

VOL. LXIX

SEPTEMBER 1964

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR  
AWAKENED INDIA



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

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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

SEPTEMBER 1964

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## विवेकानन्द साहित्य

### जन्मशती हिन्दी संस्करण

कुल १० खंड—डबल डिमाई १६ पेजी साइज में ; अनुक्रमणिका समेत पृष्ठ संख्या प्रति खंड लगभग ४५० ; मजबूत और आकर्षक सजिल्द प्रति खंड का मूल्य ६ रु० । पूरे सेट रेल द्वारा मँगाने से रेल-खर्च नहीं लगेगा । पुस्तक विक्रेताओं के लिए विशेष कमीशन दिया जाता है ।

स्वामी विवेकानन्द की समग्र ग्रन्थावली 'विवेकानन्द साहित्य' नाम से दस खंडों में प्रकाशित हुई है, जो राष्ट्रभाषा हिन्दी में ऐसा प्रथम प्रकाशन है । इन ग्रन्थों में स्वामोजी के दर्शन, धर्म, राष्ट्र, समाज आदि विषयक ओजपूर्ण व्याख्यानों तथा गम्भीर लेखों का पूर्ण संकलन है । अनुवादकों में पं० सूर्यकान्त त्रिपाठी 'निराला', पं० सुमित्रानन्दन पंत, डा० प्रभाकर माचवे, श्री फनीश्वरनाथ रेणु, डा० नर्मदेश्वर प्रसाद आदि ख्यातिलब्ध साहित्यकारों के नाम उल्लेखनीय है ।

“निस्सन्देह किसी से स्वामी विवेकानन्द के लेखों के लिए भूमिका की अपेक्षा नहीं है । वे स्वयं ही अप्रतिहत आकर्षण हैं ।” — महात्मा गाँधी

व्यवस्थापक, अद्वैत आश्रम,

५, डिही एंटाली रोड, कलकत्ता-१४

INDEPENDENCE HAS ITS PRICE  
AND IT IS WE WHO HAVE TO PAY IT

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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Vol. LXIX

SEPTEMBER 1964

No. 9



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:0:—

LETTERS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

( 42 )

Chilkapeta House, Almora  
Kumaon, Uttar Pradesh  
1 November 1913

Dear—,

I have received both your letters in succession. You are seeing everything as an illusion—it is quite true: everything is, in fact, an illusion. This whole world is an illusion—those who stay in the world knowing this will never become attached to it. As the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) has said: 'You should cut the jack fruit after applying oil to your hands.' 'Applying oil' is nothing else than to understand that all this is an illusion; 'cutting the jack fruit' means to carry on the worldly duties.

You want to love me in a spirit of detachment, in an unselfish manner. That's very nice, indeed. The Master Ramakrishna is the sole treasure of my heart. He, the repository of purity, virtue, and kindness, has incarnated himself with his retinue of followers, to redeem the ordinary mortals, and that without any selfish motive whatsoever. He alone has all his desires fulfilled. To whatever extent you love this receptacle, that will reach only the Lord, and love for this (meaning himself) also, you will get from him. It is he himself who picks and chooses boys like you filled with love and devotion. Ah! He has made you his own. Now love him intensely. You are fortunate—you have seen and touched the divine playground of the Master, and have also shown it to your mother. We have not seen such a place anywhere else in the world. We have travelled widely, visited many holy places very charming to sight, but



not seen anything anywhere to compare with the beauty, grandeur, and holiness of the Master's playground. That is our Kailasa, our Kasi, our Vaikunṭha, our Goloka—what more shall I say ?

The Holy Mother (Sri Sarada Devi) does not raise her veil in the presence of anybody—not even before us. Of course, it is a different matter with women. She has blessed you—you have no more to worry about ; know for certain. Mother is not an ordinary woman, be convinced of it. Never since Sri Sri Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) was living at Dakshineswar have any of us seen anything but Mother's feet ; we have never seen her face. It is not that she uses the veil only now. She has answered your prayer with a nod of her head—you are, undoubtedly, thrice-blessed.

I am glad to hear that you are keeping well. My health also is not bad here. But it is getting very cold. Very near to this place, that is, about twenty-five to thirty miles from here as the crow flies, are the perpetually snow-covered mountain-peaks, presenting a beautiful panorama to view. As it has been snowing there nowadays, the mountain-peaks have all assumed a still more dazzling appearance. After a month or two, there will be snow-fall in the high mountain-ranges surrounding this area, and there will be slight snow-fall here also ; then it will become terribly cold.

My heartfelt blessings and love to you. Write now and then for your welfare.

Your well-wisher,  
Shivananda

( 43 )

Chilkapeta House  
P.O. Almora  
Kumaon, U.P.  
23 January 1914

Dear—,

Everything is clear from your letter. Surely, that is the way of the world. Knowing this fully well, one should live in this world. There is no use getting agitated over it. Do your duties depending on the Lord. Through this world alone, you will attain to realization—know for certain that you are not to return to this world again. If, by Lord's will, you are to go and work somewhere else for clearing off your debts, do so by all means—if that be His will, let it happen so. Why should you be worried over it ? There is no fear for you. The Lord has given refuge to you—you will not be reborn a householder again, no fear. *Jaya Sri Ramakrishna!* Don't fear in the least—go on with your appointed duties with a steadfast heart. Do every act keeping in mind the thought of the Lord. In this, devotion and faith are the main thing. The pleasures and joys of this world, as well as its woes and miseries are but a play of two days. In this world, no-one is continually happy or unhappy. Knowing that the misery and happiness of this world are transient, the devotee

of the Lord, with his mind firmly fixed on Him, will look upon them with an indifferent eye, and will neither be elated by happiness nor depressed by misery. He will just pray like a child: 'O Lord! May I not be swerved from your presence by anything whatsoever! The moment we assume a body, happiness and misery follow in its train—this is inevitable, but see to it that my faith and devotion and love remain firm and unshakable like the Himalayas.'

What more shall I write? The Lord is watching over you—wherever you might be.

Your well-wisher,  
Shivananda

( 44 )

Chilkapeta House  
P.O. Almora  
Kumaon, U.P.  
26 February 1914

Dear—,

I am in receipt of both of your letters. What you have written in your last letter is, by Lord's grace, absolutely untrue—there is no reason whatsoever for you to get worried. Pray intensely to the Lord, he will make you whole. Let the fire of passionate love (of the Lord) burn in your heart; be completely immersed in divine love—you shall not lack in anything. I shall send all the things desired by you from me, except one. Ah! how shall I describe the joy I experienced on hearing that lovely flowers are in full bloom there? Decorate the Lord (Sri Ramakrishna) with flowers to your heart's content. He was staying in the flower garden at Dakshineswar—flowers were a favourite with him. With the arrival of the spring season, still more beautiful flowers will bloom—offer them plentifully to the Lord.

Your father was a devotee; as a result of that merit, you also have devotion to Sri Ramakrishna, the incarnation of the age—there is not the least doubt about it. You have to firmly establish the Lord both within and without. If established within, there will be no want outside.

My heartfelt love and blessings to you. Write now and then for your welfare. By the grace of God, I am keeping fairly well.

Your well-wisher,  
Shivananda

PS. It rained heavily for seven or eight days, and there was snow-fall on two days towards the end—about four or five inches on the first day, about seven inches on the second day. It is terribly cold, but the wonderful radiant beauty of the Himalayas after the snow-fall is beyond description—they are as if suffused with the spirit of Śiva. It is very good for the country crops, not to speak of the health. Through Lord's will, because of these rains and snow-fall, these parts have been saved from famine; otherwise there would have



been no end to the misery of the people and the domestic animals—God knows how many souls would have died for want of food!

Shi.

( 45 )

Chilkapeta House  
P.O. Almora  
Kumaon, U.P.  
7 April 1914

Dear —,

Your letter of the 23rd ultimo duly to hand. You want to know about my life. There is nothing very striking in the incidents of my life to write about. But then, there is one incident which is the special of all specialities—that is the meeting with Sri Ramakrishna and his mercy; that also because of his own goodness. I had no such virtue in me to merit his mercy. He is self-willed, free and independent; he, through his own will, has blessed me—this is the only incident worth mentioning in my life.

Is it ever possible to manufacture a God out of somebody by dressing him up like one? He who is God is always so, and there is no need to prove it by loud proclamation. No light is required to illumine the sun; the sun is self-illuminated. You don't worry on that count at any time—let others say what they like. You have been given refuge by the Master, Sri Ramakrishna—blessed you are. There is no necessity to worry over anything else. Pray to him with your whole heart; you will be able to see him in this very life.

I heard that Premananda Swami has gone on a visit to different places in East Bengal. He is extensively preaching about the Lord. If it is convenient, try to meet him somewhere.

I don't know what to reply in answer to your various questions. I know only this: that I am the servant of Sri Ramakrishna and have taken refuge at his feet; I really don't know anything more than that. When he, out of compassion, makes me think of him, I do so; when he makes me read books, go for a walk, carry on conversations on spiritual topics with somebody, I do so—this is my work. The only hope is Sri Ramakrishna's mercy—I am convinced of it. I have nothing else in this life to call my own, nor do I desire anything else, by his grace.

You pray with your whole heart to that Ramakrishna—you will surely gain peace. What more shall I write? My heartfelt love and blessings to you.

Your well-wisher,  
Shivananda

# IS ETHICS A SUBSTITUTE FOR RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY?

[ EDITORIAL ]

We often hear people say in their flair for modernism : 'Religion and spirituality? Oh! We have had enough of them—these preoccupations with weird things we are not sure about, these transcendental realities that have no relevancy to the affairs of the day. They are no more necessary. All that we need is a good ethical life that will make for better human relationships.' Whenever we plead thus, in tune with these moderners, for an ethical life devoid of any religious or spiritual element in it, we presume wrongly that ethics and religion are two completely independent branches of human striving in no way connected with each other, or rather even opposed to each other. This is an arbitrary distinction we make on the general but unfounded impression that ethics is deeply concerned with the welfare and progress of humanity, whereas religions are not. Religions, according to some critics, are so much preoccupied with the personal salvation of the individual, life after death, and other supramundane affairs that they have lost all touch with the life on earth, which alone matters in the last resort. And as a result, they are utterly callous to the woes and sufferings of the men around. In support of the view, examples are quoted in galore from history of how organized priestcraft in all religions has joined hands with reactionary forces in the suppression of free thinking; of how the priests have encouraged superstition, in order to keep their hold on the masses on whom they depended for the perpetuation of their pomp, glory, and privilege. In contrast, the magnificent edifices of humanitarian service—the hospitals, the reforma-

tories, the recreation clubs, the children's welfare centres, and other social institutions for the enrichment of the cultural and intellectual life of the people—that have sprung up under the inspiration of ethics are held up to our view as the bright examples of what a life wedded to simple good living can do. And we are, indeed, struck by the comparison. Many of the noble characters of history in the field of politics, science, and social reform draw our unstinted admiration and praise for the exemplary life of service and sacrifice they have led. Beside them, many of the so-called religious look the very antithesis of all that nobility of character implies. And our critics of religion ask: 'Is it not better to be like one of the former who have made their mark in different fields of human endeavour than be running after the will-o'-the-wisp of religion and spirituality like the latter? There may be something in religion, but we don't know.'

The argument appears to be quite irrefutable, and we are obliged to admit that it is far better to be like one of the former than the latter who pay lip-service to religion and spirituality. Saying that, however, is one thing—the Bible itself says, Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father—and saying that religion and spirituality are myths of no value in relation to mere ethics is quite another. We would be only confusing things by comparing the best fruit of one with the worst fruit of the other and castigating the latter as worthless. We would be only betraying



ourselves as irrational and unscientific by doing so. If we want to evaluate properly the relative worths of a purely ethical character and a religious personality, we must look at the brightest exponents of both. If we do so, we shall always find the former wanting, whatever be the measure of his greatness. A truly religious personality possesses, in addition to the ideal characteristics of an ethical personality, something that is lacking in the latter, namely, the depth of understanding and fullness of character that come only from diving deep into one's own inner consciousness, call it God, or Ātman, or Self, or Brahman, or universal Absolute. Take a spiritual character like the Buddha or Christ or Ramakrishna, and compare him with the noblest of characters in other fields of human life and conduct. How woefully the latter will suffer in comparison! Whereas the energy and greatness of the latter are frittered away in a few striking and spectacular acts of bravery and sacrifice, the magnanimity of character of the former drips through every pore of their soul and being in an unending stream, to quench the thirst of millions and transform their life and character for ages. Wherefrom does it issue forth? Certainly not from their ethical deeds, which are no less extraordinary, but from their spiritual eminence. That is why when Sambhu Mallick seeks Sri Ramakrishna's blessings to establish hospitals, dispensaries, and schools, and to make roads, dig public reservoirs, and so on, the latter asks him: 'Suppose God appears before you; then will you ask Him to build hospitals and dispensaries for you? ... Coming to the Kalighat temple, some, perhaps, spend their whole time in giving alms to the poor. They have no time to see the Mother in the inner shrine! First of all manage somehow to see the image of the Divine Mother, even by pushing through the crowd. Then

you may or may not give alms, as you wish. You may give to the poor to your heart's content, if you feel that way.' (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Madras, Sri Ramakrishna Math, p. 67, 1st edition) And his admonition to Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, the great scholar, educator, writer, and philanthropist of his time, was: 'There is gold buried in your heart, but you are not yet aware of it. It is covered with a thin layer of clay. Once you are aware of it, all these activities of yours will lessen. After the birth of her child, the daughter-in-law in the family busies herself with it alone. Everything she does is only for the child. Her mother-in-law doesn't let her do any household duties.' (ibid., pp. 32-33) Christ was also emphasizing the same idea when he said to Martha, who was 'cumbered about much serving', while her sister, Mary, chose to sit at Jesus' feet: 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.' (Luke x. 38-42)

