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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबाधत

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

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SPIRITUAL DISCOURSES OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

Allahabad Math, January 11, 1925

There was a gathering of many distinguished devotees who had come all eager for Swami Vijnananandaji's holy company. A certain devotee had been given by Maharaj a copy of *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* and another book on Tantra, written in English. Maharaj asked him: 'How did you find these books?'

The devotee: 'I haven't gone through the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* yet. I have read the other one and am now at the last chapter. You have marked the important passages throughout the book. The language is very good, and the writer seems to be an erudite scholar.'

Maharaj: 'Yes, it is well-written, undoubtedly. But do you know what I feel about it? Such erudition does not seem to be worth the name. Where is that pure and comprehending life? There is no harmony between preaching and practice. It looks to me like a parody of religion. Such erudition is ultimately worthless. As the Master used to say: "Kites and vultures soar very high up in the air, but have their gaze fixed on the earth down below, at evil-smelling carrion." Our ancient sages were endowed with self-

restraint in every sphere. They had attained the realization of Truth and had gained insight into the past, present, and future. They have shown the way of It to all. Behind what they have said was their wonderful life. Religion is not a matter of discursive reasoning or scholarship; it is a matter of experience. What a great philosopher Kant was! But he said that marriage was a necessity. He spoke as he felt. But Kant was a man of very regular habits. Punctuality was such a prominent trait in his character that people used to set their watches by the hour of his morning walk. There is one thing, however, over which I feel deeply annoyed with him. His philosophy approximates closely to Advaitic (non-dualistic) theory. But, at the same time, he says that Hindus got their religion from Europeans, the idea being that Hindus owe everything to them. They want to prove that they are superior to us in every respect, and whatever we have learnt is all from them.'

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Reciting an English poem, Swami Vijnananandaji said: 'The words seem to come out

of a heart that is frustrated and filled with despair.'

The devotee: 'But it is applicable to many persons. The words are based on a large number of events as they happened in the world, and that is why they are so relevant and touching.'

Maharaj: 'Indeed, it is so. But there are two things which enter into it. One is fate and the other is human effort. Mahākāla is the lord of time. What the Westerners call fate or destiny, we characterize as the result of our actions in previous births. The river of time is flowing on. Will it only do to be drifting with the current? You have got to cross that river and you can go across, only when you swim with the help of that current. Never give way to despair and dejection. Without perseverance, nothing great can be achieved. The aim of life is to realize God, and the task is not easy. You must steer you are nearly across, you have to clear of laziness and insincerity. Even when persist in your efforts and go on swimming, or else you will be sucked in by the currents and drowned. If you put your whole heart into it, God will give you immense, infinite strength, and you will reach the *terra firma*. What is true of personal life is also true of a nation. How many empires have disappeared into the limbo of oblivion! We, too, will share the same fate, if our countrymen do not come forward to serve the country, each according to his own capabilities. The country belongs to all, not to any particular individual. Whatever situation one may be in, one can, to some degree, serve the motherland, serve the common people, and above all, serve God. Always have the good of the universe at heart and let this become a part of your daily prayer.

'A public worker must be honest and above reproach. Don't find fault with others. Rather look at your own faults. Once, while I was at Belur, a gentleman came and expressed his regret that we had not married and had renounced the world. By all sorts

of arguments, he demonstrated that our supreme Guru (Śiva) was also married; He, too, had Pārvatī as his spouse. The gentleman's point was that the householder's life is the best, and by not adopting it, we were insulting religion.'

A devotee: 'Perhaps, the gentleman himself had become a Śiva; his words, therefore, were just like him!' Everyone laughed loudly at it.

Maharaj said: 'But do you know what Rakhai Maharaj said? He said to that gentleman, "You do as you think best"; and, calling me aside, said: "Peshan, let us get away from here. So many people together will only prolong the discussion." I, also, said: "Yes, Maharaj, let us go. Men cannot see, and do not want to see, their own frailties, and they bring forward all sorts of useless arguments to support their own misdeeds."'

Allahabad Math, January 14, 1925

From amongst those who had gathered around Swami Vijnananandaji towards evening, a devotee asked: 'What is the significance, Maharaj, of baths and fasting etc. undertaken on special occasions? Have these any particular religious significance?'

Maharaj: 'Well, though not so much for those who are constantly engaged in the contemplation of God, for ordinary people, these observances are, certainly, of great value, because on these occasions, their minds turn towards God. Besides, certain hours or changes of season exert an influence on the mind; and that is why the scriptures prescribe engaging of the mind in some religious rituals or in introspection on these special occasions. Our holy books advise nothing that is useless; we have only to understand their real import. With our superficial knowledge, we may fail to grasp many things which, however, become clear when we achieve purity of mind.'

A certain gentleman had brought his son with him who had just appeared at a com-

petitive examination. He prayed earnestly to Maharaj for his blessings, and the latter said: 'I bless everybody; but had my blessings efficacy, should I be like this? Crowds of people would, then, be running after me.' But the boy was importunate and very earnestly prayed for his blessings. So, Maharaj said: 'Well, I certainly wish you success. After passing, you will get a big job. But will you then talk to us like this? Perhaps, you will not recognize us even.'

The father and son left after making their obeisance to Swami Vijnananandaji. He then said: 'Government service is such an ignoble thing. I don't want anyone to be subordinate to and dependent on others in government service. Our country is great, and we have such nice young men! But to what a pitiable state we have been reduced! Everybody shouts for more education, but the only result of it is the creation of a set of slavish job seekers. Men of real genius have no use for this kind of education. Modern English education has created a slave mentality among us. Akbar, Ranjit Singh, Sivāji—all of them were practically illiterate people. Our Master himself was a man of little education and attached no value to book-learning. He wanted man to imbibe learning from God's own words. He looked askance at bookish knowledge. A marvellous man was he, one who shed lustre on the land that gave him birth. And, personally, I myself was extremely lucky in that I came in contact with him. A mere glance at him was enough to convince anyone that he was a shining embodiment of purity. I say this, not because I am one of his devotees. But, indeed, I have never come across a person of such childlike sincerity. He used to be always in an abstracted mood, with the nerve current constantly upwards. During his illness, if someone said that a particular medicine would do him good, he would immediately put his trust in him, like a child believing everything that another person said. He would send at once for Ramlal and instruct him to get that

medicine as a certain person had assured him that it would cure him. Trust and disbelief came to him as naturally as to a child. If the prescribed medicine failed to effect a cure, he would tell the person who had suggested it that what he had said was wrong and he would not trust him again. Therefore, one had to be very careful in speaking to him. Who among us has understood him properly?

'It was evident to anyone who saw him that he looked at the affairs of the world with strange amazement. He wondered that people could be so much engrossed in the world's momentary happiness, oblivious of the eternal joy. His moods were unique. Any discussion of something holy would throw him into a trance. He could not bear the touch of metallic things at all; contact with them would result in contraction of his nerves, just as it is the case with us when pricked by thorns. He would consider worldly wealth as mere trash. To him, the only object in life was God-realization; the existence or non-existence of the world was to him a matter of no consequence. The *Kathāmṛta* (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) gives a good idea of the Master's outlook; this book by Master Mahasaya (Sri Mahendranath Gupta) is of eternal value.'

As the hour was late, the assembled people were asked to leave. They bowed before Swamiji, and he blessed them saying: 'May all go well with you.' Then, he said again: 'My good wishes are somewhat different from the Master's. I wish for your worldly happiness, while he wished people to have faith in, and devotion to God and to attain Self-realization, and so on.'

Allahabad Math, December 13, 1925

On Swami Vijnananandaji's expressing a desire to visit the Congress Session at Kanpur, one amongst the assembled devotees asked: 'Is it so very essential that you should visit the Congress?'

In a lighter vein, he said: 'Oh yes, certainly. I am getting old and if I don't see

it, how can I account myself to God when He would ask me about it?' Then, becoming serious, he said: 'Where so many people gather together to do some good work, it is just another form of worship. Organized work is also a worship. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) never criticized the work of the Congress. After all, they seek the good of the country, don't they? In unity is the manifestation of the power of God. I feel that our country is going to rise again. Many nations have gradually achieved prosperity and power—America, Japan, China, and so on. And now the wheel is turning in favour of India. Our hope lies in every individual citizen. Every Indian will have to qualify himself to become a leader of men; that means he has to be a man of character—selfless, high-souled, large-hearted—and he has to love his countrymen. We have to train ourselves to work for the good of the people. One has to exercise self-restraint and remember God. He will give us strength to act.

'One reason for the decadence of our country is that, in the name of religion, people put forward harmful theories, as a result of which people lose their faith in religion itself. Simplicity, truthfulness, and purity of heart are called for. Jesus Christ had no weapons to fight with and suffered crucifixion for the sake of truth. We, also, have to do likewise, and then only will rise again the sun of India's glory.'

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'From the sun and moon come purifying and strengthening currents. Our scriptures prescribe the meditation of Nārāyaṇa inside the solar region with His attributes and adornments of golden crown and ear-rings, of the conch and the *calkra* (the wheel of destruction), and the club and the lotus. Meditation is prescribed in the solar region. The conch is the symbol of the primeval voice, the 'Om'. The wheel represents evolution, while the club (*gadā*) expresses strength of restraint, and the lotus means the creative

power. These, of course, are spiritual explanations. I am describing them as I feel about them.

'Similarly, there are spiritual explanations of the five 'Ms' (*pañca-makāras*). According to this, *madya* (wine) represents intoxication through god-consciousness. As Rāmaprasāda has said: "I don't drink wine, I take the nectar of Mother Kālī's name and become intoxicated." Likewise, *māmsa* (meat) would express the joy of controlling one's appetite, and *matsya* (fish) the currents of Idā, Piṅgalā, and Suṣuṃṇā that go up the body. *Mudrā* (posture) would represent the joy of controlling the senses, and *maithuna* would mean the union of the Jivātman (soul inside the living body) with the Paramātman (the Divine Person).

'Likewise, there have been spiritual interpretations of *ratha-yātrā* and *snāna-yātrā* (the Lord's Festival of Car and the Festival of Bathing). Whoever seats God inside the chariot of the body derives the joy of the Car Festival. In the *Katha Upaniṣad*, also, it is written that the body is a chariot and the soul is the charioteer. The 'Festival of Bathing' means dipping oneself in the water of noble and sacred thoughts.

'There is, also, spiritual interpretation of 'āvaraṇa-devatā' (the God as veil). Do you know what is āvaraṇa-devatā? It is the umbraic and penumbraic (or reflected) light. Thus the Lord, including Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, are effulgent deities, while gods like Indra and devotees like Nārada are penumbraic and umbraic deities. So also are Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā and her companions.'

* * *

'You have to invoke the Master constantly and surrender yourself completely to him. He will do what he thinks good for you. He will perform his own work. Can we do good to anybody? The Master is one of those souls who stand in the very first category. They know only the Universal Mother. Their outlook is: Her will can work miracles in a trice. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) and

others belong to the second category. They preach the ideas of those who belong to the first category. To invoke the Master means imbibing some of his virtues. When a man thinks intently on someone else, he comes to acquire some of the virtues of the latter.

'The very first attribute of God is lordliness. Contemplation on Him should enable us to gain lordliness over our passions and become masters of our souls. Secondly, whatever God wills is immediately done. We, also, should have the power to translate our wishes into action. Thirdly, God is love. As He loves everyone, so should we love all created beings. One is invoking God's name properly, to the extent that one is able to acquire His attributes.

'The Master used to tell us about Keshab Chandra's oratory. But when he was told about another person's gifts in that direction, he simply turned up his nose. Swamiji's lectures, too, had a special feature. While speaking, he used to forget himself and would

become an entirely different person. His speeches touched the core of people's hearts. He had a wonderful personality, and other people became like worms in his presence. I have myself seen in Belur Math distinguished Western disciples of Swamiji squatting on the floor all around his chair and drinking in his inspired words. And how forcefully did he speak! Now things are being done according to what he said, and people are getting inspiration from his words.

'You have to work out your own salvation. Your soul is your greatest friend. In your mind, you should always be thinking of God. There is a Hindi couplet which says that one who prays with his beads is an inferior person, one who prays with his fingers is fit to be our brother, while one who can pray in his mind is the best. My only advice to all is to forsake idleness. An idle brain is the devil's workshop. You must do everything with concentration and diligence, never with an eye to rewards.'

THE CORRECT EMPHASIS

[EDITORIAL]

A common charge against religion is that it turns our mind from the realities of life and makes us run after distant imaginary ideals which hardly stand the test of reason or the validity of proof. To seek after God, to practise religion, is only a wild-goose chase, only a cover under false camouflage. Walter Lippman jocularly voices the view of the educated layman of today, when he says: 'I do not mean that modern men have ceased to believe in God. I do mean that they no longer believe in Him simply and literally. I mean that they have defined and refined their ideas of Him until they can no longer honestly say that He exists, as they would say that their neighbour exists.' The more

radical among such men think that the idea of God first came in the minds of primitive men who had no power to reason out things and who were obsessed by a fear complex at the ravages of nature, against which they had nothing to save themselves with. They seem to say: 'Thanks to modern scientific civilization! Now that we have it, God, religion, and the superstitions that go along with them must beat a hasty retreat. We shall correct the mistake done by our ancestors and shall relieve man of toiling under false and foolish notions. In our times, we have gained mastery over air, water, and land. We are trying to conquer the space. Science is about to make an end of diseases

and frightening freaks of nature. It will protect us from old age and, perhaps, death. Poverty will vanish from the face of the earth, wealth will be distributed equally, every man will get the maximum of happiness of human life. The mysteries of nature will be revealed, and we shall expose the hollowness of God and claims of religion. Life is not a flight from the problems that face us. No negative looking at life; we shall be positive. We shall emphasize this correct and scientific view of life and drive away the psychology of escapism from the realities of life, which religion mischievously encourages.'

II

It is a fact which cannot be denied that religion, when rightly understood, brings about a change of values in the life of a man. It brings about, as Swami Vivekananda has said, a change in the outlook on, and attitude towards, the world outside of us. A truly religious man does not cling to the world in the same way and with the same avidity as that of a common man. He transcends the sense of bondage which keeps a common man tied to the world and its gains and losses, and he feels a higher call, which on many occasions, lifts him above the common life of an ordinary man, finding joy and bliss in things above the ephemeral. There is nothing bad in it, for Truth is as it really is whether one likes it or not; and the greatest of truths is the realization of that supreme Truth which makes one free from all binding desires to the things of the world. The *Katha Upaniṣad* clearly says: 'When the heart is freed from all desires dwelling in it, the mortal becomes immortal and fully enjoys Brahman, yea, even in this life' (II.3.14). But that does not mean that realization of this Truth, to which religions are different paths, always makes one dead to the good and evil of the world and callous to the joys and sorrows of one's fellow beings. There are important instances in history when the greatest of

realized souls have willingly laid down their lives to the service and good of their less fortunate brethren.

Buddha, after having the gates of blissful *nirvāṇa* opened before him, returned to the service of the millions of souls who were still struggling in the midst of misery. His long eighty years of life were a dedication to the welfare of humanity in more ways than one. History has yet to record a greater force that impelled its followers to engage themselves in all kinds of service not only to the human beings, but even to the animals. Christ, who was one with his Father in Heaven, made the sacrifice of a whole life to the regeneration of mankind, and the machinery of benevolent service which he set in motion is working vigorously for all these two thousand years. Śaṅkarācārya, who had gained the supreme knowledge leading to liberation, made hectic efforts to bring the light of that knowledge to all men and women, and what he did within the short span of his life on earth reads like an unbelievable saga of energy and action. Rāmānuja, after acquiring the key to salvation from Yāmunācārya, ran forth to the people to cater wide that heavenly secret to all and sundry for their emancipation, even though such an action was forbidden to him at the pains of endless hell-fire. Śrī Caitanya, who was saturated with the love of Kṛṣṇa and was forgetful even of his body in the ecstasy of divine joy, ran from door to door asking people to drink of that ambrosia of Hari's name and become immortal. Sri Rama-krishna, having merged himself in the beatitude of *samādhi*, and always enjoying the great heights of realization, was kept by the Divine Mother on the threshold of the Absolute, and he brought solace to numerous scorched and struggling souls and opened a way of life which is bringing and is destined to bring light, peace, progress, and joy to humanity at large.

