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Prabuddha Bharata

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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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No. 2



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:o:—

Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary: Parliament of Religions

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

I am very happy to welcome you all here and inaugurate this Parliament of Religions in connection with the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda, in this very city of his nativity, which also heard Sri Ramakrishna preach the gospel of the harmony of all religions. People of various faiths from far and near have assembled here to find out the co-ordinating unity of the various faiths. If religion is to survive, and it must survive for the good of man, we have to compare notes and find out where we agree and on what basis or platform we can all unite and make a united front against irreligion, which is gaining ground everywhere. At this time, when nations are arming themselves for wars of offence and defence, it is meet that the followers of various religions should voice the message of love, peace, and brotherhood to a mad world.

The word 'religion' is used in a vague sense to signify both the diverse external manifestations of religiousness and inner spiritual ex-

cellence. Truly speaking, spirituality begins where religiousness ends. Swami Vivekananda, therefore, made a distinction between spirituality or the inner core of religion and formal religion, and he defined the former as the manifestation of the divinity already in man. He believed that from this point of view, 'Confucius, Moses, Pythagoras, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Luther, Calvin, and the Sikhs, Theosophy, Spiritualism, and the like—all these mean only the preaching of the Divine-in-man'.

When talking of the fundamentals of religion, we have to remember that in the past each great religion of the world had to adapt itself to changing times, places, and cultures, so that sects multiplied, which claimed exclusive authenticity for themselves. But the very fact that they differ, while adhering to the same originators or the same books, points to some basic fact of unity. The modern problem is to find out this unity not only among the different sects of the same religion, but

also among all the religions of the world. We have emphasized the differences long enough; now is the time to emphasize oneness.

When we speak of the unity of religions, we have mostly in mind the forms in which they originally issued out of their founders, or as they are presented in the original books. Here, again, we are aware that even these original religions of the world are never identical when taken in their totality; for, even in those early days, they differed in language and forms of worship. The Indian method of solving this difficulty was to accept variety and yet keep the eyes fixed on unity. Sri Ramakrishna declared that just as a grain of paddy has two parts, the husk and the rice, so must each religion have its essentials and non-essentials to make it acceptable to ordinary human beings. That protective husk is also necessary just as much as a fence is necessary to protect a growing sapling. Besides, the growing mind has to ascend step by step, and the different forms of religion may well serve as the stages suitable for its expanding outlook. Forms cannot be ignored just because they are non-essential. Many essential portions of religions, again, though apparently contradictory, may not really be so; they may as well be complementary. 'I do not mean the different languages, rituals, books, etc., employed in various religions,' said Swami Vivekananda, 'but I mean the internal soul of every religion. I believe that they are not contradictory; they are supplementary.'

Thus we can lead a two-pronged attack against sectarianism by revealing their essential oneness and exposing the hollowness of their claim to exclusive possession of truth and the folly of magnifying differences and quarrelling over non-essentials. 'Our aim should be to widen the boundaries until they are lost sight of and to realize that all religions lead to God.'

This realization of the sameness of the goal of all religions and this striving for bringing about their harmony, Swami Vivekananda

inherited from his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, who proved by his own life and taught in clear terms that all religions are true. The history of India also impressed this upon Swamiji's mind. And this was the message that found expression in his very first speech at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893: 'My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honour of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true.'

This idea of acceptance marks out and emphasizes the Indian point of view. We not only tolerate but accept all forms of religion as true and help them in all possible ways. All religions have their honoured places here, for they fulfil some felt needs. The watchword of India's civilization is 'unity in variety', which is nature's plan of the universe itself. It is only through harmony and brotherhood and toleration and help that the future destiny of humanity can be assured. Starting from toleration and proceeding through sympathy and help, India found the true solution of sectarianism in nothing less than acceptance. This idea was boldly preached by Swami Vivekananda who said: 'The one great lesson, therefore, that the world wants most, that the world has yet to learn from India, is the idea not only of toleration, but of sympathy. Nay, more, not only should we be charitable, but positively helpful to each other, however different our religious ideas and convictions may be.'

That this was not mere empty sentiment, but was borne out by facts becomes evident to anyone reading the history of India. We can cite how the Hindus built churches for the Christians and mosques for the Moham-medans. The Parsee refugees were granted

asylum here, and Christianity was allowed to spread under St. Thomas. The idea underlying Indian culture was succinctly summed up and the motto for all future generations was supplied by the R̥g-Vedic *mantra* : 'Ekam sadviprā bahudhā vadanti—Truth is one, but sages call It by various names.' This motto coloured all Indian endeavours in all fields of culture and civilization.

Along with a theoretical and practical recognition of the essential truth of all religions, some saints of the Middle Ages like Rāmānuja, Rāmadāsa, Kabīr, Nānak and Śrī Caitanya consciously followed a process of fusion of the best elements of each faith. Some modern religious reformers also followed the same method. This, however, did not find favour with the generality of people, as every attempt along this line only created new sects without resolving fundamental differences. Swami Vivekananda did not stand for such eclecticism, which would reject certain features of a religion and borrow others from elsewhere, thus trying to create a body of religious beliefs and practices which would find universal acceptance. Rather, he accepted each religion in its totality, and if he spoke about the reform or rejection of some outer forms, it was from the motive of avoiding unnecessary communal friction, which cuts at the very root of spirituality. He stood for making the spiritual outlook fuller in content and more catholic and rational, without which few faiths had a chance of survival in the modern world of science and international dealings. Swami Vivekananda invited all to understand their own faiths better in the light of the rational philosophy of Vedānta and the psychological revelations of Yoga. He was not also against conscious assimilation, but he strongly condemned imitation. His method of establishing harmony was active cultivation of brotherhood along with firm adherence to one's own personal and sincere way of approaching God.

Sects there will be, just because men and their environments differ; but sects in them-

selves are not the causes of dissension, though often enough they fan the flame of organized brutality. Truly speaking, real harmony will never be achieved so long as the animal in man is not brought under control. Selfishness colours most of our behaviour and philosophies of life. Our neighbours are forced to adopt our points of view and our ways of life through personal contempt, social hatred, and ostracism. Group selfishness also takes the form of political oppression, racial hatred, and communal fanaticism. And all this is done in the name of spiritual regeneration. But politics, and not religion, is to be blamed for this sorry state of things.

The remedy for this is not less religion, but rather more of it. History has proved more than once that the conclusion of insincere treaties and pacts, which goes by the name of diplomacy, can never bring peace. Nor can any war—cold or hot—do so. For real universal brotherhood, religious people have to be up and doing in a united way, and not leave the matter in the hands of the politicians alone; for along with saving religion from irreligion, the onerous task of establishing lasting peace rests on their heads. The days of communal bickering must be left behind, for the simple reason that this only weakens the position of religion itself. In the modern age, all religions must stand together or be crushed together by materialism. Too long have we allowed true religion to be exploited by designing people for their own selfish ends. Great souls first felt the impulse for love, peace, charity, equality, and universal brotherhood. Later on, these became mere slogans in the hands of designing people, who reduced the universality of the saints and prophets into 'our fathers' religion', 'our national religion', 'our country's religion', and so on. And in the hands of the ignorant masses religion degenerated into fanaticism, mere protestation of faith, and hatred of others, without any sincere effort for moral uplift and spiritual enlightenment. God's revelation of His love and glory through His

prophets and incarnations thus becomes the worst weapon against God's own children.

To eschew this fanaticism, the world must be better educated and informed about the faiths all over the world. Historical research and comparative study can also separate the dross from the essential, and put us in a better frame of mind. The metaphysical presuppositions of sectarian doctrinaires have to be openly and critically examined; for true religion can very well stand such scrutiny. It will not do simply to refer to somebody's sayings or some ancient text, when the matter under discussion militates against the scientific facts of this life and offends against morality. The mythologies and ceremonial forms have also to be examined in the same way, without at the same time becoming a sort of scientific fanaticism and running amuck against all real or supposed anomalies, irregularities, and irrationalities. For we have to remember that each religion has its own natural appendages, without which the faith itself cannot survive. Under such circumstances we have to make concessions so long as such supposed irrationality is not fanatically directed against others. Have your unscientific mythologies, rituals, and mysticism, if you feel that they really help you Godwards. But let others also have their own way, and do not shut forever the light of reason from penetrating into the dark recesses of your mind.

While thus agreeing with science and reason up to the very limit of their possibilities, we cannot, however, forget that religion is after all an expression of the natural aspiration of man to reach God—a fact which no science or reason can deny, and which can be compromised under no circumstances. Looked at from this angle of vision, we are all at one, though our religions may bear different names, and even God may be called differently. If such an aspiration is true anywhere, it is true everywhere, so that all religions stand or fall together. The expressions of this aspiration may be evaluated differently, and some may

be graded higher and some lower; still they are religions none the less, and they have their due scope relatively to the degree of development of the human minds concerned and the civilizations by which they are sustained. The religion of the less advanced tribes is as much religion as that of the more civilized communities; a child's faltering talk is also a form of human language.

We can tackle the problem of amity either in the wider fields of human dealings or in personal life, or both together. But it is better to work up from the bottom upward. A saint can give a new tone to a society, and an individual life lived ideally can do much more for the cause of universal brotherhood than talking loudly from the house-top. Law can prevent something wrong, but creation of a value depends on the human heart itself. Planned progress must follow sincere individual effort. 'Iconoclastic reformers do no good to the world', said Swami Vivekananda. 'Help, if you can; if you cannot, fold your hands and stand and see. Secondly, take man where he stands, and from there give him a lift. Give up all ideas that you can make man spiritual. There is no other teacher to you than your own soul.'

Sri Ramakrishna exemplified all these ideas in a practical way in his own life. He represented a type which future generations would have to strive to emulate, if the world is to have real spirituality and real universal brotherhood. And this is a field where religious men alone can succeed. Let them proceed step by step as sincere religious men, and not be led by secular men who have their own ulterior motives.

Before closing, let me pray to God that the deliberations that will be held in this Parliament of Religions may help us implement into the life of the world the spirit of tolerance and acceptance of which Swami Vivekananda and his *guru* Sri Ramakrishna were living embodiments. I wish you all success.

SPIRITUAL DISCOURSES OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

Belur Math, 1937-38

In the summer of 1937, after taking charge as President of the Ramakrishna Order, Swami Vijnanananda stayed for some time in Belur Math. Addressing the monks one day, he said: 'You have joined the monastic order; but it is a very hard life. Particularly in the case of those who have renounced everything in the name of the Master, it is essential that their life should be exemplary in every respect. Renunciation of wealth and lust in thought, word, and deed is the high ideal of monastic life; otherwise it is no use putting on the saffron robe. Your object in life is Self-realization; but that is not an easy thing at all, and the slightest attachment to wealth and lust would be an insuperable impediment.

'Unless you are completely detached from everything, your meditations and prayers and work and learning will all be in vain. Our Master used to say that a monk should not look at even the picture of a woman; and wealth he should discard as something extremely filthy. Wealth and lust are so much connected that one follows in the wake of the other. But it is not as if you are to hate women or treat them with disdain. You have, on the contrary, to treat them with the utmost respect and consider them as being on the same level as the Mother, who is there in the temple. It is the woman who makes the mother and you have to bow to her from a distance. You are monks with a noble ideal in life and that makes it incumbent on you not to mix too much with them. You have, of course, to do all kinds of public work, and that makes it difficult to avoid women altogether. But the point is that the work you do is the Master's work, and this advice to monks was also given by him. Now you have got to reconcile these two things. You

may speak to women when it is absolutely essential, but you have got to be on your guard. And your talk with them can only be in connection with the work you do. So that you must confine yourselves strictly within limits. It is certainly not my idea that you should shut yourselves up behind closed doors. Your work should be taken as a kind of mental discipline, and your gaze should be fixed on the high ideal you have set before yourselves. Otherwise you will be caught unawares and there will be danger which you will find it impossible to overcome. Sometimes I feel this system of public service has an element of great risk in it. The public are benefited, undoubtedly; but our people who are rendering this service are treading a path that is full of risks, and they have to be very careful. But this, too, is a great truth that instead of wasting your time in laziness and idle gossip, as some monks do in northern India, it is infinitely better to keep yourselves engaged in this kind of public work. Of course, for those whose mind is fixed constantly on God, there is no need to take up this kind of work. I had once a long discussion with Swamiji on this topic. . . .'

At the time of the Jagaddhātrī Pūjā in 1937, Swami Vijnanananda came to Belur Math in connection with the construction of the temple. It was decided previously that on the Jagaddhātrī Pūjā day itself, the consecration of the temple would be performed; but it had to be postponed as the work of the inner sanctum had still to be completed. In this connection, he told an attendant monk: 'You are delaying the work far too much, I am afraid. You must try and complete it as soon as possible.'

Attendant: 'Every attempt is being made to do that.'

Maharaj: 'That is good. The sooner it is complete, the better.'

Then, looking at an almanac, he said: 'There are auspicious days between the 14th and the 18th January next. See if the consecration can be performed then.'

He was so much taken up with the idea of finishing the construction work of the temple that he seemed to have no thought for anything else. In the course of a talk, he said: 'Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) prepared the plan, but the work had to be postponed. Raja Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) also could not see it accomplished. Mahapurush Maharaj (Swami Shivananda) laid the foundation-stone, but did not live to see it completed. Gangadhar Maharaj (Swami Akhandananda) started the work on the temple, but he too had to leave it unfinished. They have all departed one after another. That is why I am so keen on seeing the work completed.'

Then, in the course of conversation on this topic, he said in regard to Swami Vivekananda's memorial temple: 'Rakhal Maharaj was gifted with a strange prophetic power. Once, while the construction of Swamiji's temple was going on, we were in difficulty for want of bricks, when he casually asked me how the work was proceeding. I said we were held up for lack of bricks, which had been ordered for but had not arrived in time. He said: "Your boat-load of bricks will be coming tonight, don't worry." I was so much in despair that I could not believe him. Even then, throughout the night, I got up from time to time to see if the boat had arrived. My idea was to tell the boatman, if he came at all, not to anchor the boat on the shore until morning. Seeing that the boat had not come till 4 o'clock in the morning, I thought it would not come at night and went to sleep. After a while I heard Rakhal Maharaj calling me and asking: "Well, Peshan, has your boat come?" I replied: "Where is the boat, sir? Rest assured, it is not coming." Almost immediately, he pointed out the boat, which had by then already arrived, and told me: "See, there is your boat!"

I came out and was surprised to see it anchored at the ghat.

'On another occasion, a very strange thing happened. It was a clear day, with a cloudless sky, and somewhat sultry. Rakhal Maharaj said: "It is very hot today, there will be rain." I told him it was impossible, there being not a speck of cloud anywhere in the sky. But, strangely enough, towards evening, clouds gathered and a shower of rain followed. Rakhal Maharaj called me and said: "Well, Peshan, was I not right?" I said: "Yes, Maharaj, you were."'

During those days Vijnan Maharaj was not keeping good health. Both legs had swollen, and there was indigestion and distaste for food. An attendant suggested a medical examination, to which he said: 'I have no faith in doctors.'

Attendant: 'But the doctor I am suggesting is a very good physician. He comes to the Math frequently. He treated Mahapurush Maharaj also.'

