a grave. The repentant king entreated the Āḷvār to restore its glory, by praying to the Lord to return to His seat. The Āḷvār relented, and Śrī Varadarāja granted His devotee's prayer by returning to Kanchi.

The Āḷvār then proceeded to Tirukkuḍandai (modern Kumbakonam in Tanjore District). He began spending his days in the worship of the Lord at this place. The Āḷvār made this his permanent dwelling place.

His devotion to the Viṣṇu aspect of God was exclusive. Tradition tells of an incident where the Āḷvār had an encounter with Śiva, who conferred upon him the name 'Bhaktisāra' in recognition of his one-pointed devotion to his *iṣṭa*, the ideal dear to one's heart. Another interesting incident took place when the Āḷvār happened to rest outside a Brāhmaṇa's house during his travel from Kanchipuram to Tirukkuḍandai. Seeing nearby a person belonging to the lower caste, the Brāhmaṇas stopped their Vedic chanting. But when the Āḷvār began to leave, they could not resume from where they had stopped. They immediately recognized the spiritual greatness of the Āḷvār and begged his pardon. Only when he indicated through signs where they had stopped the chanting could they resume.

It can be presumed that the Āḷvār might have composed many psalms during his long life. But only two works, *Nānmugam Tiruvandādi*, comprising 96 verses, and *Tiruccandaviruttam*, comprising 120 verses, are extant. It is said that the Āḷvār threw away all his works in the floods of the Kāverī, and only the above-mentioned two floated against the current. That proved their greatness, and so they were preserved. In his works, he affirms the exclusive greatness of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. He, too, had

a special attraction to the Kṛṣṇa incarnation. The Ālvār's intense devotion gave him an unbroken remembrance of the Lord during his last days.

NAMMĀLVĀR

Nammālvār occupies the foremost place among the Ālvārs. Out of his contribution of 1,296 verses to the *Divya Prabandham*, his *magnum opus*, *Tiruvāimoḷi*, contains 1,102. This work shines as the crest-jewel of the Ālvār literature. Nammālvār is known by many other names also. He obtained the name Śaṭakopa, as he drove out spiritual inertia (*śaṭa*) by his anger (*kopa*). His other names were Māran, Parāṅkuśan, Vakulābharāṇa, etc.

Nammālvār was born to a *vellāla* (farmer) couple at Karugur—called Alvar Tirunagari now—in Tirunelvely District in the South. It is said that he never opened his eyes until he was sixteen, nor ate, nor talked. For all practical purposes, he was like an inert being. His food was Kṛṣṇa, his drink was Kṛṣṇa. But Madhurakavi, who was later to become his disciple, saw a light during his meditations in far off Varanasi. He was greatly charmed by it; and pursuing it, he was brought before Nammālvār. Madhurakavi recognized the Ālvār's state of divine inebriation, and to bring him to normal consciousness, he threw a stone at him. The Ālvār opened his eyes, and Madhurakavi questioned: 'If an atom of the conscious enters a mass of unconscious (thing), on whom will it feed, and where will it lie?' The Ālvār replied that it would remain in this body, which is unconscious, and lie within it. Madhurakavi was impressed by his wisdom, and accepted him forthwith as his *guru*.

Very little is known about the biographical details of his life. But it would be interesting to have a peep into his immortal writings, at once philosophical and poetic. His three earlier works, *Tiruviruttam*, *Tiruvāśiriyam*, and *Peru Tiruvandādi*, contain 100, 7, and 87 verses respectively. *Tiruviruttam* sings the glories of *madhura-bhāva*, the spiritual practice of bridal mysticism. Here, the Ālvār's attitude of a

woman towards her lover, who is the Lord Himself, is complete. The other two works are in praise of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa.

Tiruvāimoḷi is considered to be the essence of the *Sāma-Veda*. In fact, this work was mainly responsible for the Ālvār literature to be placed on the same footing with the Vedas by Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, with the name '*Drāviḍa-Veda*'. Nammālvār had a deep knowledge of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, and we can hear the echo of these in his poetry. His stanzas exude the sweetness of *bhakti* and the serenity of *jñāna*. Kambar, the author of the well-known *Rāmāyaṇa* in Tamil, celebrates these thousand verses with the words:

Dearest Lord, Thy consort Lakṣmī fetched
Thee wealth abounding
In the thousand names the Vedas sing,
And the thousand crowns that adore Thee;
The thousand garlands of sweet-scented *tulasī*,
Lo, now enriched with the thousand verses
of Śaṭakopa.

Nammālvār addresses numerous verses to the different incarnations of Śrī Viṣṇu, as well as to the different Viṣṇu deities (*arcāvatāras*) worshipped in various places of pilgrimage in the South. Kambar feels that these places of pilgrimage owe their popularity and greatness to Nammālvār's glorifying them.