These quotations also bring out clearly the relative place of ethics and religion in man's life and the intimate connexion that exists between them. Ethics and religion are not, as is often supposed, contradictory and antagonistic to each other, but supplementary and complementary. There is a place for ethics in religion, and ethics without the holy touch of religion is dry and barren and leans on a weak support. In fact, as C.E.M. Joad has pointed out, no true positive morality is possible without a strong and lively religious feeling. 'In a new and positive morality', he says in his *The Future of Morals*, 'in which men can believe lies the hope for the world; yet such a morality cannot come without a revival of religion. Religion and religion alone gives the driving force which impels men to change things ...' (*Thrasymachus*



or *The Future of Morals*, New York, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., p. 92)

The difficulty in grasping the intimate relation between ethics and religion arises mainly from the vagueness and rigidity of definitions of the terms. We place ethical behaviour of the highest type and the religiosity of the lowest type side by side and pronounce the irreconcilability of the two. This is due to our failure to recognize that there is an evolution and gradation in the concept of ethics as well as of religion as we grow up and advance in our thinking. Surely the copy-book maxims of a child do not suffice to serve as the standard of ethics for the grown-up. Further, we exclusively identify ethics with good gentlemanly behaviour and civic duties of a loyal citizen in a well-ordered society which aims chiefly at the economic prosperity of the community as a whole, and judge the conduct of an individual from the objective effects they produce on the community. The individual, thus, becomes subservient to the demands of the state and the society, and his value is determined by the functions he performs in and for them. The law-abiding, efficient, and industrious administrator or scientist or technologist becomes the ideal pattern for everyone to follow. The code of conduct of the citizen, we forget, is only one aspect of ethics and morality. What about the individual himself, the centre of all ethical conduct and behaviour? What transformation has been brought about in his personality? What induces him to practise, if he does at all, the fundamental principles of ethics like love, unselfishness, self-sacrifice, etc.? Does he practise them of his own free will, realizing their intrinsic worth, or is he driven to it by the force of circumstances or by a utilitarian motive and by the fear of the police and the law? In other words, have those principles become part and

parcel of his being, at least in part? When we try to answer these questions, we find that this subjective element, namely, the transformation of the individual, which alone can guarantee that the man will act justly and morally at all times and in every circumstance, is generally lost sight of in all consideration of ethics, in our enactment of the laws, and in the training imparted to children in our educational institutions. It is precisely this that forms the subject matter of religions and on which they lay stress. Without this change in the inner personality of man, any amount of polishing up of his exterior will not make for the ideal society we are hoping for. A man cannot be made moral by the iron hands of law and force, which at best can restrain him from becoming immoral and from acting against the interests of society. The springs of morality are within man himself, and so long as man's attention is not drawn to this fact and a practical way of tapping these sources shown to him, the ideals of morality and ethics will ever remain a moonshine. Ethics says what ought to be done or what ought not to be done, but gives no satisfactory explanation as to why he should or should not do them, nor tells him how he could help doing or not doing them. This explanation is provided by religion and religion alone. Religions do not discount the value of ethics, but invest them with a new purpose and meaning. They provide them with a rational basis and a philosophic background that are rooted in the ultimate realities of life, and orientate the whole scope and significance of ethics.

The end and aim of ethics as ordinarily understood is the improvement of the world, but religions point out that it is illumination of the soul, wisdom, and knowledge. Improvement of the world is a secondary consideration, however important and necessary it may be. Even



taking it for granted that it is primary, we must first of all decide what exactly we mean by it. Is it merely increasing the wealth of the nation and the standards of living of the people? If that is what we mean, then it is a very limited ideal. Besides, that does not seem to ensure to man the happiness he seeks and strives for. The rich do not always find life interesting and exciting; on the contrary, they very often find it stale and insipid. That is the reason why, in the industrially advanced countries, people are thirsting every other day for a fresh excitement to activate the deadened senses exhausted by excessive indulgence. Industrialization is supposed to leave the people there with plenty of leisure; but the proper utilization of it is really posing a problem. Ennui and boredom have filled the vacuum left by leisure. Further, man in an industrialized country is ever on tenterhooks. The rush for the haven of plenty and prosperity that industrialization promises hardly leaves him any time to even enjoy the fruits of his labour. And he works himself out in the struggle. But he is not likely to give up the struggle, when nature and nurture are both dinning into his ears that that is the ideal to be aspired after. If happiness is the ideal, why should he forgo it for the sake of others? He would not, in spite of himself. That is what we see all around.

'Love thy neighbour as thyself' is a maxim sweet to hear and read in books, but when it comes to a question of putting it into practice, man involuntarily feels why he should do so if he is going to be the loser. The answer is provided by the religions. Because, they tell us, in the first place, that is the only way of making ourselves happy. The joy and happiness that man ordinarily seeks in the body and the senses, or even in the mind and the intellect, are not real joys; they are mere

titillation of nerves. In addition, they are so fleeting and momentary; it is a misnomer to call them joys. The real happiness is in the spirit or the soul. All the physical and intellectual joys that man experiences are but an infinitesimal part of the infinite bliss that is within himself. 'That which is infinite is alone happiness', says the Upaniṣad. 'There is no happiness in anything finite. The Infinite alone is happiness. But one must desire to understand the Infinite.' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII. xxiii. 1) This infinite happiness and bliss is the very nature of our being, and we must seek to discover it. We may not realize the truth of this in the early stages of our struggle, but we are bound to as our experience grows and becomes deeper.

Moreover, love, renunciation, unselfishness, and self-abnegation are the very prop of society. We see their working in every field of human activity: mother sacrificing herself for the children, patriots sacrificing themselves for the country, and so on. Even the worst criminal, unless he be a rabid misanthrope, commits the crime impelled by his love and attachment to his near and dear ones. Only, in these cases, it is confined to smaller circles of the family or the community or the nation. Within these smaller circles of 'me and mine' which man has created for himself, he is perfectly ethical; beyond them, his love and spirit of sacrifice shrink and dry up, and he sometimes becomes the very incarnation of a demon. Swami Vivekananda, relating a personal experience of his, says: 'When I came to this country and was going through the Chicago Fair, a man from behind pulled at my turban. I looked back and saw that he was a very gentlemanly-looking man, neatly dressed. I spoke to him; and when he found that I knew English, he became very much abashed. On another occasion in the same



Fair, another man gave me a push. When I asked him the reason, he also was ashamed and stammered out an apology saying, "Why do you dress that way?" The sympathies of these men were limited within the range of their own language and their own fashion of dress. Much of the oppression of powerful nations on weaker ones is caused by this prejudice. It dries up their fellow-feeling for fellow men. That very man who asked me why I did not dress as he did may have been a very good man, a good father, and a good citizen; but the kindness of his nature died out as soon he saw a man in a different dress.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. I, p. 65, 11th edition) That is what we observe: the two forces of denial and possessiveness, of differentiation and unification, of expansion and contraction, are constantly at work in this universe. All the political struggles, social movements, and class wars are, in the last analysis, the result of the conflict between these two opposite forces vying with each other for gaining ascendancy over man. And this conflict can end, the religions tell us, only when man realizes that the whole universe is one, that the myself and the other he makes a distinction between are the same, and that when I hurt somebody I hurt myself too. When that universal consciousness arises in us that we are not these small limited bodies, minds, and intellects we think ourselves to be, but are the all-pervading spirit, eternal and pure, then alone our love becomes expansive enough to embrace the entire humanity within its fold, and our renunciation complete; then alone we are truly ethical. There is nothing in this world that man can consider precious and cannot give up for the sake of realizing this spirit. As a Sanskrit verse exhorts us: 'For the family sacrifice the individual; for the community the family; for the country the communi-

ty, and for the soul the whole world.'

This brings us to the second and a weightier reason why we should practise the ethical virtues, namely, the destiny of the human soul and its fulfilment. Man is not born just to eat, drink, and preserve the continuity of the race, or do a few acts of service for the family, the society, or the country to which he is heir to, and then pass away. That the animals do, and with a degree of precision rarely equalled or excelled by man. The perfect social organization of the bees exhibits an extraordinary sense of co-operation and sacrifice in the interests of the community, which enables them to produce a perfect piece of architecture. But there they are since they attained this perfection millions of years ago, perfectly satisfied with their attainment, and have not progressed a bit out of their limited sphere, nor do they show any signs of their doing so in the future. Man, on the other hand, is not satisfied with himself or with his own achievement, in spite of the fact that he has successfully surpassed the bees in many spheres. That shows that he has a higher destiny yet to fulfil. What is that destiny? Realization of his own divine nature here and now, Vedānta would say; realization of God, the theistic religions would say; going to heavens and so on after death, the mythologies would say. The terminology varies according to the level of understanding of the person concerned, but terms need not frighten us—there is enough scope in these three definitions of the process of religion to satisfy and accommodate every temperament and intellect. Those who find the last two definitions not up to their sense of reason may easily accept the first, to which they could have no objection whatsoever. All, however, equally insist upon a thorough ethical discipline for those who want to reach the respective goal. There is no



religion without ethics and morality. Realization of the Divine within automatically implies the realization of the Divine without. There is no compartmentalization in nature; it is we who impose it by the limiting adjuncts (*upādhis*) of the human mind and introduce separateness where there is none. All religions, the most dualistic, say that God is in everything, and as such every creature on earth deserves the respect and reverence that is due to God; for when we realize the Divine within or God, all separateness between 'thou and me' vanishes. While sectarianism is bad and condemnable because of the attendant evils, there is a meaning in the attempt of the sectarian, proselytizing religions to bring everybody under the hegemony of one religion and one God. The human mind naturally feels that we are all one, the children of the same God, whatever be the apparent differences, and wants to break the barriers that separate individuals from individuals somehow or other; only in this case, the method adopted is wrong. This seeing of the sameness and oneness is the goal of all religions; and that is also the goal of all ethics, though expressed in a different language and less clearly. 'Thus seeing the same God equally in all, the sage does not injure Self by Self, and thus reaches the highest goal. Even in this life they have conquered relative existence whose minds are firmly fixed on the sameness; for God is pure, and God is the same to all. Therefore such are said to be living in God', says the *Gītā* (V. 19). 'Verily I say unto you: Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. ... Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then

come and offer thy gift', says Christ in the Bible (Matthew xxv. 40, v. 23-24).

Here is the rationale of ethics and morality. When we hate or injure somebody, we are not hating or injuring merely the individual concerned, but the God that resides in that individual, and putting one more barrier between ourselves and God; or, as the Advaita Vedānta would put it, we are injuring and hating ourselves and riveting one more chain round ourselves; and when we love somebody, we are loving God and thus advancing one step towards Him, or in Vedāntic terminology, we are loving our own higher Self and breaking a chain that binds us down to earth. This bondage to earth and exile from God are the cause of our misery and unhappiness. Our only hope of escaping from this chain of misery and unhappiness lies in our going back to God or realizing our divine nature. But, for God to manifest Himself, we have to make the receptacle ready; we must make room for Him to reside in our abode. This making the receptacle ready, this emptying the heart of its contents to make it fit for God to stay, this tearing away of the veils that cover the glory of the Ātman or Self within, is, according to religion, the true function of ethics, nay, ethics itself; and not a few external acts of service in the cause of humanity.

Ethics, of course, has its internal as well as external aspects. The internal is the slow change effected within in the chrysalis of the heart. That, however, depends on the external acts of service etc. In the man of realization, these acts are a spontaneous welling forth in outward expression of the change that has taken place inside. We who are raw inside and in whom the internal and the external are inextricably mixed up, we who are so much weighed down by the external, have to imitate the external acts of the man of realization to awaken the inner feeling of

love etc. The principle is this: We do not have love in our hearts for anybody; we have to act as we would have done if we had. This will, in course of time, induce true love in us. The principle is the same as in the case of an adopted child. The parents in the beginning do not have the same natural love they would have had to their own child if they had one. They develop it in themselves gradually by treating the child as if it were their own. Similar is the process here.

Thus in the scheme of religious discipline, there is an honoured place for the various codes of accepted ethical conduct—from the moral precepts taught to a child, good gentlemanly behaviour, and rules of social etiquette to higher acts of bravery and self-sacrifice. But we should not forget that there is a higher stage of morality and a lower stage, and a stage of trans-morality, when man is not bound down by conventional morality. That stage is when man lives day in and day out in unbroken

God-consciousness. In that stage, he may apparently break our accepted code of ethics, but is never immoral; whatever he does in that stage is in tune with morality, but a morality that has its sanction in the highest of all authorities, viz God and his own inner consciousness, and is conducive to the good and welfare of humanity. It is this highest stage of man which is beautifully described in the *Gītā* thus: 'He who hates no creature, and is friendly and compassionate towards all, who is free from the feelings of "I and mine", even-minded in pain and pleasure, forbearing, ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, and possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect fixed on Me; he by whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, who is freed from joy, envy, fear, and anxiety—he is dear to Me.' (XII. 13-15)

The path to that highest stage, no doubt, lies through the hard discipline of ethics, but the goal should never be lost sight of.

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## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S SYNTHESIS OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION—2

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

### INDIA'S VISION OF UNIVERSAL SCIENCE-RELIGION

Religion as developed and understood in the West was, in its aims and methods and data, opposed to this spirit of rational seeking and investigation. It was taken as something finished and ready-made, which men were asked to believe—a creed or a dogma, a frozen piece of thought, which men were called upon to accept. That was why it came into fierce collision

with the advancing tide of science with its spirit of seeking and rational inquiry. In India, on the other hand, religion has always been understood to be a matter of seeking, finding, and verification, as any of the branches of science. This is a statement that will be found corroborated in the great Upaniṣads of ancient India and in the literature of Swami Vivekananda of our own times.

