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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निवाधत

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

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## *Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary*

### MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE EAST AND THE WEST,

Please allow me to extend to you all my hearty greetings and good wishes on this historic occasion of the first birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda. His earthly career was a brief one, but it was packed with epoch-making spiritual realizations and their wide diffusion in the East and the West alike.

In his youth, sitting at Dakshineswar, at the feet of his great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, who was the fulfilment of the aspirations of humanity of all ages and climes, he had imbibed the spirit of universality through the realization of the Divine in man. So, though he was born in India, he belonged to the whole world, and India had no exclusive claims on him. His mission in the East and the West was to rouse men and women to an awareness of their divine nature and the unity of man, which alone can bring peace to this world torn with hatred and strife. To quote his own words: 'Doubtless I do love India. But every day my sight grows clearer. What is India or England or America to us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called man.

'There is but one basis of well-being, social, political or spiritual—to know that I and my brother are *one*. This is true for all countries and all people.'

In his comprehensive message, science and religion, reason and faith, the secular and the sacred, the modern and the ancient, and the East and the West became unified, and he himself was the personification of that union. His life and message have given the necessary impetus for the ushering in of a new era in the history of the civilization of man.

To his countrymen, he sounded the clarion call to be up and doing: 'Work, work, for the future of India depends on that.' He exhorted them to cast off all petty jealousies and to rally round the great ideal of 'unity in diversity', inherited by them from hoary antiquity. On this principle, he advised them to build up a great nation out of India's divergent races with divergent languages and customs, which, though a slow process, would yet give lasting results, and to refrain from using force to attain quick and spectacular results, which would be short-lived. Weld the variety into a unity, he said, without destroying anything, for such destruction will make the nation so much the weaker and poorer. He asked his countrymen to look with pride on what the nation had attained in the past, and have faith in the future destiny of their motherland. 'I am one of the proudest men ever born,' he says, 'it is not for myself, but on account of my ancestry. It has given me strength . . . raised me from the dust of the earth . . . may you have the same pride.' Referring to the future of India, he said: 'There she is walking with her own majestic steps—my motherland—to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power on earth can check'; 'Up, up, the long night is passing away, and the day is approaching; the wave has risen, nothing will be able to resist its tidal fury'; 'never is she going to sleep any more, no outward powers can hold her back any more, for the infinite giant is rising to her feet.' He exhorted them to have faith in themselves, to give up lethargy, and to work hard to build the future India. 'Have faith in yourself,' he said, 'otherwise there is no salvation; have faith and be strong, that is what we need'; 'Call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, and everything that is excellent will come'; 'No great work can be done without sacrifice . . . lay down your comforts, your pleasures, your name, fame, or position, nay, even your lives'; 'What our country wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which will accomplish their purpose in any form, even if it meant meeting death face to face.' 'Thou brave one, . . . proudly proclaim, "I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother, . . . the soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good", and repeat and pray day and night, "O Thou Lord of Gaurī, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me, . . . make me a MAN!"'

This message of strength, faith, energy, and solidarity is specially needed today in our present crisis.

The Centenary year will witness the reverberation of his thoughts, which will be a perennial source of creative spiritual education for man, endowing him with a vision and the resolve to bring about unity, harmony, and fellowship between man and man and nation and nation.

May the spirit of the great Swami, who awakened India and united the East and the West, inspire us all to live and work to this end in the light of the life-giving motto: '*Ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca*—For one's own liberation and welfare of the world'!

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA

*President*

Belur Math

January 17, 1963

Ramakrishna Math and Mission

## THE INAUGURAL SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA

[The Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary celebrations were formally inaugurated by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, President of India, at a public meeting held at the Deshapriya Park, Calcutta, on Sunday, the 20th January 1963. The meeting was attended by nearly 2 lakhs of people. The following is the full text of the speech delivered by Dr. Radhakrishnan on the occasion.]

I am very delighted to be here this evening and inaugurate the birth centenary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda. This city of Calcutta has produced many men of genius in education, science, literature, and spiritual endeavour, and the greatest of them all is Swami Vivekananda. He embodied the spirit of this country. He was a symbol of her spiritual aspirations and fulfilment. It is that spirit which was expressed in the songs of our devotees, the philosophies of our seers, the prayers of our common people. He gave articulation and voice to that eternal spirit of India.

Many of us are content to look upon the greatness which he had achieved. But it is more interesting to know the way by which he attained that greatness, the hard difficulties which he had to encounter and surmount, the exercises which he had to undertake, the way in which he transmuted his intractable nature to the purpose of the Divine. That, also, has some interest to the pilgrims, to the stragglers, to workers who wish to attain some kind of lesson in spiritual life.

He was born here, educated in one of the institutions here, studied the works which were then popular in his time—of John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, David Hume, was disturbed in his mind, tried to discover the way to Truth, went hither and thither, was tossed about till at last he met Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The impact of his personality, the sincerity of his conviction, his passionate love of God made a remarkable change in the life and work of Swami Vivekananda. When he was disputing with philosophers and dialecticians, when he was attending many *samājas* which professed to declare Truth, he went to him and asked, 'Have you seen God?' And the answer came: 'Yes, I have seen Him even as I see you, only more clearly, more intensely.' He was not arguing, he was not making guesses, he spoke from his personal experience and declared that he felt the reality of God in his own life, in the pulse of his being, and was face to face with Him almost all his life. That made a profound change in the life of Swami Vivekananda. It is the tradition of our country that religion does not consist in arguments and speculations. *Na medhayā na bahunā śrutena*—not by brain power or study of many texts, but we have to see the Supreme face to face. The Rg-Veda tells us: '*Sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam.*' *Paśyanti*, they see constantly the highest dwelling place of the Divine. So says the Upaniṣad: '*Vedāhametaṁ puruṣam mahāntam ādityavarṇam tamasaḥ parastāt.*' Don't be deluded by the glamour of this world, by the darkness of this world, beyond it is a diety. He is the Supreme. It is something which is to be felt, which is to be realized, which is to be experienced. That is the

lesson of India. India never counted on dogmas, doctrines etc. They were instruments, they were means for the purpose of realizing the highest kind of truth. It is true that the Divine is in each of us, but the splendour is imprisoned. There are so many opaque things shutting it out from expression, from manifestation. It requires a good deal of spiritual meditation, austerity, if you wish to manifest the Divine which is in you. Therefore, it costs a great deal. Religion is not a thing which we can acquire by simply reading books. It is a thing which can be acquired by the wastage of your whole nature by going through enormous difficulties and transforming yourself. He passed through all that, and attained to the sensing of the mystery of this world.

When once we recognize that the Reality is something to be felt, something to be experienced, you do not attach so much importance to the ways by which you attain it. They become subordinate. They become instrumental. And in that great utterance of his in September 1893 in the Chicago Parliament of Religions, what he said was there is a God above all gods, there is a religion above all religions, there is something which supersedes all our religiosities, all our pieties, rituals, dogmas, doctrines, etc., and that is the religion on the basis of which the whole world, East and West, could be united.

He quoted that famous verse of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* in that audience: '*Ye yathā māṃ prapadyante tān tathaiiva bhajāmyaham, Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ.*' Even as men approach Me, so do I accept them. All men are trying to seek Me, to find Me, and therefore, I don't make any differences between the pathways and the addresses and the approaches adopted by them. I know their seeking, their earnest endeavour, the way in which they are passing through turmoil to reach the Supreme. Therefore it matters little for me by which way they attain Me. It is that which he said. He declared it in the Parliament of Religions, the voice of eternal India, the voice of universal religion, the voice which says there is one God above all gods. '*Devānām ādideva ekah*', says the *Ṛg-Veda*. And the same scripture tells us that there are many ways in which that Reality is described by human beings. It is therefore essential for us to be tolerant, to be understanding. At a time when our country was lost in dogmatic controversies, when religious people were fighting one with another, became sectarian, became dogmatic, became exclusive, he emphasized that you are all fools, you do not know what the ultimate Truth is. You must get rid of all these prejudices and prepossessions and believe that the one universal God belongs to all religions, is found in all religions, and everyone is trying to seek the pathway to that eternal Supreme.

As in the life of the Buddha, there was in the life of Swami Vivekananda a moment when he thought that he should lose himself in the delights of inner life, in the delights of contemplation and not get back into the world. But Ramakrishna told him: 'Shame on you! Why are you trying so much to seek your own personal salvation?' '*Śivamātmani paśyanti*', the Supreme is in every human being. All these are to be regarded as embodiments of the Supreme. We should realize that the name given to him, Narendra Nath, was not a mere accident. He was the embodiment of *nara*, of the human beings. '*Nārāyaṇam narasakham śaraṇam prapadye.*' *Narasakha* is *Nārāyaṇa*. He felt the pangs of all human beings, and he wanted that every human being

should live, should live a decent life. Most of us exist, but do not live. He wanted every one of us to acquire strength, beauty, power, dignity, and be a truly human being. We are not that. He looked at the misery of our country. He looked at the millions who died of poverty and hunger, and he said: I am the worshipper of Daridra Nārāyaṇa, of the Nārāyaṇa who is located in all the poor people of this world. So long as they are there, how can I content myself with my own salvation or with my own beatitude? It is my duty to look after them all. The best way to reach God is by the service of man.

He inculcated a religion of patriotism—not patriotism in the narrow sense of the word, patriotism as the religion of humanity. His was a religion which called upon us to look upon all human beings as kindred, as belonging to one family. That is the kind of religion which he taught us and which he adopted. He said 'it is a man-making religion'. It is a humanistic religion. There is no divorce between contemplative life and social service. The two things are expressions of one and the same kind of phenomenon. If we have reached the Supreme and felt the reality of God in our own minds and thoughts, it would be our duty to come to the rescue of all people who are suffering in this world. A call to suffer was a thing which we should heed. Therefore he said: I suffer. I suffer anguish when I look at the misery of my country, when I look at the poor millions dying like flies for lack of food, sustenance etc. Even Bhagavān takes pity: '*Bhagavān anukrośamanubhavati*'—He feels a kind of pity, a kind of compassion, when He sees how the people, in whom the divine spark is located, are not able to develop that spark and make it into a splendour, make it into a flame. That is why we are here. We are here for the purpose of fulfilling ourselves, and that kind of fulfilment does not consist merely in the accumulation of wealth, or name and fame, or possessions etc. It consists in completing yourself, in your making yourself a symbol or an image of the Divine which dwells in you. It is that kind of humanistic, man-making religion which gave us courage in the days when we were all young. As a student in one of the classes, in Matriculation or so, the letters of Sri Vivekananda used to be circulated in manuscript form among us all. The kind of thrill which we enjoyed, the kind of mesmeric touch that those writings gave us, the kind of reliance in our own culture which was being criticized all around—it is that kind of transformation which his writings effected in the young men in the early years of this century. In Madras it was so. I have no doubt it would have been so in other parts of the country also.

We are today at a critical period not merely in the history of our country but in the history of the world. There are many people who think we are on the edge of an abyss. There is distortion of values, there is lowering of standards, there is wide-spread escapism, a good deal of mass hysteria, and people think of it and collapse in despair, frustration, hopelessness. These are the only things which are open to us. Such a kind of lack of faith in the spirit of man is a treason to the dignity of man. It is an insult to human nature. It is human nature that has brought about all the great changes that have taken place in this world. And if there is any call which Vivekananda made to us, it is to rely on our own spiritual resources. Say that man has inexhaustible spiritual resources. His spirit is supreme, man is unique. There is nothing

inevitable in this world, and we can ward off the worst dangers and worst disabilities by which we are faced. Only we should not lose hope. He gave us fortitude in suffering, he gave us hope in distress, he gave us courage in despair. He told us: Don't be led away by the appearances. Deep down there is a providential will, there is a purpose in this universe. You must try to co-operate with that purpose and try to achieve it. Renunciation, courage, service, discipline—these are the mottoes which we can learn from his life. There was a time when Sri Ramakrishna marked him out for leadership. The last words which he uttered to any of his disciples were to Swami Vivekananda: 'Take care of these boys.' Many were older than himself. But the advice was there—prophetic advice. He established the Ramakrishna Mission, which has centres in India and abroad. I know of the splendid work which that Mission is doing in the way of spiritual enlightenment and social service. We owe that Mission to his far-sighted vision, and we have it, and I have no doubt it will continue for many years to come to function for the spiritual succour and the physical sustenance of the large humanity which is now enmeshed in materialism—crude and trivial.

It is essential, therefore, that we should remember what this great soul stood for, what he taught us. It is not merely a question of remembering it at a centenary celebration, but trying to understand what he wished us to do, assimilate it, incorporate it in our being, and make us worthy of the citizens of the country which produced Vivekananda.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

Prime Minister's House  
New Delhi  
January 8, 1963

On the occasion of the Centenary of Swami Vivekananda, I should like to pay my homage to this great son of India who was instrumental in putting a new life in our people. His writings are as fresh and as valuable today as when they were written. I am sure that they will continue to inspire not only the present, but coming generations.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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## SPIRITUAL DISCOURSES OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

*Allahabad Math, February 8, 1920 (Contd.)*

The evening *ārati* (vesper service) was over at the shrine, and the devotees came to Swami Vijnananandaji. Among other things, he said: 'After the dissolution of the mortal frame, the soul takes a subtle form and more intensely reaps the harvest of previous deeds. If one can control his senses and transcend the bounds of time and space, one is in a position to summon the souls of dead persons, and get a response from them. They also respond as people respond to us when we call them.'

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'It is the duty of everyone to donate a certain portion of income for the public good. For that is the law of nature. You will get back whatever you give. A change in your circumstances today may reduce you tomorrow to penury and make you dependent on others. You suffer as a result of your own past actions, and that is why you should devote a portion of your income for the good of others, instead of appropriating it entirely to yourself.'

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'These ceremonial functions are not child's play. All our actions have the ultimate aim of attaining spiritual enlightenment or God-realization. Whether you reach that goal through the path of selfless action or through spiritual austerities is of no consequence. But the goal of all action is to receive illumination. ... Yesterday morning, I had a beautiful experience—the same as I had when I went to Sarnath. Something like a black-snake was creeping up very fast—it was the rising up of the *Kuṇḍalinī* (coiled up energy). It gave me a feeling of intense joy.'

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A certain devotee, in the depth of his despair, came to the Math to tell the Swami about his mental despondency. In words of encouragement, the Swami said to him:

'When the mind is overcome with evil thoughts, it becomes dejected and inactive like a mouse in the grip of a cat. But why should you suffer it to be like that? In situations like that, you should summon up within you the strength of a hero and shake off all evil thoughts. This is the only way out.'