Nammālvār's songs have a multi-faced character. Elsewhere, he gives vent to his sorrow over the miseries of the world:

Enemies rejoice, dear ones suffer,
Death covers everything, men are deceived...
Riches, friends, high heritage,
Dear sweetheart, and one's own dwelling,
All are left behind; quick Death carries
All, with suddenness. O what is this Nature
That spreads destruction?

These miseries impress deeply upon his heart the evanescence of earthly life. And he pleads:

Like bubbles on water, this life never abides;
Monarchs, surrounded by regality, disappear
unknown.
O seek His lotus feet, the only refuge.

Where is He, whom he calls upon everyone to seek? The Āḷvār answers:

As life in the body, all-pervading is He;
He fills this space; the vast ocean spread
Over this earth, and the little bubbles
That adorn its surface; He vibrates in both.
Enmity and friendship, good and evil,
Pain and pleasure, poison and nectar,
He is the Power behind all,
He is the shadow and the light.

How is He to be sought? Nammāḷvār's method of *upāsanā* is not one-sided. He asserts that each one can choose his own path.

Each as his heart dictates
Shall seek Him through his different creed.
He is the One, He is the Many,
He is Nārāyaṇa, He is Brahmā, too.
By whatever name thou callest,
He is the supreme Nārāyaṇa.

To be sure of attaining Him, one should root out such ideas as 'I' and 'mine'. Only when the control of senses is complete can one reach the final Beatitude. Nammāḷvār's prayer to the Lord is to get the privilege of serving Him for all times without any break. In his *dāsya-bhāva*, he prays, 'Let me be Thy slave for ever'. The only way to cross the ocean of misery is to worship Him with a pure heart. He calls upon everyone to hold fast to His lotus feet, when the mortal coil falls off decayed.

How shall we thank the Lord for His immeasurable grace? His verse is reminiscent of Śrī Saṅkarācārya's *śloka* in his *Śiva-mānasa-pūjā*:

My longing heart the sandal-paste,
And the songs I breathe the robes and gar-
lands,
My folded hands (salutations) the jewellery
I offer,
My thanksgiving is to offer thought, words,
and deeds
To Him who swallowed and spat this
universe.

Nammāḷvār saw the Divine in everything.

The birds, the trees, flowers and fruits, and all Nature reminded him only of his beloved Lord. He questions the cloud yearningly, 'How, indeed, did thee learn to be clothed in His colour?' For all this sweet melody that poured out of his lips, he is not puffed up with pride. He feels that his beloved Nārāyaṇa has entered his very vital being, and made him sing:

The great magician, tricky thief,
He, a mystery poet disguised,
Entered my life and heart unseen,
And filled my whole being.

Nammāḷvār's poetry and devotion have enshrined him for ever in the hearts of the people. Śrī Rāmānuja went to the place of his birth with his disciples, and wrote feelingly:

Oh, is this Tirunagari,
Is this the border of the celestial world,
Is this the very place of Śaṭakopa,
Who revealed the inner truth of the Vedas?

MADHURAKAVI

Madhurakavi is unique amongst the Āḷvārs, in that his object of worship was his own *guru*, and not Śrī Viṣṇu. He has set an example of *gurubhakti*, proving by his life the identity of *guru* and *iṣṭa*. The Śāstras avow that, for the complete fructification of spiritual practices, the realization of this identity is essential.

Madhurakavi was born in a Brāhmaṇa family. Here, again, he stands unique by accepting as *guru* one who was himself not a Brāhmaṇa, which was against custom. One attains the position of a spiritual preceptor not through caste, but through genuine spiritual greatness. It is his intense devotion to his *guru* that brought him recognition as one of the Āḷvārs.

How Madhurakavi saw a light during his meditations and how that led him to the presence of Nammāḷvār have already been described. He learnt the essence of the Vedas through the works of his *guru*. He began popularizing those songs by singing them to the accompaniment of tune and timing. For him,

Nammālvār was a part of the Lord Himself incarnated on earth. When his preceptor was on the point of death, Madhurakavi, too, prayed to be taken away. But the Ālvār reminded him that his mission in life was yet to be worked out; it was to popularize the *bhakti* literature.

After his *guru's* passing away, Madhurakavi installed Nammālvār's image in the place of his birth and began celebrating his birthday and other events. When he reached Madurai during his wanderings, the Saṅgam poets¹ derisively questioned the divinity of his *guru*. They averred that he might have been a great devotee, but not a part of the Lord Himself. But to prove his contention, Madhurakavi wrote a line of Nammālvār's verse on a palm-leaf and placed it on the Saṅgam plank. The plank immediately tilted violently, threw off all the

¹ Tradition has it that a plank used to float in the celestial pond in the temple at Madurai. The early poets and scholars of Tamil, who adorned the court of the Pāṇḍya king, had to prove their fitness to be included in that august group by sitting on that plank. Those who were unfit were thrown off the plank.

celebrated poets seated on it, and retained only this palm-leaf containing the line of Nammālvār's poetry. Then the poets recognized his greatness and sang in his praise. In this way, Madhurakavi succeeded in establishing his preceptor's writings on very secure foundations. The remaining years of Madhurakavi's life were spent in spreading the message of his *guru*.

