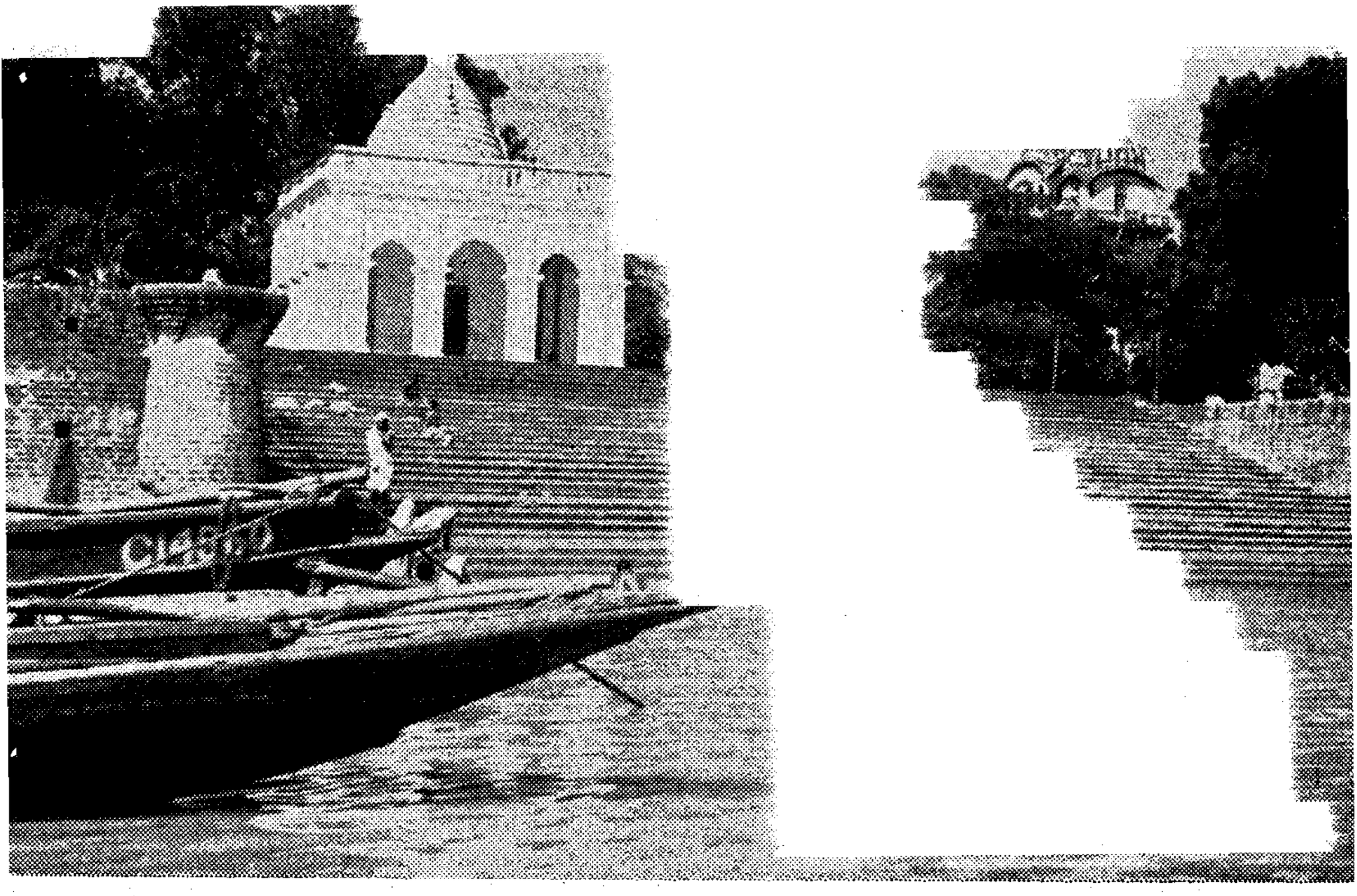

VOL. LXVI AUGUST 1961

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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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Bombay, January 30, 1927 (Continued)

Then a monk asked: 'Were you present at the Belur Math when Swamiji left his body?'

Mahapurushji: 'No, I was not then at the Math. Some ten or twelve days earlier, Swamiji had very earnestly persuaded me to go to Varanasi to start some Vedānta work there. I reached Varanasi at the end of June for that work. When Swamiji was in Varanasi for the last time, I was also with him. At that time, the Maharaja of Bhinga placed five hundred rupees at the disposal of Swamiji for starting an institution for the propagation of Vedānta at Varanasi. The Maharaja loved and respected him very much. In his old age, he had left his own princely state and come to live in Varanasi as a *vānaprastha*, where he built a house for himself. He would not stir out of his compound. When he heard of Swamiji's stay at Varanasi, he sent a messenger to him, with fruits and sweets, to invite him very respectfully to his house. He informed Swamiji through that messenger that, as he had taken a vow not to move out of his house, it would not be possible for him to pay his respects personally to Swamiji. The Maharaja's humility pleased Swamiji very much, and he said: "We are monks; why should I not go when he invites? I shall certainly go." Accepting the Maharaja's invitation, Swamiji went to his house. I, too, accompanied him. The Maharaja received him very respectfully and took him inside the house. In the course of the talk, he said: "I have been following your activities for a long time. This gives me great joy. Your ideal is very high. I think you have come down to this world like Buddha, Śaṅkara, and others to establish the path of virtue on this earth again. It is my heart's prayer that your plan should succeed fully." In order that some such activity might be started in Varanasi also, he offered to pay five hundred rupees to Swamiji, but Swamiji did not accept it at that time. He said that he would think over the matter and would do the needful in due course. Nevertheless, the Maharaja sent the amount to Swamiji after a few days and requested him to start some work in Varanasi. And Swamiji accepted the gift.

'After his return to the Math at Belur, Swamiji first asked Swami Saradananda to proceed to

Varanasi. But he would not agree. He said: "Varanasi will not suit me." So Swamiji kept on pressing me for going to Varanasi. Swamiji's health was very bad at that time. His diabetes had increased; I used to arrange for his medicines and take general care of his health. As such, I could not make up my mind to leave that task and go there. When he recovered a little, he sent me to Varanasi.'

A monk: 'About the Home of Service at Varanasi, Master Mahashay (Mahendra Nath Gupta or "M") used to say, "Just see how much of a push the Home of Service has got from the spiritual endeavour of Swami Shivananda".'

Mahapurushji: 'Oh, no, not at all. All is achieved through His will and through His grace. The Master's message will spread more and more as days roll on. That is the inevitable course that the message for this age will take. For instance, look at Bombay, where there was nothing in the beginning, and now things are proceeding apace. Much more is bound to be accomplished in due course. It is all His *līlā* (play).'

When the topic turned to the devotional music of a Parsi lady, who was a devotee, he remarked: 'It is really with great devotion that she sings the song, "*Mere to Giridhara Gopāla dūsarā na koi*" etc.' And saying this, he began to sing that song himself.

Varanasi, 1927-28

During his stay at Varanasi, Mahapurushji initiated about fifty persons—both men and women. Varanasi being the place of Śiva, Swami Brahmananda, Swami Saradananda, and other intimate disciples of the Master had refrained from giving initiation at this place. Hence, a few monks as also a few of his attendants had some doubt in their minds as to the propriety of his breaking that rule. To have this doubt removed, an attendant asked him one day: 'Maharaj, we have a question to ask. Please enlighten us on this point. We had heard that Raja Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) and others had refrained from giving initiation at Varanasi. Why did you not follow their lead?'

At this question of the attendant, he remained silent and thoughtful for a while, and then said slowly: 'Look here, my son, I never entertain the idea that I am initiating anyone. The Master, out of his mercy, never instilled the idea of a *guru* in me. Śiva is the *guru* of the whole world, and the Master is so in this age. It is he who inspires the devotees to come here, and I tell them as he prompts me from within. He is the soul of my soul.' ...

Mahapurush Maharaj lived in a corner-room on the first floor of the Advaita Ashrama. It was winter. Both the Ashramas (the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama and the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service) were full of *sādhus* and *brahmacārins*. Many of them had come there to live in the holy company of Mahapurushji. Besides, the devotees came crowding there every day, so that it looked like a festivity and an occasion to rejoice. One morning, as the inmates of both the Ashramas were saluting him and departing one by one after receiving his blessings, he said to one of the *sādhus*: 'Look here, I had a very delightful experience last night. It was dead of night, and I was in my bed, when I suddenly saw a person of white complexion with matted hair and three eyes; he came and stood before me. His divine effulgence lighted up the whole place. Aha, what a beautiful and lovely appearance he had, and how compassionate were his eyes! The very vision pressed all my spiritual energy upward, so that my whole being became soon stilled in divine absorption and full of bliss. Just then, I saw that form vanishing and the Master standing there instead, with a smiling face. Pointing to me with his hand, he said: "You have to continue in this body, for you have still something more to do." As the Master said so, the mind started coming down to the normal plane, and my body began functioning as usual. It is all his will. As for myself, I felt very happy all the time. The Master is none other than Viśvanātha (Śiva of Varanasi) himself.'

The monk: 'Did you have the vision in a dream?'

Mahapurushji: 'No, no; I was wide awake.'

Saying thus, he started talking about other matters, as though trying to stop further discussion about it.

Belur Math, March 19, 1929

Mahapurush Maharaj felt rather unwell today. Only two days back, the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna had been celebrated on a grand scale and with great *eclat*. About a hundred and fifty thousand people had gathered on the occasion. That day, from early morning and till late in the evening, innumerable people had been blessed by touching his feet or seeing him from a distance. His door was always open for the devotees. He, too, was so much full of the thoughts of the Master that he paid little attention to his own body. It was as though he were divinely inspired. He talked unceasingly with the devotees about the Master and made them all happy, giving instructions about various spiritual problems raised by them. That strain had told upon his health very much; yet, he was ever smiling and looked quite happy.

From early morning today, the *sādhus* and *brahmacārins* of the Math began to gather in his room, and started saluting him with all devotion and respect. He also made affectionate enquiries about their health. Noticing that one of the monks was wearing a rather worn out cloth, he asked his attendant to give him a new piece, and said: 'Can't you so much as keep an eye on the needs of the monks?'

As soon as an old monk came to him, he greeted him with, '*Om*, salutation to Śiva! Glory to Mother!' Soon the talk turned to Dakshineswar. The newly initiated *sannyāsins* and *brahmacārins* were to go to the Dakshineswar temple that day, where they would pass the whole day in meditation, devotional music, etc. The temple authorities had arranged for giving *prasāda* to thirty monks. On hearing all that, Mahapurushji was highly pleased and said: 'Dakshineswar is our heaven on earth; it is our Kailāsa, our Vaikuṇṭha. Is that an ordinary place? The Panchavati is a great seat of spiritual perfection, where the Master had innumerable spiritual experiences of a very high order. For twelve long years, he practised different modes of divine communion at Dakshineswar. The divine visions and spiritual realizations that he had there are without any parallel. The history of religion has no record of such intense and diversified spiritual practices and such high spiritual experiences in the life of any other incarnation. The Master used to say: "The experiences that occurred here (meaning himself) have transcended all the records anywhere." That is why Swamiji used to refer to the Master as "the greatest *avatāra*". The Master brought the dust of Vrindaban and spread it on the ground of the Panchavati. Every particle of dust in Dakshineswar is holy. Blessed by the holy feet of God Himself, Dakshineswar has become a great place of pilgrimage. It is a great place of spiritual inspiration to people of all denominations—be they non-dualists, or dualists, or Śāktas, or Vaiṣṇavas, or Śaivas, or Tāntrikas; for the Master practised all those modes of divine communion and attained perfection in them. This time, God manifested His greatest *sāttvika* aspects. It was the great Mother of the universe, the source of all creation, who expressed Herself freely and playfully, as it were, through the body of our Master. The intense spiritual *sādhanā* that the Master went through will exert its influence not only on this earth, but also in the regions higher up, even up to heaven. Ah, what a play of divine power it was!' As he spoke thus, his whole face became flushed, and he sat silent with his eyes looking down.

Just after he had sat for his lunch, Swami S— came and enquired: 'How are you today, Maharaj?'

Mahapurushji kept on looking at him vacantly for some time, and then, as if awakened from sleep, slowly said: 'You enquire about this body? The body is tottering, and nobody knows what will happen to it the next moment. Now it is your turn to take up the responsibility of doing the Master's work. It seems the Master will grant me release this time. It is all hollow inside the body; I do not feel any strength.

But he is increasing the power of the mind day by day. I now stand at the brink of *nirvāṇa*; and in front, I notice the vast abode of peace. Out of his grace, the Master has freed me from all bondages; he has cleared the way to *nirvāṇa*. Well, that is enough! The Master has shown me all; he has fulfilled all my desires. (With eyes closed) Now I have no more worries—it does not matter whether the body goes or stays.'

Swami S—: 'Maharaj, why should you talk like this? As for ourselves, it is our conviction that, for the good of the many and for the welfare of this organization, the Master will keep you for a long time yet. You are now passing through a great strain; that is why your health is affected. We are all sincerely trying to see that this strain is avoided. Innumerable people are being benefited by your mere presence; and we, too, feel secure.'

Mahapurushji: 'I know that you all love me deeply, and I, too, am very happy in the company of monks and devotees. Further, I know that the Master will get whatever possible done through this body before he releases me. Now and then I think: "Why does the Master retain this body? He must have some purpose to serve. Else, why should he make this frail body work in this manner? I have neither scholarship nor intelligence; I cannot talk or speak well, yet, he is having so much work done through this broken instrument of his."'

Swami S— wanted to change the topic, and said: 'Three persons have gone to bring down Gangadhar Maharaj (Swami Akhandananda).'

Mahapurushji: 'Yes, it will be really good if Gangadhar comes. It is delightful to see the people that belong to the Master. He does not easily move out unless he is earnestly requested to do so. Khoka (Swami Subodhananda) is also coming today. Ah, Khoka Maharaj is very much pulled down in health! Have you finished your lunch?'

Swami S—: 'No, not yet. From early morning, I have been trying to come to you, but I could not get an opportunity, for the devotees are always about you.'

Mahapurushji: 'Ah, so it is! Don't delay any further; go and have your meal.'

At this, Swami S— left the place. Then Mahapurushji closed his eyes and prayed: 'O Master, be kind to all; bring enlightenment to all.'

After lunch, an attendant helped him carefully out of his seat, for it was difficult for him to rise up with his own effort. Slowly, he sat down in his chair. In front of his room, a monk was pouring some water from an earthen pot for drinking. Noticing him, he said: 'Hallo, so you are going (for *tapasyā*) now?'

'Yes,' he replied, 'I am thinking of leaving next Thursday.'

With a deep sigh, Mahapurushji said: 'Yes, so you have to go. Well, all have to go. That is the world. We meet only for a couple of days, and then nobody knows the whereabouts of others. Only the ever blissful Mother is real; everything else is ephemeral. Creation goes on eternally like a current; there is no break in it. The eternally blissful Mother is beyond this creation—beyond speech and mind, "That, failing to reach which speech turns back together with the mind".'

THE SOLITUDE OF THE HIMALAYAS

Men are busy now conquering the heights of the towering snow ranges of the Himalayas, which so long either had defied such human endeavour or had been looked upon as too sacred to be trodden under foot. Man now delights in doing the impossible; and from that point of view, the Himalayas stand there as a challenge to be met manfully. The spiritual appeal is, of course, still there, for otherwise pilgrims would not be visiting their holy retreats from all corners of India. There is a touch of infinity in these ranges, rising tier above tier, changing

their hues from deep green and blue to pure white, and touching the very sky itself, thus weaning away the mind from all the pettinesses of the world and raising it unperceived to a region of quiet contemplation. The Himalayan ranges have their challenging majesty as well as calm inspiration. The question to be decided is not which of these two aspects is correct, but with what mental attitude we have approached them.

Fire burns every day in our homes, and even sacrificial fires are not quite rare. But no fire utters a word, much less does it give us spiritual instruction. Yet, there was a boy named Upakosala to whom the fire spoke about the highest truth, as it is revealed in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. Bulls, birds, and other creatures move about before our eyes without imparting any new idea. Yet, these common creatures spoke about Brahman Itself to Satyakāma Jābāla, as we are told in the same Upaniṣad. So also, in later days, Avadhūta got his spiritual lessons from a kite, from the jingling bangles of a maiden, and from such other common things and occurrences. The kite flew restlessly from place to place with a piece of meat in its beak, followed by a flight of crows which gave it no respite, till it dropped the piece of meat and got rid of all worries. Avadhūta learnt from this how to renounce in order to gain peace. And from the maiden's jingling bracelets, he learnt that all quarrels start from huddling together people of disparate temperaments; it is better for a monk to be alone.