*Allahabad Math, February 18, 1920*

Swami Vijnananandaji was very much tired today. He had gone to see Panrelā Mahādeva, accompanied by his cook. He had come back with his heart full of joy. He was completely oblivious of the physical exhaustion, and to the assembled devotees he was giving a spiritual discourse with great feeling: 'Although yesterday I said in passing that I would go and see Panrelā Mahādeva, it is not as if I was very keen about it. As a matter of fact, I might not have gone, but for a strange vision that came to me at night.' He became somewhat absent-minded while saying this and after keeping quiet for a few seconds, said slowly: 'From the bottom right up to the top of the brain, a bright dazzling light filled me up. It is impossible for words to describe it. A great joy pervaded my being. I could realize that it was the benediction of Lord Śiva. God is all-powerful and so is the Mother.'

'Then, after a brief silence, he proceeded: 'He is the source of everything. He is the king, and again, He makes Himself the subject also. He is the *sādhu* as well as the thief. It is useless for people to brag about their actions. It is only through His will that things are happening. He is free to do whatever He likes and has not to depend on anyone else. We are alive and invoking His blessings, only because He wills it. We will die this very moment if He so decrees. When, therefore, our entire existence depends on Him, why should we form an attachment

for worldly things? Our duty is to make ourselves His slaves, to think and work for Him and meditate on Him. Whatever we do should be a dedication at the feet of the Mother. Her external manifestations are time, space, and causality. As the perfect embodiment of all wisdom, She points out where our duty lies; and that is exactly what we have got to do.

‘When the Divine Mother revealed Herself to the Master, he wanted to test the genuineness of the vision, by wishing that a big stone near him would jump three times if his experience had been real. No sooner did the thought enter his mind than the strange thing happened; and his confidence was established.

‘There was another strange incident about the Master that we came to know of. In Bally, there is Nīl (Blue) Mahādeva, where, on the sixth day of the moon (‘Nīl Śaṣṭhi’, the day of the worship of the Mahādeva), the Master had gone with Hriday Ram. After performing the worship, he sat in front of the God Śiva and looked intently at the flower on the head of the deity. After some-time, he said: “I say, Hriday, Śiva’s head is moving and the flower is about to fall down. Look!” As soon as he said that, the flower fell from Śiva’s head. Everything about the Master was so unusual! It is only after this flower drops from the deity’s head that the *nīl* ceremony takes place. For the ‘Gajan’ festival, the *sādhus* spend about a month there in severe austerities for this thing to happen, particularly the chief among them. According to tradition, if the flower does not drop from Śiva’s head on that day, the chief of the *sādhus* has to come forward and immolate himself in a blazing fire. Anyway, as soon as the flower dropped, there was an outburst of joy. I heard of this incident from a householder devotee at Aligarh whose name I cannot recall now. Corroboration of this story comes from Belar Math also. Rakhai Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) used to send *pūjā* (offerings)

to Nīlkaṇṭha Śiva at Bally on *nīl* day; and after his bath, he used to fast and meditate on the God. Only at about 2 or 3 p.m., after the *pūjā* had been offered and the person taking the offerings had returned, he would take that *prasāda* and sit down to his meal.

‘By the grace of Panrelā Mahādeva, I had no trouble on my journey to that place and back. I took the train as soon as I reached the station at 9.30 a.m.; the return train was at 2 p.m. The place is at a distance of about three or four miles from Phaphamau station. On arrival at the station, my cook went for a bath in the Gaṅgā, and I accompanied him. Seeing so many people bathing there, I also took a dip—the first time in four years, since I had that attack of blood dysentery. After the bath, I started walking along the sandy river bed with the midday sun blazing overhead. It was near about twelve o’clock. The road seemed unending. I thought: “O Master, why are you staying so far away here?” But, then, I realized that the fault was mine, for, after all, Panrelā Mahādeva had not asked me to go to Him. Anyway, I managed to reach there. All round the temple, there were heaps of earth and broken pieces of earthen pots. It is so, because the great rush prevents people from getting inside, and they throw from a distance the water which they bring in earthen pots. Four doors on four sides open into the temple, which is not less than fifteen feet square. Inside, it is all water and mud. I did my worship with water and flowers and after touching the head of the deity, walked round the temple three and a half times, after which I visited Hanumānjī’s temple which is nearby. Then, I proceeded to Mother Pārvatī’s temple. Remembering that my zodiacal name is “Parvati Charan”, I thought, let me have the *darśana* of Pārvatī also. After *darśana*, I returned by another road. At a certain spot, a musical performance was in progress, and there were a few shops. There was a sweetmeat stall, and ‘*pedas*’ (a kind of sweet-



meat), each half a seer in weight, were being sold at eight annas each. But they were full of dust, and so, I did not feel like taking them. Well, it saved money also! With one pice, I bought a *nākhī* (a red sacred thread tied on the wrist). If the protection of Śiva can be assured by spending only one pice, why forego it? So, I bought it.'

Then the Swami narrated the story of the hunter to which the festival of Śivarātri owes its origin. He said, also, that the significance of different religious festivals lies in the fact that, on those particular days, some great souls achieved spiritual illumination. To the extent that they achieve it, they manifest their power on these days. Another explanation is that, owing to the movements of the sun and earth, three power currents are created—physical, mental, and spiritual. The physical current creates the wind and the seasons; the mental current produces day and night; and the spiritual current is too subtle to be felt, although its action is none the less effective. The physical is subject to the mental, which, again, is subject to the spiritual. Somehow or other, that hunter was influenced by the spiritual current and felt that the killing of animals was wrong. So, giving up hunting animals as a means of livelihood, he took refuge in truth and God. On that particular day of the moon, the spiritual current was very strong, and that is why people attribute a special importance to that day and remain awake so as to imbibe a little of spiritual strength. I don't know how far this view is correct; I only mention it, because it strikes me as a possible explanation.'

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'One thing that the Master constantly said was: "May you receive illumination and possess *bhakti* (devotion)!" That is the only blessing he was heard to give; his blessing was never in terms of acquisition of wealth or supernatural powers, which, to him, were worthless. He used to say that, when people came to him, he could see the inside

of their minds as one sees things through a glass case. Can you imagine how this was possible? The centre of man's thoughts is in the mind and the senses are all subject to the mind. Seeing, hearing, and knowing are all the works of the mind. It is a common observation that the purer the mind, the clearer the understanding. A man's face is a fairly clear index of the state of his mind. The more unsullied the mind, the greater is its ability to apprehend the thought processes of other people. It is just like receiving radio waves. Any thought arising in a mind creates a vibration, and a mind which is a good receiver catches that vibration and understands the thought current that gave rise to it. The only thing necessary is the purity of mind.'

In another connection, the Swami said: 'Hold fast to the way of truth and do harm to no one, and God's blessings will be on you. You must have reverential faith in the words of great souls. Really great men declare from the junction of conscious and super-conscious stages that they are willing to be born a thousand times for the welfare of humanity. Once they transcend that stage, these ideas no longer exist.'

By the bye, the Swami said that, shortly after his renouncing the world, somebody had asked him: 'Have you attained ultimate knowledge, sir?' The reply was in the negative. The questioner then asked: 'Then why have you renounced the world?' 'Because I have realized that its value is negligible and it leads to sure death. That is why I have given it up' came the emphatic reply.

A devotee asked: 'Without having something great and noble to hold on to, can a person give up what he has, even though he knows it to be of no value?'

'Yes, that's possible on account of *samskāras* (innate tendencies); he gives up the world, because he feels happier that way' replied the Swami.

'Then the devotee launched upon various

arguments on the subject, to which Maharajji quietly listened. Then he said: 'Owing to ignorance, man tries to support his views with numerous intellectual arguments and the result is philosophizing. But he gets over all these, once he is blessed with true insight. The Master used to say: "The world is a bad place, and you should renounce it." There were no arguments behind it, because he knew that no one can get over his unhappiness without leaving it. Once it is realized that a thing is bad, the best thing is to discard it; there is no question of arguing about it.'

*Allahabad Math, January 1, 1925*

A number of devotees had come before evening. Swami Vijnananandaji was sitting quietly in the inner verandah, gazing intently at a coloured picture of Mahāvīrjī (Hanumān). A devotee had brought some bananas and sugar. Maharaj was very pleased to see the sugar and said: 'You have brought the sugar timely, indeed. I ran short of it and was thinking of telling you about it. You seem to have become a thought-reader.' And saying this, he laughed heartily. He dedicated the bananas to Mahāvīrjī, and then took one himself as *prasāda* and distributed the rest among the devotees present. Then he prayed to Mahāvīrjī: 'O Lord, you are Rāmacandra's servant, you are his devotee. Bless the children of this land and make them happy.' Tears glistened in his eyes and there was a lump in his throat when he said this, looking at Mahāvīr's picture. The devotees listened with amazement to this soulful prayer and every heart was flooded with a feeling of intense devotion.

*Allahabad Math, January 4, 1925*

Many devotees had come before evening to have the holy company of Swami Vijnananandaji. They found him joyous like a little boy. Mr. Bhattacharya came and made obeisance to him. The Swami laughingly said: 'There is a very big question under

discussion here. A little while ago, there had come a stone mason here, who greeted me by saying 'Sītā-Rām'. I told him that Sītā-Rām was a petty thief. Astounded, he said: "No, no, Maharaj, Sītā-Rām is God." I asked him: "What do you mean by God?" He thought I didn't believe in God. So he said angrily that he didn't know. Then I asked a few others, also, as to what they understood by the word 'God'. Can you tell me, Mr. Bhattacharya, what your own ideas are about Him?'

Mr. Bhattacharya: 'God has six attributes.'

The Swami: 'Why? Can He not have seven? He has endless attributes.'

Mr. Bhattacharya kept silent. After some time, the Swami said laughingly: 'My God is the flute-playing Śrī Kṛṣṇa of Goloka and Vrindaban. I don't recognize anyone else as God.' He imitated the gestures of Śrī Kṛṣṇa while he said this. Some devotees thereupon started saying 'Mother Kālī is God', 'Śrī Rāmacandra is God', 'Śiva is God', and there was loud laughter. Maharaj, also, laughed heartily and said: 'As is the devotee, so is his God.' Then, suddenly, becoming grave, he said: 'God is Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss. Many are His names and endless are His manifestations. As the devotee looks upon Him, so does He manifest Himself to him. To some, therefore, He reveals Himself as Kālī, to some as Rāma, to some as Kṛṣṇa or Śiva, and so on. It all depends on the devotee's own mental constitution. At first, you feel the truth hazily, then comes realization. As long as you don't get true insight, there is a chance of bigotry remaining. Let me tell you the story of Ghaṅṭākarna who was a great devotee of Lord Śiva, whose name he always chanted. He had bells tied to his ears so that if anyone uttered the name of some other deity, he would start ringing those bells so as to prevent his hearing it. Brahmā came, Viṣṇu came, but he kept his eyes closed and refused to look at them. Then the Lord came

as Hari-Hara (Viṣṇu and Śiva combined in one form). He opened one eye and looked at Hara (Śiva) only. Then the Lord told him: "Look, he that is Hari (Viṣṇu) is Hara, also. All are the same." But Ghaṅṭā-karṇa remained obdurate. He said: "I don't understand all that, Lord. You must reveal yourself to me only as Hara and never as Hari." Do you remember what Hanumān said: "I know that Lakṣmīpati and Sītāpati are the same, but still the treasure of my heart is the lotus-eyed Rāmacandra"? Questions may, however, arise as to whether this is all fact or fiction. It is possible that there has been a good deal of exaggeration by the writers, but you can't dismiss all of it as trash. God has so many

manifestations according to the mood of the devotee.'

In another connection, Swami Vijnānanandaji said: 'The Master is like the Gaṅgā, and all sorts of people will come to him. Let them come. With whatever ideas they take refuge in him, they will get his blessings. To you the Master is all in all; others may not think so. You should not attempt to impose your ideas on them. You should be silent there, keeping your own ideas to yourself. What, after all, is the fault of the interpreters? One will realize only to the extent of his knowledge and understanding with which one has been endowed by God.'

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## 'REMEMBER ME AND FIGHT'

[EDITORIAL]

Speaking of the Himalayas, Swami Vivekananda said in his memorable Almora address: 'This is the land of dreams of our forefathers, in which was born Pārvatī, the Mother of India. This is the holy land where every ardent soul in India wants to come at the end of his life, and to close the last chapter of its mortal career. On the tops of the mountains of this blessed land, in the depths of its caves, on the banks of its rushing torrents, have been thought out the most wonderful thoughts, a little bit of which has drawn so much admiration from foreigners, and which have been pronounced by the most competent judges to be incomparable. This is the land which, since my very childhood, I have been dreaming of passing my life in, . . . and it is the hope of my life to end my days somewhere in this father of the mountains where ṛsis lived, where philosophy was born.'

'There are no mountain ranges anywhere in the world', writes Sardar K. M. Panikkar,

the renowned historian, 'which have contributed so much to shape the life of a country as the Himalayas have in respect of India. It is not only the political life of the people of Hindustan, but the religion, mythology, art, and literature of the Hindus that bear the imprint of this great mountain barrier. To the Hindus, the Himalayas have been a perpetual source of wonder and veneration. To the peoples of the South, a thousand and five hundred miles away, to the men of the sea-coast, to the dwellers of the desert land of Rajputana, no less than to the inhabitants of the Gangetic valley, the Himalayas have been the symbol of India.

'The majesty of the snow-clad peaks, visible from afar, the inaccessibility of even the lesser ranges, the mysteries of the gigantic glaciers, and magnificence of the great rivers that emerge from its gorges have combined to give to the Himalayas a majesty which no other mountain range anywhere can claim. The

Hindus have invested it with an element of the divine: it is *devatā*—a fraction of divine majesty. It is the abode of gods to the Hindus, not the friendly Olympus of the Greeks, but the inaccessible seat of the great Śiva. From one end to the other, it is studded with sacred places of pilgrimage—Amarnath, Jwalamukhi, Hardwar, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Pasupat, and the isolated peak of Kailas, the unapproachable seat of the great God Himself. Pārvatī, the consort of Śiva, the *devī* whose worship in different forms constitutes so much of popular Hinduism, is the daughter of the mountain god. One of the great peaks, Gouri Sikhar, identified in popular mind with Everest, is held sacred as the place of her penance.

“The holy Gaṅgā takes its rise in the Himalayas and girdles it for over five hundred miles before it streams into the plains of Hindustan to fertilize and sanctify its soil. The Yamunā and the Sarasvatī, the Brahma-putra and the Sindhu, and most of their tributaries, on which depends the life of India, have all their origin in the Himalayas. It will thus be seen that the central plateau created by the Himalayas is the source of life, as of civilization, of nearly a half of the human race. Well might Śrī Kṛṣṇa claim in the *Gītā*: “Among mountains, I am the Himalayas.””

