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JANUARY 1966

Prabuddha Bharata

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

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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Vol. LXXI

JANUARY 1966

No. 1



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:0:—

LETTERS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

(88)

Sri Ramakrishna Math
Belur, Howrah
30 August 1919

Sriman —,

I have received your letter and noted the contents. You are all doing this work of service of man, initiated by the Master. He knows all—with what difficulty and suffering you are all carrying on this great undertaking successfully to the best of your ability. The Master is ever merciful to you all. We all love you as our very life and have always blessings for you. Speed forth, all of you, towards him! When the Master Himself is merciful to you, what wonder is there that the government officials are all pleased with your work? We, too, are very happy to hear it. After bringing to completion the work there, go, after consulting —, where you have thought of going. May the Lord be gracious to you! But you are going to stay alone in a solitary place; be very careful. Youthful age, many temptations are there. Anyway, may the Lord bless you, that is my innermost prayer.

I am not keeping well : am suffering from influenza for the last eight or ten days. Today I am feeling slightly better. The climate of the Math is not good. There is a talk of performing the worship of Mother Jagadambā in the image this time at the Math. Now as She wills! My heartfelt blessings and love to all of you.

Your well-wisher,
Shivananda

(84)

Sri Ramakrishna Math
 Belur, Howrah
 5 September 1919

Sriman —,

Your letter reached here a few days back. I could not reply as I was not well. Even now I have not completely recovered.

The way you are carrying on your life now is excellent. If you continue to live like this, the purpose of your life will be served. March on, march on with the same attitude.

About the thing you want to know about, namely, that you could not, in spite of your best efforts, follow the following words of Sri Ramakrishna, viz 'He whose last birth this is will come to this "house"', I am writing what I understand of it.

Firstly, the devotees never indulge in such thoughts as whether it is the last birth or the first or the second or the third. The devotees will only think of how to develop devotion and love for the Lord, how to keep themselves pure, and will simply try to depend on His will. They never worry about life and death. Everything is Lord's wish—that is the faith of the devotee. Secondly, the meaning, as I understand it, of 'He whose last birth this is will come to this "house"' is: He who, with his body, mind, and soul, sincerely believes that Sri Ramakrishna is the incarnation of God, will come to him, and his is the last birth.

If, after receiving initiation or *sannyāsa*, any unseemly conduct is observed in a devotee, obviously it is very bad, there is no doubt about it; but it is my belief that if he really has faith in Sri Ramakrishna's being the incarnation of God, then sometime or other in this life itself, he is sure to repent of his action. If, unfortunately, he doesn't feel repentent, then it must be understood that he did not have the faith spoken of earlier and that this is not his last birth. Those who initiate are supremely kind donors; that is their mercy and magnanimity. If the person initiated is not able to prove worthy of their kindness and magnanimity, then it must be said that it is his misfortune. But then this is also true that, though in this life he does not become successful in his efforts, he will in some other life; for the mystic syllable given at the time of initiation by the *gurus* whose names you have mentioned is unfailing in its effect and can never go in vain. It *will* bear fruit, whether in this life or some other. They have no desires in the world; showering blessings simply, without any motive whatsoever, is their only work. I have told what I have to say; now as you understand.

If you come across people whose hankering for spiritual practice has not assuaged, know that they are nice people. The Master used to say: 'O friend, I learn as long as I live.' This is a very exalted teaching. The thirst for spiritual practice does not lessen even when one attains the goal, but there is

a difference in the attitude. Accept my heartfelt blessings and love. Read and reflect well upon what I have written.

Your well-wisher,
Shivananda

P.S. Maharaj is keeping much better at Baghbazar.

(85)

Sri Ramakrishna Math
Belur, Howrah
9 April 1920

Sriman —,

I am in receipt of your letter and have noted the contents. I am extremely delighted to learn that you are quite happy and peaceful now by the grace of the Lord. I sincerely pray that you may attain complete faith, devotion, love, and purity. Don't hasten things very much; proceed slowly. In this path, you cannot progress quickly if you get impatient; everything is dependent on His grace. If He, out of His grace, draws you to Himself through love, then the mind becomes capable of resting there at His feet. Even if for a short time he keeps the mind absorbed there, know that also to be a great favour. It doesn't help if you get impatient; you have to proceed slowly, step by step. If you force the mind too much, after a few days, you will suffer from great restlessness. The bliss and peace you are getting now will be lost, and you will be drowned in the ocean of terrible disquietude. For the present pray to the Lord thus: 'Lord, if you, out of your mercy, draw the mind to your holy feet and let it rest there, then only there is hope; otherwise I am helpless.' Sit in the posture in which you feel at ease; there is nothing to worry about it. Main thing is the Lord's grace.

There is a song: 'If You don't grant your vision, who can see You? If You don't call near, will the mind flow easily (towards You)?' Therefore I say: Justify your name by your action; you are Dhiresh (the lord of steadiness and composure), why should you become unsteady and lose your composure? Continue to do that from which you are getting peace and joy, and meditate as long as He gives you strength to meditate easily on His holy form in the heart, and pray to Him for more. You will get everything, by His grace, through prayer. '*Bālānām rodanam balam*—Weeping is the strength of the child.' The child has no other power except to cry: 'Mother, give; mother, give.' Similar is the case with the devotee. If there is a slackening of devotion and love, there is no other way than to pray to Him, weeping like a child. The Master used to tell us the same thing again and again. If anybody complained to him, 'Sir, I am not having good meditation and prayer', he would immediately reply: 'Hey, pray, pray; Mother will grant everything.' Therefore do I say, Pray simply for His mercy.

What more shall I write? Accept my heartfelt blessings and love. May the Lord bless you with well-being and prosperity!

Your well-wisher,
Shivananda

THE MESSAGE THAT WILL EVER INSPIRE

[EDITORIAL]

In our scriptures, man has been defined as a being that can think and reason. The animal cannot go beyond its limited sphere of thinking; but man, by virtue of his thinking and reasoning power, can stretch himself up to the farthest extremity of this universe and soar high in the endless expanse of the Infinity, and as such man does not live by bread alone. He requires something more to live upon, some values to look beyond, and some ideal whereby he can expand and forge ahead. And the shining personalities who provide us with that indispensable something of life to make headway in the world from age to age, are honoured as noble. We call them great. The world is upheld by the veracity of these great souls. They live for a purpose and give a verdict. Their greatness is the right point of view of history, for they make this earth wholesome. They may pass away, but the qualities they exhibit remain and abide. The vessels on which we read sacred emblems may turn out to be common pottery, but the sense of the pictures remains sacred and we may still read them transferred to the walls of the world. Rightly did Nietzsche, the great German philosopher, observe: 'The world turns itself not around the discoverers of new noises but around the discoverers of new values.'

Viewed in this perspective, the life of Swami Vivekananda, whose hundred and fourth birthday we will be celebrating this month, heralds the dawn of a new hope to the bewildered humanity. His message transcends the barriers of time and place, and today he stands as a living symbol of universalism. Scholars and thinkers

in the different countries in Europe as well as in U.S.S.R. are engaged in researches to evaluate and assess his contribution to the realm of universal thought. To ascertain the sacred legacy which Swami Vivekananda has bequeathed to us and to scan his footprints he has left on the sands of time, we need to go back for a while to the pages of the annals of last few centuries.

Every student of history is familiar with the fact that the ancestry of the Renaissance thought-current, which leaped like a tornado in the nineteenth-century Europe, could be traced back to the fourteenth century philosophical fermentations when, during the Turkish invasion of Constantinople, the scholars there migrated into Europe, particularly to France and Italy. These thinkers, with their novel secular philosophy, gradually formed a school of thought the main contention of which was: 'The age of theology has gone by. Men will gradually leave off asking questions to which positive science can furnish no answer, and they need to find a substitute for the God to whom they have so long yielded their highest loyalty and devotion in the past. In other words, the physical man is the central fact around which the empirical world is rotating.' The great French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857) appeared in the late eighteenth century as the stout spokesman of this positive and humanistic outlook of life. Comte, of course, did not suddenly appear like a meteor in the horizon trailing a brief cloud of glory and then burning himself out in dim obscurity. Rather he came in the train of many other stars and satellites, who successfully enhanced the legacy of the fourteenth-century Renaissance into a

full-fledged positive philosophy. Of the others, there were Mill's *Utilitarianism*, Adam Smith's thesis of *Economic Man*, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and Hegel's *Dialectics of the Ideal of Absolute*; but, more or less, they ran along the same common highway towards the desired goal.

It was during the third decade of the nineteenth century that this humanistic school of positive thought began to gather momentum to emerge as a powerful movement and steal a march upon the intelligentsia of Europe. By this time modern science came into being. The startling discoveries of Kepler, Galileo, and Newton paved the way for the industrial revolution in England and France, and the barriers of traditional beliefs started to break down one after another. The positive basis of this new movement was further reinforced by the thesis of Charles Darwin,—(1859) '*Origin of Species*', Gregor Mendel's,—'*Law of the road of heredity*' (1866) and Herbert Spencer's slogan (1820-1903),—'*Survival of the fittest*'. (R. A. Gregory: *Discovery or The Spirit and Service of Science*, MacMillan and Co., London, pp. 189-92) The story of such a biological evolution with organic variations behind every living species rejected the idea of any special creation. The belief in the dictates of Christian theology—'On one day God made this earth and put light, air and water into it ... etc.'—came to be shaken rudely by the onrush of the new thought-waves. The views of the psychological school dominated by Freud (1856-1939), Adler, etc. all the more consolidated the previous hypotheses. Of the luminaries appearing one after another in the western horizon, the political economists like Marx and Engles were rather modern. Marx's thesis '*Das Kapital*', published in 1867, described man as the product of the dialectic materialism and endeavoured to explain everything, like civilization and

culture as mere secondary superstructures. This philosophy, as propounded by Marx and elaborated by Engles, added a new dimension to the Renaissance thought, and the dream of a new world of new values began to gain ascendancy in Europe.

But this Utopian dream proved to be too empty to predict any millennium. Modern physics was the first to make a distinction between the shadows and solidities of our knowledge in regard to the mysteries of the universe. During 1880 physicists like Faraday and Thomson sighted new light inside the atoms and thus the border between matter and energy came to be a shifting one. Gradually came forward modern chemistry, psychology and astronomy to uphold the findings of the physicists. Professor Kekule's (1858) conclusions on the atomic structures of organic compounds revealed a new system of new possibilities. Modern astronomy made a dreadful prediction that in the context of the present rate of radiation of heat by our dying sun, one day we might have to face an inglorious 'cold death'. Champions of modern astronomy brought home, on the one hand, the bright promises of the conquest of the space and, on the other hand, they discovered the awesome expanse of a universe of 'oppressive vastness and melancholy grandeur' where, like Milton's fallen angels, they found no end 'in wandering mazes lost'. Scientists and mathematicians like Sir James Jeans (1877-1946), Maxwell and H. N. Russel confirmed the same view and propounded with a sonorous diction that man with his petty fund of so-called knowledge was like a tiny Columbus tossing to and fro in the midst of the uncharted ocean of unknown and unknowable. (Sir James Jeans: *The Universe Around Us* and *The Mysterious Universe*, Cambridge University Press)

The history of mankind, to quote Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), shows indeed

that there is an 'enduring power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness'. These mighty developments of science made the nineteenth-century Europe saner in outlook to recapitulate over the postulates of the lofty Renaissance and as a result the torrential flow of positive humanism seemed to be slowing down and reaching a cross-road at the close of the century.

It was at this critical juncture that Swami Vivekananda appeared in the western world. When he set his foot on the hemisphere, materialism had reached its giddy height and Spencer's slogan—'Survival of the fittest' could be heard everywhere. In the Parliament of Religions in 1893, he was indeed before the parliament of men. On one side, there was the sea of mind tumultuous and overflowing with energy, and on the other, there lay an ocean calm with the long ages of spiritual development ... a world that dated itself from the Vedas and remembered itself in Upaniṣads, ... a world to which Buddhism was almost modern ...' (Sister Nivedita, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. xi) The hollowness of the western life that there were destitution, squalor, and ignorance standing side by side with luxurious living and snobbery, did not escape the attention of Swamiji. Western humanism in its mad bid to establish the undisputed suzerainty in this world built up networks of slogans and philosophies, dicta, and dialectics. It was intent on discovering the truth of life in its laboratory test-tubes; it believed that the whole universe would become compressed into its mathematical formula and it foresaw that the whole space above could be scanned through the eyes of its telescope. But the things appeared to be different. Swami Vivekananda with the conviction of a prophet thundered against the hollowness

of the western world. He made an emphatic assertion in the following unequivocal terms: 'Each soul is potentially divine.' 'Never forget the glory of human nature. We are the greatest gods.' 'We are the children of immortal bliss, holy and perfect.' 'God is the sum total of individual souls.' Man is not a bargaining animal, nor a product of the different dialectics,—man's life is not governed by the laws of supply and demand, no chain of chemical reactions can define his inner self and no equilibrium of the forces of physics would restore him to his divine glory. So he declared,—'Man has never lost his empire, the soul has never been bound ...' 'What we want are western science coupled with Vedanta, Brahmacharya as the guiding motto, and also Shraddhā and faith in one's own self'. 'Religion is the manifestation of divinity already in man'. 'Confucius, Moses, and Pythagoras; Buddha, Christ, Mohammad, Luther, Calvin, and the Sikhs; Theosophy, Spiritualism, and the like; all these mean only the preaching of the Divine-in-Man'. 'Science and religion will meet and shake hands, poetry and philosophy will become friends. ... This will be the religion of the future ...' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, p. 366, Vol. IV, p. 358, Vol. VIII, p. 229, Vol. II, p. 140) His prophetic message infused new life into the dry dogmas of humanism, added new meaning to the so-called positive sciences, bridged the gulf between macrocosm and microcosm, and opened up avenues through which commerce of ideas between the East and the West could become a reality. For his dynamic vision and unfathomable love for men Swamiji came to be regarded in the western world as the messiah of a new age. With the rapidity of a forestfire his message spread from one end of the globe to the other. Eminent scientists, staunch materialists, and turbulent psychologists began to assemble around him. During the

days after the Chicago Parliament of Religions, there had been instances where scientists like Lord Kelvin, Professor Halmholtz, Nicolas Tesla, and Hirom Maxim, philosophers like Max Müller and Paul Deussen, psychologists like William James, materialists like Robert Ingersoll all gathered round the chair of Swami Vivekananda to listen to him.