Maharaj: 'There are bigger doctors than him.'

Attendant: 'Yes, Maharaj. Dr. Nilratan Sarcar is the biggest doctor these days.'

Maharaj: 'There is some one bigger than him even.'

Attendant: 'No, Maharaj. Among doctors here, he ranks the highest.'

Maharaj: 'But the Master is a much greater physician than he. At this time, Swami Suddhananda was suffering from high blood pressure and other ailments. Vijnan Maharaj came down one day to see him and after some preliminary talk said: 'I am afraid your doctors will make an end of you. You should not believe them in the least. They will starve you to death. You have had too much of medication and should not have any more. Medicines are not of much use.'

On Friday, the 14th January 1938, the day of Makara Saṅkrānti, the consecration of the temple was duly performed by Swami Vijnana-

nanda with great *éclat*, in the prayerful presence of not less than fifty thousand men and women. Very early in the morning that day, he had put on new clothes and kept himself waiting for the sacred function. His countenance was serene and he spoke very little, as if his nerves were on edge. With great emotion he once said: 'I will install the Master in the temple and then say to Swamiji: "Your consecrated deity has now been installed in this temple contemplated by you. You said you would see from above. Now, see, the Master is seated in his new temple. And there is another thing that I will tell the Master."''

After the midday meal on that day, an attendant asked: 'You said, Maharaj, you would tell something to the Master and Swamiji. Have you told it to them?'

Maharaj: 'Yes, I did. I said: "Swamiji, you said you would see from above the installation of the Master in his new temple. Look, today the Master has been installed in the new temple." And I could clearly see then Swamiji, Rakhal Maharaj, Mahapurush Maharaj, Sarat Maharaj, Hari Maharaj, Gangadhar Maharaj, and others standing and seeing it all.'

The attendant was struck with wonder at this. He said: 'You said you would tell something to the Master, too.'

Maharaj: 'Yes, I have told it to him. But that will remain a secret with me.'

Thousands of people had gathered on this day and many were initiated also. Maharaj felt tired, but the crowd went on swelling. After evening, he said in a pleasant voice: 'I find Allahabad is after all a better place. There is not much of a crowd there. There is a tremendous rush here, leaving no time for seclusion. These days I have been forced to do what I previously disliked.'

In earlier days, Vijnan Maharaj did not allow devotees, specially women, to come anywhere near him; and initiation was a thing he invariably refused. But after the passing away of Mahapurush Maharaj, a great

change came over him, and he started giving initiation to people, irrespective of sex. On being asked by a monk about this in Belur Math, he said: 'You have seen how Mahapurush Maharaj, towards the end of his life, became an embodiment of mercy. Such kindness, love, and affection I have not noticed in anyone else. And that opened my eyes, and I thought this was the great example to be followed. He worked himself to death for the benefit of humanity, and until his last breath, no one was deprived of his benediction. It was the Master himself who, through him, worked for the redemption of humanity. That attitude of Mahapurush Maharaj has got hold of me now, and after his passing away, I always thought of his great mercy. What a large fund of kindness there was in him! If he were alive today, many more people would have been blessed by him. I thought of that only, and now the Master is using me as an instrument for the same purpose. We are the Master's slaves, and his commands have to be obeyed. We are only following the injunctions of the Master and the Holy Mother. ...'

A few days after this, one evening, when he was preparing to leave for Allahabad, one of the attendants said: 'Why, Maharaj, should you leave on the evening of Thursday, which is an inauspicious time?'

Maharaj: 'I do not believe in all these restrictions; it is not for monks. Householders, of course, have to be careful about abiding by these. When I was studying in Poona, I used mostly to sleep in the verandah. One night, the sky was clouded, and everyone told me not to sleep outside. But I did, along with two friends. At night there was storm and rain, and those two went in. They called me in, but I stayed on, and my bed and everything became sodden with rain water. On another occasion (while in service), I had to leave station on some duty, when it was pointed out to me that the

ruling star on that day was Maghā, and accordingly it was unfavourable. I did not listen to them and went on riding fast. Of course, I rushed against a tree and my hat went off. I escaped lightly. But, all the same, I have never been a believer in all this.'

Belur Math, 1938

That year Vijnan Maharaj came to the Belur Math on the occasion of Sri Rama-krishna's birth anniversary. On the day of the ceremony, he initiated a number of people and was feeling very much exhausted. The crowd of visitors, however, went on increasing, and the attendants wanted to shut them out, in consideration of his physical exhaustion. But he forbade them, saying: 'Oh! no, today is a very auspicious day and these people have come from a long distance only to get some peace of mind. Let them come, don't stop anyone today.'

He sat there quietly while innumerable visitors had his *darśana* and felt themselves blessed. Next morning, addressing the monks, he said: 'Now you must arrange to have another President. My failing health may not permit me to come here again.'

An attendant: 'You say that every time. But whenever the Master's work demands, you don't fail to come.'

Maharaj very gravely replied: 'But this time you will see I will not be coming again.'

They did not take his words seriously then, but the tragic words literally came true; just a month after this he passed away.

On the morning of his departure for Allahabad, he said in connection with the translation of the *Rāmāyana* (which he was doing): 'When I do this work on the *Rāmāyana*, I forget the world and all about it. I see only Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, and Mahāvīra, in front of me. The rest of my life I will spend uttering Rāma's name.'

And that is exactly what he did. Until about twelve days before his passing away, he worked on the *Rāmāyana*.

Belur Math, 1935

It was the month of Agrahāyana (November-December). Swami Vijnananandaji had come to the Belur Math for a few days' stay. His saintly presence created a delightful heavenly atmosphere. Extracts from some of his discourses during this time are given below.

Maharaj (in answer to a devotee's question): 'Always prostrate yourself before the Master, that is, completely surrender yourself at his feet. And you will not suffer from want of anything. Never give way to evil thoughts. When they come, pray earnestly to the Master, and you will be rid of them. And always speak the truth.'

Question: 'When telling the beads, should we sit in any particular position?'

Maharaj: 'Not necessarily; you can sit on the floor or on a chair, as you like.'

Question: 'What is the way to purify the mind?'

Maharaj: 'Recite your chosen *mantra*, that will do.'

Question: 'Is it necessary to use the rosary during *japa*? Or can we do without it?'

Maharaj: 'Yes, it can be done without the rosary. In fact, it is better to count on your fingers. Then the *japa* can be done anywhere and everywhere, and you need not have to carry the rosary with you. You should make it a point to read good books, and come and live in the Math from time to time.'

Another day Maharaj said: 'Belief is of three kinds: unquestioning faith, believing from another's example, and believing after realizing the truth through one's own experience.'

Question: 'Which one is the best?'

Maharaj: 'Any kind of faith is good. Faith is the foundation of spiritual life. If, unfortunately, there be anyone with no

kind of faith in him, you have only to hold him down under the water of the Gaṅgā, and not let him come up for a time even if he wants to. He will then believe.'

Question: 'Does that bring about faith?'

Maharaj: 'Yes. God holds us down in this way in the ocean of the world.'

Question: 'Who is called an *avatāra* (incarnation of God)?'

Maharaj: 'Who believes in incarnation? Everybody is an incarnation. (*Laughter*) You, too, would not believe if you had been educated in the modern way. You recite "Rām, Rām" (the name of Rāma). Do you know what "ram" is? It is an intoxicating drink. You cannot know what it is like unless you drink it. You cannot know the glory of God's name unless you chant it.'

Question: 'Is it true you had a wrestling bout with the Master? Who won, you or he?'

Maharaj: 'Well, ultimately it was he that won, not I. I became his slave entirely. When you fight against someone, you are as good as defeated if you become *his* completely. Where, then, is your victory?'

In the course of a talk at Belur Math one day, Swami Vijnanananda said with reference to his visit to the Master at Dakshineswar: 'I was then studying in a college at Calcutta and was about seventeen or eighteen. I went one evening to Dakshineswar to see the Master. At the time many people were sitting in his room. I made my obeisance to him and took my seat in a corner. He was sitting on the smaller bedstead and cheerfully speaking to the visitors. There was nothing special about him; he appeared just like any other ordinary person, but he had an unusual smile which I have not seen in anyone else. When he smiled, one felt as if a wave of joy spread over his countenance and his entire body, and it acted like a soothing balm to souls tortured by misery and unhappiness. And he had a very sweet voice, so sweet that

one wished to listen to him for ever. It was as if nectar was being poured into one's ears. And his eyes were bright. When he looked at anybody with his keen, loving gaze, it was as if he was peering into his innermost being. That, at least, was how I felt.

'An atmosphere of peace pervaded the Master's room. When he spoke, it seemed as if his listeners were drunk with joy. I forget what the talk was about on that day, but the scene is indelibly impressed in my memory. Seated in a corner, I was seeing and hearing everything, and felt inexpressible joy within me. For a long time I sat like that absorbed in his talk, but I was not particularly attentive to what he said. My gaze was intently fixed on him only. He asked me nothing, and I, too, said nothing. Then, gradually, the visitors started leaving. After some time I found the room all empty, with only myself and the Master left. I was sitting in that corner, and the Master was seated on his smaller bedstead, with his eyes unflinchingly fixed upon me. I also thought of leaving then and made my obeisance to him, when the Master asked me: "Can you wrestle? Come, let us have a wrestling contest." He stood straight on the floor. I had at that time a strong physique and looked fairly robust. I was amazed when I heard him, a *sādhu*, wanting to wrestle with me. I, however, said I knew wrestling. The master had in the meantime adopted a wrestling pose and smilingly invited me to join in. Gradually he started pushing me, but he was no match for me, and I pushed him back against the wall. He was, however, still holding me tightly and was smiling. I began to feel then that through his hands something like a current was passing into me. My hair stood on end, and I found my strength giving way. After a while, he loosened his grip, saying, "Well, so you have beaten me, haven't you?", and resumed his place on the small bedstead. I didn't know what to say, but felt that this was one of his ways of having fun. Meanwhile a wave of ineffable joy was sweeping

over me. I felt as if he had passed some power into me and overwhelmed me. I sat speechless, when the Master came and, patting me on the back, said: "You must come here from time to time, otherwise what will you gain?" and so on. Then he gave me some *prasāda* to eat, after which I took leave of him and returned to Calcutta. I did not know what had come over me, but remained for some days in a mood of exhilaration. I was merely feeling that, having deprived me of my physical strength, he had infused his own spiritual power into me. After that I went to him on several occasions, and sometimes also spent the nights with him at Dakshineswar. He had an indescribable power of attraction, and anyone who saw him once never failed to be irresistibly drawn to him.

'One evening I wanted to spend the night there, and he readily assented to my proposal. There was then no arrangement for night meals there. Some of the consecrated food came to him from the temple, out of which he used to take a portion and give the rest to any visitor who might be spending the night there. He, of course, was very abstemious in the matter of diet, and took only a little at night. Seeing the small portion that was to be my share, I was annoyed, thinking that I would have to starve the whole night. I was then a strong young man, and a voracious eater with good digestion. That little morsel was not at all sufficient for me, and the Master, realizing the situation, had some bread and vegetables brought for me from the *nahabat* (where Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, stayed and cooked for the Master and some of the devotees who frequented Dakshineswar). After finishing my meal I slept on the floor, but at midnight I woke up and found the Master pacing up and down the room in a rapturous mood. Sometimes he ran about like a mad person, at other times he went to the verandah outside murmuring to himself something, while at other times he sang hymns to God keeping tune with the clap of his hands. During the day

I had seen him in a different mood—talking with people, laughing, and joking merrily. Seeing him at night in this state, I was struck dumb with fear, and quietly looked on at these antics of his. I had no more sleep that night, and passed the rest of the night witnessing this strange sight. In the morning, however, he returned to his normal state, speaking and talking in a natural way. Seeing him then, it was difficult to think that this was the very person who had behaved throughout the night in that peculiar way. Everything about him was strange. To all outward appearance he was just like an ordinary person, but in reality he was a wonderful personage who exerted his influence on everyone he met. Swamiji, Rakhal Maharaj, and others—he had made them all his own.' After remaining silent for a few minutes, Vijnan Maharaj said: 'It was our good fortune that we came in contact with him. He, out of his mercy, attracted us to himself.'

A monk: 'Maharaj, do you see the Master even now?'

Maharaj (gravely): 'Yes, he appears whenever there is any necessity.'

Speaking about the Master on another day, Swami Vijnananandaji said: 'How deep was the concern of our Master for our welfare! In the event of our keeping away for a few days at a stretch, he would send someone to see us, or make inquiries about us. Sarat Maharaj occasionally used to bring me messages from the Master. Once the Master sent for me, and on going to Dakshineswar, I found his room practically empty. On seeing me he took me to task for my not going to him oftener, sometimes even when sent word for. I replied that I did not feel like it. Smilingly he said: "Very good! Do you meditate these days?" "I try to," I replied, "but find it difficult to concentrate my mind." The Master was surprised and said: "Don't worry; you will do it all right." He kept quiet for some time, and then his demeanour

entirely changed. Gravely he said, "Just go to the Panchavati and meditate there". Saying this he looked at me from head to foot and asked me to go near him. When I did so, he asked me to draw out my tongue and made a kind of mark with his finger. I felt a shudder in my body, but was overwhelmed by a great feeling of delight. He then told me to repair to the Panchavati.

'Accordingly, I slowly moved towards the Panchavati, but the Master's touch seemed to have drained all my strength. I found it difficult to proceed. I reached the place somehow, and sat down to meditate. Immediately I was oblivious of my surroundings. When I regained outward consciousness, I found the Master gently patting me, with a smile on his face. I was even then in a mood of intoxication. He asked me whether I could meditate well. I said: "Yes, today I had good meditation."

'The Master said: "From now on you will

have no difficulty. Did you have any visions?" ... That day we had a long talk. I accompanied him to his room, and he fed me very affectionately. There was nobody else there at the time. He gave me special instructions about spiritual exercises. I was overwhelmed with the love and solicitude that he bestowed on me that day. I realized then how near and dear he was to us. His mercy was incomparable, and without any selfish motive whatsoever.

'On that day he said in the course of conversation: "Don't go anywhere near women. You must be very careful about it. Avoid the least touch of worldliness. Even if you see the golden image of a woman, you should turn your eyes away from it. Do you know why I tell you this? You are earmarked for the Mother's work. A fruit which is pecked at by birds cannot be offered to deities. That's why I am warning you to be extremely cautious."