Poets study Nature and derive lessons from her, each according to his predisposition. Scientists challenge Nature and make her yield her secrets. Nature has her lessons and her secrets. The common things of the world have their spiritual instruction as well as everyday utility. The Himalayas have their challenge and their inspiration. Which shall we accept, or, rather, for which are we fitted?

The mind carries with itself its own atmosphere, so that people who visit the Himalayas in search of peace cry often in despair:

'O solitude, where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?'

II

The scriptures speak of the great spiritual influence that the realized souls scintillate all around them. That is a truth that is attested to by thousands. Their spiritual aroma spreads all around, bringing peace and inspiration to all who come to them with receptive minds. But there are others who would do nothing, not even make their minds receptive, and would yet expect the saints and sages to do everything for them. Do they even look upon these great souls as centres of spiritual force, or as mere fulfillers of the diverse wishes with which the minds of ordinary people are filled up? These people will not make the slightest attempt for making up their differences with their neighbours, nor will they try to stop the vagaries of their minds. And still, they will expect their *gurus* to work wonders for them. When these expectations are not fulfilled, they complain that their *gurus* do not love them, or worse still, that the claims of spiritual personalities are hollow.

The truth is that the object may be the same, but the reactions of the observers may be very different. The same stump of a tree, seen in the night from a distance, may appear as a thief to a policeman, as a policeman to a thief, as a lover to a love-stricken maiden, or as a ghost to a man of psychic temperament. It all depends on the mental predisposition. That is a truism which people are apt to forget when treading the path of spirituality. With a pitiable and childlike dependence on others, they would have everything done for them by others, at the same time that their minds would remain preoccupied with worldly chimeras and would offer no opportunities for higher ideas to penetrate into their hard shells. The Himalayas are grand and majestic and full of peace and serenity to those who come prepared to profit by them. But to others, they may just present a beautiful passing sight to be enjoyed during a hurried motor drive, or worse still, a place full of

jungles and wild beasts and devoid of the ordinary amenities of life.

In the Himalayas live sages and common people—the sages immersed in the thought of ultimate realities, and the common people engaged in the ordinary duties of life. The Himalayas provide ample scope for both, and for many more besides. What are the Himalayas in themselves then? They are what *we* make of them.

III

This brings us to an important aspect of human life—too much dependence on others in matters spiritual. It is not quite uncommon to find even intellectual giants running hither and thither in search of '*mahātmās*', stripping themselves for the time being of all intelligence, as it were. And God alone knows what benefit they derive from such emotional quest or unenlightened mystic search. Very often, they befool themselves; and even when they become aware of this, they shut their eyes to the truth for fear of being derided by others, or of losing the little public estimation for virtuousness that they might have gained.

Common sense is really a rare commodity. All saints and sages have declared that God-realization is a far cry without a strong moral background; also, there should be a real thirst for a higher life, combined with a disgust for worldliness. But people would ignore all that and wish to make a short cut to God-realization through the favour of saints and sages or the Himalayan quietude, like some Mary Magdelene, or Jagāi-Mādhāi, or Vālmīki. Foolhardiness can go no further; for all cannot have saviours like Jesus Christ, or Śrī Caitanya, or Nārada. Vyāsa and Nara-Nārāyaṇa could profit by the solitude of the Himalayas. But can all do so?

Talking of unprepared minds, whose spiritual ambition far outruns their competence, Sri Ramakrishna used to cite the illustration of somebody trying to bring a little quantity of milk mixed with water, three times its own measure, by boiling it over a fire lighted up with wet fuel. Much energy could be saved and put to better purpose if people would only follow the adage: 'Take care of the means, and the end will take care of itself.' Or, as Pavhari Baba, quoted by Swami Vivekananda, put it: '*yan sādhan, tan siddhi.*'

Saints and sages there are, and they are ever ready to help aspiring souls. But have we the vision to recognize them or the strength to actualize in life what they ask us to do? Without this vision and this strength, it is foolishness to run after persons who appear to our blurred vision to be possessed of mystic powers. Much better it is to learn from people who sincerely try to follow the spiritual path all their lives and stick to it, despite all hindrances and failures. In the wide arena of national development, for instance, a less advanced country like Nigeria looks to India for emulation, rather than to America or Russia. That is the reasonable process of progress.

And why should we all run to the Himalayas for spiritual advance? The Himalayas are holy and inspiring. None can doubt that. So also are the other great places of pilgrimage, as thousands and millions would testify. But for ordinary people, who have in any case to spend their lives in the wonted home atmosphere, it is not absolutely necessary to deny all the responsibilities of life and run after a chimera, for unless the mind is ready, a spiritual quest may well lead to a tragedy. One can create the atmosphere of the Himalayas even in the midst of a busy life. Else, how could Śrī Kṛṣṇa utter the *Gītā* in the battle-field of Kurukṣetra, and how could Arjuna profit by it? How, again, could Janaka realize God even when wielding the sceptre?

Spiritual aspirants suffer from many mental drawbacks. First, they depend too much on outside help, rather than on their own minds. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that, to a true aspirant, his own mind gradually becomes his *guru*.

Secondly, they are apt to hanker after the mystical, rather than the rational. Sri Ramakrishna used to taunt such people by saying,

'If you would be a devotee, why should you be a fool?' Reason and religion are not so disparate as ordinary people think. Rather, at the initial stages, one must be careful about every step that one takes.

Thirdly, one's moral character must be carefully built up. In the higher stages of life, when morality becomes one's second nature, one may even appear to be negligent about this; but for a beginner, it is essential to be moral in everything that he does. One can even question one's *guru*, if he is suspected of something immoral. Inhibitions are necessary for a beginner, though they may be discarded when he rises higher up. As Sri Ramakrishna put it: 'A sapling has to be hedged in; but an elephant can be tied to its trunk when it grows up.'

Fourthly, personal endeavour is indispensable in spiritual life. Others can show the way, but one has to walk the distance oneself. One can take a horse to a stream, but one cannot make it drink. *Gurus* will guide, and the solitude of the Himalayas will be useful, only when the mind has reached the required state of receptivity and energetic dash. Practice leads to perfection. So often did Swami Brahmananda say: 'Do something; and then, if you don't get any result, come and slap me on the cheek.' Incessant struggle is the price of success even in secular pursuits. This is much more true in the case of spiritual life.

MĀYĀ AND AVIDYĀ IN THE POST-ŚAṄKARA VEDĀNTA—2

By Professor Surendranath Bhattacharya

(Continued from previous issue)

PRAMĀṆAS IN SUPPORT OF THE THEORY OF MĀYĀ AND AVIDYĀ

The phenomenal existence of *māyā* is directly *perceived*, when one says 'I am ignorant', 'I do not know myself', etc. It also forms an object of special perception, when one says 'I do not know what you say'. Again, when one is in deep sleep, one must be supposed to have been conscious of the presence of *avidyā*; otherwise, on waking, one could not have remembered and declared: 'So long, I slept peacefully and *knew not anything*.' In all these expressions, it cannot be said that it is the mere 'want of knowledge' that forms the object of perception, for the absence of a thing can never be apprehended by means of perception. To have the knowledge of the negation of knowledge (*jñānābhāva*) presupposes knowledge. Had we no knowledge of negation or want of knowledge, how can we say that we have want of knowledge? Therefore, *avidyā* cannot be mere negation of knowledge. It is something other than negation (*bhāvarūpa*).[12] Madhusūdana Sarasvatī has ably met all possible objections raised by Vyāsa Tīrtha (the greatest and ablest critic of Advaita) against the view that *avidyā* as something existent (*bhāvarūpa*) is apprehended by perception.[13] He further supports the Vivaraṇakāra, who would prove the existence of *avidyā* by inference (*anumāna*). The flame of a lamp, as soon as it is lighted, removes darkness. The following points have to be noted in this case: (i) Darkness is not mere absence of light; on the other hand, it is *something* other than light. (ii) It is the veil that covers

[12] *Abhāva* (negation) is known by means of *anupalabdhi*. See *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, chapter on *Anupalabdhi*.

[13] See *Advaitasiddhi*, chapter I.

the object to be illumined by light. (iii) It is removable by light. (iv) Its locus is the same as that of the object. (v) Had there been no darkness, light would never disclose the object. Similarly, we must say that the very possibility of *jñāna* (knowledge) presupposes something other than itself possessing all the characteristics of darkness. Various other inferences also may be cited in support of the theory of *avidyā*.[14]

The most cogent proof of the existence of *avidyā* is *arthāpatti*. *Arthāpatti* is the supposition (or conception) of the premise, reason, or cause from the conclusion, consequence, or effect. It is, according to Nyāya, inference through negative mark or middle term, which, however, according to Vedānta, is not inference at all, inasmuch as inference is possible only on positive instances or facts (the negative instances may elucidate the positive instances and enable us to *conceive* the major premise a bit more clearly).[15] The Advaitins take *jīva* to be the same as Brahman. Brahman is Bliss absolute, but Bliss absolute is not manifest in *jīva*. Except for the intervention of *avidyā*, this could not have happened.

Again, an illusion must have some *upādāna*. The *antaḥkaraṇa* (mind) cannot be the *upādāna*, for, being aided by the process of knowing, it produces valid knowledge no doubt; but to account for wrong knowledge, mind, together with its available aids, is not enough. Moreover, the mind itself is a product; as such, it cannot be the *upādāna* of the beginningless series of the world illusion. Brahman, too, being immutable, cannot be the *upādāna*. Nor can the Sāṅkhya *pradhāna* composed of the three *guṇas* be held to be the *upādāna*. This *pradhāna* is claimed to be a reality. It must therefore be either *sāvayava* (with parts) or *niravayava* (without parts). If it consists of parts, it must be a product; if, on the other hand, it is said to have no parts, it cannot undergo any transformation, just as Brahman. (It may be remembered that *avidyā* is after all an *assumption*, and therefore the objections against *pradhāna* do not apply to it.) Hence to account for phenomena (which, on examination, are found to possess the selfsame characteristics of an ordinary illusion *in toto*), *avidyā* must be assumed.

ŚRUTI IN SUPPORT OF AVIDYĀ

It has already been pointed out in the beginning that there are a number of Śruti texts which unmistakably anticipate the theory of *māyā* and *avidyā*, so enthusiastically worked out by the Advaitins. Here, I examine a few texts out of which the anti-Advaitins have sought to establish their arguments.

(1) In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VIII.3.2, the text evidently means that just as people, untrained in the science of mineralogy, may constantly walk over the land where precious metals are hidden and yet remain ignorant of their existence, similarly, men know not Brahman, although so close to them, for they are enveloped in *anṛta*. Every impartial judge will agree that the word '*anṛta*' in the text undoubtedly means *ajñāna* or *avidyā*. But Rāmānuja (and men of his line of thinking) finds it damaging to his pet theory and gives an arbitrary interpretation to it. He takes the word '*anṛta*' to mean 'bad deed' (*adharma*). No doubt, the word '*ṛta*' is sometimes used in Śruti and in Smṛti to mean 'good work' (*dharma*); but that is no guarantee that the word '*anṛta*' must necessarily mean 'bad deed' in the present context as well. In fact, to take *anṛta* in the sense of 'bad deed' here would be wholly inconsistent and absurd. The latter part of the text describes Ātman as ever free from sin. How can, then, the same Ātman be said to be merged in 'bad deed' (*adharma*, *pāpa*, sin)? The text, refers to deep sleep (*suṣupti*), when all works—good and bad—remain suspended due, it must be said, to *ajñāna-bīja* (seed of *ajñāna*). Nor can *karma* (work) —good or bad—serve as a veil (*āvaraṇa*). *Anṛta* here is said to be the obstacle which stands in the way of realizing Brahman. It can

[14] See *Advaitasiddhi* (N.S.Ed.), pp. 562-69.
[15] See *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, chapter on *Arthāpatti*.

only mean *ajñāna*, as is understood by the Advaitins; neither *karma*, nor even *pradhāna*, as neither is removable by *jñāna*.

(2) In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, I.10, the word '*nivṛtti*' (cessation) indicates that *māyā* cannot be anything other than *ajñāna*, for it is dispelled by knowledge. Moreover, if it were a reality, it could not have been spoken of as being destroyed by *jñāna*. *Jñāna* can never destroy a reality.

Again, when the Śruti speaks of the existence of '*tamas*' (darkness)[16] in the beginning, it must not be understood in the sense of a reality, for the very same text speaks of it neither as a *pāramārthika* reality (*na sat*) nor as a *prātibhāsika* reality (*na asat*).[17] It is therefore a *vyāvahārika* reality, and exactly in this sense the Advaitins take *māyā*.

A very common objection against taking *māyā* in the sense of *avidyā* is that, in that case, the Lord, the Māyin (the possessor of *māyā*), would be devoid of knowledge, whereas He is everywhere described as Sarvajña (all-knowing), faultless, etc. But the objection is more apparent than real. *Māyā* is only an *upādhi* (condition) of Īśvara; and it is the nature of an *upādhi* that it in no way affects the thing it conditions or limits, e.g. earthen vessel and ether. Moreover, according to the Advaitins, the concepts of omniscience etc., too, spring up only in the wake of the concept of *māyā* itself.

Although sometimes the root '*māyā*' means '*to know*', yet to take *māyā* in the sense of knowledge and not *ajñāna* (ignorance) would be too much in the face of such texts as '*Māyā cāvidyā ca svayameva bhavati*'[18] (which makes no distinction between *māyā* and *avidyā*). The Nighaṇṭukāra, no doubt, gives *māyā* as a synonym of *prajñā*;[19] but *prajñā* is *vṛttijñāna* (empirical knowledge), which is nothing but a modification of *ajñāna*.

It is admitted by the Advaitins that the nature of *avidyā* (either as a real or as a non-real) cannot be proved by any means of knowledge, and hence they characterize it by the word '*anirvacanīya*' (inexplicable). Yet, when they adduce proofs (such as *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, *arthāpatti*, and *śabda*) in order to show that there is something like *avidyā*, it is to be clearly understood that they do so not to *prove* and *establish* the reality of *avidyā*, like that of Brahman, but just to show that it is not an absolute non-entity (*a-sat*) either, like the hare's horn. Therein lies the utility of the *pramāṇas*, which never seek to establish *avidyā* as a reality.

APPREHENSION OF AVIDYĀ

Avidyā is cognized by the *sākṣin*[20] and not by the pure *cit* (*śuddha caitanya*). Hence the objection that *avidyā*, being the object of *cit* and depending upon *cit* for its existence, should have the same reality (*pāramārthikasattā*) as Brahman, and that, as such, it should persist even when *mokṣa* (salvation) is attained, does not stand. Although *avidyā* synchronizes with the *sākṣin*, and although *avidyā* has no-existence apart from its own apprehension by the *sākṣin*, yet it cannot be said that *avidyā* has got the same reality as the pure *cit* has. *Avidyā* appears in other states of consciousness and also disappears in *samādhi*, without affecting the pure *cit* at any time. Hence it has been said that just as a piece of cloud veils up the sun, and is at the same time illumined by it, similarly is *avidyā* witnessed by the *sākṣin* whom it covers.[21]

LOCUS (ĀŚRAYA) AND OBJECT (VIṢAYA) OF MĀYĀ AND AVIDYĀ

There are two views prevalent among the Advaitins regarding the locus and the object of *avidyā*. Vācaspati Miśra says that the enlightened maintain that *avidyā* has *jīva* for its locus and Brahman for its object. It is a matter of common experience that the locus

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[16] *Rg-Veda*, X.129.3.
[17] *Ibid.*, X.129.2.
[18] *Nṛsiṁhatāpinī Upaniṣad*, *Uttaratāpinī*, IX.
[19] *Nighaṇṭu*, III.9.

[20] *Sākṣin* is the *cit* reflected in the mode of *avidyā* (*avidyāvṛtti*).
[21] See *Advaitasiddhi* (N.S.Ed.), pp. 575-76.

and the object of ignorance are different. When we say 'A does not know B', it is evident that the locus of this ignorance is A, while its object is B. But there is another class of Advaitins, led by Sarvajñātma Muni, who maintain that Brahman is both the locus and the object of *avidyā*. The author of the *Vārttika* remarks that there is no inviolable rule that the locus and the object of ignorance must always be different. Darkness is found to cover that very thing on which it rests. Now, *avidyā* is frequently described as *tamas* in Śruti. In ordinary language, too, the word '*tamas*' is used in the sense of that which covers light. So *avidyā*, being practically the same as *tamas*, has also to be admitted as having one entity only both as its locus and as its object.[22] It may be noted in passing that the attempt at distinguishing between *jīva* and Brahman on the criterion of the one being the locus and the other the object of *avidyā* is futile. For, just as the distinction between *jīva* and Brahman depends upon their being the locus and the object, the fact of their being the locus and the object also depends upon their distinction. Consequently, neither proves the other.