Kālidāsā, our national poet, refers to the Himalayas as *devatātmā*, of divine soul. It is *nagādhirāja*, the king of the mountains. The ranges of the Himalayas, which extend from the eastern ocean to the western, look like the measuring rod—*mānadanda*—demarking the Indian sub-continent—of which they are the crown—from the lands farther north. The Himalayas are the eternal source of our spirit, the abode of our gods and goddesses, the ever-awakened sentinel of the North, looking benignly over the whole of our beloved motherland. The Himalayas are not just a part of our geography. They are the fountain-head of the perennial source of our immortal culture and religion.

## II

As we are writing these lines, we see in front of us towards the North, at a distance, the long ranges of the mighty Himalayas spread out majestically against the background of a clear blue horizon. The magnificent lofty peaks, rising one over the other, are gloriously shining with fresh-fallen snow in the bright light of the morning sun that sheds its golden rays on them in unstinted bounty. The deep vast valleys at the foot of the hills are covered in a veil of thick mist. Not a bird chirps, not a leaf moves, not a man or animal is seen anywhere on the scene. It is all sombre, grave, and serene. It seems as if the whole nature is in a state of hushed awe, paying a tribute of respect to these mighty mountains which have always been the symbol of divine magnificence to every devout Indian, specially the Hindu. As we look at these mountains, we are filled with a strange faith that lends strength and sustenance to every ardent soul. This faith is not an empty make-believe. It arises from the sincere conviction that there is a Heavenly Father who is as great, as firm, as sure as this Father of mountains, and who listens to our prayers when we approach Him with humility and reverence. The Himalayas remind us of something higher beyond themselves.

But, as we are looking at these mighty mountains spreading vastly in front of us, we are also, perforce, painfully reminded that these sacred ranges of hallowed association with the spiritual and national consciousness of India are now being desecrated by a perfidious neighbour who has set his treacherous feet on these holy regions. The silence of the Himalayas has been disturbed; innocent, poor, peace-loving people in thousands have been uprooted, their homes and hearths destroyed, their humble belongings looted and plundered. Vast number of lives has been lost, and an atmosphere of anxiety and uncertainty has been made to prevail not only over this land, but over the whole world. At

this critical moment, we Indians, who are the direct sufferers, naturally search our hearts to find out what fault of ours has brought this unexpected suffering and burden on our nation. Is it because we are peace-loving people? Is it because we never exhibited and gloried in physical might of militarism? Is it because we were making developments which caused heart-burning to our neighbour, whose welfare and friendship we always sought with all the earnestness characteristic of us? Or is it because we had become too complacent and forgetful about the needs of building up that strength which forewarns thoughtless military adventurers against casting their evil eyes on a gentle nation like ours? We do not know. But one thing we know that we have to face the challenge that has been thrown at us, and that we shall do it as brave, honest, strong, faithful people should do.

The one good thing of great importance that the present situation has brought in its wake is the patent fact that, behind seeming disunity and disintegration, which caused a headache to most of our leaders, was lying the fundamental and unshakable national unity, which needed this explosion to bring itself out on the surface. It has once again been proved that the great heritage of Ind'—the underlying unity in the midst of diversity—is yet intact and alive. This unity is already having its effect inside and outside the country. The call of the hour has brought the whole nation to its duty, barring insignificant and negligible exceptions here and there among some blind persons who cannot see, or a few perverted men who will not see, the truth. The whole country stands as one united whole to face the challenge that confronts us today. All hearts are aflame with a sense of pious duty, all hands are vigorously at honest work, all efforts are fused together to join into a powerful national upsurge that lends strength to our cause and fills us with a faith which ensures success and victory.

### III

What India is fighting for against a ruthless enemy is not merely the regaining of some lost parts of its land or driving the invaders beyond the political boundaries of the country. What we are fighting for is much more than all this. We are fighting for an ideal higher than common things; we are for a way of life which is precious and noble, we are fighting for a freedom, which is not only political, but of higher concept. We are fighting to save that India which, according to Swami Vivekananda, 'has withstood the shocks of centuries, of hundreds of foreign invasions, of hundreds of upheavals of manners and customs'. This 'India stands firmer than any rock in the world, with its undying vigour, indestructible life. ... From time immemorial, this India has been the mine of precious ideas to human society; giving birth to high ideas herself, she has freely distributed them broadcast over the whole world. ... Our sacred motherland is the land of religion and philosophy—the birth-place of spiritual giants—the land of renunciation, where—and where alone—from most ancient to the modern times, there has been the highest ideal of life open to man. This is the motherland of philosophy, of spirituality, and of ethics, of sweetness, gentleness, and love. ... Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard, and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of this India to the thought of the world. ... Ideas after ideas have marched out from her, but every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it.' Today, also, India is playing an important part towards the maintenance of peace and goodwill among men, to take only a more glorious role towards these ends in future. It is this India—great, noble, and gentle—that we are fighting to save from an unholy threat, and fortunately, we have a philosophy of life that can give us immense energy and strength at this critical hour.

## IV

With a hoary past of an eventful history, India has a rich cultural heritage which has come down to us through a varied course of situations and circumstances. While it is essentially spiritual, it has not overlooked the necessary steps leading to the attainment of spirituality. Of the four *puruṣārthas* (aims of life), which a man must need attain for a complete fruition of human life, Dharma is the first in matter of importance.

This word '*dharma*' has been rendered into English variously. The law, the norm, religion, righteousness, virtue, and all other terms which have been used to render the meaning of '*dharma*' fail to convey the full significance of the Sanskrit term. The Indian thinkers, with their wonderful capacity for finding unity in diversity, have coined this term which has a very wide application. Generally speaking, '*dharma*' denotes the standard of excellence that a particular object should attain with reference to the quality that characterizes it. Moral values elevate man above brute creation; the Dharma of man, therefore, is the measure of the standard of excellence attainable by him in the realm of moral values. Again, human Dharma, in its more specialized aspect, can be subdivided into many distinct norms, depending upon the distinction of caste, creed, occupation, sex, etc., and also, situation. There is a Dharma for the Brāhmaṇa, another for the Kṣatriya, still another for the Vaiśya, and yet another for the Śūdra. There is a Dharma for the *saṁnyāsin* and another for the householder. There is a Dharma for the woman and a Dharmā for the child. There is one Dharma for action, another for rest, one for war, another for peace. There is a Dharma which is eternal, *sāśvata*; and there is a Dharma (*āpad-dharma*) which needs adjustment in relation to necessity and situation. The Dharma Śāstras have elaborated these and have framed codes for various groups and various occasions. It is the duty of man to find out what is his Dharma, as enjoined by

the Śāstras, in a particular situation, at a given circumstance, and try to perform them to attain excellence in it. As Swami Vivekananda said, each is great in his own place. The Hindu religion is known as Sanātana Dharma, the eternal religion; for, rising above mere doctrines and dogmas, it leads its votaries through various steps, to reach the Highest, by the righteous performance of their particular duties to the fullest measure.

Dharma should sustain us at this hour of need, too. India is a nation wedded to the fundamental values of Spirit. Like individuals, as a nation, too, we hold dear the principles of non-violence, non-stealing, non-acquisition, non-covetousness, forbearance, compassion, forgiveness, and fellow-feeling, etc. We have never been expansionists, we have never coveted an inch of another's territory. In our way of life, we give the highest place to Dharma. But this should not mean that the culture and practice of such qualities would make us milksops. Our adherence to Dharma should not make us acquiesce in evil in any shape or form; indeed, to do so would be *adharma*. All our Purāṇas and epics portray the pictures of righteous battles against evil and untruth, resulting in ultimate victory of right over the wrong—the triumph of Dharma over *adharma*. It is for the upholding of this Dharma, that the supreme Lord incarnates again and again. When he came as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he delivered the grand message of the *Gītā*, the counsel of perfection, which boldly explains the nature of Dharma in all its aspects and demonstrates its permanent value in an ever-changing world.

The message of the *Gītā* is the message of manliness, the message of strength. Swami Vivekananda says: 'If one reads this one *śloka*—"Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Prthā! Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of foes!"—one gets all the merits of reading the entire *Gītā*; for, in this one *śloka*, lies imbedded the whole message of the *Gītā*.' It

was this clarion call of Dharma which removed confused Arjuna's doubt and hesitation and inspired him to fight the *dharmayuddha* (righteous battle) that confronted him. We, too, today have to listen to the command of Lord Kṛṣṇa, faced as we are with a situation—difficult, confusing, and calling for supreme sacrifice. The battle has to be fought at the front, in the fields, in the factories, and in the houses; as a matter of fact, in every Indian heart; for what is needed is an all-out effort to win victory for all that we hold dear and precious. We shall win, for righteousness is on our side, and we have the courage to face the worst and the spirit to

sacrifice the most for a victorious end. Happily, we have the valuable moral and material support of all the right-thinking peoples of the world. Our strength is multiplied manifold. We shall have faith in our Dharma, faith in our culture, faith in the Lord, and do our duty. With resolute determination and steeled nerves, and observing the rules of the game, we shall fight against evil, fight against injustice, fight against unrighteousness—each at his own post to the best of his capacity. We shall remember God and fight; for the command today is: '*Mām-anusmara yuddhya ca*—Remember Me and fight.'

## THE SAKTI-SĀDHANĀ OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY DR. SHASHI BHUSAN DAS GUPTA

Sri Ramakrishna was a Brāhmaṇa priest in the Kālī temple at Dakshineswar, the deity Kālī being well known here as Bhavatāriṇī, the Mother-Goddess who liberates from the bondage of existence. A galaxy of sparkling young men gathered round this Brāhmaṇa priest; they were headed by Naren, the most conspicuous of them all. All these young men later became *sañnyāsins* with a palpable leaning towards Vedānta, by which we mean here the school of non-dualistic thought. Some of them preached Vedānta in the Western countries by way of interpreting the true spirit of Hinduism, and the centres they established in the different parts of the world are organizations for the dissemination of the Vedāntic ideas. Yet they all professed, or we should rather say, they confessed—for, we believe, they did it with all the sincerity of their heart—that they drew all their inspiration from the Master—that Brāhmaṇa priest of the Kālī temple. The fact is apparently paradoxical—all these stalwarts of non-dualistic Vedānta believing and preaching the

complete identification of the individual soul with the supreme One, drawing their inspiration from the life and teachings of a Brāhmaṇa priest, whose business it was to worship the deity in the temple with all the paraphernalia popular Hinduism enjoins.

There is one way of trying to resolve the paradox by saying that these youngsters, with their tender age and easily impressionable minds, were, no doubt, deeply touched by the God-intoxicatedness of the Brāhmaṇa priest with all his simplicity and sincerity. But many of them had their intellectual training in positivism, scepticism, agnosticism, utilitarianism, etc. of Western thought, as well as in non-dualistic Vedānta, Sāṅkhya-Yoga, and even in Buddhism of Indian thought. They became believers due to the charming contact and the irresistible influence of Sri Ramakrishna and they imbibed the spirit of disinterestedness, equanimity, and charity from the life and teachings of that saintly man; but, in practical life, they developed their belief in their own way with

the training they had in oriental and occidental philosophy.

This, however, is not the fact in this case. There is no denial of the fact that these young disciples were not unlettered devotees like the Master, but were trained in philosophy and scriptures both of the Orient and the Occident; but their mind worked and developed in the line indicated by the Master. The fact will be amply demonstrated by quoting one of the utterances of Swami Vivekananda: 'I am what I am, and what I am is always due to him. Whatever in me or in my words is good and true and eternal came to me from his mouth, his heart, his soul. Sri Ramakrishna is the spring of this phase of the earth's religious life, of its impulses and activities. If I can show the world one glimpse of my Master I shall not live in vain.'<sup>1</sup> All the ideas and activities of the later Ramakrishna movement, predominantly on the non-dualistic line, represent no modification of the original inspiration in its process of evolution, rather in a zigzag way, or as a result of syncretism; the evolution was very smooth and natural. There is really no paradox or contradiction involved in the matter at all. The how is the interesting question that can be answered only by an analysis and interpretation of the spiritual endeavours of the Master.

In his spiritual endeavours, Sri Ramakrishna made various experiments just to demonstrate that whatever may be the attitude or method, the spiritual experience is essentially the same. But in our present discourse, we shall not dilate on the various aspects of the attitudes and methods adopted by him; we shall deal particularly with one aspect of his *sādhanā* (spiritual endeavour), the dominant aspect, the aspect of his approach to the supreme Reality as the Cosmic Power, conceived as the Divine Mother, himself being an unconditionally self-resigned

child 'living and moving and having his being' in Her. This is what we mean by the *śakti-sādhanā* of Sri Ramakrishna.

To understand the *śakti-sādhanā* of Sri Ramakrishna, it is necessary, we think, to draw out an historical sketch of the *śakti-sādhanā* in Bengal, at least from the eighteenth century; for this will give us an idea of the background against which Sri Ramakrishna flourished historically.

Śakti-worship is a religious attitude peculiar to the Indians. In the history of world-religion, we find mention of various mother-goddesses—particularly in the territories round the Mediterranean sea; and they are not always conceived as the embodiment of the Almighty Power of God—as the Almighty Power, conceived as the Cosmic Mother, coming close to the individual in infinite motherly love. Again, even among the States of India, Bengal is noted as a special centre of *śakti-sādhanā*. The *śakti-sādhanā* of Bengal had broadly two of its notable aspects during the medieval period, we mean the period between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries; these aspects were the aspects of ceremonial worship of the various mother-goddesses on different auspicious dates throughout the whole year, and the other was the aspect of the Tāntric *sādhanā* which was predominantly a Yogic *sādhanā* involving sometimes secret sexoyogic practices. These esoteric practices known as Tāntricism was, and could by nature only be, limited to selected groups. Very popular and widespread were the ceremonial worships—particularly the worship of Durgā or Caṇḍikā as the *Magna Mater* during the autumn of every year. These ceremonial periodic worships were with the masses, as they are still with the masses, more of the nature of feasts and festivals, than endeavours of deeply spiritual significance. It was the great devout *yogin* Rāmaprasāda of the eighteenth century who gave this *śakti-sādhanā* of Bengal a new orientation, not by any discursive method, but by means of his

<sup>1</sup> Reminiscences of the Swami's visit to London, recorded by Mr. Eric Hammond, quoted in the *Life of Swami Vivekananda*, 1955, p. 416.



practices and realizations, expressed through a large number of songs, which were sometimes the outpourings of a heart filled to the brim with supreme bliss, or were, sometimes, the outcries of a heart bleeding white, struggling against all the odds of life, and yet trying to stick to the spiritual truth with fierce tenacity.