SRI RAMAKRISHNA : A GLIMPSE OF HIS PERSONALITY

[EDITORIAL]

God, religion, and spirituality are terms quite familiar to us, though not equally intelligible. We hear of them from our childhood, we read about them in the books, but they are for us only legacies of the past or matters of speculation and belief. Accretions of centuries and the doctrinaire approach of the custodians of religion have shrouded the recorded words in mystery, and the testimony of the past saints and seers, who are said to have realized the truths of religion, hardly brings any solace to us. We are no longer able to believe. Even those of us who profess belief do so half-heartedly, and are at a loss to understand and explain. We are like the children, in the illustration of Sri Ramakrishna, who swear by God having heard it

from the quarrels of their aunts or grandparents. 'The dandy, all spick and span, his lips red from chewing betel-leaf, walks in the garden, cane in hand, and, picking up a flower, exclaims to his friend: "Ah! What a beautiful flower God has made!"' (551)* We are in no way better. Having no conviction ourselves, we are unable to bring conviction to others. Rightly does the modern man ask for the proof, for the practical demonstration, of religion and spirituality. And for a satisfactory answer to the question, we cannot but turn to those who have really

* The numbers in brackets refer, unless otherwise stated, to the pages of the first edition of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4.

lived religion. For instance, what clearer proof can we give than the life of Sri Ramakrishna, who has, almost before our very eyes, relived the religious past of the whole race in one single life and transformed speculation and belief to fact and reality? Of him Swami Vivekananda said: 'All that I am, all that the world itself will some day be, is owing to my Master, Sri Ramakrishna. . . . If there has been anything achieved by me, by thoughts or words or deeds, if from my lips has ever fallen one word that has helped anyone in the world, I lay no claim to it, it was his. But if there has been curses falling from my lips, if there has been hatred coming out of me, it is all mine, and not his. All that has been life-giving, strengthening, pure and holy, has been his inspiration, his words, he himself. . . . If this nation wants to rise, take my word for it, it will have to rally enthusiastically round this name.'

The *Bhāgavata*, said Sri Ramakrishna, is fried in the butter of *jñāna* (knowledge) and soaked in the syrup of *bhakti* (devotion). The metaphor may as well be applied to Sri Ramakrishna himself with a slight alteration: He was fried in the butter of *sādhanā* (spiritual practice) and soaked in the syrup of God. For from every page of his life drips the sweetness, love, and bliss of a godly life truly lived. 'You busy yourself with five different things, but I have one ideal only. I do not enjoy anything but God. This is what 'God has ordained for me' are his very words. (674) Behind his utterances is the conviction flowing from the direct realization of what he uttered, and they confirm the words of the scriptures. 'For three days,' he says, 'I wept continuously. And he revealed to me what is in the Vedas, the Purāṇas, the Tantras, and the other scriptures. . . . I had all the experiences that one should have according to the scriptures after one's direct perception of God. . . . I saw the visions described in the scriptures.' (762 & 471) There is a cock-sureness in what he says. 'As I see this fan, directly before me, in exactly the

same manner have I seen God. . . . God talked to me. It was not merely His vision. Yes, he talked to me under the banyan tree, I saw Him coming from the Ganges. Then we laughed so much. By way of playing with me, He cracked my fingers. Then he talked. Yes, he talked to me.' When 'M', the faithful recorder of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and a disciple of his, asks him: 'Is it possible to see God?', he immediately replies: 'Yes, certainly.' (67, 73) There is no doubt, no hesitation, and we are also not left in any doubt. In the face of such assurance, God is made vivid, living, and a reality to be seen and experienced. 'To the doubters and sceptics, Sri Ramakrishna's answer is: 'All doubts disappear when one sees God. It is one thing to hear of God, but quite a different thing to see Him. A man cannot have hundred per cent conviction through mere hearing. But if he beholds God face to face, then he is wholly convinced.' (322) It is the same age-old voice of the Upaniṣads: '*Bhidyate hrdayagrantiḥ chldyante sarvasamśayāḥ, Kśīyante cāsya karmāṇi tasmin drṣṭe parāvare*—When that Self, which is both high and low, is realized, the knot of the heart gets untied, all doubts become solved, and all one's actions become dissipated.' (*Muṇḍaka*, II. ii. 8). Christ said: 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.'

Arguments may be advanced both ways. They prove nothing in the ultimate analysis—neither the existence of God, nor His non-existence. In answer to a question by an actor, Sri Ramakrishna immediately replied: 'Proof? God can be seen. By practising spiritual discipline one sees God, through His grace. The *rṣis* directly realized the Self. One cannot know the truth about God through science. Science gives us information only about things perceived by the senses, as for instance: this material mixed with that material gives such and such a result.' (355) On another occasion, he said: 'I do not like argument. God is above the powers of reason. I see that all which exists is God.'

Then of what avail to reason? ... Go into the garden, eat the sacred mangoes and go out again. You do not go in to count the leaves on the mango tree. So why waste time in disputes about reincarnation or idolatry? ... Stop that sizzling noise! When butter containing water is heated over a fire, it makes that sound. If a man but once tastes the joy of God, his desire to argue takes wing. The bee, realizing the joy of sipping honey, doesn't buzz about any more. What will you achieve by quoting from books? ... What will you gain by merely repeating "siddhi"? You will not be intoxicated even by gargling with a solution of *siddhi*. It must go into your stomach; not until then will you be intoxicated.' (773) That should set at rest all this cry for the proof of religion and God.

A famous Sanskrit *śloka* says that an eternal round of feasts and festival goes on in and around the person in whose heart has become manifested the ever-blissful Lord—

*Nityotsavam bhavatyeshām nityāśrīrnitya-
maṅgalam;*

*Yeśām hr̥distho bhagavān maṅgalāyatano
Harīh.*

Sri Ramakrishna's life was a living demonstration of the truth of this statement. Wherever he went, Sri Ramakrishna breathed an atmosphere of blessedness and purity and radiated joy all around. Many who have left records of their personal reminiscences of Sri Ramakrishna refer to the bewitching smile of his, seen on no other face, which disarmed and captivated them. And that smile sums up the philosophy of his life: to bring joy and happiness, of which he possessed an abundance, to a hapless world, parched by a thousand and one miseries.

The story of Sri Ramakrishna may be briefly told. Born in a tiny village of Bengal, of poor Brāhmin parents well-known in the neighbourhood for their honesty, upright conduct, and holy living, fate brought him over to Calcutta when he was about eighteen,

and he soon found himself in charge of the worship in the Kālī temple at Dakshineswar. The temple had been newly constructed by a rich, devout lady. From his childhood, Sri Ramakrishna had showed a remarkable passion for spirituality, and the atmosphere of the Kālī temple spurred him on in his spiritual pursuits. Giving up all worldly ambitions, for which he had the scantest respect, he engaged himself heart and soul in the worship of Kālī, the Divine Mother. As days passed, he was consumed by a hankering to have Her vision, and became completely absorbed in Her thoughts day and night. Once, when in extreme anguish at not being able to have Her vision he thought of putting an end to his life, he was suddenly blessed with Her beatific vision. But his spiritual hunger knew no satiety, and he wanted to experience the bliss of God in every possible form and through every known method. The same old fever was again on him. Under the guidance of competent teachers, he practised the various disciplines enjoined in Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, with a zest unheard of in the religious history of the world. And he was vouchsafed the highest of realizations promised in each of them. From out of these realizations has been chiselled out for us a character, most charming and beautiful.

When he had satisfied himself with the reality of God and the truth of all the religions, not from hearsay or by intellectual cogitation and argument but by actual realization, he could not contain it within himself, and the rest of his life was spent in sharing the fruits of his realizations with worthy aspirants, and through them, the whole world. This was one of the most remarkable chapters of his life. One is amazed at the ease with which this unlettered man from an out-of-the-way village met the greatest minds of the time on their own level, and advanced perfect solutions to their problems. Wherever he was, he was the pivot of attention, and wise words flowed from him in torrents soothing the hearts of those who heard them.

He pined for worthy aspirants, but not all that came to him were worthy to the same extent. That, however, did not dam the flow of his love and sympathy. His detachment from the world and its concerns was unquestionable, and he was uncompromising on that point. He would say: 'My hand gets all twisted up if I hold money in it; my breathing stops. . . . If I touch a woman my hand becomes numb; it aches.' (895) And his words had been tested and verified by some of his closest disciples. His last word in spirituality was renunciation—total and inexorable—of all that smelt worldly. But he was not a dry ascetic unmindful of the woes of the world. His prayer to the Divine Mother was: 'Don't make me a dry ascetic.' His spiritual realizations had taken him to those dizzy heights where he saw God everywhere and felt one with the whole universe—not merely with human beings, but even with plants and animals, and he could not bear their suffering. Here are his own words on the point: 'I used to worship the deity in the Kālī temple. It was suddenly revealed to me that everything is pure Spirit. The utensils of worship, the altar, the door frame—all pure Spirit. Man, animals, and other living beings—all pure Spirit. Then, like a madman, I began to shower flowers in all directions. Whatever I saw I worshipped.

'One day, while worshipping Śiva, I was about to offer a bel-leaf on the head of the image, when it was revealed to me that this Virāṭ, this universe itself is Śiva. After that my worship of Śiva through the image came to an end. Another day, I had been plucking flowers, when it was revealed to me that the flowering plants were so many bouquets. . . . It was revealed to me in a flash. I didn't calculate about it. It was shown to me that each plant was a bouquet adorning the universal form of God. That was the end of my plucking flowers. I look on man in just the same way. When I see a man, I see that it is God Himself who walks on earth, as it were, rocking to and fro, like a pillow floating

on the waves. The pillow moves with the waves. It bobs up and down. (322)

'I began to perceive God in all beings. . . . You see that bel-tree. I used to go there to pluck its leaves. One day, as I plucked a leaf, a bit of the bark came off. I found the tree full of consciousness. I felt grieved because I had hurt the tree. One day I tried to pluck some *dūrvā* grass, but I found I couldn't do it very well. Then I forced myself to pluck it. I cannot cut a lemon. The other day I managed to cut one only with great difficulty; I chanted the name of Kālī and cut the fruit as they slaughter an animal before the Goddess. One day I was about to gather some flowers. They were everywhere on the trees. At once I had a vision of Virāṭ. . . . The flowers looked like a bouquet placed on the head of the deity. I could not pluck them. God sports through man as well. I see man as the embodiment of Nārāyaṇa. (614-5)

'Sometimes I rode on a dog and fed him with *luci*, also eating part of the bread myself. I realized that the whole world was filled with God alone. (471)

'I found everything inside the room soaked, as it were, in bliss—the bliss of Saccidānanda. I saw a wicked man in front of the Kālī temple; but in him also I saw the power of the Divine Mother vibrating. That was why I fed a cat with the food that was to be offered to the Divine Mother. I clearly perceived that the Divine Mother Herself had become everything—even the cat.' (270-1)

Once, when he was looking at a plot of freshly grown *dūrvā* grass, someone carelessly walked over it, and immediately he felt an unbearable pain in the chest, which lasted for nearly six hours. On another occasion, he was observing two boatmen quarrelling with each other, when one of them severely beat the other on the back. Immediately, Sri Rama-krishna cried out, writhing with pain. Later on, when his back was examined, it was found it had become red and swollen with the marks of the beating.

So, he felt the misery of the world immensely, and strove to remove it, not calculatingly in the manner of a modern social reformer, but out of his spontaneous love for humanity in whom he perceived the spark of the Divine, and in a manner which alone he knew was the most effective. Man in general, he knew, was moved by self-interest, and the high-sounding words of the modern social reformer about socialism and equality, fraternity, and brotherhood were empty words which meant nothing when it came to a question of one's own self-interest. 'You talk about charity and unkindness!', he remarked once. 'A worldly man spends thousands of rupees for his daughter's marriage, yet all the while, his neighbours are dying of starvation; and he finds it hard to give them two morsels of rice; he calculates a thousand times before giving them even that much. The people around him have nothing to eat; but what does he care about that? He says to himself: "What can I do? Let the rascals live or die. All I care about is that the members of my family should live well." And they talk about doing good to others!' (684) The inevitable conclusion is that so long as man is bound down by his sense-experience and considers it the highest joy of his life, he is sure to struggle for it even to the detriment of others. Whether he succeeds in the attempt or not is beside the point. Few, as a matter of fact, succeed, and even they find out that the world, in the ultimate analysis, is like a hog plum. 'The hog plum has only pith and skin, and after eating it you suffer from colic.' (353) But man is not likely to give up the pursuit of the worldly enjoyment just because of that consideration. 'This world is like the whirlpool of the Viśālākṣī. Once a boat gets into it there is no hope of its rescue.' 'The camel loves to eat thorny bushes. The more it eats the thorns, the more the blood gushes from its mouth. Still it must eat thorny plants and will never give them up. The man of worldly nature suffers so much sorrow and affliction, but he forgets

it all in a few days and begins his old life over again. Suppose a man has lost his wife or she has turned unfaithful. Lo! He marries again!' (89) 'The reason is: 'God and His glory. This universe is His glory. People see His glory and forget everything. They do not seek God, whose glory is this world. All seek to enjoy "woman and gold". But there is too much misery and worry in that.' (20) The only way to remove misery and worry is to turn man's attention to God and the higher realities of life.

Here were the two poles of existence—the perfect being, calm, peaceful, happy, and in full control of himself and his environment, and the unregenerate man, suffering from ignorance and misery. Ramakrishna was at the one end of it and the ordinary human being at the other. And it was his mission to pull the latter up to his own level. In himself was the most complete manifestation of divinity possible. He had traversed the whole gamut of spiritual experiences, nay, God Himself had made him pass through the disciplines of the various paths (471), and he saw God in meditation, in the state of *samādhi*, and also when his mind came back to the outer world. 'When looking at this side of the mirror I would see Him alone, and when looking on the reverse side I saw the same God.' (472) He, no doubt, saw the same divinity in the outside world but he also saw that the world itself was not conscious of the divinity within itself. 'Under the spell of God's *māyā*, man forgets his true nature. He forgets that he is heir to the infinite glories of his Father.' (141) And that was why he suffered so much. The attention of the people all around, with the exception of a few rare souls, he found, was fixed on earthly things. They were all rushing about madly for the sake of their stomachs. No one was thinking of God. (78) In the Kali Yuga, he said (27), man was totally dependent on food—an exact description, in his own inimitable way, of the age in which we lived, the age of reason and dis-

belief and lack of faith in the ultimate realities beyond the range of sense experience, when man was driven headlong by the biological needs, which he was increasing day by day with the help of science and technology and reducing himself to subhuman levels and to the state of an automaton, instead of utilizing them to rise to higher levels of existence. Sri Ramakrishna's life was in welcome contrast to the prevailing trend and provided the necessary corrective. It furnished the pattern on which others can mould theirs. 'My experiences are for others to refer to', he said. (674) But he was too human not to recognize that it was not within the reach of everyone to attain to the state he himself had reached. It was not given to the greatest of his disciples to emulate him fully. 'Narendra's (i.e. Swami Vivekananda's) devotion and enthusiasm', he said on one occasion, 'are extraordinary indeed, but compared with the urge that came here (pointing to himself) at the time of *sādhanā*, his is most ordinary. It is not even one-fourth of that.' (Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4, 1952, p. 197). It was not necessary either. 'As for us, it is enough to know as much of Him as we need. What need have I of a whole well of water? One jar is more than enough for me. An ant went to a sugar hill. Did it need the entire hill? A grain or two of sugar was more than enough. . . . Can one pour four seers of milk into a one-seer pot?'

(254) But his bright example was ever there to guide us, to give hope and encouragement, and lead us to the highest state of blessedness, purity, and perfection, wherein is fulfilled the purpose of human life.

