



# Prabuddha Bharata

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

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## THE UNIVERSAL CALL OF RELIGIONS

He who has not first turned away from wickedness, who is not tranquil and subdued, and whose mind is not at peace cannot attain Ātman. It is realized only through the knowledge of Reality.

*Kātha Upaniṣad I. 2.24*

Look on sin, and loathe it. Then will ye make an end to misery.

*Iti-vuttaka 39*

Those men who do evil in the open light of day—

Men will punish them.

Those who do evil in secret

God will punish them.

Who fears both man and God—

He is fit to walk alone.

*Kwang Tze 23.8*

Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.

*St. Matthew 15.19-20*

Abandon the semblance of wickedness and wickedness itself.

*Koran 6.120*

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## ONWARD FOR EVER!

*The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practised, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished. Throughout the history of mankind, if any motive power has been more potent than another in the lives of all great men and women, it is that of faith in themselves. Born with the consciousness that they were to be great, they became great. . . . The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith, because the Vedanta, again, is the doctrine of Oneness. It means faith in all, because you are all. . . . Do you know how much energy, how many powers, how many forces are still lurking behind that frame of yours? What scientist has known all that is in man? Millions of years have passed since man first came here, and yet but one infinitesimal part of his powers has been manifested. Therefore, you must not say that you are weak. How do you know what possibilities lie behind that degradation on the surface? You know but little of that which is within you. For behind you is the ocean of infinite power and blessedness.*

*Sri Krishna*

ŚRĪ KRṢṢNA'S CHARTER  
TO THE DEVOTEE

## I

'To be a devotee of God you have not to be a fool', said Sri Ramakrishna.<sup>1</sup>

What are the criteria of being an intelligent devotee?

One essential criterion is that the devotee will know about all his resources of spiritual life. Being an intelligent devotee will also mean that he will know how to carefully husband his resources in order to reach the goal of spiritual life.

A self-examination will, however, reveal that many of us are not sufficiently aware of our resources as devotees of God. If we were, our life, spiritual life, would manifest a greater abundance, strength and sturdiness. Our life would be full of inspiration, hope and mighty self-application and we would never experience any despondency.

Now the question is : Where do we get an inventory of our spiritual resources?

To be sure, an inventory of the devotee's resources is not available in a neat file anywhere in the world. But by careful study we can surely make one, if we know where to look for it.

These resources are to be looked for in declared charters of God to the devotee. Whenever God manifested Himself in this world as an Avatāra or Incarnation, He declared such a charter.

A charter is a declaration of rights and grants by a sovereign. When God, the Sovereign of all sovereigns, declares a charter, it stands true for all times. And no one in the world can tamper with that charter.

These charters of God to the devotee are recorded in various scriptures of the world.

<sup>1</sup>Vide : *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, Fourth Edition, 1938, p. 140.

If an inventory is made of all the resources of the devotee, declared in all these charters, it will be an enormous record of staggering bounty of God's gift to man.

We are not undertaking that comprehensive task here. Here we shall confine ourselves to the study of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's charter to the devotee, and that too only in broad outlines.

Our source scriptures for this study are the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

## II

Are we devotees of the Lord?

If we are sure of being devotees of God, then in this fear-stricken, worry-consumed and joyless world we have reasons to be fearless, unworried and joyous. And it is a firm eternal reason, and not a reason which can be demolished by clever arguments of an opponent.

In the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes this categorical declaration that his devotees will never perish, while the world is perishable. His own words in the charter are unequivocal :

'Even the most sinful man, if he worships Me with unswerving devotion, must be regarded as righteous: for he has formed the right resolution.'<sup>2</sup>

'He soon becomes deeply spiritual and attains eternal peace. Proclaim it boldly, O son of Kunti, that My devotee never perishes.'<sup>3</sup>

Think of the given security : 'My devotee never perishes!'

As devotees this is our fundamental right and privilege. The Lord has said so.

It is not as if out of a sentimental exuberance the Lord once said so and then forgot all about it. Time and again Śrī Kṛṣṇa returns to this theme and in diverse ways reiterates this declaration.

One of the very purposes of his incarnating in the world, he says, is 'for the protection of the righteous.'<sup>4</sup> Among the righteous are certainly included the devotees of the Lord. He comes specially for you and me, so that we may be protected.