Again, to call *jīva* as the locus of *avidyā* would be subject to the serious charge of mutual dependence (*anyonyāśraya*). Jīvahood, being an effect of *avidyā*, cannot be its locus. So the locus of *avidyā* is none but the pure *cit* itself. Now, it may be asked: If the locus and the object of *avidyā* be the selfsame pure *cit*, what would be the criterion of distinction between *jīva* and Īśvara? The answer is simple: From the *pāramārthika* standpoint, no such distinction is admitted; but even from the empirical point of view, there would be no incongruity in accepting the selfsame pure *cit* as both the locus and the object of *avidyā*. For, just as the distinction between *āśraya* (locus) and *viṣaya* (object) is empirical, and is due to *avidyā*, so would be the distinction between *jīva* and Īśvara. From the empirical point of view, the selfsame pure *cit* would once be called *jīva* in its aspect of being the locus of *avidyā*, and, again, Īśvara in its aspect of being the object of *avidyā*. Just as the reflection of the sun in water has no existence independent of the sun, so the so-called *jīva*, too, has no independent existence. And to institute a distinction between *jīva* and Īśvara on the ground of *āśrayatva* and *viṣayatva* is arbitrary and meaningless. The apparent defects and drawbacks in *jīva* (who is not really different from Īśvara) may be explained just like the trembling, haziness, etc. of the reflection of the sun. So, to explain the apparent distinction between *jīva* and Īśvara, it is not necessary to assume two different entities as the locus and the object of *avidyā*.

Although *avidyā* rests in pure Brahman, yet in no way does it affect Brahman. The analogy of a reflection in a mirror aptly illustrates this. If a mirror is held before the face, the face appears in a reverse order, but the face in itself is not certainly reversed like the face in the mirror. Similarly, when seen through the perspective of *avidyā*, Brahman appears as *jīva* with all his imperfections, but It ever remains the same.

An objection is commonly raised against taking Brahman as the locus of *avidyā*, viz. that just as darkness can never be conceived as abiding in light, so also *avidyā* cannot be said to rest in Brahman, for Brahman is enlightenment absolute. Two contradictory things cannot occupy the same locus. The objection is thus met by Madhusūdana: *Ajñāna* is surely opposed to *jñāna* (knowledge), and, as such, the two cannot stand together; but the *jñāna* that destroys *ajñāna* is not pure *cit* (*cit* in itself), but its reflection in *vṛtti* (a particular mode of the *antaḥkaraṇa* in which *cit* reflects). It is the reflected *cit* that stands in opposition to *ajñāna*, and it is not the locus of *avidyā*. Just as ignorance about an object is destroyed by the *vṛttijñāna* of that object (and not by the ever existing pure Intelligence), similarly, the *avidyā* or *ajñāna* about pure *cit* is destructible by the *vṛttijñāna* of that pure *cit*.

[22] See also *Siddhāntamuktāvalī*, VI.

Pure *cit*, by itself, never stands in need of destroying *avidyā*, for, from its own point of view, it is ever shining in its own glory. If it is assumed that *avidyā* remains in pure *cit*, then also its purity is never affected by the presence of *avidyā*, because *avidyā* is ephemeral, and its connection is also the same. It is this pure *cit* that is held to be the locus of *avidyā*. And this is quite possible, as there is no antagonism between pure *cit* and *avidyā*.

Now, it may be argued that in our experience we find that, when there is no essential antagonism between two things, we take the two things as of the same nature, as in the case of an earthen pot and a piece of cloth (both being material), or an earthen pot and *avidyā* (both being insentient). These pairs have no real opposition between each other, and, consequently, they are of the same nature. So, when it is maintained that there is no opposition between pure *cit* and *avidyā*, they, according to the previous logic, must be of the same nature, i.e. both are either *jaḍa* (insentient) or *caitanya* (intelligent). Such plausible argument, however, is not tenable; for, although pure *cit* is not by itself in opposition to *ajñāna*, yet when it is conditioned by a *vṛtti*, it does certainly stand in opposition to *ajñāna*. The sun by itself does not burn (although it illumines) a piece of straw, but at the intervention of a lens, the sun burns down the straw. Similarly, the *cit* conditioned by *vṛtti* destroys *ajñāna*.

The experience '*ahamajñaḥ*' (I am ignorant) may seem to indicate that the *aham* (ego, *jīva*) is the locus of *ajñāna*. But the consciousness of *aham* is an after-effect of *ajñāna* itself; in other words, *ahaṅkāra* stands on *ajñāna*, and therefore cannot be its locus. The experience '*ahamajñaḥ*' is to be explained thus: Like the expressions 'The iron rod burns' (where actually the fire burns), 'I am fat' (where actually the body is fat), etc., the expression '*ahamajñaḥ*' is due to the *adhyāsa* (superimposition) of *ahaṅkāra* (egoism) upon *cit*.

The objection that the Ātman, being essentially of the nature of *jñāna*, cannot be supposed to be either the locus or the object of *ajñāna* is cleverly answered by the Vivaraṇakāra. The simple fact that the Ātman forms the subject-matter of such expressions as 'It is not', 'It shines not', etc. amply proves that there is a veil by virtue of which the essential nature of the Ātman becomes subject to such behaviour.[23]

Again, the objection that, if Brahman were the object of *avidyā*, how could It shine—for a pot involved in darkness is never visible—is thus sought to be answered.[24] Brahman is Sat-cit-ānanda. When Brahman is said to be the object of *avidyā*, It is so only in Its character of absolute Being (*sat*) and Bliss (*ānanda*). Brahman in Its character of pure Knowledge (*cit*) cannot be so, for in that case there would be none even to witness *avidyā*. Although from the standpoint of absolute truth the three characteristics of *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda* are only mutually complementary or explanatory,[25] yet a differentiation is assumed in so far as Brahman is understood through the perspective of *avidyā*, and it is said that this *part* of Brahman is involved in *avidyā* and not that *part*. In fact, the whole of Brahman is ever shining forth, as has been shown in *Pañcadaśī*, I.8.

The chief objection against taking *jīva* as the locus of *avidyā* (the view of Vācaspati Miśra) is the fallacy of mutual dependence (*anyonyāśraya*).[26] But Madhusūdana Sarasvatī holds that even *jīva* may be accepted as the locus, and argues thus: *Anyonyāśraya* may arise with regard to production, knowledge, or existence of *jīva* and *avidyā*. But both *jīva* and *avidyā* are beginningless (*anādi*); so the question of one producing the other does not arise. Again, although *ajñāna* is revealed by *cit*, yet the latter, being self-revealed, requires no illumination from *ajñāna*. So there is no question of *anyonyāśraya* so far as the *prakāśa* (knowledge) of *jīva* and *avidyā* is concerned. Moreover, *ajñāna* depends upon *cit* for its own existence,

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[23] *Pañcapādikāvivaraṇa* (C.S.S.No.1), pp. 112-14.
[24] See *Siddhāntamuktāvalī*, IV.
[25] See Śaṅkara's commentary on *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, *Brahmavallī*.
[26] *Jīva* is either (i) the reflection of *cit* on *avidyā*, or (ii) *cit* as limited or conditioned by *avidyā*, or (iii) a duplicate of *cit* projected by *avidyā*.

but *cit*, on the contrary, does not depend upon *ajñāna*. This need not necessarily mean that *jīva* and *ajñāna* are two mutually exclusive and independent entities. So, they may depend on one another, and will not entail the fallacy of *anyonyāśraya*, just as a pot and the space it occupies are mutually dependent and coeval.

It should be noted that, according to Vācaspati Miśra, a distinction is *tentatively* made between *jīva* and Brahman to explain bondage and liberation. Further, *jīvas* are said to be many; otherwise, bondage and liberation cannot be explained. Thus, if there were only one *jīva*, his liberation would mean the liberation of all. Consequently, it has to be said that up till today not a single soul has been released.[27] Again, *avidyā* is also said to be as many as there are *jīvas*, for, had it been one, its destruction in one single *jīva* would put a stop to the entire empirical world.[28]

[27] This extreme view is, however, held by some. See *Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha*, chapter IV; *Siddhāntamuktāvalī*, VII.

[28] See *Siddhāntamuktāvalī*, IV.

ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA: THE MYTH, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION

By Swami Nityabodhananda

'Śrī Kṛṣṇa, flute in hand, blue like a new cloud, clad in yellow, with his lips red like the *bimba* fruit, with his face radiant like that of a full moon, with his eyes like the petals of a lotus—I do not know any truth other than that Kṛṣṇa.'

This is the concluding verse of a great philosophical commentary on the *Gītā* by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, a follower of the non-dualistic school. The author, after a tough metaphysical exposition of his position, concludes by saying that he knows no reality other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has a flute in hand, and is clad in yellow.

How is the author justified in ending a philosophical dissertation by chanting the glory of a personal God? The answer is that Kṛṣṇa here is conceived not as a personal God, nor even as the absolute of philosophy, but much more than the two—as the spiritual reality, as the myth[1] that transcends both religion and philosophy, and which bridges the gulf between philosophy and religion. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the myth, is above the personal and the impersonal. When we stand before the spiritual reality, the myth, there is an upsurge of the spiritual in us. We are also transformed into myth. We are totally consumed by wonder and awe; and we have no words to express it, no feelings to manifest that plenitude. Later on, this spiritual plenitude evoked by myth solidifies into formulations of philosophy and religion.

Thus, myth is our first resonance before a higher reality, the first step to becoming that reality before which we stand. If that reality is spiritual, the result is a spiritual myth; if that reality is simply of the imaginative order, an ordinary myth is the result. A spiritual myth is one that solves the spiritual anguish of man. As it gives an answer to the spiritual problem of man, it sinks into his subconscious and becomes eternal. The myth of Durgā, the divine Mother, solves the problem of fear, and the myth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa solves the problem of attachment by showing the transcending quality of love. The myths of Hercules and Bacchus excite our imagination, no doubt. They do not bring 'religious' tears in our eyes; they do not give

[1] The word 'myth' is of Greek origin. So, the meaning that a Greek philosopher gives to it is the best acceptable. Plato means by 'myth' a form of expression to which one turns when the resources of the intellect have been exhausted and yet one has something of immense importance and significance which one must express somehow.

us a spiritual certitude, whereas the myths of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa do.

In the case of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, evidently he is not evoking the personal God of religion at the end of a tough metaphysical treatise. He is evoking the source of both religion and philosophy, the myth which, in the present context, is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the perfection of beauty, intelligence, and spiritual grandeur.

HISTORICITY OF KṚṢṆA

There is a general consensus of opinion among modern scholars in favour of the historicity of Kṛṣṇa. To some of us, it may be disappointing to be told that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a historical personality. This disappointment is caused by the fact that we view history and myth as two things opposed to each other. If we can view history with a suppleness of vision, if we can view history as eternity unfolding itself in and through time, then this opposition between history and myth will drop. Dates of history are not an enemy to eternity, even as the watch which keeps time is not an enemy of the sun. The sun neither rises nor sets; it is eternal. The watch which keeps correct time interprets this eternity to us and makes it possible for us to use it to our advantage. It was Nicolas Berdyaev who gave a new meaning to history by saying that history is 'walking Christ'. Evidently, he is not referring to the historical Christ here, but to the mythical or a-historical Christ. The Transcendental or Immobile whom we call Christ, when He moves and walks, creates time and history. He leaves behind a trail of values worthy to be imitated by men, a path to be followed. If history can expand itself into myth, myth can also consent to history and accommodate it. Hence the opposition is not real.

In the personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as we have it today, the opposition between myth and history is resolved. To the historical personality, the Hindu genius and tradition have added such fabulous and legendary ornaments that, for a Hindu, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is nothing if not mythical. But historians must do their work, their research, to separate the historical elements from the mythical elements. The volumes published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, under the editorial direction of Dr. R. C. Majumdar, contain researches that support and analyse the historicity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The volume on *The Vedic Age*, which treats of prehistoric India, places the Mahābhārata war, in which Śrī Kṛṣṇa fought as the charioteer of Arjuna, between 1500 and 1000 B.C. It was on this battle-field that Śrī Kṛṣṇa taught the *Bhagavad-Gītā* to Arjuna. One can visit the battle-field of Kurukṣetra, about a hundred miles from New Delhi, where this war was fought; and one is shown the spot where approximately the *Gītā* must have been delivered. On the spot stands today a big house named 'Gītā Mandir', where all the existing editions of the *Gītā* are collected in a library.

THE LANDMARKS IN KṚṢṆA'S LIFE

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was born in a prison-cell at Mathurā, but immediately after birth, was removed to Gokula, on the other side of the Yamunā, to escape the murderous hands of the ruling king, Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa's uncle. Kaṁsa was a tyrant, and had usurped the throne from his father. Kaṁsa had already killed seven children of his cousin, Devakī, Kṛṣṇa's mother, relying on a prediction that her eighth child was destined to be his slayer. As a child, Kṛṣṇa showed extraordinary gifts and passed through many adventures, which no man could have ever achieved. Kṛṣṇa's killing of ferocious demons who came in the form of enormous serpents and dragons, his subjugating the pernicious king of snakes, Kāliya, his going into the depths of the ocean to save his father who was drowned—all these tempt us to compare his adventures with the exploits of Hercules. But the young Kṛṣṇa was not only precocious in physical might, but also in his intellectual and spiritual stature. As a boy, he was the cynosure of those of his age. He was the home of physical beauty and charm, incarnation of kindness and affection, but at the same time, intolerant of injustice, hypocrisy, and conceit. He was unconventional in his views,

and set himself to the task of destroying all hollow customs, sycophancy, conceit, and pride in religious practice, so that people could open themselves to the spiritual content of their tradition. He was a spiritual revolutionary; and as a boy, he showed promise of a teacher and prophet much in advance of his times—an aspect that is clearly marked in him as the teacher of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

There is a very significant story that describes the boy-revolutionary that he was. One day, as usual, Kṛṣṇa was in the forest with the cows—for Kṛṣṇa was brought up by cowherd-parents—and with his friends, the cowherds. His friends told him that they had forgotten to bring the food for the midday. Kṛṣṇa told them that in the vicinity some Brāhmaṇas were performing a big worship or *yajña* (sacrifice) for the gods, and asked his friends to mention his name to those Brāhmaṇas and ask for food. They went and mentioned his name and asked for food. But the Brāhmaṇas drove the boys away, saying that they had nothing to do with the Kṛṣṇa they were speaking of. Then Kṛṣṇa asked the boys to go behind the sacrificial gathering and ask the women, mentioning his name. As soon as the women heard that Kṛṣṇa was in the vicinity, they rushed to him taking large quantities of delicious food. Kṛṣṇa then appeared before the Brāhmaṇas who had refused to give food and chastised them, saying that it was a pity that they were worshipping a god in the heavens, while they lacked the sense of charity to the boys whom they drove away. He asked: 'How can you hope to please God, when you lack love to the beings around you? Your wives have better intuition and kindness than you; for they offered me and my friends food, which you refused.'

For his education, Śrī Kṛṣṇa went with his brother to Sāndīpani, a resident-scholar of Avantipura (modern Ujjain), and became proficient in various branches of learning.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears for the first time in the *Mahābhārata* epic at the marriage of the Pāṇḍavas to Draupadī, who was his distant niece. He was the friend, philosopher, and guide to the Pāṇḍavas, who were his great devotees. In all moments of distress and calamity, it was Śrī Kṛṣṇa who saved the Pāṇḍavas. When the two royal families, the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, were about to fight, Kṛṣṇa played the role of a peacemaker, but all his efforts at reconciliation proved futile. In the Bhārata war, he offered his personal help to the Pāṇḍavas, who knew his spiritual greatness and sought it, while he offered his army to the Kauravas, who were blind to the spiritual grandeur of Kṛṣṇa. They thought that Kṛṣṇa's army was more powerful than his person, whereas the Pāṇḍavas, spiritual in their outlook, preferred him in person. He wins who chooses the Lord, and not he who chooses His material strength. Indeed, the Pāṇḍavas, who chose Kṛṣṇa in person, emerged victorious in the great war, and this was mainly due to the important part played by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Owing to recurring invasions, the Yādava dynasty, to which Kṛṣṇa belonged, had to migrate to the west of India, to Dvārakā. After the war was over, and after the Pāṇḍavas were installed on the throne, Śrī Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā. Towards the close of Kṛṣṇa's life, there was a fratricidal struggle among the members of his clan, in which practically all the males were destroyed. After entrusting Arjuna with the affairs of his kingdom, Kṛṣṇa retired into the forest, as was the custom, for completely dedicating himself to meditation. His life came to an end when, in deep meditation, he was hit by the arrow of a hunter who mistook him for a deer. Thus passed away one of the greatest figures of ancient India. All things human pass, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa was not human. He was God in human form. His ideal life has left an indelible impress on Indian thought, culture, and history. His personality has become the subject of poets, painters, and artists for centuries. His philosophy has touched and transformed generation after generation to this day. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has become part and parcel of the Hindu culture.