Tracing the recurring conflicts of science



and religion in the West to the absence of this broad approach, Vivekananda said :

‘We all know the theories of the cosmos according to the modern astronomers and physicists, and at the same time we all know how woefully they undermine the theology of Europe; how these scientific discoveries that are made, act as a bomb thrown at its stronghold; and we know how theologians have in all times attempted to put down these researches.’ (*The Complete Works*, Vol. II, p. 433, 9th edition)

When religion refuses to take the help of reason, it weakens itself. Alluding to this in the course of a lecture on ‘Reason and Religion’, delivered in England in 1896, Swami Vivekananda said :

‘The foundations have been all undermined, and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in the privacy of his heart that he can no more “believe”. Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows to be impossible for him. There are, of course, a number of people who seem to acquiesce in the so-called popular faith, but we also know for certain that they do not think. Their idea of belief may be better translated as “not-thinking-carelessness”.’ (ibid., Vol. I, p. 367, 11th edition)

And pleading for the application of reason in the field of religion, he continued :

‘Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation, which we apply to sciences and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investiga-

tions, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could happen. All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation. Not only will it be made scientific—as scientific, at least, as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry—but it will have greater strength, because physics or chemistry has no internal mandate to vouch for its truth, which religion has.’ (ibid., Vol. I, p. 367, 11th edition)

A study of the Upaniṣads reveals that the subject of religion was approached in ancient India in an objective, dispassionate manner; the aim of the study was to get at truth, and not to hug pleasing fancies and illusions or to idolize tribal passions and prejudices.

In several of his lectures and discourses, Swami Vivekananda has expounded the scientific approach to religion as upheld in Indian thought. In his lecture on ‘Religion and Science’, he says :

‘Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law. . . .

‘Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the



truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science because he reads the wrong book—the book within; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he too reads the wrong book—the book without.' (ibid., Vol. VI, p. 81, 6th edition)

The Indian thinkers discovered by their investigations that there are two fields in which man functions: one, the external field; the other, the internal. These are two different orders of phenomena. The study of the one alone does not exhaust the whole range of experience. Also, the study of the one from the standpoint of the other will not lead to satisfactory results. But the study of the one in the light of the conclusions from the study of the other is helpful and relevant.

In a lecture on 'Cosmology', Swami Vivekananda said:

'There are two words, the microcosm and the macrocosm, the internal and the external. We get truth from both of these by means of experience. The truth gathered from internal experience is psychology, metaphysics, and religion; from external experience, the physical sciences. Now a perfect truth should be in harmony with experiences in both these worlds. The microcosm must bear testimony to the macrocosm, and the macrocosm to the microcosm; physical truth must have its counterpart in the internal world, and the internal world must have its verification outside.' (ibid., Vol. II, p. 432, 9th edition)

Thus the thinkers of ancient India said: Here is the physical life of man, and here is the physical universe that environs him. Let us study both in a scientific spirit. But let us also study him in his depths, his

nature as revealed by his consciousness, his awareness, his emotions, his ego, and his sense of selfhood. These latter also constitute a vast group of phenomena that need to be investigated. Every advance in this field is bound to advance also man's knowledge about the truth of the mystery of the external world. For to quote Eddington again: 'We have discovered that it is actually an aid in the search for knowledge to understand the nature of the knowledge which we seek.' (*Philosophy of Physical Science*, p. 5)

The method of investigation in the field of religion is largely the same as in the positive sciences: collection of facts, their classification, a dispassionate study of these so as to reveal the law or laws underlying them, such knowledge leading to the control over the phenomena concerned, and, finally, the application of such knowledge for the alleviation of human suffering and the enhancement and enrichment of human life. This kind of study of religion, as a thorough scientific study of the facts of the inner life, was undertaken by the great thinkers of ancient India; the insights which they gained were re-tested and amplified by a galaxy of subsequent thinkers, leaving to posterity the invaluable legacy of a rich and dynamic scientific tradition in the field of religion. It is because of this adamant base that Indian spirituality has stood the test of time. That also explains its hospitality to modern science, and its pride in the remarkable achievements of this sister discipline developed by the modern West.

'The true Vedāntic spirit', says Romain Rolland, 'does not start out with a system of preconceived ideas. It possesses absolute liberty and unrivalled courage among religions with regard to the facts to be observed and the diverse hypotheses it has laid down for their co-ordination. Never having been hampered by a priestly



order, each man has been entirely free to search wherever he pleased for the spiritual explanation of the spectacle of the universe.' (*Life of Vivekananda*, p. 196)

After a thorough investigation into the real nature of man, the sages of the Upaniṣads made a fundamental discovery: Man, in his essential nature, is divine; behind the finite man is the Ātman, ever free, ever pure, and perfect. The body, the mind, and the ego are merely the externals of the real man who is immortal and divine. This discovery led to the further discovery that the same divinity is the ground of the world as well. This they termed Brahman, the totality of the Self and the not-Self which they characterized as *satyam jñānam anantam*—'Truth, Awareness, and Infinity'. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I. i. 3), we find this question put by an earnest student to a great teacher:

*Kasmin nu Bhagavo vijñāte sarvam idam vijñātam bhavati—*

'What is that reality, O Blessed One, by knowing which we can know all that there is in the universe?'

Is there such a unique reality by knowing which we can understand all the manifestations of nature, internal as well as external? Is there a unity behind this diversity, a one behind the many? To this question, the teacher gave a very significant reply:

*Dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma yad Brahmano vadanti parā caiva aparā ca—*

'Two are the types of knowledge to be acquired by man; so say the knowers of Brahman. One is called *parā vidyā*, higher knowledge; the other is called *aparā vidyā*, lower knowledge.' (ibid., I. i. 4)

Both these must be investigated. Of these, the lower or ordinary knowledge, says the Upaniṣad, consists of the sacred Vedas,

phonetics, the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody, and astronomy. In fact, it includes all the sacred books, literature, art, history, and science.

Here we have a scientific mind of the highest order—impersonal, objective, and detached. There is no desire to put forth a pet opinion; truth alone is the motive power, even if that truth goes against one's pet attachments and aversions. The teacher says that even the Vedas, the sacred books of the people, belong to the category of lower knowledge. Who would dare to say that his own sacred books are ordinary, except he who is of a detached and scientific frame of mind, and is in search of truth and not dogma—he who has no truth to hide, no opinion to uphold, no prejudices to defend, who just wants to know the truth and is prepared to sacrifice everything else into the bargain? No religion except the Vedānta has practised this bold detachment. The follower of every other religion, if asked what is ordinary knowledge, would unhesitatingly reply: 'All the sacred books of all the religions except my own.' But this teacher of the Upaniṣads had the detachment and boldness, proceeding from love of truth, to say that even the Vedas, held in such veneration by himself and by his people, were secondary; all the sacred books and all positive sciences and arts are but lower knowledge—*aparā vidyā*.

What, then, is left to be included in the category of *parā vidyā*, higher knowledge? The teacher proceeds to indicate this elusive theme. There is a tremendous field of knowledge still left, he thinks; but it belongs to a different order. So he says (ibid., I. i. 5): *Atha parā yayā tad akṣaram adhigamyate*—'That is *parā* by which the Imperishable is realized.'

Science and all the rest deal only with things that change, that are perishable. As Eddington puts it, science gives us



'knowledge of structural form and not knowledge of content'. The sacred books give us, says Sri Ramakrishna, only *information* about God and not God Himself. And yet we feel that, in the words of Eddington, 'all through the physical universe runs that unknown content'. What is that content? And how can we get at it? If the positive sciences cannot get at it, there must be another discipline, another line of inquiry, which must be able to give us this.

If the sacred books contain only *information* about God, there must be a discipline which gives us God and not merely *information* about Him. It is this inquiry that pervades the Upaniṣads and that has made them immortal even as literature. And the nature and scope of that inquiry and the way it was conducted have something superb about them. There is no effort to uphold an opinion, however dear; no struggle to pronounce a dogma and cling to it, and thrust it upon others; no trace of tiredness or laziness of mind seeking a resting place on the way. Truth, and nothing but truth, is the watchword. Suffused with the spirit of truth, they declared (*ibid.*, III. i. 6):

*Satyameva jayate nāṁṛtam*

*Satyena panthā vitato devayānah—*

'Truth alone triumphs, not untruth; the path to the highest excellence is spread out through truth only.'

And this path to the highest excellence is strewn with the debris of discarded opinions, pleasing dogmas, and broken hypotheses; thought was not allowed to rest on any of them for long; it forged ahead on the two wings of critical discrimination and inner detachment, wafted by the current of a single-minded passion for truth. One thinker puts forth his conclusion; another shows it as inadequate; this leads to further inquiry, leading to a

deeper pronouncement. There was this graceful conflict of thought between the most gifted minds, through which thought forged ahead. There was no national dogma or authoritarian church to suppress or arrest it. The whole process reached its consummation in the profound discovery of the imperishable Self of man, the Ātman, and its unity with the Self of the Universe, the Brahman. The entire process was a joyous voyage of discovery; looking back, they saw that the steps left behind were also valid and that man travels not from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from truth that is lower to truth that is higher.

#### MODERN SCIENCE AND THE MYSTERY OF MAN

Pleading for the viewing of man in his depths on the part of modern science, the eminent paleontologist, the late Père Teilhard de Chardin says:

'When studied narrowly in himself by anthropologists or jurists, man is a tiny, even a shrinking, creature. His overpronounced individuality conceals from our eyes the whole to which he belongs; as we look at him, our minds incline to break nature up into pieces and to forget both its deep interrelations and its measureless horizons: We incline to all that is bad in anthropocentrism. And it is this that leads scientists to refuse to consider man as an object of scientific scrutiny except through his body.'

'The time has come to realize that an interpretation of the universe—even a positivist one—remains unsatisfying unless it covers the interior as well as the exterior of things; mind as well as matter. The true physics is that which will, one day, achieve the inclusion of man in his wholeness in a coherent picture of the world.' (*The Phenomenon of Man*, London, Collins, 1959, pp. 35-36)

The Upaniṣads discovered the finite man as but the outer crust or layer of the infinite and immortal man within. In his finiteness, he enters and is entered into by the finite world around him. In this, he is a speck of dust in the vast immensity of space in which 'the universe engulfs me and reduces me to a pin-point', in the profound words of Pascal. But in his infinite dimension as the imperishable Self, he *understands the universe*. The inner aspect of man, and, through him, of the universe, is slowly dawning on modern scientific thought. Chardin asks: 'Up to now has science ever troubled to look at the world other than from without?' (ibid., p. 52) And he proceeds to say:

'In the eyes of the physicist, nothing exists legitimately, at least up to now, except the *without* of things. The same intellectual attitude is still permissible in the bacteriologist, whose cultures (apart from substantial difficulties) are treated as laboratory reagents. But it is still more difficult in the realm of plants. It tends to become a gamble in the case of a biologist studying the behaviour of insects or coelenterates. It seems merely futile with regard to the vertebrates. Finally, it breaks down completely with man, in whom the existence of a *within* can no longer be evaded, because it is the object of a direct intuition and the substance of all knowledge.' (ibid., p. 55)

And Chardin concludes:

'It is impossible to deny that, deep within ourselves, an "interior" appears at the heart of beings, as it were seen through a rent. This is enough to ensure that, in one degree or another, this "interior" should obtrude itself as existing everywhere in nature from all time. Since the stuff of the universe has an inner aspect at one point of itself, there is necessarily a *double aspect to its structure*, that is to say, in

every region of space and time—in the same way, for instance, as it is granular: *coextensive with their Without, there is a Within to things.*' (ibid., p. 56)

Says the great physiologist and neurologist, Sir Charles Sherrington:

'Today Nature looms larger than ever and includes more fully than ever ourselves. It is, if you will, a machine, but it is a partly mentalized machine and in virtue of including ourselves it is a machine with human qualities of mind. It is a running stream of energy—mental and physical—and unlike man-made machines it is actuated by emotions, fears and hopes, dislikes and love.' (*Man on His Nature*, p. 38, Pelican edition)

In a lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', delivered in 1959 at the closing session of the Chicago University symposium on 'Evolution After Darwin' held to commemorate the centenary of the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Sir Julian Huxley, the noted biologist, gave a spiritual orientation to the evolutionary process:

'Man's evolution is not biological but psychosocial; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by breakthroughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization. . . .

'All dominant thought organizations are concerned with the ultimate, as well as with the immediate, problems of existence or, I should rather say, with the most ultimate problems that the thought of the time is capable of formulating or even envisaging. They are all concerned with giving some interpretation of man, of the



world which he is to live in, and of his place and role in that world—in other words, some comprehensive picture of human destiny and significance.' (*Evolution After Darwin*, Vol. III, pp. 251-2)

Further, Huxley revealed the trend of evolution towards quality: 'It (evolutionary vision) shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality,' (ibid., Vol. III, pp. 261-2)

In his essay on 'Emergence of Darwinism', Huxley sums up the goal of the evolutionary process at the human level as 'fulfilment':

'In the light of our present knowledge man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment—the fuller realization of more possibilities by the human species collectively and more of its component members individually.' (ibid., Vol. I, p. 20)

And pleading for the development of a science of human possibilities, Huxley further says:

'Once greater fulfilment is recognized as man's ultimate or dominant aim, we shall need a science of human possibilities to help guide the long course of psychosocial evolution that lies ahead.' (ibid., Vol. I, p. 21)

#### KINSHIP BETWEEN VEDĀNTA AND MODERN SCIENCE

Swami Vivekananda has shown that Vedānta and modern science are close to each other in spirit and temper and objectives. Both are spiritual disciplines. Even in the cosmology of the physical universe, the two reveal many points of contact. The fundamental position in the cosmology of both is what Swami Vivekananda calls 'the postulate of a self-evolving cause'. Vedānta calls it Brahman which is a uni-

versal spiritual principle. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (III. 1) defines Brahman in a majestic utterance which will be welcomed by every scientific thinker:

*Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti; yat prayantya bhīsamviśanti; Tad vijijñāśasva; Tad Brahmeti—*

'Wherefrom all these beings are born; by which, being born, they abide; into which, at the time of dissolution, they enter—seek to know That; That is Brahman.'

To the modern scientist, it is a material reality, the background material or stuff, as astrophysicist Fred Hoyle terms it. And both uphold the theory of evolution, cosmic as well as organic.