This Ālvār composed only eleven verses, all in praise of his *guru*. These form part of the *Divya Prabandham*. Even today, whenever *Tiruvāimoli* is sung, the singing is begun by the recitation of the first of these eleven stanzas. To show that caste differences have no meaning for the devotees of the Lord, Madhurakavi sings:

What need of high heritage or noble birth
To attain His lotus feet?
I, Madhurakavi, devoted to Tirukkurugur
Nambi,
Declare: The doors of Vaikuṅṭha are open to
Every lover of God.

'KNOW THYSELF'

BY DR. M. HAFIZ SYED

'Know thyself' is an old and well-tried maxim, which is believed to be a sound philosophy of life both in the East and the West. All the intricate problems that confront the human being, in his relation to his own individual development and to others, can better be solved if we learn to understand the workings of our own mind and the surging emotions in our own heart. In our ordinary everyday life, we are so much engrossed in living that we do not care to know what life really is. For many lives, we have been repeatedly identifying ourselves with our physical body and its senses and the lower mind. Sir William Hamilton says that there is nothing so great in the world as

man and there is nothing so great in man as mind, and there he stops. But this imperfect analysis of the inner constitution of man does not solve our real problems. The Western method of solving life's problems through intellectual pursuits has not borne much fruit, in spite of the great progress that the Western people have made in the advancement of learning. The problem of the meaning and the essence of life still remains to be solved.

It should be clearly understood that mere intellectual endeavour or emotional culture in the hackneyed traditional manner will never bring us any nearer the goal. We have to approach the solution of this vital question from

a new angle of vision. We shall have to revise our attitude towards the Western method and give fullest trials to the methods already in vogue in the Eastern countries.

Now the knowledge of the Self is entirely dependent upon a close, clear, and careful self-analysis. The first step in this line is the cultivation of dispassion or *vairāgya*, which is the outcome of calm reflection on the happenings of life, as well as of the knowledge that this apparent solid world with all its attraction is evanescent, and has no real substance in it. The indwelling spirit of the external phenomena, if its essential nature is really understood, is the only factor which may be called permanent, inasmuch as it alone survives the changing and vanishing forms, and persists through all the periods of time—past, present, and future. When this feeling of dispassion dawns upon the mind of an aspirant, he feels a sort of vacuum in his outer life and tries to know whether there is anything else left in his life. It is then that he is enjoined by the seers of the essence of things, visible and invisible, to sit in silence, in the first instance, and begin to watch what passes in his mind and heart. After a few days of calm observation of his own inner happenings, he finds that there are numerous waves, emotional and intellectual, which incessantly occupy his being. By a close observation and intense reflection, he begins to discriminate between various types of thoughts and feelings that crowd his mind. He discovers that he is in the grip of several emotional and intellectual upheavals, which begin to calm down when the searchlight of his self-analysis is applied on them. He notices that the thoughts that spring up in his mind are the result of his desire either to possess certain desirable things or to avoid some undesirable experiences.

In the midst of this inner analysis, he discovers that he is endowed with thoughts and feelings, and something higher than them, which, in the accepted phraseology of ancient

seers and sages, may be called the astral or buddhic vehicle of his consciousness. He has to realize this consciousness as the permanent factor in his life.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa has put in a nutshell the whole constitution of man in these words: 'It is said that the senses are great; greater than the senses is the mind; and greater than the mind is *buddhi*. What is greater than *buddhi* is He (the Self).' This is the clearest analysis of man's entire being. The truth of this analysis can be better realized in silence, when a man sits calmly and begins to reflect within himself on what he is really made of. A deep reflection will reveal that the real man in him is not his physical body, nor the senses, nor the mind, but that he is pure awareness reflecting the divine consciousness that is inherent in him.

In ancient Hindu phraseology, this deeper and abiding consciousness is called *Ātman*. This *Ātman* is accepted to be the supreme Source of our being, by virtue of which the whole inner and outer existence is enlivened. It is this supreme Force that energizes all the phases of manifestation; all the entities in the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms owe their lives as well as their process of evolution to It. Its characteristic is indivisible unity. It is changeless, eternal, ancient, and ever-existent. When we realize It as the true source of our being, we shall feel the universal joy of oneness with all; and thenceforward, we shall live in the lives of all, serve all, and share the joys and sorrows of all.

This is why, since time immemorial, an aspirant on the path of spiritual realization is enjoined first to look within, to find out what he really is in essence; and having discovered his own real nature, he would realize that he is one with the supreme Source of his being, and therefore with all. This, in a word, is the way to know one's own Self, according to the Indian ideals.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

'Sri Ramakrishna (A Birthday Anniversary Tribute)' is the text of an address by Mr. A. K. Brohi, High Commissioner for Pakistan in India, which he delivered at the opening of the Ramakrishna Cultural and Educational Exhibition at the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore District, Madras State, on January 1, 1961. The title of the article is inserted by us. . . .

