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JUNE 1961

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

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



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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

JUNE 1961

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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Vol. LXVI

JUNE 1961

No. 6



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

## SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

*Deoghar (Baidyanathdham), 1926*

Mahapurushji went to Deoghar with some *sādhus* and *brahmacārins* on the occasion of the opening of the buildings of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith on its own new land there. His august presence there was a source of continuous joy all around, and his holy contact enkindled new spiritual hope and inspiration in all hearts. He, too, felt very happy in that sacred place of pilgrimage. One day, when several *sādhus* and *brahmacārins* had gathered before him, a monk requested: 'Maharaj, please tell us something about your pilgrimages; we are very eager to hear about them.'

With a smile, Mahapurushji said: 'What will you gain by listening to those old anecdotes? There was a time when we did all that with a will; but now, the Master has dragged us into this current of work. This is what is required for the propagation of his message in this age. That is why the Master is getting some of his works done by us even in this old age. What we had planned for ourselves, and had actually been following, was a life of austerity and spiritual practice; but would the

Master leave us with that? See how Swamiji himself (Swami Vivekananda) had to depart prematurely owing to incessant strenuous work. Many a time did he go away to the Himalayas for intense spiritual practice; but each time, somebody dragged him down from the lap of the mountains. He started moving through Rajasthan and other places, and had contacts with quite a number of Rajas and Maharajas. In the course of his wanderings, he reached Porbunder. That princely state was then without a ruler, and it was in a chaotic condition. So the British Government appointed Sri Shankar Rao (Pandurang) administrator of the state. He was a very learned, intelligent, able, and honest man. He had travelled extensively in Europe, and had learnt French and German quite well. In his house, he had a big library of his own; he was very studious by nature. This library attracted Swamiji very much. When he expressed his feelings to Sri Rao, the latter said with great delight: "You can stay here as long as you like and study." So Swamiji stayed there for some time. Sri Rao was a master of Sanskrit. One day, he



said to Swamiji: "To tell you the truth, Swamiji, when I first read the scriptures, it seemed as though they contained no truth, as though it was all a figment of the brains of the writers of those books—they had written as the fancies fledged across their minds. But after seeing you and mixing with you intimately, my idea has changed; now it strikes me that our religious literature is all true. I noticed in the West that the thinking people there are very eager to be acquainted with our philosophies and scriptures. But they have not yet come across anyone who can explain our scriptures to them properly. It would be a real achievement if you could go to the West and explain to them our Vedic religion." Now, see how the Master's work starts! In reply, Swamiji said: "That is a good proposal. I am a *sannyāsin*; to me, there is no difference between this country and that. I shall go when the need arises." Sri Rao added: "If one wants to mix with the *elite* there, one has to learn the French language. Please learn it, I shall help you." And so, Swamiji learnt that language well enough. I was then at the Alambazar Math. Swamiji had been travelling for about two years without giving any news about himself. Nobody knew his whereabouts, and he had not even seen the Alambazar Math. One day, all on a sudden, a letter of full four pages came from him. None of us could make out in what language it was written. Shashi Maharaj (Swami Ramakrishnananda) and Sarada (Swami Trigunatita) had a smattering of French. After a close examination, they said: "It seems to be a letter from Naren (Swami Vivekananda) written in French." Then, we had to run with that letter to Aghore Chatterji in Calcutta. He had been the principal of the Hyderabad State College, and knew French very well. He read that letter and translated it into Bengali for us. Only then we came to know Swamiji's whereabouts and that he had learnt French. Well, I told you at the start that Swamiji had planned to spend his life in meditation, *japa*, and other spiritual practices. But the great power that descended as Sri Ramakrishna did not allow

him to do so; it yoked him to the work of propagating the message of the age that would save the world. The master *yogin* that Swamiji was, he could easily have spent his days in *samādhi* or total absorption in God, if only he wanted to do so; but the Master drew him into the midst of intense activity. He has engaged all of you as well for giving shape to his message. Blessed are the men whom he has chosen!

A monk: 'But, surely, are not austerities and spiritual struggles also necessary? You, too, have undergone a lot of it.'

Mahapurushji: 'Yes, spiritual exercises are very necessary, and so also are austerities. The only means of keeping the course of one's life directed towards God is spiritual effort. But why should one think that this spiritual struggle and austerity can have only one form? Look here, for instance, what a suffering you undergo, and what a fight you have to wage against adverse circumstances, for carrying on God's works; this, too, is a kind of austerity and spiritual struggle. The one idea that you will always have to keep burning in your heart is that whatever you do is for his sake, for his service—nothing for yourselves. This, too, is a kind of spiritual practice. Out of his grace, he has chosen you as his instruments; and that has made your life blessed. Know this for certain that, for the work of propagating and giving shape to his message for the age, he does not depend on any particular person. The fortunate ones alone are able to work for him. I have seen quite a number of people with sterling qualities, but the Master does not choose them. There are others, again, who, for all outward appearance, are not very striking, nay, almost good-for-nothing, and yet the Master makes them work wonders. Anyone who gets an opportunity to do his work is a blessed person. That is why Swamiji would say that, if it pleases him, he can create a hundred thousand Vivekanandas. Have this idea ever bright in your mind that by doing his work we ourselves become blessed. When you engage yourself in his work, you will, as a matter of



course, get devotion, faith, and such other things. There can be no doubt about that. As compared with the spiritual struggles of those who roam about in hills and forests and live on alms, your struggles are in no way inferior. "For one's own salvation and for the good of the world"—that is the message for this age.'

A monk: 'In the midst of work, one is often assailed by pride and egotism.'

Mahapurushji: 'So long as you have this idea clear in your mind that you are doing God's work, you cannot have pride or anything like that. If you have the correct attitude, you need have no fear. Along with work, you should practise meditation and *japa* regularly; that helps in maintaining a balance. And a little intrusion by pride and egotism is not a thing to be worried about; for God Himself will put you under the necessary circumstances to wipe off that little defect. As for pride and egotism, these can come even to the man engaged in austerities in solitude, who may then think that he has progressed greatly in spirituality. What matters, you know, is sincerity of purpose. If one is false to oneself, one can have neither true spiritual practice nor true service. If you are true to yourself, if your thoughts and actions are in accord with each other, pride and egotism can never assail you, whether you are engaged in spiritual practice or service to God. You must be ever watchful about the goal; you must never forget the aim of life.'

#### *Ootacamund, 1926*

Mahapurushji reached the Nilgiri Hills from Madras on the 4th June and stayed there at Sri Hatiramji Math, the summer residence of the head of the temple of Bālāji at Tirupati. The climate of Ootacamund is very salubrious, and the scenery charming. The height of the place is about eight thousand feet above sea level. In those days, the place was also the summer residence of the Governor of Madras. Mahapurushji had visited the place once before in 1924, when he had stayed for some months at Coonoor, about ten miles from

Ootacamund. At that time, he had laid the foundation-stone of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Ootacamund.

After coming here, Mahapurushji spent his time mostly by himself; he did not like much to mix with the people. All the same, the local devotees came to him every afternoon, heard him talk on spiritual matters, and returned home with his blessings and their hearts full of joy. His spiritual power began to attract more and more devotees. Apart from such spiritual ministrations, he remained absorbed in his own Self, merged in the infinite Brahman, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. His mind seemed to be getting gradually more and more detached from the things of the world, and he became more reserved and indrawn. All the expression of life on the ordinary mortal plane that one could notice in him in those days was during the time he talked and joked with the simple hill boys and girls. When he went out for his walk in the morning and evening, he used to have in his pockets a few sweets and coins, which he distributed on the way among those innocent children, and mixed with them so whole-heartedly as though he was one of themselves.

When he sat alone in his room in Sri Hatiramji Math, he closed his eyes, or he looked at something far away with vacant eyes, as if his mind travelled in some supersensuous plane. One felt awed at approaching him at such moments. Often, he would say that he would free himself from all the responsibilities of the head of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and spend the rest of his days in the deep solitude of the Nilgiri Hills. His mind remained completely detached from everything—above all mundane entanglements.

One day, he was sitting quietly in his room after his morning walk, with his face towards the wide glazed window; his eyes seemed to be fixed on the blue hills spread before him like huge waves. One of his attendants, who happened to enter the room just then, noticed him sitting thus in an abstracted mood. Feeling rather alarmed, he asked: 'Maharaj, do you

feel unwell?' It looked as if the question did not enter his ears fully, though it disturbed the current of his thought. He opened his lips and said as if in continuation of the thought running through his mind at that time: 'Listen. The spiritual atmosphere of this place is very elevating; the mind naturally runs after the Infinite. I had no idea before that this place was so full of high spiritual inspiration. Now as the days roll on, more and more of it is being revealed to me and making me mute with wonder. I now think of the infinite grace of the Master that he should have brought me here for the very purpose of giving me the bliss of such divine realization. I had the same kind of feeling when I was in the Himalayas many years ago. The mind has a natural tendency towards meditation, and it soon becomes quiet and serene. It takes some effort to bring it down. Many saints and *ṛṣis* must have undertaken deep spiritual practices here; they have left the place surcharged with great spiritual power. It is very conducive to spiritual practices. Chi—and others remarked the other day that the forests here abound in fruits of various kinds. Maybe, the *ṛṣis* lived on those fruits and spent their days in spiritual practices.'

He kept silent for some time and then continued: 'The other day, when I sat thus looking quietly at the blue ranges, I noticed somebody coming out of this body and spreading over the whole world.' With these words, he closed his lips. After a long while, he drew a long breath and said: 'The Master is my Paramātman, the supreme Self; it is he who

pervades the whole universe: "A quarter of His is this whole universe; His other three immortal quarters are in the bright region."'

Struck with wonder, the attendant kept silent for a moment and then said with folded hands: 'Should we never have any of these realizations, Maharaj? I cannot even slightly perceive what spiritual power is there in the atmosphere of this place.'

Mahapurushji: 'Look here, my son, it is He alone who can bring about any realization. Hold fast to Him. Weep and pray to Him; out of His grace, He will grant you everything at the right moment. He is the master of our minds—He is the supreme Self that has come down as our Master. If He, out of His grace, but turns the mind even a little, then this very restless mind, mad as an elephant as it is, becomes calm and gets lost in *samādhi*—it gives up all attachment to worldly things once for all. How can one reach high spiritual states unless the mind becomes very fine? Again, can the mind rise to the supersensuous plane all of a sudden? It requires long spiritual practice. One can have the higher spiritual realizations only when the mind becomes finer than the finest and attains a high level of consciousness. The spiritual moods become manifest through a mind that is purified. As the mind reaches higher levels of consciousness, spiritual realities of greater order become reflected in it. What is essential is to have faith in and devotion to His lotus-feet; when that is done, everything is achieved.'



Thou oughtest to seek the grace of devotion earnestly, to ask it longingly, to wait for it patiently and confidently, to receive it thankfully, to keep it humbly, to work with it diligently, and to commit to God the time and manner of this heavenly visitation, until He come unto thee.... God often giveth in one short moment what He hath for a long time denied. He giveth sometimes in the end that which, at the beginning of prayer, He deferred to grant.



## RESURGENT INDIA DEMANDS FURTHER SACRIFICE

Some of our correspondents have written to us expressing their opinion that what we have described as the revival of our national life is nothing but fiction. This is in reference to our editorial of last January, where we tried to point out how our motherland, after passing through so many changes, is once again asserting herself. We mentioned there the remarkable progress made in every field of her national life. We do not think it necessary to detail here the long list of the nation's achievements in several spheres. Any Indian who knows the history of the nation, and is acquainted with her present endeavours, will be able to recognize the difference between the state of affairs in the past and the conditions obtaining at present. Our correspondents' contention is that the change that is most palpable in our present-day society is one that is leading towards a total degeneration of our national life, and that what has been stated by us as the national awakening and progress is illusive and a mere wishful thinking.

We, however, think that those who view things in that manner also feel for the country, and are, probably, much too pained at the prevailing injustice and inequity in society to understand things rationally. Many, we believe, are conscious of the deficiency in our social life and worried about the unhealthy tendency of life in general. But what we want to tell is that the seamy side is not the only view of our social picture. India still retains, even in this period of her social ferment and emotional unrest, a remarkably dignified and bright aspect of her national life. Of course, there can be no two opinions about the need and urgency of mending whatever there is bad, and effecting an all-round and balanced growth of our social life. It is a fact that whenever there is a national or a racial revival, certain unhealthy reactions are inevitable. Our case also is no exception. What the nation needs to do now is to recognize the revival and keep burning the

fire that was lighted during the period of the national awakening, and use it as the power from within to effect a harmonious growth of the people as a whole. It is time for a concerted and conscious effort to overcome the unwholesome reactions and skilfully go through the transition of our social life from the exciting state of revival to the sober and healthy condition of normal growth. Here, we shall try once more to make our observations clear. Our readers will kindly excuse any repetition that may become necessary for such a clarification.

When we speak of the nation's progress, we do not mean that all is well with our national life. The throb of life is doubtless perceptible, but it is also a fact that people are confused about the direction in which they are to move for a better and nobler life. As a result, the nation is utterly disappointed at the clamour and conflict rampant everywhere. Our conviction is that the spiritual ideas and ideals of the nation can still regulate the awakened life of the country and ably direct the great national force to its fulfilment. We earnestly desire that, without further delay, the nation should understand the observations made by Swami Vivekananda and conscientiously work out his plan. For this, it is necessary that the younger generation should be acquainted with the thoughts of the Swami, which, we are sure, will fire their imagination and inspire them to build their life in the right way and fulfil the great mission of India.

Without having a spiritual awareness and the self-discipline that is born of it as our guiding factors, the unrestrained aspirations of our people are prone to become a destructive force, like fire gone out of hand. Hence it is our constant endeavour to make the nation understand Swami Vivekananda, so that an educational system moulded after his comprehensive and catholic ideal may be evolved, which may lead the diverse people of our great country to



their cherished goal. To achieve a satisfactory result in our national efforts, according to the Swami, 'The first work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths confined in our Upaniṣads, in our scriptures, in our Purāṇas must be brought out from the books and scattered broadcast all over the land'.

## II

We agree with our correspondents that disruptive forces are there in our country, which may do great harm to our national solidarity. Nevertheless, the country is making a bold experiment in establishing a democratic republic, with her diverse people speaking various languages and following different customs. The ideal courageously taken up by the nation represents its faith in the dignity of the individual and the equality of man. It is in tune with India's spiritual traditions and her belief in the harmony of all religions. National reconstruction is a great task that requires caution at every step. It cannot be achieved overnight; it depends on successfully bringing about a healthy change in the people's outlook through education, by rousing in them the spirit of understanding and the capacity for feeling. History tells us that India, in the past, had hardly had the conception of political unity in the comprehensive sense that we have it today. The growth of the consciousness that the nation is a single entity in every way has been a blessing in disguise of the foreign rule, to fight against which India became politically united. The nation now understands, in some measure at least, that, under the modern system of communication and commerce, its citizens cannot live as a free people without political unity. In the absence of the foreign rule, to fight which all sections of our people became united, disruptive forces are raising their ugly heads, threatening our national solidarity. There is, of course, a common factor that can bind the people together, and it is the nation's faith in spiritual values. The Indian people, in spite of the divergent forms of their religious practices, can easily understand the common

spiritual heritage of the nation. It is their deep faith in religious values and the belief in the fundamental harmony of religions that can effectively bring about a union of the different groups, transforming them into a nation or a political unit. We wish to draw the attention of our readers to these unifying forces. There is no use in ruthlessly condemning the nation's earnest endeavours because of her failures and mistakes; on the other hand, we feel that these laudable efforts should receive encouragement and co-operation from every son of the soil.