It is true that souls like Swami Vivekananda always come riding on the crest of a new wave and it is truer still that the contemporary world, although it becomes vibrant with the sound of a new call, so often fails to evaluate the real import of their messages. It would perhaps be too early to assess the message of Swami Vivekananda now. There is the saying, 'Measure the mind of the man by the shadow it casts'. We must therefore allow sufficient time to roll on so that the full length shadow of Swami Vivekananda becomes visible on the canvas of history.

The role of Swami Vivekananda in the East, particularly in India, was not the same as it was in the West. In the West the heroic monk appeared like a cyclone sweeping over the whole western sky. He vehemently criticized the social structure of the occident, built and developed upon the sordid material foundation, prognosticated the dark future of such a diabolical philosophy bereft of a ballast of eternal values, broadcast the message of the divinity and basic unity of man and harped on the need of world evangelism. But, in India, he was more a patriot than a conventional saint. His saintly aroma mingled with a patriotic fervour, and his sense of nationality gradually merged into the vastness of internationalism. At the most critical hour of Indian history when India was politically subjugated and economically exploited, his life was projected like a powerful challenge to the rising crescendo of intoxicating material thought-waves.

By his eloquent statement of the past, unequivocal diagnosis of the present, and prophetic vision of the future, he added a new momentum to our national life. Swami Vivekananda roamed round the four corners of India to discover its soul and burst like a bomb upon the age-long stupor of the Indian masses. During his wandering days he saw millions of the descendants of sages groaning under the wheels of social inequity and cultural backwardness and millions raising pitiful cries due to hunger and starvation. With the insight of a true prophet, he observed how the epitome of catholicism had come to be almost synonymous with a hotbed of narrowness and bigotry, and the people had become dehumanized and spiritually bankrupt, and how the vengeance of history had come down upon the land with all its natural consequences.

In the West he sounded a tocsin of severe warning that the materialistic structure of the West would be crumbling into dust unless the spirit of eastern introspection was imported into it. The gigantic experiment made to build a social order upon the foundation of material interests as the saviour of human destiny failed in Greece, as it failed in Italy. Any further escalation to this end is sure to lead humanity into a terrible abyss and ultimately the whole world will be enveloped in the flaming fire of a live volcano. The history of Europe, therefore, should serve as a warning and not an invitation to imitate, and the world must look beyond and behind Europe for its necessary ideal.

But in India the same Swami Vivekananda has sounded the temple bell of a new religion which can win bread for the people and eradicate the starvation of the mute millions. The new monsoon, raging in the West with its scientific revivalism, since the days of the sixteenth century, was not a random freak of nature having

no meaning for him. He readily visualized in contrast the disequilibrium persisting in our national life and agitating the hearts of the millions and considered the inroad of science and reason of the West to be the welcome wind for India as well. Appearing in the twilight of the last two centuries, Swami Vivekananda stood like the massive Himalayas facing the incoming monsoon, pregnant with new possibilities, and caused a heavy down-pour of ideas on the soil of India. In the World's Parliament of Religions he said: 'The crying evil in the East is not religion—they have religion enough—but it is bread that the suffering millions of burning India cry out for with parched throats.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. I, p. 20) It is true that the present debilitating state is a significant pointer to the contraction of our national history and every contraction is sure to be followed by an equal expansion. Mounting degeneration of the centuries has made us forgetful of our national potential and the soul underneath has come to be almost fossilized. But, beneath these heaps of abominable self-forgetfulness and decivilization, the 'Mohenjo-daro' of eternal India has not been lost altogether. The reasons of science must help us to re-excavate and rediscover that 'Mohenjo-daro' from out of the accumulated debris of the ages. Swami Vivekananda foresaw the immense possibility of Vedānta to function as a practical religion when it would be coupled with the ingenuity of western science. The Vedānta, although it 'bakes no bread', propounds the doctrine of oneness and solidarity of man and exhorts us to have faith in ourselves. This doctrine of divinity of man and the unity of souls should no longer remain as a mere theory in the cloud-land of imagination. 'And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upaniṣads and believe "I am the

soul," "Me the sword cannot cut; me the air cannot dry; I am the Omnipotent, I am the Omniscient." ... These conceptions of the Vedānta must come out from the forest and the cave, they must come out to work at the bar and the bench, in the pulpit and in the cottage of the poor man, with the fishermen that are catching fish and with the students that are studying. They call to every man, woman and child, whatever their occupation, wherever they may be. How can the fishermen and all these carry out the ideas of the Upaniṣads? If the fisherman thinks that he is the spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if a student thinks he is the spirit, he will be a better student.' (Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Vol. III, pp. 244, 245) We must have to regain our heritage through toil and tears. Disengaged from the adventitious notions which have crept in through ages, our religion must evolve to regain its power and face the changes, in the spirit as does science. It must be relived and reinterpreted in the daily life of man. The Vedānta must filter down to every soul to awaken into activity. Science, therefore, needs to be superadded to make Vedānta a dynamic movement in the social and national life of India. Ideas govern the world and thoughts are the ancestors of facts. What we want is the faith in our vision, faith in our past, and faith in the future—for it is faith which lubricates the wheels of any progressive civilization and the history of the world, too, is but the history of a few hundred men who had faith in themselves. We must banish all fear, which is the greatest of all superstitions. It is fear which is the dark room where all the negatives of life are developed, and it is fearlessness which brings heaven in a moment. Matthew Arnold characterized sweetness and light as the two marks of culture. To this we

have to add a third,—the strength, to make it creative and living. These doctrines of abounding vitality, invincible faith and heritage of virility are the gifts which Swami Vivekananda has vouchsafed unto India. With the keen insight of a historian he declared that the soul of India, once rediscovered and put to its pristine glory, would quiver anew into endless creative expressions and shed the lustre of immortality once more in this world of storm and stress. Immortality is the language of the soul, and this has been regarded to be the greatest pabulum needed for the modern man gasping under the gruelling heat of materialism. Imbued with this spirit of oneness, India must stand up to inspire the world to save itself from the impending catastrophe. This has been her role in the past, and the history is sure to repeat itself. The philosophy of Advaita, according to Swami Vivekananda, has twice saved India from materialism. By the coming of Buddha, who appeared at a time of most hideous and wide-spread materialism and by the coming of Śāṅkara who, when materialism had reconquered India in the form of demoralization of the government classes and of superstition in the lower orders, put fresh light into Vedānta by making a rational philosophy emerge out of it. And once again Swami Vivekananda delivered the message of the triumph of the Vedānta over the dark forces of matter which enveloped the horizon of India. The ship of our national destiny decidedly ran aground on the tricky sands of time, and it was this heroic monk who hauled the sinking ship once more to the haven of safety. Upon the bed-rock of Vedānta Swami Vivekananda wanted to build the edifice of new India. If the purpose of religion—the manifestation of the basic divinity of man—is to become a reality, then we must have to scheme a new order of society and

produce persons inspired by new sets of values and possessed of characters blazing with the new faith. Men of strong vigorous character are the pillars who actually uphold the culture of any land. Swami Vivekananda wanted to build India not by mere bricks and mortars, but by men of character. 'Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning, it is character that can cleave through adamant walls of difficulties. Bear this in mind.' Swami Vivekananda : *The Complete Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 476) This making of the men for India was the keynote of the mission of his whole life. With this new light of education and culture, he searched for his would-be torch-bearers, still groping in the darkness of ignorance in the huts of peasants, in dales and jungles. He roared like a lion to rouse into activity the sleeping leviathan with the life-giving message of the Vedānta. Instead of making any peremptory demand upon credulity, unwarranted by science and reason, he interpreted the tenets of religion in the light of the need of the age. With the burning flame of patriotism consuming his heart, he tried to carry food and education to the sunken starving millions. Our sages of old meditated upon the effulgent light of the cosmic divine beyond the impermanence of this mundane life; but the sage of modern India worshipped the god dwelling in the heart of men and discovered the empirical route to that Reality. This discovery of god in man and the new interpretation of the message of the solidarity of souls are by far the greatest of the contributions which Swami Vivekananda has handed down to the posterity. His life is the mirror where the image of new India has been fully reflected, and his message is the bed-rock upon which we need to build our national future. In the words of Sister Nivedita, 'His universal soul was rooted in its human soil'. To Jawaharlal Nehru,

'Swami Vivekananda powerfully influenced the India of today', to Dr. Radhakrishnan, 'Swami Vivekananda gave articulation and voice to the eternal spirit of India', and in the eyes of the celebrated Soviet indologist, Dr. Chelysev, 'Swami Vivekananda is the greatest Indian patriot, humanist and democrat and impassioned fighter for a better future of his people and all mankind.' Standing in the midst of the full blaze of twentieth-century India, throbbing with the spirit of new creation, it is high time that once again we should have a reverential glimpse into his dynamic role. He was, in fact, India personified. Directly or indirectly India of today is his veritable shadow.

The advent of Swami Vivekananda into the arena of world-thinking was therefore

a dire historical necessity. Like Prometheus of old he brought the fire of immortality to the earth for the rescue of modern man. His clarion call to the West is the sacred 'Magna carta' of human liberty and his booming message to the East is the greatest mandate for the vindication of the glory of man all over the world. The present age is the age of negation. There is no ray of hope visible and no word of assurance audible. At this critical impasse, no material philosopher, no expansionist politician, no military dictator can provide a solace to the agonized humanity and for this we once again look to Swami Vivekananda for our guidance and inspiration. His is a voice that unites and creates, that fashions and builds. Let us not take chances any further at this time.

BUDDHISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION—2

II. THE TEACHING

PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

In the first section, we caught a glimpse of the sacred scenes in the life of Buddha which influenced the life of many, from monarchs down to peasants, and set their feet on the righteous Eightfold Path to Freedom. Let us now turn our attention to the teachings of the Tathāgata, who is one of the greatest *gurus* that the world has produced. In the present-day tension-ridden and distracted world, Buddha's words of wisdom are an unfailing haven of rest for those who are seeking inner calm and peace.

SOURCES

I have already pointed out that we do not have authentic contemporary records

relating to Bhagavān Buddha's life and teachings. We have to rely on the Tripiṭakas for information about the message of the Enlightened One. The Tripiṭakas (or 'Three Baskets') are: the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, which is metaphysical and deals with ultimate truths; the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, which is concerned with discipline for monks; and the *Sutta Piṭaka*, which gives us the Master's discourses illustrated with stories and parables. These were recited at the First Council respectively by Kaśyapa, the wisest, Upāli, the oldest, and Ānanda, the most devoted of Buddha's disciples. The Council was convened, soon after the *mahāparinirvāṇa*, at Rājagṛha, to settle doctrinal disputes among the

followers of the faith. It is out of these Tripiṭakas that the cardinal teachings of Buddha are culled and presented to the world today.

Sometimes it is argued that one cannot be positively certain about the actual teachings of the Tathāgata, as three successive councils had to be convened, the last in 241 B.C., to settle doctrinal disputes. Even then, the teachings were not reduced to writing till 80 B.C., when, during the reign of Vattagāma in Ceylon, the first Buddhist scriptures in written form were produced. There is some force in these arguments. But it must be remembered that powerful mnemonic disciplines, trustworthy in the results they yielded, were prescribed and practised in ancient India. It was a matter of daily experience in those days to meet a teacher who reproduced, purely from memory, entire texts of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, and saw to it that their pupils also acquired these remarkable powers of reproduction. Hence, absence of written records need not prompt us to doubt the authenticity of the teachings in the Piṭakas. Moreover, when the same doctrine or law is repeated over and over again by different schismatic schools, and is also incorporated in expositions where it does not seem to fit into the general framework of what is being discussed, then it may be taken for granted that such a doctrine or law is being accepted because of the authority of the Master behind it. With this criterion as our guide, we can pick out the authentic teachings of the Tathāgata. After all, in a field like the one we are treading, he who walks with reverence can develop 'a sixth sense' which will be of help to him in distinguishing the original teachings and later interpolations.

ETHICAL IDEALISM OF THE TEACHING

When we view Buddha's teaching as an

integrated whole, we are impressed by its ethical and idealistic nature. Dr. Radhakrishnan has characterized early Buddhism as 'Ethical Idealism'. (*Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, Ch. VII) In all his teachings, the Master's emphasis is on the ethical purity of action. This purity, however, was linked with the final goal of life, namely, *nirvāṇa*. Ethics, unless it is hitched to the star of spiritual idealism, will degenerate into a pragmatic and relativistic code of conduct.

THE SERMON TO A LAY SEEKER

It is usual to begin the exposition of Buddha's teachings with the *Dharmacakra-pravartana* sermon. But let us make a slight change in the usual order of discussion, and begin with the lesson that the Enlightened One taught Yaśa, the first lay disciple. The teaching is plain, simple, and straightforward. By way of introduction, Buddha spoke to Yaśa of almsgiving and moral duties, of evil and the vanity of desires, and of the blessings which come from relinquishing desires. The keynote is inner purity arising out of the extinction of desires. This teaching is very old. All great teachers in ancient India laid great stress on the need for absolute detachment from the world and its allurements. But Buddha seems to have gone a step further. He seems to have stressed the need for giving up the desire for desires. Man not only has desires, but he clings to them passionately. He desires to have desires. It is this basic desire for desire that is the root of all misery in the world. It is a malignant and poisonous weed, and as such, should be plucked out root and branch and cast into fire.

Buddha, it is sometimes argued, did not insist on the rooting out of *all* desires. The desire for *nirvāṇa* must be there; otherwise, how can one obtain spiritual freedom? Let us admit the force of the argument. But it may, perhaps, be desirable to con-

fine the term 'desire' to 'thirst' for sense-objects and use the word 'aspiration' for our longing for the pure and perfect state of Enlightenment. This distinction between pure longing for *nirvāṇa* and the passion-filled thirst for sense-objects may be further emphasized by taking into consideration their physiological concomitants. Moggallāna, seeing Sāriputta at a distance after the latter's first meeting with Assaji, cried out: 'Your eyes are shining, your skin is clear, your colour is pure and transparent! What have you found?' These certainly are not the physical symptoms of a mind filled with sense-desires. Christmas Humphreys seems to be aware of the distinction that has been drawn above. He says that 'good will' is a more suitable expression than 'good desire' for connoting our longing for spiritual ideals. (*Buddhism*, Penguin Books, p. 92)

After Yaśa had assimilated the preliminary lesson, the Tathāgata imparted to him the central doctrines of his faith, as he expounded them to the five ascetics in the Mrgavana of Isipatana.

THE FIRST SERMON

Let us go back and witness the sacred scene in Mrgavana. In the first section, I drew attention to a significant observation that Buddha made about the manner of addressing a teacher. (*Vide Prabuddha Bharata*, July 65, pp. 299-300) After administering this mild rebuke to Kondañña and his four associates, the Master opened their eyes to the eternal truth.