KṚṢṆA: THE EMBODIMENT OF INDIA'S SPIRITUAL CULTURE

Every civilization at a certain stage in its development conceives and projects through its mythology a person of force. Greek mythology threw up Hercules, and Sumerian myth Gilgamesh, both men of fabulous physical force. No doubt, Greek mythology had its spiritual heroes, too. India had Śrī Kṛṣṇa. For India, physical force had only the minimum value. Real force is spiritual strength—strength to hold one's own in the midst of a thousand temptations, strength to maintain one's faith in spiritual values in the face of chagrin and distress. This strength was Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The sacred books call him Yogeśvara, a *yogin* of *yogins*, to indicate that he was supreme among men of spirituality. All the great sages and the most immaculate saints of his time pay him divine honours; they consider him the most perfect among the spiritual men of the age; and with one voice, they acclaim him as divinity manifest on earth. The sacred books of the Hindus do not use this term 'Yogeśvara' for any other incarnation except Śrī Kṛṣṇa. And in what context do they use it to qualify him? In a context where he is depicted as surrounded by the most powerful temptations to which man is susceptible. Given the choice of political power, he did not accept it; surrounded by the charms of flesh, he elevated his *entourage* from the physical plane to the spiritual plane. A culture can be judged by the ideal man it projects in and through its mythology. If a culture projects a strong man, a hero of physical strength, or a political hero, then that is the idol of its subconscious. If it projects a spiritual hero, then that is the eternal dream of its subconscious. India's subconscious adored beauty, strength, and, above all, spirituality; so it projected it in Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Sri Ramakrishna's words are significant. When somebody asked him whether he thought Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be historic, he replied that whether Kṛṣṇa was historic or not did not interest him much. That a race could conceive such a personality was enough to give him the certitude that such a high level of perfection is possible on this earth and for that race.

KṚṢṆA, THE MYTH

Let us now consider the personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and its mythical character. It would seem that a myth calls upon us to believe in something impossible to believe. It is not so. A myth does not give time for our believing faculty, for our mind and intellect, to function. All our faculties are absorbed in astonishment and wonder, and we gaze with open eyes at the myth. At that moment, the myth is born in us. The combination of beauty, charm, personal magnetism, wisdom, sovereignty, and spirituality that is Śrī Kṛṣṇa—a combination that is not of this earth, that is Divine—keeps us gazing at his personality utterly lost and completely open to his spiritual influence. To the beautiful *gopīs*, he was Cupid; to Cupid, he was Cupid of Cupid; to the saints and sages, he was the *yogin* of *yogins*; to the kings, he was the king of kings; to the wicked, he was death; to the young folk, he was their playmate. When our wonderment calms down, we feel that a spiritual nucleus is already formed in us, and we begin to love and adore that being who gave us that exaltation, that rich experience. We begin to love him. This is the second stage—first wonder and then love. Kṛṣṇa is a personality that reinforces that love and sustains it.

The word 'Kṛṣṇa' comes from '*kṛṣ*', meaning to attract, attract by love. He accepted love of all types, physical as well as spiritual, even love in the form of jealousy and hatred, and transformed them. He was love in the form of felicity, *ānanda*. He was like fire. Anything that falls into fire takes the form of fire. Anybody that entered into contact with him—whatsoever be the nature of that contact—got transformed into his nature, namely *ānanda*. Kṛṣṇa loved those who hated him. When he had to kill the demons, he destroyed in them their demoniac nature and then annexed them to himself, to immortality. To beings in distress, to women in the captivity of a tyrant, Kṛṣṇa came as the timely saviour. His life was

a series of such tense occasions, when he came to the rescue of the righteous under the tyranny of the wicked. He himself set out his task in his gospel, the *Gītā*: 'I come whenever the righteous are menaced, whenever true religion declines, so that the voice of the spirit may be heard.' How can we resist our hearts going out in total love to that being whose nature was felicity and whose only language was love?

From love is born faith. To love him is to have faith, even as to love God is to create in us a nucleus of faith. By faith here is not meant a mere religious or blind faith, but an openness and relaxation of will, which forms a new personality. Those who entered into relationship with him, attracted by his physical beauty, did not remain where they began. They began loving the man in him, but they ended by loving the god in him. And this was achieved unconsciously, for all transcendence is unconscious. Look at the *gopīs*—his lifelong admirers and devotees. Towards the end of their association with him, they said: 'Today, we see you not as the child of Vasudeva, but as the indwelling spirit of all that exists and lives.' This spiritual certitude, this realization, is the result of loving Kṛṣṇa. It is this certitude that is meant by faith, faith in the capacity of Kṛṣṇa to take us to the heights of spiritual experience.

So, then, the Kṛṣṇa-myth goes forward in three stages: wonderment, love, and faith. Kṛṣṇa gives us the plan or design for all myths, which has a spiritual purpose. First, it awakens in us an all-out admiration, in which moment is sown in us the spiritual seed. This seed develops into love, and then into faith that transforms the whole personality. Evidently, we are here referring to spiritual myths that contain in them all the transforming power of spiritual discipline. We find that this is also the plan of any intellectual, emotional, or artistic development in us. First we admire, then love, and then come to recreate that reality in us, which is the stage of faith.

THE MYTH, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION

Whereas the sentiment of admirability solidifies as philosophy, love and faith concretize themselves as religion. In the West, philosophy is love of wisdom, search for the real; in the East, especially in India, it is the immediate perception of the spiritual reality. In both cases, whether it is an intellectual search for, or a direct perception of, reality, the first condition is a spiritual openness to reality, which is generally called wonderment, or, more correctly, admirability. The Kṛṣṇa-myth furnishes this first condition for philosophical inquiry, namely, admirability. The Kṛṣṇa-myth maintains this mood of wonderment by feeding the irrational in us. It is the impersonal aspect that feeds the irrational in us. The Kṛṣṇa-myth goes much higher than the impersonal. In a hymn addressed to him, he is described as the truth of truths, *satyasya satyam*. This is addressed to a person. The Kṛṣṇa-myth has the ability to make the highest philosophical position easy within one's grasp. The highest philosophical reality is to be grasped, experienced, and not simply discussed.

The idea of truth of truths is the keynote of the philosophy taught by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He spoke of the empirical reality and the transcendental reality, because the two levels alone can create in us a depth. It is not as though the empirical reality that is this world would disappear when realization is achieved. On the contrary, it is in this world and in this body that realization can be had. This invests a new significance on this world and on the life in this world as it is lived. The limitations of a worldly life are not viewed as limitations, but as an open door to a larger life that lies eclipsed for the moment.

Let us now see how the second stage in the manifestation of myth, which is love, takes the form of religion. In very simple words, the first and the last of religion is love for God, for a divine Being. Why do the mystics and saints have an aversion to human love and leave it behind? By the side of love for God and the freedom it gives us, human love pales into nothing. Religion is the realization that, as human beings, we are capable of loving God as God Himself loves, capable of leaving earthly

loves behind for that love. Religion means entering into relationship with such a God, who is the source of love. Kṛṣṇa was such an ocean of love. The heart of the Kṛṣṇa-myth is this love, the love that is felicity, *ānanda*, that is *rasa*. *Rasa* is the essence of felicity that is in us and that envelops the world. It is this essence that drips through every moment of our earthly pleasures.

We love this world, because it attracts us by its various beauties. But the mystic and the saint are not attracted by worldly beauty, for by the side of God's beauty, the world's beauty pales into nothing. Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches us the love of beauty as a spiritual discipline. Beauty must give us joy—not joy ephemeral but *ānanda*. But, instead, if beauty leaves behind attachment and slavery, then it shows that we must change our standard of beauty. The Lord alone is beautiful and, if we are to accept Him as our beauty-standard, then we must throw overboard all other notions of beauty. This is what Kṛṣṇa teaches. He is described as the Cupid of Cupid. As the perfection of unearthly beauty, our love goes out to him. He taught us not only the religion of love, but also the discipline that beauty-admiration can achieve.

To sum up: We began by saying that the Kṛṣṇa-myth is a spiritual myth. A myth is spiritual when it solves the spiritual conflict in us. It must be distinguished from psychic myths which, though they excite our imaginative faculty, cannot build up our personality. A spiritual myth builds up our personality by taking our intellect, mind, and will along the three well-marked stages of admirability, love, and faith.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the home of perfection, beauty, force, and spirituality, holds us under the spell of wonder and awe. Our wonder takes form as love. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is love incarnate, and his personality feeds this deepest sentiment in us. Not only that; the high divine quality of love practised by Kṛṣṇa makes it easy for us to transcend all love of inferior variety and arrive at *ānanda*. At this stage, only love can give us spiritual certitude. What is the nature of that certitude? 'From felicity we come, in felicity we live, and into felicity we go. The whole world has its roots in felicity.' We can become *one* with the world by practising love as felicity.

In the religion taught by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we learn to leave behind all adoration for earthly beauty, all attachment to earthly love. They are nothing by the side of God's beauty and divine love, which we are capable of realizing in our deepest layers. If we can have faith in Śrī Kṛṣṇa and enter into relationship with him, he can take us to great spiritual heights without doing violence to our individual aspirations. For, when he helps us to transcend ourselves, it is not by violence, but by transforming us imperceptibly and in spite of ourselves.

Let us conclude in the words of Śrī Śuka, the great *ṛṣi*, to whom we owe all that has come down to us in the form of the Kṛṣṇa-myth: 'That revealer of the Vedic wisdom who, to destroy the fear of transmigration, like a bee extracted the essence of the Vedas, comprising the highest knowledge and realization, as he had done nectar from the ocean, and gave that to his servants to drink—that primeval, perfect Being, Kṛṣṇa by name, I prostrate before him.'

He (Kṛṣṇa) is not only an especial divine manifestation, but also the personal God and even absolute Reality. In him we find the ideal householder and the ideal *sannyāsin*, the hero of a thousand battles who knew no defeat, the friend of the poor, the weak, and the distressed, and the perfect ideal of detachment. In him, again, we find the perfect harmony of *jñāna*, bhakti, and *karma*—of head, heart, and hand.

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PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

By Professor P. S. Naidu

A critical survey of the history of science brings to light one of her noteworthy features rather disconcerting to her votaries. Classical science, at the start of her career, decided to break away from philosophy and theology, and follow her own path, but after nearly two hundred years of independence, she is feeling at the present moment the need for returning to philosophy and seeking the comfort and security of her ancestral home. In this context, let us ask ourselves three questions:

1. Why did science initially break away from philosophy?
2. Why does she now want to return to philosophy?
3. What lessons should the teachers of science learn from the initial centrifugal tendency of science, and her final centripetal tendency?

Let me answer the questions in the order in which I have raised them.

1. *Why did science initially break away from philosophy?*

(i) At the start of her career, science became painfully conscious of the constricting influence of philosophy and theology. These disciplines were anthropocentric. Science, on the other hand, strove to explain natural phenomena in terms of themselves. Only so, she felt she could release man from the stranglehold of superstitions and mystic fears. She therefore raised the banner of revolt in support of a purely mechanistic and deterministic explanation of natural phenomena. In the interests of her strictly positivistic approach to nature, science felt that she must break away from philosophy.

(ii) In the second place, science was repulsed by the large element of subjectivity in philosophy. In content and method, in her approach to reality, and in her attitude, philosophy was dominated by her concern for values. Facts were viewed in the context of the value they have for man, and, as there is a large element of subjectivity in value judgements, science felt reluctant to accept the philosophical approach to the problems of life. Science decided to restrict herself severely to the objective study of facts, and to ignore the value aspect of experience.

(iii) This insistence on objectivity led to a further development in science, which widened the gulf already separating her from philosophy. Science desired to measure, and to measure accurately, the facts studied by her. Quantification of the observed phenomena and explaining qualitative differences in terms of quantitative variations were the dominant aims of science. These aims do not fit into the framework of philosophy. So, science had perforce to part company with philosophy.

(iv) Again, philosophy is broad and sweeping in her generalizations; science is narrow and specific. Science is prepared to sacrifice breadth in the interests of depth and accuracy. Philosophy is holistic and synthetic; science, on the other hand, is fragmentary and analytic.

(v) Lastly, the methods employed by science and philosophy are vastly different. It is almost impossible to compose the differences between them. The philosophical method is speculative, contemplative, and intuitive; science, on the other hand, is analytic, and depends solely on discursive reason for understanding and explaining the universe. The ultra- or supra-rationalistic element in the philosophic method is repugnant to science.

In brief, then, the following characteristics of science made it very difficult for her to live under the same roof with philosophy:

(a) Her positivistic, mechanistic, and deterministic approach to natural phenomena, involving hostility to the anthropocentricism and teleology of philosophy.

(b) Her rigorous insistence on objectivity.
(c) Her sustained effort to reduce quality to quantity.
(d) Her utter disregard of values so dear to the heart of philosophy.
(e) Her insistence on the use of reason to the exclusion of the philosophic method of intuition.

Science felt that, for her to pursue in peace her own chosen path of knowledge, she should break away from philosophy. And break away she did.

No harm would have been done, had science been fully conscious of the limitations of her approach to natural phenomena. Instead, she claimed that the *imperceptible* is *non-existent*, and that, outside science, no other discipline can lay any claim to truth. Not satisfied with these extravagant claims, science poured contempt on values and on spiritual experiences which she could not understand. But science never imagined that the sharp edge of the arguments which she was using to attack philosophy would be turned against her, most unexpectedly, by her own votaries. Contemporary nuclear physicists and biologists and depth psychologists are realizing the utter inadequacy not only of the scientific view of the world, but of the basic assumptions and 'laws' of science. The predicament that science has got into has been ably summed up by Professor S. K. Mitra in his presidential address to the Silver Jubilee session of the National Institute of Science, delivered at New Delhi on the last day of 1960. The learned professor observed: 'The scientist has come to a stage beyond which he cannot proceed. ... Boundaries of knowledge appear to have been reached which cannot be crossed. ... The situation has made the scientist face questions which belong to *the realm of metaphysics and philosophy*.'

Note that it is an eminent scientist who is speaking and not a speculative philosopher. The boomerang is coming back to hit the thrower in the neck.

The professor continued: 'We find today top-ranking scientists concerning themselves with such questions as coexistence of the external and the internal world, *and the possibility of the natural laws being products of the human mind*.'

Giving some instances of the last limits of scientific discovery, Professor Mitra said that, in the atomic and the sub-atomic world, the scientist could not form a detailed picture of the motions round an atom, and had to remain satisfied with only *a hazy picture representing 'our uncertain and probable knowledge'*.

Imagine a leading scientist characterizing the highest attainments of contemporary science as *hazy* and *uncertain*.

'A scientist today', observed Professor S. K. Mitra, 'would rather agree with the view held by many eminent men of his profession that the basic assumption of scientific enquiry, that there exists a real world of matter and energy in space-time independent of the observer, *does not perhaps represent the whole truth*.'

The gist of the matter is that scientific truth is not the whole truth, and even the partial truth presented by science is hazy and uncertain.

Again, let me stress the point that these conclusions are drawn by the scientists themselves on the basis of their own experimental investigations.

2. *Why does science seek reunion with philosophy?*

Right at the outset, let me make it clear that it is the contemporary scientist himself who is seeking this reunion. It is not the philosopher who is anxious to get science back into his fold. He is indifferent, and would rather that science kept at a distance from him. This fact should be kept constantly in the focus of their attention by the teachers of science.

Explorations into the nucleus of matter are revealing such bizarre and tantalizing phenomena that a physicist of such eminence as the late Professor Schrödinger was constrained to say, in the preface to his book *Science and Human Temperament*, that the subjective idealism of Berkeley is, perhaps, nearer the truth than the naive realism of classical science. Penetrating

into the core of the nucleus of matter, the experimentalist finds that the electrons, mesons, protons, and others of that ilk are merely so many centres of energy, and are *no more material* than the thought of the scientist investigating their mysteries. The experimentalist also finds that the spaces separating the electrons and protons are comparable to the vast distances separating the planets and the stars in the universe. If all the so-called 'hard particles' could be compressed without any space between them, then the really solid matter, say, in a large writing table, can be put on a pin-point. And about this pin-point of matter, the experimentalist is not quite certain whether it is matter, or a wave-form, or simple energy. So, purely on the basis of objective experimental evidence, gathered by the physicist himself, it is concluded that matter, as conceived by the classical scientist, does not exist. All that exists is some form of energy. The whole world is a manifestation of energy, *māyā* or *śakti*. And that is the conclusion of the scientist.

A surprise now awaits us. It is said that, as the result of researches in the field of cosmic radiation, matter can be transformed into energy, and energy recrystallized into matter. The indestructibility of matter is no longer a true doctrine. Matter is no longer to be viewed as material, but purely as immaterial. The laws of conservation of matter and of energy are to be written off as bad debts.

A similar doom awaits the law of causality, the corner-stone of positive science. It is not the Einsteinian conception of relativity, but the law of indeterminacy or uncertainty of Heisenberg that dug the grave for causality. At present, it is the statistical law of averages, used by the social disciplines, that rules the roast, and not causality.