In leading us back to this supreme goal of life, Sri Ramakrishna brings into use a repertoire of spiritual wealth, power, and personal magnetism, and reveals his personality in all its grandeur. Therein we see his simplicity, his fine sense of humour, his keen power of observation, his deep insight into the nature of persons and things, his ready wit,

his practical sense, his solicitude for the welfare of all, and his perfect command of the situation in which he is working. Amongst those who went to him were a variety of people, from all walks of life and of varied temperaments—men from the university, the most illiterate people, aristocrats, beggars, actors, musicians, men of letters, journalists, devotees, men of different faiths—Christians, Mohammedans, and Brahmos, old men, women, and children, 'oysters, conches, and snails' as he characterized them. Whoever it was, he went back with *his* cup filled to the brim, and nobody was left unsatisfied. To everyone he gave according to his need and capacity. An eyewitness of his spiritual ministration writes: 'Really, by seeing his divine ecstasies, one was spiritually benefited, the scepticism of the sceptics and the wickedness of the sinful was wiped off. What a great number of drunkards, licentious men, and atheists have been reclaimed by seeing his ecstasies, his extreme devotion, and divine life! . . . He had such a sweet nature, his words were so sweet, that even a person experiencing extreme miseries would forget everything within a few moments after his coming to him. One would get great solace by seeing his smiling face, his childlike simplicity, his devotion for the Mother's name, and his absorption in *samādhi*.' (Girish Chandra Sen, *Prabuddha Bharata*, Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Number, February 1936, p. 86).

People poured in in an unending stream, and he was ever ready to help them. He listened to them with infinite patience, and a word of hope, an encouraging look, a kindly glance, a consoling touch, a mild reproach or a severe reprimand followed by a jocular remark or a hearty laugh was enough to assuage the anguish of the heart and put the unwary soul on the right track. 'What is the way?' was a constant question asked. To the young men who were to become the carriers of his message, and as such inherit his spiritual legacy to the greatest degree, he would always

say: 'My child, you will not attain God without renouncing "woman and gold".' (638) But to the ordinary householder who felt worried as to what would happen to him if he had to renounce 'woman and gold', he would advice patience and caution. The instance of the maidservant or the tortoise was a frequent example of his to explain how a man should live in the world. 'Do all your duties, but keep your mind on God. Live with all—with wife and children, father and mother—and serve them. Treat them as if they were very dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you. A maidservant in the house of a rich man performs all the household duties, but her thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her master's children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them as "my Rāma" or "my Hari". But in her own mind she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all. The tortoise moves about in the water. But can you guess where her thoughts are? There on the bank, where her eggs are lying. Do all your duties in the world, but keep your mind on God.' (5)

Here is the most practical advice to the modern world. It is in tune with the spirit of the age, but adds something valuable to it, without which we are sure to end in disaster. Individuals, societies, and governments of the different nations are feverishly engaged in building up welfare states, which means providing its citizens with better food, shelter, and clothing, in other words, what we call the

necessities of life. Sri Ramakrishna had no objection to it. In fact, he fully recognized its necessity in the ordinary state of society that exists today, when he said: 'Religion is not for empty stomachs.' But that is only a temporary phase of our existence here, and is not going to give us what we are seeking for—eternal peace and happiness. 'We are born into this world to perform certain duties, like the people who come from countryside to Calcutta on business. . . . And it is not wise to forget the main purpose of our life, which is the realization of God and freedom from the turmoils of life.' (29) 'Man should possess dignity and alertness. Only he whose spiritual consciousness is awakened possesses the dignity and alertness, and can be called a man. Futile is the human birth without awakening of the spiritual consciousness. . . . He alone is a man whose spiritual consciousness has been awakened, who is firmly convinced that God alone is real and all else illusory.' (773 and 780) But as long as man has not risen to the stage when he can look upon this world with all its joys and sorrows as mere straw, and seek happiness only in God, he has to do his duties here, keeping his mind on God. The highest ideal, however, should never be lost sight of, and our attempts should be to build up societies where the highest opportunities to reach that ideal are available. And in Sri Ramakrishna's life we have not only that ideal fully manifest, but also the way to reach that ideal.

'When he (Sri Ramakrishna) spoke to an individual, one of the things most astonishing to the onlookers was the way he instantaneously adopted just the individual's particular turn of phrase and method of expressing his thoughts. His spirit kept firm control of the steering wheel, and if he led men to another point of the bank, it was always the bank of God. He helped them unawares to land by their own power.'

ROMAIN ROLLAND

AN OBJECTION AGAINST BRAHMA-KĀRANA-VĀDA

DR. ROMA CHAUDHURI

Although a truth is a matter of realization only, a theory requires proof. Proofs are of two kinds, positive and negative. Positively, a particular theory or doctrine is to be shown to be grounded on solid facts; negatively, other theories or doctrines are to be shown to be wrong.

Here the process may be from truth to theory; or from theory to truth. The first is found in the case of inspired saints; and the second, in that of scholars and scientists. The divinely inspired saints and sages realize the Truth in the twinkling of an eye, and then try, as best they can, to explain this Truth to others philosophically, in the form of a logical theory. On the other hand, scholars and scientists, infused with external knowledge, justify their theories first by a chain of arguments; and then a few of them may be blessed with divine realization, bringing forth before their views the Truth in all its glory and grandeur.

Thus, as philosophers, the Vedāntins start their commentaries with a discussion on the Truth or Brahman in the first chapter of the *Brahma-Sūtra*. Then, in the second chapter, they take up in right earnest the necessary, though surely the less pleasant, task of building up a theory of the causality of Brahman, or the *Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda*. The positive proofs are given in the first quarter (*pāda*) of the second chapter, where the Vedāntins refute several possible objections against the *Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda*, adducing their own reasons for the same. The negative proofs are given in the second quarter of the second chapter, where the Vedāntins raise several objections against other theories and bring to light their inherent defects and fallacies.

The possible objections against the *Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda* may be classed under seven heads. The first objection is based on a fundamental

question: What exactly is the relation between the cause and the effect? That is, is it a relation of absolute identity (*abheda*), or one of absolute difference (*bheda*), or one of identity-in-difference (*bhedābheda*)? Every one of these alternatives seems to be impossible. For if the cause and the effect be absolutely identical, then why should there be two names and two forms, as found in the world? If, on the other hand, the two be absolutely different, then how can the effect arise from a totally different cause? And finally, if the two be identical as well as different, then is that not asserting something self-contradictory?

Each of these questions raises a profound philosophical problem which cannot and need not be discussed here. Only the second alternative need be taken here as embodying the first objection envisaged by all the Vedāntins against the *Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda*. The first objection is: The cause is the creator or producer; and the effect, the created product. Now, how does the cause create or produce its effect? The process of creation is not that the cause produces a totally different effect, which is impossible. For how can a thing create or produce out of itself something that is totally different from itself? So, the process is in fact the transformation of the cause into the form of the effect. In that case, the cause and the effect must surely be similar in nature.

Take a simple and an ordinary example. A potter, as the efficient cause (*nimittakāraṇa*), takes a lump of clay and produces, as the material cause (*upādānakāraṇa*), a clay jar from it. Here, as the jar has been fashioned out of clay, it itself is, naturally and inevitably, clay and nothing but clay. In this way, the very process of causation essentially implies a similarity between the cause and the effect.

Now, the point at issue here is: According to the doctrine of the causality of Brahman, Brahman is the cause and universe Its effect. So, it is expected that Brahman and the universe will be similar in nature. But are they actually so? Definitely not. For Brahman, according to all descriptions, is sentient, ever pure, eternal, and of the nature of knowledge and bliss, whereas the world is non-sentient, impure, changeable, of the nature of ignorance, and full of misery and sorrow. How can there ever be any cause and effect relation between the two? This, in short, is the first objection against the *Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda*.

In reply, the Vedāntins bring in the following counter-arguments. Firstly, they point out, there is no absolute rule that the cause and the effect must be similar to each other. In support of this, they give the examples of the sentient scorpions etc. arising from non-sentient cow-dung and the non-sentient hair and nails arising from sentient persons. So on the same analogy, they argue, why cannot the non-sentient world arise out of Brahman? (*Brahma-Sūtra*, II. i.6).

Though the examples themselves are faulty in that the sentient scorpions are not really produced by the non-sentient cow-dung, or the hair and nails by the sentient persons they being parts of the living body, the argument itself is sound enough. The cause and the effect are not always similar in forms. From a particular cause there may arise an effect that has no similarity in form at all with its cause. What similarity is there, for example, between the small seed and the huge tree with roots, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits that ultimately spring out of it? What similarity is there between the hard seeds and the flowing oil we get from the same? What similarity is there between the liquid milk and the solid casein produced out of it? If we leave aside these cases of a single cause and proceed to consider those of a combination of causes, the matter becomes more evident. The case of the chemical compounds

is an instance in point. To cite a well-known example, what resemblance has water to oxygen and hydrogen, its constituent elements? Thus, although a clay jar is seen to be similar to the lump of clay, its cause, and a gold bangle to the lump of gold, its cause, yet there are many cases where no similarity between the cause and the effect is seen.

Then, how do we know that the two are causally related? We know this on the ground of authority, or inference, or perception. Thus, we are told first that a particular element will produce a result quite different from it; or that a particular combination of elements will bring forth a product totally dissimilar to it. Again, if we advance further, we may also ourselves infer about the same. Then, when the knowledge we have gathered is put to a practical test, we ourselves see the results with our own eyes.

The causal relation of Brahman and the world falls under this category of dissimilar causes and effects. For here, too, no similarity between Brahman, the cause, and the world, the effect, is seen. The main dissimilarity, as pointed out above, is the sentience of Brahman and the insentience of the world. Here, too, the very same question may be asked. How, then, do we know that there is really a cause and effect relation between Brahman and the world? Perception, evidently, is out of the question here. For who can claim to be able to see the production of the world, when that will happen again only at the end of *pralaya* (universal dissolution) and the beginning of a new *sr̥ṣṭi* (creation)? Inference, too, is impossible here, as inference depends on prior perception.

Suppose we argue thus:

All cases of *pralaya* are followed by *sr̥ṣṭi*.

This is a case of *pralaya*.

Therefore, this is followed by *sr̥ṣṭi*.

Here, the *vyāpti*, or the universal and necessary relation between the major and the middle terms in the universal major premise, may be established only if there be first the uncontradicted experience of *pralaya* being

followed by *sr̥ṣṭi*. But how is that ever possible? Similarly, observation in the case of the minor premise also is not possible, but necessary to make the final inference. Hence, no inference is possible at all here.

Thus we come to the Vedāntins' second counter-argument, viz that the hypothesis that the world has been produced out of Brahman has to be accepted on the ground of scriptural authority.

This hypothesis, though inexplicable, is equally unquestionable. There is nothing dogmatic or irrational in believing in scriptural authority. Scriptural authority is not a kind of blind belief but a source of valid judgement accepted by the Indian philosophers, and to which in fact we naturally resort in all cases where the other sources of judgement, viz perception and inference, are unhelpful in arriving at a conclusion, as in the present case of the cause of the world, or when they lead us to a wrong conclusion, as in the case of the 'sun's going round the earth'. We take it on the authority of the scientists that it is the earth that goes round the sun and not *vice versa*, though our experience is to the contrary.

There is no dogmatism here. When we fail to attain something through our own independent efforts, we have to take the help of others—this is a very natural law of life. Life would be impossible if we have to live by our own independent efforts alone, without relying on anyone else, without taking the help of anyone else, or without having faith in anyone else.

Take, for instance, the case of the child—how much he is dependent on others physically and mentally at every step. The extent of his dependence on others far exceeds that on himself. Take his physical development. For years, he has to rely wholly on others—on his loving parents and well-wishing relatives and friends, who tell him what to take or not to take, what to do or not to do. It is only years later, when he grows up to be an intelligent adult, that he is able to take

proper care of himself. Even then, he cannot solely rely on his own independent judgement or on his own independent efforts and resources. So is the case with his mental development. For years, throughout his school and college career, he learns many things from many persons; and even when he is a mature adult, if he has to learn, he must accept on trust many things from others throughout his life. So authority is one of the main sources of our knowledge even in the ordinary spheres of life, even in this age of reason and individual freedom.

If recourse to authority is thus inevitable even in matters of ordinary sense perception, it is much more so in matters spiritual, which are beyond the comprehension of the senses and reason. Of course, it goes without saying that external authority has to be elevated to a state of internal perception; dependence on others, to that of independence of the Self; mere apprehension, to that of realization. That is why we have the very appropriate name for philosophy in India, viz *Darśana* or 'vision'. It is a direct, complete, perfect vision of Truth that we aim at, and not a second-hand, indirect knowledge. But, for this, we require first *śravaṇa* or authority, then *manana* or inference, and finally, *nididhyāsana* or meditation on the Truth we have accepted on the above two grounds. Then only we will be blessed with *darśana*, or perception or vision of Truth. That is why the Vedāntins consider the testimony of the perfected saints, sages, and seers, who are one with the Divine, as far more infallible than that of ordinary human beings.

Now, coming back to our original question of how an altogether different effect can arise from an altogether different cause, with particular reference to the origination of the world from Brahman, we may sum up the concluding arguments of the Vedāntins thus. The cause and the effect are one and the same *vastu* or *dravya*, object or substance. Whatever be their differences in other respects, like forms and functions, their identity in

essence cannot be denied in any way whatsoever. For example, a mere lump of clay and a well-finished clay jar are, no doubt, different in forms and functions, yet both are clay in essence, and nothing but clay. So, even in those cases where the effect appears to be absolutely distinct from the cause, the effect is in essence really the same as the cause.

Accepting that the creation of the world is an established, inevitable, unchangeable fact, it goes without saying that it must have a cause. And that cause can only be Brahman. For the world cannot be the cause of itself, nor anything else in this world. A cause, to be a cause, must be something permanent and eternal, whereas everything in this universe is changing and transitory. Brahman alone is permanent and eternal, and so it alone can be the cause of the world.

Thus, if Brahman be taken to be the cause of the world, then it has also to be admitted at the same time that the world, the effect, is Brahman in essence. If that be so, what does it really matter if the world be *acetana* or non-sentient? For if *acetanatva* is the essence of Brahman, then it must also be the essence of the world, the effect. In that case, *acetanatva* is only a form or a quality or external appearance of the world and nothing more. It is only in form, in its external appearance, that the world is impure (*aśuddha*), imperfect (*apūrṇa*), etc; in its real essence, it is sentient (*ajāda*), pure (*śuddha*), and perfect (*pūrṇa*), like its cause, the Brahman, there being no difference between the two in the ultimate analysis.

It may be asked here as to why in reply to the first objection above against *Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda*, the Vedāntin does not say this straightway, instead of trying to justify the production of an entirely different kind of effect by means of two faulty examples.

This has been done purposely, as mentioned earlier, for emphasizing the fact that the cause and the effect need not necessarily be very similar in form or appearance. Hence, in the scriptures, sometimes the world is said to spring out of 'asat' or the non-existent. Compare the following from the Upaniṣads :

'This was *asat* or non-existent in the beginning. Then, it became *sat* or existent.' (*Chāndogya*, III. xix.1).

'This was *asat* or non-existent, in the beginning. Then, the *Sat* or the Existent arose out of it.' (*Taittirīya*, II. 7).