Referring to this spiritual kinship between modern science and ancient Vedānta, Swami Vivekananda said in his speech at the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893:

'Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science today, and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages is going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light, from the latest conclusions of science.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. I, p. 15, 11th edition)

Although modern scientific thought does not yet have a recognized place for any spiritual reality or principle, several scientists of the twentieth century, including biologists like Teilhard de Chardin and Sir Julian Huxley, have endeavoured to soften the materialism of physical science and to find a place for spiritual experience in the scientific world picture. Even in the last century, Thomas Huxley, collaborator of Darwin, had protested against the association of science with any fixed dogma such as materialism, and termed materialism an 'intruder'. (*Methods and Results*, Vol. I, p. 161) In this century, this pro-

test has come from great physicists themselves. Sir James Jeans found that the final picture of the universe emerging from twentieth century physical science was one in which matter was completely eliminated, 'mind reigning supreme and alone' (*The New Background of Science*, p. 307). Astrophysicist R. A. Millikan considered materialism 'a philosophy of unintelligence' (*An Autobiography*, last chapter). If twentieth century physics is thus turning its face away from thoroughgoing materialism, twentieth century biology is one step ahead of it in this orientation. The whole of modern scientific thought is in the throes of a silent spiritual revolution with the emergence, on the horizon of scientific thought, of mind and consciousness, and the consequent need to develop what Jeans calls 'a new background of science'. Julian Huxley and Chardin find the spiritual character of the world-stuff successively revealed in the course of organic evolution. Biology, in its theory of evolution, they hold, reveals what Chardin calls a *within* to nature, over and above and different from the *without* of nature revealed by physics and astronomy. Vedānta terms the *within* as the *pratyak rūpa* and the *without* as the *parāk rūpa* of nature.

When the significance of this *within* of things is recognized in modern science, the scientific background material will undergo a spiritual orientation and thus come closer to the Brahman of the Vedānta. The synthesis of the knowledge of the *within* and the *without* is what India achieved in its Vedānta ages ago as *samyak jñāna*, complete knowledge or philosophy. Reality itself does not know any distinction between a *within* and a *without*. These distinctions are made only by the human mind for the convenience of study and research.

As the different branches of the positive sciences are but different approaches to the

study of one and the same reality, and as all such branches of study, when pursued far enough, tend to mingle and merge into a grand science of the physical universe, into a unified science of the *without* of nature, so the science of the *within* and the science of the *without* mingle and merge in a science of Brahman, the total Reality. This is how Vedānta viewed its *Brahmavidyā*, science of Brahman, the term Brahman standing for the totality of Reality, physical and non-physical; the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I. i. 1) defined *Brahmavidyā* as *sarvavidyāpratiṣṭha*, the *pratiṣṭha* or basis of every *vidyā* or science. Says Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (XIII. 2):

*Kṣetrakṣetraajñāyor jñānam yat tat jñānam matam mama—*

'The knowledge of *kṣetra*, the not-self (the without of things), and *kṣetraajña*, the Self, (the within of things), is true knowledge according to Me.'

Dealing with the all-inclusiveness of this Vedāntic thought as expounded by Swami Vivekananda, Romain Rolland says :

'But it is a matter of indifference to the calm pride of him who deems himself the stronger whether Science accepts free Religion, in Vivekananda's sense of the term, or not ; for his Religion accepts Science. It is vast enough to find a place at its table for all loyal seekers after truth.' (*Life of Vivekananda*, p. 289)

In his lecture on 'The Absolute and Manifestation' delivered in London in 1896, Swami Vivekananda said :

'Do you not see whither science is tending? The Hindu nation proceeded through the study of the mind, through metaphysics and logic. The European nations start from external nature, and now they, too, are coming to the same results. We find that searching through the mind we at last come to that Oneness, that universal One, the internal Soul of everything, the



essence and reality of everything. ... Through material science, we come to the same Oneness.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. II, p 140, 9th edition)

The *Bhāgavata* (XI. vii. 19-21) refers to this complementary character of science and Vedānta in a profound utterance :

*Prāyeṇa manuṣyā loke lokatattvavica-*  
*kṣaṇāḥ ;*

*Samuddharanti hyātmānam ātmanai-*  
*vāśubhāśayāt.*

*Ātmano gururātmaiva puruṣasya*  
*viśeṣataḥ ;*

*Yat pratyakṣānumānābhyām śreyo'sau*  
*anuvindate.*

*Puruṣatve ca mām dhīrāḥ sākhyayoga-*  
*viśāradaḥ ;*

*Āvistarām prapaśyanti sarvaśaktyupa-*  
*br̥ṇhitam—*

'In the world, men who are efficient in the investigation of the truth of nature, generally uplift themselves by themselves from all sources of evil.

'For a human being particularly, his *guru* (teacher) is his own self ; because he achieves his welfare through (inquiring into) direct sense experience and inference based on the same.

'In this very human personality also, wise men who have mastered the science and art of the spiritual life clearly realize Me (God, the universal Self of all) as fully manifest and endowed with all powers.'

(*To be continued*)

## VINOBA BHAVE : THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF HIS SOCIAL REFORMS—2

DR. JACQUES-ALBERT CUTTAT

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

### III. THE RESULTS

These, as I have already indicated, are far from having satisfied the hopes awakened by the 'vision' of Telengana and fostered later in the course of Vinoba's triumphant march across India. As I have said, the totality of land gifts has reached today the extent of 4.2 million acres (17,000 km<sup>2</sup>); let me add here that the number of donors is almost 600,000, that of the receivers 350,000. Now, of the total surface of land mentioned above, one million acres, that is to say, only one-fourth has been actually distributed. There remain in reality only 1.8 million acres of cultivable land to be divided, 1.4 million acres being unproductive land and therefore unusable.

I consider it useful to quote here one of my compatriots and a friend who has closely followed the Bhoodan movement from its origin, as much through its literature as by means of contacts with numerous friends who have been associated with it. Mr. Pierre Oppliger—formerly member of the International Civil Service, at present representative of Swiss Aid Abroad in India—has been kind enough to permit me to reproduce the remarks which follow.

'When I met Vinoba Bhave, I was able to take note of the adoration bestowed on him by the masses. However, if, according to the proverb in the Gospels, the tree is to be judged by its fruits, we are obliged to admit that so great an enthusiasm has not yet brought about any notable changes

in the economic and social conditions of the villages visited by him.

'It often happens that on a spontaneous impulse of generosity some landowners gave their lands which they continue to till up to the moment in the future when they will be divided amongst those who do not possess any. And, as this aspect of the movement has been left in the hands of Vinoba Bhave's disciples—people full of good intentions generally, but lacking practical experience—it very often happens that after several years, nothing having happened in that time, the generous donors forget or revoke their past action and simply take repossession of their lands.

'It is also to be noted, and this particularly so where there is a question of gifts made by very large landowners and often covering hundreds of acres, that the lands having been offered thus are more often than not worthless, either because of the poor quality of the soil, or because of lack of means of irrigation; these are unproductive lands and will remain so unless important investment of capital is put in with the objective of improving the quality of the soil or of bringing water by digging wells or by means of irrigation canals. With the increase in numbers in their families and the parcelling out into strips of land which results from this, the villagers do not manage to till their land in a reasonable and economic manner. A new division in favour of the disinherited does not in any way increase the cultivable surface; on the contrary, it further reduces, by carving them up, lands that are already too dispersed and too small.

'Besides, it is because he was able to ascertain these difficulties of a practical nature that little by little Vinoba Bhave directed his requests for individual gifts of land—Bhoodan—towards a total gift covering entire villages—Gramdan.

'These villages number thousands across

the length and breadth of India. From what I have been able to read on this subject and from what I have been able to learn from friends engaged in this movement, it seems that this transformation of cultivation from the family system towards the collective or co-operative system, also results in important problems. The putting together of poverty does not necessarily create riches!

'In order to increase the agricultural produce, capital is required for buying machines and ploughs, for digging wells and canals. . . . The problem of unproductive over-abundant live-stock remains the same, whether the village be individualistic or collective. . . . That of the destruction of harvests by monkeys or by other scourges does not change. . . . Before the sowing season, the villagers often have no place where they can store their seeds which are exposed to the vagaries of the weather and the mercy of rats. . . . Same problem at the time of harvesting when the question arises of storing the wheat, the rice, etc. . . . The farmers are forced to sell their produce immediately to intermediaries who take advantage of this situation.

'It would be interesting to see to what extent the Bhoodan movement will succeed in solving the problem of the running into debt of the farmer, a problem which seems to me to be one of the obstacles in the way of the blossoming of a healthy agriculture.

'A visit to the headquarters of Vinoba Bhave in Banaras left me with a slightly mitigated impression. One finds there a whole army of "Babus", Indian bureaucrats who have an air of being thoroughly satisfied with themselves. I returned from there full of doubts about their organizational abilities and about their gift of inspiring confidence among the peasant masses of India. That is perhaps a rather



severe judgement, inspired by a spirit that is still too Swiss!

'These few notes reveal perhaps the weak side of Vinoba Bhave's movement; in order to be just, we should also dwell on the positive results which are numerous.'

The eclipse to which the movement has been subjected for some years threatens to make its positive results forgotten. It is therefore appropriate to recall these to mind:

(1) Vinoba Bhave's movement has to a more or less large degree saved hundreds of thousands of peasants from misery, sickness, and death;

(2) it has transformed many lives by instilling in them a new sentiment and a humanitarian approach;

(3) it has created a climate of patriotic enthusiasm and of human fraternity capable of subduing the class struggle;

(4) it has contributed towards ridding India of the threat of a general revolt which was exposing the country to the possibility of dictatorship and totalitarianism. And this in a country which, in one sense, plays the role in South-East Asia of the arm of a pair of scales;

(5) it has bridged the gap between the castes;

(6) it has awakened the attention of the Government towards the urgent necessity of agrarian reform and has shaken the lethargy of public opinion towards this question;

(7) it has assured the survival of the Gandhian movement at a time when the public authorities were becoming unfaithful to the Mahatma;

(8) it has re-forged the unity of this movement which was being threatened by centrifugal tendencies;

(9) it has prepared the way for the adaptation of Gandhism to the technical and economic conditions of the modern world;

(10) it has safeguarded to a certain extent the international prestige of India whose foreign policy had caused this prestige to diminish over the course of the past few years;

(11) it has striven for peace, not only within the country, but also beyond it, since Vinoba Bhave moves about freely between India and Pakistan. Mr. Nehru confirmed this for me in the course of a conversation that I recently had with him.

In these circumstances, the disappointing results of the Bhoodan method, it seems, do not call for its renunciation but rather for its revision and more efficient application.

#### IV. FUTURE PROSPECTS

Many sceptics, it is true, believe that the time has come to throw the helve after the hatchet. The general atmosphere remains none the less favourable to this movement. Cottage industries, formerly advocated by Gandhi, have also been considered as being utopian, and yet, it is admitted today that India owes to these an increase in her exports and the means of keeping busy millions of her craftsmen. Have not Henry Dunant and other social reformers been considered dreamers and fools by the kings and the governments to whom they addressed their appeal for the realization of humanitarian views which today are accepted as being a matter of course?

Here are some facts from which it appears to me that the decline of utopian enthusiasm awakened by the Bhoodan and the Gramdan movements, far from being unfortunate, has resulted in salutary reactions and more realistic initiatives, thanks to which their future is less gloomy than some claim:

1. The Indian Government is now concerning itself, with a view to responsible action, to support and strengthen this



movement. It has just recently entrusted the Ministry of Community Development and the Planning Commission with the task of lending financial, technical, and administrative assistance to Vinobatism. Following up a suggestion made by Vinoba Bhave, the Planning Commission organized in Delhi, on the 3rd November 1963, a conference whose task it was to formulate proposals aiming at reviving and consolidating the Gramdan activity. Some projects to be undertaken in Orissa, Assam, West Bengal, Madras, Maharashtra, and in Bihar are on the agenda of the conference. We can seize this opportunity to tackle one crucial aspect of school reform: that of primary and secondary education, the urgency of reforming which Vinoba has stressed and suggested plans in outline (sixty conferences and talks published in a widely known volume, *Thoughts on Education*, Rajghat, Kashi, 1959).

As Jayaprakash Narayan has said, 'the Indian villagers can be compared to a fractured limb that has just been taken out of plaster'. The Indian peasantry, he added, is a 'sleeping Leviathan' whose immense potential energy is still inhibited by despair and by apathy. (Remarks made to Welles Hangen, who has reproduced them in *After Nehru Who?*, London, 1963, p. 209) Narayan has pointed out that it is not without reason that the villager looks with distrust on the 'very corrupt social workers' that the Government sends to the villages. Next month's conference (December 1963) will provide the opportunity for remedying the bureaucracy and the corruption which have paralysed the application of Vinoba's reform.

2. Among the factors which might give to this movement a recrudescence of energy, there is the decision taken last July by a British humanitarian movement under the patronage of the Quakers, called 'War on Want'. This private organization,

which has already lent a fruitful technical and financial assistance to various countries, will allot the equivalent of 2.2 million Swiss francs to those Indian villages which have subscribed to Gramdan. On an average, each Gramdan village will receive about 10,000 rupees (more than 9,000 Swiss francs).

### CONCLUSIONS

We can now attempt to make an all round evaluation. It is perhaps fitting to first ask the following two questions.