With materiality of matter reduced to immateriality of energy, with the laws of conservation completely written off, and with the law of causality replaced by statistical averages, one wonders what is still left of the original conceptual structure of classical physics.

Let us pursue this line of thought a little further. When Einstein proved the untenability of the 'Aether' hypothesis, he was teaching a most useful lesson to the scientist. He showed, once for all, the absurdity of externalizing and concretizing concepts which are meant to serve merely as working hypotheses. But Einstein's greater contribution was the synthetic concept of space-time continuum. We have not grasped, as yet, the full significance of this momentous discovery. Yet the way is already being paved for a more daring synthesis. It is the synthesis of space-time-causality.

The preoccupation of the physicist with the nuclear structure of matter has therefore proved to be a great blessing in disguise. In the sub-microscopic realm of matter, the scientist has seen matter vanishing into *ākāśa*. So, both the 'particle' conception and the 'wave' conception will have to go, and along with them will go 'causality'. And out of this shambles will arise a brand new conception of the material world.

As in physics, so in biology too, the study of sub-microscopic structures is leading to a belief in the existence of a supra-scientific realm of knowledge. I have in mind the critical study of cell-division, and of the behaviour of sub-nuclear components of the cell in the process of such division. I am referring to the behaviour of chromosomes, and particularly of the genes in the chromosomes. Speaking frankly, the genes are constructs, though the cytologist claims that he can determine the gene-configuration pattern in a given chromosome.

The phenomenon of significance for the trend of thought presented in this paper is the splitting of chromosomes. Soon after the fertilization of the ovum by the sperm, cell-division takes place; and at each division, every chromosome splits lengthwise, half going to each new cell. Thus every cell has two complete sets of chromosomes. But when the reproductive cells are formed, a different type of division occurs. The chromosomes do not split; instead, each chromosome derived from the mother lies alongside the chromosome derived from the father, and the two separate, one going to

each new cell. In this marvellous manner, the number of chromosomes is kept constant in each species. Moreover, not only is there a constancy of number of chromosomes in a given species, but also a constancy in the configuration of the chromosomes. What, then, is it that produces the marvellous difference between the somatic and reproductive cells? Some fantastic bio-chemical hypothesis may be invented to account for the reduction in the number of chromosomes in the reproductive cells, and it might even be proved to be scientifically true. But the marvel is still a marvel, and mysterious. Science cannot explain it, for science rules out purpose; and this marvel is purposive in essence. It has been contrived by nature to fulfil a purpose in the interests of something that is to happen in the future. In other words, there is a guiding, supra-scientific principle operating in cell-division. No mechanistic, deterministic, and positivistic principle can ever account for this unique event in the life of the organism.

I do not propose to deal with the vast new realm of the unconscious discovered by depth psychology, and of the supra-conscious revealed by para-psychology and Yoga psychology. It is the duty of the teacher to familiarize himself with these latest developments in the newly created branches of psychology.

The position now is this:

As the result of experimental investigations into the secret recesses of matter, life, and mind, scientists themselves (and not speculative philosophers) have arrived at the following conclusions:

(a) Natural phenomena are purposive.
(b) Objectivity in science is a meaningless term.
(c) Classical conceptions of matter, energy, movement, space, time, and causality are deceptive.
(d) Quantification of phenomena and measurement have very limited validity.
(e) Discursive analytical reason cannot reveal truth in all its aspects.
(f) Law in science is the creation of the human mind.
(g) The separation of value from fact is misleading.

In brief, contemporary science repudiates the stand taken by classical science. Science can present only an incomplete and partial picture of just a few limited aspects of human experience, and even this picture is out of focus. Science urgently needs the help of a discipline which will first put the picture in focus, and then complete it and make it whole. That discipline is philosophy.

3. *What should the teachers of science do under these conditions?*

Let me speak directly to them:

Familiarize yourselves thoroughly with the latest discoveries in the realm of the sub-microscopic in the physical as well as biological sciences, and pass on this knowledge to your pupils in simple language, so that, right from the start, they will become convinced about the utter futility of depending on science as the sole guide in human affairs. Let them realize that science can reveal only, in a dim light, a few limited aspects of nature; that there are other fields of knowledge much more profound than science; and that 'scientific truth' is not the only truth that there is.

Do not sow the seeds of godlessness in the young minds by your wrong methods of presenting the conclusions of science.

Do not pour contempt on higher values.

Do not deify matter and machine, and do not cast the dignity of human personality to the winds.

At every stage of your teaching, draw the attention of the children to phenomena which science has to bypass, such as the behaviour of water below 4° C, the inclination of the earth's axis, and the pairing of chromosomes in the reproductive cells.

Teach the children that many of the so-

called facts of science, such as ether and genes, are conceptual constructs or, at best, working hypotheses.

Teach science in such a way that children grow steadily in an abiding faith in God.

As for yourselves, study carefully the history of science, and see for yourselves that the road along which science has traversed is strewn with the corpses of theories which she once held to be gospel truths.

Above all, contemplate deeply on the implications of the method of science, which teaches real humility. Learn, for your benefit, and for the benefit of your pupils, the great lesson that 'Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom'.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S EARLIEST APPRAISER: SRINIVAS

By Swami Lokeswarananda

All available records testify to Sri Ramakrishna's great popularity in his village. This popularity began even when he was a mere baby. Womenfolk of his village would daily come and shower their caresses on him. They had their own children; still this visit was a 'must' with them. They felt miserable if they missed seeing him for a single day. Everyone treated him as if he was exclusively hers. They would vie with one another in this, and sometimes there would be so many of them eagerly waiting their turns to caress him that for a long time his own mother, Chandramani, would have no opportunity to do so herself.

As he grew into a boy, this popularity increased, and he became the idol of the whole village. There was no one in the village who did not regard him with special affection and kindliness. There was no home to which he was not welcome. Wherever he went, he radiated peace and joy. Everyone sought his company—young and old, high and low. Boys of his age followed him to the mango-grove outside the village to receive lessons in drama and music. Women gathered round him to listen to his readings from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* or to hear him sing. Older men loved his company for his lively conversation, which was also full of wisdom and humour. Except when he performed appointed duties connected with the worship of the family deity, he was rarely at home. His laughter rang through the village; his songs filled its air. He lived as if he did not belong to a particular family, but to the whole village.

But however popular he was, Sri Ramakrishna was not above playing boyish pranks. There is the story of how he once duped a neighbour who boasted that no male visitor could ever enter the inner apartments of his house. Disguised as a fishwife, Sri Ramakrishna one evening appeared before this gentleman and sought a night's shelter. He said 'she' had come to the market-place with other fishwives to sell fish, but as evening fell, they had left 'her' behind, and 'she' had now nowhere to go. So complete was the verisimilitude and so convincingly was the case presented that the gentleman had not even a moment's hesitation in inviting Sri Ramakrishna to go into the inner apartments of the house and stay with the womenfolk there. The deception was not detected until Sri Ramakrishna's elder brother arrived there. As Sri Ramakrishna had not returned home, anxiety was felt on his account, and his elder brother came out to look for him. He went from house to house and called out for Sri Ramakrishna. When he arrived at the house in question, Sri Ramakrishna answered his brother's call. One imagines that he did this rather loudly, for he must have been anxious for everybody to know where he was!

The stir that the discovery created in the household can very well be imagined. What a blow it must have been to the boastful head of the family! The whole village must have had a good laugh over his discomfiture. As for Sri Ramakrishna, he became dearer still to the village as a result of this incident.

But Sri Ramakrishna's popularity did not rest on such pranks only. Neither did it rest on his sweet innocence, his songs, his power of mimicry, or his sense of humour only. There was another side to his nature, which, too, contributed much to his popularity. This was his great wisdom.

Though still a boy, he often spoke like one with a mature mind. People in the village had learnt to respect him because of his judgement and understanding. He showed an uncanny power of solving problems that baffled scholars. If there was a discussion in the village on a subject of social and religious import, there would often appear a deep and unbridgeable gulf between opposing views. In the course of discussions, tempers would rise, arguments would become involved, and the issue more and more complicated. Just then Sri Ramakrishna might make a casual remark as if in spite of himself. At once, all arguments would stop, for as everybody saw, the remark indicated a possible meeting-ground between the differing viewpoints. He had a knack of ignoring superficialities and getting down to the root of a problem. He would make a brief analysis of the problem, and the solution would then become obvious to everybody. The fact that so obvious a solution had not occurred to others would then seem very strange.

Once, a great debate took place at the house of the Lahas—his next door neighbours. The occasion was a ceremony connected with a death in the family. As was customary in those days, scholars from several places were invited. Many eminent men came, and soon discussions started. The issues chosen were of perennial interest—issues concerning God, man's relation with God, life's purpose, etc. The discussions were long and acrimonious, for the scholars represented different schools of philosophy, and their differences in outlook were sharp. The whole village had turned out to listen to the debate. As might be expected, Sri Ramakrishna with his friends was also present. They had come merely out of curiosity, for they did not want to miss this opportunity to see the great scholars that had come and hear them argue. As the debate proceeded, the main issues were soon lost sight of, and the scholars got bogged in arguments which hardly had any bearing on the subjects they were discussing. Sri Ramakrishna was listening with rapt attention, as was everybody else; but while others were not able to follow the arguments, he was. And it must have been a shock to him to see that the scholars were more concerned with the shell of an argument rather than its substance.

While this was going on, something happened that no one including Sri Ramakrishna ever expected. Sri Ramakrishna, a mere boy, found himself making some remarks that took the whole assembly by consternation. A particular point in the scriptures was being discussed by the scholars, and no conclusion was in sight. Sri Ramakrishna, who was intently following the discussion, said to a pundit known to him, 'Can't the point at issue be decided this way?' The pundit heard what Sri Ramakrishna had to say and felt convinced that it was the right conclusion. He then told about it to some other scholars, who realized the correctness of the solution offered by Sri Ramakrishna. They felt that it was the only possible solution regarding the disputed point and explained it to all others. All the scholars present unanimously admitted that it was the only rational solution and expressed surprise and satisfaction at the performance of the boy. They made enquiries about the family background of the boy, predicted a great future for him, and offered him their blessings. The whole village was excited and proud; the talk of what Sri Ramakrishna had done was on everybody's lips. But Sri Ramakrishna himself was least concerned; he was hardly conscious that he had done something unusual.

Sri Ramakrishna was now a real hero to the people of his village. Everybody knew about

his great common sense, his wisdom, his ability to disentangle a problem from unnecessary details. Still, no one in his wildest thoughts imagined that he was capable of performing this astonishing feat. They did not know how to explain this. They were happy and proud, though perplexed, at this wonderful and inexplicable capacity of Sri Ramakrishna.

Did anyone of them ever suspect that this might have been possible because of some divine power working through him? Did it ever occur to them that all that Sri Ramakrishna did could be explained, if only it was accepted that he had something of the divine in him? There is no evidence that anyone in the village, nor even his closest associates, thought that Sri Ramakrishna was anything beyond a young boy of some extraordinary intelligence. Some perhaps thought that he was a little crazy, and some of the unusual things that he did or said, according to them, stemmed from his craziness. That he had a streak of divinity in him, that all his lovable qualities flowed from some divine source within him, that he was a man with a divine mission, who was destined to influence large masses of people, no one in the village ever believed or dreamt of.

There was, however, one exception. This was Srinivas, or Chinoo, the conch-shell dealer. He was the only man in the whole village who knew who Sri Ramakrishna was. Of all of Sri Ramakrishna's acquaintances, he was the first to recognize Sri Ramakrishna's divinity. So far as this goes, he occupies a unique position. Although by caste Srinivas was a conch-shell dealer, in reality, he ran a small grocer's shop. He had a modest income, and was able to make both ends meet with some difficulty. He had no pretensions to scholarship, but he was well-read in the *Bhāgavata* and similar sacred books of the dualistic school. He was older than Sri Ramakrishna by many years—the records say that he might as well have been Sri Ramakrishna's grandfather. In spite of this difference in age, and in spite of the fact that he belonged to an inferior caste, there was the deepest friendship between the two. Sri Ramakrishna had many friends in the village—in fact, everyone in the village was his friend, irrespective of age and caste, but his friendship with Chinoo was of a special kind. There was not a single day when he did not call at Chinoo's house. Chinoo, too, would eagerly wait for his visit. As soon as Sri Ramakrishna came, he would rush forward to greet him and make him sit. He might have had important work in hand, but that would not deter him from being engrossed with Sri Ramakrishna. Even if a customer came, he would refuse to attend to him. For hours together, they would talk; while talking, they would be completely oblivious of their surroundings. Sri Ramakrishna would sometimes climb on to Chinoo's shoulders, and this Chinoo would consider a great favour. He was a fat big man, dark complexioned, with all his hair grey. Sri Ramakrishna, on the other hand, was a small lean boy, fair, and good-looking. The contrast between them was most striking. People would wonder what was the common ground between them that they found joy in each other's company. Sri Ramakrishna called Chinoo 'Dada' (elder brother), and to Chinoo, Sri Ramakrishna was a 'Bhai' (brother). When Sri Ramakrishna was with him, Chinoo forgot his age and his family cares; he then behaved as if he was a boy himself.

He would feed Sri Ramakrishna with his own hands, and feed him with the best sweets that he could afford. To him, this gave the greatest satisfaction. He would keep his eyes fixed on Sri Ramakrishna as if he was hypnotized. Often, tears would come to his eyes out of the joy that he felt.

While talking, they would often get excited, and sometimes they would have sharp and bitter disagreements, too. For long they would argue, each maintaining his position with tenacity and vehemence. Chinoo would argue from the orthodox point of view, drawing on scriptures and his lifelong experience. Sri Ramakrishna, on the other hand, would argue from intuition and common sense, without leaning towards any particular point of view. No wonder that there was disagreement between them.

Chinoo loved Sri Ramakrishna, loved him more than his life. He also sensed that, beneath his little body, Sri Ramakrishna hid a great soul. He was filled with awe for this soul; still, where vital issues were concerned, he held his own view, and he did not see why he should forsake them. Sri Ramakrishna, though full of love and respect for Chinoo, thought that Chinoo was being unnecessarily an obscurant. He could not see how so good a soul could be so obstinate. One imagines that, besides arguments, he also used his characteristic humour to demolish Chinoo's case. As is well known, his humour could be more deadly than his arguments. However that may be, the clashes between them often left them in a fury. Tempers would be so frayed that they would refuse to talk to each other. They would rush away from each other, giving the impression that a complete rupture had taken place between them. That they were the best of friends would then seem a thing of the past.

But next day, the picture would change completely. Chinoo would begin to miss Sri Ramakrishna very much soon. He would be sorry that he had quarrelled the previous day. He would hope and pray that Sri Ramakrishna would not mind it, and come to his house as usual. Again and again, he would look out and see if he was not already in sight. Sri Ramakrishna, too, would feel the same. It was impossible for him to stay away from Chinoo. Soon, he would wend his way to Chinoo's. Scenes of tumultuous joy would mark their meeting. They would rush forward to meet each other. Chinoo would snatch up Sri Ramakrishna in his arms, with tears rolling down his cheeks. He would feel an overwhelming sense of joy and relief that Sri Ramakrishna had forgiven him. Soon, he would buy him the choicest sweets and feed him. Discussions also would begin and then arguments. Almost the same scene would enact itself again. Thus, day after day, they would meet, argue, and quarrel.

Although a humble man, Chinoo commanded respect because of his character. A God-fearing man, he cared more about God than about anything else. God was his sole passion, and he had spent his whole life searching for Him. When he first met Sri Ramakrishna, he was drawn towards him by his appearance, his music, his cheerful nature, etc. But when he came to know him closely, he was struck by his other qualities. He saw, for instance, that Sri Ramakrishna knew more than what the scriptures that he had read contained. Profoundest truths fell from his lips easily and naturally. He spoke as if a great wise man was speaking. His words had an irresistible charm and power. They brought light as well as peace unto his soul. Sri Ramakrishna lifted his soul on to a new plane altogether. What he had vaguely yearned for seemed to be within his grasp now.

It is true that he had difficulties in accepting Sri Ramakrishna in the beginning. As has been seen, he was not in the habit of accepting a statement from Sri Ramakrishna without challenging it or examining it in all its implications. This involved entering into long and heated arguments, but he risked it. In fairness to Sri Ramakrishna, it may be added that he was the last man to demand unquestioning acquiescence. As was seen in later years, he preferred a disciple who questioned and argued, rather than one who never questioned and, therefore, never understood.

Through daily contact, Chinoo had understood the power that Sri Ramakrishna represented. He understood that he was a born teacher, who was destined to mould the spiritual life of others. He had seen in his own case how he had transformed him. The more he studied Sri Ramakrishna, the more he wondered at the magnitude of his powers. He at once recognized that a great teacher was at work in the form of Sri Ramakrishna. He felt sure that he was going to do great things in later years. It was his regret that he would not live to see him do them, for he was old and would soon die. But he wished to welcome him and accord him due honour on his own behalf and on behalf of the future generations. He wished to be the first in this—a privilege he very much wished for himself.