'This was *asat* or non-existent in the beginning, one only, without a second. Hence, from the *asat* or the non-existent, the *Sat* or the Existent arose.' (*Chāndogya*, VI. ii.1).

But here the same question arises: How can *sat* arise out of *asat*? How can the world arise out of non-entity or non-existence? The purpose of this is only to show that there is no fixed rule that the cause and the effect must always be very similar to each other.

So the Vedāntins, very appropriately, give three reasons from three different standpoints—the empirical, the epistemological, and the philosophical. From the empirical standpoint, it can be said that the cause and the effect need not necessarily be similar in form. Then, again, from the epistemological standpoint, it has to be admitted, however impossible or unintelligible that may appear to be, that Brahman, and nothing but Brahman, is the sole cause of the world. Finally, from the philosophical standpoint, there is really no difference between Brahman and the world in essence and the world is *Brahma-svarūpa*, of the nature of Brahman.

In this way, logically yet beautifully, do the Vedāntins refute the first objection against *Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda*.

MANU DHARMA

SRI K. E. PARTHASARATHY

Life is a wonderful privilege. It imposes great duties. It demands the fulfilment of great tasks and the realization of noble and lofty ideals. A philosopher-poet has opined that it is also a racial heritage for use and development and not for personal possession. The aim of life is to perpetuate existence, to acquire knowledge, and to attain real happiness. The desire for these three things is deep-seated in the hearts of all beings. In fact, it is the prime, nay, the sole motive for every action. It is also incumbent that men should always pursue the path of righteousness or *dharma* and avoid pitfalls. The main aim of *dharma* is to eradicate *avidyā* ornescience, and to facilitate the attainment of perfect existence, knowledge, and happiness.

The Śāstras, or the scriptures, are the authority for deciding the rightness or otherwise of an action. Without following the Śāstraic directions regarding what should be done or not, there can be no hope of reaching the highest ideal. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā* that the Śāstras are the authority for deciding the rightness or otherwise of an action—*tasmād śāstram pramāṇam te kāryā-kāryavyavasthitau* (XVI. 24). The Śāstras fall into two categories, viz the Śrutis and the Smṛtis. The Śrutis mean the Vedas including the Upaniṣads. The Smṛtis comprise Itihāsas, Purāṇas, the code of Manu, etc.

The code of Manu is *Dharma Śāstra par excellence*. It is also a *Mokṣa Śāstra*, as it leads to the attainment of the greatest good. It embodies rules based on the Vedas. The position of a perfect *pramāṇa*, the perfect means of knowledge has been assigned to the Vedas and Vedas alone. The perfect knower is the knower of the Veda and such a knower is the Lord Himself (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, XV. 15). It is also declared that the Veda is the source of all *dharmas*—*vedokhilo*

dharmamūlam. The code of Manu, which is based on the Vedas, is as perfect as the Vedas themselves. The Veda itself says that what Manu declares is medicine for the soul—*yadvai kiñcinmanuravadat tadbheṣajam*.

Common verses and expressions occur in the Manu's code and the *Mahābhārata*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself considers Manu's code to be authoritative. In the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the *karma-yoga* expounded by Kṛṣṇa is associated with Manu. The important aspects set forth in the *Gītā* are stressed by Manu in his *Dharma Śāstra*.

The path chalked out by Manu is the path of *dharma*. *Dharma* is both the law of the spirit and the law of matter. It pervades every phase of man's life. The laws listed are calculated to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind and the attainment of the greatest and highest good. They guard man against sins and usher him into a higher life. The Sanskrit word '*dharma*' means religion, but it is also something more than what is ordinarily implied by the English word. It comes from the word '*dhṛ*', meaning to hold, to sustain, to bind together. It is the binding force, the essential nature of anything that binds all beings together. *Dharma* is that which holds society together. Whatever divides or disintegrates society is *adharma*.

According to Manu, *dharma* is what is prescribed by the Vedas or commended by God, approved by virtuous persons, approved by one's own conscience or pleasing to the self, and conducive to the welfare of the world. It is known from persons well versed in good conduct or *sadācāra*. The divine law is the moral standard. It is the root of good conduct; wealth is its branch, happiness its flower, and *mokṣa* or liberation its fruit.

The scheme of Manu is quite clear. His main object is to produce the highest type of

personality and the enlightened, progressive social and moral order. His principles of *dharma* relate to the four successive stages of life—of the student (*brahmacārin*), the householder (*gṛhastha*), the anchorite (*vānaprastha*), and the monk (*sannyāsin*). Each state of life is a development and extension of the previous one. The last stage is the culmination of the art of life and provides an opportunity for getting in tune with the Infinite—for an adjustment to the Reality within oneself and for the realization of the Self in all creatures. The aim of Manu's code is to help everyone to reach the ultimate state by easy stages and attain freedom from all kinds of limitation. That requires implicit faith in its sacred teachings and in their inviolable truth.

It may appear that Manu has laid down harsh rules. Such hard and fast rules are necessary in the beginning to wean man from his inveterate habits and inculcate better ones in their stead. As medicine is often bitter, Manu's rules are harsh. This is apparently the reason why the Vedas refer to Manu's rules as medicine for the soul.

Manu preaches *sanātana dharma* or *śāśvata dharma*. It is ever eternal, true and binding, and never alterable. It includes within its scope both science and spirituality. It stands for the foundational values and constitutes the touchstone of every kind of conduct. It is the *dharma* that has carried the nation successfully through centuries of trials and tribulations. It has preserved the nation's individuality and culture intact. *Yuga dharma* constitutes duties to be discharged at a particular period and time. It cannot abrogate *sanātana dharma*. Further, *sanātana dharma* has no quarrel with other religions. The *Mahābhārata* defines true *dharma* as that which does not oppose any religion.

The truth of *dharma* is hidden deep within the secrets of the heart—*dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyām*. It is difficult to comprehend it. Only seers and ṛṣis like Manu, who came face to face with the Vedas, the infinite

mine of knowledge, and were in communion with God, could understand and expound *dharma* in the proper perspective. Consequently, the world has to hearken with faith (*śraddhā*) to the voice of Manu, which, though it belongs to an ancient past, has the wisdom of the ages engrained in itself.

Dharma is something inherent in the individual. It also applies to the whole system of complex action and interaction in the moral, intellectual, economic, industrial, political, and domestic spheres of life. It is the psychological note of one's being. To live in accord with this note is the swiftest path to progress.

The rules of Manu not only expatiate on duties and virtues, on the supreme ends of life and the means to the realization of the highest good, but also on ethical aspects. Manu's ethics are a happy blend of customary morality and personal reflective morality. What is approved by conscience is right; what is disapproved by conscience is wrong. But he does not recognize the superiority of conscience over the Vedas, that is, over the eternal law of God revealed in the Vedas.

According to Manu, the customary morality of society should be in consonance with Śrutis and Smṛtis. He regards *kāma*, *artha*, *dharma*, and *mokṣa* as the ends of life. The *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are the three springs of action. *Tamas* seeks happiness, *rajas* wealth, and *sattva* virtue. Wealth and happiness are transient, but *dharma*, which is the permanent excellence of character resulting from the habitual performance of duties, abides with us even to future lives. So *dharma* must be accumulated for future welfare as ants build an ant-hill. This should be done without harm to anyone. *Dharma* is an unfailing companion from life to life—not one's wife or children or relatives. Man is born alone and dies alone, and eats in loneliness the fruits of his actions. *Dharma* alone leads to God. It is our real friend and companion.

The ethics of Manu are anti-hedonistic.

Renunciation of desires is better than fulfilment. Contentment is the root of happiness. The supreme ends of life should be realized with all the senses completely controlled and the mind perfectly disciplined. Manu recognizes the importance of human freedom. One should give up actions whose fulfilment depends upon others. According to Manu, self-dependence is bliss.

The ethics of Manu tend to the ascetic. All human happiness springs from penance and conquest of desires. Sins are expiated by penance. Penance purifies the soul. It leads to the highest good (*niḥśreyasa*) when it culminates in the knowledge of Brahman.

Another important truth taught by Manu is that *yamas* are more important than *niyamas* and that he who follows *niyamas* and fails in *yamas* falls into sin. *Yamas* are *brahmacarya*, compassion, forgiveness, meditation, truthfulness, softness of speech, non-injury, non-stealing, sweetness of speech, and control of the senses. *Niyamas* are external purification, silence, fasting, performance of sacrifices, Vedic study, etc. Cultivating the ten *dharma*s (the *ātma-guṇas* as they are generally referred to) common to the four stages of life, along with the knowledge of the Vedas and Vedāntas, the *grhastha* (householder) should renounce all acts and live in retirement. Thus, by ridding himself (*asprha*) of all desire and intent solely on seeking the Self, he attains the supreme state.

The whole world revolves round the twin poles of *pravṛtti* (going along the path of religious activity for the attainment of happiness in the world) and *nivṛtti* (going along the path to God-realization). *Pravṛtti* is the giver of *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*, while *nivṛtti* is the bestower of *mokṣa* or liberation. The glory of Manu is that he has stressed in his *Dharma Śāstra* both *pravṛtti dharma* and *nivṛtti dharma*.

Manu enjoins the practice of *yoga*, breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), withdrawal of mind from the objects of enjoyment (*pratyāhāra*), its fixation on a part of the body (*dhāraṇā*),

and meditation (*dhyāna*). Recitation of the name of God is considered superior to ceremonial sacrifice. Mental recitation is superior to inaudible recitation, which in turn is superior to audible recitation. Manu lays stress on purity of mind as an indispensable prerequisite for the attainment of *mokṣa*.

When a man sees the Self in every being and all things in his own Self and surrenders everything to God, he attains *svārājya* or self-sovereignty. The ultimate and highest realization is the realization of the Infinite. It leads to immortality (*amṛta*). The Self is Brahman, the gods, and everything in the universe. A man who realizes this attains the highest Brāhmic realization.

Manu tries to reconcile fatalism (*daiva*) with free will and self-effort (*puruṣakāra*). The merits and demerits acquired in the previous births (*prārabdhakarma*), which are the result of free voluntary action, constitute *daivakarma*. *Mānuṣa-karma* (*puruṣakāra*) consists of free human actions in the present birth. A person should exert himself for the accomplishment of ends. He can counteract the tendencies acquired by him in other births and even attain salvation in this life itself.

The laws of Manu also deal with education, status of women, family life, social life, political life, spiritual life, etc., in minute detail. Manu's reference to the duties of a king is particularly interesting. The king's mace is only a reflection of the *dharmadaṇḍa*, the rod of divine law. The king must always remember that he derives his power only from the people. He who oppresses his people will lose his life and kingdom. Manu thus recognizes the political sovereignty of the people. The promotion of public welfare and happiness is possible only when the ruler considers himself subject to a higher law and applies himself diligently to his royal duties and guards the welfare of his subjects. The relations between the king and his subjects are always reciprocal. A king who governs well easily prospers.

At the end of the code, Manu teaches the

highest means for the realization of the Self. He says that Vedic study, *tapas*, (austerity), knowledge of God, control of the senses, *ahimsā* (non-injury), and service to the *guru* are the means of *niḥśreyasa*, or *mokṣa*, the highest good or liberation. If a man sees the Self in all beings, he becomes same-sighted in regard to all and attains Brāhmic realization.

By his exposition of the different aspects of *dharma*, Manu has laid down solid foundations for the true culture of India. His code serves as a model for the code-makers of the different civilizations, and places the 'lamp of wisdom' within the reach of one and all. It will accelerate national prosperity, and provide solutions to complicated problems in spheres of education, religion, politics, etc. It clearly brings home to one and all that there is nothing higher than *dharma* and that even a weak man can score a victory through resort to *dharma*. As it contains valuable secrets, Manu himself says that the laws of *dharma* should not be revealed to anyone who is not inclined to learn and abide by it.

Manu has exercised his influence uniformly

on the seers and thinkers of the past as well as the present. The *Vālmāki Rāmāyaṇa* refers to him. Kālidāsa says about King Dilīpa that the monarch pursued the path chalked out by Manu and that the subjects did not swerve an inch from it. All the law givers refer to him in glowing and eulogistic terms. Even foreign philosophers and others have spoken of him in high terms. The commentaries of Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja on *Brahma-Sūtra* contain references to Manu's *Dharma Śāstra*. Manu exercised considerable influence on great personages like Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, and Rabindranath Tagore, as is amply evidenced by references in their works and teachings. According to Aurobindo, Manu is the divine legislator and his *Dharma Śāstra* is a science of conduct. Manu belongs to the world and his teachings can be followed by the entire humanity. He is the 'friend of all in every age and in every clime'. Let us remember his clarion call and act up to it: 'Seek auspiciousness all your life. Do not regard it as hard to attain. The pursuit of *dharma* is the sole means of auspiciousness here and hereafter.'

PROF. W. H. WERKMEISTER AND THE EMPIRICAL APPROACH TO VALUE THEORY

SRI MADHUSUDAN REDDY

All knowledge, according to Professor W. H. Werkmeister arises from 'first-person experience', that is, the experience that is comprehensive, all-inclusive, structured as well as given, and whose denial itself is but an instance of the fact of the experience in question. The first-person experience, he says, is basically bipolar and comprises a 'subject-pole', and an 'object-pole'. The analysis of the former leads to the conception of the experiencing self and that of the latter

results in our conception of the external world. This first-person experience has a 'felt' quality and is basic to all our references to values and valuations. It comprehends the entire range of human experiences, from the simple pleasures of sensory experience and the affiliative needs to the felt quality of 'peace of mind' and self-fulfilment which is the highest happiness.

The nature of human existence, to Werkmeister, is a process of 'self-becoming' which

'confirms in all essentials the felt stratification of our experience and substantiates the "order of rank" in terms of personal engagement in the experience'.¹ These 'felt' qualities are both positive and negative, which fact provides the empirical basis for ascribing value to objects. Objects, events, and situations have therefore no intrinsic value as such. Whatever value they seem to have, is ascribed to them 'because they occasion (or are capable of occasioning) experiences having certain felt qualities'. All experiences, perceptual or valuational, including felt qualities, are not given to us in isolation; they are embedded in a dynamic context of experience which, including our past no less than the present, finds its completion in our anticipation of, and projections into, the future'.² Again, it is the complexly fluid context of human experience and the factual interrelations of things and events, thinks Prof. Werkmeister, that provide the basis for objective value ascriptions and valuations.