Owing to the prolonged political servitude that India had to undergo, she almost became impoverished materially. Under constant persecution and continued exploitation, she became unable to provide her children even with the barest necessities of life. And poverty is the worst evil that kills everything human and humane in man, degrading him to the level of beasts. Under such tragic circumstances, India seemed as if she were losing sight of her spiritual treasures, which, if it had happened, would have meant the extinction of the Indian nation itself and also the elimination of spirituality from the world. But that was not to be. India had to live and fulfil her obligations to others. Humanity needs her—her spiritual wisdom and religious ideals. And so, she survived the danger that faced her through a very significant spiritual revival. It was not an accidental survival. Spirituality is the only truth that cannot die. Though sometimes it becomes dormant, it manifests itself, again and again, like a flood-tide and engulfs the whole of mankind. The world was in need of a life-giving current of spirituality, and the spiritual renaissance of India came in fulfilment of this need. Today, India is awake, because she is the channel through which the spiritual current flows. When spirituality is dynamic, India is awake.

While there are evident signs of the spiritual awakening, it is also true that there are disquieting and humiliating expressions of human conduct in our social life. Many sensitive persons feel disturbed and worried at this



phenomenon. To those who feel it rather too much, we have to say that the situation is not so hopeless as to condemn the nation as a whole. The law of nature operates in every sphere of human existence. A drought makes even the most fertile land barren for the time being. But after a good shower, life comes out of it in all its freshness. The valued seeds that remain hidden under the soil begin to germinate, and along with these also come to life the weeds that are a veritable danger to the eagerly awaited harvest. Similarly, when the nation was in a dismal state of apathy under alien domination, the undesirable tendencies of her life remained suppressed, even as the bright aspects of her life remained paralysed. Now that the nation has become fully alive, even the harmful germs that were present in her blood have become active. A dead body is never affected by any disease; it decomposes. It is the living being that suffers from diseases, which can, of course, be cured by proper treatment. India needs her life-blood to be revitalized in order to overcome the still persisting symptoms of disease in her social life. Spirituality is the life-blood of our nation; and so, it should flow strong and clear. Spiritual consciousness and faith in God can successfully fight the anti-social virus that has crept into our social body. That is why we have been all along trying to draw the attention of our readers to the findings and observations of Swami Vivekananda, who inspired the people to live spiritually and thereby bring order and grace to life.

### III

Until recently, India had no freedom even to commit mistakes. It is only now that she has become free to build her future as she desires. The Indian people are gradually struggling to express themselves, and it is obvious that there is much disorder in their mode of work. They have now the freedom to make the experiment, however costly it may be. There is no harm even if the nation makes mistakes in her efforts. People may make mistakes, but if they are sincere in their endeavours, they are bound to

succeed and make progress. It is through freedom of action that India will achieve progress in all the spheres of her national life. What is needed therefore is that those who feel for the country should, through their thought and action, devote themselves to the sacred task of making the people conscious of their spiritual heritage and showing them how they can purposefully direct their energies for the common benefit of all. Pessimism is a poison. An optimistic outlook, particularly when there is ample reason to become optimistic, can lift man out of the slough of lethargy. When the people are struggling for freedom—social, economic, and intellectual—there is no use in glibly finding fault with them; rather, everyone with an able body and a sound mind should join them in their struggle. Our national ship is on the high seas. She may have sprung a leak in the hull. Those who feel that they are the children of the land should plug the hole. They are to do it with their heart's blood. If they fail, let all sink together. What does one gain by simply cursing those who are at least struggling to move forward? Should we not remember the exhortation of Swami Vivekananda: 'We will make a plug of our brains and put them into the ship, but condemn it, never'?

India passed through a vicious spell of *tamas*, lethargy and inertia, lack of self-confidence and power of discrimination. She has been stirred out of it, but the after effect of the spell is still lingering, which is apparent in some of the unwholesome expressions of our social life. To reach spiritual glory, she has to infuse the *sāttvika* quality into the life of her people, the quality that expresses itself in sublime thought and noble character. To overcome *tamas* and attain the *sāttvika* state, the nation should first strive hard to reach the height of the *rājasika* state, the culmination of intense activity and the pinnacle of national prosperity. That India is developing the *rājasika* qualities of life is discernible in her efforts for industrial and technological advancement. We believe that Swami Vivekananda would have been the happiest of men today to see the industrial development of



our country. It may be that the growth is not uniform or the effort is not balanced, but we contend that when the endeavour is there, it will, in due course, take the right direction and acquire the necessary balance and speed by virtue of its own strength. What has so far been done is unquestionably good; we should now methodically exert ourselves to achieve more. To those who are apprehensive of our industrial edifice being founded on the quicksand of foreign capital infiltrating in the form of aid or loan, we recall the words of the Swami: ‘“The snake which bites must take out its own poison”—and that this is going to be is my firm conviction; the money required for these works would have to come from the West.’ Our readers may judge for themselves whether there is an element of prophetic truth in these words.

India, in ancient days, was a rich country, but was robbed of her wealth in later days. Now the time has changed; her wealth must come back to her—this is the moral law. The history in the making is the history of India disseminating her spiritual treasure to all nations, who, in their turn, are helping her to become a prosperous nation. Swami Vivekananda, in the same context, goes on to say: ‘And for that reason, our religion should be preached in Europe and America. Modern science has undermined the basis of religions like Christianity. Over and above that, luxury is about to kill the religious instinct itself. Europe and America are now looking towards India with expectant eyes: this is the time for philanthropy, this is the time to occupy the hostile strongholds.’

#### IV

India passed through an unhappy period in which she could hardly express her wants or raise her voice even for her most legitimate right. Now, with the change of circumstances, the people are slowly becoming conscious of their rights and privileges. Misery and poverty are still there on a large scale, even to a disturbing degree. Greed and jealousy, which are

the inevitable offspring of servitude and persecution, desire for enjoyment, and ambition for wielding power are perceptible all over. In the freshness of freedom, the aspirations of our people are finding such crude expressions. But these cannot be taken as the innate characteristics of our people, when viewed against the background of the past history of the nation. These are just the signs of a new life, though in its crudest expressions; and experience will gradually teach the people to become orderly in their conduct and purposeful in their effort. A spiritual reorientation of life, at this stage of the nation’s history, is what is needed to set things right.

Many of our countrymen, both leaders and rank and file, sacrificed their lives to rouse the nation from her long stupor. Now the nation demands further sacrifice from her people for the nourishment of her growing life. Young and educated, pure and bold, feeling and sacrificing men and women should come forward in ever increasing numbers to flood the country with the strength-giving spiritual ideals and to educate the people in modern science. India must rise again and fulfil her duty by others as well. Observe the words of Swami Vivekananda: ‘This I know for certain that millions, I say deliberately, millions in every civilized land are waiting for the message that will save them from the hideous abyss of materialism into which modern money-worship is driving them headlong, and many of the leaders of the new social movements have already discovered that Vedānta in its highest form can alone spiritualize their social aspirations.’ India’s is the responsibility and privilege to lead humanity to its spiritual goal at this momentous period of its history. The present generation of our people must shoulder the responsibility. There is no use in only condemning things. Every Indian should feel that the burden of working out the salvation of this land and of the world is on his shoulders. The measure of success is not the only thing to be counted upon; but the satisfaction that one has lived, worked, and died for the cause is what is valuable.



India's present spiritual struggle is evident in her conflict in choosing between the Western ideal of a materialistic life and her traditional spiritual life mainly based on the ideals of renunciation and service. In every sphere of activity, this conflict between the two ways of life is noticeable. Today, the desire in our people to enjoy the material comforts of life is strong; true. But stronger still is the voice of the spiritual India calling back her children to the blissful lap of mother religion. Our society is now much worried about the disgraceful frivolity and annoying indiscipline among the younger generation. The nation feels hurt and humiliated to see some of our educated girls behaving in an un-Indian fashion. But this is not the only picture of our national life. This is manifest only on the surface. Below the surface flows unfailingly the perennial waters of her spiritual life. The actual life of the nation in its intrinsic worth is in the making outside the public gaze. He who has eyes to see can surely find how our girls cherish the ideals of Sītā, Sāvitrī, and Umā in their lives. It brings confidence even to callous minds when they observe how many of our educated girls are honourably and dutifully maintaining their parents and bringing up the younger ones in their parental homes, sacrificing their own personal needs and happiness. Is it not commendable that, within a very short time, our young men have taken up responsible positions in all the departments of our national life? Of course, there is much scope for improvement, and the nation should now concentrate its attention on improving what has already been accomplished. Swami Vivekananda observed: 'We all hear so much about the degradation of India. There was a time when I also believed in it. But today, standing on the vantage-ground of experience, with eyes cleared of obstructive predispositions and, above all, of the highly-coloured pictures of other countries toned down to their proper shade and light by actual contact, I confess, in all my humility, that I was wrong. Thou blessed land of the Āryas, thou wast never degraded. . . . I stand

in awe before the unbroken procession of scores of shining centuries, with here and there a dim link in the chain, only to flare up with added brilliance in the next, and there she is walking with her own majestic steps—my motherland—to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power on earth or in heaven can check—the regeneration of man the brute into man the God.' Is there any doubt that India, today, is in a better state than she was at the time of Swami Vivekananda?

## V

A nation should not be judged by the limited observation of the cross-section of her life at a particular period of her history. To properly understand the course of our national life, the process of its historical unfoldment should be studied with a wider view; then only the underlying national ideal can be perceived.

A systematic study of Indian life in relation to the flow of events in other parts of the world would surely reveal how India's spiritual ideas have influenced world-thought at different periods of her history. Even in recent years, since India attained independence, she has powerfully exerted her moral force in the international sphere, and her voice is listened to with respect and valued greatly.

What India needs today is a reinvigoration of the spirit of sacrifice which was aglow during her struggle for political emancipation. After long political subjection, her people have now got the opportunity to breathe the air of freedom. It is but natural for a people who were subject to tyranny and exploitation for a long time to rush in and grab anything that they can lay their hands on. This is only a passing phase, which will not last for long. When things get settled down, and the rising generation develops a sense of responsibility and works in a spirit of idealism and sacrifice, the face of India is bound to change. To this task, the nation should apply herself assiduously.

To the Indians, life is sacred, and human society is the reflex of the Divine Mother. So all their aspirations—political, economic, social,



and cultural— have one aim, viz. the spiritual unfoldment of every individual. India has to exhibit this ideal once more before the world. Busy as she is in her national reconstruction, providing for her people social security and economic stability, India cannot afford to lose sight of her foremost duty of bringing out her spiritual treasures and distributing them freely to all.

Swami Vivekananda rightly warned: 'Every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas.' When this is seriously done, her people will be able to overcome greed and jealousy, factionalism and communalism. Even a little work in the right direction has yielded encouraging results, but the road is long, and much remains yet to be accomplished.

We denounce self-complacency of every kind. But it should be pointed out that, whatever one may say belittling India's present progress, the self-consciousness and stir noticeable in her national life certainly do not indicate the spiritual bankruptcy of her people.

We believe that even the most difficult hurdles in her path to prosperity and higher life can be overcome, and her social evils eradicated, if the nation listens to the call of Swami Vivekananda and tries to mould the character of her people accordingly. Ours is but an attempt, however feeble it may be, to broadcast his call, particularly to his own countrymen, to join, in whatever capacity it suits them, in the work of building up a better India and spreading her spiritual ideas to all humanity. To achieve this, our motherland demands further sacrifice from young India.

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## AESTHETIC FORM

BY DR. P. S. SASTRI

The relation of aesthetic form to value is a special problem of the value of a work of art. There have been several attempts to explain this problem. The experimentalist was the first to consider it at length.

G. F. Fechner in his *Vorschule der Aesthetik* enunciated a few psychological laws governing the affective life of man. The first is the principle of *aesthetic threshold*. It demands that the stimulus must have a certain degree of intensity before it can affect man. The intensity refers to a certain degree of concentration on the design or structure and also on the feelings and emotions. In the absence of such an intensity, it can be conceded, one cannot have an aesthetic experience worth the name. Next, there is the principle of *aesthetic reinforcement*, pointing out that several conditions of pleasure in combination evoke a greater total satisfaction

than any one such condition. Even the sum of their separate agreeable affects is less than this total satisfaction. Here are considered melody and harmony, sense and rhythm. The criterion of pleasure may be a dubious one. But the reinforcement refers to the integral unity of the formal and material elements. The principle of *uniform connection within a manifold* explains that we prefer those that reveal both unity and complexity. This principle evidently takes us more to the content. But the complexity acquires a unity by virtue of the form alone. This would make form the chief factor. The principle of *absence of contradiction* argues for our preference to harmony in the representation. The principle of *clarity* points out that our satisfaction arises from the representation being distinctly focussed in consciousness. Both these emphasize the greater

contribution of the subject-matter, though in terms that can be applied to the form as well.

But on the other hand, there is the principle of *aesthetic association*, according to which every aesthetic impression is analysable into a direct and an associated factor. This principle has been exploited to the full in the aesthetic doctrines of Santayana, Prall, and Otis Lee. If the associated factor refers to meaning, it is not merely associated, but fused with the rest. According to the principle of *duration of stimulus*, the stimulus must exist for a specific time in order to produce a certain effect. Once the effect begins to arise, it will steadily grow to its maximum, after which it will begin to decrease. This is purely a matter for the psychological analysis of the spectator's or reader's experience. It will even limit the length of a literary composition.

In giving a due place to form, Fechner speaks of the stimulus. What is this stimulus? Fechner might appear to equate it with the work of art. But his followers throw light on this. Zierhen, for instance, observes that aesthetic experience consists of the aesthetic object, the stimulus, and the immediate cause of sensation, on the one hand; and on the other, of the purely psychic processes of sensation, representation, and meaning awakened by the external stimulus. Here the stimulus is said to be other than the aesthetic object and the immediate cause of sensation. Such a stimulus can only be the so-called pure form which, Roger Fry said, can be sensed. Thus he writes: 'In proportion as art becomes pure, . . . it cuts out all the romantic overtones of life, which are the usual bait by which the work of art induces men to accept it. It appeals only to the aesthetic sensibility.' But when form is felt in actual or imaginative experience, there can be no feeling for form where these alleged 'romantic overtones of life' are absent. A similar error appears in the experimental studies of Vernon Lee and Miss Thomson. They sought to prove experimentally that the apprehension of pure form depends on various organic changes in the body, like the special experiences of

breathing and balancing. These special experiences can arise even when we have no experience of form as such.