In view of the Buddha Pūrṇimā, which was celebrated recently, the article on 'Buddha and the Modern Age' by Dr. Paresh Nath Mukherjee, M.A., Ph.D., Lecturer in History, D.A.V. College, Dehradun, Uttar Pradesh, will be read with interest. . . .

The article by Dr. K. C. Varadachari, M.A., Ph.D., Reader in Philosophy, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, brings out in bold relief the profound spiritual implications of the twin concepts of 'Dharma and Mokṣa', and stresses that they are not opposed

to each other; rather, they support and fulfil one another. . . .

An earnest scholar of the Vedic literature, Principal Jogiraj Basu, M.A., of H.S.K. College, Dibrugarh, Assam, shows in his learned article that 'Music, Dance, and Drama' were not only prevalent, but quite popular 'in the Vedic Age'.

The Āḷvārs laid the foundation of the Vaiṣṇava movement in South India. Swami Smanananda, who is closely associated with the publication of *Prabuddha Bharata*, has written a series of three articles on 'The Āḷvārs and Their Religion of Love', the first of which is included in this issue. The other two articles will appear consecutively in the next two issues. . . .

In his short article, Dr. M. Hafiz Syed, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., the well-known scholar of Allahabad, clearly brings out the essence of the theory and practice of the dictum 'Know Thyself'.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE CONCEPT OF MIND IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY. BY SARASVATI CHENNAKESAVAN. *Published by Asia Publishing House, Contractor Building, Nicol Road, Ballard Estate, Bombay-1. 1960. Pages 164. Price Rs. 10.*

The status of 'mind' in Western system of thought is rather bewildering. Sometimes, mind is identified with brain states and glandular activities; and at other times, it is taken as consciousness or soul. It is into this scene of confusion that Dr. (Mrs.) Sarasvati Chennakesavan steps in, with a determined mind to dispel the clouds and bring in a ray of light. She does succeed to a large extent through her efforts to fix 'mind' in its proper place by comparing and contrasting the Indian and Western conceptions of the term. She sums up what she has to say thus: 'It seems that the problem of the nature of mind and its relation to matter may be satisfactorily solved only if we think of mind as a higher form of matter capable of reflecting the nature of self which is consciousness' (p.x).

The five chapters of the book, with a relevant bibliography, constitute a real contribution to the philosophical literature on the subject. The first four chapters are devoted to an exposition of the Indian view of mind; and the last and fifth chapter, to a comparative estimate of the Indian and European standpoints. In dealing with the Indian view, the author has confined herself to the *āstika darśanas*; and in Vedānta, to Advaita. She has rendered a valuable service to philosophy by correlating the epistemological and psychological viewpoints in our systems.

Surveying the 'nature of mind' from the time of the Vedas down to that of the Advaita of Śaṅkara, the author concludes: 'Mind cannot be identified with the self.' Indian philosophy avoided the pitfalls which beset European thought, by recognizing mind (*manas*) as completely distinct from the self (Ātman).

This survey is followed by two epistemological chapters dealing with the role of mind in knowledge.

Here, again, Dr. Chennakesavan starts from the Upaniṣads and comes down to the *ācāryas*. Down the ages, Indian thinkers had recognized, as their Western colleagues did, the necessity of mind-object contact for knowledge to arise. But there is a difference in their views: according to our philosophers, it is mind that goes out to meet the object. It is not reflected energy that comes from the surface of the object impinging on mind that results in perceptual knowledge.

Having explained the role of mind in perceptual knowledge, the author proceeds to discuss the relation between knowledge and object. She discusses the contributions of the various schools of Indian philosophy, and takes up finally the Yoga view of 'Discipline of Mind', as this provides the means for liberation. Incidentally, she emphasizes a very important aspect of Indian philosophy, viz. all epistemology is only a means for an end, the end of full self-realization. For this realization or liberation, all mental states and functions have to be transcended, destroyed, or suppressed. And Yoga provides the means for this mental immolation. This may be a puzzle to the Western thinkers, but it is a distinctive characteristic of Indian epistemology.

The last chapter, which, in a sense, is the most valuable, is concerned with a critical evaluation of the Western concepts of mind against the Indian background. Ryle's book *The Concept of Mind* figures prominently here; and there is a devastating criticism, highly appreciated and valued by the reviewer, of Bertrand Russell and his theories of knowledge. 'The trouble generally with Western thinkers is that not only do they view mind and matter as disjunctively capable of mutual exclusion, but they imagine that these alternatives alone exhaust the field. Until this attitude is modified and the recognition of a self over and above mind and matter is made, there can be no satisfactory solution for the mind-body problem' (p. 153) (or, as for that matter, any problem in philosophy).

This is eminently a book for professional students and teachers of philosophy (to whom the reviewer strongly recommends it). But the intelligent and aspiring layman can derive considerable pleasure and profit by studying it.

PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

ASPECTS OF INDIAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT. BY SHASHI BHUSAN DASGUPTA. Published by A. Mukherjee & Co. Private Ltd., 2 College Square, Calcutta-12. 1957. Pages 247. Price Rs. 5.

In this handy volume of seven essays and three studies in Vaiṣṇavism, Professor Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta has sought to explain the special quality of the national mind of India as revealed in her religion,

philosophy, and literature. In spite of all that has happened to our holy land, there is a subtle immanent principle unifying the various languages and areas of the country. This national unity, which is spiritual and cultural, is revealed in a significant way of life, in a specific way of looking at life.

'The Indian Conception of Sacrifice', with which the volume opens, is aimed at self-expansion and self-purification. The former is directed to the benefit of mankind, and the latter gives recognition to the principle and destiny of the individual. The historical and critical examination of the problem is brilliant. It is followed by 'The Role of Mantra in Indian Religion'. The analysis of the problem is sound but for the author's predilection to see the relics of some obsolete dialects of the Mongolian languages in some of the *mantras*. The finest piece of critical study is the third essay on the 'Evolution of Mother-worship in India'. An account of the Vedic goddesses, an examination of some of the passages in the major Upaniṣads, and an exposition of some of the mother-cults prevailing in the country make the chapter a really remarkable one. Bankim Chandra's *Vandemātaram*, at least, shows that our political life has been through and through charged beneficially with the mother-worship.

The other essays deal with Puruṣottama, divine body, and some yogic schools. The essay on 'The Indian Attitude towards Nature' is a stimulating study. That man is organically related to nature has been the viewpoint since the Vedic times. This study includes a brilliant survey of some of the works of Kālidāsa and of Tagore.

The last three studies refer to Caitanya's cult, the *janmāṣṭamī*, and Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

This work repays a careful study.

DR. P. S. SAS TRI

THE SOMA-HYMNS OF THE ṚG-VEDA: A FRESH INTERPRETATION—PART II (Ṛ.V., IX.16-50). BY S. S. BHAWE. Published by Oriental Institute, Baroda. 1960. Pages 152. Price Rs. 5.50 nP.

The Ṛg-Vedic research inevitably goes back to the great German scholars for inspiration, guidance, and progress, even if one has to differ from them many a time. No one can forget, as Geldner himself came to realize towards the end of his career, the immense help Sāyaṇa offers. Geldner's monumental translation of the *Ṛg-Veda* with his own textual commentary is still a classic; and with Geldner, we have come to realize that the best interpretation of a Ṛg-Vedic passage is offered by the *Ṛg-Veda* itself. It is by accepting this position that Dr. S. S. Bhawe, of the University of Baroda, has proceeded to present

a translation of the ninth *maṇḍala* of the *R̥g-Veda*. The work under review is the second part covering thirty-five of the Soma-hymns. Each hymn is translated and then commented upon.

Dr. Bhawe's notes are highly instructive and stimulating. He depends on parallel Vedic passages and on the Indian and European commentators. Pāṇini's interpretation of the Vedic grammar is applied systematically; and, by way of an example, he has included a modern Sanskrit commentary on IX.16 by Pandit Manishankar Upadhyaya. The notes form a valuable compendium on Vedic philology and grammar.

The work is a valuable addition to the *R̥g-Vedic* studies. A few points, however, may be noted, though it is not our intention to underrate the great value of this work. Dr. Bhawe argues that 'the later mythological Aruṇa cannot possibly be present in the *R̥g-Veda*' (p. 7). We believe with Sieg that there was some *itihāsa*-lore on which the Vedic seers constantly drew their allusions and stories, and that some of these episodes are preserved, though in a guise, in our *Mahābhārata*. At some places, he denies the Vedic conception of a heavenly Soma, only to contradict himself elsewhere (pp.63-64, 81-82, etc.). He convicts Sāyaṇa of giving *duranvaya* (pp. 71 etc.), though he himself does it often (pp.63 etc.). There is a pretty long dissertation on Venā (pp. 21-23); but in *Vedische Studien*, there is an interesting discussion on Venā being a cognate of Venus. He rejects the metaphor in IX.23.2 as given by Sāyaṇa, and this is not convincing. The expression 'arkasya yoni' in IX.25.6 may refer to the leaf of the *arka* plant; one has only to refer to the *Abhijñāna-Śakuntalam*, where the *navamālikā* flower is imagined as lying on the *arka* leaf. The derivation of *hāsate* from *bhāsate* (p.49) is far-fetched. To say that the meaning of beautiful or pleasant for *cārum* is a secondary development (p.57) is to ignore the aesthetic terms found in the text.

These remarks, however, do not come in the way of considering this work as a very valuable addition to our knowledge of the *R̥g-Veda*.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

MIRROR OF VIRASHAIVISM. BY SHRI KUMARA SWAMIJI. Published by Navakalyana Math, Dharwar, Mysore State. 1960. Pages 136. Price Rs. 2.50.