Is it the man or the system that one judges? If it is the man, it is hardly possible to entertain any doubts. I shall restrict myself to simply referring the reader to the beginning and to the first chapter of these pages, except to reply to the criticism that Vinoba tolerates the 'adoration' that his disciples shower on him. To see in this, without any further thought, a sign of pride or of arrogance would amount to applying to India purely western criteria. The perfect Hindu sage, the one who has been 'liberated while alive'—this is perhaps not too exaggerated when applied to Vinoba—tests himself as being identical to a 'divine undifferentiated essence', of which he himself is only an expression in his capacity as a mortal individuality, an expression perhaps of a privileged nature because of its transparency towards the beyond, but which is as 'unreal' as any other individuality, no matter of what character. He conceives of himself as being 'established within the Absolute in which end all differences and all hierarchies'. (*Vide* article 'The Spiritual Direction in Hinduism' by the French Indologist Olivier Lacombe, Professor of Comparative Religions in the Sorbonne, published in the *Dictionary of Ascetic and Mystic Spirituality*, Paris, Beauchèsne, 1950, t.III, col. 1213) He does not therefore 'experience'



homage showered on him by his disciples, for he regards this not as being addressed to his evanescent ego, but through it to the Absolute, immanent in every living being, which alone is, in his opinion, real. This perspective, and the cult that it implies towards the spiritual master (Guru or Acharya, title given to Vinoba Bhave), are perhaps 'shocking' to a western observer, but to speak in this connexion of pride, in the Christian acceptation of the word, would be to misinterpret it. Let us clear this point further by quoting another remark of Olivier Lacombe. The reason for which 'non-violence' acclimatizes itself more easily in the East than in the West, he explains, is that 'like all Indian virtues, non-violence is a *cosmic virtue* rather than a humanistic virtue'. 'Here there is no question, truly speaking, either of the measures of man or of the measures of God. The question arises of a spiritual experience expanded up to the dimensions of the cosmos, and superabounding in generosity, in benevolence, in compassion, even if it be within the bounds of non-action.' ('Elan spirituel de l'Hindouisme': *Bulletin du cercle saint Jean-Baptiste*, June-July 1963, p. 64) This, in my opinion, finally refutes the reproach of pride levelled against Vinoba, which always implies scorn of one's fellow men.

Second question: Is it through its tangible, immediate or future success that one hopes to evaluate the stature of the work, or is it through the originality and the nobility of its inspiration and its example? If one opts for the latter, there is no question of hesitation. Moreover, the positive results enumerated in chapter III (see page 381) and the prospects described in chapter IV (see pages 381 and 382) allow one to believe that the alternative to this question is less distinct than it seems at first sight.

That is not all. To render full justice to

the work of the reformer, we must come to a closer grip with its dominant feature and with the particular nature of the difficulties that the reformer has to confront in his task; to this end it is necessary to study the exact point of time at which the Vinobaian reform takes place in the history of India as well as in that of the world. Its dominant feature, as has been very well defined by S. Radhakrishnan, the eminent philosopher and President of the Indian Union, is its junction, on the social level, of the spiritual and the material. He writes thus of Vinoba: 'Truly does his life represent a harmonious synthesis of scholarship, of spiritual intuition, and of compassion for the poor and the disinherited. For him, there is no irreducible opposition between the spiritual life of the self and an active devotion to the cause of the needy. He adopts the *jñāna-karma-samuccaya*: knowledge and action go together.' As for the difficulties, their complexity is immense. It is, indeed, essential to carry out a co-ordination of this nature, which even in itself is an arduous task, in a subcontinent in which there confront each other, on the one hand, an immemorial *past* still alive and an ultra-modern *present* which seems to desire to abolish this past, and, on the other hand, two other antagonistic streams: the *Asiatic civilization* and the *western civilization*. And it is precisely on account of this dual confrontation that the synthesis in question is essential.

The particular difficulties to be overcome seem to me, then, to be reduced to two obstacles, or rather to the following two paradoxes which must be surmounted and which deserve to be examined in some detail.

The first specific obstacle results from the confrontation of the *past* with the *present*. The most ancient culture of the world, which has, without a break, re-

mained faithful to itself up to the present day, has, in fact, to its credit, only sixteen years as an independent nation. In this brief period of time, it has succeeded in catching up with almost eight centuries of relative economic, social, and political stagnation, and that, too, without having recourse to the coercive apparatus of collectivist regimes, however great may have been the temptation to accelerate its modernization with the help of totalitarian control. The forces of inertia to be overcome are so great that the factor to be noted with astonishment is not that there still exists so much poverty and so many distressing problems to be solved, but that this nation has already made as much progress as it has, by democratic means. The temptation towards autocracy was all the greater in view of the fact that—whatever some chauvinists might say—one can search in vain in the Indian tradition that is so rich, for the three social norms or moral imperatives which are the basis of, and which sustain, the democratic fervour of the West: qualitative equality among men as such, liberty of the individual, supreme value of the human person as an individual; the first is contradicted by the system of castes which is rooted in the Indian conscience and which sanctifies social inequality and even the notion—inconceivable in the Biblical world—‘of an inequality in the conditions for acceding to salvation’ (Max Weber); the second is impeded as much by the caste system as by the family and social sentiment towards a structure that is more collective than individualistic; the third is hindered by the mystic impersonalism that prevails among the *élite*, and by the ‘cosmocentric’ reli-

giousness which favours ritualism (of the magical type) among the people. Moreover, most of the political observers from western countries settled down in Delhi, having been carried away by the impression created in their minds by the extreme poverty, by the apparent absence of antidotes against the Marxist ideology, and by the sympathetic hearing that this ideology was receiving in higher quarters, predicted, in 1951—year of the birth of Vinobatism in Telengana—the fatal sliding of India towards communism.

Why were they thus mistaken? Not because the Indian people refuse instinctively a collectivist ideology, as do most of our peoples, but rather because, even more so than our peoples, they are by tradition, by temperament, and by conviction, insurmountably averse to its *methods*, and that only because its methods are *violent*. India resists the solicitations of communism because communism chooses to be violent and India chooses to be *non-violent*, convinced that she would be abjuring herself if she ceased to be thus. In spite of stray acts of some of her leaders and some brutal outbursts on the part of her masses, which have on occasion betrayed this vocation—and has Europe always been faithful to hers?—non-violence remains established in the depths of the Indian soul and conscience, always ready to bring to the surface and to display the latent energy which procured for the country of the Buddha and of Gandhi the conquest of its independence without bloodshed. The Indian is enamoured of peace—as much so of the means to obtain it as of the end itself—just as the West is enamoured of justice.

(To be continued)



# SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI: THE IMMORTAL MINSTREL

MRS. JOSEPHINE MILLER

Almost eight hundred years after his birth, the love of gentle, joyous Francis for every living creature continues to influence the world. He is the favourite saint of the Catholic and the Protestant alike. Others, disinterested in ascetics, mystics, or saints, honour 'the little poor man' (Il Poverello) whose kinship with all life makes him akin to us today. In an agitated and materialistic age where, in our haste to become open-minded and experimental, we toss aside values tested by the centuries, we still reveal a latent reverence for the singular human being who dares to maintain his own vision of the universe. As long as we retain the power to appreciate St. Francis, or another who has undergone that radiant conversion which marks the true mystic in any part of the world and yet may have little to do with church or theology, there is hope for the restoration of spiritual faith in a time of moral torpor and disintegration.

## THE MYSTIC IN THE SCIENTIFIC AGE

Even science and faith are not as far apart as they may seem when science today has more than a tinge of mysticism, as do many of its practitioners; and it would be a fitting contribution for science to enlarge our vision of metaphysical concepts. Research is very dear to the twentieth-century mind, and the lives of saints of all times and places show a common pattern which could be meaningful to scientific research. Each life-story of a genuine mystic like St. Francis is worthy of the closest scrutiny, because it shows a higher degree of evolution of spiritual qualities than what the remainder of humanity has attained. Such

a life is like a tapestry, with strands of action, love, and knowledge weaving a design of timeless harmony and beauty, whose significance we feel we once understood, then somehow forgot, as an ineffable dream fades from memory. Science in the future may well restore the meaning it has seemed to remove from faith: restore it in a universal manner, convincing to those who need the laboratory method.

The religious genius does not wait for proof, and his path has never been an easy one in the western world. He is now eliminated almost as thoroughly as many species of game animals and wild fowl. He has fared better in India and the Far East where he is esteemed, not merely tolerated; deified, not debased, as we have observed in the lives of modern mystics and saints like Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Sri Aurobindo, and many others. How different the lot of Albert Schweitzer and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, modern seers of the West, where those apparently best equipped to understand their purposes have consistently opposed them! Our unhappy century could use a break in 'progress' in which to examine the message of such men, especially that of St. Francis and his Indian counterpart of the fifteenth century, Śrī Caitanya.

## THE TIMES IN WHICH FRANCIS WAS BORN

In sketching the life of St. Francis, it is necessary to accept some of the legend with fact; history and legend are inextricably mingled, until one becomes as important as the other. It is an undeniable fact that he returned to the source of the Christian inspiration at a time when

Europe viewed all mankind as divided between Christians and infidels. The barbarism of the dark ages had given way to a period of knighthood and chivalry where valour was the highest ideal. Classical literature and philosophy were undergoing a revival. The crusades to the Holy Land, begun in order to convert the infidel, had become conquests for gain and plunder. The Catholic Church faced another wave of the revolts and heresies that had plagued its existence as sects continued to leave the Church to build outside a more genuine form of Christianity. The whole structure of the Church and society was endangered by the ambition of the Church to conquer and rule the world. To that end, bravery and valour were important, and only courageous knights were esteemed. Mystics had become as suspect as heretics when Francis was born in Umbria near the end of the twelfth century.

#### THE PLACE OF HIS BIRTH

Nowhere is the beauty of Italy more apparent than in the hill-cities of the Appenines, where art and nature blend to form the romantic settings for medieval castles, Roman temples, Etruscan tombs, convents, and churches. The ancient cities of Etruria overlook fertile valleys and plains, where rivers thread their way far below the battlemented terraces of the hills. Every vista is enchanting, and the tourist is too bemused to remember the necessity for ramparts, towers, and walls in an Italy dotted with little states, in those days when peasant fought peasant, city raided city, and ruler defied pope.

Today, a subtle peace exists over this land where the bare feet of St. Francis trod and on the lonely mountains where he prayed. His birthplace, Assisi, is one of the oldest towns in Italy. (Assisi is mentioned in the writings of Ptolemy [46 B.C.] as the home of a poet.) It winds up

the wooded slopes of Monte Subasio, far above the groves of olive trees and cultivated fields in the valley. The steep narrow streets are filled with memories of a merry troubadour and his gay companions as ageless as Assisi; by the time the tourist has reached the Basilica, he may have become a pilgrim to the crypt of the saint through an inner experience of grace.

The fine Gothic churches, begun two years after the death of Francis, depict with dramatic intensity the life and suffering of that most perfect mirror of his Lord. Frescoes attributed to Cimabue on the walls of the Basilica show a slender man with oval face and large dark eyes filled with humility, whose crossed hands bear the Stigmata of Crucifixion. In the upper church, the light-filled frescoes of Giotto, Martini, and their followers show simple scenes from his life, where he is with the friars, at home with nature and her creatures, as well as with the majestic ones in heaven surrounded by choirs of angels. The most endearing picture, very modern in its treatment, is the one painted by Giotto of Florence; it shows Francis with three friars and a donkey on a rugged mountain journey. Apparently exhausted by heat and thirst, they have halted. The saint on a rocky ledge prays, while one friar scrambles for a spring of water that suddenly bubbles forth; the other friars show fatigue and doubt, while the little donkey stands by with a most knowing smile.

#### THE BIRTH

Francis was born to Pietro and Pica Bernadone in 1182, while his father, a wealthy merchant of silk and wool, was in Provence on business and therefore unaware of the strange circumstances that led to the birth of the child in a stable. There had been rumours for several years



that an important personality was about to be born. Before her death in 1179, the mystic, St. Hildegarde of Bingen recorded a vision: A woman whose face was smeared with blood had appeared to her, and this woman said to her, 'The birds have their nests here on earth, the foxes too have their holes, but at the present time I have nothing, not even a stick upon which I can lean'. Then Hildegarde realized that the present condition of the church was not suitable for true Christianity, and many others dreamed in a similar fashion. (Rudolf Steiner: *An Account of Francis of Assisi*, Translated 1928) One day, a pilgrim appeared at Pica's door to say, 'The child you are expecting must not be brought into the world in this house where there is abundance; you must bring him to birth in the stable, for he must lie upon straw and so follow his Master'. When her time came, it is said that Pica could not deliver the child until the pilgrim's instructions were followed. The babe was given the name of John (Giovanni), and that name his father, on his return, promptly changed to Francis (Francesco). This he apparently did out of his admiration for France where he had found his wife; but, according to St. Bonaventura, he did it to imply: 'I wish no camel's-hair John the Baptist, but a Frenchman with fine nature.' The merchant, as later events disclosed, was a man who placed great emphasis on worldly appearances, while his wife, extremely pious and devout, was to say of their son: 'He is more like a prince than our son.'

#### THE SAINT IN THE MAKING

His childhood revealed a gay and happy nature, courteous and generous to all. Without much diligence in his studies, he learned French at home, was taught Latin by the Benedictines of St. George, a nearby church where now stands the Church of

Santa Chiara. He began early to develop qualities of leadership among his comrades, although he puzzled them when he ran after beggars to bestow coins. His father accepted his charity for the poor as well as his extravagance in dress and entertaining, sensing the value of the winning personality and potential ability of Francis to succeed in the family business. Pietro obviously never suspected that his son's proclivity for finding good in every beggar would lead him to the discovery of the Divine in all. For his part, Francis had his own dream: to become a brave knight and troubadour in the tradition of the French, an ideal greatly admired by the Italian youths of that time.

When a small war erupted between Assisi and neighbouring Perugia, Francis and some of his friends were captured and held in Perugia for a year. He bore his captivity as bravely as any knight of the crusades, encouraging with his songs and tales the behaviour of the others. Again, in Assisi, he was plagued by dreams and visions which indicated he had yet to find his mission in life. A short illness with high fever gave him some time for introspection, and he discovered his real impulses were those of mercy, sympathy, and love, although he was not ready to give them full sway in his life. His state of deep unrest is not unusual for the potential mystic, as the melancholy darkening of the intellect frequently seems to mark the incipient change in the personality. (What C. G. Jung called, in his *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 'the confrontation of the unconscious' in himself is often encountered by the spiritual aspirant in his own development.)