An empirical approach to value problems should not be confused with either an empiricist or a reductionist approach. Values 'cannot be explained or explained away' in non-value terms; and our value judgements have definable content, and our valuations, he believes, have meaning only because we have 'felt-value experiences'. 'Value theory, therefore, ... is but an attempt to clarify and interpret our felt-value experiences and thus to provide an empirically grounded, rational basis for value judgements'.³

The difference between a felt pleasantness and a felt unpleasantness as a fact of human experience is, according to Werkmeister, foundational to all our values. This does not mean that he identifies value with pleasure, or disvalue with displeasure; the

experiential situation is much more complex than that. That is to say felt-value experiences, though unitary and specific, are also complex in the sense that they involve a feeling-tone (hedonic or algedonic) and an implicit attitude (for or against) in inseparable fusion and conjunction. They are the two discernible aspects of a unitary response. The dual direction of the implicit attitude, namely, the 'implicit pro-attitude' and the 'implicit anti-attitude', is possible because the felt-value experiences never occur in a vacuum. Felt-value experiences are always occasioned by some object, event, or situation to which a particular subject responds. 'Their quality depends in each case on the object, event, or condition which evokes the response no less than on the subject which has the value experience'.⁴ Also the two implicit attitudes are basic to all value preferences, for all judgements of preference ultimately terminate in one kind or another of felt-value experiences. They are the basis for all value ascriptions, which means that felt-value experiences alone are the 'anchorage of our whole value realm and of our valuations'. Felt-values, therefore, are 'non-derivative, terminal and ... intrinsic values'. As regards objects, events, and conditions, they have value only in so far as they themselves, directly or indirectly, occasion a felt-value experience. Neither do these possess a quality, observes Prof. Werkmeister, 'nor can we speak of a "value realm" which is detached from felt-value experience and in which values exist in eternal indifference to that experience. The assumption of such a "realm" (Scheler—Hartmann) is sheer hypostatization and not justified by the facts'.⁵

It is such a value theory, says Prof. Werkmeister, that provides the foundation for literature, art, the realm of aesthetics or of economics and communal living. All these truly rest upon shared valuations and value commitments, and the individuals constitut-

¹ W. H. Werkmeister, *The Meaning and Being of Values within the Framework of an Empirically Oriented Value Theory*, ed. Richard Wisser, Sinn and Sein, Tübingen, 1960, p. 551.

² *Ibid.*, p. 552.

³ W. H. Werkmeister, *Outlines of a Value Theory*, Istanbul, 1959, p. 87.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

ing such communities share, and are committed to, those values which, indeed, are 'deeply rooted in felt-value qualities and the assuagement of human needs'. He observes: 'As a matter of fact, each institution—be it the family, a school, a church, a court of law, a branch of the government, or any thing else—is but an embodiment and objectification of certain persistent and interdependent clusters of valuations within the framework of a community ideal. And because of this fact, valuations and value commitments provide the key to a real understanding of societal living.'⁶

In the realm of the social sciences, therefore, this value theory furnishes, on empirical grounds, the value concepts indispensable as explanatory categories, and shows also that 'an empirically oriented theory need not belittle the significance and the role of ideals'. Prof. Werkmeister thus strictly adheres to the empirical approach in value theory.

Dealing with the character, function, and order of rank of felt-value experiences, he points out that these involve 'at once and inseparably a feeling tone and an implicit attitude'. But, as mentioned earlier, this does not mean that he identifies felt-values in general with felt pleasures, and felt dis-values with felt displeasures, although pleasure is certainly a felt-value and displeasure a felt disvalue. Human experience, he says, cannot be reduced to but one type of felt-values. It is a wide range of felt-values and has various levels; and felt-value experiences range from the simple pleasures of our sense experience, through the gratification of our appetites and the distinct feeling of well-being, of strength, and vitality, and soundness of body, and the felt-value of communal living, to the depths and delights of aesthetic sensibilities and the felt-value of self-fulfilment and the profound sense of happiness and of 'a peace that passeth all understanding'.

These various levels make possible at least some form of comparison of felt-value experiences and provide a clue to an order of rank of felt-values.

Considering further the multiplicity of felt-value experiences and their variations in intensity, together with the dynamics of human existence, Prof. Werkmeister observes that not all persons have the same felt-value experiences; it is because of the difference in their native endowments, social conditioning, and personal self-development. No felt-value experience occurs in isolation. Similarly, no human being exists in a vacuum. Felt-value experiences are always evoked and conditioned by the surroundings—the physico-biological and socio-cultural environment. Thus, valuation is not merely a matter of our felt-experience at a given moment; it depends also on memory and anticipation, and may be corrected 'in the light of shared experiences and of deeper insights'. And the order of rank itself is determined 'by the degree to which we, as self-acting, self-developing persons, feel ourselves "invoked" or "at stake" in these experiences; and that this felt order of rank—fragmentary, fluid, and vague though it may be—is also part of the experiential basis which makes value judgements possible at all'.⁷

No human experience as we have said is possible in a vacuum. In value experience, the human being responds to a world of objects, events, and situations both actual and imaginary and the felt-value experience as such encompasses at once his feeling state and the object, event, or situation which occasions it. While the hedonic or algedonic tone of the felt-value experience is restricted to the subject side of experience, the implicit attitude transcends the feeling state and encompasses the object, event, or situation along with his mental state. The objects, events, and situations are not in themselves valuable; nor are they valuable because of their partici-

⁶ W. H. Werkmeister, *The Meaning and Being of Values within the Framework of an Empirically Oriented Value Theory*, p. 555.

⁷ W. H. Werkmeister, *Outlines of a Value Theory*, p. 97.

pation in a 'realm of values'. Whatever value they have is ascribed to them, says Prof. Werkmeister, directly or indirectly in an immediate felt-value experience, and at the level of judgements. It is only at this level that the immediacies of felt-value responses are transcended and we can truly speak of approval and disapproval. Cognition provides the basis for value ascription; value ascription as such 'is and remains' a conative act: 'Value ascription is an essentially conative act which, although rooted in felt-value experience, depends increasingly upon cognition as its precondition. ... It is, in the last analysis, the expansiveness of life itself, ranging as this does, from organic processes on up to the levels of reason and insight, of purposive strivings, of reflective self-consciousness, and the projection of "ideal self-images" as goals for action. It is always the developing person, as an "equilibrating" dynamic whole, that responds with a felt-value experience and a value ascription to the world around him and to his understanding of that world; and it is always the self-developing person, too, who, in varying degrees of involvement, is being reflected in the "order of rank" of his value ascriptions no less than on his felt-value experience itself.'⁸

But the view taken by Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann is diametrically opposite to this thesis of Prof. Werkmeister. To both Scheler and Hartmann, the ultimate ground for value ascription is a 'realm of values' which subsists in its own right. Also because objects, events, and situations themselves become 'bearers of values' they are valuable; it is in and through them that the values become actualized.

As regards the relation of such a value theory to ethics and its contribution to a clarification and ultimate solution of its central problems—the problems of the moral *ought*, of *rights* and *duties*, etc., Prof. Werkmeister disagrees with the approach of Plato, Bentham, and Hartmann. The latter make the

idea of the *good* the key idea of ethics, and attempt to derive the *ought* from the idea of the *good*. Whereas thinkers from the Stoics to Kant and Ross regard the idea of the *ought* as central in ethics, and that of the *good* as derivative, and are denotologists; Plato, Bentham, and Hartmann are teleologists in ethics.

According to Prof. Werkmeister, an adequate ethical theory must incorporate both the *good* and the *ought*, and must allow for the 'normative character of moral judgements' as well as provide an 'empirical basis of warranty' for these judgements. Propositions of ethics 'are and remain normative, and are therefore not subject to verification.'⁹ And descriptive propositions, though they 'provide the empirical basis of warranty for the moral decision ... , do not explain the normative character of the moral judgements upon which that decision rests'.¹⁰ While value judgements are concerned with value ascriptions and evaluations, the moral judgements are concerned with imperatives. Prof. Werkmeister in his *Empirical Theory of Values* attempts to meet these seemingly incommensurate basic requirements of a sound ethical theory. He is of the opinion that an action demanded by a moral imperative may also be subject to valuational judgements. 'After all,' he says, 'the moral judgement that in a given situation such and such an action ought to be done, that it is our duty to do it, is equivalent to the judgement that the action in question is demanded by the principles and "laws" inherent in the ideal community-image.'¹¹ Again, he holds that 'Reappraisals of ends in the light of an *ought*, and of duties in the light of ends are thus part and parcel of the inner dialectic of human existence and help bring about changes in morality itself'. 'Whether any particular

⁹ W. H. Werkmeister, *Ethics and Value Theory* (Proceedings of the Eleventh International Congress of Philosophy, Volume X), Amsterdam, 1953, p. 119.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

change indicates progress or retrogression depends on the circumstances of the reappraisals and the entailed adjustments.¹²

Finally, a virtuous act, according to him, is one which *ought* to be done because moral judgement demands it, and correspondingly virtuous living is the practice of doing what ought to be done. Virtues can, therefore, be evaluated with respect to one another as well as with respect to valued objects, events, or conditions: "The *ought* is compelling precisely because it is expressive of the principles and "laws" inherent in the ideal community-image in which our drive for self-fulfilment finds ultimate realization. In obeying the *ought*, therefore, we are in harmony with ourselves, with the very core of our being, in so far as our drive for self-fulfilment is rationally directed by our conception of an ideal community of autonomous persons, that is,

¹² Ibid., p. 113.

in so far as we, as autonomous "lawgivers" in that community, impose the moral law upon ourselves."¹³

Viewed in the light of this theory, virtuous living is only practice or art of realizing the maximum of valued goals within the framework of the moral *ought*, an art wherein both value judgements and moral judgements are involved.

The theory, therefore, claims to find the *meaning* of values in their 'experiential significance' and the *being* of values in 'value ascriptions' based upon the felt qualities of first-person experience; and throughout it is and remains an empirically oriented theory, and as such Prof. Werkmeister has 'no need of, and no evidence for, a Platonic realm of independently existing values.'¹⁴

¹³ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁴ W. H. Werkmeister, *The Meaning and Being of Values*, p. 557.

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD IN SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY DR. EVA GHOSH

Swami Vivekananda, being a follower of Advaita Vedānta, maintains in his philosophy the absolutistic conception of God. According to Swami Vivekananda, the Absolute or Brahman is the ultimate Reality. Brahman is called *saccidānanda*, because It is *Sat* or Existence, *Cit* or Consciousness, and *Ānanda* or Bliss by Its nature. It is infinite, eternal, immutable, nameless, and formless.

In the absolutistic conception of God, Swami Vivekananda maintains that God or Brahman is void of qualities. According to him, Brahman is unqualified or *nirguṇa*. This indeterminate Absolute is also called 'Para-Brahman'. Brahman is transcendental and beyond all empirical experiences. We are finite human beings and our finite mind cannot really define God. If we try to do so, it

will be a limitation upon God who is infinite. Even when we call God *saccidānanda*, it also does not reveal the true nature of God. Swami Vivekananda says: 'We sometimes indicate a thing by describing its surroundings. When we say *saccidānanda* (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss), we are merely indicating the shores of an indescribable Beyond. Not even can we say 'is' about It, for that too is relative. Any imagination, any concept is in vain. *Neti, neti* (not this, not this) is all that can be said, for even to think is to limit and so to lose.'¹

Brahman, however, can be described with no other attributes except these three. He is infinite existence, infinite knowledge, and

¹ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. VII, p. 72, fourth edition.

infinite bliss. But these three are not different from one another. Existence without knowledge and bliss is nothing, and knowledge without bliss and bliss without knowledge are impossibilities. So these three attributes are not three but one. Brahman is a harmonious whole of these three. 'The Absolute or Brahman, the *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*, is impersonal and the real Infinite'.²

God or Brahman is impersonal, because all adjectives become illogical and meaningless in relation to God. He cannot be called a knowing being, because all these processes belong to human beings who are limited by their nature. God cannot also be called a creator, for creation is possible only under certain conditions. But God transcends all conditions.

Again, according to Swami Vivekananda, the Absolute being infinite, He cannot be known. He is unknown and unknowable. Knowledge of anything means limitation of that thing by our mind; and when the thing is beyond our mind, that is not knowledge. Hence, if the Absolute is known, He is no more absolute. He becomes limited and hence finite. But the Absolute is said to be infinite. A known God is, therefore, no more God. God is unknown and unknowable. In other words, God is something higher than known. 'He is the witness, the eternal witness of all knowledge. Whatever we know, we have to know in and through Him. He is the essence of our own self. He is the essence of this ego, this "I" and we cannot know anything excepting in and through that "I". Therefore you have to know everything in and through Brahman. ... Neither known nor unknown, but something infinitely higher than either'.³ Moreover, God being beyond our knowledge, we cannot describe Him by any other language. As Swami Vivekananda says, 'All attempts of language, calling Him father or brother or our dearest friend, are attempts to objectify God, which cannot be done. He is the eternal

subject of everything'.⁴ Just as we do not know our own Self, so God being the eternal subject, the essence of ourselves, is not known. And what is not known cannot be described with any objectification. Hence God is indescribable or *anirvacanīya*.

This indescribability with regard to God reveals the other conception that God is one. God is the one and the only Reality. God being indescribable, we cannot objectify Him. So He remains unlimited and infinite. And it is evident that infinite cannot be two but one. If there are two realities, then one limits the other and both become finite. But the Absolute or Brahman is indescribable and unlimited. So He remains infinite, and hence He is One. There is no other reality besides the Absolute. He is the only Reality.

But the question arises how Brahman or the Absolute can be the only reality when we experience the world with its manifold objects. In answer to this question it is maintained that the Absolute is manifesting Itself as many through the veil of time, space, and causation. *Māyā* is the magical power of the Absolute which makes His oneness manifold. In order to maintain the unity of the Absolute, Swami Vivekananda takes up the theory of *Māyā*.

THE ABSOLUTE AND MĀYĀ

Swami Vivekananda holds that there is only one existence, that is Brahman. The existence seen through the senses is called matter. When it is seen through mind, we have the world of thoughts and ideas; and when it is seen as it is, then it is the one, infinite, Absolute, the Brahman. So, Swami Vivekananda says: "There are neither three, nor two in the universe; it is all one. That One, under the illusion of *Māyā*, is seen as many, just as a rope is seen as a snake. It is the very rope that is seen as a snake. There are not two things there, a rope separate and a snake separate."⁵ He explains that this Absolute

² Ibid., Vol. V, p. 336, sixth edition.

³ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 133, eighth edition.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 134, eighth edition.

⁵ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 21, seventh impression.

has become the universe by coming through time, space, and causation. The time, space and causation are called *Māyā* or illusion. *Māyā* is the sum total of time, space, and causation. 'Time, space, and causation are like the glass through which the Absolute is seen and when It is seen on the lower side It appears as the universe'.⁶

But these—time, space, and causation—do not belong to the Absolute. As the Absolute has no mind or thought, It has no time. Again, there is no space in the Absolute, because It has no external changes. The causation is not possible in the Absolute as It is the only reality. These can only be possible when we think that the Absolute has degenerated into the phenomena. So it is true that there exists no two realities, the Absolute and the *Māyā* or time, space, and causation. We know that the Absolute is the independent existence. But time, space, and causation have no independent existence. Time changes with every state of mind and is, therefore, dependent upon mind. So with space and causation also.