The phenomenological theory speaks of three kinds of aesthetic values. First, we have the formal values, like symmetry, harmony, rhythm, equilibrium, proportion, and unity. These values or properties do not vary from clime to clime, or from period to period. The others do; and this makes us doubt whether those others are aesthetic values. The formal values are at least those revealed by the structure of the work of art, and they may offer a partial clue to the nature of form. Next, we have imitative values. These are the values said to be specific to the imitative arts, as against the productive or useful arts. The artist may present an exact copy of the object as it exists in the universe, or he may just seek to reproduce its fundamental nature. In either case, the imitative values are not aesthetic values. These values may be found in a realist, naturalist, or impressionist art. They are absent in other forms of art. Superrealism and futurism present a reaction from the external world to immaterial values. Fauvism and expressionism present the artist's personal sensations only. Cubism and constructivism show the artist busying himself with the abstract forms and qualities of his materials. The real nature of art has very little to do with imitative values. As Gombrich put it, 'It is often the expression of a figure in the painting which makes us like or loathe the work'. The imitative values are extra-aesthetic, and a good work of art can dispense with them.

The aesthetic form in its relational character brings forth a structure or a shape. In its dynamic or transforming character, it operates on the subject-matter. So there are the positive values. These are the values arising from a spiritual or living content. When the content becomes aesthetic, the positive values arising from this are said to be the true kernel of the world of beauty. It is from the nature or kind of the content that we derive the idea of greatness in art; and on the basis of the nature or kind of content, we derive our ideas of the



tragic, comic, or sublime. Drama is a form of literature, but tragedy is not a form. And when we seek to interpret the positive value or values embodied in a work of art, we have always to examine how the sense of form has modified or transformed the subject-matter in order to give rise to these values.

The phenomenologist Geiger argues that the effect produced on the mind of the spectator by the aesthetic object has a specific quality; and that it is unique, because it reveals the genuine and characteristic feature of the aesthetic attitude. This feature is described as 'qualitative, existential, contemplation'. In the contemplative mood, the object must be distanced from the subject; and in order to have an experience of the specific aesthetic quality of the object, one must apprehend the complete concrete object with all its sensuous qualities in a truly detached manner. This is what Külpe called the surrendering of ourselves to forms and colours. In this surrender, there arises what is called the 'wesensintuition'. This enables the spectator or reader to apprehend the general nature of every object in a particular work of art. This is something like the intuition of the aesthetic form; and in so far as it is an intuition, it can be said to be analogous to the artist's intuition of form.

The spectator's response to the aesthetic object includes the two factors outlined in Fechner's principle of aesthetic association. They are the direct and the indirect factors. The former refers to colour and form. The latter is the relative or associative factor referring to thought and emotion. But the two are not merely associated with one another, but fused together. Elaborating this fusion, Müller-Freienfels speaks of the five component parts: sensuous involving the higher senses, motor (or muscular), associative, logical, and emotional parts. The last three are the universal, general, and individual aspects or components. All these together form a unity. Then the form is as much an integral part as any other.

These theories assume that there are only cognizable and verifiable facts here, as we have

in science. In aesthetics, most of the facts that we have are those established by structural corroboration. And for any progress in aesthetic theory and practice, we have to depend on structural corroboration only. To reduce it narrowly to scientific terms is to ignore the very nature of the data of aesthetics. The data here are not similar to those we have in a science like physics.

We have then to consider the structural unity. The experience which forms the basis of an artistic creation has three basic aspects. First, there is its unity in which the artist is an integral component. Next, there is its problematic nature as presented to the artist; it poses a challenge. And he is enabled to meet the challenge because of the third aspect, viz. its potentialities or immanent capabilities. The capabilities refer to the meaning, significance, or value, which the artist apprehends as being inherent in the experience. In seeking to apprehend this value, he comes to feel the form which makes the experience expressive. The feeling for value, or, in the language of Berenson, the feeling for movement, is what determines the kind of expression or shape the form is going to take. It is the feeling for the aesthetic quality. The satisfying articulation of this feeling is what we mean by a work of art. It is possibly because of such a feeling that we credit a work of art with significance, even though we fail to say clearly what it does signify. Yet the expressive form satisfies us, because it does answer some fundamental human need. And the artistic meaning does belong to this sensuous construction. In an art like music, we do find something like a pure form appearing as the very essence of music; and in such music, it is the form that embodies a value. Since we have no formless works of art, we can at least generalize by saying that the aesthetic value is intimately bound up with the form. Through form, it can appear in the other components as well.

That a work of art has a value implies, then, that it has a form. The perceptual or imaginative aspect of the aesthetic object is necessary.



There can be an aesthetic experience where the perceptually possible existent is not present. But even then, there is present a certain kind of perceptual experience which may have its being in imagination. This perceptibility is vital to any work of art. In aesthetic perception, we have not only a seeing, but a meaning of a very special type. It may be called imaginative seeing. In such an experience, the object appears to express a value or values. These values are apprehended as having a fusion with the object. The value is in the aesthetic object. And it is not merely the product of the relational continuum operating over the subject-matter. This continuum transforms the matter into an aesthetic content, whence arises a value in the aesthetic object. That is, the aesthetic value depends on the fusion or on the transformation. In the former case, the work of art appears as an organization, as a unity, of embodied values. In the latter, the value is realized by focussing our attention on the total object. The total object, then, is one where we do not have the so-called unity of form and content, but their identity. The same work viewed from one angle may appear as the so-called form, and from another, as the content.

The artist is more sensitive to the suggestiveness of the material he perceives. What matters most to the artist is the value embodied in what is perceived by him. The value inherent in the experience is articulated in a specific way. And an articulation without a medium is an impossibility. The expression he achieves in and through a medium is stimulated by the material. The final product is an organized and self-contained unity. This unity presupposes the operation of the principle of order, under which we include such of its manifestations as rhythm, measure, proportion, and all other modes of arrangement known as composition. This order is no other than one of the activities of the aesthetic form felt by the artist; and it functions as a principle of inner control taming the wildness of life.

This transformation appears to us in a specific

medium. It is the nature of the medium which determines the content it can portray or express. This at least presupposes some intimate relation between the medium and the expressed. And the central value of the work has to be sought precisely in the kind and nature of this relation. Moreover, each medium has its own specific possibilities and its own limitations. Hence, what can be expressed in one cannot be said to the same effect in another. The medium presupposes an operating form, which gives an expressive structure to the work and which transforms and organizes the matter or content. And the expressive medium comes to appear as a unity. This is analysable into pattern and elements. An artistic pattern is more or less a self-contained and complex unit having its own artistic quality. The artistic element is that which does not have any artistic quality of its own, but which becomes artistic because of its place or context in the total work. The artistic pattern is something concrete and objective, which can be sensed and imagined. Thus we have the pattern of tones in music, and a pattern of movement and rest in dance. Such a pattern exhibits the operation of some laws. The law of balance has its basis in physiological and associative factors. This law gains significance from the law of proportion. Both these make the pattern appear complex. We have also the law of rhythm followed by the law of harmony. And the factors that determine the structural unity of the pattern are complexity and integration of the elements and rhythm. These can be viewed as the sources or springs of value. In this light, we can seek an explanation for the fact that we are profoundly moved by elements related in a particular way. This is not a problem irrelevant to aesthetics, in spite of Bell. The relation between emotion and the object is the main basis of valuation; and the object is one which presents the factors related in some one specific way. It is an established fact that certain musical structures have a similarity with certain patterns of human experience. The Gestalt psychologist Köhler deems it useful to employ



the so-called musical dynamics to describe forms of mental life.

The true aesthetic form, with which we are directly concerned in the aesthetic experience, is the expressive form, which can also be designated as the dynamic structure. This structure resembles certain dynamic patterns of human experience. It is the operation of this pattern that brings to the foreground the values that we claim to discover *in* the work of art. Where the true aesthetic value depends on the transformation wrought by form, we find the work exhibiting the identity of the so-called form and its content. When we are faced with a visual form, we do not see a face and its character; but we see character *in* the face. Likewise, a song is not music and poetry; it is 'words-sung'. Its beauty is not to be judged by the standards of music and those of poetry, but by a separate set of standards. These standards or patterns are not formalistic, but formistic, in the sense that they are present in the inner life and in the external works of art as well. Such are the patterns of motion and rest, of tension and release, of agreement and disagreement, of preparation and change, of excitation and fulfilment. Because of the similarity of these patterns, we are not wrong in expecting a work of art to reveal the nature of feelings.

Sometimes, the same musical form seems to

bear contradictory interpretations. This is also true of at least a few literary compositions. If both the interpretations are plausible, it would follow that two contradictory feelings have a similar structure. This led Moritz Hauptmann and Moritz Carrière to argue that art conveys general forms of feeling. Such forms are shown to have an intellectual value because of their close relation to concepts. At the same time, these forms have their unmistakable ground in sensuous experience and in sensuous constructs. It is this that makes us argue that the work of art has a symbolic form. It is a symbolic form, in the sense that it has a significance or value felt by the artist and communicated by him. That is, there can be an emotion or feeling forming the content of the work. This is not the same as the aesthetic emotion, which is embodied in the structure or expression. The aesthetic emotion actually seems to spring from the artist's triumph over the materials with which he has to work. It is also associated with his insight into the unspeakable realities. And the value of the form lies not in what is expressed, but in what is controlled and regulated and in how it is done. In this valuation, we may miss much when the content of the work, too, is highly emotional. The work of art presents a feeling or emotion under the operation of the aesthetic feeling or emotion arising from the artist's insight into the aesthetic form.

## THE ĀLVĀRS AND THEIR RELIGION OF LOVE—2

BY SWAMI SMARANANANDA

### KULAŚEKHARA

Kulaśekhara is well known for his celebrated Sanskrit hymn *Mukundamālā*. He was the son of the king of the Cera kingdom, on the west coast of India, corresponding to the present Kerala State. During his youth, he demonstrated his valour by bringing the neighbouring

kingdoms of Pāṇḍya and Cola under the suzerainty of the Ceras. His father, considering his own old age and the qualities of a ruler inherent in his son, abdicated the throne in his favour. The new ruler soon established himself as a righteous monarch. By his concern for his people, he endeared himself to them. His pious



nature prompted him to include worship and other religious practices in his daily routine. Keen on promoting the Vedic learning, he extended his patronage to many a scholar.

One day, while he was asleep, the king was blessed with a vision of Śrī Raṅganātha. This incident transformed him thoroughly. The divine vision impressed him so deeply that all the wealth and pleasures of the royal household became insipid to him. His days began to be spent in serving the devotees of the Lord and hearing from them about His *līlā* in His various incarnations. Now and then, he began to express a desire to undertake a pilgrimage to Srirangam, Tiruvengadam, and other holy places.

An incident is narrated which shows how Kulaśekhara's whole being used to get absorbed in Śrī Rāma's story, while hearing the *Rāmāyaṇa* from the court-pundit. The incidents relating to Śrī Rāma's early years in the forest-life were being described. After the sending away of Śūrpaṅkhā by Lakṣmaṇa, deforming her as a punishment for her immodest intentions, Khara and Dūṣaṇa, her brothers, came to wage war with the princes of Ayodhyā. Their huge armies accompanied them. When Kulaśekhara heard this, he was overwhelmed by his anxiety for Śrī Rāma's safety. He called forth his army and started for Janasthāna for helping the Lord in his battle. But the pundit, foreseeing the danger, concluded his story with the description of Rāma's victory over the *asuras*, fighting them single-handed. Thus the king was persuaded to come back to his palace. From this time on, the pundit, while expounding the *Rāmāyaṇa* daily, refrained from a detailed description of the dangers that Rāma faced during his forest-life.

But, one day, the pundit, himself unable to go to the palace, sent another person to do his duty. He began describing the scene of Rāvaṇa's abduction of Sītā vividly. Kulaśekhara was again roused. He started with his army for the sea-shore to proceed to Laṅkā for conquering Rāvaṇa and bringing back the divine

consort of his dear Lord! It took much effort to explain to him that Śrī Rāma returned victoriously with Sītā, after destroying Rāvaṇa and his men.

The king's heart began to yearn for the *darśana* of Śrī Raṅganātha, the presiding deity of Srirangam. The courtiers thought that, if he went to that place, there would be no chance of his return. So they hit upon a plan. Many devotees were invited to the palace and requested to sing every day devotional songs and expound the scriptures. The king had to postpone his pilgrimage, as he was engaged in the service of these devotees. But, in the meanwhile, the courtiers became envious of the devotees, for they had won the affection of the king, and enjoyed wide freedom in the palace. They now thought of a plan to bring the devotees into disrepute before the king. They stole the jewelled garland used for the worship of Śrī Rāmacandra, and held the devotees responsible for the theft. The king was enraged, but had the firm faith that the devoted servants of the Lord were not the persons to commit such a heinous crime. However, he decided to find out the truth by submitting himself to a dangerous test. A pot with a deadly cobra inside it was called for. The king thrust his hand inside the pot saying that, if the devotees had committed the theft, he would be bitten by the reptile; if not, he would be unharmed. To everyone's surprise, and to the chagrin of the courtiers, the king was not bitten. This incident was an eye-opener to him, and he decided to renounce his kingdom. He crowned his son and left forthwith for Srirangam. There his life was spent in complete dedication to Śrī Raṅganātha. A few years later, he went on a pilgrimage to the various Viṣṇu *kṣetras* in South India and finally passed away in the presence of Śrī Rājagopālasvāmī, the deity of a town situated near the birth-place of Nam-mālvār.

As already stated, Kulaśekhara's *Mukundamālā* is well known. His Tamil work *Perumāl Tirumōḷi* consists of 105 psalms, divided into ten sections. The first five sections relate to







our old age during our youth, so also we have to earn merit in this life for our future life. The king pondered deeply over this; he also inquired the chief scholar of his court about the way to accomplish this. He proposed that all the scholars of the land be invited to a conference, where the question could be discussed and decided. A bag containing a huge sum of money was to be hung from a post, and when the best exposition was put forward, this bag would fall to the ground of its own accord.

During this period, Viṣṇucitta was blessed with a vision of Śrī Nārāyaṇa. He was asked to proceed to Madurai to establish the greatness of the *bhakti* doctrine before the assembly of scholars, and bring the offered gift. Viṣṇucitta expressed his inability to carry out this task, as his education was negligible compared with that of so many scholars. But the Lord assured him of success.

Thus commanded, Viṣṇucitta arrived at the king's court on the appointed day, with his mind full of devotion. The arena of scholars resounded with the battle of wits. The upholders of different doctrines contended with all their vehemence. There was a huge congregation to witness the scene. Is not 'loud speech consisting of a shower of words, skill in expounding the scriptures etc.' meant for the enjoyment of the learned? The battle of words went on, but no one succeeded in unloosening the bag of gold. Lastly came the turn of Viṣṇucitta, seated quietly in a corner. By His grace 'the dumb become eloquent, and the lame cross the mountain'; Viṣṇucitta expounded the doctrine of Viṣṇu *bhakti*. He showed convincingly that that was the right way to travel towards Truth. And to the astonishment of everyone present, the bag of gold fell to the ground. His doctrine was accepted by the Pāṇḍya king. He honoured him with the title 'Paṭṭar Pirān'—chief among scholars. He was seated on the elephant of the palace and taken round the capital in procession. Viṣṇucitta, on his part, was wholly immersed in the contemplation of his dear Lord.