Viraśaivism is a living faith in South India, specially in Kannada country. As an offshoot of the ancient Śaiva religion, it has an individuality of its own. And Shri Kumara Swamiji, an authority on this faith, has already made known widely, by his speeches and writings, the essentials of Viraśaivism to the laymen

and students of philosophy. He has a remarkable felicity of expression. In this book, we get an account of the life of the founder of the faith, Sri Basava; the essential doctrines of the faith in a nutshell; a clear exposition of the basic concepts of *liṅga*, *ṣaṭ-sthala*, and *śiva-yoga*; and, finally a discussion of mysticism. Throughout, the author keeps to a high philosophical level, while making the knowledge of Viraśaivism available even to the ordinary man. Students of comparative religion and of philosophy of religion will find the book worth studying carefully.

PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

A HISTORY OF THE DVAITA SCHOOL OF VEDĀNTA AND ITS LITERATURE. BY B. N. K. SHARMA. Published by Booksellers' Publishing Co., Mehendale Building, V. P. Road, Bombay-4. Pages xv+372. Price Rs. 17.50 nP.

The work is based on a revised and enlarged version of a part of the thesis approved for the Ph. D. degree of the Madras University. While we have many accounts of Advaita, there was no comprehensive treatment of Dvaita. The cause seems to be that to pass beyond Advaita involves the encounter with Rāmānuja and Madhva, whom few ever read and even fewer understand. The author fills the gap by presenting a systematic and comprehensive account on the origin and evolution of the Dvaita system and its literature in and through its source-books. If Madhva could be read and be expressed in a clear and simple language, many will gladly run forward to the many interesting thinkers like Jayatīrtha and Vyāsarāja, who appeared after him.

The present volume is divided into three parts: evolution of the Dvaita system, the creative period of Madhva and his immediate disciples, and standardization of the Dvaita thought under Jayatīrtha.

In tracing the evolution of Madhva thought through its source-books, the author has worked out his own theory regarding the *tone* and *direction* of their ideological development, though he generally accepts the views of modern scholars about their successive *stages* of growth. The second part is devoted to the life, age, and works of Madhva, and the evolution of the school under his direct disciples and followers. The last part deals with the most important phase of the Dvaita system after Madhva, represented by the accredited interpretation by his chosen commentator, Jayatīrtha (A.D. 1400). So much for the brief outline of the contents; they are helpful and informative.

But we cannot refrain from referring to one or two points mentioned in the book. Though this

volume deals with a history of the Dvaita school, it would have been better if the author had kept out from the scope of the book long philosophical discussions and criticism of the rival schools. For instance, the author's criticism of Ghate's estimate of Madhva's *Sūtra-bhāṣya* (pp. 131-59) cannot form an integral part of the present book. According to the author, the term 'Dualism' is not adequate to express the meaning that Madhva has put into the term 'Dvaita'. Even the Sanskrit term 'Dvaita', according to the author, is not capable of expressing the true position of the system. The alternative term suggested by the author for Madhva's system, '*Svatantra-advitīya-Brahmavāda*', has not improved the position either, since Madhva does not put down pluralism or realism. It must be borne in mind that, according to Madhva, 'difference' is fundamental, and every entity has this 'difference' as its essential character. Madhva uncompromisingly maintains ultimate plurality of entities in the final analysis, and asserts that only the ignorant accept monism: *Ajñāninām pakṣe eva dvaitam na vidyate*. None need fight shy of this position. The writer reveals a double standard in his judgement: He appreciates Das Gupta whenever he runs down other systems (p.ii), but is loath to accept his views when they are not appreciative of Dvaita (p.149). The author is uniformly unfair to Rāmānuja. Though he admits that the first theistic reaction to Advaita came from Rāmānuja, he finds fault with him for not being sectarian in his commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtra*, for not finding a place for *Śrī-tattva*, *bhakti*, and *prapatti* in the interpretation of the *sūtras* (p.95).

Rāmānuja, it must be noted, has presented a philosophy of theism in his *Śrī-Bhāṣya*, and not a cult of Śrī Viṣṇu, however dear it may be to his theology. In his *Gadyatraya* and the *Gītā-bhāṣya*, one can find in abundance all the three elements wanting in his purely philosophical writings. The term 'Viśiṣṭādvaita' is *infra dig* to the author (p.93), since it admits an element of *advaita* in that system. Perhaps, the learned author would have preferred *viśiṣṭasya dvaitam*, and not *viśiṣṭasya advaitam*. Obviously, Rāmānuja has his own opinion in the matter!

The author is justified in paying the highest tributes to Jayatīrtha, the *ṭīkācārya par excellence*. But the author, in his zeal, seems to have overstepped the bounds of propriety and perspective. He says: 'He gave final shape and form to its concepts and categories, standardized their definition, formulated new ones where *none had been given by Madhva*' (italics ours). And 'But for them, the works of Madhva would never have made headway in the philosophical world' (p. 322). The orthodox Mādhhvas may not approve of such partisan statements. He also does not find much merit in the great commentators who preceded Jayatīrtha and paved the way for him (p. 308). The view that 'he has driven out of the field the works of Trivikramaṇḍita, Padmanābhatīrtha, Narahari, and others' is hardly pleasing.