#### THE FIRST TRANCE AND THE CONVERSION

In an effort to escape this distressing inner conflict, Francis gave a lavish banquet, and when his guests could eat and



drink no more, he led them singing through the winding streets of the sleeping city. Somewhere (near a church, it is said), he fell behind the others, and when they retraced their steps, they found him in a deep trance and, as it developed, permanently changed. His bravery and generosity had been transformed into soul and spirit, of which he gave even more prodigally than he had given of his material possessions. He gave to the whole world. His moral force permeated all Europe and changed the lives of thousands in the centuries to come.

During the next two years, he became a devotee of solitude and prayer, weeping and calling out through the night, 'My God and my All', a form of *jāpam* (repetition of a mystic utterance, symbolic of the supreme Godhead) not unknown in the Christian world—for example, Peter the Damascene wrote: 'One must learn to call upon the name of God, more even than breathing—at all times, in all places, in every kind of occupation. The Apostle says, "Pray without ceasing".' (*The Way of a Pilgrim*, Translated from the Russian by R. M. French) The service of the poor and outcast became his concern, especially the nursing of the lepers of whom there were many—a result of the crusaders' bringing back the most dreaded disease of the times from their expeditions to the Near East. Lepers were shunned completely, not even treated as human beings, and Francis in the past had handed alms to others to pass on to these outcasts. Now he embraced them and gave them his loving care.

In 1207, when Francis was twenty-five years old, his father had him brought into court as a spendthrift and thief. The latest provocation for that sorely disappointed man had been occasioned by Francis's selling a quantity of cloth from the shop in order to get material to repair a ruined chapel. While worshipping at St. Damien's,

he had heard a voice say, 'Francis, go, repair my house that thou seest is all in ruins'. He had done so. Now, in the revulsion which he always showed whenever his love of poverty was misunderstood, he stripped off his rich garments, wrapped himself in a tattered cloak, and went off to the woods of Monte Subasio for prayer, meditation, and songs of joy, having taken the most decisive step of his life. The gay minstrel who loved parti-coloured silks and scarlet velvet, fine wool and leather, owned, for the remainder of his life, one cloak and no shoes nor wallet, not even a staff. The slender body that enjoyed ease and luxury never again knew ordinary comfort. Self-denial and austerities depleted the body until Francis, when he came to die, had to beg forgiveness of 'Brother Donkey' for having unduly mistreated it. Gentle to others, he showed himself no mercy, always driving the frail body beyond its strength.

#### THE ORDER OF THE LITTLE BROTHERS

After the break with his father when Francis proclaimed publicly that God alone was his Father and Poverty his Lady, he spent the next three years in deepest poverty, tending his lepers and other outcasts. Entirely without resources, he sang and begged in the streets of Assisi for the means to feed his poor and restore other dilapidated chapels. The citizens of Assisi considered him quite mad, and he garnered insults as well as scraps of food along his way. With his love of companionship, he still shared his crumbs and songs with dogs, sparrows, and rabbits, remaining king of the feast in a new group of admiring friends. In his humility, he continued to interpret his visions and voices literally, until one February morning, during mass, the aged priest read from the Gospel of St. Matthew the words of Jesus to the disciples as he sent them forth to preach: 'Everywhere on your road preach and say the kingdom



of God is at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out devils. Freely have you received, freely give. . . .’ Deeply impressed, Francis began to preach. He was still a layman, but as disciples joined him, he envisioned an Order of Barefoot Friars and drew up a simple rule for them to follow. A forsaken shelter near a leper colony at Rivo Torto became their first abode, and when the following summer came, the little band of twelve, singing and praying, made a pilgrimage to Rome.

Pope Innocent III, already greatly troubled by innovators and heretics of various sorts, declined to see them. Whether the friendly bishop of Assisi persuaded him or, as legend claims, a remarkable dream moved him to change his mind, the Pope’s vision is too interesting to omit: As he stood in the Lateran palace and looked out at the church dedicated to John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, ‘the head and mother of all churches’, he saw the proud building shake, the tower swing, and the walls begin to crack. Paralysed with fear, he could not even move or pray. Then a small man, dressed in peasant garb, with knotted rope around his waist, came across the piazza and went to the side of the falling church, set his shoulder under the wall, and gave a mighty push so that the falling church stood up again. It is said this moved the Pope to receive the ragged band and finally give them his reluctant approval and blessing, although he considered Francis too optimistic and enthusiastic concerning human nature and its possibilities.

The now tonsured friars elected Francis as their leader, calling themselves the minors, or The Little Brothers, and happily began their mission. When a peasant soon claimed their rough shelter to stable himself and his donkey, they humbly surrendered it, and built huts of

interwoven boughs and clay near the chapel of the Portiuncula. In the past, Francis had restored that little chapel, and it still exists in the shadow of a fine sixteenth century temple of St. Mary of the Angels. Public as well as clerical opinion was undergoing a change concerning ‘II Poverello’ and his followers; the Abbott of the Benedictines offered them the property henceforth and for all time, but Francis refused to accept it. He said, ‘If we had any possessions, we should need weapons and laws to defend them’. It was agreed that the rental basis was to be a basket of fish that the friars would catch in a stream below the chapel and deliver to the abbey once a year.

#### THE ORDER OF PENITENTS

Poverty and self-abnegation were not enough for the dedicated friars and their leader. They endured every hardship: cold, hunger, and abuse as they spread across the countryside, singing and dancing their happiness for poverty, humility, and love. Their example in forming settlements, feeding, teaching, and clothing the poor, as well as the power of Francis as a preacher, caused whole communities to declare themselves disciples wanting to follow him, so that he was forced to restrain them and ponder how they could become devout and yet remain householders. His solution was to found the Third Order of Penitents.

#### SISTERHOOD OF THE POOR CLARES

The Second Order had come about previously when, in 1212, a beautiful young girl of a patrician family heard Francis preach. Almost at once, Clara Scifio left the family palace, and asked permission to take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. To test her resolution, Francis directed her to beg alms for the poor in the streets of Assisi. This she did happily.

Then, shorn of her long golden hair and silken robes, she put on sackcloth and rough wooden sandals before she went to live in a hut near the Chapel of St. Damien. She was joined there presently by her two sisters, and after her father's death, by her mother. Many others came; within three years, she and her spiritual disciples were given the privileges of Holy Poverty by the Pope. Thus, she became the founder of the famous Sisterhood of the Poor Clares, which, for forty years, she ruled and guided in the lofty ideals of their spiritual father. The understanding and sympathy between Clara and Francis enabled her to maintain a struggle against the forces in the Church which strove to change the Order. She died in 1253, and by 1322, less than seventy years, the doctrine of apostolic poverty was condemned as heretical.

#### THE RENAISSANCE

To the Church, heretics have always consisted of those who believe differently than the Church's traditional interpretation of the Bible. It follows that the mystic, by claiming personal access to God, has always been a nuisance and frequently a martyr. The early biographies of Francis were destroyed by the Church, but the tales of his many miracles, especially the healing of the lepers, have persisted down the centuries. The sceptical mind of the present age is set against the possibility of supernatural events. Whether those attributed to Francis are accepted or not, there is no possible denial of a tremendous influx of moral and spiritual power. A new creative epoch in literature, poetry, and painting stemmed from the example of his life and activities. Nor can the knowledge of love and devotion to God, man, and all creation that he imparted be explained away. From him, through Giotto, Martini, Dante, and others, came the in-

spiration for the great art and literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

#### FRANCIS AND ŚRĪ CAITANYA

The divine play, or *līlā*, enacted by Francis is similar to that of Śrī Caitanya, whose strange resemblance to St. Francis has been mentioned. Śrī Caitanya was born in 1485, and became a scholar and teacher of renown in Bengal. Then came a call when he was twenty-two years old, such as came to Francis at that age, to restore devotion and knowledge to religious observance. For two years, he shed tears and sang the names and attributes of God, then left his wife and his mother to become an ascetic. For six years, he went about the south and west of India to share his realization of God with all. His remaining eighteen years, he lived in Puri, with the last twelve years spent almost entirely in spiritual trances. Śrī Caitanya died in 1533, almost the same age of St. Francis at his death. He emphasized union with God and humility and tolerance towards others. His contributions to the philosophy and theology of the Vaiṣṇava school of philosophy are still revered, and he is considered an incarnation of his Ideal, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

#### FRANCIS THE PEACEFUL CRUSADER OF CHRIST

The ancient wisdom of India as epitomized in the Vedānta was never bestowed upon Europe, and even the rudiments of the belief in reincarnation had been thrown out of the Christian Church in the early years of its existence, although that belief continued to be one of the heresies to exasperate the Church for many centuries. The devotion to the spiritual life that India had always known and practised was not then a part of life in Europe, and indeed is not today. The European, if he thought about it at all, would be apt to



declare, as do Americans, that it is impossible to practise pure devotion in the world as it functions today.

We Americans are appalled by the indifference of Italians to animals, even more by the Spanish addiction to killing bulls for 'sport', forgetting in our sophistry of thought that beating horses to death on the streets and roads in America was called 'the habit of a nation' in the nineteenth century. One man, Henry Bergh, fought 'Big Business' (which could not be attacked, it was said), got a law passed in 1866 to protect the creatures, then found that a law against causing animals to suffer was difficult to enforce. Although St. Francis was not his name-saint as he *is* the name-saint of thousands of Italians, Spaniards, and Americans, Henry Bergh demonstrated his pure devotion to his ideal, was beaten in the streets, ridiculed and attacked in every possible fashion. He founded the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, eventually educated the public and business to feel that animals must not be undernourished and ill-treated, and that they are not expendable.

Mankind learns slowly, and there are many wasted days at school, as we know to our sorrow. It is too late to wail over the brutalities of the past, especially when great injustices exist in the present. Had the western world kept the belief in action and reaction, in reincarnation, in freedom of religious thought, would we have the world tottering on the brink of destruction today? Wisdom was lacking then, in the early years of Christendom, as now. Even martyrs are not available since Gandhiji left us, and this brings us full circle to St. Francis, who was very willing to become a martyr. He longed to join the crusades to convert the infidel rather than slaughter him.

On his first attempt, he was shipwrecked and forced to return home. A year or

two later, he went to the Moors in Spain; in 1219, to Egypt where the crusaders were besieging Damietta. Francis implored them to purify their souls and cease the battle. He was taken prisoner and led before the Sultan, to whom he preached the Gospel. The Sultan of the Saracens was not converted, did not renounce Mohammed, although legend infers that he was won by the eloquence of Francis and waited until his death-bed to announce it. He *was* impressed by the humble pilgrim, and granted him permission to travel at will in the Holy Land. This was no small achievement at a time when a captured Christian could not expect to retain his head. The ruler also spared the 12,000 crusaders caught in Egypt by the waters of the flooding Nile. He said: 'For the sake of the only Christian whose deeds do not belie his faith, I am ready to spare your lives. Only because of him.' All the other so-called Christians, he said in effect, were after Egypt's wealth—not the Holy Land. (Zofia Kossak: *Blessed Are the Meek*)

#### THE PASSING AWAY

During the absence of Francis, the troubles in the Order began. The clerical-minded in the Order and the Church had instituted the beginning of large buildings in which to house the now enormous numbers. A formation of rigid organization was under way. Francis found that his earthly dream of a kingdom ruled by Lady Poverty had been shattered, and this soon led to the words of his abdication: 'Lord, I give Thee back this family which Thou didst entrust to me. Thou knowest, most sweet Jesus, that I have no more the power and the qualities to continue to take care of it. I entrust it, therefore, to the ministers. Let them be responsible before Thee at the Day of Judgement, if any brother by their negligence, or their bad example, or by a too severe punishment,

shall go astray.' (Johannes Jorgensen : *Saint Francis of Assisi*)

Broken in health and suffering from a serious eye-infection he had acquired in Egypt, he continued to preach after he had, with much pain to himself, revised the Rules of the Order. According to Thomas of Spalato : 'The whole theme of his discourse was to assuage enmities and to create peace. His habit was dirty, his appearance insignificant, his face not handsome. But God gave his word such power that many noble families, between whom there was much old-time enmity and spilled blood, allowed themselves to be induced to make peace. And all felt such great devotion and reverence for him that men and women in crowds precipitated themselves upon him, and tried to tear off bits of his habit or even to touch the hem of his garment.'

His message had never changed : *Dominus det tibi pacem*, the Lord give you peace ! His song was always of the joy of the creator and the harmony of all creatures. His constant prayer was to know the sufferings of his Master in his soul and body. 'And he meditated with great devotion until *he was all transformed to Jesus.*'

Two years before his death he went up Mount Alverno in the Apennines with some of his devoted disciples, and after forty days of fasting, prayer, and contemplation, on September 14, 1224, at sunrise, he had a vision : Suddenly a strange huge figure with extended wings flew towards him. His wonder was great until he perceived the figure to be that of a seraph nailed to a cross. Then he felt sharp pain and, as the vision disappeared, he saw on his body five wounds, the Stigmata of the Crucified. His resulting exhaustion was so profound that he had to be carried back to Assisi where he endured great physical suffering and increasing blinding, further

aggravated by trips and treatments for his afflictions. The flame of his faith in the kinship of God and all creatures only burned more brightly and inspired his last song, a song of praise. Francis died in the Portiuncula on October 3, 1226, but his song, 'The Canticle of Brother Sun' as it is usually known, will never die. To complete the legend, he is said to have died with the song on his lips, and when his voice was stilled, a symphony of sound began as his brothers and sisters, the larks, said farewell.

#### THE CANTICLE OF BROTHER SUN

Here are the praises of the creatures which St. Francis made for the praise and honour of God when he was ill at San Damiano.

Most High Almighty Good Lord,  
Yours are the praises, the glory, the  
honour, and all blessings !  
To you alone, Most High, do they belong,  
And no man is worthy to mention You.  
Be praised, my Lord with all Your  
creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun,  
By whom You give us the light of day !  
And he is beautiful and radiant with  
great splendour  
Of You, Most High, he is a symbol !