All this honour did not make him elated. His way of worship was through *vātsalya-bhāva*, considering the Lord as his own child. So, he was apprehensive of His safety in the midst of all these celebrations, and began singing auspicious songs that would protect Him from all danger. The bells on the neck of the elephant acted as his *tāla*, timing. These songs beginning with the word '*pallāṇḍu*', meaning 'many, many years', are sung to this day in all the Viṣṇu temples in the South, while the deity is taken round in procession during festive occasions. The songs pray that the glory of the Lord may shine eternally. It is said that, after this event, when Viṣṇucitta returned to Srivilliputtur and resumed his service to the Lord through gardening, he happened to find a female child among the *tulasī* (basil) plants. This child was to become the famous Śrī Āṇḍāl later. By making her the consort of Śrī Raṅganātha, he came to be known as the father-in-law of the Lord Himself. These incidents earned him the name of Periyālvār, the great Ālvār.

The Ālvār's only work known as *Tirumoli* contains 461 stanzas. Most of these refer to the Kṛṣṇa incarnation. His work, which begins with an address to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, ends with the words 'the dear One who has made Viṣṇucitta's heart His abode'. In his *vātsalya-bhāva*, he identifies himself with Yaśodā, the foster-mother of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In his mental cradle, he rocks the baby Kṛṣṇa with the lullaby:

Weep not, dear one, beautiful-shouldered,  
weep not.
As every Indian mother does, he shows the bright 'Uncle Moon' to stop the child's weeping, and calls him with his heart overflowing with affection:

Come, darling, Nārāyaṇa, come and bathe,  
 Come, darling, sweeter than honey,  
 I shall decorate Thee with fragrant flowers;  
 Come, dear one, I have jasmynes many,  
 Come, dear one, I shall bathe Thee with  
limpid water.

His songs describe the pranks of baby Kṛṣṇa in



words full of deep paternal love—Kṛṣṇa, the butter-thief; Kṛṣṇa, the shepherd, followed by the cattle and the shepherd boys of Gokula, spellbound by the music of His magic flute; the enchanted *gopīs* whose one obsession was Kṛṣṇa, that Kṛṣṇa who to this day is dear to every devotee's heart.

In captivating words, he paints all creatures, even plants and trees, as responding to Kṛṣṇa's charm:

The flock of deer with tremulous eyes,  
Their mouthfuls of grass slip off  
At the call of Kṛṣṇa's flute;  
They stand enchanted like deer in a picture.

In himself, the Āḷvār imagines the characters of two shepherd-maids, one describing the deeds of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the other of Śrī Rāmacandra. The one killed the dangerous serpent Kāliya and acted as the messenger of the Pāṇḍavas; while the other, ordered by his step-mother to spend fourteen years in the forest, proceeded forthwith untouched by anger, while his own mother was weeping with sorrow.

The Āḷvār describes the unity of the different incarnations of Viṣṇu. It was Śrī Rāma who, in his earlier incarnation as Nṛsiṃha, was the slayer of Hiranyakaśipu. It was He, again, who incarnated Himself as a boar (Varāha) to kill the tyrant Hiranyākṣa.

Periyāḷvār calls on everyone to think of the Lord, while enjoying sound health. Pictur-  
esquely, he describes:

The deceased body, shorn of all vigour,  
Lies prostrate. Relatives insist:  
'Tell, tell, where have thee hidden thy  
savings.'  
But alas! no sound escapes those pale lips  
On that withered frame.

Then what should one do? The Āḷvār says:

O strong one, build a shrine in thy heart,  
And installing Mādhava's image there,  
Adore it with the flower of love.

His advice to parents is:

O fool, thou callest thy sons  
With earthly names, of mortals  
Who reach dusty graves.  
O call them with His numerous names,  
The blue One, the cynosure of all eyes.

In his last days, Periyāḷvār's identification with the Lord was complete. He asks: How can the diseases find a place in this body, where Śrī Nārāyaṇa with His serpent-bed has made His abode? Filled with divine ecstasy, the Āḷvār says: 'O Lord, Thou left the milky ocean and the supreme heaven and chose my poor heart for Thy dwelling place.'

### ĀṆḌĀḸ

A reference has already been made as to how Periyāḷvār found a female child under a *tulasi* bush in his garden. He brought her home, and his wife, too, was overjoyed. They named her Godā (in Tamil, Kodai) and brought her up with all care. The word means 'she who was born of Mother Earth'.

Āṇḍāḷ's bridal mysticism has been compared to that of Mīrābāī and St. Teresa. She was the only woman amongst the Āḷvārs. Tradition regards her as the incarnation of Bhūdevī, one of the consorts of Viṣṇu. She imagined herself to be one of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana pining for union with Kṛṣṇa.

Even as a teen-age girl, Godā had decided to marry Śrī Raṅganātha, dwelling in His shrine at Srirangam. She would lose herself in the thought of becoming His bride, and she spent long hours in adorning herself so as to appear presentable before Him. This longing for her Beloved grew intense with age, and she shone like an angel from heaven struggling to regain her lost moorings. Her father used to prepare garlands of flowers for the worship of the household deity of Viṣṇu. Having made them ready, he was in the habit of going out during evenings. Godā took this opportunity to bedeck herself with these garlands every day, and used to look at her own reflection for testing her suitability to be His bride. Before



her father's return, she would keep back the garlands intact in the casket. This went on for many days, but one day, the Ālvār returned home earlier than usual and found his daughter wearing the garlands meant for worship. He was much grieved, and reprimanded her for such a sacrilegious act. That evening the garlands were not offered to the Lord. The Ālvār went to bed still sad at heart over this incident; but in a dream, the Lord Himself appeared before him and told that he was not correct in not offering the garlands that day; for they were particularly dear to Him, after being worn by Godā. The flowers turned sweeter by her touch. This was, indeed, a revelation to the Ālvār. He got up from his sleep and, without the least delay, offered the garlands to the deity. That day the image shone with indescribable splendour.

After this incident, the Ālvār was convinced that his daughter was none other than the divine consort of Bhagavān Viṣṇu. He named her Āṇḍāl, meaning 'she who dives deep into the ocean of divine love'. Āṇḍāl revealed to her father that she would marry none but Śrī Raṅganātha. Her days became one continuous longing for His presence. She began to observe fasts and penances to win His hand. She would question eagerly whomsoever she met about her Lover's whereabouts—even animals and trees! Food and sleep took to flight. His memory alone remained. She entreated everyone to take her to His presence. In such a state of mind, one day, she dreamt that she was being married to her Beloved in the midst of great pomp and ceremony. Her parents were in a dilemma. How could they marry her to her divine Lover?

But mysterious are the ways of the Lord. When the day dawned, her father informed her that Śrī Raṅganātha had ordered him in his dream to bring her before Him at Srirangam. Indeed, her own dream had come true. The very same day, they started for Srirangam. Āṇḍāl was in her bridal robes, ready for her mystic wedding. Tradition has it that, as soon as she was brought before the image, she was engulfed in a bright light. And Āṇḍāl was

absorbed in the person of Śrī Raṅganātha, like Mīrā in the image of Giridhāri. The river of purity and sweetness merged in the ocean of the Infinite.

Her two works are *Tiruppāvai* and *Nācciyār Tirumoli*, containing 30 and 143 stanzas respectively. All these songs express her *madhura-bhāva* in such ineffable language that they have found an esteemed place in Tamil literature.

For her, Srivilliputtur was Vṛndāvana; the presiding deity of the temple there was Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and she herself was a *gopī* thirsting for His company. The songs that poured out of her heart while she was in this mood form the *Tiruppāvai* (The Song Divine).

She imagines herself to be in the lovely woods of Vraja. In the auspicious month of Mārga-śirṣa (December-January), she wakes up early; and observing certain penances, she calls upon the shepherd-maids of Vraja to accompany her to the Yamunā. She reprimands a girl who is still asleep thus: 'Art thou deaf or dumb? Or blind? Or under a magic spell?' She leads all the maidens of the locality in a congregation to the palace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to worship Him. On reaching the palace, Āṇḍāl wakes up her Lord, the sleeping Beauty. When He takes His seat to listen to their petitions, she with her companions prays only for the privilege of eternal loving service to Him. Āṇḍāl's days are filled with songs calling on Govinda, with whom she claims connection in every birth. *Tiruppāvai* combines in itself a depth of meaning, an excellence of language, and a poetic beauty. Its sweet scent of divine love issues forth from every word and engulfs the reader. This poem is sung even today in every Vaiṣṇava shrine in the South.

Āṇḍāl's longer work *Nācciyār Tirumoli* illustrates the different moods she undergoes while longing for the presence of her Beloved. These verses are filled with the pathos of tender hopes, deep sighs of longing, and grave apprehensions. When her penances fail to win for her His hand, she addresses her prayers to Mānmatha, the god of love. In her anxiety, she speculates about her luck through various



methods. She would add up some numbers, and if the total be an even number, then she would succeed in attaining her Lord; if it be an odd number, then she would grieve apprehending failure. Addressing a *kuyil* (Indian cuckoo), she says:

O my dear *kuyil*, art thou unaware of  
lover's grief?  
My bones are all softened. My spear-like  
eyes

Remain unwinked for days many.  
Caught in the sea of distress, I look for that  
Ferry-boat, called the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha.  
Would thee not call Him of golden hue,  
Whose banners bear the royal eagle?

But alas! her Lord is still keeping Himself away. She rebukes Him mildly for this callousness towards her. In her agony, she envies the conch born in the salty ocean, for it is blessed by the touch of His lips while being blown. Like the *yakṣa* of *Meghadūta*, she, too, addresses the clouds to bring her news of her Beloved and inform Him about her pangs of separation. They are sure to meet Him, for they pass over His abode, Mount Tiruvengadam, every day. In her madness of love, she

befriends even plants, trees, flowers, and animals, and prays to them to carry her to the presence of her Lord. Finding no help from any quarter, she addresses Him: 'The sense of shame is of no avail henceforth, for all and sundry have come to know the fact. If you would without delay find the remedy for restoring me to my past condition and save my life, take me to Gokula' (*Women Saints of East and West*, p. 29). Different moods of *madhura-bhāva*, described in the Vaiṣṇava scriptures, find expression in her person. Finally, being carried along by the flood-tide of divine love. Āṇḍāl reaches the Sea—her beloved Lord.

As centuries roll on, her life of divine madness attracts devotees from all lands. Paying his tribute to her sacred memory, Devendranath Sen, the Bengali poet, says:

Thy love was not of earth: no woman's soul  
For mortal love craved with such a yearning.  
So thou didst wed great God Himself! O  
Goal  
Beyond our ken, beyond our dim discerning!  
And soul to soul, like sunbeam unto sun,  
Thou didst vanish away, O mystic Nun!  
(*ibid.*)

## CHĀNDOGYA UPANIṢAD : AN INTERPRETATION—2

BY DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

In my previous article on the subject published in the February 1961 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*, I made an attempt to interpret the first four sections of the sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* from the Sāṅkhya point of view. In the present article, an attempt is made to interpret the eighth section of the sixth chapter from the same standpoint.

The section begins as follows: 'Once Uddālaka Āruṇi said to his son Śvetaketu, "Dear boy, know from me the true nature of sleep. When a man is said to be sleeping, then, dear boy, he has become united with Being and has

attained his own nature" ' (VI.8.1).

In the above lines, it is clearly stated that in the waking state the role of consciousness as the knower of all worldly objects is very prominent. In the state of deep sleep, however, *pramātrī-caitanya* becomes inoperative, and the consciousness of the witnessing self becomes steady and unchangeable. Steadiness and immovability belong to consciousness by nature, whereas change is falsely ascribed to it through its apparent connection with the changing intellect. Hence, by way of instances, Uddālaka is impressing on Śvetaketu the truth that



it is only in deep sleep that consciousness regains its true nature. In the state of deep sleep, *pramāṭṛ-caitanya* remains in a merged condition and *sākṣi-caitanya* only is manifested. The passage thus suggests that *pramāṭṛ-caitanya* becomes united with *sākṣi-caitanya*, which is then manifested in its own form. Uddālaka did not mean to suggest a complete identity between the individual soul and Brahman.

‘Just as a bird tied to a string, after flying in various directions and finding no resting place elsewhere, takes refuge at the very place whereto it is tied, even so, dear boy, that mind, after flying in various directions and finding no resting place elsewhere, takes refuge in *prāṇa* alone; for the mind, dear boy, is tied to *prāṇa*’ (VI.8.2).

The knower of this empirical world (*buddhi-vṛttyāvachhinna-caitanya*) has diverse experiences through the *vṛttis* of the intellect; and after a while, due to continuous enjoyment of various kinds of experiences during waking hours, the knower becomes tired. Then, this *pramāṭṛ-caitanya* seeks to have its rest in *sākṣi-caitanya*, which is its real refuge. Hence, the unity mentioned is the unity between *pramāṭṛ-caitanya* and *sākṣi-caitanya*, which is attained in deep sleep. In fact, the expression ‘*bandhānamevo paśrayate*’ shows that this refuge of *pramāṭṛ-caitanya* is not the pure and unconditioned Brahman. On the other hand, it is the steady background of passing mental states, constituted by consciousness conditioned by the intellect. The consciousness of the Puruṣa (*upahita-caitanya*) is reflected through *buddhi*; and in this reflected consciousness, we have got to make a distinction between that which is mutable (*vṛttyāvachhinna-caitanya*) and that which remains stable, furnishing the background of objective knowledge.

The changing images of objects must be knitted together through an unchangeable and identical thread, and that is *sākṣi-caitanya*. In the Sāṅkhya also, we find (1) *pramāṭṛ-caitanya* (the mutable aspect of the reflected consciousness), (2) *sākṣi-caitanya* (the stable aspect of the reflected consciousness), and (3) pure con-

sciousness or *puruṣa-caitanya*, which is caught in the snare of the intellect. *Pramāṭṛ-caitanya* is symbolized by mind, and *sākṣi-caitanya* by *prāṇa*. So runs the sentence: ‘That mind, after flying in various directions and finding no resting place elsewhere, takes refuge in *prāṇa* alone.’ *Pramāṭṛ-caitanya* (mind), in fact, rests on *sākṣi-caitanya* (*prāṇa*), which is its real support.

‘Dear boy, know from me (the true nature of) hunger and thirst. When a man is said to be hungry, then (it is to be understood that), water is leading away what has been eaten; (therefore water may be designated as hunger). Just as people speak of the leader of cows, the leader of horses, and the leader of men, even so they speak of water as the leader of food. Hence, dear boy, know this shoot (the body) to be put forth (by a root), for it cannot be without a root’ (VI.8.3).