Through his songs, which are surprisingly forceful in their directness and sincerity, Rāmaprasāda salvaged Śāktaism from all sorts of esoteric aberrations and sectarian limitations and raised it to the level of a universal spiritual effort. Nothing was more unpleasant to him than outward show, pomp, and pageantry in the religious sphere, and he grew averse, also, to the ceremonial and the ritualistic side. Of wine, which is much too spoken of in both esoteric and exoteric Śāktaism, Rāmaprasāda said in one of his songs: 'Wine I do not take—drinks of immortal spiritual delight do I take with the muttering of the name of my Divine Mother Kālī; my inner experiences make me intoxicated—I am called a drunkard by the drunken.' The whole stress of Rāmaprasāda was on *bhāva*—sincerity of the emotional approach, firmly based on an unflickering faith in the Mother—a spiritual power in whom 'I', with 'my' universe, is comprehended. This *bhāva* in man presupposes long periods of preparation—perfect purification of the body and the mind. This is all that is to be done on the part of man; the rest is to be done by the grace of the Mother who acts spontaneously on a medium which is well prepared. The analogy of the magnet and a piece of iron has often been brought in. The action of attracting a piece of raw iron towards it pertains to the magnet, but deep layers of rust prevent the piece of iron from being drawn to the magnet. All that is required of the piece of iron is to be purified, and the greater the purity, the greater will be the automatic attraction towards the magnet which, for man, is the Divine Mother. The purer the man, the stronger the attraction

from the Mother. The only duty left for the devotee is to cleanse the inner temple so that best preparations may be made for making the altar of the Mother therein.

As a matter of fact, the aim of Rāmaprasāda was also ultimately Brahman-realization—of course, with some modification, of which we shall presently speak. Brahman was taken by these devotees to be the great One, the supreme One, and Rāmaprasāda has repeatedly said: 'I have known the Goddess of the dark-blue colour (Śyāmā) to be Brahman.' It has again been said by him: 'When at the touch of the lustre of the truth, the lotus of my heart unfolds its petals, and the darkness in my mind is removed, I shall resign myself completely and lose myself completely in the Mother—the Saviour. All senses of difference and duality will be cast off and the grumblings of the mind will be stopped, and I shall accept hundred times the infallibility of the Vedas which say that the truth is non-dual, for, in reality, formless is my Mother, the Saviour. Proclaims Rāmaprasāda, my Mother resides in all the pots (forms); O thou, blind of eyes, realize the Mother as the luminous truth removing all darkness.'

Scriptures and discursive arguments were not for Rāmaprasāda, which were compared to the insincere smile of the hypocrites. Truth is to be always intuited within, and that intuition has always brought it home to Rāmaprasāda that 'it is the Mother who resides in all the forms'. The Upaniṣads exclaim: 'One is the truth that has assumed all these forms.' Rāmaprasāda would, also, proclaim the same truth; but then, there would be only this difference that the indefinite indeterminate One of the Upaniṣads would be replaced in his case by the Mother who can be definite more than the earthly Mother, in spite of being the indefinite and indeterminate Truth. There is some fine distinction made by Rāmaprasāda, which was emphasized, we shall presently see, by Ramakrishna, also, between the Brahman and the

Mother; the Mother is not exactly the Brahman, but the Brahmayā, which means a transformation and a transfiguration of the Brahman in active relation to man in infinite love and grace.

Śākta devotees of Bengal, among whom Rāmaprasāda was the most prominent, had a philosophical perspective of viewing the relation of Śiva and Śakti, which is mythically described as a conjugal tie, Śakti being the counterpart of Śiva as his consort. There is a traditional way of viewing Śakti as the Power, belonging to some one; and therefore, Śakti is the Cosmic Power of God who is the possessor of Power. Power here derives its truth from the Powerful. But there is the other way of viewing the truth which was favoured by the Śāktas of Bengal, though they were not openly opposed to the mythical descriptions, of which, also, they made extensive use. According to this view, power is not something that belongs to the supreme being, but power itself is the supreme Truth, everything else has its meaning inasmuch as it possesses the power. Śiva is the best medium that realizes and reflects this supreme truth as the Power. In interpreting the mythical posture of Śiva, lying prostrate as a corpse under the feet of the Mother-Goddess, poets like Rāmaprasāda and others would describe Śiva as the supreme Yogin (*paramayogin*) who constantly and eternally realizes the truth of the Mother.

Thus it is clear that the Mother is not to be viewed as the power of God, but the Mother is the God as power. God has two aspects; in one aspect, He is the ultimate, immutable ground of all that comes into being or may come into being; and in the other aspect, God is actively associated with the world of being, and, as a person, comes close to man to respond to the call of man; this second aspect of God is the Mother aspect of God—God condescending to man in infinite love and grace. In this active aspect, God is not merely the Mother. He can assume any form to meet the temperamental

differences among the devotees and can incarnate Himself differently to fulfil diverse purposes. With Rāmaprasāda, therefore, the Mother stands for the same truth as God as Śiva or Rāma or Kṛṣṇa, and the narrow limits of sectarianism are transcended in this way.

As for the spiritual experience, Rāmaprasāda had a preference for the dualistic tendency. Rāmaprasāda would not argue whether dualism or non-dualism is the correct thing; he would accept everything as possible with regard to the supreme Truth which can synthesize all contradictions within it; but he would argue for his dualistic approach in terms of temperamental preference. The pet analogy with Rāmaprasāda which was repeated also by Ramakrishna, was the analogy of 'being the sugar and of tasting sugar'. If you be the sugar, you are altogether deprived of the possibility of tasting sugar. Merging oneself completely in the Absolute means being deprived of the possibility of enjoying supreme bliss derived from the communion with the supreme Truth. Some distinction between the individual and the Absolute must, therefore, be maintained, which may leave the possibility for enjoying eternal bliss. With some, this dualistic approach and the truth of some sort of a distinction is not a question of preference, it is philosophic; with Rāmaprasāda and other devotees of his type, it is more psychological than philosophical.

Historically speaking, Rāmaprasāda and a host of other devotees of the Mother who followed the footsteps of the great saint prepared the ground for the advent of Ramakrishna about a century after. In Sri Ramakrishna, we find the consummation of the spiritual efforts and realizations of his predecessors. Historically, it has to be noted that Ramakrishna had Rāmaprasāda and the other Śākta devotees as his predecessors; and he again had Swami Vivekananda and his fellow monks as his successors, who mainly preached in India and abroad non-dualistic Vedānta as the kernel of Hinduism. He began by saying that there is really no con-

tradition involved in this fact. The how of it has been indicated in presenting a brief exposition of the religious views and approach of Rāmaprasāda, the Śākta devotee; and we shall now dilate on the point with reference to the views and practical spiritual efforts of Ramakrishna.

The main point to demonstrate is that there is essentially no difference in the mode of *sādhana* known as the Śākta *sādhana* and the Vedāntic *sādhana*.

We have indicated before that Sri Ramakrishna's life of spiritual efforts and realization was, indeed, an interesting chequered life. If we follow it historically, he got himself initiated into the Śākta cult first by Kenarama Bhattacharya in his early life, and then, followed his life of priesthood in the Kālī temple of Dakshineswar for several years. According to the account given by Swami Saradananda, a period of ten years, roughly between the years 1856 and 1866, was the period of Ramakrishna's intensive spiritual practices of various types. For the first four years, his spiritual efforts were concentrated in the worship of the Mother-Goddess in the temple, the next four years were years of intensive esoteric Tāntric *sādhana* under Bhairavī Brāhmaṇī, an elderly lady versed in Tāntric *sādhana*; in the following years, he took seriously to various experiments; he was advised into the Rāma cult by a Rāmaī saint, known as the Jatadhari, and he followed the method for sometime; then, for sometime, he guised himself as a love-intoxicated maiden for approaching the eternal beloved Kṛṣṇa, in the manner of the Vaiṣṇavas; again, he resorted to the strict discipline of the life of *sañnyāsa* (renunciation) under the guidance of the veteran non-dualist monk Totapuri, and during this period, he engaged himself exclusively in practices of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* or the spiritual state of arrest without any mental residue; again, he practised Islam in an orthodox manner for sometime, and again, Christianity for another period. All these

accounts may sound queer indeed to a man of reason even in the religious field, for it may, at the first instance, be difficult to discover any seriousness behind all these hotch-potch experiments in the spiritual march. But nothing of these was without the profoundest of solemnity to Ramakrishna, for he had a double mission behind all these: first, to be convinced himself that all views and methods in the religious field led to the same spiritual realization, and secondly, to demonstrate this fact to the world at large. Two things emerged out of these experiments of Ramakrishna: first, that, whatever may be the approach according to individual differences in taste and temperament and the differences in social heritage, the truth cannot but be one and the same; and secondly, spiritual truth is no monopoly of any sect or society; it reveals itself in infinite lustre and supreme bliss to men of all ages and under all climates, provided the approach is sincere.

The variety of methods adopted by Sri Ramakrishna was justified by him on another ground also; he would often say, 'Why should I compel myself to the monotony of a single course? I must enjoy the variety of the realization'—a variety that is consequent on the differences of psychological attitudes and the methods adopted. The path of non-dualism, he would sometimes say, is a path of dry disinterestedness and relentless austerity; he was for enjoyment even in his spiritual life—he was not for self-annihilation or self-immersion.

It has to be noted that enjoyment in spiritual life presupposes two things, the enjoyer and the enjoyed. Non-dualistic Vedānta is always categorical on the point that, in the ultimate Brahman-realization, there is neither the knower, nor the knowable, nor the possibility of any knowledge in the absence of the former two. The state of Brahman-realization is, therefore, a transcendental, indescribable state—a state of complete identification with the ultimate

Reality. But, in spiritual realization, Ramakrishna like Rāmaprasāda, was in favour of retaining some I-ness and Thy-ness. The philosophical dualists would say that there is no question on the part of the devotee of making any special effort for retaining the I-ness upto the last stage of realization; for the I-ness remains there, because of the very distinct nature of the individual as a spiritual atom. Because of this eternal atomic self-exclusive nature of the individual and the eternal all-pervasive nature of the ultimate Reality, there cannot be any question of their complete identification. But Ramakrishna would not argue in that way; he would not agree with the dualists in denying the possibility of this identification; accepting the possibility of this identification, he would say, he just did not like always to be identified and immersed thus. Ramakrishna advocated rather a self-imposed distinction between the individual and the Absolute just to enjoy the communion between the two. He would, often, speak of two kinds of I-ness, the one created by *māyā* or the principle of cosmic illusion; and the other created by a special attitude of the individual towards the self and God; here, the self must stand in relation of a servant to God or as the child to the Divine Mother. In his homely way, Ramakrishna would describe the former I-ness as the unbaked or the untempered I-ness, whereas the latter was the baked or the tempered I-ness. It seems from the sayings of Ramakrishna, and also from the songs of his predecessors, that this state of duality was not really a state that denied the possibility of a state of non-duality or preceded it; it was rather a state which accepted the truth of non-duality, and then, followed it, just to create an enjoyable variety in the flow of spiritual realization. We are reminded in this connection of a saying which runs as follows: 'Dualism is false and illusory, until and unless one is firmly placed in non-dualism; but the dualism that is created by the devotees for enjoying the divine sports is far sweeter

than non-dualism.' Ramakrishna was a devotee of just this type; the mother-child relation was so sweet to him only after the non-dual realization was a thing of common experience. But having been fully entitled to it, he would avoid it consciously—sometimes, he would hate it, as it would deprive him of the opportunity of enjoying the most intense communion with God in the sweetest relation of a son to his mother.

Should we then say that this Mother is not an objectively real entity, it is just an apparition conjured up by determined psychological conditions of the particular devotee? Nothing could be farther from the life-long beliefs of Ramakrishna. Swami Vivekananda, with his mind steeped in the agnosticism and scepticism of the nineteenth century Bengal, would often thus challenge the Master in the days of his (Vivekananda's) earlier acquaintance with the Master; the Master would be deeply pained at heart at this disbelief on the part of the disciple; and he rejoiced boyishly on the day he could win over the sceptic young man to believe that the Mother is as much objectively true as the non-dual formless Absolute is. God is as much true in His transcendental loneliness—in His undifferentiated oneness—as He is in all the forms He is capable of assuming as the Father or the Mother or the Eternal Beloved in active and intimate relation with the individual man—a God who not only comprehends me and my world, but who comes closest to me in a personal relationship. There is no contradiction or exclusiveness between these two aspects of the nature of the ultimate Reality; they cohere easily in the very integral nature or the wholeness of the truth.

Speaking generally, Ramakrishna would say that the path of non-dualism is a difficult path, to be pursued only by spiritual aspirants of very high calibre. It is extremely difficult to hold oneself fast in the non-dual realization for a long time, unless one is exceptionally strong in body and mind and

with a perfect training. The easier course for ordinary people, he thought, is to concentrate on some form of God as the Father or the Mother or the Beloved, according to his personal choice; but when the concentration becomes complete, the form imperceptibly melts away, leaving behind the realization of the one all-pervasive blissful Truth. To put the whole thing in terms of Yoga-physiology, Ramakrishna would say that, of all the plexuses of the body, the highest plexus (or the lotus of a thousand petals), situated at the top of the head, is the centre for realizing the truth as the non-dual Brahman; it is the region of knowledge. The next three plexuses situated in the region between the eye-brows, in the neck, and in the region of the heart, respectively, are the centres for realizing devotional delights of various grades. The lower three plexuses are centres for realization of worldly pleasures. It is very difficult to keep oneself always firmly placed in the highest plexus; Ramakrishna advised many of his devotees to concentrate on the three plexuses just below. As for himself, he preferred to dwell on these three plexuses to maintain and enjoy his relation of love and affection with the Mother.

The ultimate Truth, according to the Hindus, is Sat-Cit-Ānanda: It is Sat—It exists; It is Cit—It is the conscious principle; It is Ānanda—It is the supreme bliss. The realization of Sat-Cit-Ānanda in the whole of one's being is the ultimate aim. God with a form has nicely been explained by all the dualistic schools of Hinduism as the Sat-Cit-Ānanda-ghana, i.e. the solidification of the Sat-Cit-Ānanda just in response to the call of the individual soul. This solidification takes place through the unthinkable powers of God moved in infinite love which acts as grace with reference to the individual aspirant. The general attitude of Sri Ramakrishna, therefore, was that there was nothing very serious about the fuss over dualism and non-dualism. Naren, the buoyant young man, throbbing with all the future possibilities as

the would-be Swami Vivekananda, preferred the non-dualistic attitude, even after he was won over to accept the truth of the Mother also; and of this, Ramakrishna would often say to his companions: 'Naren has his house built on a very high altitude, he dwells in non-dualism; that is possible specially for him.'