The first instruction that the Enlightened One gave the ascetics was on the Middle Path which he himself followed with notable success. 'There are two extremes', said the Master, 'which he who would follow my way must shun. The one is a life of pleasure devoted to desire and enjoyment. . . . The other is the life of self-mortification and torture.'

Human life, at all times and in all climes, has been plagued with desires. These desires are destructive of all spiritual tendencies, and so, in ancient India, graded steps in the practices for overcoming the allurements of the body as well as the mind were devised. But, in their great enthusiasm, many seekers inflicted gruesome injuries on their own bodies, in the belief that thereby all desire could be made extinct. Buddha himself tried some of those methods, and found them not only useless, but positively detrimental to the realization of Truth. So he strictly prohibited these practices. He insisted on inner purity and on that type of physical discipline conducive to its attainment. In his own experience, he found the Middle Way most efficacious for the pursuit and the final attainment of *nirvāṇa*. Therefore, he dwelt on it at some length in the first sermon. In passing, it may be mentioned that there is a sound pedagogical principle implied in Buddha's enunciation of the Middle Path.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

When Kondañña and his four associates were convinced of the efficacy of the Middle Path, Buddha instructed them in the Four Noble Truths and the sacred Eightfold Way. In plain language, the Four Noble Truths are: (1) *Duḥkha* (pain and suffering) is all-pervasive in this world of impermanence; (2) this *duḥkha* has a cause; (3) the cause can be made extinct; and (4) there is a well-defined path for annihilating the cause. Buddha emphatically asserts that the four truths are eternal, that they were taught by the previous Buddhas, and that he was only carrying on the traditions of the ancient line of Buddhas.

The term '*duḥkha*' needs elucidation. Some scholars seem to be of the opinion that 'suffering' and 'pain' are too strong

and violent in their connotation to convey the idea that Buddha had in his mind. (Sir Charles Eliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. I, p. 103) Perhaps, he meant 'sorrow' arising out of clinging to the impermanent in this phenomenal world. The uneasiness and discomfort that follow the longing for unreal things are perhaps meant to be stressed by the expression '*duḥkha*'. We long for peace, but peace we cannot find in this samsāric world. Sorrow is universally prevalent.

It is true that on rare occasions we experience real joy and happiness. But, if we analyse these moments of *ānanda*, we shall discover that they arise out of a sense of detachment. Somehow, once in a way, we seem to reach the exalted level of disinterestedness eulogized in the *Gītā*. Such moments are few and far-between. All others, we must admit, are steeped in sorrow, some perhaps lightly, but others very deeply indeed. Further scrutiny reveals that longings of the flesh are the root cause of all our troubles. Buddha wants us to free ourselves from this heavy millstone hanging round our neck. In order to create a longing for deliverance in the minds of ordinary men, Buddha tried to place in the focus of their consciousness the fact of universal pain and sorrow in this world. Hence, he gives the place of prime importance to *duḥkha* in his scheme of Four Noble Truths.

The usual charge of pessimism brought against Buddhism will be answered elsewhere. At this stage, however, I may point out that the Master did not look upon life in this world as a thing of no value. 'It is fine thing to be a man and have the power of helping others, ... the best life is that which is entirely unselfish and a continual sacrifice. In his touching reply to the messengers of King Śuddhodana who had asked his son, the Buddha, to visit the palace, the Tathāgata says :

Let no man miss to render reverence
To those who lend him life,
Whereby come means,
To live and die no more.'

(ibid.)

This life is the means by which one can live on and die no more, that is, one can attain *nirvāṇa* and conquer death. So, this life is not to be lightly thought of, much less despised. Christmas Humphreys, referring to the application of higher criticism to the Pali canon, says that Mrs. Rhys Davids 'has made it clear that the Buddha's original message to mankind was cast in positive form. ... his teaching was a call to the More of life, not to the ending of it, and not to the running away from a relative and imperfect world. The ephemeral self must die, so much is clear: but what shall attain salvation, become enlightened, reach *nirvāṇa*, when this unreal, separative, misery-causing self (ego) is dead? The answer is Man.' (*Buddhism*, p. 13)

This optimistic element in the teaching has to be stressed, because of its educational implications. Of course, the teacher should start with a keen understanding and firm first-hand conviction of the *duḥkha* enveloping life in this world. The dissatisfaction will be keenest in the realm of cognitive experience for the teacher, who will strive to remove it by attaining a higher state of knowledge. And, what is more, the teacher will infect his pupils with this sense of 'divine dissatisfaction', and spur them on to higher levels of attainment.

The second Noble Truth is that *duḥkha* has a cause. Nothing uncaused ever happens. For that particular brand of *duḥkha* which afflicts anyone of us, there is a particular chain of causation. But running through all these there is a thread, black as black can be and which thus can easily be identified. And that black strand is *trṣṇā* or desire. It is that thirst or

passionate longing that man has for the impermanent. It is the misery of endless longing for that which cannot last long and can never bring peace that is the originator of *duḥkha*. *Tṛṣṇā* (*tanhā* in Pali) is the lust of the flesh, the lust of life, and the love of this present world. The term is difficult to translate, but the following quotation will, perhaps, convey the idea which the Tathāgata had in his mind. 'It is the thirst or craving which supplies the binding force to hold men on the wheel of rebirth . . . causing the renewal of existence, accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction, now here, now there *Tanhā* is the inner conscious support we eagerly give to life and its changes, and its tendency towards rebirth, believing that life will make us feel happy and fulfilled. (But) Life really fails to give us fulfilment.' (ibid., p. 91)

Buddha appears to have stressed the restrictive nature of *tanhā*, which makes one ego-centred and selfish. It obstructs the free flow of *karuṇā*. Flow of compassion is the surest means of expansion of self, and *tanhā* dams this flow. *Tanhā* ministers to the cravings of our lower nature, and when we yield to its sway, we affirm the lower nature, cling to it, and finally commit the great blunder of identifying ourselves with it. *Tanhā*, therefore, must be completely destroyed.

The third Noble Truth is that *tanhā* can be destroyed by rooting out its cause. There is a way of escape from the clutches of this monster. Were there not such a way, and had not Buddha shown it to us, then Buddhism would indeed be a gospel of despair. Edwin Arnold says (ibid., p. 92, quoted from *Light of Asia*, Book VII):

If ye lay bound upon the wheel of change
And no way were of breaking from the
chain

The Heart of Boundless Being is a
Curse,
The soul of things fell pain. *Ye are
not bound.*

Tanhā can be exterminated by stilling the lower self, and allowing the higher Self to expand and consume it, through boundless compassion and love. This is a magnificent ideal, and the path to its attainment is clearly laid down, with graduated steps to suit seekers of every type of mental calibre. And that path is the fourth Noble Truth.

Before we dwell on the steps in the Path, let us discuss a point of importance from the pedagogical standpoint. The destruction of *tanhā* is to be achieved solely through *self-effort*. The Tathāgata has said: 'There is none that can save a man but himself—no, none in heaven or earth. It is he himself who must walk the way; the Enlightened One can but show it. . . .'

The teacher can but show the way to his pupils. He cannot carry them on his shoulders. They have to learn by their own effort. Of course, the teacher will give timely warning about the pitfalls and dangers. But it is the pupil who has to face them in his own person and overcome them. Self-effort is the secret of success at *all* levels of knowledge.

The fourth Noble Truth is the Eightfold Path. In a sense, this path is the most important teaching of the Master. It is the path that he himself followed for attaining enlightenment. So his exposition is so simple and, at the same time, so forceful and arresting that it enters straight into our hearts. The man who had never given any thought to spiritual matters, the sceptic who thinks himself all-wise, and the habitual evil-doer—even these are captivated by the Tathāgata's teaching. Having tasted the sweetness of Buddha's words, they turn their backs on their past, and

fix their gaze steadfastly on *nirvāṇa*, and walk on tirelessly towards the goal.

The eight steps in the Path are: (1) *samyag-drṣṭi* (right view or belief); (2) *samyak-saṅkalpa* (right resolve or aspiration); (3) *samyag-vācā* (right speech); (4) *samyak-karmāntā* (right action); (5) *samyag-ājīva* (right living or livelihood); (6) *samyag-vyāyāma* (right endeavour); (7) *samyak-smṛti* (right recollection of thought); and (8) *samyak-samādhi* (right meditation or self-concentration). On a first reading, these steps seem to be simple and clear, as they are meant for all classes of men, from the ordinary householder up to the ascetic who has renounced the world. However, a moment's reflection will reveal to us some of the deeper implications of the Path. It is applicable in an equal measure to the *brahmacārin*, the *gṛhastha*, the *vānaprastha*, and the *sannyāsin*. It is applicable with equal force to the student. To the ordinary pupils and students of the modern age, with their ephemeral ideals and aspirations confined to lower levels in the scale of values, the Path applies with double force. Faith in the subjects they have chosen to study, a resolve to master the intellectual discipline in all its aspects, polite and inoffensive conversation with fellow students, punctual and efficient discharge of the duties assigned by the teacher, unflinching effort to achieve the aim for which study has been undertaken, purification of inner life, and, above all, development of powers of concentration—these are necessary for success even at the comparatively lower levels of attainment sought by the ordinary student. The higher one rises in the scale of aspirations, the greater is the need for adhering to the Path scrupulously.

Each step in the Path, as I have already remarked, is simple enough to be understood by the ordinary householder; yet, at

the same time, it is profound enough to move great ascetics to their depths. Witness how deeply the great Kaśyapa was moved when he heard the Master preach the Doctrine. The Path is overflowing with spiritual dynamism, and can readily lead the right aspirant on to *nirvāṇa* in no time. Let us study the steps in the Path and understand their nature and purpose in life.

Samyag-drṣṭi (*samma-diṭṭhi*) has been variously translated as right view, right comprehension, right understanding, right belief, and so forth. It is true that *drṣṭi* can make or mar a man. The total personality of an individual is involved in his *drṣṭi*, which is 'perception' supported by belief. And this belief, of course, is in regard to the Four Noble Truths. Buddha, however, is particular about the aim of this *drṣṭi*. Mere knowledge or belief, by itself, cannot confer freedom. It is only the first step in the long road to *nirvāṇa*, and should be treated as such.

The second step is *samyak-saṅkalpa* (*samma-saṅkappa*), which is right resolve or aspiration. Understanding and belief, as has been pointed out already, are not enough to confer illumination. One begins, but does not end, with them. When doubt is dispelled, and the mind is firmly established in the belief that one is on the right path, then one has to resolve firmly to pursue the path till the goal is reached. It is here that 'will' comes in. Buddha has given us clear instructions as to how this 'will' can gain extraordinary strength through a process of purification. With a will thus purified and sanctified, and with a steady resolve which is the outcome of that will, progress on the path becomes comparatively easy.

The three succeeding steps, *samyag-vācā* (*samma-vācā*, right speech), *samyak-karmāntā* (*samma-kammātā*, right action), and *samyag-ājīva* (*samma-ājīva*, right

living) relate to 'human behaviour' in its all-embracing sense. These steps emphasize the outer aspects of moral conduct, and are a great aid in purifying the will. The directives given under the three heads may appear to be couched in negative terms, but they are potent forces for uplifting and purifying the mind. They occur in the precepts of all great religious teachers of the world. Under right speech, the simple directive that is given is: 'Do not utter falsehood.' The implications of this simple command are far-reaching. One is forbidden not only from speaking a lie, but also from indulging in slander, harsh words, and time-killing gossip. Speech has the power to control our thought, and in a very true sense, thought, is the stuff out of which our personality is made. We realize now the need for purity in speech, for uttering truth, and for using kind words in our dealings with others. And as often as we can, we should restrain speech and maintain silence. This is one of the most effective means for self-control.

As with speech, so also with action, purity is enjoined as the condition for attainment of liberation. Non-killing, non-stealing, and abhorrence of lust are laid down as the major principles for the guidance of man's actions. It is needless to point out the impact of pure action on the personality of the agent of such action. These simple prohibitive rules apply to men in all walks of life and at all stages of mental development. They apply with special force to pupils and students. And last, but not the least, in this group of three steps is right living, which, too, is universal in its application. *Samma-ājīva* has been translated into 'right livelihood' and 'right occupation or profession'. But 'right living' seems to be the most satisfactory equivalent of the principle. True, the emphasis is on honest and irreproach-

able means of earning one's livelihood to maintain oneself and one's dependants. But it is really much wider in scope, including as it does 'living' in all its aspects.

The three steps discussed above relate to the outer aspects of moral conduct. These are important, but it must be remembered that Buddha laid great stress on inner purity. The times he lived in demanded such emphasis on inner discipline and inner sanctity. Cults had grown up which held out promises of salvation through outer sacrificial rites performed often by proxy. The Upaniṣads had already taken up the cudgels against these ceremonials, and Lord Buddha supported the stand taken by them. For the ordinary man, these rites were an intolerable burden. Hence, a drastic reform seemed to be the need of the hour, and the Tathāgata initiated the reform by preaching the Four Noble Truths.

The last three steps in the Eightfold Path are: *samyag-vyāyāma* (*samma-vāyāma*, right effort or right endeavour), *samyak-smṛti* (*samma-sati*, right recollection), and *samyak-samādhi* (*samma-samādhi*, right meditation). On the face of it, the inwardness of mental discipline is patent in all these.

Right effort is, after all, self-effort. The *sādhalca* has to help himself. The *guru* may point out the path, but it is the disciple who has to walk on and reach the goal, all by himself. Some hints are given as to how best right effort may be directed. The aspirant should aim at ridding himself of the evil that has accumulated in his mind, and at not allowing fresh evil to enter in, by strengthening the good elements in his nature and by striving ceaselessly after perfection. These 'hints' are universal in their application. The pupil in the lowest class as well as the most advanced research scholar in the university, the business man, the white-collared pro-

essional, and, above all, the seeker after Truth—all of them can derive benefit from interpreting the hints correctly and applying them to their own special problems, often correctly interpreting them. Dr. Radhakrishnan throws further light on this important step, so far as the spiritual aspirant is concerned: 'If we want to expel an undesirable idea which haunts our mind, Buddha recommends the following five methods: (1) attend to some good idea; (2) face the dangers of the consequences of letting the idea develop into action; (3) turn attention away from the bad idea; (4) analyse its antecedents, and so nullify the consequent impulse; and (5) coerce the mind with the aid of bodily tension.' Right effort, thus, appears to be the chief means for destroying anger, envy, pride, and attachment to objects of sense.