The desire to drink and to eat is nothing but the *vṛtti* of the intelligized *buddhi*, and the intelligized *buddhi* is satisfied when it succeeds in having an easy access to all the enjoyable objects of the world. Now, such desires cannot be possessed by a wholly non-intelligent intellect. *Buddhi* begins to have such modifications only when consciousness is reflected through it. Hence, it can be safely said that consciousness is at the root of all modifications of the intellect. None of the psycho-physical activities of the body is possible unless the intellect that resides in the body is intelligized by the reflection of the consciousness of the Puruṣa. Uddālaka is therefore advising Śvetaketu to discover this consciousness lying at the very root of the world-formation.

‘Where could its root be apart from food? Even so, dear boy, with food as the shoot, look for water as the root; with water as the shoot, dear boy, look for fire as the root; with fire as the shoot, dear boy, look for Being as the root. All these creatures, dear boy, have Being as their root, have Being as their abode, and have Being as their support’ (VI.8.4).

‘Again, when a man is said to be thirsty, then (it is to be understood that), fire is leading



away what has been drunk; (therefore, fire may be designated as thirst). Just as people speak of the leader of cows, the leader of horses, and the leader of men, even so they speak of that fire as the leader of water. Hence, dear boy, know this shoot (water) to be put forth (by a root), for it cannot be without a root' (VI.8.5).

'Where could its root be, apart from water? Dear boy, with water as the shoot, look for fire as the root; with fire as the shoot, look for Being as the root. All these creatures, dear boy, have Being as their root, have Being as their abode, and have Being as their support. How, dear boy, each of these three deities, on reaching man, becomes threefold has been explained to you earlier. When this man is about to depart, dear boy, his speech merges in the mind, mind in *prāṇa*, *prāṇa* in fire, and fire in the supreme deity' (VI.8.6).

The purport of the passages quoted above is simply this: The body is the result of the process of *trivṛtkaraṇa*, and so the three elements (food, water, and fire) are jointly present in the structure of the body. Water is the root of food; fire is the root of water; and the root of fire is pure consciousness. Unless this consciousness is associated with the principal organ of the body through reflection, the joint product of food, water, and fire will be of no use in this world. At the time of death, mind, first of all, merges in fire. For that reason, even when no other sign of life is present in a body, its mere warmth becomes a sign for the existence of life in it. In the case of a bound soul, the impressions of its past life remain stored up in its intellect, which remains associated with it till the time of liberation. The intellect, in the absence of a gross body, becomes inoperative, and hence it is unmanifested. But at the time of rebirth, the individual soul again gets associated with a body, the nature of which is determined by the type of impressions stored up in the *buddhi*. The soul that has been able to realize its distinction from the intellect gains back its freedom from the clutches of the *buddhi* and shines forth in its own transcen-

dental glory. Its *buddhi* or intellect then gets merged in Prakṛti for all time to come.

Now, food, water, and fire can very well stand for the *tamoguna*, *rajoguna*, and *sattvaguna* of the Sāṅkhya system. Food, being *pārthiva*, is devoid of activity and is also not light in weight. It therefore stands for *tamas*, whereas water, which is dynamic, stands for *rajas*. Fire (light), being the revealer of everything, takes the place of *sattvaguna*. It has also been mentioned in the passages quoted above that the root of fire is pure consciousness. That may be understood to imply that the contact of the *sattvaguna* is with the Self. If this passage were quoted with a Vedāntic bent of mind, then the author of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* would have also mentioned air and ether, in addition to food, water, and fire. In the Yoga philosophy (which is also called *Seśvara Sāṅkhya*), *sattvaguna* has been treated as the *upādhi* of God; and here, too, *tejas* or *sattva* has been spoken of as having its connection directly with pure consciousness. The Vedānta has followed the principle of *pañcīkaraṇa*. If we treat here the process of *pañcīkaraṇa* as *upalakṣaṇa*, we find that all the five elements have not been mentioned in this *Chāndogya* passage. With the help of this passage, Rāmānuja has tried to prove the divinity of the world. The Sāṅkhya, on the other hand, suggests that the whole world is charged with *sākṣi-caitanya*, owing to the direct contact of *sattvaguna* with pure consciousness.

'That Being which is this subtle essence (cause), even That all this world has for its self. That is the true. That is the Ātman. That thou art, O Śvetaketu' (VI.8.7).

Here, 'That thou art' (*tattvamasi*) can be interpreted in two ways:

1. Uddālaka means to suggest that the consciousness which is reflected through *tat* (standing for Prakṛti) constitutes the soul of Śvetaketu. Śvetaketu is really this pure consciousness which has been reflected through *buddhi*—the principal internal modification of *tat* or Prakṛti (*tat avacchinnaṁ tvaṁ asi*). This consciousness



is real, and this is Śvetaketu's soul, whereas his 'mind-body' has evolved from *tat* or Prakṛti.

2. A pure unconscious Prakṛti is never potent enough to create a world. The creation of the world is the work of *cetanāviṣṭa-prakṛti*. So here the Upaniṣadic text can be interpreted in this way: Śvetaketu is of the nature of that by being charged with which Prakṛti is able to create the world. He represents pure consciousness, the inflow of which in Prakṛti is absolutely necessary for the purpose of creation. The very sentence '*sanmūlāḥ imāḥ prajāḥ*' favours such an inflow (*sanmūlāḥ imāḥ prajāyante*). '*Sanmūlāḥ*' implies that Prakṛti becomes potent to create the world when it is intelligized. Unaided by consciousness, nature has no creative efficiency.

The reality of Prakṛti has already been established. So Uddālaka is trying to impress upon his son the reality and importance of the principle of consciousness, without the help of which creation is impossible. Matter by itself is of no use, unless it is associated with consciousness. In the absence of its revelation by consciousness, it is no better than a non-existent thing. Prakṛti looks up to Puruṣa and finds in it its true meaning. Though Prakṛti is the real modifiable stuff of the world, still it can assume definite characters only through its connection with *puruṣa-caitanya*. Consciousness, therefore, is the soul of Śvetaketu, since it is the principle that really makes a body purposeful and rich in meaning.



## CENTRES OF COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

BY SRI S. N. RAO

All centres of cosmic activity in the universe of space are centres of cosmic Consciousness. They create to destroy and destroy to create. Cosmo-genesis may be said to begin at these centres of cosmic Consciousness. All cosmic powers—integrating and disintegrating forces, also called centripetal and centrifugal forces in the universe—personified and given embodiedness by all religions for the comfort and consolation of man, emanate from these centres of cosmic Consciousness. Cosmic Consciousness, being pure Spirit, ever unseen and never manifest, not bound by any temporal or spatial limitations, and not conditioned by dimensions of any shape or form, can have its centres anywhere and everywhere, and it can even be all-pervasive. Creation can therefore start at any point in the universe of space and at any moment in the universe of time. Where and when it begins, where and when it ends, no one can say. If at one point it begins, at another point it ends. If we accept the conclusions of modern science as valid, that is exactly what is happen-

ing in the universe. By cosmic Consciousness, we mean pure Consciousness, Consciousness *per se*, that is, Consciousness standing by itself in full, all-comprehensive knowingness. Consciousness *per se* is a very difficult thing to conceive of without physical and psychical adjuncts like body and mind in some individuated form. Rationalist mind questions the very existence of Consciousness standing by itself, and demands some one to be conscious and something to be conscious of, while it fails to see that the very question and the demand arise because of the ever-alert and ever-present Consciousness as the inner essence in man himself. It is the core, the essence of everything in the universe, everything that has life, everything that has a mind, and everything that has a form. It is the soul of man; it is what the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* call the Ātman in man.

The Consciousness we speak of, it should be noted, is not mere awareness of oneself and one's environment. It is Consciousness which is all-pervasive, all-knowing and cosmic, dynamic



and creative. It is cosmic, because it has many centres of creative activity in its expansive pervasiveness. It is these centres that we designate as centres of cosmic Consciousness, centres from which innumerable thought-currents flow out and innumerable ideas (in the Platonic sense) surge out. This flowing out, this surging out, is what we call creation or evolution. It is pure Intelligence, the *ādhyātmika* principle both in man and in the universe. It is the intelligence-principle which made man, and every living being, a co-ordinated system functioning in harmony. It is the principle which made the universe itself a cosmos, instead of a chaos. Aberrations are there, but they constitute the exception and not the rule. These aberrations are mostly at the human level, not at the other levels of creation. At each centre, Consciousness weaves and builds round itself some shape or form, sometimes ugly and uncouth, sometimes beautiful and magnificent, with life or with no life. Without the illuminating presence of this Consciousness as the inner essence, there can be no particular, individual, and concrete existence. Without it, our eyes cannot see, nor our ears can hear, nor our mind can perceive. All sense-perception is possible only with pure Consciousness standing behind.

The difference between one man and another, between one living being and another, is one of degree in the power and expression of this pure Consciousness. There are undoubtedly other differences—surface differences—physical and psychical, but the basic difference is the difference in the expression of pure Consciousness. The reason for this basic difference lies in the very act of creation, in the very nature of creation. It is not really due to any lack in the power and expression of pure Consciousness, which is the all-knowing supreme Spirit. All differentiation, plurality, and variety are due to the covering of materiality, covering by a 'cloud of unknowing', or what the *Gītā* calls *yoga-māyā* (VII.26). All manifestation is differentiation only. The supreme Spirit, being all-pervasive, can have its centres of creative

activity anywhere and everywhere in the universe of space. The term 'all-pervasive' does not mean that the Supreme is sitting tight spreading its wings all over. It only means that the Supreme, being pure Spirit, can be anywhere and everywhere, because it is not bound by any limitations of time and space. At these centres of creative activity, the supreme Consciousness thinks and wills, creating pulsation and vibration in the environs—mere movement of thought-currents and upsurge of ideas. It thus weaves and builds round that centre a form, a body with or without life, according to its free will—the only will which is free, full, and absolute.

It is really Nature, *prakṛti* or *yoga-māyā* or whatever we call it, that builds round a centre of Consciousness, taking that centre as the basis and foundation. Thoughts and ideas surge out from the centre, and Nature builds. And what is built is the universe we live in (*Gītā*, IX.10). All centres of Consciousness, round which a form is created, become conditioned, each by its own creation. This conditioning is probably self-imposed and apparent with potentiality for release from such conditioning. In every one of us, in every entity moving or unmoving, there is a centre of cosmic Consciousness, round which everything that has a form is built, and without which we all disintegrate, and are reduced to dust and ashes of primeval atoms. That which is woven and built up becomes the *kṣetra*, the field or the form created, and the indwelling intelligence principle is the *kṣetrajña*, the knower of the field or the awareness principle in man and animal. It is the *kṣetrajña* who builds the *kṣetra*. It is a process of individuation, a process of differentiation, which is all that is in creation. All creation is a multiplicity and a variety show.

We may say that the supreme Spirit assumes individuality at some points of its all-pervasiveness. Creation is therefore considered as an act of *yajña*, an act of sacrifice, on the part of the supreme Spirit. There can be no creation without individuation and differentiation. That which is universal becomes, as it were, a par-



ticular at some points of its universality. The centres of cosmic Consciousness become, as it were, centres of individuation for purposes of creation. The universal does not really lose its universality. It ever remains full. If that universality is lost even a little bit when the particular emerges every time, creation itself must necessarily come to an end at some time or the other. It is the individual, the particular, that comes and goes. It is the individual only that has a beginning and an end. Consciousness *per se* is the universal, and it is equated with Ātman in the *Gītā* and the Upaniṣads, and with Brahman in the Vedānta. It is the soul of man, the soul of the universe. It is the soul of every star and planet in the universe. It is the impersonal Absolute of all philosophers. It is invested with a personality, and made the personal God of all religions for the comfort and consolation of man. In the individual, it is the *jīvātman*. In the universal, it is the Paramātmān, the supreme Spirit.

The word 'Brahman' suggests, rather brings to our vision, something which is immeasurable in its vastness and unlimited in its infinitude. Consciousness having been equated with Brahman, the centres of Consciousness must necessarily be un-numberable, with 'no circumference anywhere', as Swami Vivekananda put it. Cosmo-genesis may be said to begin at these centres of Consciousness. When any such centre builds round itself a form or body, it creates a circumference for itself. It is thus conditioned by its own construction. Every such centre of Consciousness is called in the *Gītā* an *aṁśa* or a part of the divine Spirit, and it attracts to itself all the qualities of nature from the environment and becomes bound (*Gītā*, XV.7). Every living being has this *aṁśa* of the supreme Spirit as its inner essence. In the human being, however, the power and expression of that Consciousness is prominent. It is the principle behind the thinking mind. When a centre of Consciousness is thus circumscribed, it becomes the reincarnating element in all living beings, including man. When Consciousness is free and absolute, unconditioned by any

environmental complex, it is the Paramātmān or supreme Consciousness—cosmic Consciousness unlimited by any dimensional quality of either time or space. It is therefore called the Timeless or the Spaceless. It can thus start its centre of creative activity at any moment in the universe of time and at any point in the universe of space.

We have said that cosmo-genesis begins at some centres of cosmic Consciousness. But was there a beginning? Could there be a beginning for the universe? We postulate a beginning only for purposes of our understanding. Cosmo-genesis, creation, or evolution, by whatever name we call it—the difference being only in the point of view we take—is an eternal process which could neither have a beginning nor an end. God could not be sitting idle before He began this creation. Both God and His creation are eternal. Some star systems with their planets and comets spring up slowly and gradually at one place, while others explode and disintegrate at another place in cosmic space. The universe as one whole can never cease to exist. It is only that which has a beginning that must have an end. It is the particular that begins and ceases to be, not the universal. Prakṛti and Puruṣa are both *anādi* or beginningless (*Gītā*, XIII.19). In the *Gītā*, Prakṛti is the unmanifest, of which Nature is the manifestation; it is a self-acting and self-creating principle operating in the presence of the supreme Puruṣa (IX.10). From the standpoint taken in the *Gītā*, the primary responsibility for good and evil lies on Nature, matter-cum-energy complex. At the human level, it is the body-mind complex. It is this complex that is acting and creating, while God is standing by. The responsibility of the Divine is remote and indirect, somewhat similar to the responsibility of a catalytic agent; somewhat similar to the responsibility of a constitutional monarch over a democratic people. The function of the Divine is not the function of a despot or a dictator. The responsibility for the existence of good and evil, of sin and virtue, in this world lies solely



with the created beings and not with the Creator (*Gītā*, V. 14, 15). The Divine may give a shape to our ends, but we need not rough-hew them and give them an ugly shape.

Man is a unique product in creation, unique in the sense that he alone has a mind equipped with intelligence and the faculty of discrimination or what we call *buddhi*—the faculty of differentiating what is true from what is false and *vice versa*. *Buddhi* is not different from mind; it is mind itself functioning at a higher level. The more the power and expression of pure Consciousness or *Ātman* in man, the higher the level at which the mind functions. We have said that in each one of us lies a centre of cosmic Consciousness. Human personality is therefore a structure—physical and psychical—built round that centre as the base and support, the divine ground on which each one of us stands. That centre is the divine element in man, the indwelling Spirit which, though of the same essence as the supreme Spirit, and isolated, as it were, in that physical and psychical structure, develops a sense of individuality and forgets its cosmic sense, its innate sense of universality. When we say that a cosmic centre develops a sense of individuality and forgets its sense of universality, it does not mean that there is any loss or diminution in the fullness and the wholeness of cosmic Consciousness.