These 'you and me' may be faltering people, with more lapses than virtues. But if we have a little love for God, in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's charter it is declared, we shall not come to grief.

Arjuna pointedly asked this question:

'What happens to that aspirant who though endowed with faith and devotion, is unable to control himself and is carried away from path of yoga by his wandering mind, and thus fails to gain perfection in yoga?

'What happens to him O Kṛṣṇa? Does he not, fallen from both, perish without support, like a riven cloud?'<sup>5</sup>

In answer to this question Kṛṣṇa uttered one of the most reassuring points of his charter, which will embolden every struggling soul. He said:

'O Arjuna, know it for certain, there is no destruction for him, here or hereafter, for the doer of good, my son, never comes to grief.'<sup>6</sup>

The struggling soul who strives and strays away, who falls and is derided by the world—how wonderful and inspiring it is to know that the Lord regards him only as 'the doer of good'!

God is not a puritan. He is the saviour. On Him is the onus if we fall. Does He not know how terrific is the power of His Maya? If there is even a grain of love in the heart of the devotee, God catches hold of that as the pretext for his salvation and ignores a mountain of his follies.

The Avatāra knows better than anyone else that every man is a combination of vices and virtues. He so pulls out the man by holding on to his fraction of a virtue

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavad-gītā* : IX. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* IX. 31.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* IV. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* VI. 37, 38.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* VI. 40.

that all his vices are suppressed and destroyed.

That has always been the case with the saviours of the world. Buddha accepted the invitation of even Ambapali, a courtesan and dined at her home. He made a disciple of Angulimala, the ferocious highway man.

Christ, did he ever utter a harsh word to a contrite sinner? How cleverly he saved the adulterous woman whom society was ready to stone to death. And how tenderly he regarded Mary Magdalene!

Sri Ramakrishna showered his unreasoned grace on some men and women who were notorious for their moral lapses.

### III

This 'doer of good', who perhaps loves the Lord a little and the sense objects much more, by the power of his little love of God draws out a handsome article in Kṛṣṇa's charter. The Lord says :

'High-souled sages—penniless, devoted to Me, and unsmitten by desires, calm and compassionate to all creatures—derive that bliss of Mine, which they only know who care for no gain, and not others.'<sup>7</sup>

No wonder it should be so. The wonder is here, when continuing, the Lord says :

'Even a devotee of Mine who not being a master of his senses is troubled by sense-objects, is generally not overcome by them, owing to his powerful devotion.'<sup>8</sup>

Sinful tendencies and temptations worry devotees ever so much. But why this worry? Has not the Lord said in His charter to the devotee :

'As fire kindled into a blaze burns the faggots to ashes, so, O Uddhava, devotion to Me totally destroys all sins.'<sup>9</sup>

### IV

The first great point in Kṛṣṇa's charter

to the devotee is that he will not be destroyed. What is more, devotion to the Lord will destroy all sins. Being intelligent devotees will require of us to constantly remember these facts, which constitute the irrevocable and unchallengeable security bonds, more precious than any in the world.

But what does 'not being destroyed' actually mean? Will not the devotee suffer from the pains and afflictions of life, which are common to all men? Will he not die?

Yes, he will suffer, may be he will suffer more than others. He will surely die.

What the Lord means is that the devotee will triumph over the forces of life and death and reach Him. This is the meaning of not being destroyed.

If he dies before attaining God in this life, none of the efforts of his life will be wasted. The Lord so provides that,

'There (in the next life) he is united with the intelligence acquired in the former body, and strives more than before, for perfection.'<sup>10</sup>

Kṛṣṇa says so in the *Gītā*. So much care is taken of the devotee as he travels through life and death to perfection.

### V

It may, however, be contended that the assurance of not being destroyed, though a very important one—for if destruction is inevitable, building any super-structure of inner life amounts to nothing—is after all a negative one.

What does the Lord say on the positive side of his charter to the devotee?

On the positive side Kṛṣṇa says many glorious things, in the implications of which we shall discover our inexhaustible and invaluable spiritual resources.

In the *Gītā* (V. 29) He declares Himself as the friend of all creatures.