A wealth of details is given in the books as to how he did it. One day, with the best flowers and sweets that he could procure, he took Sri Ramakrishna into the fields. He chose a spot where he thought he was not likely to be seen by others. What he was going to do was so intimate, so personal, that he was anxious that others should not know about it. This was going to be his final surrender to Sri Ramakrishna. It was a privilege, also an achievement. He wanted to have it all to himself. First, he fed Sri Ramakrishna with the sweets that he had brought; then, he knelt before him and worshipped him with flowers. Next, with folded hands and tears trickling down his cheeks, he began to pray to him. What he said was more or less to this effect: 'Oh Lord, it is not for me to judge you. I do not know who you are, but I am convinced that you are born to lead mankind to light. You already have performed some miracles, but you are going to perform many more in the future. Alas, I will not live to see them. I am old, and will soon depart this life. But before I die, I wish you to know what I feel about you. I wish to offer myself at your feet. Please accept me, please bless me.'

It is a pity that what Sri Ramakrishna said in reply is not recorded. But did he say anything at all? Most probably he did—he perhaps scolded Chinoo for the foolish things he was saying. As was his wont in later years, he ridiculed the suggestion that he was divine. But there are also instances in which he allowed it, even enjoyed it. His reaction depended upon many things, specially upon the character of the person from whom it came.

Thus, it happens that it was Chinoo who first recognized Sri Ramakrishna's divinity. This appraisal was unique, because it came from a humble tradesman. Later, many scholars and religious leaders loudly proclaimed Sri Ramakrishna as an incarnation of God. But Chinoo, the small village grocer, had the distinction of being the first to do so.

PHYSIOLOGICAL ASTROLOGY

By the Hon'ble Mr. Justice P. B. Mukharji

The astrological science of India has the most universal and comprehensive sweep. It is one of the Vedāṅgas. Its study was essential to realize and make effective the knowledge of all the other studies. It is today a much misunderstood and misapplied science. It was intended to be, and it truly is, a study of man in the totality of his entire relationship with the universe of time and space. On the technical side of its science, it commands the knowledge not only of astronomy, understood in its limited sense of studying the movement of the planets, but also of the effects that such positions and movements of the planets have on everything that exists, moves, grows, and decays on this earth. It is necessarily based on a very intricate science of mathematics, involving calculations of degrees and angles of the most complex kind. It is also based on a masterly analysis of physics, chemistry, mineralogy, botany, biology, and physiology affected by the positions of the planets and the stars. In fact, Indian astrology is not one science, but the combination of all sciences and philosophies. It is cosmology itself.

Indian astrology does not treat man as an accident in creation. He is not a chance collocation of purposeless atoms. It teaches that man is a precise calculation. He is a great purpose, a great endeavour, and, above all, the most complete aspiration and realization, both miraculously and marvellously combined. It

demonstrates the balance-sheet with which a man is born in this world and the extent of his evolutionary possibilities in a particular life within the context of planetary constellations. It is, however, a common mistake to think that Indian astrology is mechanical. It has an all-comprehensive corrective philosophy. Indian astrology is inseparably and integrally connected with the Indian philosophy of creation. In this view, Indian astrology uses a fund of its spiritual knowledge, which is unique as a methodology which can be called at once scientific, physical, philosophical, and spiritual.

One aspect of Indian astrology, not frequently emphasized, is the subject of this article. The broad aspect which I propose to put forward is from the point of view of Indian Yoga Śāstras and their view of the science of physiological control of planetary influences and movements. Shakespeare unwittingly expressed a great Indian astrological truth, when he uttered, 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves'. That fault is the physical, mental, psycho-physical, and psychosomatic defects which exist in every human constitution. The yogic physiological astrology is an attempt to correct, control, and guard against these defects. While planets, their positions and their movements, cannot ordinarily be controlled by an individual man, their effect upon him can be controlled is the message of the Indian yogic astrology. In emphasizing this message, it corrects a prevailing misconception that astrology propounds an undiluted predestination. It describes and studies a man's born predilections and inherited predispositions, and goes further to say that a man is not the prisoner of those predilections and predispositions. Rather, it indicates the way and the method of breaking that prison and securing his own liberation. Astrology in this view does not mean predestination. On the contrary, when properly understood and applied, astrology contains the message, hope, and technique of a highly informed, scientific, intelligent, and rational human endeavour to overcome hereditary, acquired, environmental, and planetary obstacles.

To appreciate this message of Indian astrology, certain fundamental grounds must be cleared. Indian astrology is called 'Jyotir-Veda'. It is looked upon as one of the Vedas, whose knowledge is said to be the very foundation of all other Vedas. '*Jyoti*' in Sanskrit means light. It is spiritual light which penetrates into, and reveals the nature of, material mysteries. It is said that no one can be a real *jyotiṣa* or astrologer unless he himself, by his spiritual discipline and moral training, has seen the spiritual light or the *jyoti*. This is the first principle. The next point to emphasize is that planets work and have their effect in time and space. Indian *yoga* teaches man how to overcome and rise above both time and space. This is the second principle to remember. The yogic astrology therefore proclaims that it is possible to overcome the effects of planets by requisite spiritual training under great masters of this science. The third basic principle of Indian astrology is what follows from the above two, and is equally important and significant. It is this that such a *yogin*, who has risen above the control of time and space, and who is therefore above all planetary influences and is, in fact, controlling and no longer controlled by the planets, is beyond prediction by astrology. No astrology can predict his future, because he is in tune with the infinite Reality, which is itself the master of the planets.

The microcosm is the exact miniature of the macrocosm. Whatever is in the universe is in the individual as well. Whatever is in the solar system is also in the atomic structure. The planets in the sky and the firmament are transfigured in the human body. The principles are the same. The mechanism is the same. The constituent elements are the same. The *Śiva Saṁhitā* says: 'In this human body reside Meru and the seven *dvīpas* (islands, making up this earth); rivers, oceans, mountains, lands, and protectors of lands; *ṛṣis* and *munis*; stars and planets; sacred spots, places, and their deities; the revolving sun and moon, who create and

destroy; the ether, air, fire, water, and earth.'

While man may not reach the sun in the sky, he can certainly reach that sun in his body. While man may not reach the moon in the sky, he can reach that moon in his body. In the *Śākta-ānanda-taraṅgiṇī*, we get the following description of the positions of the planets in the body: 'The sun is in the *nāda-cakra*; the moon is in the *bindu-cakra*; Mars is in the eyes; Mercury is in the heart; Jupiter is in the stomach; Venus is in the seminal protoplasm; Saturn is in the *nābhi-cakra*; Rāhu is in the mouth; and Ketu is in the legs as well as in the *nābhi-cakra*.' These physiological centres can be properly manipulated and trained to correct adverse influences of any of these planets on the life of the individual. All the *navagrahas* or the nine planets of this solar system are therefore within the power of man to control. There are special exercises and techniques for controlling these different physiological and nerve centres of the human body. The body therefore is not a limited instrument with limited structure, with limited means, and with limited faculties. It has unlimited potentialities. They can be so magnified as to be coequal with the entire universe and its astral and planetary proportions.

A central theme of astrology is the particular solar system in which a man functions. The predominant features in the system are the sun and the moon. The perpetual chase between the sun and the moon represents the circumference of man's existence. Time and space are the two dominant mental results of this pursuit between the sun and the moon. The Indian Yoga Śāstras find their parallel in the human body in the two major nerve currents in the human physiological system, which are called the *iḍā* and the *piṅgalā*. The *iḍā* represents the moon; the *piṅgalā* represents the sun. It is said that these two planets, whose currents are reflected in *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, are the source of duality which is the cause of suffering, both physical and mental. If they could be reunited, then the effects of the duality caused by these two planets will be overcome. For this purpose, *yoga* teaches the unique science of *prāṇāyāma*, which is incorrectly translated as breath control. It is a mistake to consider this to be a mere physical exercise. It is at once physical, mental, and spiritual. While man cannot control the sun, he can control the *piṅgalā* in his body. While man cannot control the moon, he can control the *iḍā* in his body. Therefore, by controlling the *iḍā* and the *piṅgalā*, he controls both the sun and the moon, and overcomes both time and space, both light and darkness, both day and night, both joy and sorrow, and all the infinite differences of the universe. This is not the place to discuss the superb principles and the numerous techniques and processes of *prāṇāyāma*. Their broad principles are laid down in the Yoga Śāstras, and their infinite variations according to human constitutions are to be gathered from individual *gurus* and *sādhakas* and practised under their directions. The point to emphasize here is this that the two controlling major planets, the sun and the moon, in the horoscope of an individual can themselves be controlled and guided by man by *yoga* to achieve higher destinies and to rise above his natal limitations and predispositions.

The control of the other seven planets of the solar system and their effects on human life can be similarly achieved by man through special processes of *yoga*. The seat of the Mars or the Maṅgalagraha is the two eyes in the human body. The eyes represent the planet Mars. Astrologically, as a planet, it helps to possess things desired and encourages ambition, welfare, and prosperity. They are the signs of animation. The Mars, as a planet in astrological effect, is regarded as strong and resolute, both as an aggressor and as a protector. It shines red in the sky, and is regarded as the fiery planet. The eyes are the fire of the body. The Yoga Darśana of India has many exercises for the control of the eyes and the vision, and of the fire represented by them. Foremost among them is *trāṭaka* practice and its many variations. By such control, the Mars is controlled.

The Mercury in astrology, as a planet, re-

presents the intellect and the power of thought to discriminate and to decide. It implies curiosity, attention, study, scrutiny, and deliberation as its methods. In the human system, it is the entire machinery of the sensorium. The passage quoted above represents its seat as the heart. Now, the control of the sensorium is the very central theme of the Yoga Darśana, and of *prāṇāyāma, dhyāna, dhāraṇa*, and *samādhi* in particular. The sensorium is restless in the human constitution, in the sense that it is endless in its processes and functions and is continually changing. The Mercury is restless, but when it is controlled according to yogic technique, this restlessness is controlled. Then man attains that calm and peace which are the true foundation of knowledge and effective action.

The Jupiter, as a planet in astrology, represents the principle of comprehensive knowledge and wisdom. It is the lord of knowledge, eloquence, and wisdom. If it is massive as a planet, it is equally massive in its calm serenity. In the human system, its seat is represented as the stomach, typifying the principle of nourishment, growth, and accumulation. The ear, as the organ of hearing, and other apertures of the body are its outer circumferences. In the Yoga Śāstras, apart from the technique of *prāṇāyāma*, there are various *mudrās* and *bandhas* which scientifically control and tune the activities of the Jupiter in the body.

The Venus, as a planet in astrology, represents the principle of passion in the human constitution. It rules over the senses by holding the mind active under its influence and charm. According to the passage cited above, its seat in the human system is the seminal protoplasm and the creative, reproductive machinery of the body. The Yoga Śāstras lay down elaborate practices for the control of the Venus principle in the human body by uniting the *prāṇa* and *apāna vāyus*, by special *mudrās*, and by the many techniques of rousing the *kuṇḍalinī* and making persons *ūrdhva-retas*.

The Saturn is a heavy planet. It is remote and obscure. A decisive termination of things is its object, be it death and destruction, or be it self-realization and renunciation. In the human system, it represents the principle of movement and locomotion and the respiratory system controlled by its seat in the *nābhi-cakra*. In one sense, it opposes the sun in so far as it grants shade and darkness. Many practices are indicated in the Yoga Śastras by *āsana, prāṇāyāma, mudrās*, and *bandhas* for regulating and controlling these parts of the human constitution, and specially the navel or what is called the *maṇipūra-cakra*.

The Rāhu, as a planet in astrology, represents wrath, violence, force, and veracity. It has the power to grasp and release. It has the capacity to eclipse luminaries and also to liberate them. The passage quoted above represents the seat of the Rāhu in the human constitution as the mouth and the jaws, exemplifying the above principles. It has the momentary power, though not lasting, to eclipse the sun and the moon, the light of the Ātman and the principle of sustenance. In Yoga Darśana, the sun and the moon principles, represented by the *piṅgalā* and the *iḍā*, are attempted to be united in one axis in such harmony that it defeats the vagaries of Rāhu by this broad method of control of physiological processes. To bring *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, the sun and the moon, in tune is to open the axis of the *suṣumṇā*.

Finally, the Ketu, as a planet in astrology, means the mark and the badge on things. It is the mark or the token of recognition or identification. It is the standard bearer. While the Rāhu is the ascending node of the moon, the Ketu is its descending node. Its functions are obstruction, impediment, and hindrance. The passage quoted above represents its seat in the human body as the *nābhi-cakra* and the legs. In fact, the Ketu's influence in the human constitution is on the nerve system and the spine, controlled by the solar plexus at the *nābhi-cakra*. In the mythological concept of the Ketu, it is regarded as headless, which, according to yogic interpretation, means that the lower nerve system in the human constitution fails to reunite with the higher nerve system,

and the ordinary breathing is the perpetual struggle to achieve that unity. In the Yoga Darśana, the attempt is made by certain practices, again, of *prāṇāyāma*, *mudrās*, and *bandhas* to establish the reunion between these two and thereby control the Ketu.

This very brief, and necessarily bald, analysis is only an attempt to indicate that planets and stars have their exact replica in the human body. The ideal body must achieve the poise of the *vyoman*, or the firmament, which is the feasible body of the cosmic creation. Within the body as the *vyoman*, manifold functions are fulfilled by these different physiological organs and systems, as planets in the sky. The body is the garment of the Ātman. There is almost an exact reproduction of the planetary system. As in the firmament the planets move and function, so in the body as firmament its different organs and processes function as planets. As modern physics shows that even the structure of an atom has within it almost the whole principle and organization of the solar system, with a central nucleus with vibrating principle of machinery, so is the whole universe in its miniature, with the same rules and regulations, operating within the human constitution. Nothing therefore is beyond the reach of man, if only he would know how to do it. Man is the map of the universe, only drawn to a smaller scale. He is a little cosmos, but a most faithful copy of the vast solar system and the larger cosmos of the universe. Let it therefore be not said any longer that Indian astrology is a doctrine of fatalism and blind predestination. On the contrary, it is a grand message and technique to regulate, guide, control, and overcome the *yantra* (body) of a creature, which is only a phase of time's evolutionary process, to achieve self-realization and *ātmadarśana* as the supreme fulfilment of the ultimate destiny of man. As Henley said, so did the great sage Vasiṣṭha and the Indian astrology thousands of years ago say:

> It matters not how strait the gate,
> How charged with punishment the scroll,
> I am the master of my fate;
> I am the captain of my soul.

ROLLAND'S CONCEPT OF AESTHETIC DYNAMISM

By Dr. Sudhir Kumar Nandi

Romain Rolland was a humanist in the first instance, and then an artist. He was largely influenced by Tolstoy, and his outlook on life and art bears testimony to such influence. Rolland regarded social service to be the first duty of every man, and he wanted art to serve such an end. An artist having nothing to do with other people's welfare is no artist worth the name. What distinguishes Romain Rolland from others is that in art he never created anything isolated, anything with a purely literary or casual scope. Invariably, his efforts were directed towards the loftiest moral aims; he aspired towards eternal forms; and he strove to fashion the monumental. Spiritually, he might be said to feel at one with the Indian seers (*ṛṣis*), who say: '*Bhūmaiva sukhaṁ, nālpe sukhamasti.*' His goal was to produce a fresco, to paint a comprehensive picture, and to achieve an epic completeness. He did not choose his literary colleagues as models, but took as examples the heroes of the ages. He felt more at home in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, in Goethe's universality, in Balzac's wealth of imagination, and in Wagner's Promethean art than in the activities of his contemporaries, whose energies were concentrated upon material success. His zeal for the absolute was almost a religion. He dreamt of creating Sistine symphonies, dramas like Shakespeare's histories, and an epic like *War and Peace*. The timeless was his true world.

Among latter-day Frenchmen, none but Victor Hugo and Balzac have had this glorious fervour for the monumental; among the Germans, none has had it since Richard Wagner; among contemporary Englishmen, none, perhaps, but Thomas Hardy. Rolland believed that a moral force must be the lever to shake a spiritual world to its foundation. The moral force which Rolland possessed was a courage unexampled in the history of modern literature. This young man, writes Stefan Zweig about Rolland, whose financial position was precarious, who had no powerful associates, who had found no favour with newspaper editors, publishers, or theatrical managers, proposed to remould the spirit of his generation simply by the dynamism of his own will and the power of his own deeds. He wanted to reform his contemporary society, and he wanted the services of art to be harnessed in this direction. That is why he was haunted by the problem of art as a socially creative force. And he tried to find a solution on the lines indicated by Tolstoy.