The individual is an emergence from the universal, which always remains full and whole. When a child is born, that is, when a child emerges from its mother, is there, or can there be, any loss or diminution in the fullness and the whole-

ness of the mother? Similar is the case with the Mother of the cosmos. Every centre of cosmic Consciousness may rightly be considered as the womb of the Mother of the cosmos. The forgetfulness of universality in the cosmic centre is temporary; it lasts until it gets liberation or release from the material structure. That release comes only after repeated attempts, after a series of evolutionary developments. And hence, when a structure loses its cohesive vitality by the efflux of time and begins to disintegrate, the centre drops the structure altogether. This dropping of the physical body is what we call death. But the sense of individuation and all the impressions and tendencies acquired during its stay in the embodied state continue to persist. Compelled by these material and psychical forces, the centre begins to build another body, another structure. This process of incarnating, discarnating, and reincarnating is a creative process. It is the principle of reincarnation operating on the cosmic level. Reincarnation is not a theory. It is a cosmic fact, a fact of cosmic significance.

All forms of life—plant or animal or human—go through this incarnating, discarnating, and reincarnating process to ever-changing levels of individuation. The core of all forms is Consciousness. When once we perceive the close affinity or identity between cosmic Consciousness and Consciousness in man, the union between the human and the Divine, between man and God, becomes a definite possibility, which is the goal, the fulfilment of all *yajñas* and all *yogas*.

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Man is an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but the centre is located in one spot; and God is an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is everywhere. . . . Man can become like god and acquire control over the whole universe, if he multiplies infinitely his centre of self-consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, is the chief thing to understand.



# JESUS CHRIST, THE GREAT IDEAL FOR MAN

BY PROFESSOR J. N. DEY

On this sacred occasion, the first picture that comes to my mind is the little divine baby in the manger wrapped in swaddling clothes, being gazed upon by his virgin mother Mary and foster-father Joseph. With what joy, veneration, and love they do so, and how these are intensified when the simple shepherds come to pay their homage to him and narrate, to all present, the wonderful vision of the angels proclaiming the coming to this earth of the Lord as Jesus! It is difficult to say which fills their hearts the most—joy, veneration, or love. Does it not remind us of mothers Kausalyā, Yaśodā, and Chandramani? How often each of these, knowing fully well that the child before her was no other than the supreme Lord, would forget about His great power and glories, and, filled with intense maternal love, think herself indispensable for the care and protection of the child—think that the child was completely dependent on her even for its simple needs! How, constantly thinking about the child night and day, they would forget about themselves, and live as it were for the child alone! What a sweet relationship it was between the devotee and the Lord!

The child Jesus is then brought to Nazareth, where he gradually grows up into boyhood and then into adolescence. We have no record for this period of Jesus' life. But, thanks to Swami Saradananda, we have a detailed account of the early period of Sri Ramakrishna's life. And so, from this, we can easily conjecture what it must have been for Jesus, too—how he lived amongst the poor people of Nazareth and saw extreme poverty reigning amongst quite a number of them; how his little heart felt compassion for them; and how he tried to do his best to lessen their sorrows and miseries that follow in the wake of poverty. He must have heard about his own religion and its injunctions, and he must have been attracted by the

beauty of nature surrounding Nazareth—its meadows, vineyards, and green fields. Wishing to find a way out of the miseries that he saw around him, he must have been given to silent thought, and so must have often taken himself to solitary places to pray to the divine Lord to show him the way. About this time, word must have come to Nazareth of the rise into eminence of John the Baptist, who was proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and who was calling the people to repent and to be baptized for the remission of their sins. Not having found an answer to his prayers, and hearing about John the Baptist, the thought must have come to his simple heart that the reason why his prayers were not being answered might be due to his heart being not completely purified. It may have been this reason that took him to John the Baptist to be baptized by him and thus have his heart purified.

When his turn came to be baptized, and John's eyes fell on him, John at once recognized him as the Messiah and called out that it should be the other way about, that is, that he, John, should be baptized by Jesus. But, as Jesus wanted to be baptized by John, the latter dipped him in the water of the Jordan. And, as Jesus came out of the water, he saw the Holy Ghost descending upon him as a dove, and a voice from heaven said: 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.' It is doubtful if any of the people gathered there saw or heard any of these. But something of this must have been revealed to John, and it must have gone a long way to strengthen his conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. What was revealed to Jesus, it is very difficult to say; for it was most probably something which 'words cannot express'. He must have come face to face with Truth. This overwhelmed him to such an extent that he was filled with the spirit of complete renunciation of the world.



He took himself to the desert, where he fasted for forty days and nights, and was tempted by the Devil. It was here that he had his final *sādhana*, and at the end of it, he became established in Truth. All his previous ideas had to be readjusted in the light of what he now knew as Truth. How many times his old idea of the self must have tried to reassert itself, and how many times he had to overthrow it! Here, again, we are helped a great deal in our drawing of this picture by what has been narrated so vividly, and in such great detail, about Sri Ramakrishna. Ultimately, Jesus knew that he was the Son, and the divine Lord, the Father; and that he and the Father were one. How peaceful he must have felt! Then the thought came to him that the Kingdom of God was indeed at hand. The supreme Lord in His great mercy had shown to him that he, Jesus, was the Son of God. And it was in the same way possible for everyone to know that he was the son of God. The kingdom of heaven would be nothing but God and His sons; and once this was realized by men, where was the chance of any sorrow or misery? It was here that it was revealed to him that this was his mission in life—to show man his divine nature.

So Jesus came back among men and told them of his realization; he told them how the kingdom of God was at hand. But the people hesitated to believe him. Then, because he had great compassion for men, and because of his faith in being one with the Father, any wish that came to him was at once fulfilled. It

was thus that he performed miracle after miracle. This drew the attention of the people to him and made the simple folk worship him as verily the Messiah. But the learned and the influential section of the people got jealous of him and became his worst enemies. They tried in every possible way to bring him down in the eyes of the people, but to no purpose. This, instead of making them change over to his side, made them more bitter against him. All this pained Jesus very much. But the saddest thing was that Jesus found that nobody, not even his closest disciples, really understood him and his message. They still thought that the kingdom was of the earth. His heart was filled with great sorrow, in that he thought that he was not doing his Father's work properly and that he was actually letting down his Father.

So Jesus prayed and prayed; and as he was doing so late one night, it was revealed to him that, in order to make the people have faith in the Father, he would have to make the supreme sacrifice of giving up his body on the cross. As this picture came to his mind, followed by the accompanying torture that the body would have to undergo, his flesh cringed from it, and he cried out: 'My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me!' But immediately afterwards, he was filled with a great shame, in that he found that his self-surrender was not complete. So he continued: 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' And this prince of compassion willingly sacrificed his last drop of blood for man.

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## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : UNION OF EAST AND WEST

BY BRAHMACHARI AMAL

Swami Vivekananda is quoted as having said: 'I have a message for the West, even as Buddha had a message for the East.' It goes without saying that he also had a message for the East. One might say that fundamentally he was like all spiritual teachers—an awakener of souls—

and that the main burden of his message everywhere was to lead men to eternal Bliss. This is, of course, true. But he was more than a spiritual teacher. He was a world mover. The world bears the imprint of his personality on many levels and in many different ways. He



founded and instructed and inspired a monastic Order devoted both to spirituality and service; he revitalized a nation, turning the ancient currents of life into modern channels; his ideas have influenced artists, historians, and scholars of various fields; his teachings inspired revolutionaries and nationalists. His message, therefore, cannot be put in a nutshell, nor can any slogan do him justice.

Nevertheless, we must of necessity analyse and detail the various facets of his message. It is proposed here to study his life and teachings as a union of East and West. No differences between East and West can be said to be inherent. Both have passed through cycles of decline and revival, between materialism and spirituality. At the time which concerns us, however, the turn of the century, India was entering a period of renaissance, and a new wave of spirituality was beginning to rise. The West was then at the height of its power and self-confidence, and the scientific era was in full flower. Materialism was increasing rapidly.

This orientation of the West is to be understood as a reaction to medievalism. During the medieval period, the West passed through many centuries in which a religious outlook prevailed, and the dominant interest was inner and mystical. Monasticism flourished, saints arose, and there were popular mystical movements. But there were also seeds of decay, and corruption increased, magnified by a centralized church administration and an entrenched priestcraft. Reaction was inevitable. At last, the Reformation broke the secular hold of the church and allowed the formation of dissenting and heretical sects. The new burst of energy that was released, however, could not be confined within the limits of religion. The scientific outlook developed and soon came into a series of direct collisions with religious dogma. The result was a further erosion of the hold of religion on intellectuals and the growth of materialism.

Centuries passed, and Western culture developed in manifold ways: science, individualism, and technology—the greatest amount of

energy was expended on understanding, controlling, and enjoying the physical world. Religion continued, of course, but lost most of its mystical emphasis. It is probable that the masses everywhere and at all times have some religious interest. But sometimes, new currents of spirituality burst forth, and saints are to be found. This is living religion. At other times, religion becomes set in traditional forms, and what life there is takes theological or sentimental forms. The society may be a living one, but the energy of the creative people is mostly centred on non-religious pursuits. This has been the case to a large extent with the modern West.

The condition of India, on the other hand, has been complicated by foreign domination. This domination itself was made possible by a decline in the cultural, the political, and the religious condition. Once begun, the domination tended to discourage normal growth and change in every field. The result was a serious and deep dichotomy between the orthodox, who carried on the old traditions without much adjustment to modern conditions or Western thought, and those who became Westernized in outlook and cut off from any roots in the past. An uncritical cultivation of orthodoxy, while it has elements of strength, tends eventually to stagnate. An equally uncritical absorption of foreign ideas may lead to some needed reforms, but by itself it cannot produce more than a second rate imitation.

However, though this may seem obvious today, during the nineteenth century, there was a grave increase in the seriousness of this dichotomy. This was due to various reasons. Old India had seemingly failed. The industrial revolution had had catastrophic results on the Indian economy, and poverty had become acute. The failure of the 1857 uprising was a severe psychic shock to the Indian mind. The existence of certain perversions in Hindu social practice could hardly fail to antagonize and embarrass those who received a modern education. Moreover, the developing administrative and educational practices created a class with a vested interest in British rule and an education on the



European model. It is not surprising that there should be a rebellion against orthodox beliefs and practices, and an equally great admiration for the ideas of the West. These seemed to be stronger and more 'enlightened'.

No. It is not surprising that Indian intellectuals became Westernized. What is amazing is the change in tide that took place in a comparatively short time, how India regained her self-confidence in the very teeth of vast opposing forces. Indians once more became proud of their past and confident of the future. This was a marvellous thing, and a change that appeared impossible only a short time before.

In great measure, this was the work of Swami Vivekananda. The rejuvenation of India was an idea and a purpose that burned within him ever more intensely, from his wandering days to the end of his life. First in his letters, and then in his talks and lectures when he returned from the West, he called for a re-awakening of India. He wanted India to develop in every respect, to become strong. He taught only strength, the message of the Upaniṣads, Advaita, for he knew that this was the heart of any future progress. He wanted also the best the West had to offer: science, industry, the power of organization, co-operation, and a free society. This would mean a union of East and West, taking the best of each, combined in a harmonious manner, and coming as a natural growth rather than by decree or by force.

Sister Nivedita, in *The Master as I Saw Him*, in the chapter on 'Past and Future in India', has recorded an interesting conversation with the Swami on this question. The Swami said: 'I disagree with all those who are giving their superstitions back to my people. Like the Egyptologist's interest in Egypt, it is easy to feel an interest in India that is purely selfish. One may desire to see again the India of one's books, one's studies, one's dreams. My hope is to see again the strong points of that India, reinforced by the strong points of this age, only in a natural way. The new state of things must be a *growth* from within.

'So I preach only the Upaniṣads. If you

look, you will find that I have never quoted anything but the Upaniṣads. And of the Upaniṣads, it is only that one idea *strength*. The quintessence of Vedas and Vedānta and all lies in that one word.'

To accomplish this, he wanted to raise the masses, to restore to them their lost individuality, to give them education and prosperity. In one of his letters (*Letters*, p. 83), he said: 'Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But alas! nobody ever did anything for them. Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course, I am a sympathizer in every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon the *condition of the masses*. Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature? Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done, and *we will do it*. You are all *born to do it*.'

He emphasized this again and again. In another letter (*Letters*, p. 99), he said: 'We as a nation have lost our individuality, and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and *raise the masses*. The Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian, all have trampled them under foot. Again, the force to raise them must come from inside, that is, from the orthodox Hindus. In every country, the evils exist not with, but against religion. Religion therefore is not to blame, but men.'

The strong point of India is its spirituality. This is to be kept and nurtured and made the very heart of the national life. The weak points are those of social organization and economic development. To remedy these, the help of the West is necessary—in knowledge of nature, spirit of enterprise, ideals, and material aid. Thus the best in East and West should be brought together in a grand union of ideals



and practice. Then the greatness of India will be realized.

Swami Vivekananda went to America because of his love for India. Many are the consequences of that visit, but his original purpose was simply that of raising money for his work in India. To continue the last quotation (*Letters*, p. 99), he said: 'To effect this, the first thing we need is men, and the next is funds. Through the grace of our *guru*, I was sure to get from ten to fifteen men in every town. I next travelled in search of funds, but do you think the people of India were going to spend money! . . . Selfishness personified—are they to spend anything? Therefore I have come to America, to earn money myself, and then return to my country and devote the rest of my days to the realization of this one aim of my life.'

However, once he arrived in America and became widely known and accepted, he found other problems facing him. The thing that confronted him most pointedly was the great amount of ignorance and misinformation concerning India. This was due to various reasons. The power and prestige of the West was then at its greatest, and European nations ruled or controlled the greater part of the world. It was natural for people to evaluate other nations on the terms and standards of Western culture. The East was then prostrate under foreign boots and depressed both in wealth and culture. The true value of the ideas and culture of the East was not appreciated, and many disinterested but ignorant people felt that they had nothing to learn from the Orient.

But there were some who were not disinterested. The Christian missionaries in particular gave a distorted view of India. They did not deliberately falsify facts, but the results were equally pernicious. Coming from a Western society, they naturally reflected its self-confidence and false sense of superiority. In addition, most Christian sects had long held exclusive and narrow-minded doctrines—salvation is possible only in Christianity, if not in their sect. Since the church people of the West contributed large sums for missions, a returned

missionary or one on furlough would naturally wish to justify his work. He would therefore emphasize only the dark side of Indian life, speaking of the 'terrible need' for missions, and of the great work they were doing. Since missionaries were the main source of information about India, the American mind was filled with a strange mixture of truths, half-truths, errors, and crude misconceptions. Some practices condemned by the missionaries, such as Sati, had long since been put down by the Hindu reformer, Ram Mohan Roy.