Thus we find in the lives of all great saints that there is always an inner urge for things

transcendent which, in fact, is the reality behind the phenomenal world; still, there is something that links them up with this world of ours, though, at the same time, the values they attach to it are different from ours. Maybe, we do not know exactly the *raison d'être* of this mysterious contradiction and conflict, if any, for everything of the realm of Spirit cannot be analysed and explained, as all data are not recorded. But, for our understanding of it, in whatever small measure it may be, we shall turn to Swami Vivekananda's life, of which we have a pretty detailed account with us.

Swami Vivekananda, like all true aspirants, goes to Sri Ramakrishna and speaks out the simple desire: 'I want to get merged in in everlasting Beatitude and never return from it.' And what does Sri Ramakrishna, whose mere wish could bring to Vivekananda this supreme gift, do? With a tone, at once affectionate and disapproving, he says: 'I thought you were of a higher order; you, too, are so selfish! Nay, I cannot grant this; for, through you, the Mother will have Her mission accomplished.' Then, was this supreme realization denied to Swami Vivekananda for ever? No. We have it on record that he had his heart's desire fulfilled. But we have it also that, after his first vision of the Ultimate, Sri Ramakrishna had shut the door of *samādhi* on him with the remark that it would be reopened only after the Mother's mission was complete. And what could be the Mother's mission but to serve her teeming children, struggling and scrambling for, and sometimes oblivious also, to the necessity of higher achievements? The contrast between the longing for individual emancipation and the demands of universal service are set forth here in the boldest relief. And what a man of God and religion did was definitely not escaping this world with all its problems and miseries. In speech and action, he manifested an intense feeling for the poor and the downtrodden. In him, the hankering for personal freedom had been replaced by, or

shall we say, had evolved into, a varied and unceasing endeavour for the emancipation of humanity as a whole. The individual in him had found its complement in the universal; the truth in the macrocosm and the truth in the microcosm had revealed their identity. In later life, he declared in no uncertain terms that he was ready to be born again and again even as the lowliest creature, if thereby the world could derive the least benefit. And was he the less of a *sannyāsin* when he said this? No, he was only the more of it. He was one with the whole creation. The lure of Himalayan silence is as great to him as his desire to serve the poor. He cannot brook any separation from the Virāt, the cosmic soul. Personal gains and losses count for nought. He serves the world, not because the world demands it, but because the spontaneous outpourings of his heart find there a greater consummation. He is both a *sannyāsin* and a servant of humanity, and that is not because his intellect is forced to a helpless compromise, but because, in his higher vision, the face of Truth has been unveiled and the contrast between the world and God has faded away.

But, though true and inspiring as all this is, reason stands in a fix for its explanation. How can a monist, a believer in the non-existence of plurality, a man ever eager to lose himself in the bliss of supreme Beatitude, still be such a powerful actor on the stage of this chimerical world and have affectionate relationship with all these kaleidoscopic changes? How can a believer in *Māyāvāda*, which boldly declares that the entire manifested creation, as it is commonly perceived, has its basis only in falseness (*bhrama*), be wedded to the acceptance of the life on earth with its joys and sorrows, successes and failures, rises and falls? We shall try to see if there is really any higher metaphysics, a better meaning of Indian philosophy and religion than what we have commonly understood, which can effect this strange synthesis.

III

The purpose of all philosophy—more so of Indian philosophy—is to make a man rid of the triple sorrows, *ādhyātmika* (intrinsic—bodily or mental), *ādhibhautika* (caused by extrinsic natural influences like beasts, inanimate objects, etc.), *ādhidāivika*, caused by extrinsic supernatural influences such as spirits, *devas*, etc.). The *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā* clearly says at the very beginning that the origin of philosophy lies in the inquiry into the means of terminating the torment, caused by the three-fold misery (*duḥkha-traya-bhīghātāj-jijñāsā tadabhīghātake hetau*). Indian philosophy and religion rightly emphasize the principle of gradual withdrawal from gross enjoyment of the external world through the senses—for this only adds to our misery and stands in the way of higher joy. This withdrawal has a positive goal in view—the goal of joy eternal. The theory of *Māyā*, which is the most maligned of all theories on the charge of investing the Indian mind with escapism and pessimistic outlook of life, is really not the outcome of a disgust for life. There is disgust because there is *māyā*, and not *māyā* because there is disgust. *Māyāvāda*, as Swami Vivekananda has said, is a mere statement of facts.

According to Vedānta, which rests on *Māyāvāda*, five factors constantly present themselves to our consciousness. Things exist, they give rise to knowledge, and knowledge has joy (or sorrow, if knowledge is wrong) as its counterpart. And, for our perception, things must have name and form. Name and form are of the world and constantly changing, giving rise to plurality. And change and plurality cannot give stability and indivisibility, which must be the nature of real joy—a realization that lasts and remains steady. This realization is the realization of that principle which endows this changing phenomenal world with reality and positivity. That principle is Brahman—of the nature of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss.

What is denied is accepting this name and form, the changing externals, as the real by overlooking Brahman, on which the eternal play of name and form goes on. The world, then, is true when it is conceived of as the manifestation of Brahman. It is also true in another lower sense, viz. when name and form are inter-mixed with Him. But it is false when it is conceived in terms of name and form only, bereft of the background of Brahman. The sole object of *Māyāvāda* is only to expose this common mistake that a human being commits, bound by his selfishness and caught in sense enjoyment, and to divert his attention from falsehood to Truth, from *māyā* to Brahman. The beautiful expression in the *Iśa Upaniṣad* is very apt and to the point: 'This world has to be covered with the Lord.'

The sole aim of Indian philosophy, therefore, is to provide ground and means to understand the Truth as it is and try to be the possessor of the joy eternal. And it is a psychological truth that we will not seek for a higher joy, unless we feel dissatisfied with our present possessions. It is this divine dissatisfaction towards things ephemeral that we have to create in ourselves to make for a higher goal. There must be a disgust for the limited lower existence, a struggle, a hankering for the more, the higher, the better that gives real meaning to life. This positive outlook is the real message of Indian philosophy and religion. And we have ample proof of history to show that so long as understanding of philosophy and religion was correct, the country was prosperous in all respects, as also the national life was strong and vigorous.

It has to be thoroughly understood here that this attitude of Indian philosophical outlook is as objective as that of modern science. The only difference is in the approaches of science and philosophy. Science keeps itself confined to matter alone, whereas philosophy advances further and admits the existence of Spirit as the basic Reality be-

hind all existence—material and spiritual. The ‘world-negation’ is, therefore, not a denial of matter altogether, but only not accepting it as the whole truth. If we take life only on the plane of matter, it is a ‘broken arc’, as Tennyson has said; it becomes a ‘perfect whole’ only when it is extended to the plane of Spirit. The stress of Indian philosophy is on this extended vision, which fact is oftener than not mistaken by the critics of philosophy and religion. We have to realize that the national disease is not our ascetic philosophy, but a wrong understanding of it due to our own defective and weak comprehension of it.

IV

Philosophy and religion, then, must be studied and also practised in this light to save them from wrong interpretation, not because they have degraded society, but because our earnestness for a national revival demands that the minds of common men should be re-educated about the true significance and import of religious life. The nation has to advance along its chosen path. To effect this, it is necessary to take man where he stands and thence give him a lift. India has always recognized the difference that exists between man and man, with regard to their capacities and acumen to advance in spiritual, as also in material, life. Religious beliefs must have a graded manifestation in a variegated national endeavour, because Truth has various manifestations of Itself. Lower truths, therefore, need not be rejected outright, because man, as Swami Vivekananda has said positively, ‘does not travel from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth’. We need not give undue importance to the fact that all name and form should be rejected, and at the same time, we need not accept the world unquestioningly, as some would have us to do. We must not shut our eyes to the great Truth—which definitely is the realization or manifestation of the potential divinity of our

souls—and yet, we must not be too eager for a denial of this life on earth when we are really not in a position to deny it. With the realization of ultimate Truth, the world will automatically reveal its worthlessness as ‘world’ to us. Till then, it is self-deception to say—for instance—that a thorn does not give pain when all the while it is making our life miserable. We must be more realistic and take things as they really are to us. If there is a thorn and if we feel the prick of it, it must be plucked out; and if there is a brute, it must be faced. It is not by overlooking the lower rung that we can ascend the higher. Did not Sri Ramakrishna say that, in order to reach the terrace, the steps leading to it are the most necessary aids? To deny the existence and importance of the steps is to lose the joy of the heightening light and air of the terrace also. But, at the same time, the steps should not become the end in themselves. He who does this mistake can never get on to the terrace. And, once one reaches the terrace, he sees that the terrace is made of the same material with which the steps are made. Thus the world with its lower things, also, need not be denied, but at the same time, the higher ideal must not be lost sight of. It is only by the proper utilization of the means that the right end can be achieved. The world around us, with its duties and responsibilities, is the means which has to be rightly used to reach the ultimate Goal, and once it is reached, the difference between the divine and the non-divine vanishes, and life becomes a unified whole. This world, therefore, is not for enjoyment, but for using it as an aid to transcend it for obtaining the higher enjoyment of Spirit, without which the sorrows of life do not cease, and one does not gain That by gaining which no other gain is needed and by knowing which nothing more remains to be known. It is not, therefore, by asserting our rights and perpetrating our egoistic selfishness, but by making personal sacrifices, that we can hope to progress individually as

well as collectively. These ideas of renunciation and service are the basic demands of true religion, and it is in this positive outlook, that the correct understanding and practice of religion lies.

What is, therefore, wanted is neither the banishment of religion, nor a new philosophy of life. The only thing necessary for us today is to believe that true religion does not make us idle, inactive, or pessimistic; rather it releases a new current of energy and helps one to break the narrow walls of little self and enjoy the emancipated freedom of the higher self, which enables one to love one and all and feel the presence of universal oneness behind the fragmented lives on earth. This is possible and practical, and in it lies the golden key to the opening of a higher existence—positive, blissful, and radiant.

Fortunately for us, we have a bright example of such a divine and perfect life in Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, who are so near to us, in our own times. Though constantly merged in *samādhi*, Sri Ramakrishna could arrange the minutest details of his life better than the most methodical man; though established in the perfection of life, he could sympathize intensely with the limitations and shortcomings of ordinary human beings and could set them thinking about things eternal; though blessed with the highest transcendental vision, he could live the humble life of an unostentatious simple man in the suburbs of a city like Calcutta; and though a Hindu of the highest order, living in the orthodox atmosphere of a Kālī temple, he could fully identify himself with the followers of other faiths. He was a *yogin*, a *jñānin*, and a devotee in the best sense of the terms, nay, he was even more; yet, he was a great dynamo of action, serving the world to the last breath of his life. In him, all contradictions met and all philosophies and shades of belief found their fullest significance.

And this robust positive outlook that pervades the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna found its wonderful manifestation in the life of Swami Vivekananda. To him, life meant strength and affirmation. To him, the message of the Upaniṣads, which really is the true foundation of our religious philosophy, is that of strength: 'Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be vivified, made strong, energized through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable, and the downtrodden of all races, all creeds, and all sects to stand on their feet and be free; freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual freedom are the watchword of the Upaniṣads.' He further says: 'The best guide in life is strength. In religion, as in all other matters, discard everything that weakens you, have nothing to do with it. ... Infinite strength is religion. ... Let me tell you that we want strength, strength, and every time strength.' We once again humbly ask: Is it escapism; is it day dreaming; is it fleeing from the realities of life?

If coming events really cast their shadows, and if the positive efforts of saints are not their private affairs alone, then there is a meaning in the advent of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. With them, nothing was insignificant and no life was lost. With them, the correct emphasis was on a positive outlook and not on a negative one, in practice and not in theory, in acceptance and not in rejection of life. And this is the best that Indian culture and religion does really present. Let us now get over all hesitation, doubt, and polemics and direct our steps in keeping with this message of religion, the message of life eternal, the message of strength supreme, the message of freedom unbounded. And, in this alone, lies the cure of most of our ills—individual, social, and national.

THE BUDDHA AND THE ĀTMAN

BY PANDIT JAGADISH CHANDRA CHATTERJI

In 1956-57, *The Middle Way* (the London Buddhist Journal) made what may be called the latest attempt at justifying an ancient 'accusation' (as the Buddha himself characterized it) brought against the Buddha by certain *samanas* and Brāhmaṇas of his time. The Buddha had said: 'It is dishonest, trivial, a lie, not in accordance with the real fact.' Let us quote in full the utterance concerned: 'That *bhikkhu* who has thus attained the Absolute Freedom of the heart (*ceto-vimutti*), even the *devas*, including their leaders—Inda, Brahmā, and Pajāpati—can never trace, however much they may search for him everywhere so as to be able to say: "Sheltering in here (*idam-nissitam*) is the consciousness of the One So-going (Tathāgata)." And for what? Because, as I say, even in this state of earthly existence, (the ways of) the Tathāgata cannot be traced (to say nothing of their utter untraceability after his death). While I say only this, while I propound only this (only this utter untraceability of the Tathāgata-consciousness), there are certain *samanas* and Brāhmaṇas who accuse me—untruthfully, trivially, by telling a lie, in utter disregard of the actual fact—and say: "A Nihilist is Samaṇa Gotama; he teaches the utter cutting off, the complete loss, the total destruction of the Being that truly Is."¹

The Buddha's own words are these. They contain a vehement protest against the accusation that he is a Nihilist; that he teaches the utter cutting off (*uccheda*), the complete loss (*vināsa*), the total destruction (*vibhava*) of the Being that truly Is. This accusation, to repeat the Buddha's own words, is 'untrue, trivial, a lie, not according to the fact'.

This same accusation has since assumed

the form that the Buddha denies the Ātman. Let us here remind ourselves of the meaning and significance of the word 'Ātman'. It is well known that the word 'Ātman' (Pali Attan) means 'Self', and that it is used in two main senses. In one sense, Ātman is the ever-changing, perishable, egoistic, personal 'self', as for instance, when any of the mutable and perishable factors, such as the body in one's personality, is regarded as the 'self'. There is no dispute as to the existence of the 'Ātman' as the perishable, egoistic, personal self. In the other sense, the word 'Ātman' is used for the immutable, imperishable, super-personal Being behind all the ever-changing and perishable factors in a personality, and as the one and only indispensable universal point of reference, as 'I', 'me', and 'mine' in every experience one has. 'Ātman', in this sense, may be translated as the 'Self'.

It is the Ātman in this universal aspect which is supposed to have been denied by the Buddha. And this, in spite of the glaring fact that the Buddha never, nowhere says 'There is no Ātman', 'This Ātman is not'. Not only has the Buddha never said any such thing, but on the contrary, he tells Ānanda, his chief disciple, that he could not possibly do this, because, to say, 'there is no Ātman' would be to preach 'Annihilationism' (the doctrine of *Ucchedavāda*), which he altogether repudiates.

Since most people who have any knowledge of this conversation of the Buddha with Ānanda have it in a confused manner, this story, in its true and original form, may be given here, specially because this story alone is a sufficient refutation of the falsehood, indeed, the lie, that the Buddha denies the Ātman. It is as follows.