Rolland believed that it was only Tolstoy who solved this problem of art and solved it satisfactorily. Tolstoy had achieved a universality which applied to the people of Europe as a whole, and not to any particular caste. Rolland writes: 'Yes, the whole of our art is nothing but the expression of a caste subdivided from one nation to another into small opposing groups. There is not one artistic soul in Europe which unites in itself all the parties and races. The most universal in our time was that of Tolstoy. In him, we have loved each other, the men of all the countries and all the classes. And anyone who has tasted, as we have done, the powerful joy of this vast love will never again be satisfied with the fragments of this great human soul which the art of the European coteries offers us.'[1] Humanist Rolland places above everything else his notion of the good, and judges the works of art from this point of view.

This he learnt from Tolstoy: 'All that tends to unify mankind belongs to the good and the beautiful. All that tends to disunite it is evil and ugly. That which unites people is good and beautiful for humanity. Well, if the champions of science and of art have the good of humanity as their object, they should not ignore it; and if they do not ignore it, they should cultivate only those arts and sciences which lead to the fulfilment of that object.'[2] According to Tolstoy, human welfare is the *summum bonum* that any science or art should aim at. That alone is of value, he said, which binds men together; the only artist who counts is the artist who makes a sacrifice for his convictions.[3] The precondition of every true calling must be, not love of art, but love for mankind. Only those who are filled with such a love can hope that they will ever be able, as artists, to do anything worth doing. Thus social good and beauty were looked upon by Tolstoy as synonymous. For him, beauty had no other import than the capability of doing good to others.

Rolland tells us: 'Life cannot be linked with death, and the art of the past is more than three quarters dead.'[4] Art, to be living, should have a constant communion with life around; and when art ceases to commune with life, it is dead. The art of the past did not satisfy Rolland, and he considered its effects to be detrimental to the society at large. The first requisite to a normal healthy existence is that art should continually evolve together with life itself. That is why he detested all sorts of fetishism in art. He could not understand why classical mummies should be preserved in the art-gallery to influence the younger generation of artists. Why should there be so many precedents to follow? He writes: 'I do not know whether the society of today will create its own art, but I am sure that, if it fails to do so, we shall have no living art, only a museum, a mausoleum wherein sleep the embalmed mummies of the past.'[5] We have been taught to respect the

[1] Romain Rolland, *Life of Tolstoy.*

[2] *Vide* Tolstoy's letter to Rolland.

[3] Stefan Zweig, *Romain Rolland:The Man and His Work,* p. 20.

[4] *The People's Theatre,* Introduction, p. 5. And yet a reflective philosopher will say that life is perpetual dying and renewing of itself and that unchanging eternal life is the blank emptiness of death.

[5] *The People's Theatre,* Introduction.

memory of what has been, and we find it exceedingly difficult to tear ourselves asunder. But we must, Rolland tells us, tear ourselves loose from our ancient moorings, so that we may set sail for newer adventures. He let no opportunity slip of jeering at fetishism in art. He did not consider it necessary to preserve the idols or classics of any sort. He only had the right to call himself the heir of the spirit of Wagner, who was capable of trampling Wagner under foot and so walking on and keeping himself in close communion with life.[6]

The past is dead; and from the classical works of art, life has faded, or is fast fading out from day to day. If some of the ancient works still retain some of their pristine power over us, 'I am not sure that that power is beneficial nowadays'. Nothing is good except in its proper place and time. Rolland pleads for the acceptance of human values which are changing and transitory. The forms which were charming and noble in one century, when carried over into another, are more than likely to appear as monstrous anachronisms.[7]

Rolland here follows Tolstoy. One of the dangers of art, Tolstoy points out, arises from the fact that the forces of another day, when brought into an epoch where they do not belong, occasion serious disorders. It is not only in the domain of ethics that 'meridian decides the truth' and 'a river fixes the boundary'; it is the same in art.[8] What was good for yesterday is no longer good for this day, and what is good today may not be so for the day to come. Certain ages proscribed all representation of the nude, not only on moral, but on aesthetic grounds as well. The sculptors of the Middle Ages shunned the naked body as a thing deformed, believing that 'clothing was necessary to bodily grace'. The painters of the school of Giotto found 'no perfect proportion' in the female body. Fenelon, in the seventeenth century, condemned Gothic architecture for identical reasons which render it most beautiful in our eyes. Gluck, a genius of the eighteenth century, considered it an insult to be compared with Shakespeare. Michelangelo, the great Italian painter, spoke of Flemish art in derision. He opined that it was 'good for women, priests, and other pious people'. Tolstoy's Moujik is disgusted with the Venus of Milo. Moreover, people of the same generation may not like the same form in art. It is a truism to say that what is beautiful to the cultured few may seem ugly to the people at large, and that it fails to satisfy their needs which are equally legitimate. 'Let us not', Rolland tells us, 'blindly seek to impose upon the people of the twentieth century the art and thought of the aristocratic society of the past. And besides, the People's Theatre has more important work to do than to collect the bourgeois theatre.'[9]

Rolland fully knew the difficulty in prescribing absolute rules of procedure in matters of artistic creations. He was aware of the divergence of taste amongst people of the same place and of the same time. He writes: 'I shall not try to lay down absolute rules of procedure; we must remember that no laws are eternally

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[6] *John Christopher,* II. p. 227.

[7] Rolland here ignores the universality, the eternal immutable element in all true art. Even if art has value as representing or otherwise suggesting the ideals relevant to a particular age or place, yet such art has value as befitting expressions of the inner spirit and motif of the particular age or place, which thereby becomes a value to be enjoyed for its own sake in all times and places.

[8] This is also a gross misrepresentation of the unconditional moral imperative of ethics. It is no doubt true that no code of conduct is obligatory in vacuo and that every duty has application as morally imperative in a particular situation and under specific conditions. But despite this, it remains true that the duty which becomes morally imperative in a specific situation is authoritative for the situation not merely for the time that the conditions of the situation last, but it is authoritative for such situations for all times and all places. This is the real import of the unconditional authority of moral duty.

[9] Here also, we must join issue with both Tolstoy and Rolland. It may be true that the art which evokes admiration in a particular age may, under different conditions of another age, fail to elicit an equal degree of admiration and appreciation. But this no more proves the relativity of art than the changing moral codes of different times and places establish ethical relativity as the last word on morality. The human mind grows under the stress of changing circumstances, and its capacity for artistic vision and creation also improves with maturescence of experience. But this only proves the gradual unfolding of the essence of art in human experience and not its intrinsic relativity or its conditionality.

applicable, the only good laws being made for an epoch that passes and a country that changes.'[10] Art is essentially changeable, specially popular art. Not only do the people feel in a manner far different from the cultured class, but there exist different groups among the people themselves. There are the people of today and the people of tomorrow; there are those of a certain part of a certain city and those of a part of another city. We cannot presume to do more than establish an average, more or less applicable to the people of our own time.

But this harnessing of art to life and to the good of man was not long adhered to by Rolland. Like Bertrand Russell, he changed his position and wanted to judge art as art. The pragmatic standard of social service, handed down to Rolland by Tolstoy and accepted by the former unquestioningly, was thrown away as useless in his mature age. The artist in Rolland was not satisfied with this creed of social service, and he went beyond such vague standards of human welfare as the end of art. This change of position made it difficult for him to explain the concept of dynamism so stoutly upheld and defended by young Rolland. He, however, overlooked this aspect of the problem, when he abjured his earlier utilitarian standpoint with regard to his aesthetic theory.

[10] *The People's Theatre*, p.103.

A VISION OF GRACE AND BEAUTY

By Principal B. S. Mathur

The mind of man is his chief strength; it can transform life into grace and beauty. Life may have intense sorrow, but mind can change sorrow into happiness. Mind can read reality in dreams. It is mind that matters. Mind means a great personality. It portrays an achievement of the past. What has gone by is behind mind. What is present is behind mind. What is to come, that is also behind mind.

Think of Omar Khayyam. Many of us think of him as one who is keen on escape from life, lost in the pleasures of the senses. In his poems, apparently the burden is nothing but sensuous pleasures. Here are his poetic lines:

> Oh, come with old Khayyam, and leave the wise
> To talk; one thing is certain, that life flies;
> The flower that once has blown for ever dies.

A mind, sensuous from inside, standing for a sensuous personality, might find nothing but sensuousness in Omar Khayyam. But here is an accent on action, on the present, and on the great and elevating work that we can do, and what we must do. Omar shuns talk. He wants a man who may 'soar', but who is never to 'roam' like a philosopher. Heaven and home we are not to forget. Here is an effort for a synthesis, for a balance of thought and action.

This is like facing life, not escaping from it into a region of dreams. What is more, here is an effort to find grace and beauty in life. Does not Omar seem to be a painter of grace and beauty? Through grace and beauty, Omar leads us across complications of life to their enjoyment. Even difficulties take the colour of joy. A new harmony, born of sacredness and reality, is our experience, and we get through life. Life flies, but there is rest in plenty. Life then is not an illusion, a dreamy existence. It comes to mean an enduring experience, a vision that is a joy for ever.

Life is real, and it has to be lived. Let us be always active. Omar Khayyam has told us that life flies. If it is to fly, if it is flying, let

it fly in joy and accomplishment, not in dreams, not in fancies that might take us back or that might take us off the present. We have to be happy. We are here on earth. We have our mind. God has given us hands. Can we not work, and in work, can we not find joy? Work is really worship. It is our dedication.

There are dark things in life that deepen the darkness of our ignorance. The result is sea round us, and that sea is nothing but an unchecked sorrow. This sea must dry up. Work alone leads to the dry ground, the hard ground, on which we can construct our castle of hope. We cannot have our castle of hope on water. We must therefore work.

Of course, we are not to forget our inside. There is that vast and immeasurable divinity inside, God's own centre. Let us describe the circle with God Himself as the centre. That is the only way to create an atmosphere we so urgently need in the world, the atmosphere of sacredness and light. Here it is that our minds and hands are to unite. This is what Omar means when he insists on the present and declares forcefully that life flies and all else is a lie.

Life may have dangers. But our intelligence, our inner awareness, our oneness with God, with all that is good and useful by the standards of humanity—that is our great and perennial help to cross the dangers in life. Let us be philosophers in action. Life is a harmony of philosophy and action.

How beautifully Omar exclaims, not out of disappointment, not out of grief or sadness!

> The moving finger writes; and having writ, moves on; nor all your piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line; nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

Here is Omar's grip on life; also, wit possessed by him in plenty is in evidence. The present we cannot shut from our mind, if we are in sure possession of our ears and eyes. After all, we cannot efface what we have done. Let us be sure of what we do.

Omar is visualizing a life of accuracy, a life of virtue and strength. He might be too rigid in his view of life. He wants man to attain truth; the vision of beauty he must have; both might be difficult of attainment. But, certainly, effort can be there, and the effort matters.

We are not animals. We have a certain penetration into life afforded by our mind and experience. We can discriminate. So the effort for progress, for perfection, and to live better —that is our problem of life. That, to my mind, seems to be the great problem of Omar Khayyam as a poet.

Omar recommends swiftness and determination to do the right thing. He is determined not to cancel a line. He is aware of life that is flying. How can he think of escaping from life? Omar is aware of the preciousness of life; he is also aware of his inner strength. He definitely wants to go ahead. He wants others to be in step with him. It will not be an exaggeration to think of Omar Khayyam as an honest student of life, who teaches his lesson delightfully.

Omar is quite clear and impressive. One may go wrong; and then, through wisdom, piety, and sorrow, one may try to mend. But that will not do. Piety in plenty Omar recommends, but for doing the right thing and not for the sake of correcting the wrong thing. Why think of correction? Try to be pious; let us not forget the mind, its wisdom, and also our experience. Hold on to the right thing. That is Omar's burden; that is his message. Only one thing else is there, which Omar does not relish. Tears are too much for him. He seems to go all out for a life of joy, wisdom, and piety.

Certainly, we are to be philosophers in action. But we are not to be weeping philosophers. We have to think and cancel the darkness that is about us. We are not to forget God, and we have to go heart and soul for piety, for a life whose centre is God. When wisdom and piety are there, what else is there but joy? There is no *question of sorrow, no* occasion for tears to wash out a word.

Omar Khayyam, then, is a steady thinker,

who has lived and seen through life. He has his deliverance—liberation of mind, heart, soul, and hands. He is not selfish. He wants to share this liberation. Hence is this message to move on, never to cancel a line—a message of hope, work, and determination, a message of a man who is essentially manly, grand, and steady. Here is an artist drawing a picture of grace and beauty.

> Ah Love! could you and I with fate conspire
> To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,
> Would not we shatter it to bits and then
> Remould it nearer to the heart's desire.

Omar Khayyam is concentrating on nobility of mind, nobility of thoughts, to make an ideal world of happiness and fulfilment. He definitely admits fate, but he never believes in man's defeat. He pictures man as his own maker, as his own guide, friend, and philosopher. Behind this thought—that man is his own maker—there is Omar Khayyam, a man of determination wedded to heroism in life. Here is not a picture of escape, not a painter of escape, but a real fighter for fulfilment and accomplishment. Man is asked to rise to the fullest height of his personality; and in this rise, in this manifestation of his inner strength, he is face to face with God that is inside him. That God is to be brought out, is to be manifested in our deeds, dreams, and thoughts. This is what Omar Khayyam suggests so magnificently.

One is reminded of the following beautiful lines of Wordsworth:

> Oh! There is no sorrow of heart
> That shall lack its timely end,
> If but to God we turn, and ask
> Of Him to be our Friend!

Here, the poet is asking for a very intense measure of spiritual feeling. As a result of this manifestation of God in our life, or of our awareness of God as our Friend, there is no knowing of any manner of sorrow. The feeling that God is our Friend marks our real progress. This idea is very elevating, and it is definitely man-making, enabling us to rise higher and higher till we are face to face with Him.

Omar Khayyam asks man to shape his future himself. He needs the help of his love to conspire with fate in order to transform the sorry scheme of things entirely into something nearer to the heart's desire, a world of one's own dreams. In Wordsworth, there is a call for praying to God. Here in Omar, there is emphasis on man himself. A little reflection reveals to us that man is made in the image of God; as such, in his revelation, in his flowering, we have the fulfilment of God in man. So Omar Khayyam can be an undying inspiration for a life of action, sublimity, grace, and beauty. Only we are to be sure of our mind, our mental apparatus, to find this unique synthesis in his poems.

Swami Vivekananda has said: 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details.' We can quite comfortably read Omar Khayyam for our elevation. There is love, there is work, and there is also worship. Indeed, there is so much in his poems to rouse, to inspire, and to guide. Only we should listen to him and follow his inner meaning.

O mind! Don't forget Rāma of bewitching beauty, his dignified bearing, his soft words. . . . Realizing how indulgence in sensual enjoyments brings in only death and the like, lovingly sing the praise of my Lord, the heroic Śrī Rāma.

SAINT TYAGARAJA

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

'Māyā and Avidyā in the Post-Śaṅkara Vedānta' is the second part of Professor Surendranath Bhattacharya's seventh article in the series that he has been contributing to *Prabuddha Bharata* during the past three years. The first part of this article appeared in the July 1961 issue. ...

Swami Nityabodhananda is the head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Geneva (Switzerland), which he started nearly three years back. The Swami has been carrying on the Vedānta work in other parts of Europe as well, in addition to the Geneva centre. His article 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa: The Myth, Philosophy, and Religion' is based on a lecture he gave at the Sorbonne University (France) in 1960. ...

'Philosophy and Science' by Professor P. S. Naidu, M.A., of Vidya Bhawan Govindram Seksaria Teachers' College, Udaipur, is based on an address he delivered at the Rajasthan Science Seminar held in the early part of this year. ...

How a humble tradesman of Kamarpukur had the unique privilege of being the first to recognize the divinity of Sri Ramakrishna even as boy and to worship him as such is beautifully portrayed in the article on 'Sri Ramakrishna's Earliest Appraiser: Srinivas' by Swami Lokeswarananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, 24 Parganas, West Bengal. ...

In his learned article on 'Physiological Astrology', the Hon'ble Mr. Justice P. B. Mukharji, Judge of the Calcutta High Court, brings out clearly that Indian astrology does not preach a doctrine of fatalism and blind predestination, but has a grand message to enable man to achieve self-realization as the supreme fulfilment of his ultimate destiny. ...

'Rolland's Concept of Aesthetic Dynamism' is by Dr. Sudhir Kumar Nandi, M.A., D.Phil., Lecturer in Philosophy, Maulana Azad College, Calcutta. ...