These remarks, however, do not detract the value of the book as a whole. The account given here is scholarly, suggestive, and accurate, and is written with a wealth of patient labour and conscientious care.

SWAMI ADIDEVANANDA

NEWS AND REPORTS

ADVAITA ASHRAMA CALCUTTA

The Calcutta branch of the Advaita Ashrama, which is now fully established in its new premises at 5 Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta 14, started three new activities in March 1961. (1) Regular weekly discourses in which the average attendance was 150. (2) The library and reading room, the average daily attendance at the latter being 20. (3) Distribution of rice doles to the needy poor, the number of recipients on an average being 60.

THE RAMAKRISHNA SARADA MISSION VIVEKANANDA VIDYA BHAVAN (A DEGREE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN)

REPORT OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING

An inaugural meeting of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission for a proposed full-fledged degree college

was held on Friday, the 10th March 1961, at its newly acquired premises at 33 Nayapatty Road, South Dum Dum, Calcutta-28.

Swami Madhavanandaji, General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission was the president, and Dr. D. M. Sen, Education Secretary, Government of West Bengal, was present as the chief guest. A large number of ladies and gentlemen as well as many senior monks of Ramakrishna Math and Mission were present.

After the chanting of Vedic *mantras*, Pravrajika Mukti-prana, General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, in a brief address said that Swami Vivekananda, after whom the college was to be named, had said more than once that if India is to raise herself, it was only through education. Real education is that which builds character and leads to self-realization. It is necessary that both men and women should be educated. For decades now, the

Ramakrishna Mission has tried to work out the Swami's ideals among men. The Swami himself had a girls' school opened by his worthy disciple Sister Nivedita. Many girls' schools since then have been started and run by the Ramakrishna Mission in different parts of India. Inspired by Swami Vivekananda's idealism, many women have gradually come forward to take the vows of renunciation and service. With the increase in their number, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission decided to start an independent Math for them, which would be run by themselves. With this end in view, in 1954, the Sarada Math was established. In May 1960, the trustees of the Sarada Math, under the guidance of the Ramakrishna Mission, formed the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission to carry on humanitarian work. Immediately, a proposal for opening a college for girls was made to them. For that purpose, Sri Devendra Nath Bhattacharya, of Dum Dum, offered a gift of 33 *bighas* of land with a building. From July this year, the three years degree course college will be opened. It will also have the pre-university course. The plan is to make it a residential college, but at present day-scholars may have to be taken. This institution will be fashioned after the ancient *gurukula* system, with a scientific outlook suited to the needs of modern times.

She said that about fourteen lakhs of rupees will be required, and appealed to the government and the generous public to help them.

Sri Ashok Sarkar, Managing Director of the *Hindusthan Standard* and the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, who was present on the occasion, said: Swami Vivekananda wanted to see that the women of the country come forward to solve their own problems, and be courageous and brave. The establishment of the Sarada Math was, in part, a fulfilment of his dream. He wished the proposed college all success, and appealed to the government and the public to come forward and help the organizers.

Speaking next, Dr. Roma Chaudhuri, Principal of the Lady Brabourne College, Calcutta, said that the political bondage of more than a century had brought about a total physical and mental ruin of our people. Therefore we have to face enormous educational problems. She dwelt, in detail, upon the ancient ideals of education, and in the end expressed the hope that the idealism, devotion, and sincerity of the dedicated workers of the newly started Ramakrishna Sarada Mission would help in imparting the right type of education to our girls.

Dr. D. M. Sen, who was the chief guest, agreed that the educational problems that they had to face were many, and they had been striving to find out a solution. Speaking about the need of national unity, he said that the education that is being given is narrow and limited. In this context, he praised

the *sannyāsins* of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission for breaking the narrow limits of provincialism and serving the whole country, keeping before them the noble ideals of unity and equality. All the streams of Indian culture, he said, met in the Ramakrishna Mission, where everyone was accepted without any distinction.

He expressed the hope that the newly founded Ramakrishna Sarada Mission would follow the path of the Ramakrishna Mission by striving to enlighten the women of our country.

In his presidential speech, Swami Madhavanandaji said: I have not come here to make a speech. I have only come to participate in the inauguration of a good work and be blessed. Swami Vivekanandaji Maharaj desired that women should work out their own problems. He wished to establish a Math for women, like the one he had started for men at Belur. He had left instructions with us that till women were competent to shoulder the responsibility of such an organization, we should help them from a distance. If women work under the directions of men, it so happens that men try to control them, and they cannot work in freedom. So he wanted that women by themselves should run their Math, and men should not interfere in its management.