The last but one step is *samyak-smṛti*. We have the same difficulty in translating *smṛti* as we had in the case of quite a few terms previously. *Smṛti* is not just 'thought' or 'recollection'. It is an experience which is much deeper than what is conveyed by these expressions. Dr. Radhakrishnan uses the word *prajñā*, which, perhaps, brings out fully the significance of *samyak-smṛti*. '*Prajñā* stands for the highest activity of the human mind, and has supreme value from the religious point of view.' *Prajñā* is really true insight which one gets when one realizes his unity with the rest of the universe. It is 'recollection', no doubt, but it is recollection of one's true nature, the memory of which has been dimmed temporarily. The 'recollection' of one's unity with the universe is certainly right mindfulness, because it is this recollection which will spur one on to climb the last and the most difficult step in the ascent to *nirvāna*.

We have reached the last stage of

samyak-samādhi in the Eightfold Path. *Samādhi* is achieved through intense inner discipline by means of meditation, concentration, and *dhyāna*. I am not entering here into a discussion of the various efficacious aids to meditation, so well known to all Buddhists. I shall only describe briefly the four successive states of *dhyāna* which lead to final spiritual freedom. The first of these stages, known as *jhānas*, is characterized by joy accompanying insight attained through contemplation in solitude; the second by calm and mental peace; the third by complete absence of 'I'-ness or ego-feeling; and the fourth by perfect tranquillity, when the mind, exalted and purified, is indifferent to all emotions, be they pleasurable or painful. Buddha passed through these four stages when he attained *nirvāna*.

Scholars, as well as *bhikkhus*, have described the nature of the four *jhānas* with great care and insight. Das Gupta says that in the first *jhāna* there is discursive thinking, with the mind concentrated on objects with form and name. (A *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 105) This state is superseded by inward bliss. In the second *jhāna*, the mind is calm and unruffled. The bliss and one-pointed concentration persist, and there is in addition buoyant jubilation. In the third *jhāna*, the sage experiences *sukha* and *ekāgratā*, but he is unattached to objects. He has risen above the dualisms of pleasure and pain. The possibility of the mind's sliding down is there. The fourth and final *jhāna* releases the sage from all *sukha* and *duḥkha*. A state of supreme indifference to all mental states (*upekṣatā*) prevails. This is the state of complete enlightenment, of full freedom and perfection. The *sādhaka* has become an *arhat*.

Bhikku Nyanatiloka throws light on the

four *jhānas*. (*Fundamentals of Buddhism [Four Lectures]*, Buddha Sahitya Sabha, 1956, p. 70) After referring to the various grades of concentration, the Bhikku first explains the nature of *jhānas* in general. *Jhānas* are supersensuous states of perfect mental absorption, wherein there is complete cessation of all sense activity. The mind, however, is fully awake and alert. Solitude in the strictest sense and unremitting practice are needed to achieve this state of mental purity.

In the first *jhāna*, the *sādhaka* experiences peace and bliss, but the faculty of discursive thought is active. This cognitive activity ceases in the second *jhāna*, where there is rapture and joy. The next stage of third *jhāna* is characterized by equanimous joy. It is said that the kind of rapture experienced at the second level fades away when the third *jhāna* is attained. The fourth *jhāna*, which is the highest stage of supersensuous experience, is marked by the complete disappearance of all joys and raptures and ecstasies of lower *jhānas*. Bhikku Nyanatiloka asserts that 'The mind, after emerging from the Fourth Jhana, is . . . serene, pure, lucid, stainless, devoid of evil, pliable, able to act, firm and imperturbable'.

We can trace the line of evolution running through the four *jhānas*. At the start, all sense activities cease, but pure cognitive activity persists. There is also an experience of joy. At the basis of the *jhāna* pyramid, cognitive and affective experiences of the purer kind are present. As the seeker ascends higher and higher, mental activities cease, and the experience of bliss also gets refined and purified. At the last stage, even this bliss falls off, and there is peace and equanimity. It is a transcendental state beyond all cognition, affection, and conation, which cannot be described, but can be felt at first hand.

Such is the magnificent Eightfold Path, which leads to true freedom. Many are its educational implications. A few have been touched on already, and the others will be discussed in the last section.

PRATITYA-SAMUTPADA

Closely linked to the Eightfold Path is the Buddhistic doctrine of *pratitya-samutpāda* (or dependent origination). It is the doctrine of the causal chain with its twelve component links. I have already mentioned that after attaining *nirvāna*, Buddha, in his state of *sambodhi*, spent a week in contemplating the causal chain. In spite of the controversy over the exact point of time when this doctrine was made a part of the Path, and even over its authorship, we must admit that the concept of *pratitya-samutpāda* (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) occupies a central place in early Buddhism. Besides, it is of value for a student of philosophy of education.

Buddha, as we have already noted, begins his message to the world by pointing out the universal prevalence of suffering. This suffering has a cause. That everything has a cause, that nothing uncaused ever occurs by chance, and that when the cause is made extinct, its effect is destroyed, are principles which underlie Buddha's main teachings. It is on the basis of these principles that Buddha has formulated the Eightfold Path to liberation. It will therefore be seen that *pratitya-samutpāda* is, in a very important sense, the foundation for the Noble Truths and Eightfold Path.

I shall, at this stage, only enumerate and comment on the links in the causal chain, postponing the elucidation of its logical and metaphysical basis to a later section. The chain may perhaps be represented thus :

LINKS

Previous Birth

1. Ignorance (*avidyā*)
2. Impressions (*saṃskāras*) carried over to

Present Birth

3. Initial embryonic consciousness (*viññāna*)
4. Body-mind in the embryo (*nāma-rūpa*)
5. Six organs (*ṣaḍāyatana*)
6. Contact of organs with objects (*sparśa*)
7. Sense experience (*vedanā*)
8. Thirst (*trṣṇā*)
9. Attachment (*upādāna*)
10. Desire for rebirth (*bhava*)

Following Birth

11. Rebirth (*jāti*)
12. Disease, old age, death (*jarā-marāṇa*)

Such is the causal chain with its twelve successive links, the first two of which pertain to the past birth, the eight immediately following to the present birth, and the last two to the birth to be. Sometimes, the links are presented in the reverse order emphasizing the logical, rather than the temporal, sequence. Usually, the symbol of a wheel with twelve spokes is used to indicate the ever revolving and ever continuing cyclic nature of birth, death, and rebirth. The ceaseless whirl of this wheel, with its *nidānas* (or components), must be arrested. In fact, the entire wheel must be smashed. Luckily for us, Buddha's teachings place within our reach the means for destroying the wheel of *saṃsāra*. However, let us try to understand the nature of the wheel and its *nidānas*, so that we can locate and attack the points at which its strength lies. Each link in the chain of causation has been analysed fully, and the results of the analysis are set forth in the doctrine which goes by the name of

pratītya-samutpāda (or dependent origination). Every phenomenon, according to this doctrine, is *completely dependent* upon other phenomena as conditions. If these conditions are nullified, then the phenomenon will cease to occur. If the conditions generating rebirth, suffering, and death are destroyed, then the individual will attain freedom. This is the central teaching of Buddhism. Let us, therefore, devote some attention to the understanding of the chain of causation.

Certain general remarks may be made before we enter into a detailed discussion of *pratītya-samutpāda*. We have to remind ourselves right at the start that, profound as the theoretical ramifications of *pratītya-samutpāda* are, the doctrine is primarily a guide to practical moral conduct. It should never be forgotten that the basic teaching of the Enlightened One, in *all* its aspects, is meant to help the ordinary man. *Pratītya-samutpāda* must therefore serve the purpose of the Tathāgata.

The doctrine is not meant to throw light on a first cause. The *nidānas* are, no doubt, given in a certain order, but there is no justification for reading into *avidyā* anything more than what was meant by the Master. *Avidyā* is *not* a first or a primal cause. It is a first condition only in the logical sense.

Let us begin our discussion of the *nidānas* with the link which is connected with the first Noble Truth, namely, 'disease, old age, and death'. These sources of *duḥkha* are universal in their sway, and are conditioned by birth in the human body. Had we not been born, we would not have become victims to *duḥkha*. Birth, in its turn, is brought about by the 'desire to be reborn'. The life-affirming volition of our mind brings about rebirth. Why, then, is there this life-affirming volition, when it is crystal clear that birth and *duḥkha* are indissolubly linked? Why does man, knowing that

birth will invariably lead to pain and suffering, persist in wanting to be reborn? It is in answering this question that Buddha reveals a fact which may be platitudinous, but must be driven home to our minds with considerable force. The desire to be reborn is conditioned by our passionate craving for sense objects. It is *trṣṇā* that is the root of the trouble. *Upādāna* is only *trṣṇā* in a developed form. Buddha has already described *trṣṇā* as the cause of *duḥkha*, while expounding the second Noble Truth. Man has got so habituated to leading a life of desires that he fails to see the terrific evil lurking in *trṣṇā*. Desire is the most enslaving and poisonous link in the chain of causes. *Trṣṇā*, in its turn, is conditioned by *vedanā* generated by sense experience. The feelings generated by sense experience produce in us the longing for their continuance or repetition. Sense experience is the result of *sparśa* or contact of the sense organs with objects. Apart from the impressions caused by the five physiological organs, we have those generated by the mind, which is also to be treated as a sense organ. Hence, we have six sources of *sparśa*. The six organs belong to, and are conditioned by, the ego or the individual personality designated *nāma-rūpa* in this context. This is a difficult link, and may be beyond the comprehension of the ordinary man. Christmas Humphreys throws some light on it: 'Although a self-contained conception, it (*nāma-rūpa*) is usually considered in conjunction with its cause, *viññāna*, consciousness in general, which to become self-conscious needs a form or vehicle through which to gain experience and be itself. . . . *Nāma-rūpa*, then, becomes equivalent to personality, a symbol of the necessary body of illusion, which the abstract must imbue before it can appear in concrete form. . . .' (*Buddhism*, p. 98) This individual *nāma-rūpa* is the body-mind, which, starting as a single cell,

grows into a fully developed embryo and is born as an infant. *Nāma-rūpa* is thus conditioned by *viññāna*, the initial consciousness in the embryo, which is the outcome of *saṃskāras* in the previous birth. And the *saṃskāras* are finally conditioned by *avidyā* or ignorance.

We may now comment on certain points in the chain of causation. Of the twelve links, some are slightly more difficult to understand than the others. *Nāma-rūpa* and *viññāna* may be cited as examples. On the face of it, the compound term *nāma-rūpa* may indicate the close linkage between the psychological and the physical factors in individuality. But something more than this simple bio-psychical affinity in personality may also have been implied by the term 'name and form'. Perhaps, this peculiar expression is used to suggest the impermanence of the ego or individuality and the absence of any permanent or immortal 'Soul' behind 'name and form'. If this is so, then it is in keeping with the general trend of Buddhistic teaching.

In the second place, *viññāna* also stands out as a challenging concept, specially in its relation to *nāma-rūpa*. In order to understand these links in the causal chain thoroughly, we have to analyse another great doctrine of Buddha, namely, the doctrine of Karma.

KARMA

It is perhaps in its Karma doctrine that Buddhism makes its most original contribution to ethical thought. The great merit of this doctrine is that, while making man solely responsible for all that he is and suffers, it places, at the same time, in the individual's hands the means for liberating himself from its clutches. Grace has no place in Buddhism. Self-effort is the only means for liberation. But it is remarkable that early Buddhism succeeded in incor-

porating freedom into its apparently deterministic view of moral conduct. Man has to blame himself for all his suffering, but he also holds in his hands the powerful tool with which he can totally destroy all his suffering.

Of the numerous expositions of the Karma (Kamma) theory, that by Bhikku Silacara seems to be the easiest to follow. The following discussion is based on the Bhikku's pamphlet, *Kamma* (Mahabodhi Society of India, Calcutta, 1950).

The term '*karma*' is derived from the root which means 'to do', 'to act', 'to perform'. *Karma* is action embracing thought, speech, and deed. The agent is solely responsible for his *karma*. It is his doing, and it brings about rebirth. *Karma* is rebirth in its latent form; and rebirth is *karma* in all its explicitness. Moreover, *karma* is volition. Action without volition is not *karma*, and has no effect on rebirth. This principle has far-reaching ethical implications. And now we come to what is perhaps most original in Buddhism. *Karma is the individual. Karma is not made by the individual, it is the individual himself in the totality of its manifestation.* Bhikku Silacara uses the term 'visibilisation' (*Kamma*, p. 12) to express the idea that *nāma-rūpa* is nothing but the embodiment of past *karmas*. Apart from the psychophysical aggregate in constant flux, there is no immortal entity. This view is but a natural corollary from Buddha's teaching about the momentariness of existence, and on this view, the moral responsibility of the individual is staggering to contemplate.

The individual, who is *karma*, is exceedingly complex. The present *karma* is a thick rope of many strands, spun out during several previous births. Which one of the strands will dominate now and colour the whole of the present life, one cannot tell. It follows that in any one

birth, all the past *karmas* may not be operative. But, willy-nilly, every one of the strands will have to come up sometime or other and make itself manifest.

The Karma principle, according to Buddhism, is not rigidly mechanistic and deterministic in its working. Fatalism is far removed from the Tathāgata's teachings. It is true that the past is manifesting itself in the present. But the present can be taken hold of and shaped in such a manner that the future becomes controllable here and now. By our present thought, speech, and action, we can completely change the effects of the past, so that the future holds no terror for us. By thinking pure thoughts now, by kind words, and by generous and compassionate deeds, we can give support to the good in our past *karma*, and make it strong enough to come up and manifest itself, in this birth if possible, otherwise most certainly in the next. These good actions are *supportive karmas*, and by constant practice they can become habitual and very effective. Such habitual good *karmas* will bring about holiness, peace, and finally release. In a true enough sense, we are the architects of our future.

In this connexion, a very valuable piece of advice is given to all those who wish to attain holiness. They are invited to devote some time every day to thinking good thoughts, thoughts of kindness and goodwill to all, of compassion and sympathy to all that are afflicted, of a fellow feeling of happiness with all that are enjoying happiness, and of equanimity and even-mindedness towards whatever may befall ourselves, so long as others are obtaining happiness and comfort. The practice of these *brahma-vihāras* (or lofty or divine dwellings), as they are called, of the mind may have very great effect in the future, if not in the present life. (*ibid.*, pp. 28, 29)

Stress is laid on the continued practice

of these *vihāras*. It is not enough to have reached the 'divine dwellings'; continued stay there is necessary. Man has to *become* continually good by constantly practising good.

Another important aspect of the Karma doctrine is to be noted by us. It has weighty moral implications. The *karma* of each one of us can and does affect the lives of many others. It 'overflows one's own life and envelopes those surrounding one. . . . Every good man confers a benefit upon the world simply by living in it. . . . And also, unhappily, every evil man . . . does the world an injury. Thus, we are, all of us, at all times, whether we think of it or not, benefactors or malefactors of the world.'