On one occasion, a certain wandering ascetic, Vacchagotta by name, comes to the

¹ *Alagaddūpama-sutta*, *Majjhima-Nikāya*, I, p. 140, P.T.S. edition.

Buddha and puts to him the direct question : 'Is there the Ātman? Does the Ātman exist?' The Buddha makes no answer; he remains altogether silent. Vacchagotta, however, does not stop at this, but puts him the negative question: 'Is there, then, no Ātman?' The Buddha does not answer this question either. So Vacchagotta goes away much puzzled.

After his departure, Ānanda wants to know from the Buddha his reason for not answering either of the two questions of Vacchagotta. And the Buddha tells Ānanda the reason. Being the perfect master of *jhāna-samādhi*, the Buddha possesses all those psycho-spiritual powers which come to one on attaining the fourth *jhāna* stage and thereafter. One of these is the power to know at a glance a person, even though altogether a stranger, 'inside-out', to know all his thoughts and feelings, all his attitudes. He, therefore, sees at once how Vacchagotta would not be able to understand the answers to his two questions aright: that he would certainly misunderstand them. The Buddha knows, too, in what way exactly they would be misunderstood.

So, the Buddha says to Ānanda: 'If, Ānanda, I had said "yes" to Vacchagotta's first question, he would, certainly, have thought that I was siding with the Sassatavāda, the Eternalist. And if, Ānanda, in answer to his second question, I said "No, there is no Ātman", he would, certainly, have thought that I was siding with the Ucchedavāda, the universal Annihilationist.'² In these circumstances, the best thing the Buddha could do was to remain silent. This, then, is the reason of the Buddha for not answering Vacchagotta's questions. It is not

that he did not know the answers or any such thing.

In regard to the two doctrines—Eternalism and Annihilationism—the second one is the doctrine which teaches the 'utter cutting off', 'the complete loss', and the 'total destruction' of the Being that truly Is.

From the quotation given above from the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*, we can see that 'the Being that truly Is' means nothing else than the Infinite Knowingness, that is, Tathāgata-viññāṇa, which has no perceptible sign whatever, whereby it could be pointed out as 'here' and 'there' (*anidassana*), is Infinite (*ananta*), and which has wholly cast off every objective relation (*sabbato'paha*). This Tathāgata-viññāṇa is only another name for Nibbāna (*Vide Alagaddūpama-sutta* quoted above and *Papañcasūdanī* on *Brahmanimantānika-sutta*).

Further, this Tathāgata-viññāṇa or Infinite Knowingness is, as can be seen, the same as the Upaniṣadic Ātman which is 'Knowingness Itself in all its glory' or Brahman described as 'Knowingness Infinite'. That is to say, Ucchedavāda is the doctrine of the Ātman's annihilation—the Ātman which is declared by the Upaniṣad as utterly indestructible, *avināśin* and *anucchitti-dharmā* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV.5.14), which, by its very nature, is free from all cutting off (*ucchitti*), which is only a different form of the same word as 'uccheda'.

While this is Ucchedavāda, Eternalism (Sassatavāda), as defined by the Buddha himself, is the doctrine which holds (i) that every individual self (Ātman) is eternal as individual and personal, and (ii) that the universe which exists in relation thereto is also eternal. Both these doctrines are rejected by the Buddha as well as the Upaniṣadic seer.

This is what the Buddha meant when he told Ānanda that, in one case, the true answer would make Vacchagotta imagine that the Buddha was supporting Eternalism (Sassatavāda), and in the other case, it would make

² In Pali, the expression 'Ucchedavāda' means one who holds the doctrine of Uccheda or 'annihilation'. Similarly, the word 'Sassatavāda' means the person who holds the opposite doctrine. But, in Sanskrit, the words refer to the respective doctrines themselves, and not the persons who hold them. For the sake of convenience, we shall henceforth use the expression in their Sanskrit sense.

him think that the Buddha was supporting Annihilationism (Ucchedavāda).

The most important points to note in all this are just two, namely, (a) that the denial of the Ātman is placed by the Buddha in the category of Annihilationism, (b) that the ascription to the Buddha of Annihilationism, and therefore, the denial of the Ātman, too, which is the very core of Ucchedavāda, is strongly repudiated by the Buddha by saying that this ascription to him is made untruthfully, trivially, by telling a lie, and by not stating the actual fact.

This is quite equivalent—indeed, more than equivalent—to a formal statement that ‘The Ātman most certainly Is’. But the Buddha does not make such a statement, because it cannot be made with strict logical consistency of Ātman which is beyond all thought and speech—from which words, together with the mind, fall back and away, not reaching it—so that the Upaniṣad of the Veda, centuries before Gotama the Buddha, has to own and say that ‘the Ātman is “not” and “not”’. That is to say that the Ātman cannot be defined in any positive terms with rational consistency. ‘Is’ has no meaning without reference to space (‘here’ and ‘there’) and time (‘now’ and ‘then’), but Ātman transcends both. Even then, the seers and sages have often been tempted to describe the Indescribable in positive terms.

So far, we have dealt with the negative aspect of the question namely the repudiation of the accusation brought against the Buddha, saying that he denies the Ātman—Ātman in the sense of One, Eternal, Immutable Being. Before proceeding further, we may consider one secondary point of a historical nature. It has been stated that, ‘If the Buddha, contrary to the whole of Buddhist tradition, had proclaimed a transcendental Ātman, one would expect that some one of the many Buddhist sects would have preserved a trace of it’ (Vide ‘Vedānta and Buddhism’ in the *Middle Way*).

To this, it may be replied that not only

‘traces’, but adequate mention of the original teaching of the Buddha regarding the existence of the Ātman are undoubtedly there in the Pali texts, as we shall see, but they have been either neglected or misrepresented and even distorted in later times by the Annihilationist followers of the Buddha. Even in the Buddha’s own time, as he himself tells us, there were certain *samaṇas* and *Brāhmaṇas* who misunderstood and misinterpreted his teachings, and it is people of their line of thinking who ultimately predominated. The original followers of the Buddha’s true teaching, namely the *Sākiyaputtiya*s, were gradually absorbed and lost in the Vedic school with which the Buddha’s real teachings had little or no conflict. As regards the *bhikkhus* of the Buddha’s own Order, who could have preserved the ‘traces’ of his teachings, they were mostly wiped out of existence, as later history would confirm. The extant Buddhist sects grew out of the distortions and misrepresentations wrought by the unorthodox classes. In this way, the tradition of the Buddha’s real teaching was lost among his professed followers. History can furnish evidences of similar distortion of a Master’s real voice in other lands.

We may now take up the other aspect of the topic: the Buddha’s positive references to the Ātman. His first and earliest reference occurs in what came to be known in later times as the ‘Discourse on the Characteristics of the Not-Ātman, Not-Self’ (*Anattalakkhaṇa-sutta*). Therein, he mentions the Ātman, along with five other factors. The latter comprise all that is mutable and perishable in man’s personality as well as in his universe.

In what is clearly a very ancient Pali verse recited by the Buddha, the names of these factors occur in the following form and order: *rūpa*, *vedayita*, *saññam*, *viññāna*, and *sam-lhata*.³ The original names of the five factors

³ *Māra-Samyutta*, *Paṭṭa-suttam*, *Samyutta-Nikāya*. The verse later mentions their forms, and the order of counting them are slightly altered: the names *vedayita*,

are highly technical; they are scientific and philosophic terms with defined meanings. Hence it is impossible to translate them adequately and accurately by single-word equivalents; they can only be explained, but not translated. We will, therefore, use the original terms. These five orders of the mutable and perishable in man and universe are given the general name 'skandha' in Sanskrit, and 'khandha' in Pali. They are the well-known 'five khandhas'.

In this context, 'skandha' means a ledge on which one's personal consciousness rests or 'is established' (*patitthita*, Sanskrit 'pratiṣṭhita'; 'nissita', Sanskrit 'nisṛita', not 'niḥsṛita'), the consciousness which is limited and hence can be traced and pointed out as 'this-inherent' (*idamnissita*), inherent in this or that. But the supra-consciousness of a Tathāgata who is absolutely free not only in the reasoning mind, but also in the believing heart (both *paññāvimutta* and *cetovimutta*), is wholly independent of every support (*appatitthita-viññāna*), ever steady, unlimited, and utterly incapable of being traced (*ananuvejja*) and of being pointed out as dependent on this or that (See *Alagaddūpama-sutta*, quoted above).⁴

saññam, and *saṃkhata* become *vedanā*, *sañña*, and *saṃkhāra*, *rūpa* and *viññāna* remaining unchanged, while in regard to their order, the fourth and fifth change places, i.e. *viññāna* is counted fifth and *saṃkhata* fourth. It can be shown that the order of counting them as stated earlier is not only older, but also natural, because in the process of their appearance (*paṭicca-samutpāda*), the *saṃkhata* comes into manifestation first, and then *viññāna*.

⁴ There is much confusion about the word 'nissita' in the phrase 'idam-nissitam', occurring in the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*. It is taken to be the equivalent of the Sanskrit word 'niḥsṛitam', meaning 'that has thrown out' and cast off the five *khandhas*. But, really, it is the Pali form of Sanskrit 'nisṛitam', meaning 'that is propped on, ledged on'. The word 'idam' in the expression 'idam-nissitam Tathāgata-viññānam' is thought to be adjectively used of the word 'viññāna', and the expression is interpreted as 'this Tathāgata-Consciousness has gone out of, is freed from', the *khandhas*. But, really, 'idam' is only a part of the compound word 'idam-nissitam' which is an adjective to 'viññānam', so that the whole expression means 'the Tathāgata-Consciousness is propped on, dependent on this or that'. That is to say, it cannot be pointed out as dependent on this or that object.

In these circumstances, the best way to translate 'khandha' in this context should be 'ledge', 'support', on which the limited personal consciousness rests.

As the Buddha tells us, each of the five *khandhas* exists in two main orders—personal and external, cosmical (*ajjhatta* and *bahiddha*—*adhyātma* and *bahirdhā* in Sanskrit). The 'personal' *khandha* (also called *upādāna-khandha*) is that which builds one's personality through attachment, while the 'cosmical' is the world outside one's personality, such as the world of body, the world of life, the world of mind, etc. These are all mutable and perishable.

As is well known to the students of the subject, these names of the five *khandhas* as well as the name *Ātman*, along with which they are mentioned in the *Anattalakkhaṇa-sutta*, and also, several scientific and philosophical names are introduced in the talks by the Buddha quite abruptly without any explanation or definition. This is because these terms were all well known to, and were the common property of, the *paṇḍitas* of the Buddha's age in India.

In regard to the five names of the five orders of the mutable in man and the universe, we have the Buddha's own words, stating how they are well known to the learned scholars of his days. It may be well—indeed, it is necessary—to give here a summarized version of this utterance. Addressing the monks, he says: 'I do not quarrel with the world. In regard to the *khandhas*, I do not go against the *paṇḍitas*. On the contrary, I agree with them in their views of both what is untruth as well as the truth about the *khandhas*. The

This meaning is clear from the expression 'ettha-nissitam'—here-inherent—which is used of the egoistic, personal self, in the description of what is called by the *nāmadassana* which is attained after the fourth *rūpa-ḡhāna* is reached. In that stage, this personal self can be clearly seen to be inherent here, in this body (*ettha-paṭibaddham*), in the same way as the coloured thread passing through beads of crystals can be perceived.

It should be noted, too, that the Ceylonese reading for 'nisṛita' here is 'sita', which can, by no means, convey the meaning 'thrown out', 'freed from'.

paṇḍitas hold it to be untruth that either *rūpa* or *vedayita* or *sañña* or *saṃkhāra* is eternal, ever immovably fixed, everlasting, never-changing by nature. And I agree with them; I say the same. Again, they hold it to be the truth that *rūpa* and *vedayita* and *sañña* and *viññāna* and *saṃkhāra*, that every one of these is non-eternal, full of evil, and full of misery, ever-changing by nature. Here, too, I agree with them; I say the same' (*Samyutta-Nikāya, Khaṇḍha-samyutta*, Vol. III, p. 138, P.T.S. edition).

From this, we can see that, according to the Buddha himself, the five *khandhas* were known to the *paṇḍitas* of the day, not by name alone, but also as they are by their essential nature as ever-changing, perishable affairs.

The only difference is that while, in those days, the *paṇḍitas*—or rather most of them, like most scholars of today—had only hearsay, second-hand knowledge of the *khandhas*, the Buddha had not just learnt them in a hearsay manner from his teachers. He, on the other hand, personally verified them by *jhāna-samādhī*, in the same way that, as he himself tells us, he first got a hearsay knowledge of the last two *arūpa-jhāna* states, respectively, from Alārakālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, who had the direct, immediate knowledge of what they taught, and then verified them for himself. In regard to the five *khandhas*, he says, in the same utterance summarized above, that he preaches the truth of the five *khandhas* only after verifying them by the method of full spiritual awakening, (*abhisambujjhivā*) and of the most perfect integration of consciousness (*abhisametvā*).

Further, the five *khandhas* were known among the scholars of not only the Buddha's days, but also of the pre-Buddha Upaniṣadic times, equally as they have been known by the post-Buddha Vedāntic writers. Both the pre-Buddha Upaniṣads as well as the relevant post-Buddha Vedāntic writers, however, call them by means other than those used by the Buddha. These names are *annamaya*,

prāṇamaya, *manomaya*, *viññānamaya*, and *ānandamaya*. In the Upaniṣads, they are called the Ātman in the egoistic, limited sense, while in the Vedāntic literature, the name given to each is *kośa* (coating) of the Ātman, the Self.

We shall now turn to some of the specific references made by the Buddha to the Ātman, the Self. The first and the earliest mention of the Ātman, the Self, by the Buddha, is in his discourse on the 'Characteristics of the non-Ātman', as has already been noted. This discourse begins abruptly with the Buddha declaring, 'The body is not-Ātman'; and then he says: 'If the body were the Ātman, then the body would not be getting involved in opposition to, in conflict with (*ā-bādha*) one's will, and one would gain the power of ordering (*labbhettha*) in regard to the body (*rūpa*): "Let my body be such and such; let my body be not such and such." Because it is not-the-Ātman, therefore, *rūpa* gets involved in opposition to, in conflict with one's self-will, and one has not the power to say: "Let my *rūpa* be such and such; let my *rūpa* be not such and such."'

From the second sentence of this utterance, we can gather, and gather quite legitimately, that, according to the Buddha, Ātman, the Self, is something which does not get involved in opposition to, in conflict with one's will. But this is only a negative way of saying that the Ātman is always under the complete control of one's will (*vasa*), as mentioned in the Buddha's conversation with Saccaka (*Cūlasaccaka-sutta, Majjhima-Nikāya*, I, p.231, P.T.S. edition).

We should note here carefully that this discourse on the characteristic of the not-Self has been terribly distorted by later Buddhists, with a view to making it the basis of their dogma that everything in the universe is Ātman-less, devoid of Ātman. They have done this by first taking the Pali expression 'anattan' (Sanskrit 'anātman') as an adjective, and then, interpreting it as 'without Ātman', 'devoid of Ātman'. But even a tyro

in Pali can see that the word is a masculine noun meaning 'not-the-Ātman', that is to say, what is the reverse of the Ātman itself. This is quite clear from the expression, 'if the body were the Ātman' (*rūpam ca idaṃ attā abhaviṣṣa*), used in the second sentence of the discourse. Here *rūpa* is in apposition with *attā*.

It is most important to note this terrible distortion. No one with the slightest acquaintance with the Pali language could take the word '*anattam*', in this context, as an adjective, and meaning 'without the *attan*' or 'Ātman-less', especially because of the phrase like 'If the body were the Ātman'. It should be noted, too, that this distortion fits in well with the Nihilistic dogma that 'there is no Ātman'.