It gives us great joy that in 1954, during the Holy Mother's Centenary, we were able to start a Math—Sri Sarada Math—for women and that gradually we were able to hand over all responsibilities to them. This Math is the counterpart of the Belur Math. Just as the Belur Math is for men, so is this Sarada Math for women.

As, with the Belur Math, we have the Ramakrishna Mission attached to it to carry on humanitarian and social welfare work, so also attached to the Sarada Math is the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission with the same objects in view. For all this work done in a spirit of worship is an aid to self-realization. Like the Ramakrishna Mission, this Mission also will carry on humanitarian work. They will not, however, be able to undertake all the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission, for their field of work will be limited among women and children.

That the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother are on this Mission, which bears their names, can be understood very well. For, immediately after the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission was registered last year, a generous resident of Dum Dum, Sri Devendra Nath Bhattacharya, came forward most unexpectedly to offer a gift of this land and building to them for starting a residential college for women. They are starting with a degree college, and this has been possible only on account of the grace of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother.

Our Vidyamandira at Belur was started in 1941.

For nearly twenty years, it was an intermediate college, and only last year, it was converted into a degree college. But we are happy to know that these people are starting with a degree college. Today, though it is a working day, many of you have assembled here to encourage them in their new endeavour. It shows which way the wind is blowing. I pray that Swamiji's dream be fulfilled through them.

Many of our friends may think that we have shirked responsibility by giving them legally an independent status. But that is not true. It will also not be correct to say that they wished to be independent. Rather, they would have been glad to continue the previous status. The separate organization has been formed according to Swamiji's wish.

He wanted that women should carry on work independently and that we should only help them from a distance. So it was according to our advice that they started the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission. This Mission, though legally separate, is basically one with the Ramakrishna Mission, being its counterpart. May they be able to efficiently conduct the Sarada Math and the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission guided by their intelligence is my earnest prayer to Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother.

Immediately after forming the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, they have undertaken this work, which shows that they do not wish to sit quietly at the Sarada Math and strive after personal salvation only, but wish to come out and do active work for the welfare of humanity in a spirit of worship.

They are all highly qualified and capable of doing good work, and they have feelings and good intentions. To the extent they will dedicate themselves whole-heartedly to the work of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother, to that extent their grace and blessings also will be on them. We ourselves feel surprised to see the great works that the Master, the Holy Mother, and Swamiji have accomplished through us. We never dreamt of doing such things, but still we were forced to undertake such works, in spite of ourselves. Similarly, their blessings will be on these people, and they will accomplish great things through them also. Their blessing is already on them; may it increase a thousandfold is my earnest prayer.

All these years, the Ramakrishna Mission has enjoyed your regard, trust, and help, and I want that you will extend the same to these people also. They have renounced their homes and have dedicated their lives to the service of humanity. I appeal to you to see that they, too, get your help. If you come to know of any of their needs, I request you to remove such wants. We want to see that they excel the

Ramakrishna Mission and that their work grows from day to day. May Sri Ramakrishna guide them! You all help them in their endeavours—this is my request to you all. The small seed that is sown today will in ten years grow into a big institution. Today, we feel happy that we have been able to fulfil the responsibility that Swamiji had placed on us. As the blessings of the Master and the Holy Mother are on them, so will they be on all who will help them. You are householders, and so cannot fully dedicate yourselves to social work, as you have responsibilities. But from your respective spheres of activity, you can give them help. Thus, with mutual trust, their Mission will grow like the Ramakrishna Mission, and you all will be blessed by helping them; and they, too, will be blessed by doing service to humanity.

On this auspicious day, I pray may this Vivekananda Vidya Bhavan be prosperous in every way.

A vote of thanks was then proposed by Pravrajika Shraddhaprana.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA PATNA

REPORT FOR 1959

Religious Activities: Regular daily *pūjā* and *bhajanas* at the Ashrama shrine; celebration of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān Buddha, Jesus Christ, and Śrī Śaṅkara; observance of religious festivals, such as Durgā Pūjā, Kālī Pūjā, Śivarātri, and Sarasvatī Pūjā; and scriptural classes in and outside the Ashrama.

Educational and Cultural Activities: (i) *The Adbhutananda Upper Primary School:* Total number of students: 189.

(ii) *The Students' Home:* Total number of students at the end of 1959: free: 15; paying: 11. A spacious two-storied building for accommodating 30 students was constructed in 1959 at a cost of more than one lakh of rupees. The Government of India gave a grant of Rs. 45,000 towards the cost of construction, and the State Government Rs. 40,000.

(iii) *The Turiyananda Library and Reading Room:* Total number of books in the library: 5,532; number of books issued during the year: 8,606. Number of dailies received in the reading room: 6; periodicals: 72; total number of attendance during the year: 16,082.

Medical Activities: (i) *Bhuvaneshwar Charitable Homoeopathic Dispensary:* Number of patients treated: 71,887.

(ii) *Allopathic Department:* Number of patients treated: 48,464.