One other lesson of note which the Karma doctrine teaches us is that the last thought which is in the focus of the dying man's consciousness will determine the nature of his coming birth. True, the nature of this thought will be determined by the feelings, attitudes, desires, and aspirations that man has cultivated all through his life. What a man has cherished most throughout his life, be it material wealth, worldly honour, lusts of the flesh, or love of the Divine, will dominate his consciousness as he is about to depart from this world. But there is also a belief that the last dominant idea can also be influenced, to some extent, by purifying the environment immediately surrounding the dying man. Kind friends and relatives, therefore, recite holy texts, sing sacred hymns, show auspicious objects, and in diverse ways try to force the right thought into the departing man's mind, so that the birth awaiting may take him one step nearer *nirvāna*.

The Karma theory has profound educational implications of special value to us in the present educational crisis. These

will be worked out in the last section of this paper.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TEACHING

The first characteristic of Bhagavān Buddha's teaching that catches our attention is its intensely *ethical and practical* outlook. All the other features of the Tathāgata's gospel may be deduced as corollaries from this one. The Enlightened One wanted men to lead their daily life in such a way that they will attain spiritual freedom sooner or later. The common man is puzzled by metaphysics and baffled by tendentious logic. Moreover, even the intellectuals of the age in which Bhagavān Buddha lived were befuddled by endless philosophical disquisitions which led nowhere. Inner purity of life and righteous conduct were not much in evidence. The need of the hour was a simple, yet powerful and dynamic, moral teaching which could help men, high and low, to get a correct perspective of life and to translate that perspective into righteous conduct. Lord Buddha's message came at the right moment to meet this pressing need of his times.

The ordinary man understands readily simple facts of common experience, but at the same time he would welcome some rational explanation of these facts in a language which he can comprehend easily. What fact could be simpler or more universal than the fact of suffering in human life? And all of us are ready to accept rational explanations for this suffering, provided simple and effective means for ending this suffering can be evolved out of these explanations. Therefore, the Master's gospel begins with *duhkha*, gives a rational explanation for *duhkha* through *pratītya-samutpāda*, and offers the Eightfold Path, based on *pratītya-samutpāda*, as the means for making the sorrow extinct. Here is a

magnificent synthesis of feeling and reason, of affection and cognition, of will and intellect, in the teachings of the Tathāgata. The Enlightened One starts from the basis of suffering and soars to sublime intellectual heights. The harmonization of feeling, will, and intellect is a noteworthy feature of Bhagavān Buddha's gospel.

At the time Bhagavān Buddha lived, sacrifices, rituals, and ceremonials, often performed by mercenary priests, were the rage. The ordinary man could hardly afford these expensive passports to salvation. In the alternative, he had to undergo gruesome self-inflicted physical tortures to secure liberation. Lord Buddha made a clean sweep of all these ineffectual prescriptions for attaining freedom, and laid down the Middle Path for the seeker, with emphasis on purity and sanctity of inner life and outer conduct. This emphasis on a clean and stainless life in thought, word, and deed is followed up by an insistence on universal compassion, love,

and tolerance. It is perfectly legitimate to hold that *karuṇā*, *maitrī bhāva*, and *śīla* stand out boldly as the prerequisites for *nirvāṇa* in Lord Buddha's teachings.

Man, Lord Buddha tells us, is, in the most literal sense, the maker of his future. The entire doctrine of Karma, taken along with those of Nairātmavāda and Kṣaṇikavāda, whose implications I shall discuss in full in the next section, is meant to transmit a terrific sense of self-responsibility to each one of us for every thought we entertain, every word we utter, and every deed we perform. Nothing can be done to escape the consequences; we shall have to eat the fruit, sweet or bitter. The contemplation of this truth is enough to frighten everyone, even the most hardened criminal, away from the path of evil, straight into the path of righteousness. This is the last and the most impressive feature of the Lord's teaching to which I wish to draw attention.

ŚRĪVAIṢNAVISM THROUGH THE AGES

SWAMI HARSHANANDA

Śrīvaiṣnavism, the religion, and Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, its philosophy, are of hoary antiquity. In his introductory verse of *Śrībhāṣya* (the commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*), Śrī Rāmānuja traces this philosophy to the Upaniṣads, which was well guarded by the later *ācāryas* like Vyāsa, Bodhāyana, Ṭaṅka, Dramiḍa, Guhadeva, Kapardin, Bhārucci, etc. According to the tradition that obtains among the Śrīvaiṣnavas, the religion of Śrīvaiṣnavism was first taught by the Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself to Lakṣmī, who communicated the same to Viṣvaksena. From him it was

handed over to a series of teachers headed by Śaṭhakopa.

THE ĀLVARS

Ālvārs are Śrīvaiṣṇava saints of the Tamil country who lived between the sixth and the ninth centuries A.D. The word 'Ālvār' literally means one who is immersed in divine love. They are twelve in number: Poygai, Pūdam, Pey, Tirumoliśai, Nammālvār, Kulaśekhara, Periyālvār, Tondaradippodi, Tiruppanālvār, Tirumaṅgai, Madhurakavi, and Āṇḍāl. Theirs was a religion of ecstatic love for God.

Hence, neither caste nor sex was any barrier to their attaining to that state.

Coming to the historical times, it was these Ālvārs who first propagated the religion and the philosophy of Śrīvaiṣṇavism through their songs. These songs, called the *Nālāyira Prabandham*, combine in themselves rare poetic beauty and high philosophical tenets, couched in a simple language.

Nammālvār, the author of the famous *Tiruvāimoli*, is by far the greatest among them. He is called the Kūṭastha by the later Ācāryas of Śrīvaiṣṇavism, because the fundamental doctrines of this faith as current today were taught by him.

THE ĀCĀRYAS

The Ālvār movement was more emotional in nature than metaphysical. The Ālvārs were great devotees of the Lord Viṣṇu. They believed in the impermanence of worldly enjoyments and in the acquisition of liberation by union with Him. They taught more by example than by precept, though they propagated the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita in their songs.

Hence it was left to the Ācāryas beginning with Nāthamuni, who succeeded the Ālvārs, to put the system on a firm footing, basing it both upon the Sanskrit scriptures and the Tamil teachings of the Ālvārs. The Ācāryas were very orthodox Brāhmaṇas, versed equally in Sanskrit and Tamil, who passed through the different stages of orthodox life and discharged their duties so as to serve as an ideal for their followers. Apart from expounding the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita, they also laid down various rules for the proper observance of festivals, fasts, vows, and customs. They were thus the makers of modern Śrīvaiṣṇavism. It is not surprising, therefore, that they in turn have become objects of worship like the Ālvārs whom they themselves apotheosized.

The first of the Ācāryas was Raṅganāthamuni, popularly known as Nāthamuni (A.D. 824-924). He was at once an erudite scholar, a *yogin*, and a devotee. It was he who first collected all the *prabandhams*, edited them with proper introductory verses, popularized them by setting them to music, and made them sung in temples. It was, again, he who gave these *prabandhams* the status equal to that of the Vedas in temple festivals. The various reforms brought about by Nāthamuni necessitated the creation of a post of a universal Ācārya whose authority was law in religious worship and whose advice was a guide to temples and householders. It was but natural that when such a post was established, the choice should fall on Nāthamuni himself. Since this office was combined with the management of the Srirangam temple, it was easy for the Ācāryas to revolutionize and reorganize the Śrīvaiṣṇava cult by introducing the necessary reforms first in that temple, which is one of the most important shrines of Viṣṇu and a stronghold of Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

Nāthamuni was succeeded by Puṇḍarīkākṣa and Rāmamiśra for two short periods. Then came Yāmunācārya, who was the grandson of Nāthamuni himself. It was he who, endowed with great scholarship and insight, first attempted to put the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy on a firm foundation. He wrote competent works in Sanskrit defending it, and established the orthodoxy of the Pāñcarātra school, whose authority is accepted as equal to that of the Śrutis by the Viśiṣṭādvaitins. *Siddhitraya* and *Āgamaprāmāṇya* are his two important works, in addition to the *Gītārthasaṅgraha*. It was his cherished desire to write a commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtra* according to the Viśiṣṭādvaita, just as Śaṅkara had done according to the Advaita. But he died

before he could attempt it, and it fell on Rāmānuja to achieve it.

ŚRĪ RAMANUJA

The name of Śrī Rāmānuja is inseparably associated with the Viśiṣṭādvaita, just as Śrī Śaṅkara's is with the Advaita. The traditional date of his birth is A.D. 1017, and he is said to have lived for 120 years. Yāmuna died before Śrī Rāmānuja became the Ācārya, and the interval was filled up by Mahāpūrṇa and Śrīśailapūrṇa.

Yāmuna bequeathed to Rāmānuja the three great tasks of his life which he himself had failed to achieve, viz the perpetuation of the memory of the sage Parāśara, the immortalization of the glory of Nammālvār, and the interpretation of Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahma-Sūtra* according to the Viśiṣṭādvaita system. Śrī Rāmānuja fulfilled all these three in his lifetime. He commanded Bhaṭṭa, the son of Kureśa, to write a commentary on *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, and named him as Parāśara. He authorized Kurukeśa, the son of his uncle Śrīśailapūrṇa, to compose a commentary on the *Tiruvāimoli* of Nammālvār.

To achieve the third object, Śrī Rāmānuja had to undertake an arduous journey to Kashmir, where the last surviving copy of the *Vṛtti* of Bodhāyana, a commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*, was available. After going through it with great difficulty, he composed his *Śrībhāṣya*, a masterly commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*.

Śrī Rāmānuja was as great an organizer as he was a thinker. He divided the Śrīvaiṣṇava world into seventy-four Ācāryic dioceses, over each of which he appointed a pious householder as the head or *śimhāsanādhipati* as he was called. These spiritual leaders earnestly took up the work of carrying the message of Viśiṣṭādvaita to all the villages and homes, each within his diocese.

SPLIT IN ŚRĪVAIṢṆAVA RANKS

The demise of Śrī Rāmānuja was followed by a period of sectarian split among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, which ultimately ended in the permanent division of their ranks into the two sects of Vaḍagalais and Teṅgalais. These words literally mean the followers of the northern and the southern learning respectively. The two sects developed separate sets of works, separate lineage of *gurus*, and separate traditions in many matters of practical importance.

The language of the holy books to be studied, the comparative importance of *bhakti* and *prapatti* (self-surrender) in the path of liberation, relation with the lower castes, details of certain ceremonials to be observed on certain special occasions, and a few other questions were the causes for such a division. The Vaḍagalais favoured the Sanskrit works and the path of *bhakti*, and were more conservative in their relation towards the lower castes. The Teṅgalais, on the other hand, preferred the Tamil works to the Sanskrit ones, and laid greater stress on *prapatti* than on *bhakti*, which, according to them, was subservient to *prapatti*.

Though there has never been a check to interdining, intermarriage, and free social harmony at home or at the temple, the allegiance to different teachers and philosophies, as also the scramble for control over the temples, has perpetuated this division.

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSORS OF ŚRĪ RAMANUJA

The two sects have a different *guru-paramparā*, though both trace their origin to Śrī Rāmānuja himself. Kurukeśa was the first successor of Śrī Rāmānuja according to the Vaḍagalais. Viṣṇucitta, his successor, is the author of two famous works *Sārārthacatuṣṭaya* and *Viṣṇucittīyam* (a commentary on the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*). The next in line is Varadārya or Varadācārya,

otherwise known as Nadādur Ammāl. A substance of his lectures and interpretations of the *Śrībhāṣya* was committed to writing under the title of *Śrutaparakāśikā* by a talented disciple of his, named Sudarśanasūri.

After the death of Varadārya, the Ācāryaship devolved on Ātreya Rāmānuja, who in turn was succeeded by Vedānta Deśika or Venkatanātha.

ŚRI VEDANTA DESIKA

Śrī Vedānta Deśika (A.D. 1268-1370), who was a contemporary of Śrī Vidyāraṇya, is undoubtedly the greatest of the Ācāryas of the post-Rāmānuja period. For more than three quarters of a century, he enriched the Śrīvaiṣṇava world with his teachings and writings. His works number more than a hundred, and are characterized by versatility, beauty of style and thought, and a deep spiritual insight. He was a poet, a philosopher, a thinker, a controversialist, and a sage, all rolled into one. His works include original writings in Tamil, as also commentaries on older works. *Gītā-bhāṣya-tātparya-candrikā*, *bhāṣya* on *Īśāvāsyopanīṣad*, *Tattvatīkā*, *Adhikaraṇasānāvalī*, *Nyāyasiddhañjana*, *Saccaritrarakṣā*, *Rahasyatrayasāra*, and *Hamsasandēśa* are only a few of the important works which may be mentioned here. It is not a matter of surprise that he was called in his own times as *kavitārki-kasimha*. One of the greatest of his services was his saving the *Śrutaparakāśikā* from the chaos that followed in the wake of invasion of Srirangam by the Moham-medans. It is for this reason that his name as Vedāntācārya is gratefully remembered by all the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, without sectarian bias, in beginning the study of the *Śrībhāṣya*.

PILLAI LOKACARYA

The Teṅgalai sect traces the apostleship

in succession of Śrī Rāmānuja in the following manner: Embār, Parāśara Bhaṭṭa, Nañjīyar (the famous commentator of the *Prabandham*), Nampillai, Kṛṣṇapāda, Pillai Lokācārya, Tirumalai Ālvār, Maṇavāla Māmuni (or Varavaramuni). Among these, Pillai Lokācārya, who was a contemporary of Vedānta Deśika, occupies the same place amidst the Teṅgalais as Deśika does among the Vaḍagalais. In fact, he is generally regarded as the founder of Teṅgalaism as a distinct sect. Being a man of brilliant intellect, he composed several treatises in order to uphold his school. *Vacanabhūṣaṇa* is a difficult work in aphoristic style which deals with the doctrine of *prapatti* in all its aspects. For the benefit of women and the common folk, Lokācārya composed sixteen treatises on the secret doctrines and the philosophy of Śrīvaiṣṇavism like *Nigamanappadi*, *Mumukṣupadi*, *Tattvatraya*, *Arthapañcaka*, etc. Though most of these works are small in size, they are regarded by the Teṅgalai school as the only correct interpretation of the cults of Śrī Rāmānuja and the Ālvārs.