Leaving this distortion aside, there is in the whole range of the Buddha's utterances, nothing whatsoever which could show that the Buddha, ever, anywhere taught that there is no Ātman. The purpose of the above-quoted discourse is to show that none of the five *khandhas* is the Ātman. As we know from the Buddha's own words translated above, the doctrine of the *khandhas* being not the Ātman is not anything new, but that this was current among the contemporary scholars and their predecessors. Thus none of the five *khandhas* being the Ātman, the Ātman must be something other than the *khandhas*. The *khandhas* are the not-Ātman, because they are non-eternal, full of misery, perishable by nature. The Buddha repeatedly declares: 'Whatever is impermanent and perishable is miserable, evil; whatever is miserable, evil is Anātman, not-the-Ātman' (*Samyutta-Nikāya*, III, pp. 44-45, P.T.S. edition).

But by the very definition of *anātman*, the Buddha tells us, also, what the Ātman really is, namely, whatever is permanent and imperishable, joyful and good is the Ātman. Of all things in the universe, Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa) alone is absolutely permanent, imperishable. Hence Nibbāna alone is supreme joy (*paramasukham*), is goodness Absolute. Thus Nibbāna alone is the Ātman, or the Ātman is

only Nibbāna under a different name.

The Buddha speaks of Nibbāna as 'the Being, the Absolutely fixed and firm and true, the Deathless, the Peace, the Good, the Secure' (*sacca, dhuva, amata, sānta, siva, khema—Samyutta-Nikāya*, IV, pp. 363-73, P.T.S. edition). All these are epithets applied to Ātman, to Brahman in Vedic Upaniṣads and allied literature.

Despite these most positive and unambiguous words of the Buddha concerning Nibbāna, certain scholars have tried to establish that Nibbāna is not the Self, *anattā*. But they forget that they, thereby, nullify the fundamental teaching of the Buddha. If Nibbāna were *anattā*, not-the-Self, as the scholars contend, then, Nibbāna must be perishable and miserable, *anicca* and *dukkha*, the *anattā* being defined by the Buddha in the famous formula quoted above as 'whatever is impermanent, perishable is misery, and whatever is misery is *anattā*'. But not even one with the slightest acquaintance with the Buddha's philosophy would concede that Nibbāna is impermanent and misery.

We may now consider some of the authorities quoted by these scholars in support of their contention that Nibbāna is *anattā*. Firstly, they say that Nibbāna is described as *anattā* in the following verse of the *Vinaya-Piṭaka*, V, p. 86 (Oldenberg's edition):

*Aniccā sabbe saṃkhārā dukkhā anattā
ca saṃkhātā;
Nibbānañ c'eva paññatti anattā iti
nicchayā.*

It is difficult to see how this verse can be interpreted to convey the meaning that Nibbāna is *anattā*, not-the-Self. It simply means that Nibbāna as idea is not-Self.

Another authority quoted is the *Udāna*, VIII.2, where Nibbāna is said to be described as *anattā*. But this is clearly a misreading. The correct reading, as given in several manuscripts, is '*ananta*' meaning infinite, an adjective which is used of Nirvāṇa or Tathāgata-Consciousness in the verse-line: '*Viññāṇam anidassanam anantam sabbato'pahaṃ*' (See

Dīgha-Nikāya, *Kevaddha-sutta* and *Majjhima-Nikāya*, *Brahmanimantanika-sutta*, with the *Papañcasūdanī* on the latter).

Anyway, as we repeat, to speak of Nibbāna as 'anattā'—devoid of Self in the sense of the Ultimate Reality—amounts to declaring Nibbāna as both perishable and miserable. This is against the whole conception of Nibbāna.

Next, we may take up the famous utterance of the Buddha, directing his disciples to make the Ātman, the Self, the 'Island', the 'Refuge', which, as he tells us in another utterance (*Dhammapada*, 25), will not be overwhelmed by the flood of *samsāra*, of repeated births and deaths, hence of sorrows and sufferings.

He also tells the disciples that they must not make such an island, such a refuge of anything else, for there is nothing else than the Ātman that will not be overwhelmed by that terrible flood.

It has been contended that, in this direction, 'Ātman' is only the limited, personal ego, and is not used in the sense of the ultimate Being. But this limited, personal self or ego is perishable, and therefore, subject to the flood of *samsāra* or 'becoming', and there would be no sense in directing one to make it the sole refuge, the securest island, which has to be attained only by unrelenting spiritual discipline, by ever being up and doing, never-slackening zeal and enthusiasm, unrelaxing self-control, and lofty spritual self-taming (*utthānena appamādena samyamena damena*).

Then, there is a parallel direction given by the Buddha to his disciples. It is to make Dhamma the Island and the Refuge that will not be overwhelmed. And, as in the other direction, the Buddha takes good care to tell the disciples that they must not make anything else such an island or refuge.

The two directions, taken together, will show that it is one and the same thing, one and the same ultimate Reality, which the Buddha means by Ātman in one direction, and by Dhamma in the other. To tell people to make the Ātman and nothing else the

Island and Refuge, and to tell them again in the same breath, as it were, to make Dhamma and nothing else the Island and Refuge, one can construe no other meaning, except that Ātman and Dhamma are but alternative names of one and the same thing. It is like telling a person to take shelter in Jesus, and not in anyone else, and then again, telling him in the same breath, as it were, to take shelter in Christ and not in anyone else. This can be done logically, only if Jesus and Christ are but the two different names of one and the same person.

It is necessary to mention here that the word 'dhamma', like the word 'self' is used in two different senses, its root meaning being 'things which are held together' or 'that which holds things together', in which sense, it is usually in the plural, while in the second sense, it means the ultimate Reality, 'the Absolute Law and Justice' that holds together and governs the compound things and beings of the universe. These two different senses of the word find expression in the following *gāthā* (song-verse) which the Buddha uttered immediately as he woke up to the sense-perceptible world, on attaining *bodhi*:

*'Yadā have pātu bhavanti dhammā
ātapino jhāyato Brāhmaṇassa;
Atha'ssa kaṅkhā vapayanti sabbā
yato pajānāti sa-Hetu Dhammam.'*

Here the word 'dhamma' in the first line, unquestionably, means 'the laws and processes by which all compounded things in the universe are severally held together', while 'Dhamma' in the second line can only mean the ultimate Reality, Nirvāṇa, which holds the universe as a unified whole.

In our present context, Dhamma means not just a collection of philosophical and ethical utterances; it can have no other sense than that of the ultimate Reality. It is that Dhamma which monk Channa, despite his knowledge of all authentic utterances on Dhamma, and all his efforts to 'see' Dhamma, had not been able to see. It is, again, that Dhamma which, being seen, the Buddha him-

self is seen as he really is (*'Yo dhammam passati, so mām passati; yo mām passati so dhammam passati'*, *Samyutta-Nikāya*, III, p. 130, P.T.S. edition). That is to say, Dhamma in the highest philosophical sense and the Buddha as truly is, are one.

This, also, means that the Buddha as Dhamma is very different from the Buddha as a person in a physical body which is sub-

ject to decay, as characterized by the Buddha as a 'rotten body' (*pūtikāya*) in the reference just quoted. In other words, Dhamma, in this context, is only Tathāgata-Consciousness or which is the same thing as Nibbāna. Hence, too, Dhamma, in the sense it is identical with the Buddha in his freest state, with Tathāgata-Consciousness, and with Nibbāna, is identical with Ātman in the highest Vedic sense.

SRI AUROBINDO AND ŚANKARA ON THE ABSOLUTE

BY SRI M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

The philosophy of Śaṅkara, which maintains the sole reality of Brahman in strict conformity to the Upaniṣadic formula 'one without a second' (*ekameva advitīyam*) and which, consequently, reduces the world and finite spirits to appearances arising from a foundational error, has naturally evoked much adverse criticism in later times. It is well known that Rāmānuja, the illustrious founder of Viśiṣṭādvaita, has formulated several objections against Śaṅkara's doctrine of Nirguṇa Brahman. Vedānta Deśika, who came after Rāmānuja and who put Viśiṣṭādvaita on a systematic and stable footing, has written a book called *Śata-Dūṣanī*, in which he has advanced several criticisms against Śaṅkara's Advaita in general, and his doctrine of Māyā, in particular. It is also well known that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, in his *Advaita-Siddhi*, has given most cogent and convincing answers to these objections, as also to others advanced by the Dvaitins. Brahmānanda, in his *Laghu-Candrikā*, which is a commentary on *Advaita-Siddhi*, has met the other charges that were made up to his time.

In spite of these answers, criticism keeps cropping up from time to time, because it is so difficult for thinkers to reconcile them-

selves to the uncompromising monism of Śaṅkara which robs the *jīvas* of their individuality and reduces the world, which is the scene of all our endeavours, to a mere illusory appearance on a par with dream perceptions. One of the recent critics of Śaṅkara's Advaita is Aurobindo Ghose, the great *yogin* of Pondicherry. His book, *Life Divine*, is a brilliant contribution to Indian philosophical speculation. Though, on account of a certain mystical vein pervading the entire work, it is a hard nut to crack for ordinary readers, still it amply repays a careful and systematic study. When one dives deep into the work, one gets the feeling that he is in touch with a mind of a very fine penetration and that he is moving all the time in a high and rarefied atmosphere. Aurobindo's general philosophical standpoint bears a close resemblance to that of F. H. Bradley. Śaṅkara's conception of Brahman as Pure Spirit, devoid of all differences, *sajātīya*, *vijātīya*, and *svagata*, that it is therefore sentience all compact (*Prajñānaghana*) and, finally, that it excludes everything that is non-sentient has proved to be rather puzzling for Aurobindo, who describes it as 'a void of nothingness' and 'Eternal Silence'. As against the Nirguṇa Brahman of Śaṅkara, Aurobindo has devel-

oped at great length his own theory of the 'Integral Absolute'. In the course of his work, he refers to Śaṅkara by name but once, though he makes frequent references to his philosophy, which he chooses to describe as 'Illusionism' or 'ascetic philosophy'. Both appellations are misleading, as will become clear later. It is unfortunate that such wrong nomenclatures, which have the effect of creating in advance a certain prejudice in the minds of unwary readers, should be given. Before examining Aurobindo's theory of the 'Integral Absolute', it may be useful to set forth this conception as far as possible in his own language.

The highest reality, according to Aurobindo, is above all finite determinations. It is beyond time, space, causal relation, and other categories of the understanding. Since it is beyond all relations, it is inconceivable by mind and thought. But it is not a mere blank. It is the substratum which remains when all names and forms are denied. It is the permanent and stable basis underlying the changing world. 'Behind the world-movement, there must be something stable. This entity is the timeless, spaceless, infinite, and indefinable Existence. It is not an aggregate of forms or a formal substratum of forms. If all forms, quantities, and qualities were to disappear, this would still remain. Existence without quantity, without quality, without form is not only conceivable, but it is the one thing we can conceive behind these phenomena.' The analysis of the external world leads us ultimately to the conception of the acosmic Brahman, as that which sustains the movements of the changing order of things.

A similar analysis of the internal states of man will confirm the same conclusion. 'There is a supreme experience and supreme intuition by which we go back behind our surface self and find that becoming, change, and succession are only a mode of our being and that there is that in us which is not involved at all in the becoming. It is pure existence,

eternal, infinite, indefinable, not affected by the succession of time, not involved in the extension of space, beyond form, quantity, quality, Self only, and Absolute.' This may be termed Ātman.

Though Brahman or Ātman is the highest reality, it is by no means the sole or only reality. The changing flux of the world is, also, a part of our experience, and it is impossible to dismiss it or think it away. 'The supreme experience of Brahman or Ātman does not have the effect of abolishing or contradicting the lower experience. If Being is a fact, Becoming is also a fact. We have to reckon with it and make terms with it. Matter and its mutations are hard facts given in experience and there is no justification for treating them as an illusory appearance. 'The truths of material science and their real utilities must be preserved in the final harmony. We must seek a large and complete affirmation. We perceive that in the Indian ascetic ideal, the great Vedāntic formula "one without a second" has not been read sufficiently in the light of the other formula, equally imperative, "all this is Brahman".' Aurobindo's point is that the statement, 'all this is Brahman' (*sarvam khalu idam Brahma*), occurring in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (III. 14.1), is as important and significant as the other statement, 'one without a second' (*ekameva advitīyam*), occurring in the same *Upaniṣad* (VI.2.1), and that it is clearly one-sided exaggeration to lay the entire stress on the latter and quietly ignore the former.

Spirit and matter are, therefore, of the same unknowable reality. The apparent difference between them must not lead us to think that the one excludes the other. 'The apparent incompatibility of the two is an error of the limited mind which, accustomed to the trenchant oppositions of affirmation and denial, is unable to conceive of a comprehensive consciousness, vast enough to include both in a simultaneous embrace.' 'The real Monism the true Advaita, is that which admits all things as the One Brahman, and does not

seek to bisect its existence into two incompatible entities, an eternal truth and an eternal falsehood, Brahman and not-Brahman, Self and not-Self.' Aurobindo has, therefore, no hesitation to put aside the 'trenchant destructions of a partial logic which declares that, because the One is the reality, the Many are an illusion, and because the Absolute is *sat*, the relative is *asat*.' 'It is only when we put aside all irreconcilable antinomy between Self and not-Self that things fall into their place by a less paradoxical logic.'

Aurobindo's charge against Śaṅkara is that he has made too much of the difference that we ordinarily perceive between Spirit and matter. In his opinion, the difference is more apparent than real. They do not fall apart, but run into each other. Matter houses Spirit and Spirit ensouls matter. 'Matter is a fit and noble material out of which He (the Infinite) weaves constantly His garbs, builds recurrently the unending series of His mansions.' Close reflection will show that there is no break between either matter and life, or life and mind, or mind and consciousness. In each case, the latter grows out of the former, because it is already implicit there. It is only a case of manifesting the potentiality already contained in matter, life, and mind. There is thus no break anywhere. Matter is a form of veiled life, and life a form of veiled consciousness. In that case, the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, and Immortality presents itself in the right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which nature is seeking to evolve beyond mind.'

Strictly speaking, therefore, there is no antithesis between Spirit and matter. There is no reason to dichotomize reality into Self and not-Self and to make out that the two are as opposed as light and darkness, and that is sheer folly to identify the two or transfer the attributes of the one to the other. In his celebrated introduction to the *Brahma-Sūtra-bhāṣya*, known as '*adhyāsa-prakarana*', Śaṅkara, as is well known, has drawn such a

distinction between Spirit and matter and has illustrated it by referring to the first personal and second personal pronouns, '*asmāt*' and '*yuṣmat*', which can never be brought into grammatical relationship in the same sentence. He further says that the common practice of identifying the Self with the physical body, the sense organs, the mind, and the internal organ is due to a natural error which is beginningless. We commit the same mistake if we identify Brahman with matter and its evolutes. These are all clear instances of superimposition (*adhyāsa*). The states of the mind, what are known as '*vṛttis*', are also superimpositions on consciousness, which is only the standing witness (*sākṣin*) of the passing states.

Aurobindo thinks that Śaṅkara has overdrawn the distinction, being misled by a partial logic. In his opinion, the Law of Contradiction, which breaks up Reality into two mutually exclusive units, has played havoc with Śaṅkara's philosophy. He has been betrayed by placing too much faith in it. 'A law founded upon an observation of what is divisible in space and time cannot be confidently applied to the being and the action of the Indivisible. Not only can it not be applied to the spaceless and timeless Infinite, but it cannot be applied even to the time-infinite or space-infinite. A law and process binding on our superficial being need not be binding on what is occult within us.' The contrary relation which admits of a middle ground, and therefore, makes for continuity and reconciliation can be applied with greater justification to ultimate realities.