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon  
and the Stars !  
In the sky You formed them bright and  
lovely and fair.

Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Wind  
And for the Air and cloudy and clear  
and all Weather,  
By which You give sustenance to  
Your creatures !

Be praised, my Lord for Sister Water,  
Who is very useful and humble and  
lovely and chaste !



Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire,  
By whom You give us light at night,  
And he is beautiful and merry and  
mighty and strong!

Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister  
Mother Earth,  
Who sustains and governs us,  
And produces fruits with colourful  
flowers and leaves!

Be praised, my Lord, for those who  
forgive for love of You  
And endure infirmities and tribulations.

Blessed are those who shall endure  
them in peace,  
For by You, Most High, they will be  
crowned!

Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister  
Death,  
From whom no man living can escape!  
Alas for those who die in mortal sin,  
But happy they who find themselves  
within Thine will,  
On them the second death can work  
no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord and thank Him  
And serve Him with great humility.

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## THE AJANTA TRADITION

SRI P. SAMA RAO

Ajantan influence in art and religion over the surrounding Indian states and the neighbouring countries—Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Java, China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, Afghanistan, Persia, etc.—has been profound. The earliest colonization is that of Aśoka's Buddhist mission to China and that of the Brāhmanical Hinduism to Java. From China, Indian art spread to Korea, and through Korea to Japan, Siam, Cambodia, Burma, and Mongolia. Through Persia and Greece, it spread to Italy and other European countries. The Rajput and Moghul styles of painting owe not a little to the Ajantan style. There has been a modification of it, however, with the local influence in almost all cases except, perhaps, at Java. This influence showed itself more in sculpture than in painting in Cambodia, Siam, and Java, and vice versa in China, Japan, and Korea. The 'proces-

sion galleries' at Borobudur (Java), which are embellished by a series of some two thousand bas-reliefs depict Buddha's life as per *Lalita-vistara* and also *Jātakamālā*. The reliefs from end to end cover more than two miles. This 'Buddhist Bible' is more extensive than the reliefs at Sanchi and the paintings at Ajanta. Though wonderfully graceful and ornamental, sincere and supremely devout, and spontaneous, yet they lack the austerity and the abstraction of the early Buddhist primitives. Besides, the episodes illustrated at Borobudur are not 'so exclusively courtly as in the case of Ajanta, but cover the whole circle of Indian life alike in city and village', and the narrative element here is more conspicuous than at Ajanta. Of the later individual figure pieces, none more impressive and sublime than that of Mañjuśrī (fourteenth century A.D.) and Prajñāpāramita, 'one of the most spiritual

creations', can be cited.

Buddhist art reached China via Central Asia by about the same time as Aśoka's cultural mission (third century B.C.), if not earlier. China had by then its own indigenous technique, an accomplished art, and a great philosophy in Taoism. The latter, by their blending with the Indian, developed into a new thought as well as an art which can be called as much Indian as Chinese, although there was a repetition of the forms of Indian art. The Chinese Buddhist art is therefore not, like the Javanese, entirely Indian. China was also influenced by the Greco-Buddhist art of Gāndhāra through Western Asia, but the few specimens that survive now are subsequent to fifth century A.D., when the Greek and Roman traits had almost disappeared. Only the most minor details of that influence could be traced in the decorative motifs in the caves of Tatong (fifth century A.D.), Longman caves (sixth century A.D.), and the classic art of the T'ang epoch.

From China, Buddhist art reached Korea, and from Korea it went to Japan (sixth century A.D.), in the time of Prince Wumayado who wrote his commentaries on Buddhist Sūtra, setting out Buddha's teachings. As Okakura observes in connexion with the art of Horiuji temple: 'We find in these works a spirit of intense refinement, such as only great religious feeling could have produced. For divinity in this early phase of national realization seemed like an abstract ideal, unapproachable and mysterious, and even the distance from the naturalism gives to art an awful charm.' In short, it may be said that all the early Buddhist art of the Far East is more purely hieratic and abstract than that at Ajanta, to which the painting at Horiuji is so closely related (paintings of Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī). Adverting to the paintings of Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī, Laurence Binyon observes:

'The fluid lines of form and drapery are of an indescribable sweetness and harmony, as if sensitive themselves with life; the colour also discloses itself as part of the glowing life within, veined with fine lines of gold, not as something applied from without. Such images as these—images of the infinite of wisdom and of tenderness, of which this early Buddhist art has created not a few—not only express the serenity of the spirit, but have, in a degree unreached in any other art, the power of including the spectator in their spiritual spell; to contemplate them is to be strangely moved, yet strangely tranquillized.' As instances, we may point to the painting of Buddha in Tofukuji temple at Kyoto (eighth century A.D.) and the 'Death of Buddha' by Wu Tao-Tzu (A.D. 742). The last resembles closely the motif at Ajanta and at Bagh.

Bagh (Malwa, Dt. Gwalior, Central India) is a similar forest retreat, over 250 miles north of Ajanta. It has in all nine caves similarly excavated in the hill that runs parallel to the river Bhagmati, between fourth century and seventh century A.D. The cliff that looks down on the river is about 200 feet high. The caves are quite modest in appearance when compared to the Ajantan, but continue in their excellent specimens (C.2—fifth century A.D., C.4—sixth century A.D.) the high traditions of the Ajantan art though with slight modifications (C.2, 'Gonsai Gumpa', contains a Padmapāni Buddha, highly ornate and Gandharian in style; C.4, 'Ranga Mahal', contains the group of musicians which is in the best Ajantan style).

The paintings at Bagh, Sigiriya (Ceylon), Sittanivassal (Ramnad District), and Ellora continue essentially the Ajantan tradition, though in different degrees of quality. The 'Queens of Kaśyapa', honorifically called Apsara (fifth century A.D.), the Dancer, the Bhikkus in Water Sport



(Sittanivassal, seventh century A.D.), all recall the best of their kind in caves 1, 2, 16, 17, etc. of Ajanta. They disclose a modelling much more abstract than in the last phases of paintings at Ajanta (C. 1 and 2). Ellora is more celebrated for its wonderful architecture and sculpture than for painting. It registers decadence in Buddhist painting. The few paintings that remain at Ellora are in Kailāsa: Gods adoring Śiva, Viṣṇu with two goddesses riding on Garuḍa in the sky, Śiva and other deities, and Brahma in Gaṇeśa Lena, are certainly the most charming and sublime like its Natarāja, copied with zest at Lepakshi and Srisaīla in paint and bas-relief respectively. They offer sufficient material to formulate the peerless Brāhmanical Hindu art that existed long before the Buddhist Ajanta. The forms are no less elegant or graceful or melodious than the best of Ajanta in the above caves 1, 2, 16, and 17.

The earliest of the extant Brāhmanical paintings is at Badami, and is dated about A.D. 578 in its caves 2 and 3, which resemble the Ajantan tradition. The 'Betrothal of Śiva and Pārvatī' is the most remarkable in that the modelling is much more sensitive in texture and expression, and the outlines much more tender and elastic, than the latest figures in caves 1 and 2 at Ajanta.

The women of Ajanta have all the highest and most seductive charm of youthful flesh and bearing, but they evoke not so much of erotic feeling as the feeling of the universal motherhood of the Godhead. The 'Dancer' (C.2), the dancers in the

palace scenes and in Māra's temptation (C.1), and the 'Reception of Wijeyo's Conquest' (C. 17) are not sentimental. They are all touched and swayed into enrapturing poses by the only graceful divine order (*rta*) that governs all being.

To sum up: The Ajanta painting and sculpture, pure, unalloyed, and untouched by foreign influences like the Gupta best are really a testament to the Indian concept of art that is undivorced from spiritual ties with the Supreme. They are the expression at its best of a yogic contemplation and renunciation, and of divine qualities. They are a supra-sensuous expression of a selfless and gracious and an all-loving activity of the human in tint, sound, and gesture, at once radiant and spontaneous. The Ajantan beauty is the beauty of the 'rapture of the soul' in communion with the Oversoul. 'The Ajantan art, though Buddhistic, is essentially Indian, and at its best is truly hieratic, universal, and transcendent' (Dr. A. K. Coomaraswami); for a strong sense of naturalism and a broad humanitarianism have mingled 'with an intense spirituality, to animate the drama of human life, of love and death, happiness and suffering, through graceful men and women and their gentle poses and gestures. Their acts are dominated by the sense of the fugitivity of existence, and a profound emotional piety saturates the beholder as he passes from cave to cave'. For there we have 'the enchanting figures of the holy beings of wisdom and compassion, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, all delicate visions of life in its totality in the present and the future'.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

In the second instalment of his article on 'Swami Vivekananda's Synthesis of Science and Religion', Swami Ranganathananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, points out how the Vedāntic approach to religion and the problems of life has always been rational and scientific in spirit, temper, and objectives—as much rational and scientific as any branch of modern science.

Continuing his theme 'Vinoba Bhave: The Nature and Scope of His Social Reforms' in this number, Dr. Jacques-Albert Cottat, the Swiss Ambassador in India, makes a realistic assessment of the weak and the strong sides of the movement started by Vinobaji—its failures and successes and its future possibilities, and evaluates its place in the building of the new India that is in process of construc-

tion. He will conclude the article in the next number.

The story of St. Francis of Assisi has been told many times and in many forms—in the form of short articles as well as in bigger volumes. But it is a story which never grows old or stale with repetition. Each time it is told, it strengthens our faith in the higher realities of life and fills our heart with hope and inspiration for pursuing the path trodden by the great saint and mystic. And we are deeply thankful to Mrs. Josephine Miller, of Warwick Blvd., Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A., for retelling the story in her own pleasing manner.

In our March 64 number, we had the pleasure of publishing an illustrated article on 'Painting at Ajanta' by Sri P. Sama Rao, B.A., B.L., Advocate, Bellary, Mysore State. The present article on 'The Ajanta Tradition' is complementary to it.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**CLASSICAL INDIAN PHILOSOPHIES: THEIR SYNTHESIS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.** BY DR. SATIS CHANDRA CHATTERJEE, M.A., Ph.D. The University of Calcutta. 1963. Pages 152. Price Rs. 5.50 P.

The book devotes half of itself to a masterly summary of the classical Indian philosophies—theistic as well as atheistic, materialistic as well as spiritualistic—and then proceeds to build up a synthetic philosophy, which, according to Dr. Chatterjee, 'is in a position to combine and correlate the different systems of philosophy as parts or stages of a comprehensive philosophy of life and the world', and 'which is based on all levels of experience' (p. 84). The latest and the most strikingly outspoken synthesis, viz that which is met with in *The Gospel of*

*Sri Ramakrishna* and *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, is called by our author neo-Advaitism. With this is concerned his last and longest section of the book, which is often very original in its approach.

Students of the *Gospel* are struck not only by the freshness, vigour, and simplicity of the utterances, but also by the novelty of the philosophical implication contained therein. The curiosity to know what exactly was the basic philosophy of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda is wide and irresistible, and this has impelled many thinkers to dive deep to discover the fundamentals, among whom may be mentioned Dr. A. C. Das of the Calcutta University, Dr. G. Dev of the Dacca University, and our present writer, who retired as the Head of the Department of Philosophy of the



Calcutta University. With Dr. A. C. Das's book, we dealt in these columns a few years ago. Dr. Dev's thesis published from the Ramakrishna Mission of Dacca, and written from the epistemological point of view, agrees with Dr. Chatterjee's in so far as Brahman's relation with Its power and the reality of the latter are concerned, which may be stated in Dr. Chatterjee's words: 'Śakti (Brahman's energy) is not Māyā in the sense of a magical power of creating illusion, but a real power of creativity in Brahman or is Brahman himself as engaged in the activity of creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world.' (p. 150) We may also quote from Swami Vivekananda (*The Complete Works*, Vol. IV, p. 497):

Verily, the sun is He, His the ray,  
Nay, the sun is He, and He is the ray.

Dr. Chatterjee, however, does not stop with this conception. He goes further. No doubt Sri Ramakrishna was basically a non-dualist, but his non-dualism, according to our author, differs at several points from the philosophy of Śaṅkara. To quote from the book *in extenso*: 'It is more positive than Śaṅkara's Advaita which is more negative. It is reconciled with Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Śakti-Advaita of Tantra, and other types of Advaita, while Śaṅkara's Advaita cannot, from the transcendental standpoint, be reconciled with these, although some sort of compromise among them may be effected from the empirical or practical standpoint. ... In Sri Ramakrishna's philosophy, ... Brahman is the ultimate reality and the only reality, one without a second. But while for Śaṅkara it is, from the transcendental standpoint perfectly indeterminate and qualityless (*nirguṇa*), for Sri Ramakrishna, it is, even from the transcendental standpoint, both indeterminate and determinate, qualityless and possessed of quality. According to Śaṅkara, Māyā as creative power is not an essential character of Brahman, it is only an apparent, accidental predicate (*upādhi*) that we illusorily ascribe to Brahman. According to Sri Ramakrishna, Brahman and Śakti or the Divine Mother are non-different. ... Even when the creative activity of Brahman ceases and the *līlā-rūpa* disappears, Śakti as formless Mahākālī rests and is equipoised in the formless Brahman. ...