The Lord Himself says that He is our

<sup>7</sup> *Srimad Bhāgavatam* XI. 14. 17.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 14. 18.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 14. 19.

<sup>10</sup> *Gītā* : VI. 43

friend. No one asked Him to make such a declaration. He Himself said so. What a reassuring statement! If the Lord is our friend, over our being indestructible, what need we be afraid of in this world or any other? With God as our friend, what can we not face and do?

Now, a friend may stay far away. We meet once in a blue moon, which is as good as not having him as a friend. In happiness he is not around here to share our joy. In calamity we cannot depend on him for help or consolation. What good is such a friend?

In the *Gītā* (XVIII. 61) the Lord says by implication that He is not that kind of a friend for the Lord stays in the very heart of all creatures, not certainly excluding the devotees. In other words He is our resident friend of all times. If it is true that we have a heart, it is equally true the Lord is residing in the heart, in the mansion of our love.

Do you say, you do not know how He stays there? That may be true. You may not know or understand. But if you are a devotee doubt not the Lord's words. He has infinite intelligence and ways of accomplishing things which may not be comprehensible to us.

As devotees we must take the Lord's charter as literally true. Our faith will eventually open our eyes and we shall see things unseen, know things unknown. Somewhere we must start believing God's words like a child believing mother's words.

Spiritually speaking, is it not a great tidings to hear from Lord's own mouth that He is our heart-resident friend of all time?

## VI

In the *Bhāgavatam* He goes even further and says :

'There are many created cities such as those with one, two, three, four or many legs, as well

as without legs; of these the human body is My favourite city.'<sup>11</sup>

The Lord is not only our friend, our resident friend in our own body; but also, as He Himself says, this is His favourite abode.

He is not a reluctant prisoner; He stays within us lovingly of His own sweet accord.

The whole context of our inner life will change, if we can train our sensibilities in the awareness of this great fact of a friendly God lovingly staying in His favourite abode, which is the human body. What could be a greater good fortune?

O weary pilgrim, you have not to go about any more. For the Lord says He is just here!

## VII

And if you are a true devotee of the Lord, out of humility you will not perhaps be able to believe what he says about you in His charter. But then the Lord makes only statements of facts. He says :

'Neither Brahmā, nor Śiva, nor Balarām, nor Lakṣmi, nor My own form is so very dear to Me as you.'<sup>12</sup>

Of course these words were uttered to Uddhava, His personal friend and disciple. But who is Uddhava? He is only a representative devotee.

## VIII

Next, Kṛṣṇa goes to an impossible length and says :

'With a view to purify Myself by the dust of his feet, I always follow the sage who cares for nothing, is calm, bears enmity to none, and is even-minded.'<sup>13</sup>

These are the Lord's own words. Why does He say these absurd words : 'to purify Myself', being Himself eternally pure?

<sup>11</sup> *Bhāgavatam* : XI. 7. 22

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 14. 15

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 14. 16

This worshipful attitude of the Lord to the devotee is the grandest poetry in the world. This is behaving like God. He glorifies the devotee to an impossible length to prove His loyalty and also to teach how to be a devotee.

### IX

The Lord is ever ready to do anything for the sake of the devotee. He is prepared to carry his burden and do everything needed for his preservation and augmentation. In the *Gītā*, making a specific declaration on this point, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says :

‘Persons who, meditating on Me as non-separate, worship Me in all beings, to them thus ever zealously engaged, I carry what they lack and preserve what they already have.’<sup>14</sup>

There are thrilling stories in the world’s religious lore which show to what extent the Lord is ready to go to fulfil this promise to the devotee.

### X

Lest we should doubt the fact of the indwelling Lord and on that score be losers, the Lord emphasizes this fact in a variety of ways. In the *Gītā* He says :

‘Those men who practise severe austerities not enjoined by the scripture, given to ostentation and egoism, possessed with the power of lust and attachment, torture, senseless as they are, all the organs in the body and *Me* dwelling in the body within; know them to be of demoniac resolve.’<sup>15</sup>

When we go wayward, heavy in our foolishness, undivine in our endeavours, the friend, tortured God, stays within suffering as it were vicariously the deeds of His own creatures. And He waits, waits for the day when we shall know better ways of living. To be God is no small agony!