We see all around us identity running through difference, unity in diversity, permanence in the midst of change. The One and the Many are not opposed entities. They can subsist peacefully side by side. The latter grows out of the former by slow and imperceptible stages. It is an inner necessity which provides the urge for the One to manifest itself as the many.

Formlessness and form are not, again, relat-

ed as contradictories. What we mean by formlessness is that the Infinite is not tied down to any one particular form, but that it has the freedom to assume any form. The forms that it can assume is past counting. 'The Infinite is at once Form and the Formless. The apparent contradiction does not correspond to a real opposition. The Formless is not a negation of the power of formation, but the condition for the Infinite's free formation. The Divine is formless and nameless, but by that very reason, capable of manufacturing all possible names and shapes of being. Form may be said to be the inevitable self-revelation of the Formless. The Infinite is nameless, but in that namelessness it includes all possible names.' When we say that the Infinite is without name and forms, what we mean is that it *exceeds* them, that it is something which refuses to be bound by our limited understanding.

Reconciliation of seeming opposites is, then, the true function of philosophy. Such a procedure alone will lead to Truth. 'Śaṅkara's wordless, inactive Self and his Māyā of many names and forms are disparate and irreconcilable terms. Their rigid antagonism can terminate only by the dissolution of the multitudinous illusion into the sole truth of the Eternal Silence. In this barren contradiction, the human mind cannot rest satisfied.' It is always in search of the highest unity which will comprehend all apparent differences. In our eagerness to attain the ultimate unity, we must not deny or exclude the multiplicity.

So far we have given a fairly full account of Aurobindo's conception of the Integral Absolute, and we are now free to examine it in some detail. He admits that the main problem of philosophy is how to reduce the multiplicity that is given in perception to unity. The human mind cannot reconcile itself to a chaotic multiplicity. It is always in search of the central unity which is behind and beyond the diversity. Aurobindo thinks that the unity for which the human mind is

putting up a persistent quest has to be reached by harmonizing and reconciling the apparent contradictions that are to be found in the world. Spirit and matter appear to be polar opposites, but in reality, they are not so diverse as we think. Spirit cannot manifest itself, except through material aids.

It is true that Spirit and matter are found in close association. It is also true that, in ordinary experience, we never come across pure matter or pure form. We may even agree with Aristotle that formless matter and immaterial form are both ideal abstractions. But all this does not by any means lessen the opposition between them or establish any common ground between them. Reflection will show that Spirit and matter are really poles asunder. Spirit is a sentient entity, whereas matter is insentient; Spirit not only exists, but also knows that it exists, whereas matter has only existence. It does not know itself, but requires to be revealed by Spirit. Matter is, therefore, an object (*drśya*) in relation to a subject (*drk*), while Spirit is never an object and does not require to be revealed by any other agency. It always stands self-revealed. It is self-luminous and shines in its own light. When objects are presented to it in the waking and dream states, it lights them up and when nothing is presented to it, as in the state of profound sleep, the light of the Spirit does not go out, but continues to shine as before, only to declare that nothing is presented to it. When we transcend even the state of dreamless sleep and attain the fourth one known as *turīya*, we enter what is called '*samādhi*' and attain the plenary experience of non-dual Absolute which is literally one without a second.¹ The knowing subject then vanishes as such, because it has been transformed into the Highest by the advent of right knowledge

¹ That which is one (without a second), which is the fourth state (i.e. superconscious state) beyond all the three ordinary states of consciousness, and which shines in the heart of those in *samādhi* when all that is in the world has been denied (as not being Brahman) by the words of the Śruti, "not this, not this"—that Supreme Brahman am I' (*Svarūpānusanādhānāṣṭakam*, 5).

regarding the nature of the *jīva*. The experience of that state is not consciousness of the Absolute (*akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*), but Absolute Consciousness (*akhaṇḍa-caitanya*). This is the Ātman which never suffers contradiction, for we can never imagine the absence of consciousness. 'The Knower's function of knowing can never be lost, because it is immortal', says the Upaniṣad.² The *vṛttis* or states of the mind may come and go, but Consciousness which lights them up remains for ever as the constant witness of them all. It is the only permanent and stable reality behind the passing shows of the world.

It can never be doubted or denied. It is quite possible to doubt the existence of objects which are external to us, but such a doubt can never arise with regard to the inmost Self of man. When all else has been doubted or denied, the doubter and denier will still remain. Any attempt to doubt or deny the Self will only serve to establish it on a firmer and more secure footing than ever before. Hence it is the one reality which will never suffer contradiction by any other experience. Since it continues to shine even when no object is presented to it, it is not dependent on anything else. It rests on its own glory, *sve mahimni*, as the Upaniṣad puts it.³ It does not require any material aid for its manifestation.⁴ The process of evolution should be viewed, not as providing increasing faculties for Spirit to manifest itself through more and more refined forms of matter, but as the process by which Spirit gradually discards the material appurtenances with which it is associated from time immemorial. It is a case of Spirit disengaging itself from every kind of adventitious adjunct. In the state of *samādhi*, Spirit comes to its own and shines in its native splendour. It is pure and homogeneous, since it is noth-

ing but consciousness through and through. Here we have the true and unalloyed unity of which we have been in search. The Ātman is strictly one without a second. It excludes all differences, internal and external. Śāṅkara founds his Advaita on the unity of the Ātman, and hence it is known as Ātmādvaita, as distinct from Brahmādvaita.

The unity of the Self is reached by eliminating all that is adventitious to it. It has been stated above that man passes through three states, the waking (*jāgrat*), the dream (*svapna*), and the dreamless sleep (*susupti*). The analysis of these states shows how everything that is in the nature of adjunct is being gradually eliminated, leaving ultimately the standing witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-caitanya*) shining in its native splendour. In the Upaniṣads, this process of elimination is set forth very clearly.⁵ Things that fall away without doing the least violence to that to which they appeared to belong must be deemed to be casual adjuncts. There can be no vital or organic relation between such adjuncts and the Self to which they appear to belong. The Self, therefore, is a thing apart, standing in no relation to anything within or without. It is unattached (*asamśṛṣṭa*).

The *vṛttis*, therefore, are superposed on it in the same way in which the world of diversity is super-imposed on Brahman. Both are clear cases of *adhyāsa*. Brahman does not contain the world, and it is mere gratuitous assumption to suppose that what is unmanifest and potential at one stage becomes manifest and actual at another. Brahman, which is the same as Ātman, is a pure, unmixed, homogeneous unity. 'As a lump of salt dropped into water dissolves into water, and no one is able to pick it up, but whensoever one takes it, it tastes salt, even so, my dear, this great, endless, Infinite Reality is but Pure Intelligence', says Yājñavalkya, addressing

² *'Nahi vijñātuh vijñāteḥ viparilopo villyate, avināśitvāt'* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV.3.30).

³ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII.24.1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, VIII.12.3: 'This serene One rises out of this body, reaches the highest light, and appears in his own form.'

⁵ *Māndūkya Upaniṣad*, III.7; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VIII.7-12; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV.3.

his wife.⁶ The Infinite Self is '*vijñānaghana*'. The Self, so conceived, can never enter into relation with the not-Self. The problem of integrating it with matter will present itself only to the neutral observer who has not realized the identity of Brahman with his own inmost Self, and who, therefore, treats it as an object like any other object. But the Self is never an object in relation to any other subject. It stands self-revealed. No one can doubt that it is real.⁷ That it is true cannot be proved and does not require to be proved, for it is the presupposition of all proof. It carries its own certitude with it. The question whether the Self is real and true and the further question as to the relationship in which it stands to matter will arise only to the man who looks at it from the outside, and not to one who looks at it from within. The two standpoints known as *parāṅk* (extrovert) and *pratyaṅk* (introvert) are clearly distinguished in the Upaniṣad: 'The Lord doomed the senses by turning them outward; therefore, one sees only outward and not inward at all. Some wise man, however, seeking immortality, finds the Self by turning his eyes inward.'⁸

Let us now examine the category of identity in difference which, according to Aurobindo, applies to the relation between Brahman and the world. This conception is ridden with an inner contradiction. Identity and difference are exact opposites and can never be reconciled. Either we go in for the identity or for the difference, but not for both. It does not improve matters if we assume that the difference is at first contained as a mere potential-

ity in the identity and that at a later stage, it becomes manifest and actual. Even as a mere potentiality, it is sufficient to disrupt the identity. Nor will it help if we assume that there are two parts or aspects in Brahman, an unchanging and a changing one. We can hardly conceive that Brahman is made up of parts. On such a view, we must be prepared to grant that Brahman will, in course of time, disintegrate and disappear when the parts get separated. As regards two aspects, it is difficult to believe that, when one of them goes on changing, the other remains intact. The process of change which affects one of the two aspects will not leave the other untouched. Hence we must suppose that either both aspects go on changing or that neither of them changes. Both alternatives are unacceptable, because they are one-sided. If both aspects change continually, then, nothing permanent will be left to connect them. A series can never know that it is a series. There must be a standing witness to connect the series of changes and piece them into a whole. If neither aspect changes, then, we will have the fixed and immutable Brahman, which leaves out of account the fact of change and multiplicity which we see all around us. Any theory that we put forward with regard to the relation between Brahman and the world must do justice to both. This can be secured, not by the recognition of parts or aspects in Brahman, but by the adoption of two different standpoints, the intuitive and the intellectual.

At the higher level of intuition, Brahman is pure sentience, devoid of change, one and homogeneous. The same reality, viewed from the standpoint of the intellect, appears as the world characterized by diversity and change. It is well known that the *modus operandi* of the intellect is to break up the original unity that is presented at the level of indeterminate perception into subject and object, and view the latter as a substance, possessing several attributes. The intellect, thus, stands for the principle of differentiation. In one of his

⁶ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II.4.12. The translation is that of Swami Madhavananda.

⁷ 'The Self (Ātman) is self-determined (*svatasiddhaḥ*). When the Self, the knower (*pramātr*), has been determined, then only is possible a search for proper authorities on the part of the knower, with a view to obtain right knowledge. In fact, without determining the Self—"I am I"—none seeks to determine the knowable objects. Indeed, the Self is unknown to nobody' (Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Gītā*, II.18). The translation is that of A. Mahadeva Sastri.

⁸ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, IV.1. The translation is that of Professor Hiriyanna.

minor poems, Śaṅkara has said that Māyā breaks up Brahman into the world, God, and soul.⁹ The intellect, no doubt, tries to restore the lost unity by what is known as the process of integration, but it never wholly succeeds in that task. Though the substance and its attributes, as also the knowing subject and the known object are brought into some kind of logical relationship, the sense of distinction is not overcome. To overcome the sense of difference, we must pass beyond the intellect to the plane of intuition. This is the experience of communion in which all differences disappear and the original unity is regained.

Śaṅkara, therefore, assigns Brahman to the higher plane of communion (*sākṣātkāra*) and the world to the lower plane of the intellect and the discursive thinking. What is a unitary, homogeneous whole at a higher level, appears as God, soul, and world at a lower level. This is Śaṅkara's solution of the problem of One and Many. He recognizes three orders of reality, the transcendental (*pāramārthika*), empirical (*vyāvahārika*), and phenomenal (*prātibhāsika*). This does not mean that the three are independent realities. It is one and the same reality viewed in three grades or at three different levels. The Highest appears under certain conditions as the *vyāvahārika* and the *prātibhāsika*. The world of diversity in which we live and move and have our being belongs to the *vyāvahārika* level, while illusions (the rope appearing as serpent) and dream experiences belong to the *prātibhāsika* order.

It is remarkable that Śaṅkara concedes some kind of reality even to illusory appearances and dream perceptions. His view is that nothing that is wholly unreal can ever present itself to perception, though it be for a moment (*asat cet na pratīyeta*). The hare's horn or the sky lotus has never been experienced by anybody. They are mere words with no basis in reality. Higher than the *prātibhāsika* stands the *vyāvahārika*. This

is an order of reality which enjoys a higher ontological status, because it is the same to different individuals at the same time, and the same to one and the same individual at different times. In the example of the rope appearing as the serpent, the latter belongs to the *prātibhāsika* order, because it is perceived only by one individual, and even that for a brief moment. The former belongs to the higher *vyāvahārika* order, because the rope is a rope to several individuals who see it at a particular moment, and it is seen as a rope by the same individual at different times. The rope is typical of the working order of things while the serpent is typical of illusions and dream experiences. The former is public reality, while the latter is private.

Just as the perception of the serpent is falsified when the perception of the rope arises, even so the perception of the world and its diversity is falsified when one enters into direct and immediate communion with Brahman, which is known as *samyag-darśana* or *aparokṣānubhūti*. When man rises to *Brahma-sākṣātkāra*, the *vyāvahārika* *sattā* or world order is falsified. It only means that it is consigned to a lower order of reality. It is a well-known fact that when the higher order of knowledge arises, the lower order suffers contradiction. When we know that the object is a mere piece of rope, it follows that the previous knowledge that it was a serpent is sublated. Both cannot be true. The serpent-notion has to be rejected in favour of the rope-notion. Error has only to be eliminated. There is no question of integrating it with truth. Error can never become the truth by any amount of supplementation. Error is error and not partial truth.

Śaṅkara should not be misunderstood when he maintains the unreality of the world order in the wake of the highest experience. It is only when the highest *sākṣātkāra* has come to a man that he will treat the world as '*mīthyā*'. Till then, it continues to be quite real, even as our dream experiences appear to be perfectly real, so long as the dream lasts. For

⁹ *Māyā-Pañcakam*, 1.

all practical purposes, therefore, the world, with all its distinctions that it implies, is quite real. Śaṅkara makes this point quite clear in his commentary on *Vedānta-Sūtra* (II.1.14).¹⁰ In view of this categorical statement, it will be seen that it is hardly fair to describe his philosophy as 'Illusionism'.

If Spirit is the only reality, then, we have no alternative but to eliminate the not-Self. This implies the dichotomization of the existent into real and unreal, Self and not-Self,

¹⁰ Memorial Edition, Vol. II. p. 311—*Tasmāt prāg-brahmātmatā-prabodhāt upapannaḥ sarvo laukiko vaidīkaśca vyavahārah.*

truth and error. The law of contradiction, therefore, holds. There is no use seeking to minimize its importance. In the sphere of the highest Truth, there is no place for error. Though Aurobindo rails against the law of contradiction, he unconsciously admits it when he claims the sole truth for his theory of the Integral Absolute, and dubs Śaṅkara's theory as 'Illusionism'. If his theory is the only truth, then, other theories will, automatically, have to be rejected. Thus the law of contradiction reasserts itself. 'None ever went about to break logic but in the end the logic broke him.'

THE MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA FOR THE WORLD

BY SWAMI RASAJNANANDA

Today, the diverse sections of humanity are rising as one man to pay homage to Swami Vivekananda on the occasion of his birth centenary, for his universal outlook is based on the vision of spiritual oneness of mankind and his Vedāntic teachings point to the grand unity behind the bizarre multiplicity of ideas and ideals extant in the world. The music of his message, proclaiming as it does the eternal theme of unity in variety and divinity in humanity, captivates the heart of man, removes his pettiness and exclusiveness, breaks down the barriers of race, politics, and religion, and raises him to the sacred stature of immortal God. In the present day context of a strife-torn and fear-ridden world, the voice of Swami Vivekananda, ever increasing in volume, reaches us to eradicate the modern superstition, suspicion, and hatred, and endows us with absolute fearlessness, happiness, and peace. The light of Swami Vivekananda's message is a blazing but soothing one, potent enough to dispel the deep darkness that often envelops the earth due to devilish designs of man. It is mellow in its coolness and rich in its content to brighten up hope, inspire the

life, and illumine the soul of everyone without distinction of clime, colour, or creed.