According to Sri Ramakrishna, both *vidyā* and *avidyā* belong to Brahman, but for Śaṅkara, Brahman is only *apparently associated* (*māyopahīta*) with them. ... According to Śaṅkara, ... Īśvara is after all an appearance which is neither real nor unreal. But for Sri Ramakrishna, Īśvara or the Personal God is really the creative form (*līlā-rūpa*) of Brahman. ... Even from the transcendental standpoint, God is

real, though not eternal, since there may be a cessation of Brahman's creative activity. So also the world, created by God, is real ... even from the transcendental standpoint. ... the world is real but not eternal. ... Finally we find in Sri Ramakrishna's philosophy a synthesis and reconciliation of the four main paths to the realization of God.' Dr. Chatterjee here quotes from Swami Vivekananda's *Rāja-yoga*: 'The goal is to manifest this Divine within. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these, and be free.' (pp. 149-52)

Dr. Chatterjee states his case boldly and clearly without reserve. He breaks much new ground, but like all pioneers, he may not find ready acceptance; and yet any critic will be an irresponsible man if he would discard this synthetic philosophy outright, though it may not be difficult for the orthodox Śaṅkarites to decry it as a form of Śakti-Advaitism, and to point out logical inconsistency or scriptural unorthodoxy. One thing, however, is certain: Dr. Chatterjee has pointed out the impossibility of fitting Sri Ramakrishna's philosophy into post-Śaṅkara Advaitism, which lays too much emphasis on the negative side—or '*neti neti*'—rather than on an all-comprehensiveness as stated in '*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*'. He says: 'The Upanishadic text, "All this is Brahman", does not mean for him (Ramakrishna), as it does for some Advaitins, that there is no all but only Brahman. For him all *are*, and are Brahman in different forms.' (p. 112)

In Ramakrishna-Vivekananda approach to the problems of life and spiritual practice, there is a definite shifting of emphasis from the mere negative to the positive, and this is bound to influence the world of speculative thought and spiritual endeavour in the ages to come. If, therefore, it is complained that Dr. Chatterjee has not hit the bull's eye, he may well reply, 'Come out with a better solution if you can'. As for ourselves, we heartily recommend the book for study by scholars and spiritual aspirants alike.

S.G.

#### PHILOSOPHY OF LOGICAL CONSTRUCTION.

BY HEMANTA KUMAR GANGULI, UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA. Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 38 Bidhan Sarani, Calcutta 6. 1963. Pages 252. Price Rs. 20.

European and American thought in this century turned against idealism and began developing, under the influence of Moore and Russell, a philosophy which is said to be the same as logic. Logical analysis or positivism came into vogue, and a theory of logical construction has been developed by Wittgenstein, Carnap, Schlick, Ayer, Price, Neurath,



and others. A similar philosophy was developed in India long ago by Bhartṛhari and Dharmakīrti. The Indian thinkers faced the logical consequences of their theories, unlike the modern thinkers. Sri Hemanta Kumar Ganguli has rendered a good service in focussing the attention of the students and masters of philosophy on the answers offered by the Indian thinkers to the problems that continue to vex the western thinkers.

Modern positivism rejects all metaphysics and lays stress on a theory of proposition and on the principle of verification. But Bhartṛhari developed his metaphysics out of his logical and epistemological theories. Dharmakīrti and Prajñākara evolved a philosophy of pluralistic idealism on a similar basis. Sri Ganguli unfortunately calls Dharmakīrti's theory empiricism.

Sri Ganguli argues that the key to epistemology lies in the logical analysis of language. But when we are told that the meaning of language is only logical fiction and that the real as such has no place in the realm of meaning, we are not talking of language as we use it in daily life. If the meaning is a *vikalpa*, there is no need for an epistemology. One can plausibly argue for the reality of meaning and for the *vikalpa* nature of the sound. The author does not explore this aspect, possibly because it would expose the views of all the thinkers examined here.

After a brilliant criticism of positivism, Sri Ganguli explains, in the fourth chapter, Bhartṛhari's view and relates it to the Advaitic and Buddhist theories. Then he proceeds to discuss nominalism and symbolism in order to arrive at Bhartṛhari's law of logical construction. According to this law, there is no point of contact between the perceiving individual and the so-called external world, since the phenomenal world exists only as the apprehended meaning of a system of intelligible language. This is nothing short of solipsism. But Sri Ganguli is evidently not worried about solipsism. Hence he takes Advaitic *avidyā* as the law of logical construction. But, in reality, the principle of *avidyā* is both an ontological law and an epistemological one. Even the orthodox followers of Śaṅkara saw these two aspects in the *āvarana* and *vikṣepa śaktis* of *avidyā*. And its indefinability is ontological and epistemological.

Sri Ganguli's criticism of modern realism and positivism on the basis of the teachings of Dharmakīrti and Prajñākara is superb. From the twelfth chapter onwards, he offers a brilliant critique of the theory of proposition advanced by the moderns. There are places in this examination where the argument is open to objections, if only because he ignores the theory of *akhaṇḍārtha* and the Bradleyan theory of judgement. If every word is a logical construction,

then he cannot have even a theory of *svalakṣaṇa*. If self-definability is a synonym of indefinability (p. 133), he ought not to have been upset earlier by the Advaitic approach to *avidyā*. If language constitutes a common fund of logical constructions (*vikalpa*), how does it arise? Is it an accident? Are we not then starting with a grand assumption? How can I designate something even as a *svalakṣaṇa*, if I have no access to it outside? If 'language, meaning, experience, and the object of experience are one indivisible unit', are we not getting back to the Hegelian theory? Sri Ganguli argues that there are no false facts; but what is one to say about the false hunger experienced by a dyspeptic? These troubles are the result of looking at epistemology as though it had nothing to do with ontology.

Sri Ganguli speaks of the 'Bengal school of neo-logic' (p. 128). It ought to be the 'Indian school of neo-logic' since no philosopher in the past looked upon his province or state in the way some of us do today. There are many printing mistakes which, I hope, will be corrected in the next edition. The book deserves a careful study both in the East and in the West.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

THE LOTUS AND THE SPINNING WHEEL.  
BY MARIE B. BYLES. George Allen & Unwin Ltd.,  
Ruskin House, Museum Street, London. 1963.  
Pages 260. Price 32 shillings.

The author is an ardent admirer of Bhagavān Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi. In 1953, she undertook a pilgrimage to the various places associated with the life and teaching of the Buddha, and made a journey to Sevagram to see the work of Gandhiji's disciples, and then posed herself the question whether the teachings of the Buddha and the Mahatma were not basically the same and whether they were not both necessary to world problems. The present book is the outcome of those travels and her attempt to answer that question. The 'Lotus' and the 'Spinning Wheel' symbolize the Buddha and the Mahatma respectively.

In the earlier and major part of the book, the author recounts, against the background of her travelogue, some of the interesting episodes of the Buddha's life and teaching, associated with the particular places she visits. The references to the original Pali sources of these episodes are given at the end of each chapter. In the later part of the book, we get a rapid review of Gandhiji's life and times, and the author's reflections on the work of Gandhiji's disciples at Sevagram.

In the concluding chapters of the book, the author tries to evaluate the Buddha and the Mahatma as



kindred spirits. She finds that 'the Buddha taught of the things that are beyond time and space, whereas the Mahatma taught mostly of those that are within time and space', and so 'Gandhiji's teaching cannot lead mankind on the path of spiritual evolution as does the Buddha's.' As regards Gandhiji's work in the socio-political field, she sees the need for such work; she nevertheless, feels that 'all his work will pass into oblivion because all things are transient, and all reforms, however noble, but little points of light on the cinematograph of time'. Of the Mahatma's saintly spirit, for which the author has great admiration, she writes, 'it is too early to know if it will live on and flourish as long as the Buddha's', but she fondly hopes that 'it may well live on ... though all the work he accomplished in his life fades into complete oblivion.' She concludes that 'the Mahatma belonged to the same spiritual lineage as the Buddha and his message is just as necessary to the world', the Buddha's message for inner peace and enlightenment and the Mahatma's for outer peace and reforms.

Those who are previously familiar with the basic outlines of the lives and teaching of the Buddha and the Mahatma will find the book interesting for its edifying stories of the Buddha's ministerial life and its attempt to assess 'India's two great sons', in doing which the author has taken, on the whole, a balanced view.

SWAMI SANDHYANANDA

## BENGALI

BHĀRĀTIYA-O-PĀŚCĀTYA DARŚAN. BY DR. S. C. CHATTERJEE. The Calcutta University. 1963. Pages 366. Price Rs. 7.50 P.

The author, Dr. S. C. Chatterjee, is a renowned scholar and was formerly Professor of Philosophy, Calcutta University. He has already contributed substantially to Indian philosophy by writing the following books: (1) *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*; (2) *The Nyaya Theory of Knowledge*; (3) *The Problem of Philosophy*; (4) *The Fundamentals of Hinduism*; and (5) *Tattva Jijñāsā* (Bengali).

The author was specially requested by the Calcutta University to produce this book in Bengali dealing with Indian and western philosophy, for the B.A. pass and honours courses. The book is brilliantly written. The students of Bengal will be greatly benefited by the book.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

## ORIYA

VIVEKĀNANDA VĀNĪ O RACANĀ (in 10 Volumes). 1963. Pages about 500 each. Price each set: Rexine Bound: Rs. 50; Board Bound: Rs. 40.

VIVEKĀNANDA CARIT. 1963. Pages 409. Price Rs. 5.

SWĀMĪ VIVEKĀNANDA. 1963. Pages 159. Price Re. 1.

PILANKA VIVEKĀNANDA. 1963. Pages 56. Price 40 P.

Sri Ramakrishna Math, Bhubaneswar 2.

All the four books, brought out in commemoration of the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda, are, on the one hand, a perennial source of inspiration and guidance to the people of Orissa, specially the younger generation, and on the other, an invaluable asset to Oriya literature. The first one, *Vivekānanda Vānī O Racanā*, published in ten volumes, is translated from the English *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, published from the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, in eight volumes. The second one, *Vivekānanda Carit* is the Oriya rendering of the work of the same name in Bengali by Sri Satyendra Nath Mazumdar, and depicts, in chaste and elegant prose, the life of Swami Vivekananda in its varied aspects.

The third book, *Swāmī Vivekānanda*, is a translation from the original in Bengali by Swami Viswasrayananda, meant as a textbook for the top classes in high schools. The book presents in a simple and easy style the ancient spiritual ideas of India that have sustained her through the centuries and points out how they can lead her now to an era of peace and prosperity in every field, if understood and practised in the light and background of Swami Vivekananda's life and teachings. The modern youths of Utkal are sure to be infused with the true spirit of patriotism by going through the book.

The last book, *Pilanka Vivekānanda*, also a translation from the original in Bengali, is by Swami Niramayananda, and is intended for children. It is a handy compendium depicting the life of Swami Vivekananda in a simple and easy style suited to the age for which it is meant. The life of Swamiji as depicted here is sure to leave its impress on the child mind in its formative period, and help build up its moral character.

S. C. BASU



## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CALCUTTA STUDENTS' HOME

P.O. BELGHARIA, DT. 24-PARGANAS

REPORT FOR 1962-63

This Students' home, run on the lines of the ancient *gurukula* system adapted to modern conditions, provides free, or partially free, board and lodging facilities, as also fees, books, clothings, etc., to meritorious students of slender means studying in colleges in Calcutta, and is licensed by the Calcutta University as a non-collegiate hostel. A few paying boarders, not exceeding one-third of the total number, are also admitted, provided they are ready and willing to undergo the training imparted to the other inmates. The Home aims at inculcating in the boys a respect for the ancient Indian spiritual ideals and at helping them to develop an all-round integrated personality. To this end, regular socio-religious classes are held for them, and the boys participate in the congregational prayers held every morning and evening in the shrine attached to the Home. Also, the birthdays of religious and national leaders, as also other functions such as the independence day, the republic day, *Kālī-pūjā*, *Sarasvatī-pūjā*, etc., are observed. During the year under review, the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda was observed with week-long celebrations, consisting of an exhibition, public lectures, devotional music, demonstration of physical feats, discourses with magic lantern slides, procession, N.C.C. boys' route march, etc. There is a library and reading room attached to the Home (the total number of books in the library: 2,848; number of books lent out: 1,210; number of periodicals received in the reading room: 18 journals and 6 dailies). The boys bring out a manuscript magazine every year. Occasional discourses by eminent scholars, educational tours, a gymnasium, facilities for outdoor and indoor games and for swimming and rowing, are some of the other activities of the Home. According to a routine drawn by the boys, all the household duties, such as attending to the cleanliness of the Home, and arranging the celebrations, sports, and excursions, are done by the boys themselves. The boys are also given some practical lessons in agri-horticulture, animal husbandry, and pisciculture. A small workshop, with a few machines, affords the boys opportunities for training in some small scale home industries. A scheme for social education among adults of backward communities

has been taken in hand. At the beginning of the year under review, there were 93 students, of whom 62 were free, 16 concession-holders, and 15 paying. During the year, 36 students left the Home and 35 were newly admitted; thus the total number at the end of the year stood at 92, of whom 63 were free, 14 concession-holders, and 15 paying. Out of the Bhanu Dasgupta Memorial Fund, Rs. 590 were distributed among 37 students belonging to several colleges of Calcutta and its neighbourhood, by way of help towards their examination fees; and out of the Krishnachandra Memorial Fund, Rs. 131 to help four degree examinees.

*The Ramakrishna Mission Shilpapitha*: This is a Government-sponsored polytechnic for three-year diploma courses in civil, mechanical, and electrical engineering, started under the auspices of the Students' Home in March 1958. During the year under review, there were altogether 540 students on the roll (civil engineering: 360; mechanical: 90; and electrical: 90). Staff: lecturers: 24; foremen: 2; and mistry instructors: 20. The Shilpapitha has a library of its own, with 2,557 books, 5 dailies, and 12 periodicals. Out of 192 students who appeared for the final examination, 28 passed out in first division, one of them securing the first place in mechanical engineering, and 101 in the second division. The institution also had the distinction of having the largest number placed in the first division among the civil and electrical engineering examinees of West Bengal polytechnics. A survey camp and an educational tour were organized for the boys. An exhibition organized in connexion with the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda, observance of the independence day, republic day, founder's day, *Viśvakarma-pūjā*, *Sarasvatī-pūjā*, etc., the annual sports meet, and the institution's annual meeting, were the other activities of the institution during the year under review.

#### *Needs of the Home:*

1. For the maintenance of more free boarders .. Rs. 1,500 per month
2. Furniture, utensils, hospital equipment, etc. .. Rs. 2,000
3. For completion of the new Assembly Hall and library and free reading room .. .. Rs. 40,000
4. Guest house, quarters for cooks, etc. .. Rs. 88,000