MANAVALA MAMUNI

Pillai Lokācārya was succeeded by Śrīśaileśa, who in turn handed over the Ācāryaship to Maṇavāla Māmuni, also known as Aḷagiya Maṇavāla or Varavaramuni. He was a master of the Tamil Veda and other lore. Though he was trained by the teachers of the Vaḍagalai sect also, he openly declared that *Īḍu* (the commentary by Kṛṣṇapāda on the Tamil Veda) was the equal of *Śrībhāṣya*. He wrote several works explaining the works of Pillai Lokācārya. Though his works were limited in range and diction, he gave a definite form to Teṅgalaism. His magnetic personality elevated him in the eyes of his followers to the position of an incarnation of Śrī Rāmānuja.

ŚRĪVAIṢNAVISM IN PRACTICE

Everyone born in a Śrīvaiṣṇava family must approach a proper *guru* and undergo what is called *pañcasamskāra*, if he is to be considered as a true Śrīvaiṣṇava. This fivefold ritual includes *tapas* or the Ācārya's initiating the student into the sacred fire by branding the latter's shoulders with the symbols of Viṣṇu; the *pundra* or initiating into wearing the sectarian mark, the symbol of the Lord's foot; giving a spiritual name like Nārāyaṇadāsa or Govindadāsa to the disciple; imparting the three *mantras*, viz the *aṣṭākṣarī*, the *dvaya*, and the *caramaśloka*; and handing over a *śālagrāma* or other concrete objects for daily worship.

Though in theory this *pañcasamskāra* is enough to secure the devotee's entry into the blissful world of Lord Viṣṇu, in practice he finds that his past *karma* and present weaknesses are serious obstacles to spiritual progress. He is thus forced to realize that the Lord's grace is absolutely necessary, and therefore surrenders himself at His feet. This is technically called *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*, and the devotee who does it is known as the *prapanna*.

The *prapanna* is, again, in need of a mediator, since he is unable to communicate with the Lord directly. Therefore, he has to go to a teacher and beg him to intercede on his behalf and place his soul at the Lord's feet. This vicarious employment of the teacher is technically designated as *bhāraṇyāsa*.

ŚRĪVAIṢNAVA MATHAS

The evolution and consolidation of Śrīvaiṣṇavism as a cult is closely associated with the origin and development of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Mathas. From the most ancient times, *āśramas* and *mathas* in India have been the repositories of religion in theory and practice. Their heads, whether monks or pious householders, have been responsible for arresting the decay of

dharma and for propagating true religion, apart from guiding the society often in secular matters also. The same holds good in the case of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Mathas also. Ahobila Maṭha, Parakāla Maṭha, Yadugiri Yatirāja Maṭha, and Vanamamalai Maṭha—these are some of the important *mathas* of Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

The Ahobila Maṭha was founded in the year A.D. 1398, in the Ahobila Kshetra of Andhra Pradesh, by Śrīnivāsācārya, who became a *sannyāsin* under the name of Ādi Vaṇa Śathakopa Svāmin. He was a great scholar and lived as a *sannyāsin* for the full length of sixty years. The successive Jeers of the Maṭha have kept up the tradition of erudition and of touring the country to spread religion.

According to the tradition that obtains at the Parakāla Maṭha, its founder was Śrī Vedānta Deśika himself. His disciple, Periya Brahma Tantra Svatantra Svāmin, occupied the *pīṭha* in A.D. 1360. So far there have been thirty-three Jeers. The principal deity worshipped in the Maṭha is Hayagrīva, which has been handed down to the Maṭha from Śrī Vedānta Deśika himself.

Yadugiri is a small hill about thirty miles to the east of Mysore. It is claimed that Śrī Rāmānuja himself established a *maṭha* here during A.D. 1103. This *maṭha*, known as Yadugiri Yatirāja Maṭha, had a branch at Rewa, which is now functioning independently. Some of the Jeers of this *maṭha* had kept contacts with North India also.

Vanamamalai Maṭha was established at Nanguneri, Tirunelveli District, Madras State, by Maṇavāla Māmuni during the fourteenth century A.D. So far there have been twenty-seven Jeers.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF VISISTADVAITA

Any account of the history of Śrīvaiṣṇavism should be deemed incomplete without a description of its philosophical

tenets. As has already been pointed out, this philosophy is much older than Śrī Rāmānuja, who only systematized it. However, the pioneering and yet stupendous work he has turned out in the cause of Viśiṣṭādvaita has justified its being called as Rāmānuja Darśana.

Viśiṣṭādvaita is essentially a philosophy of religion. In it reason and faith coalesce to become 'reasoned faith'. It is often identified with the older Seśvara Mīmāṃsā, and is also called as Ubhaya Vedānta, since it accepts both the Sanskrit *Prasthāna-traya* and the Tamil *Prabandham* as equally authoritative. *Pañcarātra* treatises are also put on a par with the Vedas.

Epistemology

Śrī Rāmānuja accepts knowledge in all its levels of sense-perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), and scriptural testimony (*āgama* or *śabda*) as valid, and also that it affirms reality. The principle of *dharmabhūta-jñāna*, the logical rule of *aprthak-siddha-viśeṣaṇa*, the grammatical rule of *sāmānādhikarāṇya*, and the realistic view of Satkāryavāda are the special features of his theory of knowledge.

Dharmabhūta-jñāna is the consciousness of the individual soul as its attribute, through which it comes to know the nature of the external world, Self, and Īśvara or Brahman. It is eternal and all-pervasive in respect of Īśvara and the *jīvas*. However, owing to the limitations imposed by *karma*, it has become contracted. When it is purified, it expands into infinity and brings about an immediate intuition of God.

The logical rule of *aprthak-siddha-viśeṣaṇa* states that a *viśeṣaṇa* (quality) subsists in the *viśeṣya* (the qualified substance) and is *aprthak-siddha* or has an inseparable existence. Of course, it is not absolutely identical with it. It is separate and yet inseparable. For instance, when

we say that 'man is rational', the quality of rationality is inseparable from man, though it is not man himself. In the view of Śrī Rāmānuja, *dharmabhūta-jñāna* is an *aprthak-siddha-viśeṣaṇa* of the *jīva*; the *jīvas* and *prakṛti* are *aprthak-siddha-viśeṣaṇa* of Brahman or Īśvara.

This very truth is brought out by the grammatical rule of *sāmānādhikarāṇya* or co-ordinate predication, which means the application of two terms to a single entity through connotation of its two modes. For example, in the sentence 'This is a cow', different words connoting genus and quality (i.e. *jāti* and *guṇa*) also connote individual (*vyakti*) and substance (*guṇin*) respectively. Same is the case with the Upaniṣadic text '*Tat tvam asi*' ('Thou art That'). A substance may become the body or quality of another substance, and a word connoting the body (*śarīra*) may connote the self, its possessor (*śarīrin*) also. Therefore, in the above example, the term '*tvam*', which connotes the *jīva* as the *śarīra*, connotes also Brahman, the *śarīrin*. Thus, in the highest Vedāntic sense, all terms connoting a thing or a person or a god connote also Brahman as the source, support, and ultimate Self of all.

The Sāṅkhya theory of Satkāryavāda, the theory of pre-existent effect, is accepted by Śrī Rāmānuja. Consequently, the world, which is a transformation (*pariṇāma*) of Brahman, is real and not illusory as asserted by the Advaitins.

Ontology

Viśiṣṭādvaita accepts the three entities, viz Brahman or Īśvara, *jīva* or *cit*, and *prakṛti* or *acit* as ultimate realities. Hence, these three together are called as *tattva-traya*. Of these, however, Brahman is the absolute, independent reality, whereas the other two are dependent realities. It is for this reason that this philosophy is

known as Viśiṣṭādvaita (Viśiṣṭa Advaita), a philosophy which accepts only one Reality, but with attributes or modes.

Brahman of Viśiṣṭādvaita is both the Absolute of philosophy and the God of religion at the same time. Truth (*satya*), knowledge (*jñāna*), infinity (*anantatva*), and bliss (*ānandatva*) are His attributes. He is the repository of all virtues and perfections. He is the progenitor, the protector, and the destroyer of this universe. He is also the indweller and controller of everything that exists in this universe. He is the *śeṣin* (the whole) of whom all the *jīvas* and the *prakṛti* are *śeṣa* (parts). He is the granter of all boons, whether it is righteousness (*dharma*), worldly gain (*artha*), and enjoyment of pleasures (*kāma*) or the attainment of freedom from births and deaths (*mokṣa*). His form is most wonderfully beautiful, absolutely free from all imperfections and defects. Out of His infinite mercy, He incarnates Himself in moments of cosmic crisis into humanity, in order that He may recover the lost *jīva*. He is the master of Śrī or Lakṣmī, Bhū, and Nīlā. Śrī is of the nature of mercy.

He enjoys the cosmic *līlā* or play of creation. He creates this universe out of the *cit* and *acit* portions of Himself and yet remains unaffected in His essential nature. Since He creates in accordance with the past *karma* of the individual souls, He can never be accused of partiality or hard-heartedness.

He has a fivefold form, viz *para*, *vyūha*, *vibhava*, *antaryāmin*, and *arca*. The first is His form in Vaikuṅṭha, along with Śrī, Bhū, Nīlā, Ananta, Garuḍa, Viṣvaksena, and others. The *avatāras* of Saṅkaraṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, who are His partial manifestations and who are the objects of contemplation by the devotees, go by the name of *vyūha*. The incarnations of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Matsya, Kūrma, etc.

are called as *vibhava*. As the indwelling spirit of each and every object (animate or inanimate), He is called the *antaryāmin*. The descent into the forms, symbols, or idols worshipped by His devotees, in order to bless them, is known as *arcāvatāra*.

The next *tattva* is *cit* or the *jīva*. The *jīvas* are innumerable, but of identical form and nature. Each *jīva* is essentially different from the body, mind, *prāṇa*, *buddhi*, and *dharmabhūta-jñāna*. He is blissful (*ānandasvarūpa*), atomic (*anu*), unmanifested (*avyakta*), unthinkable (*acintya*), homogeneous (*niravayava*), immutable (*nirvikāra*), substratum of consciousness and knowledge (*jñānāśraya*). He is controlled by Īśvara (*niyamyā*), and is a part of Him (*śeṣa*). He is knower of knowledge, doer of actions, and experiencer of their results (*jñātr*, *kartr*, and *bhoktr*).

The *jīvas* can be divided into three groups: the bound (*baddha*), the liberated (*mukta*), and the eternally free (*nitya*). The bound souls are those who are constantly going through this transmigratory existence being attracted by and attached to the *prakṛti* in all its forms. Those of the bound souls who awaken to the evils of *saṁsāra* owing to their previous good *karma* and get liberated by doing spiritual practices and by the grace of God belong to the second category. Those like Ananta or Garuḍa who are never bound by the shackles of *saṁsāra* form the third category.

The *jīva*, though essentially free, becomes bound in *saṁsāra* by the proximity of *prakṛti*, *avidyā*, *karma*, *vāsanā*, and *ruci*. *Avidyā* is ignorance which manifests itself in various forms like *anyathā-jñāna* (knowing a thing in a way that is different from what it really is), *viparīta-jñāna* (knowing a thing as the opposite of what it really is), etc. *Karma* is what is performed by the body, the senses, or the mind, whether good or bad. Doing anything unintentionally is *vāsanā*. *Ruci* is the inordinate

desire created by *vāsanā*. Through *bhakti* and *prapatti* and the consequent grace of God, these bondages are destroyed.

The last *tattva* is *acit* or *prakṛti*. It is the insentient substance out of which this material universe is evolved. It is ever changing and can never be the substratum of knowledge. It is of three kinds: *suddhasattva*, *miśrasattva*, and *sattva-śūnya*. The first is the material which is absolutely free from *rajas* and *tamas*, which is eternal, which is not subject to *karma* but only to the will of God. It is the substance out of which all things in Vaikuṅṭhā (which is called *nityavibhūti*, as opposed to this temporal world, called *lāvibhūti*) are made. The second, viz *miśrasattva*, comprises of the three *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. It is this which is evolved as this universe.

Out of these, Brahman or Īśvara is the independent reality, and the other two are dependent realities which inhere in Him by the principle of *sāmānādhikarāṇya*. Just as skin, flesh, seed, colour, taste, and smell can all exist in the same mango simultaneously, so also the *cit* and *acit* can exist in the one Brahman.

Means of Liberation

The *mumukṣus*, or those desirous of liberation, have to know three things: *tattva* or Reality, *hita* or the means of attaining that Reality, and *puruṣārtha* or the nature of attainment. Of these, *tattva* has already been described.

As regards the *hita*, the scriptures have described it in various ways. These things can be grouped under five headings, and are consequently known as *arthapañcaka*. They are: *sva-svarūpa* (one's own nature), *para-svarūpa* (nature of God), *puruṣārtha-svarūpa* (nature of the four ends in life), *upāya-svarūpa* (nature of the means to liberation), and *virodhi-svarūpa* (nature of the obstacles in spiritual path).

Out of these, the first two have already been delineated while describing the *tattva-traya*. *Puruṣārthas*, or the things desired for by men, are four in number: *dharma* (practice of righteousness); *artha* (economic gain); *kāma* (enjoyments of the pleasures of life); and *mokṣa* (freedom from *samsāra*). Of these, the *mumukṣu* should know that the real *puruṣārtha* is *mokṣa*.

Upāya, or the means to liberation, is fivefold: *karma*, *jñāna*, *bhakti*, *prapatti*, and *ācāryābhimāna*. *Karma* includes all such acts like *yajña*, *dāna*, *sandhyā*, *pañcayajñas*, *dhyāna*, *tīrthayātrā*, etc. *Jñāna* or *jñāna-yoga* consists of self-renouncement (*vairāgya*) and ceaseless practice of contemplation on Lord Nārāyaṇa. This leads to the realization of the Self, but not to that of the Lord.

The next step is *bhakti*. *Bhakti* or *bhakti-yoga* marks the consummation of moral and spiritual endeavour as attained in the other two *yogas*. The Viśiṣṭādvaita constructs a ladder, as it were, from ethics to religion and from religion to mystic union. The seven aids to *bhakti* are: *viveka* (purification of the body as the living temple of God); *vimoka* (inner detachment); *abhyāsa* (ceaseless practice of the self-presence of God as the inner Self); *kriyā* (service to all beings); *kalyāna* (practice of virtue); *anavasāda* (freedom from despair); and *anuddharṣa* (absence of exultation).

Prapatti is complete self-surrender, and is meant for those who are unable to follow either *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, or *bhakti-yoga*. Its main characteristics are: to conceive what is in conformity with the will of God; to reject what is disagreeable to Him; to have firm faith that He will save; to seek Him alone as the protector; and to surrender one's self to Him in all meekness.