But, personally, Ramakrishna preferred dwelling in dualism—not because of the fact that he was a man of any inferior calibre, but because he was a *paramahansa*, which means the great swan—a swan that swims and dallies in the stream of infinite bliss, without being lost in it. Ramakrishna, as a *paramahansa*, would often say: 'Don't keep me senseless with Brahman-knowledge or Brahman-realization, O my Mother; always keep me alive in the variety of love and bliss.' Ramakrishna had his transcendent experience of oneness of the Truth, often, in the very temple of the Mother Kālī. In speaking of his experience one day in the temple of the Mother, the saint exclaimed: 'The Mother Herself showed me that everything within the temple was a transformation of the Mother Herself; She showed me that everything was a transfiguration of the conscious principle—the image of the Mother, the altar, all the paraphernalia of worship, all the wooden things, and things of marble—everything was the transfiguration of the conscious principle—nothing was material.' But his were not the efforts to attain the Formless through the form, but to come down to the form from the Formless, just to have his sportive enjoyments, like the great swan in the lake of infinite bliss.

The aforesaid predilection of Sri Ramakrishna speaks of a characteristic quality of the religious mind of a section of the Indian saints. The general approach of Yoga and Vedānta is to make the mind purged, ultimately, of all the states and processes, and in the absence of any sort of psychological activity, there cannot be any question of the knower and the knowable, and any relation

between the two. But a *paramahansa* is not for the total arrest of the entire psychological process; he is rather for the mutation of the entire substance and the process. Some working of the absolutely purified and tranquillized mind they prefer, but they cannot but have God as the object. We have already spoken of the retention of the I-ness and Thy-ness even in the final state; a faint trace of this I-ness and Thy-ness keeps the purified psychosis working, which helps the devotee share the divine communion as a partner with the consciousness of active participation.

In the narratives and anecdotes that are available on the life and sayings of Sri Rama-krishna, we sometimes find him realizing the Truth with the strictly non-dualistic attitude and training. We, again, often find him falling into trance with a song on Mother Kālī or a song describing the supra-natural love-dalliances of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa—and again, we find him enjoying the spiritual experiences of Śrī Caitanya, on hearing songs describing his maddening love towards the Lord. What exactly is the difference in the spiritual experience in each of these cases?

To us, who are attempting an academic analysis and judgement in the field of spiritual experiences, it seems that the spiritual experience of man, at bottom, is substantially the same—the experience of infinite light and supreme bliss, either as emerging from the self or as pouring from above from the original source of all light and bliss. By his dualistic approach, a *paramahansa* has his purified psychosis conditioned in a particular way; because of the psychological conditioning, the experience becomes slightly tinged, as it were, which gives rise to a congenial variety in the experience that these great saints appreciate very much. The analogy of aesthetic delight may be of some help in understanding the situation. The Indian critics have all accepted the truth that aesthetic delight is, at bottom, one and the same in all the cases; yet they spoke of its kinds as the erotic delight, the heroic delight, the delight of sadness as well of laughter, etc. The immediate causes and conditions that were responsible for the generation in the mind of the aesthetic delight accounted for the subtle shades in the experiences of the delight which, in reality, is one and undifferentiated.

## ŚĀṆKARA'S CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD IN PRAPANCASĀRA-TANTRA

BY DR. P. S. SASTRI

It is often said by many a critic that, in the idealism of Śaṅkara, the world in which we have our being is not real. This charge makes out that Śaṅkara's approach to the problem of the external world is mainly negative. Attempts, however, have been made, chiefly by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Professor P. T. Raju, to show that this view is not completely true. A careful reading of the Master's voluminous commentary on the

*Vedānta-Sūtra*, if brought into relation with his Tāntric works, confirms the positive character attributed by these thinkers to the universe of persons and things. This contention acquires greater validity and strength from what Śaṅkara himself has said in his *Prapañcasāra-Tantra*, which was commented upon by his own disciple, Padmapāda.

1. In his exposition of the *Vedānta-Sūtra*, Śaṅkara clearly postulates two levels of

reality from the standpoint of the individual. First, there is a reality which is conditioned by names, forms, change, and difference. This is the reality with which we are normally conversant in our empirical life. This is not an unreal reality. Secondly, there is a reality which is unconditioned or absolute.<sup>1</sup> The former reality is represented by the world of finite beings and things including the God of religion; and the latter is the Absolute or Brahman.

The Absolute may be viewed as Being. This characteristic, says Śaṅkara, is the principle immanent in space and other empirical objects.<sup>2</sup> More explicitly, we are told that the contents of the world are the features or characteristics of Spirit.<sup>3</sup> The entire world has its being, precisely because it partakes of this character of the Absolute; and this position has been accepted by Śaṅkara in unmistakable terms.<sup>4</sup> It is in this light that we read that the reality of the world is Brahman itself.<sup>5</sup>

Brahman is the cause of the world, and the two are non-different.<sup>6</sup> However, it is said that the effect alone participates in the nature of the cause, and not the cause in that of the effect.<sup>7</sup> The effect is the manifested world, beginning with *ākāśa* or space; and the cause is the highest Brahman. With this cause, in the sense of the highest Reality, the effect is identical, having no existence beyond it.<sup>8</sup>

2. This view appears in a more pronounced form in the *Prapañcasāra-Tantra*. Reality is designated Śakti as in the other Tāntric texts. This Reality comes to appear as Prakṛti or Pradhāna, the matrix of the world;<sup>9</sup> and at times, the word *māyā*, also, is

applied to it. Reality, we are told, is the Prakṛti in the form of the elemental world; it is the life of all that lives. As a concrete entity, Śakti (Mother Energy) is the ruler or God of the universe, though her supreme form is Māyā. She is the form of the whole universe, since she pervades all; and yet, she is formless. As the immanent principle, she is all and is in the form of all; she is the energy in all things and is, as such, the same as the Spirit. These passages provide an illuminating commentary on Śaṅkara's conception of the world. The world is not a non-entity. It has a certain reality which can be neither doubted nor denied.

3. Māyā, Prakṛti, and Śakti are synonymous terms, not only in this Tantra, but even in Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*.<sup>10</sup> It is an indeterminate entity, says Śaṅkara, which makes creation and even activity possible.<sup>11</sup> Such an entity is called space in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*,<sup>12</sup> immutable in the *Muṇḍaka*,<sup>13</sup> and Māyā in the *Śvetāśvatara*<sup>14</sup> Upaniṣads.

The principle of Māyā is responsible for the emergence of names and forms, though it can be described as neither real nor non-real; and it is the cause of all phenomenal existence.<sup>15</sup> It is grounded in God and is designated indeterminate.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, the *Prapañcasāra* speaks of Viṣṇu as Māyātman, having the nature or self of Māyā, Śiva who has Śakti is Māyin, the possessor of Māyā. Śiva reveals himself as determinate and also as indeterminate.

This Māyā is indeterminate, only because

<sup>1</sup> *Brahma-Sūtra Śaṅkara-bhāṣya* (with the commentaries Bhāmati, Kalpataru, and Parimala), 1938, Nirnayasagar Press, Bombay (hereinafter abbreviated as V.S.B.), p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 441, 443.

<sup>3</sup> *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II.1.

<sup>4</sup> V.S.B., p. 444.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 272, 273.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 471.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 446.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 454.

<sup>9</sup> *Prapañcasāra-Tantra*, edited by Arthur Avalon in

the series entitled Tāntrika texts, Volume XIX. (Published for the Agamanusandhana Samiti by the Sanskrit Press Depository, 27-1 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta) 1935, I.26. The rest of this article is entirely based on this Tāntric work; wherever other works are indicated, relevant footnotes have been provided.

<sup>10</sup> V.S.B., p. 462.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.

<sup>12</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III.8.11.

<sup>13</sup> *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, II.1.2.

<sup>14</sup> *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, IV.10. See also V.S.B., p. 378.

<sup>15</sup> V.S.B., p. 462.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 378.

it is impossible to say whether it is real or non-real.<sup>17</sup> It is not absolutely real like Brahman; nor is it unreal like the water in a mirage. It has a certain degree of reality; and if it does not exist, all our empirical life would be a manifest impossibility.<sup>18</sup> The plurality that we have in the world is a creation of this principle which brings forth names and forms; and yet it is, says Śaṅkara, both evolved and non-evolved.<sup>19</sup> Still we cannot define it either as existing or non-existing.<sup>20</sup> As both evolved and non-evolved, it is both real and unreal; and this unique synthesis of the real and non-real is at the very basis of all finite experience.<sup>21</sup>

4. While commenting on the opening verse of the *Prapañcasāra*, Padmapāda observes that the world is a mysterious (*apūrva*) evolution of Reality. The evolutes then necessarily claim some reality. Of these, the primeval matrix, the individual soul, and time, says Śaṅkara, have a reality which is ontologically prior to the reality of other empirical data.

The *Prapañcasāra* first speaks of five pure real entities, of which the first four represent forms of Absolute Consciousness. The fifth is pure knowledge, followed by *Māyā*. This *Māyā* carries claim to reality, and it seeks not only to conceal the real but to distort it. The distortions, in effect, constitute the emergence of the world of plurality. Thus emerge a series of real entities characterized by the three *guṇas* or basic elements.

5. Before we proceed to consider the emergence of real entities, it is necessary to note that this Tantra is devoted to a detailed examination of the universe (*prapañca*) in the five-fold aspect. These five are the gross, subtle, causal, generic, and self-conscious aspects of Reality. The supreme transformation of Reality gives rise to the indeterminate sound which is Prakṛti; and from this originates the principle of intellection.

The latter brings forth the ego. From the ego are born the five subtle or imperceptible principles which give rise to the five gross elements. From the ego there also emerge the five organs of action, the five organs of knowledge, and the mind. All these elements go to make up the material world.

The great Prakṛti, distinguished by the three *guṇas* (qualities, attributes), pervades and possesses the qualities of the five elements. This Prakṛti is in the ten organs of action and knowledge. When Prakṛti is awakened into activity by the Absolute Reality, then she is the doubting and inquiring mind; and in the act of determining certainty, she comes to appear as the intellect. When she knows herself as the knower, she is the ego. Thus it is Prakṛti or *Māyā* that appears as the principle of intellection and also as the ego, and she is also the support of all. Since this Prakṛti becomes creative only because of the Absolute Reality, it is said that the Ultimate Reality is the ground of all the products of Prakṛti, and that the entire universe partakes of the nature of the Absolute.

6. In a different context, the *Prapañcasāra* observes that Brahman is beatitude, truth, knowledge, and consciousness, and that, therefore, it is *bhūh*, *bhuvah*, and *svah*. *Bhūh* is mere existence; *bhuvah* represents all the elements comprising the universe and their cause; and *svah* is the guide and the self of all this. The Absolute Reality and the world are, therefore, one and the same. They appear to be different when our point of view is altered. It is, therefore, not strange that the Advaitic tradition speaks of six beginningless entities, of which one is the phenomenal existence.<sup>22</sup> Just as the Ultimate Reality is beginningless, so is the world. It is by introducing the principle of time that we designate Reality as beginningless or as changing. But time itself, as the Tantra points out, is born with the activity of Prakṛti.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 380.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 709.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 477, line 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 477, line 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 333, 484.



The Absolute, in itself, is indeterminate, because it is originally not manifested as the pluralistic universe; and yet it is an all-pervasive Reality which wields Māyā. In so far as this Māyā is translated into activity, there arises a distorted or oblique appearance of Reality. As Padmapāda explains it, this 'mūrtyābhāsa' (appearance of forms) is an appearance which is coextensive with Reality. There can be no appearance outside Reality; and whatever appears is not only an appearance of Reality, but a real appearance. It is a product of the immutable.

The immutable, we are told, is eternal and is immanent in the entire universe. One of the first manifestations of this principle is Prakṛti, which is subtler than the subtlest, which is greater than the greatest, and which pervades all persons and things. At the same time, the *Prapañcasāra* observes that Prakṛti and the world-appearance always pervade even the Creator and the Absolute. There is nothing left untouched by Prakṛti or Māyā. And, as the ultimate Reality, too, comes under the grasp of this principle, the world-appearance is not an unreal fiction, but a hard reality.

Śaṅkara goes a step further and tells us that this Māyā knows herself; she is self-conscious, and none other can know her. It is only the Absolute that may be said to know her and this is only when the Absolute comes to have the nature of *kāla*. If *kāla* (time) retains here its usual meaning of time, this would mean that Prakṛti or Māyā is comprehended in the time series, and that, therefore, time is real. But Padmapāda seems to take *kāla* to mean a kind of knowledge or transcendental consciousness. However, we find in this Tantra that *kāla* or time continues to exist in a subtle form even during the state of involution of the world. This, obviously, points to the fact that Prakṛti or Māyā is a real entity; and this real is more or less characterized by space and time. Prakṛti as space (*ākāśa*) becomes active in order to create, and thus arises the

interaction of space and time. Out of this space is born air, these two give rise to fire, these three bring forth water, and these four finally bring forth earth; and then are born the animate and the inanimate. After giving an account of this creation, Śaṅkara observes that the world is apprehended by us, only because there was such a fact as creation; and only when we are able to apprehend the universe, can we have apprehension of the *prapañca* (world) in its five-fold aspect. Here the term *prapañca* obviously stands for the system of reality as a whole. Thus, according to the *Prapañcasāra*, the entire universe is a real system, exhibiting coherence at every step; and it is permeated by Prakṛti, which is only the Śakti or Māyā of the Absolute Reality. And this Absolute is not excluded by the system, because it is not any other than Śakti. As Śaṅkara puts it, Śiva and Śakti are one and the same.<sup>23</sup>

7. Viewed in this light, we find some of the ideas expressed in Śaṅkara's *sūtra-bhāṣya* more intelligible and illuminating. The experience of our waking life, he admits, are not unreal, since they are not sublated in any other state of empiricity. When I apprehend a post as a post in my waking moments, this cognition is not contradicted in any manner throughout my empirical life.<sup>24</sup> Even when the individual soul is liberated, the world of plurality is never annihilated. Instead, the prevailing wrong outlook gets corrected. Otherwise, we will have to admit that the moment an individual is liberated, the whole world ceases to exist; and this is impossible of achievement. And if there was a liberated soul in the past, Śaṅkara observes, there cannot be a world now; and this is contrary to our experience.<sup>25</sup>

The world in which we live is a fact of our experience. A liberated soul may come to negate its reality *for himself*. Even then, we have to admit that prior to the emergence

<sup>23</sup> *Saundaryalaharī*, verse 35; also verses 32 and 23.