True, time, space, and causation have no real existence, but they are not non-existent either, as all things of the universe are manifesting through them. Swami Vivekananda says: '*Māyā* is real, yet it is not real. It is real in that the Real is behind it and gives it its appearance of reality. That which is real in *Māyā* is the Reality in and through *Māyā*. Yet the Reality is never seen; and hence that which is seen is unreal and it has no real independent existence of itself, but it is dependent upon the Real for existence. . . . *Māyā*, then, is a paradox—real, yet not real; an illusion, yet not an illusion. . . . He who knows the Real sees in *Māyā* not illusion, but Reality. He who knows not the Real sees in *Māyā* illusion and thinks it real'.⁷

Swami Vivekananda holds that time, space, and causation, what we call *Māyā*, are the cause of differentiation. But this differentia-

tion is only in the form, not in the substance. 'The differentiation is caused by *Māyā*—as the contour of the shore may shape the ocean into bay, strait, or inlet. But when this shaping force or *Māyā* is removed, the separate form disappears, the differentiation ceases, all is ocean again'.⁸ Similarly, when an individual is in ignorance, he thinks that the world, with its manifold objects which are caused by *Māyā*, is real. But when ignorance is removed by true knowledge, *Māyā* vanishes. The individual realizes that only the Absolute or Brahman is real and the universe caused by *Māyā* is illusory and unreal. 'Brahman is one but at the same time appearing to us as many on the relative plane. Name and form are at the root of this relativity. For instance, what do you find when you abstract name and form from a jar? Only earth which is its essence. Similarly, through delusion you are thinking and seeing a cloth, a monastery, and so on. This phenomenal world depends on this nescience which obstructs knowledge, and has no real existence. One sees variety such as wife, children, body, and mind only in the world created by nescience, by means of name and form. As soon as this nescience is removed, there takes place the realization of Brahman which eternally exists'.⁹ Thus it is quite evident that the Absolute or Brahman which is nameless and formless manifests Its Oneness in the manifold forms through *Māyā*, that is through name and form.

But this *Māyā* cannot really transform the unity of the Absolute into manyness. The Absolute never loses Its real nature. Manifoldness is only apparent, not real. The world is only a superimposition upon the Absolute through *Māyā*. *Māyā* never changes the divine nature of Absolute or Brahman. The Absolute always remains, *Sat-Cit-Ananda* (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss). It is we who, being in *Māyā* or ignorance, regard It as the manifold objects.

⁶ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 130, eighth edition.

⁷ Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 92, sixth edition.

⁸ Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 237, second impression.

⁹ Swami Nikhilananda, *Vivekananda—A Biography*, pp. 184-6.

THE ABSOLUTE AND GOD

Māyā which is the cause of this universe with manifold objects, is also responsible for our maintaining a personal God called Īśvara. When we take this world to be real, we think that this world must have a creator and a supreme Ruler called God or Īśvara, who is not only transcendent but also immanent in this world. But this Īśvara is not void of qualities like Brahman. He has so many good qualities. He is qualitative or *saguṇa*, not *nirguṇa*. And having qualities, God has individuality. He is not impersonal like the Absolute. The personal God or Īśvara is described as, 'He from whom this universe proceeds, in whom it rests, and to whom it returns, He is Īśvara, the eternal, the pure, the all-merciful, the almighty, the ever-free, the all-knowing, the Teacher of all teachers, the Lord who of His own nature is inexpressible love'.¹⁰

Now the question arises whether there are two Gods, the one impersonal Absolute or Para Brahman and the other the personal God or Apara Brahman. Looked at from the superficial point of view, we have to conceive of two gods. One is the Absolute, the *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*, which can only be defined by 'not this, not this' or '*neti, neti*'. The other is the personal God. But if we go deep into the matter, then we realize that there is only one God who is called Brahman, the one without a second. It is the same Brahman who is also Īśvara, the impersonal and personal in one. Swami Vivekananda holds that the personal God is nothing but the Absolute seen through Māyā. 'Īśvara is the highest manifestation of the Absolute Reality, or in other words, the highest possible reading of the Absolute by the human mind'.¹¹

With regard to the relation between the Absolute and the personal God, Swami Vivekananda holds that any relation is possible only when there are more realities

than one. But, the Absolute and the personal God are not two but one and the same. 'The same Impersonal is conceived by the mind as the creator, the ruler, and the dissolver of the universe, its material as well as its efficient cause, the supreme Ruler—the living or the loving, the beautiful in the highest sense'.¹² Swami Vivekananda, in order to prove the sameness of Brahman and Īśvara, takes the help of an illustration. He says: 'If a man starts from here to see the sun, he will see at first a little sun; but as he proceeds he will see it bigger and bigger, until he reaches the real one. At each stage of his progress he was seeing apparently a different sun; yet we are sure it was the same sun he was seeing'.¹³ Similarly, the same Brahman when seen through the glass of Māyā, that is time, space, and causation, appears as the world and its creator and ruler called Īśvara or God. So, it is evident that the impersonal Brahman is the only reality. What we call the personal God is nothing but the personalized impersonal Absolute.

This impersonal Absolute, according to Swami Vivekananda, is not separate from the personal God who is worshipped by the devotee. The impersonal Brahman is too abstract for the purpose of religion. So the devotee chooses the relative aspect of Brahman, i.e. Īśvara, the supreme Ruler. But when real knowledge comes, the devotee realizes that there is no personal God as such, there is only the Absolute, the impersonal Brahman, the eternal Self. The personal God is as much an entity for Himself as we are for ourselves, and no more. God can also be seen as a form, just as we are seen. As men we must have God; as God we need none. This is why Sri Ramakrishna saw the Divine Mother ever present with him, more real than any other thing around him; but in *samādhi* all disappeared but the Self. The personal God comes nearer and nearer until He melts away and there is no personal God and no

¹⁰ *The Complete Works*, Vol. VII, p. 80, fourth edition.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 87, seventh impression.

¹² *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 336, sixth edition.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 224, sixth edition.

more "I"—all is merged in the Self'.¹⁴ Thus we find that when true consciousness arises, ignorance is removed and Māyā vanishes, then one realizes that the impersonal Absolute is the only reality. Personal God or Īśvara is mere manifestation of the Absolute. But this manifestation is only apparent, not real. From the transcendental standpoint, we find that the Absolute is the only reality. But our practical standpoint, from which the world caused by Māyā is taken to be real, leads us to maintain a personal God in the impersonal Absolute. 'Yet we must not ever forget that the personal God is the very Absolute seen through Māyā.'¹⁵

CONCLUSION

Having dealt with the conception of God in Swami Vivekananda, we come to the conclusion that Swami Vivekananda's conception of God is very similar to the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara. Like Śaṅkara, he also tries to find out an ultimate unity of all things. He does this through his conception of God. According to him, God is the unity in the midst of diversity. Like the Advaitins he explains this diversity with the help of Māyā.

Swami Vivekananda holds that we should remove this diversity in order to reach the ultimate goal, which consists in the realization of God in the soul. This realization is the ultimate end of all religions, only there are

¹⁴ Swami Nikhilananda, *Vivekananda—A Biography*, p. 185.

¹⁵ *The Complete Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 158, second impression.

differences in their methods. He says: 'All these forms and ceremonies, these prayers and pilgrimages, these books, bells, candles and priests, are the preparations; they take off the impurity of the soul; and when the soul becomes pure, it naturally wants to get to the mine of purity, God Himself'.¹⁶

According to Swami Vivekananda, there is only one God called Brahman, the Impersonal, the Absolute. But this Brahman can be realized not only through Vedāntic religion, but also by all the religions of the world. Swami Vivekananda is a synthetic philosopher and he thinks that any religion can lead us to God-realization, that is, the realization of an identity between the soul and God. 'As many rivers, having their source in different mountains, roll down, crooked or straight, and at last come into the ocean, so, O Lord, all these various creeds and religions, taking their start from different standpoints and running through courses crooked or straight, at last come unto Thee'.¹⁷

Hence, Swami Vivekananda believes, we must not care for any particular religion, but accept all religions of the past, present, and future as different paths to the same goal—God. God is not limited to any particular religion. He is beyond all religions. The religions, therefore, are nothing but the preparations for the realization of one infinite God.

¹⁶ Swami Nikhilananda, *Vivekananda—A Biography*, p. 210.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

'The ideal of man is to see God in everything. But if you cannot see Him in everything, see Him in one thing, in that thing which you like best, and then see Him in another. So on you can go. There is infinite life before the soul. Take your time and you will achieve your end.'

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

VIVEKANANDA, THE POET

DR. S. V. JOGA RAO

Much has been said of Vivekananda's greatness as saint and philosopher; but, curiously enough, the fact that he is a poet of the first order seems not to have received much attention. Perhaps the eminence of his saintly career has overshadowed the other. But, in fact, long before the *Gītāñjali* of Rabindranath Tagore, he delivered to the West the message of our spiritual bards of the bygone ages, festooned with fine flowers of poetry. His message is a bridge of goodwill between the Orient and the Occident, and his life an overall interpretation of the vision of the great saint, Sri Ramakrishna, his *guru*.

The content of all his poems is nothing but a synthesis of the poetic thought of the ancient saints and the saintly vision of kindred bards. The epithet has earned a name for him and proved itself to be an apt combination of terms on account of its association with him. All good poetry or great philosophy is the manifestation of 'Viveka' culminating in 'ānanda'. In fact, that kind of philosophy and poetry is the spring of his inspiration. The Swami observes in his 'The Song of the Free':

The cloud puts forth its deluge strength
When lightning cleaves its breast;
When the soul is stirred to its inmost depth
Great ones unfold their best.

The same thing can be said of his own poetry.

His entire output of poetry covers some sixty-five pages and thirty-three pieces in all,¹ out of which only two are translations.

Eight pieces were originally composed in Bengali, his mother tongue, four in Sanskrit, one in Hindi, and the rest in English. He was well versed in all these languages. The output is small but not the quality. His poems, if presented in suitable Sanskrit garb, appear to be excerpts taken from Upaniṣadic texts. The feeling of a sublime spiritual vision and experience is the string that binds all the scattered beads.

Great souls immersed in *bhakti* and philosophy are themselves, at times, overcome with a feeling of aesthetic ecstasy, while writing poetry. Their statement looks like a gospel for others. When the poets intend preaching philosophy with poetic fervour, others derive the experience of absolute bliss. Here lies the secret of all mystic poetry. Some of our Vedic bards and the Sūfi poets have given us the key to the mystic experience, and Swami Vivekananda stands on a par with them. Obviously, we find striking resemblance in the poems of all these men of God. It is not the result of any kind of mimesis on their part. They are independent monologues of individual experiences, and yet all of them are members in the pilgrimage to one shrine divine. Hence the natural coincidence.

One day during July 1895, while he was staying in the Thousand Island Park at New York, he was lecturing to his pupils, in his spiritual training camp, on *sannyāsa* and its welcome experiences. Suddenly, something struck him and he left the class quite unceremoniously. Then, in no time, a memorable melody came out of him. That is the famous 'Song of the Sannyāsin'. It begins as follows:

Wake up the note ! the song that had its
birth
Far off, where worldly taint could never
reach ;

¹ Recently, *Vedanta and the West*, the bi-monthly magazine of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood, in its issue of September-October 1963, has published, for the first time, a free translation by the Swami of several verses from the *Vairāgya-sataka* of Bhartrhari (Ed.)

In mountain caves, and glades of forest
 deep,
 Whose calm no sigh for lust or wealth or
 fame
 Could ever dare to break; where rolled
 the stream
 Of knowledge, truth, and bliss that
 follows both.
 Sing high that note, Sannyāsin bold; Say—
 ‘Om Tat Sat, Om!’

This is nothing but what is contained in our sacred scriptures and nothing but the outburst of his own experience at the same time. “The ‘I’ has all become, the all is ‘I’ and Bliss; know thou art That”—this is how he describes the condition of the soul when it is free from all bondage. He gives here the crux of the *mahāvākyas*: ‘*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*’, ‘*Prajñānam Brahma*’, ‘*Aham Brahmāsmi*’, ‘*Tattvamasi*’. It is, as if, a brief commentary on the way of life of our *maharṣis*.

He composed his song ‘Kālī, the Mother’, a brilliant spark of his poetic inspiration, in the earthly paradise of Kashmir. He projected in it a colourful picture with a rich background. Kālī, to him, is not the three-foot idol at Dakshineswar, but something more—the omnipotent power behind the three worlds and the Trinity. He had the chance of seeing Her before, through the help of his *guru*, but here he understands Her as the Time-incarnate. Sister Nivedita says: ‘No sooner did he finish the song than he fell down to the ground in a fit of ecstatic emotion.’

The Swami observes in another of his poems (‘Who Knows How Mother Plays?’):

Perchance the shining sage
 Saw more than he could tell;
 Who knows, what soul and when
 The Mother makes Her throne?

This aptly applies to him also.

In ‘The Song of the Free’ the thought and diction are well in a race with each other. There he presents the document of his self-realization when he says:

Before the sun, the moon, the earth
 Before the stars or comets free,
 Before e’en time had its birth
 I was, I am, and I will be.

The resurgent notes of his song ‘The Awakened India’ had their echoes in our national movement afterwards. He was a patriot of the first order, but his vision was unbounded. He celebrated the day of the American Independence, too, with a beautiful poem. He was an advocate of freedom and an apostle of love and peace. He heard sermons in stones and read books in running brooks; heard the music of the spheres and ably brought out the tempo of their being in a dynamic rhythm of well-poised words of choice.

He saw God in man, nay, in every living being and, in one song, he proclaims the love of all beings to be the best worship:

These are his manifold forms before thee,
 Rejecting them, where seekest thou for
 God?
 Who loves all beings, without distinction,
 He, indeed, is worshipping best his God.
 (“To A Friend”)

All this is not mere platitude. It forms the very core of his nature. He is a man of action, a dynamic personality. Vivekananda is another name for philosophy in practice. He pledged even life for gaining knowledge and devoted half his days on earth inspired by love of God and humanity; even as one insane, he often clutched at lifeless shadows. For the sake of religion, he sought many creeds, lived in mountain caves, on cremation grounds and by the Gaṅgā and other holy rivers, and passed many days on alms, friendless, clad in rags, with no possession at all, and feeding on what chance would bring. His frame was broken under *tapasyā*’s weight. Thus, having undergone such tremendous hardship, what did he achieve in the end? The Swami himself answers in the ebb of his own voice:

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

sole treasure.
(“To A Friend”)

This is the net result of all endeavour of the great saints. This sermon of love is their perpetual message to mankind.

The Swami has given us yet another sermon, the sermon of peace in terms more clearly defined and with a better refinement of poetic setting. I quote a few lines here :

It is not joy nor sorrow,
But that which is between ; ...
It is sweet rest in music ;
And pause in sacred art ;
The silence between speaking ;
Between two fits of passion—
It is the calm of heart ;

It is beauty never seen,
And love that stands alone,
It is song that lives unsung
And knowledge never known.

The void whence rose creation,
And that where it returns ; ...

It is the Goal of life,
And Peace—its only home !

(“Peace”)

He is a devout pupil and a kindred teacher too. He hails, in Sanskrit, his *guru*, Sri Ramakrishna as an *avatāra* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the preceptor of the *Gītā*. He blesses Sister

Nivedita, his disciple, to be the mistress, servant, and friend in one to India's future son. In his poem ‘To an Early Violet’, he exhorts another Western lady-disciple from New York not to get disheartened at her unbecoming situation and give up her cheerfulness. ‘Change not thy nature ... ever pour thy sweet perfume, unmasked, unstinted, sure !’