Ācāryābhimāna is strong faith in the

guru and his affectionate attachment to the disciple.

The obstacles to the spiritual path (*virodhi*), which are the last of the *arthapañcaka*, are again fivefold: obstacle to the realization of the Self; to the realization of God; to *mokṣa*; to the means of realization; and to attainment of the goal.

State of Liberation

The liberated soul has a direct vision of Brahman in Vaikuṅṭha and is absorbed in the eternal bliss of union with Him (*sāyujya*). To him the pluralistic world remains, but the pluralistic view is abolished. The distinction between him and

Brahman still remains, and there is no loss of personality. He will continue for ever to enjoy this state of bliss by serving Brahman.

CONCLUSION

Viśiṣṭādvaita is thus not a dry metaphysics, but a philosophy of religion. In it, reason and faith have been nicely synthesized. It guarantees the vision of God and salvation to all finite beings—human, sub-human, or celestial. The view that God is immanent in all for the purpose of cosmic redemption inspires the feeling that the God of all religions is ultimately one, though the various seers and sects may give different accounts of Him.

THE DESTINY OF THE HUMAN SOUL

SRI P. M. BHASKARAN NAMBUDIRIPAD

Of the many riddles and mysteries that have perplexed the intellect of man from the very dawn of history, the most intricate and mysterious is the nature and destiny of his own soul, his true being. It is the problem of problems, the most insoluble enigma that has puzzled mankind from time immemorial. It has been the subject of discussion for ages by saints and sages, prophets and priests, poets and philosophers. Yet the interest in the theme has not yet slackened a bit with the passage of time, nor will it ever diminish so long as man exists. Though various answers have been given by many minds in every period of our history, yet the theme remains as fresh as ever. In the struggle and turmoil of life, man sometimes seems to forget it, but soon, when one who is dear and near dies, it again comes up in his mind afresh with added force: 'What

is real and what is unreal in this evanescent earth? Is death the end of all these things to which we are clinging as if they were the most real of all realities, the most substantial of all substances? Or is there an eternal soul transcending death even? If so, what becomes of the soul after the death of the body?'

According to the ancient Hebrews, death of the body ended all. To the ancient Egyptians, the soul was only a double; that is, the soul never broke its connexion with the body, nor had it got any individuality of its own. It persisted so long as the body lasted and suffered a second death when the corpse was annihilated. The idea of a soul separate from the body, which endures the latter's death and is re-born in life after life till its final release, is found mainly in Hinduism and Buddhism, and forms the corner-stone of the life and

philosophy of their adherents, though its truth is acknowledged by the ancient Greek philosophers, the sufis among Moham-medans, the educated classes among the ancient Egyptians, the Persians, and the Pharisees among the Hebrews. The germ of the idea of an immortal, free soul, separate from the body, is found in the *Rg-Veda Samhitā*, the oldest scriptures of the Hindus, where the devotee prays: 'Place me in that deathless, undecaying world, where is the light of heaven, and everlasting lustre shines'; 'Make me immortal in that realm where dwells the King Vivasvān's son, where is the secret shine of heaven'; 'Make me immortal in that realm where they move even as they list'; 'In the third sphere of inmost heaven, where worlds are full of light, make me immortal in that realm of bliss'. We also notice here the recognition of a blissful state that is higher than the sense pleasures.

However, the predominant belief in the pre-Upaniṣadic Vedic period is still in an extracosmic heaven which is secured by the due performance of ritualistic sacrifices. It is in the Upaniṣads that we have a clearer and fully developed conception of the soul as the innermost core of our being. The main question raised by the Upaniṣadic seers is: What is that by knowing which one can know everything and attain immortality? To the Upaniṣadic seers, the existence of the soul was a pre-established fact, for it was the essential principle of everything. The Self or the soul was the primal entity by which everything else was made known, but it itself was in no need of any other entity for being known. 'Through what should one know That owing to which all this is known—through what, O Maitreyī, should one know the Knower?', as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II. iv. 14) asks. The soul or *jīva* is often described in the Upaniṣads as Puruṣa, which is explained as '*puri śaya*', what lies in the

citadel of the body. Soul is something which serves the mechanism of the body, though transcending it. The unique experience of self-transcendence is explained in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II. 1-5), which concludes by describing the essential character of the soul as *ānandamaya*, blissful. That the Self is the source of everything is declared in the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* (I. 1): 'Verily in the beginning this was but the absolute Self alone; there was nothing else whatsoever that winked.' The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I. iii. 3-4), in a graphic allegorization, pictures the Self as the master riding a chariot: 'Know the (individual) Self as the master of the chariot, and the body as the chariot. Know the intellect as the charioteer, and the mind as verily the bridle. They call the senses the horses; the sense-objects, the senses having been imagined as the horses, (know as) the paths. The discriminating people call that Self the enjoyer, as associated with the body, senses, and mind.' This Self is not a mere theoretical concept, but a reality to be realized, as the same Upaniṣad says further on (I. iii. 5-9): 'But the senses of that intellect which, being ever associated with an uncontrolled mind, becomes devoid of discrimination, are unruly like the vicious horses of the charioteer. But of that (intellect) which—being ever associated with a restrained mind—is endowed with discrimination, the senses are controllable like the good horses of the charioteer. But he (that master of the chariot) does not attain that goal (through that intellect), who, being associated with a non-discriminating intellect and an uncontrollable mind, is ever impure; and he attains worldly existence. That (master of the chariot) however, who is associated with a discriminating intellect, and being endowed with a controlled mind, is ever pure, attains that goal (getting detached) from which he is not born again. That man, however, who

has, as his charioteer, a discriminating intellect, and who has under control the reins of the mind, attains the end of the road; and that is the highest place of Viṣṇu.'

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (II. ii. 2-4) also, in a similar vein, impresses upon us the need for the realization of this Self, by the use of another interesting allegory: 'That which is bright and is subtler than the subtle, and that on which are fixed all the worlds as well as the dwellers of the worlds, is this immutable Brahman; It is this vital force; It, again, is speech and mind. This Entity, that is such, is true, It is immortal. It is to be penetrated. O good-looking one, shoot at It. Taking hold of the bow, that is the great weapon familiar in the Upaniṣads, one should fix on it an arrow, sharpened with meditation. Drawing the string with a mind absorbed in Its thought, hit, O good-looking one, that very target that is the Immutable. *Om* is the bow; the soul is the arrow; and Brahman is called its target. It is to be hit by an unerring man. One should become one with It just like an arrow.'

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV. v. 6) makes it explicit that this realization of the Self is the highest and ultimate goal of life: 'When the Self, my dear, is realized by being heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon, all this is known.' The other Upaniṣads, too, reiterate this view.

Coming to the Indian philosophical systems, we find that, except for the Cārvāka which totally denies the existence of Self apart from the body, all the other systems accept the reality of the Self. Though Buddhism conceives of the self only as a continuous succession of changing states and processes, it accepts a state of peace and blessedness beyond the relative existence, which it calls as *nirvāṇa*. The Jainas believe in the plurality of souls.

The soul which has the potentiality of perfect knowledge, power, and joy is essentially a conscious substance and is separate from the body and the mind, according to them. But, owing to its *karma*, the soul is in bondage to the body in the empirical life, and liberation is to be attained through right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct.

The Self, according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system, is pure existence (*sat*), and is placed in the category of substance. It is eternal, infinite, and is without any qualities in itself. Although it acquires some psychical qualities in the state of its embodied condition, it is without any qualities. The Self ceases to have any qualities in the state of its liberation. It means that the Self is really pure existence without any distinction and qualities, having neither pain nor pleasure.

Puruṣa of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga system is the conscious subject of experience. It is omnipresent, eternal, uncaused, and changeless. It is a steady constant consciousness in which there is neither any change nor any activity. Its essence is pure consciousness. It is the passive witness of the workings of nature, which is caused by the active principle, Prakṛti, which is insentient. Liberation consists in the cessation of the Puruṣa's identification with the modifications of the Prakṛti. Puruṣas, according to the Sāṅkhya, are infinite in number.

The Mīmāṃsakas, the followers of the Mīmāṃsā system, believe in a number of souls which are eternal and infinite. Souls which are spiritual substances have always the potentiality of consciousness in them. But this consciousness is only an accidental quality which arises when some conditions are present. Liberation is possible only by disinterested performance of Vedic rites, which will enable one to know the real

nature of the Self. Liberation is the total destruction of bondage, and since there is an absence of consciousness in the soul in liberation, the soul neither suffers pain nor enjoys bliss. It is a state where the soul remains in its own intrinsic nature as pure substance or existence.

According to the Dvaita system of Vedānta, promulgated by Śrī Madhvācārya, there are a number of souls which are different from God and one another, though they are absolutely dependent on God. The relation between God, on the one hand, and the matter and the soul, on the other, which depend on God is one of absolute difference. They are neither parts of God nor are they the body of God. They exist eternally as conscious and active subjects and are not created by God. They enjoy and suffer and are subject to bondage and can be liberated. The soul is infinitely small (*anu*), and has only limited knowledge and power. It is therefore finite. The bondage of the soul is due to its ignorance, through which it identifies itself with the body. The distinction between soul and God and between one soul and another is maintained in liberation. The famous Upaniṣadic utterance '*Tattvamasi*' is interpreted to mean that the soul has got for its essence qualities similar to those of God, but not identical with God.

The Viśiṣṭādvaita regards the Self as a part of God, and as such, finite. But the Self is eternal. It is also infinitely small (*anu*), but being very subtle (*sūkṣma*) it can penetrate into everything. It is sentient and is of the essence of bliss. This blissful nature of the soul is revealed only when liberation is attained. '*Tattvamasi*', according to Rāmānuja, the promulgator of this system, means that God who is the indwelling Self (*antaryāmin*) of the individual soul is the same as the God who is the source of the world. As the soul is

finite and imperfect, it is not identical with God, nor is it completely separate from God. It is a part of God, who controls it from within.

According to the Advaita Vedānta, the individual soul is identical with the universal soul, Brahman. Bondage of the Self is due to its association with the gross and subtle bodies through ignorance. This ignorance can be removed by *jñāna* or knowledge of the Self. When wisdom dawns, one realizes the true nature of the Self and attains liberation. The Self in its essence is of the nature of *Sat-cit-ānanda* (pure existence, consciousness, bliss); it is free, eternal, infinite, and unchanging.

Whatever be the differences among the different systems regarding the nature of the soul and its relation with the universe and God, all are agreed, however, that the life that is is not all. There is a higher state of blessedness, which puts an end to all our miseries, and the goal of human life and the destiny of the human soul is to reach it. Our present life is an opportunity to strive for that higher spiritual state; it is not to be wasted in trivial pleasures pertaining to the body and mind. The Hindu law of Karma emphasizes this fact. If the present is the result of the past, the future in its turn is the result of the present. If what we are now depends on what we did in the past, what we will be in future depends on what we will do now. We are, the doctrine of Karma says, the makers of our destiny. In the words of Swami Vivekananda: 'Each work we do, each thought we think, produces an impression called in Sanskrit *samskāra*, upon the mind and the sum total of these impressions becomes the tremendous force which is called "character". The character of a man is what he has created for himself, it is the result of the mental and physical actions that he has done in his life. The sum

total of the *samskāras* is the force which gives a man the next direction after his death. . . . Look back on yourself from the state of amoeba to the human being; who made all that? Your own will. Can you deny that is almighty? That which made you can unmake you. Go higher still.

What you want is character; strengthening of the will.' And in the man who has realized the true nature of his own Self—free, immortal, omnipotent, and omniscient—through spiritual discipline, we have the ideal of highest character. The destiny of the human soul is to reach that ideal state.

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN HISTORY

BRAHMACHARINI SARADA

Until very recently, history has generally been regarded only as 'past politics'. Kings, ministers, generals, diplomats, wars, and treaties have filled nine-tenths of its pages. History in its true sense is not the story of only kings and their victories, but it is the story of man in all his activities. Political history, at best, tells us only a very small part of the truth. A large part of human life, the more vital part, has nothing to do with political activities. No history of a people or a period is adequate that neglects the story of its agriculture, industry, education, sciences, philosophy, arts, religion, and social life. History, in a word, should tell the story of the total accomplishments of man. It should reflect human life in its entire compass and should reveal the very soul of the entire past.

Indian history, either in its old sense of the term or in its real sense, is in fact a growth of very recent times. There was a time when historians doubted the very existence of the history of this country. 'India has no history' has been the remark of many great historians from Alberuni of the eleventh century A.D. to the modern historian Mr. Fleet.

The important cause for this remark is that ancient India could not produce a

historian like a Herodotus or even a Thucydides. However, thanks to modern researches, now it is a well-known fact that the idea of carrying over the memories and experiences of the past to the future generations was not altogether absent among the ancient Hindus. This is evident from Hiuen Tsang's testimony to the fact that each province in India maintained officials for recording good and bad events of the days. The long list of teachers and the genealogies of kings in the Vedic texts, in the Purāṇas, and in the classics, and also the large number of inscriptions found all over India, point to the historical sense of ancient Indians. What was lacking then was, as R. C. Mazumdar remarks, 'either the enthusiasm or the ability to weave the scattered raw materials of history into a critical historical text'.

Another important factor which baffles the students of Indian history is its variety and diversity. India is, indeed, a land of varieties—varieties in physical features, in races, languages, and religions. The result is the diversity in every aspect of her life—social, economic, and political. Though India has been united twice or thrice under the rule of the Mauryas, the Guptas, the Moguls, and the British, still

disunity has been the pattern of Indian political life.

But the diversities in physical, racial, religious, or political fields were never strong enough to destroy the fundamental unity of the country in her cultural and spiritual fields. This is the unique character of Indian history. India is a land of unity in diversity. All the diversities are only apparent. As Sir Herbert Risely aptly remarks: 'Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social types, languages, customs, and religion, which strikes the observer in India, there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. There is, in fact, an Indian character, a general Indian personality, which we cannot resolve into its component elements.'

And that character and personality is her spirituality. That is the basis of Indian culture, which, overcoming all the diversities of the land, unifies her in every way. That is, indeed, the special feature or the spirit of Indian history. Therein is her vitality and strength.