<sup>24</sup> V.S.B., p. 555.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 713.

of this negation, the world did exist *for him*, the world did have a reality *for him*. After all, to negate something, we must have that something as a fact or as an event prior to that negation.<sup>26</sup> And what a liberated soul can negate is that which cannot have *ultimate* existence, but which lays a claim to such an independent existence.<sup>27</sup> The phenomenal world is not real if, and only if, as Śaṅkara observes, we view it as totally other than the Absolute.<sup>28</sup> In itself, as claiming an independent existence, it is a non-fact; and it is meaningless and illogical to predicate reality or non-reality to what is not a fact.<sup>29</sup>

In illusion, the pillar continues to appear as a man, as long as it is not properly cognized to be a pillar. Likewise, says Śaṅkara, the world will remain true for the individual as long as he is under the spell of *Māyā*.<sup>30</sup> More explicitly does he state that all our empirical activities and cognitions are real and valid till we have a realization of our identity with the Absolute.<sup>31</sup> It is only when we have the Absolute experience that these cognitions cease to be ultimately true. In other words, the liberation that results from knowledge is the liberation of the individual from his erroneous cognitions and experiences. The purpose of the *Prapañcasāra-Tantra* is to provide a method whereby such a liberation can be secured.

8. According to Śaṅkara's idealism, not only the world but also the Absolute is *anirvācya* or inexplicable. The *Prapañcasāra* observes that this inexplicability is due to the fact that it is not an object for a subject. It

is self-consciousness which is the ultimate Reality, and it is, as such, not a knowable or explicable object. So is the world self-consciousness when it is considered as the system of Reality. Hence it is that the world conceived as *Prakṛti*, *Māyā*, or *Śakti* is spoken as *Ātman*, as the unity of the three *guṇas*, as the synthesis of three *lokas* (worlds). This *Śakti* is said to pervade all space even during the involution of the world. Whether time is operating or not, Reality is thus said to exist as a coherent system of self-consciousness. It is in this light that Reality, conceived as *Śakti*, is described as '*prapañca-svarūpa*', the form, plan, or organization of the *prapañca* (world). In her gross form, *Śakti* appears as the transcendental principle, as the God of religious consciousness; and her supreme form is *Māyā*, a power through which the Absolute as unmanifest crests the universe and makes itself appear to be other than what it really is. The Absolute appears as the world; and this appearance is as much real as any other form of the Absolute. The *Śākta* (follower of *Tantra*) visualizes three forms of Reality. The supreme form is beyond any knowledge, and it is felt only in the integral experience; the second is the subtle form called the deity worshipped and meditated upon; and the last is the gross form known as the visible universe. In the last form, we have Reality or consciousness immanent. As a result, Reality cannot be pure thought alone. It includes the non-thought, the non-consciousness. Śaṅkara, therefore, addresses Reality not only as *bodharūpa*, but also as *abodharūpa*: Reality is knowledge and non-knowledge as well. As non-knowledge, it is *Māyā* or *Avidyā* which brings about phenomenal existence; and as knowledge, it liberates the individual. *Māyā* then, is not an illusion, but an essential aspect of Reality.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 445.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 456.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 535.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 458, 155.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 462.

# THE ETHICO-SOCIAL OUTLOOK IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THOMAS HILL GREEN

BY SRIMATI PADMA SANYAL

Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882) occupies a very important position among the British idealistic thinkers. The history of philosophy is the chief witness of the tremendous contribution that he makes towards the development of English philosophy, and through it, to the philosophical developments of other countries, too, by breaking, for the first time, the wall of narrow conservatism round the field of English philosophy, and thereby, allowing German idealism to commence its mission on the 'Anglo-Saxon soil'. It is really a great service on his part towards English idealism, because it was hitherto totally inaccessible to all sorts of outside influences; and without these, specially without the influence of German idealism, it might not have flourished with full blossoms. Hence it is held that but for the service of this thinker, British idealism would have taken a different course.

Now, if anybody studies Green's philosophy closely and sincerely, he cannot, in any way, deny the fact that he is a true devotee of spiritualism, and this spiritual fervour is ingrained in each and every aspect of his thought. His metaphysics is spiritual through and through and his religion, his ethics, his politics—all are based on this spiritualism or rather on his transcendentalism. Hence it is true that, without a brief reference to his transcendental metaphysics, no discussion of Green's philosophy is complete.

## II

For deriving his great inspiration for this type of philosophy, Green went to the idealistic philosophy of Kant and Hegel and to the thought of Aristotle and did not hesitate to go to Christian ethics. His spiritualism has its root mainly in the spiritualism of Imma-

nuel Kant, the German rationalist. Both of them arrive at their spiritualism through a study of the most important epistemological question, such as 'how do we know the world as a well-organized system'. The empiricists like Locke, Hume, and others hold that we experience the world. Hume declares that knowledge is purely empirical—our reason having no part to play in it. Kant, the staunch rationalist is 'roused from his dogmatic slumber' by this Humean declaration and strongly denounces it. He rather makes a counter declaration '*Macht zwar der verstand die Natur*', i.e. understanding maketh nature. Green is easily attracted to this Kantian declaration. He accepts this principle and extends it a bit further. Kant clearly points out that our understanding makes nature, but it does not create her, because the materials of knowledge are not the creation of mind, but they are supplied by the external reality. The 'thing-in-itself' that affects our senses and our understanding, by supplying the forms and relations, builds up the superstructure of knowledge. Green does not accept the latter portion of the Kantian theory. So he accepts it, but modifies it according to his own bent of mind. He makes the principle of relation the basis of the world. According to him, everywhere in nature the principle of relation reigns supreme without which nothing can exist, because there cannot be any existent reality without relations of space, time, causality, etc. Thus, according to him, the world is not merely a construction, but a creation of mind. But it is not the finite mind of this or that man—it is the eternal self-consciousness that relates everything, itself remaining behind and beyond all sorts of relations. This eternal self-consciousness is the ultimate reality in Green's

philosophy. Therefore, out of this self-consciousness evolves everything.<sup>1</sup> Like Kant, he denounces sensationalism of the Humean pattern that strives to eliminate the work of mind from the realm of knowledge and reduces the object of knowledge to bare passive sensation that, ultimately, leads to extreme scepticism. Green declares that the work of the mind is involved in the very existence of the world and, therefore, proves the baselessness of the empiricists' declaration. Green, ultimately, identifies the relational principle of self-consciousness with what religion calls God. This ultimate reality is immaterial and immovable, it is absolutely one with itself and remains beyond any space and time and beyond any causal series.

In Green's system, man and God are very closely related. He says: 'God is a being with whom the human spirit is identical, in the sense that He is all which the human spirit is capable of becoming.'<sup>2</sup> Thus he gives a spiritual status to man. He admits that man is a finite being, but this is not the whole truth of him, because he is potentially an infinite spirit. He vehemently denounces the naturalistic outlook that man is a mere animal, having desires, appetites, etc., and that he has been produced most mechanically and unintelligently by a huge machine, i.e. the universe, without any end or purpose of his own. Against this conventional deterministic tendency of the time, he declares that man is not a mere animal, that he can never be explained in such mechanistic terms as a helpless product of the physical forces. Instead of this, he is a self-conscious being, a self-distinguishing consciousness, having free intelligence and, therefore, can never be explained in terms of natural process. Man,

<sup>1</sup> A similar view is found in the Upaniṣad, which also declares that there is nothing in the universe which, if it is not itself mental, does not presuppose mind: 'There the sun shines not, nor the moon or the stars, nor this lightning either. Where, then, could this fire be? Everything shines only after the shining Spirit; through its light all these shine' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II.2.15).

<sup>2</sup> *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 198.

according to him, is a true bearer of knowledge, and in this respect, he is essentially spiritual. Thus he is a peculiar combination of the natural and the supernatural. 'While, on the one hand, his consciousness is throughout empirically conditioned, in the sense that it would not be what at any time it is but for a series of events, sensible or related to sensibility, some of these events in the past history of consciousness, others of these events affecting the animal system organic to consciousness; on the other hand, his consciousness would not be what it is as knowing, or as a subject of intelligent experience but for the self-realization or reproduction in it through processes thus empirically conditioned of an eternal consciousness not existing in time, but the condition of there being an order in time, not an object of experience, but the condition of there being an intelligent experience, and in this sense, not "empirical" but "intelligible".'<sup>3</sup> Thus Green relates man with God most intimately and, at the point where the finitude and incompleteness of man meets his potential infinitude and perfection, begins the moral philosophy of Green.

### III

The moral end or the true good of man, according to Thomas Green, is that in which man finds rest and satisfaction and attains this highest end through self-realization or the realization of his moral capabilities through increasing knowledge. So, according to him, self-realization is the *summum bonum* or the highest end of man.

In his conception of morality, he neither drags man to pure animality by considering only his animal side, nor does he lift him to

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85. This oneness of man and God has recently been emphasized upon by Gandhiji, who says: 'I believe in the absolute oneness of God and, therefore, of humanity. Though we have many bodies, we have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction, but they have the same source.' The Upaniṣads, too, preached the same doctrine long ago, where they equated the Satyam-Jñānam-Anantam with Ātman.

any superhuman level by recognizing only his rationality and by severing sensibility from his life. So he denounces both Hedonism and Rigorism as onesided and, therefore, incomplete theories of morality.

As against the ethical Hedonists, who say that the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the highest end of man, Green's objection is that no such sum of happiness is possible in human life, because, when we pass from one pleasure to another pleasure, it is vanished. Nor can the successively enjoyed pleasures be summed up. A sum of pleasures 'successively felt or enjoyed' is, in his opinion, a non-entity.

He denounces Kantian Rigorism, too, on the ground that it takes into account only the rationality of man as his essential nature and totally severs sensibility from his life, as Kant regards it to be the relic of animality in human life. Kant is of opinion that, as reason is the essence of human nature, only the life of reason should be cultivated and that sensibility or, in other words, animality should have no place in his life.

But Green, like a true humanist, takes into account both sensibility and reason as constituent elements of the true nature of man and joins hands with Aristotle and Hegel. Because he clearly sees that 'Aristotle, though he asserts the Platonic distinction of the rational and the irrational, conceives of man's virtuous life as a full orb'd life which, while it is in accordance with right reason, embraces sensibility as well'. Hegel, also, does not take any partial aspect of man as constituting his entire nature. Because we know very well that by a 'person' Hegel means our higher or rational self by transmuting our lower or animal self into it. Thus these thinkers, though they recognize the supremacy of reason in human life, do not negate his sensibility in any way. Green's soaring idealistic temperament is easily attracted to this thought, and happily, he joins hands with them and accepts their eudaemonistic conception of morality. Under the banner of

this, he reconciles the conflicting attitudes of Hedonism and Rigorism. He strongly asserts that there cannot be any doubt about the fact that man, as an animal organism, has desires, passions, appetites, etc., but the point is this that all these instincts are to be guided by the principle of reason and that our moral life does not require the extirpation of any of our faculties, either rational or sensible.

From the very beginning, he points out that our moral life is that in which 'through certain media and under certain consequent limitations, but with the constant characteristic of self-consciousness and self-objectification, the one divine mind gradually reproduces itself in the human soul'. 'By virtue of this principle in him, man has definite capabilities, the realization of which, since in it alone he can satisfy himself, forms his true good.'<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the realization of these moral capabilities is the *summum bonum* of man. But in Green's system, this does not seem to be a very difficult process, because man has a natural aptitude for self-realization. Due to the presence of the divine principle in him, he cannot remain content with what he actually is. He always feels some cravings—some irresistible urge. He asserts that it is man's vocation 'to make himself what he has the possibility of becoming, but actually is not, and hence not merely like the plant or animal, undergoes a process of development, but seeks to and does develop himself'.<sup>5</sup> Thus it is a most distinguishing feature of man's moral life that 'it is governed by the consciousness of there being some perfection, which has to be attained, some vocation which has to be fulfilled, some law which has to be obeyed, something absolutely desirable, whatever the individual may, for the time, desire; that it is in ministering to such an end that the agent seeks to satisfy himself'.<sup>6</sup> Of course, Green admits the fact that we do not actually know what that ideal life, in its perfection,

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

is but the very conviction that it is real and that we are capable of attaining it makes our moral life possible.

#### IV

Green's ethics is essentially social. According to him, man being essentially a social being, all his self-development—i.e. development of his self from less perfect to more perfect, from the animal life to his ideal development, from his finite to his spiritual development is possible only through some society. This social nature of man has also been emphasized upon by Bradley, J. Royce, and other idealistic thinkers. According to them, too, man's moral development is possible only in and through some society, as a member of some community. In a right dialectic fashion Green, too, says that man can never be an isolated individual, but a thoroughly social being. And all his moral actions are to be performed in some society—all his moral ends are to be attained in and through some society. According to him, the principle of self-consciousness is the fundamental fact in human nature and that this principle partakes of the character of the ultimate reality and that what is true of one individual is also true of all. Man, being essentially a social being, constantly affects as well as is himself affected, by the manifold interests of the other members of his society. So the moral action of a man does not merely mean the attainment of his own individual excellence. On the contrary, it must affect the morality of other members of his community as well. Now, the fact that human nature is universal is the source of the idea of a permanent good which is never private to this or that individual. The conception of particular individuals and the distinction between 'good for self' and 'good for others' form no part of his system. In his system, none can gain at the cost of other members of his community, and naturally, he does not seek anything which is purely private to himself and attempts to attain his own progress through the

progress of others. Green clearly points out : 'It must constantly be borne in mind, in saying that the human spirit can only realize itself, that the divine idea of man can only be fulfilled in and through persons, we are not denying, but affirming that the realization and fulfilment can only take place in and through some society. Without society, no person; this is as true as that without persons, without self-objectifying agents, there could be no such society as we know. Such society is founded on the recognition by persons of each other, and their interests in each other, as persons. . . . They are interested in each other as persons, in so far as each, being aware that another presents his own self-satisfaction to himself as an object, finds satisfaction for himself in procuring or witnessing the self-satisfaction of the other.'<sup>7</sup>

He bestows freedom on the individuals, but does not do it in this sense that man can develop himself in any way he likes, but in the sense of pursuing the goal of moral and spiritual self-realization, and such self-realization is to be achieved through the performance of 'common good', by which Green means such good, in which the individual does not distinguish between 'good for self' and 'good for others'. 'It is', he says, 'a man's thought of himself as permanent that gives rise to the idea of such good (i.e. social good not private to the man himself), and the thought of himself as permanent is inseparable from an identification of himself with others in whose continued life he contemplates himself as living. . . . Hence the distinction commonly supposed to exist between . . . good for self and good for others has never entered into that idea of a true good on which moral judgments are founded.'<sup>8</sup> This idea of common good thus plays a tremendous role in his philosophy.