I request the reader particularly to go through three of his poems, ‘My Play Is Done’, ‘A Song I Sing to Thee’, and ‘And Let Shyama Dance There’, which are replete with lyrical outpourings in a high pitch of poetic sublimity. Particularly in the last one, he, as a great devotee with a soul-stirring emotion, prepares the stage for the dynamic rhythm of the dance of the Divine Mother. He depicts the dual aspect of the creation, the beautiful hues and the terrible horrors of wild Nature by a beautiful contrast. There he stands alone, all by himself, in the *samādhi* of his imagination, at the two ends of universal Nature, namely, creation and destruction.

The Swami selected for translation only two² pieces from Sanskrit—one is the *Nirvāṇa-śatka*, the famous hymn of self-realization of Śaṅkarācārya, his own great counterpart, and the other is the *Nāśadīya-sūkta*, the great hymn of creation of the *Rṅ-Veda*. His selection itself marks him to be a true Advaitin, and his English rendering proves him to be a skilful architect of phrases. His style is remarkably lucid all through. He, in his turn, sang a beautiful hymn of creation, in which he describes the transcendental light beyond the skies. He is a great seer and a rhythmic being in one, whose penance flowered into poetry of a very high order.

² See footnote 1.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

As part of the concluding round of celebrations in connection with the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda, a Parliament of Religions was held in Calcutta from 29 December 1963 to 5 January 1964. The Parliament was inaugurated by Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and was attended by distinguished delegates from many parts of the world. We have great pleasure in publishing the inaugural address of the President.

With this issue, the series 'Spiritual Discourses of Swami Vijnanananda', which we have been regularly presenting to our readers from January 1963, comes to an end. From next month onwards, we shall begin another series 'Letters of Swami Shivananda'.

Many objections have been raised from time to time against the Vedāntic theory of *Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda*, the theory that Brahman is the efficient as well as the material cause of the world. Dr. Roma Chaudhuri, M.A., Ph.D., Principal, Lady Brabourne College, Calcutta, sums up in her article the possible objections and the Vedantins' answer to the first of these objections.

Manu-smṛti, or the Code of Manu, is the most well-known as also the most popular among the compendiums on ethics that have ordered the day-to-day moral, social, and religious life of the Hindus for centuries. Here, in his article on 'Manu Dharma', Sri K. E.

Parthasarathy, Foreshore Estate, Madras, deals with some of its important tenets.

Professor W. H. Werkmeister, Director of the School of Philosophy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, is a noted author having to his credit several books pertaining to ethics and philosophy. Of late, he has been taking particular interest in the field of 'value theory'. The importance of the learned professor's approach to the subject lays in his emphasis on the subjectivity of experience which varies from individual to individual in consonance with the 'native endowments, social conditioning, and personal development'. In his article on 'Werkmeister and the Empirical Approach to Value Theory', Sri V. Madhusudan Reddy, Ph.D., of the Arts College, Osmania University, Hyderabad, touches upon this aspect of Werkmeister's approach.

Dr. Eva Ghosh, of the Ranchi University, in her article on 'The Conception of God in Swami Vivekananda', tells in brief how Swamiji has reconciled the ideas about personal God and the impersonal Brahman and shown that God with personal qualifications is 'actually not other than unqualified Brahman'.

Dr. S. V. Joga Rao, of the Andhra University, Waltair, deals in his article on 'Swami Vivekananda, the Poet' with an aspect of the Swami's life and work which has not received much attention so far.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ADVAITA-BODHA-DĪPIKĀ. Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai, South India. Pages 119. Price Re. 1.50.

Advaita-bodha-dīpikā is the title of a work in Sanskrit by Karapatra Swami. It summarizes the main points in the various extant Advaitic commentaries on the *Vedānta-Sūtra* from the point of view of *sādhanā* to arrive at self-realization. Though the work is said to be of twelve chapters, only eight of them are now available. The work has been translated into Tamil prose and the present publication is a free English rendering of the same by the late Sri Ramananda Saraswati, well-known devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

The eight chapters cover the topics of *adhyāropa*, *apavāda*, *sādhanā*, *śrāvāṇa*, *manana*, *vāsanākṣaya*, *sākṣātkāra*, and *manolaya*. The discussion goes on in the form of questions and answers, and there is much in these pages that is of practical importance to the *sādhaka* of the *jñāna-mārga*. Replace thoughts by the thought of Brahman; introduce the idea that 'I am Brahman'; stop *thinking* even of this *mahāvākya* and you will be Brahman—this is the concluding instruction of the writer.

M. P. PANDIT

PHILOSOPHY OF GORAKHNATH. BY AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA. Mahant Dig Vijainath Trust, Gorakhpur. Pages 331. Price not mentioned.

Even professional students of Indian philosophy are unaware of some of the treasures hidden away in the original Sanskrit texts of the medieval period. Here is a gem taken out of the treasure, polished and presented to us in an attractive form. The volume under review is an expository thesis based mainly on *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati* of Mahayogi Gorakhnath, an adept in *nātha-yoga*. The author rightly points out that the *yogin* speaks out of the fullness of his direct experience, and men whose vision is directed to the lower levels cannot easily understand him.

Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati teaches us six main lessons relating to (1) the nature of the body, the individual and the cosmic; (2) contemplation; (3) true insight into the body; (4) Śakti; (5) the supreme ideal of union; and (6) the *Avadhūta Yogin* (Ch. 2). The whole science of *yoga* is comprised in these lessons.

The author now proceeds to expound the philosophical concepts implicit in this *yoga* discipline. Ultimate Reality is absolute Spirit accompanied by *nija-śakti*, giving rise to the phenomenal cosmic order (Ch. 4). This absolute Spirit is realizable in absolute transcendental experience alone, viz in the state of *saccidānanda* through *yoga* (Ch. 5). Then, the author gives us an account of the evolution of the phenomenal world which is not to be discarded as an illusion (Ch. 6).

In this connection, the important doctrines of Śiva, Śakti, the relationship between the two, the gradual unfolding of the world of individual bodies as epitomes of the entire cosmic body are all explained in chapters 7 to 13. The standpoint is very clearly and definitely that of *siddha-yoga*. This comes out clearly in Chapter 16, where the esoteric aspects of the body are explained in terms of nine *cakras*, sixteen *ādhāras*, three *lakṣyas*, and five *vyomas*. The two succeeding chapters carry on the exposition further.

The last three chapters of the book are the most valuable. The author gives us, in the first instance, an estimate of Gorakhnath's place in the history of religious-philosophic thought in our country. It is shown that the *Yoga-māyā* of Gorakhnath is in keeping with the best Vedāntic traditions, but with this difference that the cosmic system is not to be discarded as false or illusory, taking it for granted that that is what Śaṅkara's doctrine of *Māyā* means. The two concluding chapters trace the evolution of Hindu culture from the Vedas down to the time of Gorakhnath. The running commentary on the *gīṛā* is superb.

This masterly treatise is the outcome of reverence and devotion. No purpose will be served by drawing comparisons or picking holes. The entire work should be accepted in the spirit in which it is written and studied with devotion and reverence by all students of Indian philosophy.

PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

KALYĀNA MANJARI. COMPILED BY R. THANGASWAMI SARMA. Edited and Published by M. A. Rajagopalan, 1/B, Dr. Rangachari Road, Mylapore, Madras 4. 1962. Pages 464. Price not mentioned.

Our Purāṇas and Itihāsas are full of ideal men and women. The marriages of the celebrated gods and goddesses are an example for those who seek the *grhasthāśrama*. Marriage is not a necessity in the Advaitic tradition, for it is said, '*Yadahareva virajet tadahareva pravrajat*'. But, for the large majority, marriage is a necessity for a number of reasons. The passages dealing with marriages in our Purāṇas and Itihāsas are a stimulating source of inspiration in this context.

The compiler Sri Thaugaswami Sarma has brought together twenty-nine passages from *Śiva*, *Saura*, *Vāmana*, *Brahma*, *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Brahmavaivarta*, *Devī Bhāgavata*, and *Bhāgavata Purāṇas*, *Hāḍasya Māhātmya*, *Śaṅkara Saṁhitā*, and *Divya-suri-carita*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, and *Mahābhārata*. These passages are selected with great care and taste. They are charged with a lofty spirituality and ethical idealism. The work should be in every family. It has a fine collection of *prārthana ślokas* at the end.

A foreword by Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, and a learned introduction in Tamil by the compiler add to the value of the work.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

FRENCH

LE DOMINICAIN BLANC. BY GUSTAV MEYRINK.
La Colombe, Rue Rousselet 5, Paris. Pages 234.
Price 14 fr. 50.

It is not generally known that Taoism is not confined to China. Centuries ago, during the last years of the Sung dynasty, at the approaching threat of the Mongol invasion, adepts in Taoism left the country in large numbers, in order to safeguard their sacred lore, and settled wherever they could find hospitable environment. Some of them settled in Islamic countries, where they developed the science of alchemy to amazing lengths. Drawing attention to this historical aspect of Taoism, M. Gerard Heym, in the course of his brilliant introduction to this volume, points out that Taoism itself is more ancient than the Chinese civilization. It was only when Confucianism gained ascendancy and the adherents of Tao were harassed, that Taoism either withdrew to the caves or migrated elsewhere—to Europe, Mediterranean countries, etc. Now Taoism, like most of the ancient disciplines, had an exoteric as well as an esoteric side. To the common man, it meant a way of deliverance. To the initiated, it was a discipline for the attainment of immortality. This immortality was sought to be achieved either by the use of certain substances of radio-active properties—elixirs as they were called, or through yogic methods. The yogic methods consisted of certain breathing exercises and visual concentration upon some of the centres in the body, as a result of which the physical body was dissolved and a subtle-physical body formed, in which one could live for ever outside the pale of death and disease. This subtle-physical body was again of two kinds: either perceivable by others or not visible to the human eye.

It was in 1870 that an Austrian scholar, Prof. Pfitzmaier, published three articles on this subject and caused a stir. He was persuaded, however, not to write more articles as they had a very unsettling effect, and no more was heard of it. But among those whose imagination was captured by this thought was Gustav Meyrink, the author of this work, who had a *penchant* for mysticism, occultism, and the like. He was a strongly endowed medium, and could project himself not only into far off planes of existence, but also into epochs of the distant past. In this way, he had already familiarized himself with many ancient occult traditions whose full doctrine could not be found with their custodians today.

Meyrink, accordingly, delved into the past, gained access to the Masters who had become Immortals in the secret Path of the Tao, got initiation from them, and exerted himself with his customary zeal for realization of the Truth of the Tao. He went far, but could not achieve the final victory. For, we are told, he had an insufferable hatred towards his mother, and this stood in his way. Be that as it may, he learnt from the invisible Masters and verified for himself the possibility of dissolution of the physical body and its resuscitation in the subtle form, passing through the intermediate stage of the appearance of the mystic 'sword'. It was also revealed to him how the Tao esoteric discipline combined the ancient Tāntric way of liberation through the union of the male and the female principles with the special breathing techniques of its own. And *Le Dominicain Blanc* is a record, in the form of a novel, of the profound knowledge and experience gained by the author in this field. He gives detailed descriptions of the methods adopted and results obtained.

Originally written in German, this is a translation into excellent French, and captures the mind of the reader, opening quite a new vista of possibilities for man. We look forward to an English edition of this notable book.

M. P. PANDIT

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA SHYAMALATAL, DISTRICT ALMORA

REPORT FOR 1961-62

This Sevashrama, which is a charitable indoor hospital, is situated in the Kumaon Hills amidst picturesque surroundings on the road leading to Tibet, sixteen miles from Tanakpur on the N. E. Railway.

During the year under review, it treated 177 patients in the indoor section which has 12 beds. In the out-

door section, 8,456 patients were treated, out of whom 7,069 were new cases.

The Sevashrama has also a veterinary department, where 1,870 animals were treated in the outdoor and four in the indoor sections, respectively.

Situated as it is in remote parts this Sevashrama has been rendering service to the poor hill people for the last 47 years. It is in urgent need of Rs. 25,000 for equipping the hospital with modern appliances etc. Endowments are also welcome at the rate of Rs. 3,000 per bed.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
NEW DELHI

REPORT FOR 1961-62

The activities of this centre were as follows during the year under review :

Religious Work: Besides regular worship and *bhajanas* in the Mission's temple, the birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, and other great prophets and saints were observed with due solemnity. Religious discourses and lectures were also organized during these celebrations.

Medical Work: The Tuberculosis Clinic has twelve beds in the observation ward. The Clinic is not only equipped for general treatment, but also for surgical measures, such as thoracoplasty, pneumothorax, etc. Milk and tiffin were supplied free to all free-ward indoor patients. The number of patients treated in the Clinic during the period was 1,39,239 of which 1,832 were new cases. During the same period, 505 indoor cases were treated in the observation wards, containing 28 beds, of which 254 were women.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA
VISA KHAPATNAM (ANDHRA)

REPORT FOR 1961-62

The Ashrama conducted the following activities during the year :

Religious Work: Daily worship and *āratrikam* were conducted at the shrine and devotional songs were sung in the evening.

Free Reading Room and Library: Total number of books : 2,330 ; Number of books issued : 1,375 ; Number of readers : 25. The Reading Room received six newspapers and twenty periodicals.

Cultural and Recreation Centre for Children: This is a centre for imparting to children the spiritual and cultural heritage of India on easy lines. The children are taught prayers, *stotras*, and told stories from Purāṇas

and epics. A library is also provided for their use ; it consists mainly of illustrated books and journals.

Sri Sarada Bala Vihara: This school was started five years back and has now 244 children on the roll with nine teachers.

The Ashrama has undertaken the construction of an auditorium to accommodate 500 people and also a school building. It is in need of Rs. 2,00,000 for meeting the expenses of construction of the new buildings and the necessary equipment for them.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA
SALEM (MADRAS STATE)

REPORT FOR 1961-62

Started in 1928, this Ashrama has been carrying on spiritual, cultural, and humanitarian work. During the year under review, following were its activities :

Spiritual and Cultural: Besides regular worship and *bhajanas*, the Ashrama organized regular classes on Sundays on the *Gī'ā*, *Rāmāyana*, *Bhāgavata*, and life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. On the occasion of the birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, lectures and discourses were arranged.

Library and Reading Room: The Ashrama library has a select collection of books in English, Tamil, and other languages. The total number of books in March 1962 was 1,047.

Charitable Dispensary: During the period, 50,823 patients were treated of which 21,423 were new cases.

Milk Distribution: Fresh cows' milk was supplied to the ailing and under-nourished children.

Needs: (i) Rs. 75,000 for the renovation of the old Ashrama building ; (ii) Rs. 25,000 for a separate library building ; (iii) Rs. 10,000 for water storage arrangements and the sinking of a well ; (iv) Rs. 25,000 for the expansion of the dispensary ; (v) Rs. 25,000 for a doctor's quarters and sanitary arrangements for patients.

CORRIGENDUM

Read घोषते for घोषन्तं in the January '64 number, p. 2, Sanskrit verse 9.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The 129th birthday of Sri Ramakrishna falls on Saturday, the 15th February 1964.