No criticism is acceptable if it is intended to destroy. It must rather be a result of love and understanding. The missionaries' denunciations did not meet either condition. On the other hand, it is not likely that any missionary criticized India or Hinduism more vigorously or pointedly than the Swami did. But his vehemence was born of the fullness of his love for India, and confirmed by his intimate knowledge and understanding of India and Hinduism. His criticism was intended to purify and not to destroy. The popular impression of India, however, which he found in America, was the result of profound ignorance and unthinking preconceptions. Those who propagated these myths were determined to destroy Hinduism and substitute their own ideas in its place.

Even now, if a Hindu speaks before some groups, he is likely to be bombarded with questions about caste, cows, and various Hindu superstitions. The truth or falsity of these accusations is not the point, but that these people think of India only in such terms. The condition was far worse in Swami Vivekananda's time. During the first months of the American work, therefore, he devoted his time and energy to combating these errors and misconceptions, and to giving correct ideas about Hinduism and a true description of India. This was the 'cyclonic' period of his work when he gave lectures almost daily, and travelled over many parts of the country. This was a period of purgation, as it were; and sometimes, he had to use plain language in order to frustrate the attempts to misinterpret India.



However, after several months of strenuous lecturing, he had some measure of success, and he then began to think of building some permanent centres. At first, he had no thought of starting a movement; but later, he decided to settle down for intensive work, to train disciples, publish books, and so on. Again, his first thought was to make and train some American *sannyāsins* and others to carry on the work in the U.S.A. after his departure. Indeed, he did make some, though none had the capacity and steadiness to live up to his expectations. Later, he brought over some of his brother Swamis to carry on the work.

The theme of his teaching for the West was entirely spiritual. The material and economic condition was very good, and the masses had both freedom from abject poverty and great social freedom. The Swami spoke of America as a 'paradise of the woman and the labourer'. The spiritual condition was not good, however. What the West needed was a rational religion that was at once liberal and profound: 'Wide as the ocean and deep as the sea.' The West had both, but seldom together. Those who were liberal and broadminded usually were interested in social improvement, rather than deep spirituality. Those who practised mysticism, or had a serious interest in spiritual life, usually were sectarian, or believed in rigid doctrines and dogmas. The majority, perhaps, were neither, and thought of religion in terms of material benefits. They were interested if religion could offer health, beauty, or money.

This was the condition the Swami faced. Three things were necessary if a union of East and West was to be possible. The first, as mentioned above, was clearing away the jungle of misconceptions about the East. A substantial beginning had been made. The second was the deflation of bigotry and exclusiveness. The orthodox view was that Christianity is the only true religion, and this was obviously incompatible with any synthesis with the East; there could only be competition. (Here it must be said that union or synthesis does not mean syncretism. Even within Hinduism, there are

the widest possible variations in faith and practice. It means, rather, the acceptance of 'unity in diversity' and the exploration of common grounds of unity.) Swami Vivekananda therefore preached the ideal of universal religion that all religions lead to Truth. Fortunately, the Western mind was ready for this idea, and it has made very encouraging progress.

The third thing necessary was the development of a religious consciousness in the West that was rational, liberal, deeply spiritual, and which all types of men could believe in and practise. This was the most important part of the message; the rest was preparatory. The teaching had to be rational, for it would appeal first to the intellectuals. For all the aggressiveness of the orthodox section, they were themselves under serious attack by scholars and scientists. Many modern discoveries were in direct conflict with important church doctrines. Many people, therefore, and a fast growing number, were searching for a religion which was spiritually satisfying and which was acceptable to reason.

Swami Vivekananda preached mostly *jñāna-yoga* and *rāja-yoga*, since both of these approaches had great appeal for intellectuals and scientifically minded people. The message was rational—it did not require blind faith, nor did it require adherence to set forms and doctrines. It was also experimental, in that specific spiritual practices were given, and a person need believe only what he proved for himself. Even the terminology was helpful to some, since those who found it hard to believe in a personal God could accept the Absolute or Brahman.

This teaching led, at the same time, to the highest spiritual experiences. Mere philosophy or dry intellectualism would attract only a few. The Swami did teach a rigorous philosophy, but combined with spiritual practices leading to realization of Truth, which is Bliss. Thus, the Swami combined liberalism and reason with a profoundly mystical religion. Nor was it limited to a particular type of mind. His message of Vedānta, with its division into four *yogas*, appealed to the devotee and the worker as well



as the mystic and the rationalist. In short, all men could come and find a teaching and spiritual path which would meet their needs.

In establishing the Western work on these lines, Swami Vivekananda laid the foundation for the development and growth of what was best in both East and West. The West was the land of science, prosperity, and social freedom. What was needed was spiritual culture, a knowledge of the divine Unity behind existence, and a spirit of renunciation. This he gave, devoting years of the most strenuous effort.

At the same time, he studied the strong points of the West with a view to applying them

in India. Science, industry, technology, organization, the freedom of society, and self-reliance—these he wished to bring to India, with spirituality at the heart. Such a combination of strong points could produce a much higher type of civilization on both sides.

The letter quoted above can be made to apply, in its spirit, to people of both East and West. He said: 'Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done, and *we will do it*. You are all *born to do it*.'

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## THE SONG OF SOLOMON

BY SRI C. GOPALAKRISHNAN NAYAR

The 'Song of Solomon' teaches us how intense our love of God should be if we have to attain to Him. Love of God is generally known as devotion, *bhakti*. It is the same love as men have towards each other; but turned towards God, it is more pure, more unselfish, and more intense. Love exists among men in various degrees. The love existing between a man and his neighbour is not the same as that existing between a master and his servant. So also, the love between friends, the love between parent and child, and the love between husband and wife vary in degrees. The love between husband and wife is the highest form of mundane love. The other kinds of love have their own limitations. A servant can approach or talk to his master only up to a limit. A child cannot disclose all his or her affairs to his or her parent. Similarly, the love between friends, too, is restricted. But this is not the case with lovers. There is nothing that they cannot disclose to each other. They love each other with their full heart. What is in the bridegroom's heart is in the bride's heart, and what is in the bride's heart is in the bridegroom's heart also.

Such should be the relationship between man and God. This relationship is of the spirit and not of the flesh. The devotee should consider himself as the bride, and his *iṣṭa-devatā* (chosen ideal) as the bridegroom. He should love his God as a bride loves her lover. This kind of devotion is known in Sanskrit as *madhura-bhāva*. It is this form of devotion that the 'Song of Solomon' teaches us. It may be for this reason that this song of Solomon is known as the 'Song of Songs'.

The story presented in the song is this: King Solomon chanced to meet a Shulamite damsel, and was much attracted by her. He brought her to Jerusalem against her wish, desiring to make her his queen. Solomon proposed to her several times, but she refused to become his wife. She loved to live in her own country with her shepherd lover, tending his sheep and revelling in his loving embraces. The king tried in various ways to gain her love, but failed in all his attempts. At last, the king grew wise, and let her return to her own country and be wedded to her lover.

The Shulamite damsel represents the devotee



of God. Her lover is described as a shepherd tending his flock. God is the Shepherd, and all people of goodwill are His sheep. King Solomon stands for the vainglory of earthly wisdom and material riches. Jerusalem is the house of the Lord, the heart of man. The daughters of Jerusalem, who are shown as the messengers of the king, and who are commissioned to win over the damsel's love for him, are symbolic of the desires and thoughts arising in the heart. We have to review the story in this background, if we have to appreciate the beauty of the song in its fullness.

'Shulamite' means 'peaceful'. The Shulamite damsel was living peacefully and joyfully in the love of her lover. The devotee of God also has peace of mind, because he has surrendered himself completely to God. He is not worried by the anxieties or cares of the world. God is his protector, his care-taker, his all; and he has full faith in Him. God is the Good Shepherd. He loves His sheep and takes care of them.

The damsel had been brought to Jerusalem against her will. She was discontented with her life in the king's house. She longed to return to her country, free to ramble in the fields together with her lover and his sheep. The true devotee also, when he may be forced by circumstances to lead a worldly life, is not content with his fate. He hates his home, his riches, and all things that stand in his way to love God.

The song begins with the Shulamite woman conversing with the daughters of Jerusalem. She tells them of her humble birth; that she is black, because the sun hath looked upon her; and that her mother's children were angry with her, and made her the keeper of the vineyards. But she had peace and joy in her heart, because she was loved by her lover. The devotee, too, considers himself humble. He may be ignorant of the scriptures. He may not be learned, and may be serving God in his own humble way. He may be laughed at by others who consider themselves wise; they may be angry with him. He may not be able to acquire a high position in society. Yet, he finds peace

and joy in loving God and lives contented with his lot, because he can love God.

The greatest thing that the devotee cherishes in his life is God's love. He says: 'Thy love is better than wine.' To him, God's love is the most valuable thing to be acquired in life.

Because of the savour of thy good ointments,  
Thy name is as ointment poured forth;  
Therefore do the virgins love Thee.

Our love of God should be akin to 'virgin's love'. A virgin is an unmarried damsel. We, too, must not be married to materialism, thereby sharing our love among the various objects of the world. Our whole love must be given to God.

The devotee is impatient for the presence of the Lord. He says: 'Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon.'

A true devotee never goes astray, because God Himself is his guide. He may be ignorant of the scriptural ways, but God leads him along the right path. God says: 'If thou know not, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the Shepherd's tent.' The sheep are the devotees of God. We have only to walk along their footsteps, and we may remain assured that we would reach our destination (which is God) without ever missing the way.

Though the Shulamite damsel was living in the king's palace, her thoughts were always of her lover. She felt the pangs of separation greatly. In her sleep, she often dreamt of her shepherd lover. She first dreamt of having missed him and herself searching for him. At another time, she dreamt of having heard his voice; she went to open the door to let him in, and, when she opened the door, lo! he was gone. Still at another time, she dreamt of having actually found him, and she would not let him go.

The true devotee also, though he may be forced by circumstances to sit in the mire of worldliness, never forgets his chosen ideal. He



cannot even for a single moment remain without the thought of his Beloved. His physical body may be engaged in the performance of his worldly duties, but his mind would ever be fixed on the Lord. His love of the Lord is so great that the feeling of His presence, the presence of His devotees, His thought, and the mere mention of His name transport him to the realm of ecstasy. And during such reveries, he dreams of the hide-and-seek play of the Lord.

The path to the presence of God is not strewn with roses. It is a hard one. There are many things on the way to distract our attention and retard our march towards Him. Solomon's attempts to win the love of the Shulamite damsel speak of such temptations. The king tried in several ways to find favour in the eyes of the damsel. He praised her beauty; he showed her all his kingly pomp and glory; he flattered her. But he failed every time. The devotee, too, is tempted by the fleeting pleasures of the world—by the desire for riches, name, fame, power, and honour. And if he succumbs to any such desire, he is sure to be lost on the way. A true devotee never becomes a prey to the desire for mundane pleasures. He fights boldly, yet calmly, with all his desires and vanquishes them. He says:

'I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me.' The virgin remains chaste and spotless to meet her true lover.

True love comes from the bottom of the heart. It is mutual affection between two persons. Nothing can stand between them. The welfare and happiness of the other is the aim, goal, and thought of each, even at the risk of one's own life. Unselfishness is its characteristic.

True love never fails. It is described as 'as strong as death'. And it is a jealous love: 'Its jealousy is cruel as the grave.' It is a burning love: 'The coals thereof are coals of fire which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.' One would willingly give his all to have such love. 'If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.'

True love will have to encounter various obstacles, temptations, rivalry, accusations, and unhappy incidents in life. But as love is pure, sincere, intense, unflinching, and strong, it withstands all trials and comes out freshened and more strong. After trials, it shines all the more, as gold purified in fire.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READER

Dr. P. S. Sastri, M.A., M.Litt., Ph.D., Reader and Head of the Department of English, Nagpur University, Nagpur, presents in his article a learned and lucid exposition of the relation of 'Aesthetic Form' to value. ...

In his second article on 'The Ālvārs and Their Religion of Love', Swami Smaranananda deals with Kulaśekhara, Periyālvār, and Āṇḍāl. ...

In her second article on 'Chāndogya Upaniṣad: An Interpretation', Dr. Anima Sen Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., of Patna University, offers

an interpretation of the eighth section of the sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* from the Sāṅkhya point of view. Her first article in this series appeared in the February 1961 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*. ...

Sri S. N. Rao, of Ootacamund, shows in his article that all centres of cosmic activity in the universe of space and time are 'Centres of Cosmic Consciousness'. ...

The article on 'Jesus Christ, the Great Ideal for Man' by Professor J. N. Dey, M.Sc., L.T., of St. George's College, Barlowganj, Mussoorie Hills, is based on a talk he gave at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal (Hard-



war), on the occasion of the observance of Christmas Day last year. . . .

That Swami Vivekananda envisaged and worked for a harmonious blending of the best in both East and West for the future of mankind is the theme of the article on 'Swami Vivekananda: Union of East and West' by Brahmachari Amal, who has recently joined the Ramakrishna Order. . . .

The article by Sri C. Gopalakrishnan Nayar, of Thiruvilwamala, Trichur District, Kerala State, brings out the point that 'The Song of Solomon' teaches 'how intense our love of God should be if we have to attain to Him'. . . .

### A COMMON SCRIPT FOR INDIAN LANGUAGES

In the last session of the Lok Sabha, a non-official resolution recommending the adoption of Devanāgarī as the common script for all the regional languages of India was sponsored by an Independent member from Punjab, Sri Prakash Vir Shastri. The resolution was debated in the Parliament; and later, Sri Shastri withdrew it 'on the consideration that it might otherwise lead to misunderstanding'. In the course of the debate, Sri B. N. Datar, Minister of State for Home Affairs, called for a policy of caution with regard to the script issue, and said: 'There is a lot of sentiment attached to this issue, and there should not be any suspicion that the resolution was an indirect effort to obliterate or destroy the scripts of the regional languages' (quoted from *The Hindu*, of April 2, 1961). Considering the present state of affairs in our country, the withdrawal of the resolution was a wise decision.

Now, this question of a common script for India has two aspects to be considered:

(i) whether a common script—which can only be Devanāgarī, being the most suitable one for this role for obvious reasons—should replace the existing ones, which may, in due course, 'obliterate or destroy the scripts of the regional languages'; or

(ii) whether a common script should be encouraged for all Indian languages in addition to the existing scripts which have centuries of history behind them and to which people are sentimentally attached.

This second aspect of the question has an appeal, particularly in the cause of spreading the knowledge and wisdom contained in the literary treasures of the various regions of India, in which every enlightened Indian is interested. Rightly approached, we have every reason to believe that a move in this direction, namely, adopting a common script—Devanāgarī, let us repeat—for publishing and popularizing the literary productions of the regional languages, will be heartily welcomed by the nation. In this sphere, the use of a common script for all Indian languages has a wide scope; and the project, if successfully implemented, will earn the gratitude of every educated Indian, for it is bound to enrich the common cultural heritage of India.

As to the question of adopting a common script all over India in place of the existing ones, the nation should be very cautious, lest the sentiment, hardened by centuries of attachment, should burst forth in a volcanic form and add a few more problems to the still unsettled conditions of our socio-political life. Although we cannot foresee what is in the womb of future, for the present, at least, the existing scripts will have to remain; maybe for decades, if not more. In the present context, we can change over to a common script only at the peril of our national unity and solidarity. Hence the question of elbowing out the prevalent scripts cannot arise at the present moment. In this connection, we may recall the views expressed a few years ago both by the Official Language Commission and the Sanskrit Commission that the common script issue should be tackled with caution.