Green, being a social philosopher, makes society responsible for the moral development of man. He says: 'It is only as living in

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 217-18.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 271-72.

community, as sharing the life of others, as incorporated in the continuous being of a family or nation, of a state or a church, that he can sustain himself in that thought of his own permanence, to which the thought of permanent well-being is correlative.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, without realizing the demands of God through his fellow man in his society, it is hardly possible for a man to realize it in his own life. So, it is, according to Green, the most important condition of man's moral development that he should stand in a 'relation to some group of persons whose well-being he takes to be as his own and in whom he is interested in being interested in himself'.<sup>10</sup> He should feel in the very core of his heart that the service to man is a bounden duty to everyman, that 'there is a duty of every man to every man; and that he should know well that it is impossible for him to attain any desired goal by neglecting this fundamental duty'. This, of course, is also the main theme of the social philosophy of Bradley who, in his famous *Ethical Studies* (p. 185), clearly says: 'In the community is the individual realized. . . . The work of the individual for his needs is a satisfaction of the needs of others as much as of his own; he attains this satisfaction of his own only through the work of others.'

Here, we are to note an important point that, though Green rejects utilitarianism as an ethical doctrine, yet he admits the fact that they improved the standard of social action by 'insisting that it is the greater number whose highest good is to be taken into account'.<sup>11</sup> Society, therefore, in Green's opinion, is a most indispensable condition for the moral life of man; for, however much he may lay stress on the spiritual man, he admits the fact that man in the world is a mere finite animal organism, and in that respect, he is incomplete and imperfect. It is only potentially that he is perfect and spiritual. But he has a scope for reaching that potential

spirituality and perfection by overcoming all the handicaps of his finitude and the way to that goal is his sincere service to humanity.

Of course, we should remember that Green nowhere says that the society or State makes its members moral; rather, he says that the State simply helps his moral life by removing the different physical hindrances that may obstruct his leading a moral life. 'The function of the Government', he says, 'is to maintain conditions of life in which morality shall be possible.' The primary function of the State is to establish the minimum condition without which morality can hardly be attained. At this point, the ethico-religious point of Green's philosophy becomes very clear; for, according to him, God realizes Himself through the self-realization of man, and man thus, through his own self-realization, fulfils this divine purpose. Therefore, man has a right to an opportunity for the fulfilment of this divine purpose. And it is the State or society, of which he is a member, that is to guarantee that right—the right to live the good life. 'The capacity for rights, then, being a capacity for spontaneous action, regulated by a conception of common good, . . . is a capacity which cannot be generated; . . . which, on the contrary, is neutralized by any influences that interfere with the spontaneous action of social interest. . . . For this reason, the effectual action of the State, i.e. the community as acting through law for the promotion of habits of true citizenship seems necessarily to be confined to the removal of obstacles.'<sup>12</sup> In accordance with his metaphysical doctrine, in his political theory, too, he says that the State emerges out of the consciousness of a common good. 'Human consciousness postulates liberty, liberty postulates rights, and rights demand the State', because, without being a member of some State, nobody can have any right. He vehemently denounces the conception of the existence of

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 272-73.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384.

<sup>12</sup> *Principles of Political Obligation*, pp. 208-9.

rights possessed by man in some pre-social condition of life.

Society helps man through various laws and institutions in which the 'collective mind' is embodied, and it is the duty of each member of society to recognize and respect each other's rights which are powers. Man, as a moral being, can fulfil his various vocations only through the use of these powers secured to him.

The State, sometimes, uses force in order to maintain law and order within the State, and Green supports it only for the purpose which it fulfils. He also says that man should obey the powers of the State, in so far as they facilitate the realization of his ethical ideals, but he very strongly declares that force should not be the basis of the State.

Green supports all that supports humanity or helps its moral life. According to him, the rights of life and liberty are the fundamental rights of man and they make it a duty of the State to guarantee them. He does not support anything that annuls these fundamental rights of man. He feels from the very core of his heart that these fundamental rights of man are annulled by war, because in spite of the facts that 'it may not be a case of mere murder, that it may satisfy some private interests of some States, or it may elicit the spirit of patriotism', he clearly sees that it, in most cases, utterly exhausts human capacities and drains his life blood. So he prays not only for the end of war, but for the extinction of the very spirit of war. Here, of course, he deviates from the path of Hegel who might have worshipped war as it reveals the omnipotence of the State in its individuality.

He is liberal towards the practice of punishment. He sees that, though the rights of life and liberty are sometimes infringed by punishment, it sometimes helps the members of the State by removing the bad elements from the path of their moral development. So he supports punishment, but declares that the aim of punishment must be not to extin-

guish the man concerned, but to help him regain his sense of truth, beauty, and goodness.

He justifies the existence of some socio-political institutions, such as education, existence of private property, family, marriage, etc., in so far as they contribute to the development of man's moral character. He knows that ignorance is a hindrance to man's development, and therefore, it must be removed by the State by making education compulsory, and this is welcomed by all the great men of the modern world.

Thus we see that the ethico-social outlook of Thomas Hill Green is greatly affected by his transcendentalism. It is fundamentally based on, and it ultimately led to, his metaphysical conceptions. His metaphysics says that the principle of self-consciousness is the ultimate reality which is the basis of the existent world. This self-consciousness is ultimately identified by Green with God who uses man as His vehicle for reproducing Himself. His moral philosophy is concerned with the realization of the potential spirituality, the self-consciousness in man; and his social philosophy is to provide an atmosphere in which self-realization is possible. Truly, He is an idealistic thinker, and his philosophy is refracted by the prism of his spiritualism.

But a series of objections have been thrown from different quarters against Green's thoughts. It is sometimes doubted whether the unity of human consciousness can be maintained if it is divided into the divine consciousness which is out of time and the finite consciousness which is in time. Sidgwick points out that there is a great gap to be filled up in passing from his metaphysics to his ethics.

Again, as against his conception of 'social good', we can point out that we can hardly understand how 'my own' is to be identified with the good of others—either by a self-distinguishing consciousness or by sympathy?

Again, Green seems to say that, without society, no self-realization, no self-development is possible. But we know that there is



an aspect of human nature which does not directly require the help of community. Such self-realization was attained by Buddha, Śrī Caitanya, and other sages.

But, in spite of these cogent objections, we remember with great respect the great contribution that Thomas Hill Green has made towards philosophical development in the world.

## YANKA KUPALA

BY MR. MIKHAS LYNKOV

Byelorussia, where the poet Yanka Kupala was born, was once a country of forests and marshes, a remote country whose population was needy and bereft of its rights. This, at least, was the idea generally held, and it was not altogether wrong. For the Byelorussians, life was indeed hard and dreary. The grudging earth yielded no more than a meagre harvest; it was also small in area. To complete this picture of Byelorussia as it was before the revolution, it should be mentioned that the population was practically illiterate and lay at the mercy of the superstitions, prejudices, and arbitrary nature of the tsarist administration; with regard to the inhabitants' mother tongue, its use was forbidden in the educational, clerical, and administrative spheres.

Despite this past history, despite the social and national oppression to which it has been subjected, the Byelorussian people, passionately attached to freedom, has managed to safeguard not only its language, but also its faith in itself and in the future. It has preserved the customs, traditions, songs, and legends which are the reflection of its spirituality.

We must know something of this people's past history if we are to understand the sources of the work of Byelorussia's greatest poet, Yanka Kupala. His vocation as poet and statesman was awakened by the revolutionary events of 1905. These events stirred up the mass of the people, aroused their crea-

tive powers, taught them to struggle, to take positive action against the sinister forces of tsarism. All the poet's work dating from the revolution is imbued with the ideas, sentiments, and spirit of this period.

Neither the conditions of life in tsarist Russia, hard though they were, nor the violence of the forces of reaction, were able to shake the poet in his convictions. At the very outset of his career, he chose to follow what he judged to be the path of justice—a steep and stony path, that of a militant and revolutionary poet who was to devote his whole life, his whole strength, to the service of his people.

'Yanka Kupala would be happy if his people could attain to happiness', he says in one of his early poems. These memorable lines constituted the poetic and political creed to which he was to remain faithful in his work, at once social and literary. From his earliest poems, published in 1905, to his last works, in which he brands with reproach the executioners and assassins of the Hitler regime, Kupala defends above all else the interests of his people, their happiness, their well-being, their freedom, their independence. Never did he retreat into the narrow sphere of his own personal, intimate feelings. Never did he utter the empty phrases of the aesthete. He has nothing in common with those artisans of literature who, untouched by generous passion, make themselves advocates of art for art's sake, turning their backs on life itself,

its joys and sorrows, its countless tragedies, its sunshine and shadows, its contradictions.

Throughout his life, Kupala was aware of an organic bond between himself and his people. Every word he wrote served to strengthen this moral unity.

He came from a modest family of share-crop farmers. All his life, he worked on land which did not belong to him and had to hand over the lion's share of the fruits of his labour to the landowner. Thus, from his youth upwards the future poet knew the bitterness of seeing his rights denied; he witnessed oppression and the humiliation of human dignity. He learnt from experience what is meant by man's exploitation of man, by social inequality, by the oppression of a nation. He developed a hatred of constraint and social injustice; this hatred was to inspire the following austere beautiful lines, reminiscent of popular epic poetry:

What are these great masses  
Moving through forests and marshes?  
These are the Byelorussians.  
What do they want today, these men  
Oppressed for centuries, blind and deaf?  
They want to be called men.

These verses, translated into Russian by Maxim Gorky, enjoy a wide popularity. Sensitive and sympathetic, lofty of spirit and generous of heart, Yanka Kupala has become a true champion of the people, an interpreter of their finest thoughts and aspirations.

His poetry is earthly, in the best sense of the word. It is as varied as life itself and, like life, moving and authentic. It has always appealed to the people, because it expresses their real feelings. Whether he is speaking of his village, of harvest time, of the changing seasons, or of a beloved woman, the whole is penetrated with the social preoccupations of the poet.

He condemned severely all works which are out of touch with the people. In an ironic poem entitled '*For Whom These Songs?*', Yanka Kupala steps for a moment into the shoes of a poet whose works have aroused no popular

sympathy. Lying around on dusty shelves, this writer's books are a prey to rats and 'erudite moths'. From time to time he shakes the yellowed, gnawed pages, in quest of Byelorussia's past: 'O my songs', he concludes, 'better were it had you burned rather than suffer such a fate!' In the poem *Harvest*, which describes the work in the fields, the poet exclaims passionately: 'You, too, sow, my brother, ... but where then is your plough?' Such were the thoughts of the poet-citizen, such his love for the earth, for his people, and his native land.

Yanka Kupala represents a whole period in the life of the Byelorussian nation. His poetry is permeated with these unfailing forces; hence its popularity. This great poet has also been a great civilizer. There is not one facet of labour or of social life in which Kupala has not taken an interest, in which he has not participated. During the months he spent in the country, he studied the progress which the revolution had introduced into rural life and which had altered even the appearance of the villages and the Byelorussian countryside, not to speak of the changes brought about in the material and spiritual state of the peasants. Touching personal relations came to be established between the poet and these peasants, who welcomed him into their midst with warmth and hospitality, as one of themselves. It is not therefore surprising that Yanka Kupala should know the country so well and should sing of it in poems which are admirable for their genuineness and sensibility. These poems have helped in banishing the gloomy past of the Byelorussian peasants.

Kupala was interested in everything that was new in the life of town and country. He welcomed these innovations in the living and moving annals of his poetry, where we find the echo of the tremendous changes brought about by the revolution, in which he himself had taken so active a share.

The people had a deep love for him and an admiration for his songs, so akin to popular

songs and legends. His very name is borrowed from folklore. A legend about the fern flowers on Midsummer Night (the feast of St. John) has it that whoever finds this magic flower finds the key to happiness. In adopting the name of this feast, Yanka Kupala's intention was to emphasize his role as an untiring seeker for the happiness of mankind.

Following the creation of Soviet Byelorussia, Yanka Kupala received the title of 'people's poet of the Byelorussian Republic'. He thus became the spokesman of the masses; the hero of his songs is the worker, the true creator of spiritual and material values.

Yanka Kupala is a national poet in the true sense. Byelorussia comes alive in his poems. We hear in them the rustle of forests and cornfields, the tinkling of rustic bells, the song of the harvesters, the melody of the shepherd's flute, the silence of sunset, and the grumbling of the storm. His works bring before our eyes the pale blue of the Byelorussian countryside, the deeper blue of its lakes and flowery fields. They recount the whole history of this nation and—more important still—its thoughts, its aspirations and desires.

Kupala's poetry describes life, habits, traditions; it voices the originality of everyday life, as it has been fashioned by the centuries; it tells of the eternal spirit of life as well as of the essential changes produced by the revolution. At the same time, like all great works, this poetry is of general import, it has gained a place in world literature.

Yanka Kupala's influence remains considerable. Together with his friend Yakop Kolass, people's poet and founder of contemporary literature, he has freed Byelorussian literature from its provincial bounds.

Yanka Kupala has contributed much to the development of the modern Byelorussian language. He has had an undeniable influence on the generations of Byelorussian poets whose master and friend he has been. There is, indeed, no sphere of art—be it drama, prose, music, or painting—which has not come under the beneficent influence of this creative genius.

Such, then, is Yanka Kupala, the national poet of Byelorussia (his real name is Ivan Kominkovich Lutzevich), whose 80th birthday is being celebrated in Byelorussia as a major national holiday.

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## SISTER NIVEDITA ON EDUCATION IN INDIA

BY BRAHMACHARI CHANDAN

In many countries, the problem of education does not appear to be so complicated as in India. If we look back at the history of nations and the growth of their national life, we can find that almost every nation possesses, in some form or other, one basic system of education which arises from its very soil as the fulfilment of the necessity of that particular nation. The individuals are born and brought up under that educational system, thus creating a common bond of unity between them and a feeling of kinship. As

years roll on, advancement of thought brings new outlooks, new trends of mind, and consequently, creates new environments. An educational system prevailing for many years requires to be adjusted with the turn of events. But it requires to be modified in such a way as to help the present generation to imbibe new ideas and go ahead in tune with the progress of the age, at the same time, remaining established in the basic traditions of its past.

India, like other countries, had her own

system of education which was developed centuries ago as a result of the enlightened lives of the ancient Aryans, but later on, India had to face harder times. Her educational system was based upon the teachings imparted in the *gurukulas*, in the precincts of the preceptor. A close family-like contact between the teacher and the taught, deep love and respect of the students for the teacher, and cultivation of the supreme virtues like honesty, purity, etc. were considered part and parcel of the education of those times. Gradually, circumstances began to change, when India saw herself passing through different political vicissitudes. Social, political, and educational systems prevailing in the country were trampled upon by the foreign rulers. Not only did they destroy the foundation of Vedic education in the country, but they introduced also a system of education which prevented the intellectual development of the individuals. Seeing herself slowly drifting from her spiritual moorings, India was bewildered and a change seemed almost imperative. Having awakened to the necessity of this change, a passing glance at the bygone days made her despair. The Vedic culture and civilization, upon which was founded the basic structure of India's life, were not only neglected, but germs of foreign elements, basically antagonistic to her life and purpose, were also instilled into her veins and made to flow for the past few centuries. In order to divert the entire course of Indian life into its established channels, reform in education, with its multifarious aspects, appeared greatly necessary. But this presented a serious problem. Could India afford to neglect the impact of the new scientific and technological discoveries to keep pace with the modern world? What should be the basis and method of the new Indian system of education that India needed for her real progress and strength?