Swami Vivekananda's universal and uplifting message may be traced to the depth of his love for man and the breadth of his understanding of human affairs which are but the expression, rather the logical outcome, of his Vedāntic perception of non-difference. He accords a pride of place to love, as he opens his heart to a friend in a poem which reads as follows:

Listen, friend, I will speak my heart to thee,
I have found in my life this truth supreme—
Buffeted by waves, in this whirl of life,
There's one ferry that takes across the sea—
Formulas of worship, control of breath,
Science, philosophy, systems varied,
Relinquishment, possession, and the like,
All these are but delusions of the mind;
Love, love—that's the one thing, the sole
treasure.

His heart embraces the whole of humanity and he offers himself as a sacrifice at its altar. His love flows into diverse streams and takes on forms suitable to the different climates and requirements. His genius lies in

fulfilling the peculiar wants from which a particular individual or a nation suffers. Naturally, his methodology manifests itself in different patterns. Whatever be the pattern, the goal is one: It is nothing less than freedom, total freedom—physical freedom, intellectual freedom, political freedom, economic freedom, social freedom, moral freedom, and above all, spiritual freedom. According to Swami Vivekananda, freedom is the one goal of all nature, sentient or insentient; and, consciously or unconsciously, everything is struggling towards that goal. It is by this yardstick that he measures civilization, development, etc. Is man free from the bondages to which he is subject? It is to emancipate him from the different kinds of fetters and to enable him to realize his full freedom and innate divinity that Swami Vivekananda worked till the last breath of his life. Nay, even after death, he said, he would not cease to work. To quote his own words: 'It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body—to cast it off like a worn-out garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere until the world shall know that it is one with God.' What an immortal spirit endued with unbounded love for the world!

Men the world over, whom Swami Vivekananda loves to serve, inspire, and illumine, may, by and large, be classified into two groups: (i) the developed and (ii) the under-developed or developing groups. The developed societies possess abundance of wealth and power. With the aid of scientific knowledge and technological invention, they have built up self-sustaining economy and sound politics and enjoy modern amenities, welfare services, social justice, and higher standard of living. Amazing are the benefits conferred by modern science, such as were not thought of a century back, and breath-taking is the prospect of space conquest and journey to the moon. With such power over nature and no dearth of luxuries, the advanced countries can proudly claim peace and plenty.

But, alas! a little probing beneath the surface betrays gnawing emptiness in the heart, immense void and distressing insecurity, manifesting itself in unprovoked violence, unwarranted crime, juvenile delinquency, frequent divorces, suicides, and moral laxity. At no time in the history of humanity has man extended the frontiers of knowledge more than today. Paradoxically, at no time was he more peaceless, fear-ridden, and suspicious than today; he is not at peace with himself, nor with his neighbour, nor with nature. The edifice of modern civilization is rising high vertically, without corresponding depth of spiritual foundation. Science has placed tremendous energy in the hands of man. But the demoralizing threat of nuclear war and the consequent certainty of annihilation of humanity are haunting him; the recurring tests with radio-active fall-outs contaminate the physical and mental atmosphere. Man, in the grip of fear, is the enemy of man. As the power of enjoyment is increased with the help of modern inventions in arithmetical progression, the tempo of desire itself increases in geometrical progression, with the result that man is helplessly enslaved and preyed upon by the internal enemies like greed, lust, anger, etc. The grave problem is how to fight the internal enemies and learn the art of self-conquest. Swami Vivekananda declares that he who conquers self conquers all. In its ultimate analysis, the modern crisis is spiritual.

As a matter of fact, Swami Vivekananda's work in the civilized West mainly relates to the realm of spirit. With his profound knowledge of human affairs and deep study of world history, he emphasizes that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure evils of life. History bears witness to the extinction of great civilizations of Rome, Greece, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, etc., which could boast of political power, social order, and intellectual attainments, but whose structure was based on material values. Swami Vivekananda's keen

insight notes the explosive character of the Western civilization and likens it to a volcano which can explode at any time. In his view, what can avert the catastrophe is spirituality, the religion of fearlessness, the Vedānta which makes the best appeal to the rational and scientific mind of modern times. Like Hanumān of epic days, he crosses the ocean with the nectareous message of Vedānta to provide the much-needed pabulum to the spiritually hungry and famished souls of the West. The ovation that he receives at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, and subsequently in other parts of America as well as in Europe, reflects the thirst of the people for eternal truths. Referring to this, Swami Vivekananda says in his address at Calcutta after his return from the West: 'For a complete civilization the world is waiting, waiting for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous spiritual inheritance of the race, which, through decades of degradation and misery, the nation has still clutched to her breast. The world is waiting for that treasure; little do you know how much of hunger and of thirst there is outside of India for these wonderful treasures of our forefathers.' Eminent persons like Schopenhauer find in the Indian wisdom sure solace and security which modern sciences fail to give. The great philosopher Schopenhauer wrote: 'In the whole world, there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death.' Besides, he foretold: 'The world is about to see a revolution in thought more extensive and more powerful than that which was witnessed by the Renaissance of Greek literature.' Impressed by the influence of the Vedānta on the thinking minds and thirsty souls, Swami Vivekananda preached it extensively and established centres for the propagation of the message of Vedānta where men could drink of the soothing waters of perennial values. It is a happy sign for humanity that there is a world-wide network of such centres and

that the demand for them is on the increase.

As regards underdeveloped and developing countries of the East, Swami Vivekananda's work is directed to raising the material standard of the people; for spirituality is a far cry as long as there is impoverishment of the body. However, he views it as a means and does not lose sight of the spiritual goal, because spirituality alone can ensure eternal happiness and peace. With this end in view, his work in India takes the shape of 'elevation of the masses without injuring their religion'. A great nation builder of modern India that he is, Swami Vivekananda wants us to learn from the West politics, economics, sociology, industry, science, technology, etc., and effect improvement in the material condition of living, but takes care to emphasize that all these should be subordinated to the main theme of the nation, that is, religion, lest we should build the edifice on the shifting sands of material values and come to grief. Endowed with a far-sighted vision rare among the present-day leaders, he comprehends the subtle truth behind the unique, unbroken continuity of our life and culture for ages, that religion is the life-force of the nation and, also, anticipates the logical conclusion that, if it goes, death will be the result. Hence, with a motherly heart, full of love for us and concern for our future, he strikes a note of warning that, if in our craze for Europeanization, we happen to give up religion, we shall become extinct as a nation, as a race. Nevertheless, he infuses hope in us, when he utters in a prophetic tone that India will become greater and more glorious than ever before and that she will rise, not with the power of the steel, but with the power of the spirit.

The Vedāntic knowledge that Swami Vivekananda disseminates particularly in Europe and America—the centres of potent Western civilization and splendid social organization and splendid social organization—may be put in a nutshell in his memorable words: 'Each soul is potentially divine.

The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details.' Obviously, the Vedānta is non-credal and non-sectarian and is free from dogmas and doctrines. On the other hand, it is broad and universal, as it holds good for man in any time or clime, irrespective of sex, colour, or religion. Marvellously new as it appears when it issues from the lips of the modern Vivekananda, it is very ancient and forms part of the oldest record of religious literature of the world, the Vedas. 'By Vedas', Swami Vivekananda explains, 'no books are meant. They are the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws, discovered by different persons in different times. . . . The discoverers of these laws are *ṛsis*, and we honour them as perfected beings.' Thus the Vedas, not being woven round a prophet or prophets, are impersonal. Rather, the *ṛsis* owe their authority to their exemplifying in their lives the eternal principles enshrined in the Vedas.

By paying homage to truth and not to persons, the Vedāntic approach is in tune with the scientific outlook. The scientific theory of physical unity of matter is an echo of the Vedāntic conception of the solidarity of the universe. The Vedānta goes one step further to demonstrate unity of matter and mind. Nay, undaunted, sacrificing everything, even individuality, it goes to the dizzy heights beyond matter and mind, name and form, time-space-causation, and reaches the Everest of the ultimate reality of supreme Spirit, which is One without a second. The infinite power of Spirit, 'brought to bear upon matter, evolves material development, made to act upon thought, evolves intellectuality, made to act upon itself, makes of man a God'. Based on the scientific enquiry and impersonal investigation of truth, as well as austere disci-

pline of purity, sincerity, and utter renunciation of personal desires, the Vedānta does not contradict reason. Of all world faiths, the Vedānta alone provides the rationale of social ethics and morality. Since there is one and the same Spirit in all beings, one injures oneself by injuring another and one does good to oneself by doing good to others. No wonder that the scientific West was 'fascinated' by such a rational faith. Reminiscent of his experience in the West, Swami Vivekananda says: 'I have myself been told by some of the best Western scientific minds of the day, how wonderfully rational the conclusions of the Vedānta are. I know one of them personally, who scarcely has time to eat his meals or go out of his laboratory, but who yet would stand by the hour to attend my lectures on the Vedānta, for, as he expresses it, they are so scientific, they so exactly harmonize with the aspirations of the age and with the conclusions to which modern science is coming at the present time.'

In the present-day context of global tensions and threats that are ultimately traceable to spiritual bankruptcy, Swami Vivekananda has done yeoman service in the cause of humanity by evoking interest in the uplifting Vedānta and starting centres to diffuse the saving wisdom handed down as an invaluable legacy by a galaxy of illumined sages and seers of our blessed motherland, whose significant mission among the races of the world is 'the evolution of spiritual humanity'. The beneficent seed sown by the illustrious Vivekananda has grown to a *kalpataru* (mythological wish-fulfilling tree), mighty enough to give shade and succour to sun-baked and storm-tossed men, women, and children, by fulfilling their diverse wants, whether in the spiritual or secular sphere. The befitting homage that we can pay to him on the occasion of his birth centenary is to hearken to his celestial voice, raise and perfect ourselves in the light of perennial philosophy and make others do the same, so that there may be lasting peace and happiness in the world.

DISCIPLINE

BY SRI JAGADISHWAR PAL

The word 'discipline' is the most discussed topic of the day. The word is used almost every now and then by men whose opinion counts in society—political leaders, teachers, administrators, and social thinkers.

In view of the magnitude of the problem, it is worthwhile to examine the word 'discipline' in the historical perspective.

The word has a long history during which it has acquired many meanings. Wycliff first used it in 1382 in his translation of *Proverbs*: "Thou shalt finde grace and good discipline before God and man." It was used in 1548 in a description in connection with the foundation of Eton—"He first holpe his awane young scholars to attain to discipline and for them he founded a solemne school at Eton." It was originally something worthy to be mentioned with the charming word 'grace', something desirable to be found and attained—and not something unpleasant to be administered like medicine with the help of punishment.

This word has as many as six meanings in the dictionary. The first one is 'instruction imparted to disciples or scholars'. The second meaning is 'a branch of instruction or education'. The third meaning is 'instruction having for its aim to form the pupil to proper conduct and action—the training of scholars or subordinates to proper and orderly action by instructing them in the same'. The fourth meaning is 'the orderly conduct and action which result from training'. The fifth meaning is 'the order maintained and observed among pupils'. The sixth meaning is 'correction—chastisement—punishment by way of correction'.

In this evolution of meaning from instruction imparted to disciples to correction and chastisement, the following changes

should be noted carefully. 'Disciples or scholars' disappear from the second meaning. More importance is attached to the subject than to the pupil. In the third meaning, the recipients of discipline reappear, but not as a disciple—as a subordinate scholar and a pupil. In the fourth meaning, discipline becomes the result of training. In the fifth meaning, the idea of willing disciples disappears—even the idea of instruction to the pupil goes. They are replaced by the idea of subordinates being trained to produce order. If the personality of the trainer fails to maintain order, the only alternative left is the use of physical force. The sixth meaning of correction and chastisement follows from the fifth. The prevailing view of discipline is that of orderly behaviour which results from training—it is a combination of fourth, fifth, and sixth meanings of the dictionary. Complete depersonalization has taken place in the meaning of the word in course of time, due to socio-economic factors which are not within the scope of the present article.

Punishment is not discipline; nor is it a cure for indiscipline. It is, at best, a negative treatment, useful only occasionally for imposing order so that some form of positive treatment may have a chance of beginning to exert a disciplinary influence. What is this positive treatment then?

The understanding of the problem becomes easier, if we know that discipline comes from the same root as the word disciple. Disciple is translated today by the word 'pupil', and therefore, discipline is connected with disciples, with learning.

Discipline is a practice which appertains to pupils for the realization of perfection already in them. The road that leads there

is long, and the journey is difficult. Teachers have the important functions of giving the taught the right kind of treatment—positive and negative: (a) leadership to make them aware of their best human impulses—that there are valuable purposes in life; (b) restraints and checks to prevent them from giving way to their wayward impulses. As Clarke says, 'In the disciplinary relationship, teacher or parent is selfless in the sense of being wholly disinterested—seeking not his own—no interference, but steady wholesome influence.'

A reviewer of the book *Art and Child* by Marion Richardson states in the course of his review as follows: 'Here is a simple-minded woman saturated with a sense of abiding beauty in her world. Here are children devoid of any such sense at all. While maintaining her highest possible intake, she increased to the uttermost sacrifice her output. Of such relationship true teaching consists. That is a phenomenon susceptible of repetition in every subject of the curriculum. . . . There must be a filling of the teacher's soul with such loves. There must be an emptying of the teacher's soul before her scholars—a "passing of something" between them.'

This is a picture not of a disciplinarian, imposing order and imparting instruction, but of a teacher transmitting discipline, an inspired maker of disciples. The obverse is a picture not of subordinates passively or unwillingly accepting instruction, either in a subject or in proper conduct, but of disciples eagerly and actively learning in communion with a teacher.

It will not be irrelevant here if we dilate on the relationship of *guru* and *śiṣya* (teacher and student) as is found in the religious scriptures. The soul can receive impulse from another soul—the person from whose soul such impulse comes is called the *guru*, and the person to whose soul the impulse is conveyed is called the *śiṣya*. To convey such an impulse to any soul, the soul from which it proceeds must possess the power of

transmitting it to another. The soul to which it is transmitted must be fit to receive it.

There is a saying in English: 'One lamp lights another'. Following the analogy, we may say that the *guru* is the first lamp and the lamp lighted from him is the disciple. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'any selfish motive, such as the desire for gain and name will immediately destroy the conveying medium'. Swamiji gives the definition of a teacher thus: 'The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into thousand persons at a moment's notice. The true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student's soul, and see through and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else.'

In order to promote this superb discipline, we need more understanding of the real needs of the pupil, more love, more books and equipments, more space, more small classes and more teachers imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, and not more police force.

One may well ask whether this superb discipline can be promoted in an 'acquisitive society' which unleashes naked greed, fosters Machiavellian business methods, and drowns all lofty ideas in the 'icy water of egotistical calculation' and lets people gain the world and lose their soul. It should be remembered that dignity resides in thought and not in acquisition.

The spirit of sacrifice, a sense of justice, honesty, fairness, chivalry, moderation, public spirit, respect for human dignity, firm ethical values—people in society must possess all these, before they can attempt to promote discipline in society.

These values can be imbibed in a people who have got character—purity of heart and soul—chastity in word, deed, and thought. Tons of publicity materials and the entire propaganda machinery will fail to instil discipline amongst students and teachers,

managers and workers, if there is a big gulf of difference between word and action, between theory and practice. It is said that example is better than precept. Discipline cannot grow in a vacuum. Neither can it be promoted by extensive lectures and radio talks, N.C.C. and A.C.C. training, and other extra-curricular activities, unless they are practised in life. To quote Professor Humayun Kabir: 'It may appear a truism, but the fact is that, as in other spheres, here also, example is better than precept. In fact, one might say that in the field of moral feeling and action, example alone matters, values develop naturally out of the total experience of a pupil. ... Just as teaching of hygiene does not, necessarily, make a man healthy, nor knowledge of monetary theory make him rich, knowledge of moral ideas does not necessarily make a man moral. Morality is essentially an attitude of the mind in which values are placed above self-interest. This attitude can be developed only through contact with men who have made it part of their being. ... It cannot be too often said that it is not what the teacher says or tries to teach, but the way in which he lives his life that will have the greatest impact on the young who come in contact with them. Conflicts arise, because the teachers are slack, and often, allow worldly considerations to take precedence over their duty to their pupils.'