Even under the most tortuous situation God does not leave us. He cannot leave

us. For where could He go, if He is all-pervasive? And if He is all-compassionate, how could He go?

### XI

In the *Bhāgavatam* Kṛṣṇa assures us that it is even possible to see Him dwelling within this body. He says :

‘Those who are of a balanced mind and are skilled in knowledge and yoga behold Me in the human body as fully manifested and endowed with all the powers.’<sup>16</sup>

And let the devotee know according to the Lord’s teachings this is something inevitable. For, does He not say in the same scripture :

‘Nothing whatsoever exists without Me in My twofold aspects of the Lord and the Jiva, attribute and substance, the indwelling Spirit and gross and subtle bodies.’<sup>17</sup>

Further :

‘O Uddhava, I am the Self of all creatures, their friend and Lord; I am all creatures and the cause of their birth, life and death.’<sup>18</sup>

This is the highest point in Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s charter to the devotee. We must understand as devotees the tremendous implications of such declarations of the Lord in His charter. By such words the Lord owns us as His very own, not as a proprietor saying this property is mine. But the Lord is saying that in one aspect He is God and in another He is Jiva. Do we realize, in God’s eyes, what we are!

In the Upaniṣad there is the great declaration ‘That Thou Art!’<sup>19</sup> That is man’s discovery of the ultimate fact of existence.

Here in His declaration the Lord is giving us the same truth from His side as it were. It is the same as Sri Ramakrishna’s Jīva-

<sup>16</sup> *Bhāgavatam* : XI. 7. 21.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 16. 38.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 16. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Vide : *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad* VI. 8. 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Gītā* : IX. 22.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* XVII 5, 6.

Śiva mantra, which Swami Vivekananda understood as the new liberating gospel.

This tenet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's charter reinforces the Vedantic truth 'That Thou Art' with a new power.

Man here is placed by God by His own side on His own throne. This glorification of man by God must have a special meaning for us. We must learn to look on man as God going about in various disguises.

If we must take the Lord's words as true what other conclusion may we reach except this? Reverence for everything should be the motto of our life. For God has said that He is everything. Seers have also experienced God in everything.

## XII

Sri Ramakrishna says : 'God dwells in all beings, undoubtedly. That being the case, who may be called His devotee? He who dwells in God, he who has merged his mind and life and innermost soul in God.'<sup>20</sup>

Various ways of dwelling on God have been taught in the scriptures. The devotee is sometimes puzzled as to which one he should choose for himself. To the fortunate ones who have met their guru, a personal spiritual preceptor, this problem no longer arises. But there are ever so many others who want to do something for growing in spiritual life, without knowing where to seek for guidance.

To such devotees the Lord Himself comes with many explicit declarations in His charter, of which we shall mention only a very few : In the *Bhāgavatam* Śrī Kṛṣṇa says :

'With a view to effecting the liberation of man I have inculcated three yogas or methods, viz.

those of knowledge, work and devotion. There is no other means anywhere.'<sup>21</sup>

It is to be specially noted that the Lord is personally interested in the liberation of our spirit. In His charter to the devotee He therefore adds revolutionary texts which do not hesitate to sharply declare what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected even in Vedic knowledge. In the *Gītā* He says :

'The Vedas deal with the three gunas. Be thou free, O Arjuna, from the triad of the gunas, free from the pairs of opposites, even-balanced, free from (the thought of) getting and keeping and established in the Self.'<sup>22</sup>

The most significant and momentous work of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was to have caused a revolutionary inner explosion of truth in the Vedic-dharma. He did it in such a surpassingly consummate manner as to bring about the marvellous extension of the Veda-dharma.

'Vedas deal with the three gunas, go beyond the three gunas': with these few words Śrī Kṛṣṇa transformed the heaven-minded religion of man into the liberation-minded religion. And the result was that the ideal of *abhyudaya* (prosperous well-being) became the gateway to freedom being subservient to the ideal of *nihśreyasa* (supreme well-being attained by the liberation of the spirit). Everyone received a self-transforming ideal' which was commensurate with his powers.