To these perplexing questions regarding education in India, constructive answers came from a foreigner, who had completely

dedicated her life for the service of the Indian masses. She was Miss Margaret E. Noble, an Irish lady, later known as Sister Nivedita. Having had the privilege of imbuing India's ideas and ideals in the light of her own goal in life from no less a personality than Swami Vivekananda, the patriot-saint of India, she studied the problem from various angles and left behind in her literary works some concrete suggestions for the workers in the field of Indian education. Her suggestions, which are the products of her deep understanding and keen vision, appear in the present context to possess immense value.

To make education a common treasure to be shared by many, it is necessary that all should be given equal opportunity to gain access to it. Education and its purpose should be defined properly and its functions should be fully explained. The conception of education as borne by many is that it is acquiring or imparting different systems of knowledge which are various kinds of information regarding men and matters. Contrary to this, Sister Nivedita compared education to mining. Two things are implied in this conception. First, a big mine of, say, coal remains hidden from the notice of man, which corresponds to the treasure-house of knowledge lying imbedded in the very constitution of the human mind; and secondly, there is a process of digging it up on to the surface for its utilization in various ways, which corresponds to bringing out the latent ideas in the human mind to the conscious level. The process needs the help of external accessories. A big storehouse of coal lying underground requires to be discovered before being pulled up by machines. Similar is the case with the human mind. It must know and be conscious of the infinite amount of knowledge lying within it. Diving deep within the human mind brings into view those thoughts which are akin to one's own ideals. Ideas follow according to one's subjective tendencies, which are the basis, the substratum of one's thought pattern. Accordingly, education is

not acquiring knowledge which is foreign to one's thought pattern, nor merely reproducing the inherent ideas of the mind, but a blending of both. Education is a function which makes the inner ideas manifest when they become related to external ancillaries, both theoretical and practical. The product, i.e., learning or knowledge, is something new, closely related to both these factors, but not a replica of either. We, therefore, find that education is a manifestation of the inner faculties of man in the context of the world around him.

Thus looked at, the problem of mass education can be solved through a method advocated by Sister Nivedita. She found that the custom of alms-giving is inherent to India's culture. She felt that this can be extended into the field of education, too, in the form of *vidyā-dāna* or imparting of education to the masses in a spirit of sacrifice. This concrete method has already been worked out in the West and has produced results. Like the aggressive spirit of religion, Nivedita wanted to transplant the Western idea of an army of teachers. These student teachers, being well educated, are to render free educational service for several years to the masses, without any idea of remuneration in any way. Success on the part of these student-teachers in this line will act as an inspiration to coming generations and will encourage a spirit of service and co-operation. The students of today will be the teachers of tomorrow, and in this way, propagation of education can be maintained at a steady pace.

There is a general opinion that, like other departments of national life, education, too, should be an affair of the State. It is for the State to find out ways and means and arrange for the spread of education among the masses. But Sister Nivedita felt that this solution to the problem was unsuitable to India, specially in a period when the vital problems like food, finance, etc. kept the Government busy. Appealing to the human spirit of love and fellow-feeling, she hoped

that it was only the students and the people, and their mutual co-operation and sense of sacrifice, which could help in this respect.

A slogan is current these days in the country, especially among the youths, that the educational system should be revitalized. It demands that all the old methods should be rooted out and that the educational system should be cast into a new mould. The reason is not far to seek. The old methods being impracticable in the modern set-up, the execution of those systems hardly brings any desirable effect. Just as different regimes in a country see the same problem from different angles, so also the same problem is dealt with differently at different times. To this, Sister Nivedita would have replied thus: It is true that the old methods cannot be retained *in toto* as the trend of mind of individuals changes from age to age. So the methods planned two centuries ago will not, necessarily, suit the present age. Again, the formulae and experiments of the present time will be obsolete in future. In spite of this fact, every nation must retain its basic character with which the masses have got a kinship, and then proceed along these lines with the march of time.

As regards the early methods of Indian teaching, Sister Nivedita appreciated the Hindu emphasis on training the mind, but at the same time, she deplored the lack of altruistic attitude in it. On the other hand, West's superiority lay in the fact that it stressed the need of united effort in all problems. But its efforts were confined to the method, ignoring the goal. Now, as long as Indians retain the principle of training the mind and preservation of energy, their potentialities for success in any path will remain with them, as their ancients had shown in the field of science, arts, medicine, astronomy, etc. If to this the Western idea of organizing the mass mind is added—if men are made conscious of the need for extending their attitude of sacrifice to the cause of the country—then education in India can have an enduring solution. The

greater idea of extending one's helping hand from the family to the neighbour, and thence to the society, does not bring bondage to one; rather, it leads one into the path of freedom. India has always extolled the value of training the powers of the mind. Europe has glorified herself by substituting the common good for the individual good. By adding the latter to the former, by the blending of the altruistic idea of common education with the Indian process of training the mind and preservation of energy, the much disputed problems of Indian education may find their solution.

In education, the training of different faculties of the intellect are of special importance. When a man accepts nature naively, i.e. when he does not question what is given to him, his mode of behaviour is said to be passive. But if he questions the facts and things that come under his purview and modifies them as the situation demands, his action is said to be motivated by the active function of the intellect. Similarly, when the boys are taught to train the different faculties of the mind, education to them will be not only to learn what is needed in their day-to-day life, but also to cultivate the good qualities like heroism, truthfulness, sacrificing attitude, etc. Education will not be like swallowing a bitter pill, but a creative participation in moulding one's own character. The pupils, educated thus, will be imbued with a trait 'to feel nobly, to choose loftily and honestly' and they will become the assets of the country.

When education means only book-learning, its scope is limited and the value of such education becomes negligible. Such education does neither teach us the aim and purpose of a worthy life, nor does it help in the growth of altruistic qualities. Sister Nivedita was of the view that education should not be merely informative or fact-finding and

individualistic, but it should be nationalistic and altruistic. True education is learning and grasping the truth about various things and then translating them in one's own life. Her theory of education strives to overcome the defects of the empiricist and rationalistic theories. The empirical view does not take into account the rational constitution of man's mind and its innate tendencies which play a great role in shaping objective knowledge to subjective patterns, and therefore, it is unable to explain the variations from man to man in the understanding of objective truths. A rationalistic approach, on the other hand, has man's inherent ideas alone as its key, and therefore, cannot help towards the expansion of man's knowledge. But Nivedita's critical theory serves the purpose of both these theories, while eliminating their defects. It keeps the door open for expansion of knowledge by showing that objective truths, viewed in a subjective manner, differentiate them only in degree, and not in kind.

The above is a general outline of what Sister Nivedita meant by education and its scope of application to India. On being examined, it is found to be throbbing with the ideas of Swami Vivekananda regarding education in India. He had always stressed the value and importance of introducing the true spirit of the Vedic system of education and wanted to see the youths of the country trained not only intellectually, but morally too. The principles of training of mind and *brahmacarya*, advocated by Sister Nivedita, are an echo of her Master. A sense of co-operation and sacrifice, which were sorely wanting in India, were to be coupled with the individual training on the intellectual and moral plane. Thus Sister Nivedita wanted to see the youths of the country blossom physically, intellectually, and morally, by giving them a comprehensive education on the individual and collective level.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Dr. Shashi Bhusan Das Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., of Calcutta, whose learned book on *śakti-sādhanā* has recently been awarded the President's prize, writes this month on the 'Śakti-sādhanā of Sri Ramakrishna' on a wide background of historical evolution of the cult of *śakti-sādhanā*, especially in Bengal. The learned contributor shows how 'in Sri Ramakrishna, we find the consummation of spiritual efforts and realizations of his predecessors'. . . .

Dr. P. S. Sastri, M.A., M.Litt., Ph.D., Head of the Department of English, Nagpur University, in his learned article published in this issue, deals with Śaṅkara's conception of the world on the basis of his *Prapañcasāra-Tantra*. He says that, according to the *Prapañcasāra*, the entire universe is a real system, exhibiting coherence at every step; and it is permeated by Prakṛti, which is only Śakti or Māyā, an essential aspect of the Absolute Reality. Dr. Sastri shows that this view of the Ācārya finds corroboration in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*, also. . . .

Thomas Hill Green is regarded as one of the most important of idealistic philosophers of the nineteenth century. According to Green, every experience takes place by forming relations with time, space, etc., and they are the real elements of that which is regarded as sensation; and since relations are the work of the human mind, reality is charac-

terized as essentially spiritual. Srimati Padma Sanyal, M.A., a research student in the University of Calcutta, deals, in her article, with the ethico-social outlook in Green's philosophy, and that she does well. . . .

Yanka Kupala is the national poet of Byelorussia. Mr. Mikhas Lynkov, national writer of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, in his beautiful article on the poet, whose 80th birthday is being observed as a national festival in Byelorussia, shows what great influence he has effected on the life and literature of the people of his land, and how he has transgressed the local bounds to stand in line with the great poets of all lands. The article has been kindly sent to us by the UNESCO for publication in *Prabuddha Bharata*. We hope it will be found informative and interesting. . . .

Brahmachari Chandan, of Belur Math, in his article on 'Sister Nivedita on Education in India', discusses some of the educational ideas of the Sister, with particular reference to India. The Sister was an educationist of repute, and her identification with this land of her adoption, naturally, made her think deeply about its needs and their fulfilment. Her educational ideas are of particular importance in this respect and will be found helpful for those who desire to work in the field of education.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

### BENGALI

VEDA-MĪMĀMSĀ, PART I (A VEDIC COMPENDIUM). BY ANIRVAN. Published by the Principal, Sanskrit College, 1 Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta-12. 1961. Pages 240. Price Rs. 10.

The Sanskrit College of Calcutta has to its credit quite a number of valuable publications, to which the

present volume is a noteworthy addition. This volume is only a precursor of a more ambitious scheme aiming at placing before the public a fresh spiritual interpretation of the Vedic *mantras*, which the author promises to undertake, after writing a second volume about Vedic deities, spiritual practices, life, philosophy, etc. The book under review convinces the readers of the need of a fresh systematic approach for discovering the spiritual

significance of the *mantras*, and then, by way of introduction to further study, it acquaints him with the broad outlines of the Vedic literature. Thus the Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, and the Upaniṣads are summarized in 167 pages. Each point dealt with here is supported by exhaustive references to other Vedic texts. In the earlier 46 pages, the author notes that, though the Brāhmaṇas offer a sort of explanation of some of the *mantras*, they are really concerned with their practical application in sacrifices etc., and as such, these explanations are neither exhaustive nor comprehensive. The commentators like Sāyaṇa, also, had only that kind of idea at the back of their minds, so that the *mantras* do not yield their fullest spiritual purport even in these scholarly writings. But, from the hints dropped here and there by them, it becomes obvious that they did not rule out other mystic interpretations and were, in fact, themselves aware of these. The European scholars, on the other hand, and the modern schools of Indologists following in their footsteps, find nothing in these hymns but nature worship and the crude beginning of religion. The scope and need for a spiritual interpretation is, therefore, very great indeed.

The author has not fully indicated what line of interpretation he will follow. All that we are told directly or indirectly is that Sri Aurobindo gave certain indications of a new approach in his writings, and the Pondicherry school has been working on these. We are also

told that the Vedic *mantras* are capable of symbological meanings. This, of course, is not quite a new approach, for others made the same attempt years ago. Neither is the interpretation of the *mantras* by giving spiritual meanings to their words quite new. Sāyaṇa and others adopted this method long ago. For instance, Sāyaṇa says that *soma* is Brahman in the derivative sense of 'he who coexists with *umā* or *brahma-vidyā*'. The word '*Samuāra*' is explained in the sense of Brahman. The word '*indra*' is interpreted in the Upaniṣad to mean Brahman. Even so, a fresh systematic attempt at interpreting the *mantras* as a whole, from the spiritual point of view, is quite welcome.

Certain remarks made by the author regarding the spiritual standpoints of the seers of the Samhitās and the Upaniṣads make us rather critical. There are certain other philosophical assertions with which we cannot fully agree. We realize that divergence of opinion is bound to crop up. The readers will easily forget these if the explanations themselves are reasonable, consistent, and spiritually uplifting. We would only request the author not to be consciously dogmatic about the philosophical standpoint around which he reconstructs the inner meaning of the Vedas. In the meantime, we shall reserve our opinion till the whole work is placed before the public.

S. G.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA KANPUR, U.P.

REPORT FROM APRIL 1961 TO MARCH 1962

The following were the activities of this centre for the year under review:

(1) *Spiritual and Cultural*: Regular worship, prayer, and meditation were held in the Ashrama shrine. Religious classes were held in various parts of the city on Sunday mornings, and at the Ashrama on Sunday evenings. Besides these, many religious and cultural meetings were addressed by the monastic members, and the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda were observed elaborately. A new feature of these functions, in the form of speech and essay competitions for school and college students, was introduced in 1961.

(2) *Educational*: The Higher Secondary School for boys, run by the Ashrama, enrolled 537 students in 1961-62. The High School result was 94 per cent passes. Out of 71 students sent up for S.S.C. examination, 6 secured first, 49 second, and 12 third divisions. Five students were in the State merit list. The School

has extensive facilities for bringing about an integrated growth of the students through co-curricular activities, physical training, A.C.C., moral education, etc.

The school building added four more rooms on the second floor during the year. The library for children and the general public contained 5,732 volumes on 31st March 1962. During the period under review, 2,509 books were issued to the students and the public. The reading room receives seventeen magazines and eight newspapers.

(3) *Medical*: The charitable hospital treated 1,56,192 patients during the year. Of these, more than 80 per cent were women and children. The hospital handled 1,879 major and minor surgical operations. Eye patients operated upon were kept in the indoor department for short periods.

*Needs*: (i) For the proposed kitchen block, a sum of Rs. 25,000; (ii) A building to house the Ashrama library at a cost of Rs. 35,000; (iii) An amount of Rs. 24,228 to complete the third storey of the unfinished school building; (iv) Equipments etc. for science and biology laboratories and museum: Rs. 15,000.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The 128th birthday of Sri Ramakrishna falls on Monday, the 25th February 1963.