So, in the interest of discipline and good life, there should not exist in society a double standard of morality—one standard for the ministers and civil servants, priests, preachers, teachers, etc., and the other for the rest of the people.

Swami Vivekananda used to say that an ounce of work is better than tons of lectures. There has been debates and discussions, conferences and congresses to find out ways and means how to promote discipline in society. In spite of these, indisciplined behaviour is on the increase. Everybody is fed up with tall talks; what is needed is

action, and the motive force behind this action must be selfless.

The disease of indiscipline has been diagnosed and the medicine has been found. The medicine is nothing short of promotion of attainments of character, viz. spirit of sacrifice, a sense of justice, honesty, purity, fairness, chivalry, moderation, public spirit, and respect for human dignity in the people at large.

Now the question arises whether these ideal traits of character can be cultivated in an acquisitive society where the dominant tone is material and personal gain at any cost, when civilization is becoming subject to a Gresham's Law (bad money drives away good money), and it becomes difficult for anything better to hold its own.

Socio-economic structure and mode of production determine to a great extent the way of life of the people in society. Religion is, also, not outside the scope of this economic determination. To quote Swami Vivekananda: 'There (runs) an economic struggle through every religious struggle. This animal called man has some religious influence, but he is guided by economy. Individuals are guided by something else, but the mass of mankind never made a move, unless economy was involved. You may preach a religion that may not be perfect in every detail, but if there is an economic background to it, and you have the most ardent champions to preach it, you can convince a whole country. Whenever any religion succeeds, it must have economic value. Thousands of similar sects will be struggling for power, but only those who meet the real economic problems will have it. Man is guided by the stomach. He walks and the stomach goes first and the head afterwards. It will take ages for the head to go first.'

So the character of individuals can be regenerated according to the dictum stated above. But the problem of the mass of the people will remain. The moot point is how regeneration is to be brought about in their

character, without some kind of revolutionary change in society. It is for the political pundits and social scientists to say whether that is possible through revolution or peace-

ful co-existence, through dictatorship or freedom, through the preaching of Vedāntic equality or through the socialistic pattern of society.

THE FREEDOM OF TRUE RELIGION

BY MR. GUY LABERGE

The human soul is in search of great freedom. Because the basic ingredient of the soul is Spirit, and Spirit is perfectly free, the soul seeks to unify itself consciously with the great freedom it intuitively feels. The real Self of man, the Christ, is perfectly free. If this was not so, it would be impossible for the soul to experience any suffering whatsoever. The shadow on the ground would not exist, if the light of the sun did not exist. An object such as a tree is an obstruction to the rays of the sun producing a shadow. The light of the Christ perpetually shines, but our imperfect concepts of reality obstruct the rays of the Christ, producing our shadowy experiences. As a result, we fail to find the true freedom of the soul.

Ramakrishna, a very great soul of the last century, put this in other words; he said: "The wind of God's grace is always blowing, and we have to simply unfurl our sails and thus catch the breeze. The idle and the lazy, not acting properly, fail to reap the benefit; but the active and the prompt receive and enjoy the grace of God."

For thousands of years, mankind has been faced with a dilemma which has been difficult to resolve. Faced with suffering, lack, limitation, and death, man, through fear of these, has been compelled to delve into religion which, in most instances, has failed to clear up this dilemma. Man has associated with his religious beliefs a long list of 'don'ts'. Religion has often pounded into the individual many beliefs which have appeared to limit

the individual's expression. In the old Jewish religion, the Sabbath was so strongly observed that it was almost impossible to breathe without committing a sin. Many of us have given credence to countless rituals, creeds, and dogmas, believing that, through participation in these, we would consciously discover the complete inner freedom we so desperately sought. Many of us have been gravely disappointed that we did not find in religion anything which would bring us this inner freedom.

Let us not be too hasty, however, in judging or criticizing any of our former beliefs or the religion of others in the world. When a person goes deep enough in thought, he begins to understand that all religions are here, because they are fulfilling a purpose. Although it might seem very disappointing in retrospect, our former religious beliefs played a very important part in our spiritual development. At a certain stage of this development, we needed visible signs, symbols, and rituals to convey to us different religious ideas. Many of us found it very difficult to believe anything that we could not see, hear or feel. This is why dogmas, rituals, and visible signs of worship were needed by many of us, so that we would have something concrete to believe in, because of our inability to believe in the unseen. Let us not blame our upbringing or our religious past for any apparent bondage. We were in this or that religion, because we had certain lessons to glean from it. Because of our inability to grasp the

Absolute in our thoughts and feelings, we needed something concrete to believe in.

Once a minister made a sermon about how wonderful children were, that they were actually little angels in the absolute, because their souls were so pure. The next day he was seen to lose his temper at little children who were walking in the fresh cement walk in front of the church. They were having a lot of fun leaving their imprints on the fresh cement. One of his parishioners, witnessing this, jokingly reminded him of his sermon the day before. The minister replied: 'Yes, yes, that's true, I like children in the absolute *but I don't like them in the concrete.*' As we grow spiritually we leave concrete forms of religion behind and begin to encompass within our souls more and more of the absolute concepts.

Ramakrishna was known to have also said, all religions are true at different levels of understanding. Let us forever remember that all religions are meeting the needs of their followers at their own levels. Religions are brought into being by an infinite Spirit as a result of mankind's desires, and these desires are at all levels of the spiritual ladder. This is the meaning of Jacob's ladder, a step by step realization of Truth. In his dream, Jacob saw angels ascending and descending on this ladder. These are symbolic of religious thoughts being present at all levels of spiritual understanding. In other words, there is good in all religions. Understanding this, let us be forever at peace with all the religions of the world.

What do we mean by the freedom of true religion? What is true religion in the first place? The word 'religion' comes from the latin word *religio*, which means to bind back again. The purpose of religion is to bind us back to God in consciousness. When this is achieved, we have the highest form of religion possible. When we are bound back to God in consciousness, great freedom is experienced. This is the freedom of true religion. The Christ is then experienced as eternally free.

This is the highest freedom the soul can ever know. In this state of consciousness, rituals, dogmas, set forms, churches, and meetings become unnecessary. There will come a time in the experience of the race where all religions and religious movements will cease. The individual will, then, have discovered that the highest sacrament is within himself. A person reaching this understanding has no need for relying on anyone or anything. Even metaphysical movements such as we have today will no longer be necessary. That's the purpose of religion, to guide us there. We must remember that this is the highest form of religion. We must also remember that we are not there yet, and that we are at the present just experiencing glimpses of this eternal freedom. All religions are steps to this goal. If we belong to a metaphysical movement, the chances are that we are more advanced on the path. We have left behind the need for rituals and dogmas. We are beginning to grasp more of Truth, without the need of symbols of Truth. As we continue to study Truth and continue to meditate, we come nearer and nearer our goal. As we look back on religious history, we see this gradual unfoldment very clearly. The earliest man had very crude forms of religious worship, then came the witch doctor, then the priest and organized religion, and then the metaphysical movements which are destined to be great religions. In our metaphysical movements, we have the greatest teachings in the world, but once again, these are but another step on the path.

Becoming free in consciousness is a very gradual process. We reach a certain plateau where we experience great freedom over the past, and we have no sooner settled down in that consciousness when we are beckoned to come higher. Reaching a new plateau, our past in retrospect often appears as bondage. We have all experienced greater freedom through 'Truth' teachings, but the time will come when we will look back on this present experience and call this bondage, too. This is

the way we grow spiritually. We go from one level of understanding to a higher one, from one glory to another glory.

While it is true that a man has a free will, this does not mean that he is free. Man is free to think thoughts only at the level of consciousness he finds himself in. The thoughts of the criminal are not the thoughts of the saint. Man binds himself or frees himself by his own thinking. Philosophers have argued for ages whether or not man has a free will. In 'Truth', this is seen so clearly. A man is free only at his level of understanding, as his understanding increases so does his freedom. A prisoner is free to move about the prison yard, but a wall prevents him from going further. He is free to do a lot of things inside that prison, but he is, also, prevented from doing many things a man outside can do. On the other hand, the man outside has many invisible walls of fear, doubt, and guilt, which prevent him from thinking free thoughts, which the higher soul constantly thinks. As we begin to grow spiritually, God gives us greater and greater freedom in our thoughts. Ramakrishna gives the following illustration: 'A cow is tied to a post with a rope, and she is free to move within the limits of the rope. If the cow, being obedient, behaves well, then, the owner increases the length of the rope, and thus gives her more freedom. And, when the owner is fully satis-

fied with the good behaviour of the cow, he may let her free without the rope. On the contrary, if the cow does not behave well, the little freedom she got will be curtailed, and she may even remain tied tightly to the post without any freedom whatsoever. So also has God given us free will, and expects us to use it well; thus we deserve His grace, which ultimately brings us complete salvation. Then such a one never violates God's commandments and continues to be virtuous throughout.' Religion is not meant in the least to bind us or to limit us, but is meant to lead us to the highest freedom the soul can ever know, Christ-consciousness.

We sense at our present level of spiritual development the great freedom of the Christ. Religion is guiding all of humanity in that general direction. Regardless of where a person is in consciousness, his religion is giving him the highest freedom he can grasp. Freedom is experienced in all religions, but at different levels of consciousness. What one person considers freedom in his religion is bondage to you and me. What we consider as freedom at this level is, undoubtedly, considered bondage by a very highly advanced soul. This is the eternal process, moving from one level of freedom into a higher one. Let us give thanks for the signposts of the many religions of the world, all pointing the way to the Infinite.

GANDHIAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AND RELIGION

BY MR. SHAMSUDDIN

It was Mahatma Gandhi who, while pointing out that 'the whole system of education in India was defective', observed that 'religion is absent from the very basic principles of education and that is why humanitarian feelings are miserably suffering.' In his view, the defeat of the high purpose of education in

India was due to the seeds of materialistic outlook of life sown by the foreign rulers, which had resulted in the spiritual and physical starvation of the country. Gandhiji discovered the cure for this malady in the scheme of basic education, with piety as one of the many forceful agents to bring about the desired cure

A REVOLUTIONARY STEP

Basic Education is, really, a revolutionary step in the field of education. Its aim is not only to solve the problem of bread and butter, but to provide food for the soul as well. This scheme embraces physical and mental development along with spiritual enlightenment to make man all-round and really educated.

Under the present circumstances, the problem of education in India, really speaking, is largely the problem of money. The Mahatma found his solution by making education self-supporting, and basic education has been started on grounds of self-sufficiency.

The main feature of this system is that the centre of all education is the learning of some craft. In view of the environments and prevailing local conditions around the child, all learning is imparted to him through some craft. In fact, it aims at the development of the physical, mental, and moral powers of the child, in short, his all-sided progress and perfection.

In India, majority of the people are such as do not get even the bare daily necessities of life. Many of them rarely obtain even one meal a day or have sufficient clothes to cover them. The Gandhian system of basic education makes every satisfactory provision for their training in crafts, such as spinning, weaving, wood-work, etc., and also, gardening, agriculture, and so on, which does help them to fulfil the bare needs of life which are essential. Thus the child not only develops intellectually, but also gets good moral build-up and is able to lead a better social life. Basic education is true to 'the kindred points of heaven and home'.

REAL MEANING OF RELIGION

Indian culture has all along been influenced by religion in the broadest sense of the term. The Sanskrit word '*dharma*' is originated from the root '*dhr*', which means, 'to put on or to accept'. Whatever is truth and worth accepting is *dharma*, while the rest is *adharma*.

This is the popular meaning of *dharma* or

religion, according to the Śāstras. It may be this or that religion, but all religions aim at one common universal aim—a lofty moral and a humanitarian outlook.

Gandhiji considered religion as one of the indispensable items in the system of education. His opponents took opportunities for criticizing him for the absence of any provision of religious book in the syllabus of basic education. In reply to these critics, Dr. Zakir Hussain said: 'There is no State religion in India. There are followers of various religions; and as such, the teaching of any particular religious book cannot be undertaken here in this land. Moreover, the Gandhian system of basic education provides equal consideration to all religions. It teaches the broad moral principles common to all religions. Truth, non-violence, love for the country, moral uplift, and so on are common in all great religions. Gandhian system of education, in fact, develops all the good qualities of head and heart in such a way that there is an all-round development of the full personality of the child, making him a patriot in the real sense. In this way, we find close relationship between basic education and religion.'

DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONALISM

The basic system of education in all its principles and methods encourages religion in the broadest sense. Consequently, not only religion and morality, but culture and civilization as well, improve the citizen, resulting in national enlightenment. As an example, basic education imparts instruction through the mother tongue, which fosters feelings of love for the motherland and national culture.

Today, our country is considerably influenced by Western civilization, which, in body and mind, is more or less foreign to us, and its soul is enshrouded in the mist. Foreign language, introduced as medium of instruction by Lord Macaulay, is largely responsible for this. The aim behind that education, probably, was that Indians should forget

their culture and civilization and become slaves in all respects.

In this connection, Dr. Iqbal remarks: 'If you mean to destroy a particular community, strike at the language spoken by that community.' Realizing this, Mahatma Gandhi rightly introduced national language in the place of English. 'By the medium of the mother tongue,' he said, 'people will develop love for their own ancient literature.' He was right when he found that people would not only revive their own culture, but, at the same time, elevate their ethical and aesthetical standard of life, by the intensive study of their mother-tongue.

COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

Another aim of Gandhian system of education is to impart knowledge of petty, yet useful, home industries and popularize them in villages. With the influence of Western civilization, India today is, also, advancing towards industrialization and harmful capitalism.

The plight of the rural population remains as usual. People of the urban area as well sail in the same boat. The education they receive leads them nowhere. The great problem of unemployment is before the nation.

INTEGRATED SCHEME OF EDUCATION

The Gandhian system of education provides the cure to all these ailments. Its aim is replacing large scale industries by small cottage industries. It can check corruption and moral degeneration caused by the unhealthy atmosphere generated by capitalism. Knowledge of various small industries will provide individuals with work at their own convenience, and to their taste, inside their own homes. Members of the family will work together, and as such, the home atmosphere will remain free of all unhealthy possibilities and will be religious. The moral standard will improve as the result of this practical religious training.

All the prevailing distinctions between man

and man will be reduced. Proper knowledge of farming and tilling the soil will enable the agriculturist to reap the best fruit of his labour. Similarly, in cities, the educated public can and will have to work. At present, they do not understand the dignity of labour and discard physical work. They will come to know that work is worship and labour is love of the Lord.

Thus they will follow practical religious life. Indifference towards religion and morality in India can be traced largely to the empty stomach and tattered clothes. Who can deny that poverty is mainly the cause of all crime and of lack of religion in the people? 'Beg, steal, or borrow', under such circumstances, is apparently the only means of fulfilling their basic necessities of life. They have not a moment to give thought to religion or piety. The teaching of basic education will remove many present-day disabilities and tend to foster a spirit of true religion among the masses.

The age of science, of atom and hydrogen, of man-made satellite, has made man more or less an arch-devil. The existence of God is outrageous to his dignity. He is turning into a beast, is tearing and devouring his own kin. He is not far from bringing his own end.

The impending catastrophe is visible in the ugliest form. Gandhiji foresaw all this, and he discovered a way of deliverance. It is his system of basic education which embraces religious education in its true form. It is this education, with its abiding values, which will raise the Indian population and make them worship work and not wealth, society and not self, deity and not devil. It will bring about physical improvement, social progress, and cultural advancement.