Moreover He says :

'To the Brahmana who has known the Self, all the Vedas are of so much use as a reservoir is, when there is a flood everywhere.'<sup>23</sup>

On the one hand the Lord straightens the path of absolute liberation, and on the other hand he clarifies man's understanding so that he may have the desire to travel

<sup>20</sup> Vide : 'M' : *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1964, p. 195.

<sup>21</sup> *Bhāgavatam* XI. 20 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Gītā* : II. 45.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* II. 46.

along the path for gaining the highest well-being. So He says in the *Bhāgavatam*:

'The wise man should seek neither heaven nor hell, nor desire to return to this world, for he comes under delusion through attachment to the body.'<sup>24</sup>

'Conscious of this fact, he should be alert and struggle for liberation before death comes on, knowing that the body, even though mortal, can help him to attain the goal.'<sup>25</sup>

### XIII

Kṛṣṇa's charter to the devotee is a unique combination of a clarion call for unremitting highest efforts for gaining supreme bliss, with abundant gift of Lord's personal help. Here statements of impersonal spiritual facts go hand in hand with the Lord's anxious personal care for the devotee.

Urging the devotee the Lord says in the *Bhāgavatam*:

'Seeing that the tree on which it built its nest is being felled by cruel hands, the bird giving up attachment leaves its home and attains to well-being.'<sup>26</sup>

'Similarly, knowing that his span of life is being cut short by the rotation of day and night, the wise man trembles in fear, and giving up all attachment realizes the Supreme Being.'<sup>27</sup>

Then the indulgent Lord, out of compassion forewarn the devotee:

'Getting the first and foremost requisite viz. a human body which is like a strong boat—so difficult to secure, yet within easy reach—with the teacher as its helmsman, and propelled by Me as by a favourable wind—with such means as these, the man who does not strive to cross the ocean of saṁsāra, is verily a suicide.'<sup>28</sup>

### XIV

The most significant point in the Lord's charter is that he has provided for man's liberation and that with such tender con-

sideration for man's temperamental difficulties.

Speaking about the three paths devised for man's liberation the Lord says in the *Bhāgavatam*:

'Of these, the path of knowledge is for those who have got disgusted with work and have renounced it; for those who have not been disgusted with it and desire its fruits, there is the path of work; but for the man who somehow has got a veneration for tales about Me and such other things, and who is neither disgusted with nor grossly attached to work, the path of devotion is successful.'<sup>29</sup>

By travelling even this far the Lord may not have reached all the devotees. Out there some one may not be bold enough to express his special difficulties.

So in His charter Lord's compassion continues to outreach itself rocket-wise. He says in the *Bhāgavatam*:

'Should a man who has got faith in tales about Me and is disgusted with all kinds of work, know desires to be full of misery and yet fail to give them up, then this man of faith, with firm conviction, should cheerfully worship Me, as he goes on satisfying those desires fraught with painful consequences, condemning them all the while.'<sup>30</sup>

The Lord here indulgently permits the devotee to enjoy what he wants to, but sitting tight in his heart does the miracle. He does not say that the devotee must drink only the nectar of His Name. If he wants he can taste the sweet and bitter fruits of the world too. But if he continues to love also the Lord, he will come out of every snare in due course, under the watchful eyes of the Lord. So He says:

'If a meditative man constantly worships Me through the path of devotion (mentioned above) all the desires of his heart are destroyed, for I reside in his heart.'<sup>31</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Bhāgavatam* : XI. 20. 13.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 20. 14.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 20. 15.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 20. 16.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 10. 17.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 20. 7, 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 20. 27, 28.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* XI. 20. 29.



The devotee may not know it but the Lord is all the time sitting tight in his heart. No one can escape this message in the Lord's charter: sitting there in the heart of the devotee He is working out his liberation.

One thing is all-powerful, says the Lord—love, bhakti. He even goes to the extent of asserting:

'Hence the practice of knowledge or dispassion is scarcely of any use to the yogi who is devoted to Me, and has his mind centred in Me.'<sup>32</sup>

And that He means even more than what He says, He Himself makes clearer:

'Whatever is acquired through works, austerities, knowledge, dispassion, yoga or charity, or through any other means of well-being, My devotee easily attains to it all through devotion to Me—aye, even heaven, or liberation, or My abode, should he care for it.'<sup>33</sup>

## XV

If we are asked: after this, as devotees, what more could we ask of the Lord to be included in the charter, we perhaps would not think there were anything more to be sought.