Principal B. S. Mathur, M.A., of M. M. H. College, Ghaziabad, shows in his article entitled 'A Vision of Grace and Beauty' that 'Omar Khayyam can be an undying inspiration for a life of action, sublimity, grace, and beauty'.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SHRI KRISHNA: HIS PHILOSOPHY AND HIS SPIRITUAL PATH. By Bahadur Mal. *Published by Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, P.O. Sadhu Ashram, Hoshiarpur, Punjab. 1960. Pages 334. Price Rs. 4.*

This is a treatise based on painstaking research. Authoritative works in English on the *Gītā* by Garbe, Hill, Sri Aurobindo, Tilak, Radhakrishnan, and others have been carefully studied by the author. The historical background of the *Gītā* and the *Mahābhārata* has also been probed into thoroughly. The result is a work of merit from the literary and philosophical standpoints.

The first of the three parts of the book is devoted to a presentation of, what the author calls, the personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Principal Bahadur Mal, though reverential in his overall attitude, is sceptical about the divinity of the author of the 'Song Celestial'. However, he has a few penetrating statements to make about the prevalent views of the Mahābhārata war. 'We ... hold that there was made a deliberate attempt to paint the victory of the Pāṇḍavas with a dark brush and that the many references to the part played by Kṛṣṇa in the Mahābhārata war were activated by questionable motives' (p. 25). Nor is our author prepared to take the popular legends seriously. 'The popular idea about the part

played by Kṛṣṇa during the Mahābhārata war appears to be taken from the rabid and virulent speech of Duryodhana as narrated in this chapter (*Śalī Parva,* chapter 61)' (p. 26). 'Some interested party has made a conscious attempt to besmear the character of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the noblest among the heroes and statesmen of his time; and strangely enough, most of the Hindus who have not carefully gone through the account of the war as a whole believe in the truth of these charges, and try to justify them in all sorts of ways' (p. 27).

Basing his conclusions on a thoughtful analysis of internal evidence, Principal Bahadur Mal establishes that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a prince, ruler, warrior, and teacher of spotless purity and unimpeachable integrity. He dismisses all the popular legends about the love life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as pure myths.

It is in the second and third parts of the book, dealing respectively with the philosophical bases of the *Gītā* and the *sādhanā* to be practised by the seeker, that we see the author at his best. The *Gītā* conception of God; of body, mind, and soul; of *karma* and the *guṇas*; and of the goal of human life is explained in a language clear and simple enough to be understood by the lay reader. At the same time, the exposition is sufficiently authoritative from the philosophical standpoint. That the *Gītā* is both *Brahmavidyā* and *yogaśāstra* is made abundantly clear in the second part.

The third and last part of the book deals with *sādhanā.* The method of yogic concentration is described at great length (pp.227-62). Self-surrender is given its due place, and *karma-mārga* is explained with special emphasis on the nature of 'desireless action'. The chapter on 'Cultivation of Moral Qualities' (pp.197-226) deserves special mention.

Having said this much in appreciation, the reviewer is in duty bound to express his disapproval of the author's treatment of the avatārahood of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (p.295). It is true that the *Bhagavad-Gītā* is great poetry and great philosophy. But, above all, it is great divine gospel. And if the divinity of the inspirer of this gospel is suppressed, then the *Gītā* loses to that extent its value and appeal.

PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

FRANCISCO ROMERO ON PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY. BY MARJORIE S. HARRIS. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1960. Pages 115. Price $3.75.*

This is an interesting book which starts with an illuminating account of Francisco's philosophy—a philosophy that helps us to have a clear vision of human weaknesses and achievements. We are living today in an era of crisis and confusion. Romero has gone deep into these problems in a manner that he has been able to offer a real solution of the human problems.

As a true philosopher, Romero has found out the cardinal truth that a 'critical study of the history of philosophy is that of the relation between that history and the total history of man'. 'The human being, past ideas, and a given world view all play their parts in originating new ideas.'

A true realization of world culture presupposes an accurate analytico-synthetic knowledge of all important changes and developments occurring in different spheres of human life in different ages. Romero pleads that a philosopher should have an intimate touch with the past and maintain his keen interest in it.

Another feature of Romero's philosophy that invites our attention is his firm belief in the problematic rather than in the systematic approach to philosophy. It is the proper business of a philosopher to deal with problems unfettered by presuppositions and postulates. The age of system-making has passed, and the philosopher's business is that of dealing with problems. He must not try to fit newly discovered data into the frame of a system constructed in an *a priori* fashion.

In chapters III and IV, we find a brief but lucid survey of Romero's anthropological philosophy.

The author has no doubt presented a commendable work; it is sure to have a wide appeal to all interested in Latin-American thought.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

OUTLINES OF VEDĀNTA. BY R. KRISHNASWAMI AIYAR. *Published by Chetana Ltd., 34 Rampart Row, Bombay-1. Pages 163. Price Rs. 4.50 nP.*

The relationship of the individual soul and the physical world to the eternal Truth is an important topic of the Vedānta philosophy. It is really commendable that the author has been able to expound the subject in a very clear and interesting manner.

It is a fact that our sorrow is due to ignorance, which conceals from us the nature of Truth. Brahman or Ātman is the supreme Truth. So the main *sādhanā* of man should be directed towards the realization of the Ātman. The oneness of all, when realized, expresses itself in the following three equations:

(1) I, the soul, am Brahman,

(2) All this is Brahman,

(3) Ātman, the essence of the soul, is identical with Brahman, the essence of all.

The Self is not to be identified with the body, with the sense-organs, or with the mind. It is, in reality, Sat-cit-ānanda. Everything and every being in this world lives, moves, and has its being in Brahman, which is the essence of all.

The book under review is a comprehensive survey, in a small compass, of the main tenets of the Vedāntic thought, both in its philosophical and religious aspects. Those who are interested in the Vedānta philosophy will find this book worth studying.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

PEACE AND DEMOCRACY. By SHRI KUMARA SWAMIJI. *Published by Navakalyana Math, Dharwar. 1960. Pages 289. Price Rs. 5.*

In this book, the author observes that man is in possession of unlimited power over the outside world, but has failed to conquer himself and rouse the divinity in him. This, the author believes, is the basic cause of war. He is, however, confident of the emergence of a society based on co-operation, love, and peace. So he says: 'There are three stages of social progress. The first stage of social progress is marked by the law of jungle, where might prevails over right. ... The second stage is marked by the rule of law, where right prevails over might, where impartial justice is sought with the aid of courts, police, and prisons. The third stage is marked by the rule of love, where we have non-violence and unselfishness, where love and law are one' (p. 285).

Every line in the book speaks of the vast learning of the author and of his firm conviction and deep sympathy for the suffering humanity. At every step, the reader will be inspired and entertained by the vigour of his language and imagination.

RAJEN CHAKRAVARTI THAKUR

THE REALITY OF RELIGION. By JEHANGIR M. SHAPOORJEE. *Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras-17. 1960. Pages xiv+135. Price Rs. 6.*

That the great religious truths are common to all shades of faith has been the basic conviction of all great seers and saints. There is only one religion, and that is a religion of truth and love. Since this conception of religion is not within the practicable reach of the common man, some form of idolizing is present in every religion. At the same time, every form of religious consciousness presupposes the need of a teacher who has experienced Truth. The religious experiences of such great teachers vindicate the reality of religion and its basic tenets. The great teacher is the awakened self who communes with the Self. And thus the central injunction of all religions has been 'Know Thyself'. It is with this teaching that Sri J. M. Shapoorjee is concerned in this work, where he proposes to give an outline of the real and practical way of living. The first part gives a lucid account of what his Master taught him; and in the second, he presents an interesting account of the Masters of Shah Daraz, like Mirchandani, Giani, Sakhi, Nanak Yusuf, and Sachal. These Masters are mystics, and they have held the torch of universal Religion.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

DRINK, DRUGS, AND GAMBLING. By M. K. GANDHI. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. Pages 149. Price Rs. 2.*

This is a collection of the thought-provoking writings of Gandhiji on matters concerning the grave sociological problems associated with drink, drugs, and gambling. The booklet presents a forceful and rational explanation of prohibition and repudiates the objections raised against it. Those who are interested in social upliftment can ill afford to miss going through this book, which records the various phases of the struggle launched in India and abroad for abolishing these social vices. Even in ancient times, the fight was on against these dangers. The *Manu Smṛti* is quoted in the book: 'The king should diligently keep gambling and betting away from the state; for these two vices destroy the state and the sovereign themselves' (p. 139). Gandhiji has not words strong enough to condemn the exploitation of the masses for filling the coffers of the state. He states indignantly: 'A nation that can subjugate 300,000,000 helpless Indian people, and then turn them into drug addicts, for the sake of revenue, is a nation which commits a cold-blooded atrocity unparalleled by any atrocity' (p. 120).

After independence, the national government, of course, has adopted certain measures to deal with these social evils, and some progress has been achieved in this direction. But unless the enlightened citizens take genuine interest in the moral regeneration of the people addicted to these evils, no amount of legislation can bring about the desired result. These soul-destroying habits are bound to eat into the vitals of the nation and make it weak and degenerated, unless effective measures are applied throughout the country and that in time.

KESHAVA CHAITANYA

THE MEANING IN YOUR LIFE. By Samuel Rosenkranz. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. Pages 146. Price $3.*

The necessity to have the correct concept of the meaning of life and to act up to its spirit is the theme presented in this book. The author, Lecturer in Philosophy at the Washington University, provides the 'relevant data presented by science, art, philosophy, and religion', 'and then relates that material to human life'. He is trying to evolve a basis out of the seeming chaos the world is facing in different spheres of life 'for answering the many questions thoughtful people are asking today about the meaning in their lives'. And he utilizes 'the concept of the fifth dimension for a fresh approach' to the problem.

Almost everybody is faced with these baffling questions: Where are you from? What do you do here? Where are you going? The solution rests on our ability to discover the meaning of life, which is revealed to him who can perceive the unity between the individual life and the universal life. Amidst the bewildering chaos and disorder that we notice on the surface, we must harp on the underlying chord of unity. This is the essence of life, as 'we live for unity within ourselves, we hunger for it in the world about us'. The timeless march of the universal life enjoins on us certain duties, which can be best fulfilled by undertaking the struggle 'to overcome hate and disease, ignorance and injustice'. The eternal 'values of freedom and justice and truth and peace and love and beauty' cannot die, and we discover the significance of our life when, being convinced of the truth of these values, we are actuated to work them out in our lives, individual or communal.

This book is not a philosophical treatise, but is meant for the common man, to help him in grasping the purpose of life. In this age of materialism, every book that deals with the higher ideals of life is a priceless gift to humanity.

However, the following ideas of the author are shallow, and cannot be logically defended:

'But God is not all-powerful. Injustice and suffering exist, not because a good God desires them, but because He is powerless to prevent them' (p. 112).

'Order comes from disorder' (p. 130).

Keshava Chaitanya

PHILOSOPHY OF JUDAISM. By Joshua Adler. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1960. Pages 160. Price $ 3.*

Professor Toynbee thinks: 'Jews are a "fossil" of an ancient Middle East culture.' In reaction to this statement, Mr. Adler remarks: 'If we are today a fossil, then we were always a fossil.' He thinks, perhaps rightly, that Jewish existence 'has undergone no great change of course to suggest that it is today better or worse than what it was two thousand years ago.' If one is acquainted with the history of the Israelites from the time of Pharaoh to that of Hitler, one would never choose to become an Israelite. It is a wonder how Judaism is still surviving. Jews also do not believe in any kind of 'missionary activity' to promote their religion. Their mode of isolated living—perhaps because of their belief that they are 'the chosen people'—has always remained an object of curiosity, but never of sympathy.

Mr. Adler is not fully willing to admit that 'Jews remain aloof from dominant social trends'. It is only for the 'last four centuries that Jewish scholarship has stopped interpreting itself to the world'. There are evidences that Jewish intellect was in contact with the outside world. For example, Maimonides in his *Guide to the Perplexed* interpreted Torah within the ideas of Aristotelian scholasticism. Mr. Adler himself makes a similar attempt in the present book in the course of interpreting the Bible, the Talmud, and Jewish history. The only difference is that he remains within the boundary of the ideas of our own age.

To justify the views concerning Judaism as expressed in the last six chapters, Mr. Adler devotes the first two chapters of his book to the interpretation of the subjects of scientific, philosophical, and political importance. Let us see his interpretation of a few sentences from the Bible. His remarks on the first sentence of the Bible give an idea that 'Divinity is not an infinite void', for it is an infinite void only in natural terms. But 'It is a primary ordinance of faith that the world came into being *creatio ex nihilo* "substance from void" '. There is no clue in this ordinance to infer that it is only in natural terms that Divinity is an infinite void. Mr. Adler also does not agree with the description of 'the fall of the human being'. According to him, 'man was not bidden not to use "the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge", but bidden to use its fruit with those faculties to which it was intended for him to deal in the "orchard of spiritual growth" '. The prohibition which a commandment expresses is not to curtail the natural functions of man. There is originality in Mr. Adler's interpretation. One may or may not agree with his philosophical or religious views, but one has to agree about Mr. Adler's scholarship. This book is not merely a significant contribution to the Jewish literature, it has a place in the philosophy of religion as such.

Suresh Chandra

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA KUTIR
ALMORA, HIMALAYAS

This Ashrama, a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, came into existence in 1916 through the efforts of Swami Turiyanandaji and Swami Shivanandaji, two of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. It is situated in a secluded, charming spot of the Himalayas on the outskirts of the town of Almora in Uttar Pradesh. It commands a beautiful view of the snow range, and is free from the din and bustle of town life. Thus it serves as an ideal place for an exclusive life of meditation and *tapasyā*.

This Ashrama is of great help to the *sannyāsins* and *brahmacārins* of the Ramakrishna Order in devoting themselves exclusively to spiritual practices and studies, during periods of leave from active work. Such facilities are also available to a limited number of devotees and friends. At present, the Ashrama has accommodation for 25 *sādhus*, and it has a separate guest-house for three families. In addition, there is a library containing 4,000 books. The Ashrama is in need of funds for making additions to the library building.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CALCUTTA STUDENTS' HOME, P.O. BELGHARIA, DT. 24 PARGANAS, WEST BENGAL

Report for 1959

Hostel Section: At the end of the year, there were 88 students, of whom 57 were free, 9 concession holders, and 22 paying. Most of the students fared creditably in their university examinations.

Pecuniary help: Rs. 555 were distributed to 44 students belonging to various colleges in Calcutta. Three students were helped with Rs. 90 for paying their examination fees.

The Library: Equipped with 3,050 books, 13 journals, and 6 dailies, the library gave the students facilities for studies beyond their college curriculum. In the text-book section, there were 1,360 books. In all, 1,398 books were lent to the inmates.

Educational tour: During the month of May, a number of students were taken on an excursion to Bhuvaneswar, Puri, and other places of religious and cultural interest.

Ex-students: As usual, the Home renewed its contact with its ex-students during the annual festivals. A book named *Swami Nirvedananda—Jīvanī O Racanādi Saṅgraha,* to commemorate the memory of the Home's founder, was published by the ex-students.

Shilpapitha: On the 13th December 1959, the buildings of this polytechnic were inaugurated by Professor Humayun Kabir, M.A. (Oxon.), Minister of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of India. Now in its second academic year, the Shilpapitha has 360 students.

Flood Relief: When the neighbouring refugee colonies were affected by unprecedented floods, relief operations on a moderate scale were conducted.

Immediate needs: (i) An amount of Rs. 1,500 more per month to increase the number of free boarders to 70; (ii) Furniture and equipment worth Rs. 2,000; (iii) Rs. 11,000 for a few small structures like rest-houses, quarters for cooks, etc.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA
(A Charitable Hospital)
RANGOON

Report for 1959

During the year, the Sevashrama, founded in 1921, carried on the following activities:

Indoor: Total number of patients treated: 4,075; Major operations: 2,248.

Outdoor: New cases: 66,663; Repeated cases: 1,56,624; Grand total: 2,23,287.

Classification of cases: Eye: 5,647; E.N.T.: 4,755; Dental: 7,811; I.M. injections: 52,551; V.D.: 1,985; X'ray: 1,724; Deep X'ray: 3,581; I.V. injections: 1,375; Minor operations: 5,368; Physiotherapy: 5,209; Clinical laboratory: 10,999; Blood collection: 122 bottles.

Cancer work and deep X'ray work done in the Hospital need special mention.

The Nurses' Training School: At present, 28 student nurses are accommodated.

The auxiliary staff quarters were opened on the 24th January 1960.

Needs: (i) K.10,00,000 for reconstruction of war-damaged hospital wards; (ii) K.75,000 for doctors' quarters; (iii) K.1,00,000 for cancer department, for an additional quantity of 600 mgm. of radium, a hydraulic table, and other accessories for deep X'ray; (iv) K.1,00,000 for a high-powered X'ray plant with attachment for planigraphy; (v) Physiotherapy department: Funds for replacement of equipment; (vi) Water supply: Funds for distribution pipes; (vii) K.50,000 for improvement and replacement of theatre equipment; (viii) K.10,000 for increased facilities and additional equipment for the Eye and the E.N.T. departments.