Let teachers, therefore, make a beginning in that direction, 'heart within and God o'er-head', which will make the learner understand religion or religions, with neither pride nor prejudice.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The late Pandit Jagadish Chandra Chatterji was an erudite scholar of Indian philosophy. In this learned article, he refutes with sound arguments the common charge against the Buddha that he was a Nihilist, inasmuch as he is said to have denied the existence of Ātman as an eternal and permanent entity. He copiously quotes the original Buddhistic sources and goes to show that the 'Tathāgata-Consciousness' of the Buddha is identical with the Ātman in the highest Vedic sense. . . .

Sri M. K. Venkatarama Iyer, M.A., formerly Professor of Philosophy, Annamalai University, Madras State, in his learned article 'Sri Aurobindo and Śaṅkara on the Absolute', compares the views of Sri Aurobindo and Śaṅkara about the nature of the Absolute. His thoughtful analysis and deductions will be found helpful in understanding the philosophy of Advaita, as enunciated by the great Ācārya, specially when it is examined against the critical dissertation of one of the best minds of the modern times. . . .

Swami Rasajnananda is of the Ramakrishna Order. In his article, he shows how the message of Swami Vivekananda, if properly understood and sincerely adhered to, can remedy many of the ills of present-day human society, and how it can bring lasting peace and happiness in the world. . . .

'Discipline' is one of the most necessary elements for success either in individual or in social life. But its proper implementation

and imbibition have always been a problem, as also its concepts have been varied. Sri Jagadishwar Pal, M.A., LL.B., of Calcutta University, in his article on the subject, has tried to clarify what 'discipline' should mean, and has also suggested some ways and means of making it more effective, specially among our students of today. . . .

Mr. Guy Laberge, Minister, Church of Religious Science, Pacific Palisades, California, U.S.A., writes about the 'Freedom of True Religion' in this issue. He says that the aim of all religions is to enable their followers to enjoy the highest freedom of Spirit. This is possible by a gradual process of advancement from lower levels to higher ones, and different religions are only the means to help men in passing through these levels. Each religion is true and useful, and fulfils the needs of this spiritual advancement, at different time. . . .

Mr. Shamsuddin, B.A.B.T., F.R.G.S. of Raipur, in his article 'Gandhian System of Education and Religion', deals with the principles on which Gandhiji based his system of basic education. The writer says that, along with introduction of the teaching of crafts with languages and subjects, special stress is laid in this system on the inculcation of the basic principles of religions also, which, in their width of vision and spirit of toleration, equips the individual with the best traditions of noble life and makes for physical improvement, social progress, and cultural advancement of both the teacher and the taught.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

COLLECTED PAPERS OF PROFESSOR S. S. SURYANARAYANA SASTRI. EDITED BY DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN. *Published by the University of Madras, 1961. Pages xix+441. Price Rs. 20.*

Professor S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri has been one of our great Idealists in this century. Translating and

editing important Advaitic texts, he found time to publish a number of papers on history, political theory, logic and epistemology, metaphysics, and law. Of these, forty-seven are brought together into the present volume. They cover the wide range of his interests, though a large number are purely epistemological and metaphysical.

Starting as a follower of Appayya Dikṣita's Śivādvaita, Professor Sastri soon became a Bradleyan. Gradually, he came to accept with deep conviction the general framework of Advaita. Strangely enough, the empirico-pragmatical tendency in him drew him largely to Maṇḍana and Vācaspati, with the curious result that he rejected some of the tenets of Śaṅkara. While a number of Indian philosophers have been reading a Bradley or a Kant into Śaṅkara, Professor Sastri came to develop his Advaita in an eclectic manner, on the foundations laid by Maṇḍana. Thus he accepts *sphoṭa*, the continuity of the empirical with the transcendental—a strange spatialization of time and of eternity—and *sarvamukti*, besides trying to harmonize the Prabhākara school of Mīmāṃsā with that of Maṇḍana. Surely, Vācaspati would not have countenanced it even for a wink, let alone the rejection of *jñānād eva tu kaivalyam*. The doctrinal changes introduced by Sarvājñātman and Appayya Dikṣita provide the basis of Professor Sastri's thought.

This volume deserves to be gone through carefully by all serious students of Advaita. It is sure to provide a point of departure for all those genuinely interested in restating Śaṅkara's position to the modern mind. As Professor Sastri knew well, we owe the greatest debt to Śaṅkara, and it is our duty to restate the system of the Master, taking into account all that has been said for or against it.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

THE BASIS OF SCIENTIFIC THINKING. BY SAMUEL REISS. *Published by Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1961. Pages 262. Price \$4.75.*

The leading scientists who formulated the laws of nature made use of thought processes, of whose nature they were not conscious. What was *unconsciously* employed by the scientist and the creative artist was brought up to the conscious level and revealed in all its details by the logician. It then became abundantly clear that psychological processes were basic or fundamental to conceptual thinking. The author of the book under review uses the term 'psycho-logic' to highlight the simultaneity of logical and psychological processes in meaningful thinking. Perhaps, we may say that psychology is concerned more with the process than with the product, and more with the logic than with the process of thinking. 'Psycho-logic' deals with both at once. What is of great value in the book is the emphasis that the author lays on the *unconscious* psychological processes in thinking. Just as Freud 'sought to obtain an insight into the nature of the complex by penetrating beneath surface phenomena to the unconscious,' so also, psycho-logic is concerned with exhibiting the unconscious foundation that underlies the explicit formulation of concepts, such as are applied to the sciences' (p. 10).

Prefacing his detailed analysis of the conceptual structure of the sciences with a brief summary of what he has said elsewhere on 'Language and Meaning' (Chapter II), the author probes into biological thinking and tries to establish the reality of mind simply as a result of the analysis of the concept of organism, with its intimately associated concepts of structure and function, together with the concept of self-maintenance of the organism (Chapter III). This analysis is extended to cover all aspects of recent biological (Chapter IV & V), and even psychological (Chapter V) thinking. It is finally shown that *mind* is fundamental to all the postulates, hypotheses, and deductions encountered in biology and psychology. In the succeeding chapters (Chapters VII to X), the psycho-logic probe is applied to mathematics and physical science. The result is the same. 'The incompleteness of any physical theory, in the last analysis, reflects the fact . . . that there cannot be any significance to any concept of a physical world, apart from an *interpreting* mind' (p. 226). Therefore, purely on the basis of psycho-semantic analysis, the reality of mind has been established. The book concludes (Chapter XI) with an impressive summary of the entire argument advanced in its body.

Of the value of the book in enlarging the field of our vision, there can be little doubt. But the reviewer has, for a long time, held the view that semantics is the 'grin without the cat' of *Alice in Wonderland*. 'Psycho-logic-semantics' has brought back the head of the cat behind the grin. But there is more to the story—the body, and life energizing the body. What is the *unconscious* motive force that drove mind out of physical, biological, and behaviouristic psychological sciences? The answer will be very revealing, as it will uncover the unconscious of the scientists.

PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

PRINCIPLES OF TANTRA. BY ARTHUR AVALON (SIR JOHN WOODROFFE). *Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras-17. Third edition. Pages 787. Price Rs. 30.*

The *Tantra-Tattva* of Sriyukta Shiva Chandra Vidyarnava Bhattacharya Mahodaya is the most exhaustive and clear exposition of Tantra Śāstra in its various aspects, and it is to the credit of Arthur Avalon that this great work was first published in the English language in 1914. The present edition, like its preceding one, contains the two parts of the book together under one cover, thus making it a unit in itself and also handy.

The first part, with an elaborate and masterly introduction by Arthur Avalon, deals with the philosophy and principles of Tantra Śāstra, and explains and establishes through learned discussions and comparative studies of various other schools the signif-

icance and importance of the various principles of Tantra and the methods of *sādhana* and rituals. Various topics such as 'Appearance and Applicability of the Tantra Scripture', 'What is the Necessity for the Tantras when there is the Veda?', 'What is Śāstra?', 'What is Śakti?', 'Śiva and Śakti' have been taken up for study and discussion and have been dealt with with adequate ability and clarity.

The second part, which is mostly the work of Jnanendralal Majumdar and has a very learned and fairly exhaustive introduction by Sri Barada Kanta Mazumdar, deals with the practical, ritualistic, and esoteric aspects of the Tantra Śāstra. The topics dealt with include 'On Mantra', 'Lettered and Unlettered Sound', 'On the Guru', 'The Play of Guṇas', 'Outer Worship', 'Ceremonial Worship', etc. The methods, importance, and utility of various Tāntric rituals and practices have been described and explained with authoritative quotations from various scriptures, and efforts have been made with strong arguments to drive home into the mind of the reader the necessity of Tāntric *sādhana*s.

As is natural, at places, the arguments and discussions look as if being one-sided and prejudicial, but in a book like this, where a particular philosophy and way of spiritual life is given supremacy over others, such things are bound to come in the way of its exposition. But this fact remains a matter of common agreement that the present work is, perhaps, the most authentic and exhaustive book for knowing and understanding the principles of Tantra—which, in India, is held in very high esteem and is regarded as a very important way of spiritual unfoldment. The publishers deserve the gratitude of scholars and seekers for having published this valuable book once again, and that so elegantly and carefully. Printing, binding, and general get-up are all very commendable.

S. C.

EPISTEMOLOGY OF BHĀṬṬA SCHOOL OF PŪRVA-MIMĀMSĀ. BY GOVARDHAN P. BHATT. *Published by The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Post Box 8, Varanasi-1. 1962. Pages 436. Price Rs. 20.*

This is, no doubt, a scholarly work on the epistemology of Kumārila Bhāṭṭa in three parts. Books I and II contain detailed and critical discussions on knowledge and various sources of knowledge, while Book III deals with the problems of substance, self, and universe.

The author's treatment of various topics is based on a first hand study of original texts. The book is well-documented.

English books on the philosophy of the Mīmāṃsā school are not many in number. Dr. Jha's books on the subject are the only available authentic works on Mīmāṃsā topics. Epistemological thoughts of the Kumārila school, however, remained almost untouched for a long time. By publishing the book under review, the author has filled up an undesirable chasm in Indian epistemology.

The work is, however, not without defects. For example, while dealing with the theories of other schools, the author has not been able to represent their views in proper spirit. On page 12, he states: 'The Puruṣa of the Sāṅkhya system is neither a knower, nor a doer, nor an enjoyer.' The Puruṣa is a pure subject (*draṣṭā*). Anyone familiar with the Sāṅkhya definition of Puruṣa knows that the Sāṅkhya has defined Puruṣa as *draṣṭā*, *bhoktā*, and *akartā*. This '*bhoktr-bhāva*' of Puruṣa is still a controversial issue in the philosophy of Sāṅkhya. Moreover, ordinarily, we find that a seer is also the knower of objects. The author has not clarified the sense in which Puruṣa, though the eternal *draṣṭā*, is not actually the '*pramātā*' of the various worldly objects. It seems the author himself is not very clear on this point, because he has sensed incoherence in the Sāṅkhya definition of Puruṣa as the pure subject (*draṣṭā*). In his opinion, if Puruṣa is the seer, then he is bound to see always the products of Prakṛti as a seer cannot exist in the absence of the 'seen'. Truly speaking, '*draṣṭṛtva*' or pure subjectivity of Puruṣa in the Sāṅkhya sense implies simply the capability of the self to reveal anything which happens to be related to it. This revealing capacity constitutes the essence of Puruṣa, and so, Puruṣa is never deprived of it. Hence, it is always the pure subject, although, in the state of liberation, it turns away from the worldly-show. In the state of liberation, Puruṣa is separated from *buddhi*, and so there is no object-cognition for the self.

On page 389, again, while criticizing the Buddhist views, the author has said that, according to Buddhism, each moment 'gathers all the past impressions from its predecessor, passes them on to its successor, and is destroyed completely'. I am not aware that, according to the Buddhist theory of dependent origination, a moment passes on the same impressions to its successor which it has inherited from its predecessor.

In the concluding paragraph of almost every chapter, the author has given his original comments. These, though stimulating, are insufficient because of their sketchy nature.

The book is nevertheless a valuable addition to the literature on the Mīmāṃsā school.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA SARISHA, 24-PARGANAS

REPORT FOR THE YEARS 1956 TO 1958

This centre, established in 1921, is mainly devoted to educational work, providing for general and scientific education, technical education, social education, basic education at all levels, audio-visual units, and library service, both for boys and girls.

Ramakrishna Mission Siksha Mandir Boys' Multi-purpose Higher Secondary School: Started in 1923 as a lower primary school, it has now developed into a multi-purpose higher secondary school with humanities, science, and technical as elective courses. In 1958, there were 22 teachers on the staff. In 1956, 19 boys were sent up for class X examination, of whom 15 passed; in 1957, all the 20 students sent up for examination came out successful.

Besides physical education in various forms, there were facilities for N.C.C. and A.C.C. training. Various extra-curricular activities such as socials, dramatics, debates, exhibitions, excursions, and social services were gone through.

The attached hostel accommodated 125 boarders in 1958, including five Santhal boys. The school library contained more than 3,000 volumes of well-chosen juvenile literature; in 1958, 1045 books were issued.

The Senior Basic School: Comprising classes VI, VII, and VIII, this school was started in 1957 by converting a part of the middle section of the High School. Strength in 1958: 91. Staff: 5.

Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Mandir Girls' Multi-purpose Higher Secondary School: This girls' school, started in 1927 as a primary school, has risen to the present status with a strength of 217. Twenty per cent of the pupils enjoys free-studentship. The number of staff in 1958 was 23. Here, too, considerable emphasis was laid on physical education under trained experts and there was ample scope for extra-curricular activities also. The hostel accommodated 65 girls, of whom 5 were free and 7 enjoyed concessions. Technical training was given to 40 trainees in the technical section of the school. The library had 1,829 volumes in 1958. The number of books issued was 796. The School has its own buses to bring students from long distances.

Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Mandir Junior Basic Training College for Women: In 1958, this institution

had a strength of 51 students, all residential. Started in 1950, the school has since then grown, maintaining at the same time its bright results. Number of staff including principal and medical officer: 7. The library contains books and journals of pedagogical interest. An exhibition room is maintained, where handiworks of trainees are preserved with great care.

Junior Basic Schools: Comprising three units, these schools had a strength of 380, of which 197 were boys and 183 girls. The number of staff was 13. Elaborate arrangements for creative activity is provided by these schools.

Pre-basic School: In 1958, this school had a strength of 36. The children are brought and sent back by a special bus every day.

Social Education Department: In 1958, there were ten centres (6 for men and 4 for women) for social education, meant to improve village life. Average roll strength was 167, of which 114 were men and 53 women.

Community Centre: There are two community centres, one for men and another for women, each with a strength of 21. These centres devote themselves to social and literary education.

Youth Camps: Organized annually, separately for boys and girls, these camps give the opportunity to the participants for road construction and other works in rural areas. In addition to work projects, activities such as cultural classes, discussion, entertainments, village-survey, etc., too, form part of the camp life.

Vivek-Bharati Patha Bhawan: The social education scheme includes this area library also. In 1958, the library, with its various feeder centres, issued 7,655 books. The total number of books in the library was 4,304.

Audio-visual Unit: Documentary film shows, comprising films of social and educational interest were exhibited by this department. The number of shows held in 1958 was 110.

Charitable Dispensary: This Homoeopathic dispensary treated 1,943 patients in 1957, of which 1,096 were new cases.

Relief Work: The Ashrama did relief operations when a small-pox epidemic broke out in the nearby villages of Nainan and Gazipur.

Milk Distribution: Skimmed milk was distributed to boys, girls, and children belonging to the different schools of the Mission, during recesses.