The uniqueness of every culture or nation is revealed from the very beginning of its history. A study of the earliest literatures of the different civilizations of the world will best reveal the spirit of those cultures. So, to understand clearly the spirit of Indian history, we have to go back to its very beginnings. And what do we find when we do so? While, in all the other civilizations like the Sumerian, the Babylonian, the Egyptian, and the Greek, the human mind always turned its attention outward, in India, from the very beginning of her history, the quest was inward. Outside nature did attract them in many ways. In the *Rg-Veda*, we get many beautiful descriptions of sunrise, rain, etc. and the

worship of the different aspects of nature. But the special character of Indians was that they were always conscious of the universal aspect of nature. The different manifestations of nature and divinity did not confuse the keen intellect of the Indians. For they had arrived at the conclusion, through actual realization, that 'that which exists is One, sages call It by various names'. Thus the analytical mind of the Indians examined the world and arrived at the truth of the one universal Being who is behind all this manifestation and forms its essence, by knowing whom everything else in this universe becomes known, as the *Mundaka Upaniṣad* (I. i. 3) points out. It is directed by this universal effulgent Being that the mind goes towards its object, that the vital force precedes all and proceeds (towards its duty), that people speak, and that the eyes and ears see and hear. (*Kena Upaniṣad*, I. 1-2) He is the origin, source, and end of these worlds. And all the energies of the Indians were bent upon Its realization.

This quest after the Infinite is the main theme of Indian history. From the outset to the present day, men and women in hundreds and thousands have devoted their entire lives to this quest. The Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, and the classics tell the stories of their attempts and achievements. In this, there was no distinction of sex, caste, or creed. Kings, ministers, common people, men, and women, all have taken up this quest as the one goal of their life and achieved glorious victories. And by their achievements in this field, they have practically demonstrated to the world the glory of the spirit over matter, of the supremacy of the soul over the flesh. So the spirit of Indian history lies in her spiritual character. The conquests of India are all spiritual conquests.

Today, we are faced with the threat of another world war. And at this hour of crisis, the message of Indian spirituality is a great desideratum, and it is up to us of the present generation to keep bright the torch of this spiritual wisdom and pass it on into the hands of the coming generations. As Swami Vivekananda said: 'The question has yet to be decided whether peace will survive or war, ... whether goodness will survive or wickedness. ... We have solved our problem ages ago. ... Our solution is unworldliness—renunciation. This is the theme of Indian

life-work ... the spiritualization of the human race. ... For a complete civilization the world is waiting, waiting for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous spiritual inheritance of the race, which through decades of degradation and misery, the nation has still clutched to her breast. ... Little do we understand the heart-pangs of millions waiting outside the walls, stretching forth their hands for a little sip of that nectar which our forefathers have preserved in this land of India.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. IV, p. 315; Vol. III, p. 317, 8th edition)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

In 'Buddhistic Philosophy of Education—2', Professor P. S. Naidu, Member, Standing Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology, Ministry of Education, New Delhi, sums up the teachings of Bhagavān Buddha. 'Buddhistic Philosophy of Education—1', dealing with the life of Buddha, as our readers will remember, appeared in the July 1965 number of *Prabuddha Bharata*. The remaining two sections, dealing with the 'Philosophical Foundations of the Teaching' and 'Philosophy of Education', will be published in due course.

Swami Harshananda, of the Ramakrishna Order, makes a historical survey

of the evolution of 'Śrīvaiṣṇavism through the Ages', and briefly expounds its main philosophical tenets and religious beliefs and observances.

Sri P. M. Bhaskaran Nambudiripad, M.A., M.Litt., Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, presents in brief the Hindu view of 'The Destiny of the Human Soul' in his short article on the subject.

Brahmacharini Sarada, of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Calcutta, makes a brief assessment of 'The Spirit of Indian History', which she concludes to be essentially spiritual in character.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF HINDUISM: A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY. BY DR. SATISCHANDRA CHATTERJEE. Das Gupta & Co. (P.) Ltd., 54/3 College Street, Calcutta. Pages 179. Price Rs. 3.50

Dr. S. C. Chatterjee needs no introduction to students of philosophy in India. In the book under review, he presents a lucid account of the philosophical foundations of Hinduism, keeping in view the general lay reader. While the entire book is interesting and thought-provoking, the chapters on liberation need special mention. It is here that Dr. Chatterjee's logical training becomes predominant. He maintains that the fourfold paths to liberation are complementary to each other and that liberation means freedom from sin and suffering. Dr. Chatterjee's loyalty to the *Advaita-mārga* is evident throughout the discussion. His liberal interpretation of the notion of God, in the chapter on *bhakti-yoga*, as a 'formless spirit' may not be accepted by many devout Hindus, but it is well that attention is drawn to this aspect of Hinduism also, as there are many among the Hindus who are of the same persuasion as Dr. Chatterjee.

DR. (MRS.) SARASVATI CHENNAKESAVAN

ADVAITA VEDANTA ACCORDING TO SANKARA. BY M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER. Asia Publishing House, Calicut Street, Ballard Estate, Bombay 1. 1964. Pages 213. Price Rs. 18.

The book is, indeed, a masterly study of the Advaita Vedānta. The author has brought out clearly the important ideas which were contributed by Śaṅkara to the cause of Advaita thought. The cosmology and epistemology of the Advaita Vedānta have been very ably dealt with. His attempt to show the points of similarity as well as of difference between the Advaitic views on these topics and the views of the idealistic and the realistic schools of western philosophy is, indeed, praiseworthy. The historical survey of the Advaita thought, made in the introductory chapter in a lucid and faithful manner, will surely be helpful to those interested in the philosophy of the Śaṅkara school.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

GERMAN EXISTENTIALISM. BY MARTIN HEIDEGGER. TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY DAGOBERT D. RUNES. Philosophical Library, Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N.Y. 1965. Pages 58. Price \$2.75.

Croce remarked truly that Heidegger 'dishonours

philosophy and that is an evil for politics too'. Heidegger joined the National Socialist Party of Hitler, a party that derived its theory from a misplaced emphasis on the Hegelian theory of the State; and, as Professor Laird remarked, 'existentialism is Hegelianism in mufti'. The existentialist metaphysics is applied to justify the brutalities of Hitlerism. Dr. Runes collects here some of the writings of Heidegger to emphasize this aspect of Heidegger's thought; and it is timely, since many are falling victims to the existentialist thought.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

ESSAYS ON SĀMKHYA AND OTHER SYSTEMS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY. BY DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA. M. Sen, 65/64 Moti Mahal, Kanpur. 1964. Pages 170. Price Rs. 5.

Dr. Anima Sen Gupta is already familiar to the students of philosophy as an authority on the Śāṅkhya system of thought. In the present volume, twenty papers are brought together. Five are devoted to the Śāṅkhya. The others cover the Nyāya, the Vedānta, the Yoga, Buddhism, and the Tantra. These essays present the doctrines in a lucid manner.

After analysing the basic principles of the classical Śāṅkhya, Dr. Sen Gupta gives an account of the Śāṅkhya in the *Mahābhārata*, followed by a discussion of the seventeenth verse in the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*. Here Vācaspati's '*cicchaya*' is faultily rendered as the reflection of consciousness.

Dr. Sen Gupta offers a brilliant defence of the reality of the Puruṣa. Having examined the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of the soul, she considers the treatment of Śūnyavāda in the *Nyāya-Sūtra*. Here we have to state, what we discussed elsewhere, that the *Nyāya-bhāṣya* is contemporaneous with Nāgārjuna, because the *bhāṣya* has references to the *Mādhyamika-kārikā*; and the arguments of the *bhāṣya* have been examined in turn in Nāgārjuna's *Vigrahavyāvartanī*.

The paper on 'The Central Core of Buddhist Philosophy' is disappointing, because this central core is to be found in Śūnyavāda and Vijñānavāda, and because no reputed thinker of the past took 'Śūnya' to mean pure emptiness or void.

The comparative study of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja is interesting. So is the paper on Vijñāna Bhikṣu's concept of Advaita. The two papers on Yoga and immortality deserve particular mention.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

SOME ASPECTS OF RELIGION AND POLITICS IN INDIA DURING THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY. BY KHALIQ AHMAD NIZAMI. Published by Asia Publishing House, Calicut Street, Ballard Estate, Bombay 1, for the Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University. 1961. Pages 421. Price not mentioned.

The Turkish invasion of India in the thirteenth century brought about the Sultanate which began reshaping the political and cultural map of India. Mr. Nizami deals first with the political expansion and ideological integration of Islam till the thirteenth century. Then he proceeds to discuss the establishment of Muslim power and the nature of the new government in that century. Here he draws his material also from the work of the Muslim missionaries. The sixth and seventh chapters are devoted to the Muslim mystic life and mystic ideology. The status and treatment of the Hindus appears in the ninth chapter. The last chapter is given to the foreign policy of the Sultanate.

In his 'Introduction', Professor Mohd. Habib draws our attention to some aspects of the problem studied in the work. He has some uncalled-for gibes at Sri K. M. Munshi, whose forewords to the Vidya Bhavan volumes on Indian history are called

in question. Professor Habib is on slippery ground when he questions Sri Munshi's views on war and on caste system. It would have been much better if the Introduction were confined only to the simple task of introducing the work. The foreword by C. C. Davies is short and to the point.

Mr. Nizami offers a brilliant analysis of the Islamic revolution and its consequences. His study of Indo-Muslim mysticism does not pay proper attention to the non-Muslim sources of inspiration. He holds that the cause of the Ghorian success is the caste system of the Hindus. This is controversial. How did the Europeans build an empire in India at the expense of the Muslim rulers and others? How is it that a foreign invasion succeeded in spite of the no caste system of the Muslims?

The chapter on Muslim religious life and thought is illuminating and sound. Appendix A offers some documents of the period like *Fath Namah*, *Ijazat Namah*, and a saint's letter to the Sultan.

The book has good illustrations. As Dr. Davies remarks, this book 'should find a place on the bookshelf of every Islamic scholar and student of Muslim rule in India'.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

NEWS AND REPORTS

VISHVA HINDU PARISHAD

PRAYAG SAMMELAN

The Vishva Hindu Parishad was founded on the auspicious Krishnāstami of Vikrama Samvat 2021 (30 August, 1964) in the Sandeepani Ashrama in Bombay.

The Hindu society has held in its bosom, adherents of directly opposite dogmas, monists and dualists and pluralists, theists as well as pantheists and atheists, idealists along with materialists, ritualists, *yogins*, and anchorites, moralists and adorers of tribal gods and animists. It embraces besides Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs, Arya, Brahma and Prarthana Samajists, the reforming sects of different epochs who brought the highest truths and spiritual light and joy to the hearths and hearts of the common folk. It holds together the Śaivites and Sun-worshippers, Vaiṣṇavas and Śāktas, indeed all who derived their creeds from the common spiritual stock and homeland of Bharata.

In spite of a unique and universal philosophy of life, catholicity and tolerance taught by all sects

and religion and the affluence of culture and civilization the society has fallen in sorrowful conditions. The Hindus in India and abroad need a reawakening into their essential unity and consolidation as one strong and indivisible people. It is necessary to infuse pride, devotion and loyalty in respect of the *dharma* and *sanskṛti*.

In the Hindus of the world a sense of duty and obligation to the society which of late is fast disappearing, requires to be regenerated on the basis of our *dharma*.

The Hindus who live in distant countries need not only inspiration but effective aid to rejoin the bonds of love and regain their faith in the practice of the Hindu way of life, which have been gradually weakening.

With the aspiration to fulfil these objectives Vishva Hindu Parishad was founded with the blessings of *ācāryas*, *gurus*, saints and savants of almost various sects and belief and active association and advice of renowned philosophers and leaders of our society.

On 22 and 23 January, 1966 the Parishad is holding its Sammelan of Hindus from all over the world

as its first programme in its plan of building up Hindu solidarity for the preservation of *hindutva*. The Sammelan will offer an unprecedented opportunity for all to come together, to know each other, and to realize the relation of common blood which flows in the veins. It will also afford a rare chance of having the glimpses of the holy and historical Bharata in the great exhibition which the Parishad is staging. The realization of oneness, the intrinsic strength of *hindutva* and the determination to preserve it, will help to establish a permanent World Hindu Congress.

For the success of the programme and the plan every one will have to offer all his co-operation—create a favourable atmosphere in all walks of life, call for literature and directions, propagate the idea, advise the Parishad workers how and where from money, means, materials and even willing helpful men can be mobilized, write to relatives, friends and acquaintances here and abroad and inform their addresses, and the least of all to enrol oneself as a member.

Objects: (1) Take steps to consolidate and strengthen the Hindu Society. (2) Protect, develop and spread the Hindu values of life—ethical and spiritual. (3) Establish and reinforce contacts with, and help all Hindus living abroad.

Membership: All people who believe in, respect, or follow the eternal principles of life—ethical and spiritual which have sprung up in Bharata are Hindus and can become members.

Programme: (i) A world-wide Sammelan of the Hindu brotherhood. (ii) A conference of learned pundits, philosophers, and savants of all sects and belief in the Hindu society. (iii) An exhibition presenting the evolution of the multipetal Hindu society, the rise and glory of its culture and civilization reflected in the panorama of its holy places and epoch-making historical landmarks in Bharata and its projection and influence abroad through the medium of pictures, photographs, reliefs, sculptures, and miniature or full models showing the glimpses of Bharata since Vedic times right upto the achieve-

ment of national freedom. To establish a permanent World Hindu Congress which will aid and enable the Hindu brotherhood to preserve *hindutva* and propagate its message everywhere.

The Parishad has an Advisory Council with members like Jagadguru Sankaracharyas of Sringeri, Dwaraka, Puri, and Kamakotipitha, heads of different religious institutions and other important persons all over India. It has its Executive Committee with H. H. Maharaja of Mysore (Governor of Madras) as the President, Sri C. P. Ramaswami Ayar as one of the Vice-Presidents and Sri S. S. Apte as the General Secretary.

We are happy to associate with and work for the consummation of the idea, so that on the auspicious day of the Purna Amrit Kumbha on the sands of the holy rivers we can share a moment of the immortalizing experience of eternal unity.

PURNA KUMBHA MELA AT ALLAHABAD

AN APPEAL

The famous religious fair, the Purna Kumbha Mela, will take place this month (14 to 26) at Prayag on the Triveni sands. The local branch of the Ramakrishna Mission will, as usual, open a camp on the Mela grounds for the purpose of giving medical help and attention to the assembled pilgrims. There will also be a boarding and lodging section to provide food and shelter for a limited number of pilgrims.

Qualified doctors, compounders, and volunteers will be necessary to conduct the work. Medicines, dressing materials, and foodstuffs will have to be purchased for the purpose. It has been estimated that a sum of Rs. 15,000/- will be needed. The Sevashrama, therefore, earnestly appeals to the generous public to help it in this humanitarian cause. Contributions in cash or kind will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (i) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Muthiganj, Allahabad, U.P. (ii) The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, West Bengal.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The 104th birthday of Swami Vivekananda falls on Thursday, the 13th January 1966.