But, out to give Himself entirely, the Lord knows what more could be given even though we might not know what more to ask. Here is the strange irony in the scheme of man's liberation through the worship of personal God: the Lord must get bound to liberate man; he must give blood to heal the wounds of man's soul. The Lord must give Himself. And so He does.

## XVI

If devotion is all-powerful, the question arises how do we get it to the fullest extent? The Lord gives out in His charter a supreme secret and that answers the question. He says:

'Yoga, discrimination, piety, study of the Vedas, austerities, renunciation, rites such as Agnihotra, and works of public utility, charity, vows, sacrifices, secret mantras, places of pilgrimage, and moral rule, particular as well as universal—none of these, I say, binds Me so much as the association of saints that roots out all attachment.'<sup>34</sup>

Why does the Lord say that nothing binds Him like the association of the holy?

Because in this world there is no single factor more powerful than the contagion of the holy for inspiring love of God in a man. Love of God is there in every soul. But it lies buried under the heap of desires. When a spark comes from the holy there is suddenly a blaze. People are amazed and they say: how could that man become like this!

Therefore it is said: even a moment's holy company can become a raft for crossing the ocean of transmigratory existence.

## XVII

The point is: when love of God is once inflamed in the heart, the Lord gets bound. He gets bound to the extent of even assuming a human body for the devotee's sake.

It is this liberating love of God which Śrī Kṛṣṇa emphasizes in His charter above everything else. In fact the charter is not needed for those who can shoot themselves out of the mechanism of Maya. It is the admitted need for the devotee who cannot do that.

So emphasizing love of God Śrī Kṛṣṇa says referring to the Gopis of Vrindavan:

'They had not studied the Vedas, nor served the great saints, nor observed any vows, nor performed any austerities, yet through their association with Me they attained Me.'<sup>35</sup>

'The Gopis, and even the cows, trees, beasts, serpents, and others that were dull of understanding were perfected, and easily attained Me through love alone; whom one attains not even

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. XI. 20. 31.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. XI. 20. 32. 33.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. XI. 12. 1, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. XI. 12. 7.

after struggle through yoga, discrimination, charity, vows, austerities, sacrifices, teaching and study of the Vedas or renunciation.'<sup>36</sup>

The Lord rejects no kind of love. Let it be impure love. Bring it to God. Let us not think that God cannot digest your impurity. Come to Him right now; the very proneness to God will purify anyone. Do not be afraid that our impurity will contaminate God! God's proximity will burn out our impurity.

All sinners are specially welcome to God. Come anyway, any time, you like. But do come! That is the Lord's cry!

Signalizing the example of the Gopis the Lord says :

'Not knowing My real nature, the Gopis, who were ignorant women, desired Me as their beloved sweetheart, yet they attained Me, the Supreme Brahman, by hundreds and thousands, through the power of holy association.'<sup>37</sup>

Finally comes the supreme tenet of the *magna charta* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to the devotee. He says to His friend and disciple Uddhava :

'Therefore, O Uddhava, giving up injunctions and prohibitions, the paths of enjoyment and

renunciation, things learnt and yet to be learnt, do thou whole-heartedly take refuge in Me alone, the Self of all beings, and be fearless through Me.'<sup>38</sup>

The Lord here takes the entire burden of the devotee on Himself, binding Himself entirely and freeing the devotee of all the rigours and disciplines. Only love, and be free and fearless.

### XVIII

Undoubtedly this charter of Kṛṣṇa to the devotee was declared millenniums ago. Yet as long as hills will stand on earth and rivers will flow to oceans, so long it will stay fresh and vibrant, for its contents are eternal words.

What God has once given away He cannot withdraw. This is the devotee's great privilege.

As spiritual aspirants if we meditate on this inventory of our resources, of which we have discussed only a small portion, we shall have perpetual supply of spiritual inspiration and enthusiasm, which will enable us to joyfully dare and do everything needed for attaining illumination.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. XI. 12. 8, 9.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. XI. 12. 13.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. XI. 12. 14-15.