To the second aspect of the question mentioned above, namely, adopting a common script for the propagation of the literary treasures—both classical and modern—of the regional



languages, there could hardly be any opposition. On the contrary, it is sure to have a warm reception from the intelligentsia.

India is a veritable storehouse of literary wealth. Throughout the centuries, saints and mystics, philosophers and poets, and literary geniuses have appeared in every part of our country and contributed immensely to this wealth. Even today, the literary productions in the different languages of India are by no means inconsiderable. Unfortunately, because of the barriers erected by the regional scripts, these literary productions are confined within their own limits, and their charm and beauty are denied to others. Now, with new opportunities offering themselves in a united India, efforts should be made to bring out these hidden treasures and spread them all over the land. These immortal literary productions in the various regional languages should not only be translated, but also transliterated into a common script, so that the people may enjoy reading them in the original and derive satisfaction from that. If we accept that Indian culture is one, that its literary products should be shared by every Indian, and that these should be made easily accessible to all, then the question of adopting a common script for publishing these works acquires a great significance.

We have already said that the script which is eminently suitable for this purpose is Devanāgarī; and this for obvious reasons. All the languages of India have a common source, in that they all originated from the Brāhmī script. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the well-known linguist, says as follows regarding the Brāhmī script: 'The various modern scripts of India, including those of a number of lands of Greater India, are only derivatives of it. Thus the Devanāgarī, the Bengali-Assamese-Maithili-Newari-Oriya, the Śāradā-Gurumukhi, the Kaithi-Gujarati, the Telugu-Kannada, and the Tamil-Malayalam-Grantha-Sinhalese, as also the Tibetan ... all these are transformations of the Brāhmī script' (*The Cultural Heritage of India*, Second Edition, Volume I. p. 69).

Among the scripts enumerated above, Deva-

nāgarī happens to be the oldest, and is used by the largest linguistic group in India. Also, being the script for the Sanskrit language, it has been known to a great extent in almost all the parts of India. In all the Hindi-speaking areas, Devanāgarī is the script used by the people; that is the case with Maharashtra as well. Bengali, Assamese, Gujarati, and Gurumukhi have scripts very much akin to Devanāgarī, and those who know these scripts will be able to read Devanāgarī with a little effort. As for the Dravidian languages and Oriya, the problem is somewhat difficult. But Hindi in Devanāgarī script has been accepted as the official language for all-India purposes, and good progress has been made in those regions in spreading the Hindi language. People are becoming enthusiastic about it. As such, it will not be long before every educated Indian will be fully conversant with the Devanāgarī script. Taking all these points into consideration, we have no hesitation in saying that everything is strongly in favour of accepting and adopting the Devanāgarī script for the purpose which we are discussing now. Select books in all languages, classical as well as modern, religious as well as literary, should therefore be published in Devanāgarī and made available to the people at large. Such a step, besides contributing to the enrichment of knowledge and culture in the different regions, will foster cultural fellowship and spiritual kinship among the various sections of our people. In this great task of working for our cultural unity and national solidarity, both the government and the people should whole-heartedly co-operate with each other.

It is heartening to note in this connection that the Lalit Kala Akadamy has decided to publish the works of Rabindranath Tagore in Devanāgarī. The nation will certainly accord a hearty welcome to this publication. We wish the venture all success, and pray that this may well be the harbinger of a new series of publications printed in Devanāgarī and bringing the literary wealth of the different regional languages within the reach of one and all.



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE QUEST OF THE INFINITE.** BY KAVIRAJ A. P. ROY. *Sole Distributors: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Publishers and Booksellers, Calcutta-12. Pages 922. Price Rs. 12.*

The quest of the Infinite is a perpetual quest for man. He longs for eternal peace and bliss, but fails to find them in the material acquisitions of this world. A sense of want—spiritual hunger—assails him at every mundane achievement, and he is ever faced with the question, What next? This makes him frustrated and restless. It is only when finite man establishes, through spiritual knowledge and practices, his conscious contact with the Infinite—the source from where he has sprung—that he truly reaches his journey's end, finding the much coveted perfection in his own real Self.

The book under review, says the author, 'is written only with the idea of attracting the minds of materialistically inclined men and women, afflicted by the world, to the path of religion and the spiritual treasures of the land'. It is, indeed, a veritable compendium on Yoga and Vedānta philosophy.

The book is in two parts—theoretical and practical. In Part I, which runs into 673 pages, the author has tried to present the Vedāntic teachings in 23 chapters, dealing with such subjects as Brahman and the Creation; Māyā and the World; Human Body, Mind, and Soul; Free Will; the Law of Karma; True Happiness; Human Perfection; Incarnation; Scripture, Preceptor, and Disciple; Power of *Mantra*; Three Paths; Ideal and Its Attainment.

In Part II of the book, the author discusses various *yoga* practices; perception from different levels of consciousness; *Kuṇḍalinī* or the Energy Potential in Man; *Suddhi* or the Purification of Body and Mind; *Āsana* and *Mudrā* or Posture and Sign; *Prāṇāyāma* or the Practice of Breath Control; the Power of *Yoga* and Yogic Experience.

The author has taken great pains in compiling this unique philosophical treatise. It will prove to be a great boon to all those who are after the quest of the Infinite.

J. S.

**HEGEL — HIGHLIGHTS : AN ANNOTATED SELECTION.** EDITED BY WANDA ORYNSKI. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1960. Pages 361+xvi. Price \$4.75.*

Though extremely difficult to be understood even by the academic philosophers, Hegel is well known to the outside world through the channel of Marx and other sociologists. And though his name is quite

popular, yet, as Dr. Leidecker, in his preface to the present selection, points out, 'Few names in the history of Western philosophy have evoked as many contradictory feelings, running the gamut from adulation to utter derision, as has that of Hegel'.

In the present selection, Wanda Orynski is concerned with the clarification of Hegel's views as expressed in *The Phenomenology*, *The Logic*, and *The Philosophy of History*. More than half of the selection is devoted to *The Philosophy of History*. There seems to be only a passing reference to *The Logic*. And except in the case of the latter work, which covers hardly 25 pages, she has given exhaustive quotations from Hegel, so much so that the selection seems to be a running commentary on Hegel's remarks. The writer's contribution in commenting is only to let her readers understand the significance of Hegel's remarks in a simplified language. Of course, this method of presentation is objective and detached from any kind of prejudice, a quality which is lacking among most of the Hegelian scholars. However, this objectivity has reached such an extent that Wanda Orynski has digested even that stuff of Hegel's system which can hardly be digested by an open mind. For example, one who is acquainted with the history of Indian and Chinese peoples would hardly believe in Hegel's interpretation of history. Russell rightly thinks: 'Like other historical theories, it required, if it was to be made plausible, some distortion of facts and considerable ignorance. Hegel, like Marx and Spengler after him, possessed both these qualifications.' Wanda Orynski, like Hegel, thinks that India had only one ontological system, monism. But she should know that India had all such ontological systems which happen to justify the historical progress of Hegel's spirit. In India, there are followers of 'All are free' ontology, no less than there are followers of 'Only one is free' ontology. It is also wrong to think that Indians knew only despotic form of government. There were sufficient instances of republics to falsify Hegel's theory. Wanda Orynski is able to justify Hegel's view, because she is as ignorant of the history of Indians as Hegel himself. It is interesting to note that, if Hegel's theory of history is falsified, his whole system falls to the ground.

However, the fact that Wanda Orynski's defence of Hegel is based on the ignorance of history no more decreases the importance of her selection than Hegel's own ignorance of history decreases the importance of his philosophy of history. Both the age and the philosophical climate of understanding and appreciating Hegel's language have passed away long back. Wanda Orynski's notes do bring Hegel nearer to our



understanding. It would have been better had she given more space to *The Logic*, which is the backbone of Hegelian system, than to *The Philosophy of History*. But there are the limitations of a writer. Wanda Orynski deserves appreciation for publishing this valuable selection.

SURESH CHANDRA

**THE POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE.** BY RICHARD B. GREGG. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. 1960. Pages 228. Price Rs. 2.50.*

The book under review is the second revised edition of the classic on non-violence by Richard B. Gregg. The book was first published in 1938, and since then it has commanded the love and admiration of all those who believe in religion and in the message of Gandhiji. Richard Gregg is an ardent student of the theory and practice of non-violence. Non-violence is no longer to be looked upon as a beautiful little dream; it is the desperate need of the world. In the present-day world, with the alarming development of dreadful nuclear weapons, non-violence is the only way out. Another world war means not the destruction of this or that nation, but it leads to the extermination of the entire humanity. War has been proved to be politically stupid, economically futile, and morally disastrous. In such a context, the publication of this revised edition is timely and topical. In this edition, we get a graphic account of the heroic, though unanticipated, non-violent resistance against the Nazis in Denmark and Norway, and by small groups in France, the Netherlands, and Germany itself. We also get accounts of the struggle in South Africa against unjust laws, of Ghana winning its freedom, and of the experiences of the people of Montgomery.

Our author is a careful student of Gandhiji's writings. He lived in India on different occasions and had intimate association with Gandhiji. Between 1956 and 1958, he was in India for over 18 months teaching and writing about the technique and the effectiveness of non-violence as a method for individuals and groups and nations.

The book examines all the arguments against non-

violence and answers them. Chapter V shows how non-violence is possible not only for an individual, but also for the masses. The special feature of the book is the great light it throws on the psychological aspects of non-violence. Reading the book is a rich and beneficial experience. It is difficult in a short review to bring out the different aspects of the question treated by the author. The volume is bound to be looked upon as a standard book on the subject in English for a long time to come.

DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

**REASON AND GENIUS: STUDIES IN THEIR ORIGIN.** BY ALFRED HOCK. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1960. Pages 138. Price \$3.75.*

'Genius to madness is near allied', said a writer with common sense. Psychologists, critics, and artists have told us a good deal disparaging or praising genius. It is but proper to listen to the medical expert dissecting the anatomy of genius in this short book. Superiority of achievement may be a mark of genius; the incidence of psycho-pathological factors may constitute it; and yet genius is enigmatical.

Dr. Hock devotes the first two chapters for an elucidation of the nature of reason. 'The development of imagination', he observes, led to 'reasonable behaviour'; and we have to understand the laws of reason and of science in order 'to elevate human culture'. Considered in this light, reason is not yet the common attribute of the *Homo sapiens*.

The next four chapters deal with the 'origin of reason'. Here we have a brilliant inquiry into the nature of genius. The forces of individual effort and of hereditary disposition determine the nature and direction of genius. It is genius alone that grasps the concept. The thinking out of a given subject, the constancy of purpose, and the grand total of energies single out genius as the spring of reason and as the source of all heroic and lofty endeavour.

Dr. Hock presents his case in a lucidly persuasive vein. It deserves a close study.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SOCIETY RANGOON

REPORT FOR 1959

The Society carried on the following activities during the year under review:

*Free Library and Reading Room:* Total number of books in the library: 26,354. Total number of

books issued during the year: 30,270. Total number of dailies received in the reading room: 27; number of periodicals: 125. Average daily attendance: 325.

*Religious and Cultural Activities:* Regular classes on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* were held on Sundays and Saturdays respectively. The total number of such classes during the year was



96, with an average attendance of 20. Twice a week, a Burmese language class was conducted, free of any charge. A cultural study group held discussions on different educational, cultural, and religious subjects. The Society also organized 53 periodical public lectures, symposia, and seminars, and showed 15 films on cultural and educational subjects. It also organized 7 musical performances, and celebrated the birthdays of the great religious leaders of different faiths.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA KANKHAL, HARDWAR

#### REPORT FOR 1959

During the year under review, the activities of the Sevashrama were as follows:

*Indoor Hospital:* Total number of beds: 50. Total number of cases admitted: 1,584 (medical: 1,386; surgical: major: 51; minor: 147). Details of treatment: number of cases cured and discharged: 1,425; discharged otherwise: 92; died: 28; remained under treatment at the end of the year: 39.

*Outdoor Dispensary:* (i) *General Section:* Total number of patients treated: 1,00,445 (new cases: 24,747; old: 75,698).

(ii) *Surgical Section:* Total number of cases treated: 336.

(iii) *Dental Section:* Total number of cases treated: 622.

(iv) *E.N.T. Section:* Total number of patients treated: 2,048.

*Pathological Department:* Total number of specimens examined: 4,976.

*X-ray and Electrotherapy Department:* Number of cases treated: 775.

*Milk Distribution:* Powdered milk, contributed by the Indian Red Cross Society, was distributed among the poor people of the locality, as well as among the patients. The average number of daily recipients, excluding the patients: 291.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION BOYS' HOME RAHARA, WEST BENGAL

#### REPORT FOR 1958-1959

The Home is a free residential institution for poor boys between the ages of 8 and 12. It is run on the lines of the ancient *gurukula* system. It provides a homely, religious atmosphere to the students, and aims at bringing about a harmonious development of the boys' personality. The internal administration is

mostly carried on by the boys themselves. Congregational prayers, religious classes, observance of religious festivals; library and reading room, issuing of a Sunday bulletin and separate class bulletins, publication of a quarterly manuscript magazine and a yearly magazine, *Ashrama*, containing the best articles from the quarterly; a gymnasium, a swimming pool, and provision for various types of sports, N.C.C. and A.C.C. training; a children's park, excursions, film shows, music, drama, and dance are among the varied types of activities of the boys. The Home had 403 and 548 students on its rolls in the years 1958 and 1959 respectively. In addition to the activities already mentioned, the Home conducts the following institutions:

*Junior Basic School:* The school is meant for the boys of the age group 6 to 11. Total number of students on the rolls: 1958: 356; 1959: 467. Instruction is imparted through the medium of the following crafts: spinning, clay modelling, and agriculture.

*Senior Basic School:* Along with general education, the boys are given elementary training in carpentry, tailoring, toy-making, and weaving. Total number of students in 1958 and 1959: 175.

*Higher Secondary Multipurpose School:* Total number of students: 456. The science and technical sections of this school are well equipped, and there is a separate hostel attached to the school.

*Junior Technical School:* Theoretical and practical instruction is imparted in different technical subjects, such as fitting, smithy, foundry, welding, etc. Strength in 1958 and 1959: 75 students.

*Vocational School:* This school provides practical training in weaving, tailoring, toy-making, and carpentry to those students of the junior and senior basic schools who do not go for higher education. Number of students trained in 1958 and 1959: 74. There is a night school attached to this section, where instruction in general knowledge is imparted to the boys.

*Junior Basic Training College:* Strength: 100 trainees, mainly teachers of the junior basic schools. There is a hostel attached to the college.

*District Library:* Total number of books: 11,000; daily newspapers: 6; monthly magazines: 22. Average daily attendance: 130; members: 1,200. There is a separate mobile section with a van to serve 71 rural libraries registered under it. Total number of books issued by this section: 53,320. Attached to this section, there is a social adult education centre, which has at present 6 units situated in different parts of the village.