The most illiterate man who is touched with devotion, and uses frequent exercises of it, contracts a certain greatness of mind, mingled with a noble simplicity, that raises him above others of the same condition. By this, a man in the lowest condition will not appear mean, or in the most splendid fortune insolent.

—Johnson.

# LETTERS OF A SAINT

## THE LORD MY REFUGE

Kankhal  
26.10.1912

Object of life. One can repay the debt to the father by procreating offspring and by offering obsequial oblations for the pacification of his soul after death. But because the Guru saves the disciple from *avidya* (nescience) debt to him can never be repaid even by offering one's all.

Dear Sri—,

I have received your postcard of the 22nd and noted the contents therein. I am now answering your question; please heed intently to what I write:

In Śankarācārya's *Prāśhottaramālā* there occurs this verse:

को वा गुरुर्यो हितोपदेष्टा ।

शिष्यस्तु को यो गुरुभक्त एव ।

Question: Who is the Guru?

Answer: He who instructs what is beneficial (for the disciple).

Question: Who is the disciple?

Answer: He who is devoted to the Guru; in other words, who obeys Guru's precepts, and stays engaged in his service.

The words 'what is beneficial' here refers to true spiritual knowledge or the goal supreme. The opposite of 'what is beneficial' is *samsāra* (or the compulsive necessity of being in the revolving wheel of transmigratory existence). He alone is the Guru who guides us in our Godward movement, and helps us to conquer desire which is another word for *samsāra*.

And he who abides by the instructions of such a preceptor, and renders him service, is the disciple. The relation between the Guru and the disciple is of spiritual father and son. The father gives birth to one, but the Guru saves the person from the necessity of being born again. And this he does by showing him the Supreme

That word or name which can save the mind from worldliness and take it towards God, that is called the *mantra*. The purpose of receiving a *mantra* is to disabuse the mind of worldliness with the practice of repetition of the *mantra* and fix it on the lotus feet of God, which, indeed, is the aim of human life. When a person is able to do this, in his case the assumption of human body becomes meaningful and blessed. When he is not, he simply eats, sleeps and procreates like jackals and dogs. Having to pass through repeated births and deaths he is sometimes born as a man, sometimes as an animal or a bird, or a tree or a stone and thus roams about in the wheel of *Mahamāyā*—which is called *samsāra*—for times without reckoning. Therefore, out of His grace the Lord has instructed in the *Gītā* (IX. 33) :

अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ।

Having come to this evanescent and joyless world worship Me alone. Otherwise suffering of miseries is inevitable. So far today.

Your well-wisher,  
SRI TURIYANANDA



## PROFILES IN GREATNESS

### *Greatness Of Little Things*

Adversity and disaster sift out the weak from the strong, the worthy from the worthless and the petty and mean from the noble. The Bihar famine of 1967 and the connected relief-operations provided an effective setting for revealing many people in their true colours. It also served to vindicate Mahatma Gandhi's utterance, 'In the midst of darkness light persists'.

True to its tradition, the Ramakrishna Mission had organized relief camps and one of them was in the Jamui sub-division of Monghyr district. While the distribution of food-grains etc. meant obviously a great physical help to the famine-hit recipients, it was less obviously but certainly a greater blessing to the 'givers', to the monks and other volunteers engaged in the work; to them it proved to be a remarkable education and upliftment in the field of human behaviour.

It did provide a thought-provoking variety of human nature.

There was a hefty fellow who came asking for a 'grains-issue-card' pleading starvation. 'Why, you could certainly work in one of our relief projects and earn enough to buy food!' was the natural remark of A— who was in charge of the camp. 'I can't do that! I am a "Brahmin";

not been accustomed to this kind of manual work... Please let me have a card.' A— thought over the matter a little and made a proposal: 'Well, you don't have to worry on that count. You work as much as you can. Do enough at least to earn a quarter of a rupee a day and then come to me; I shall make up the amount to two rupees and help you to buy sufficient grain. But you *won't* get free dole; no card unless you work!'

'Hefty' was not to be shaken by this proposal. He quietly departed only to return two weeks later, this time with a card. The card belonged to his wife, who had given herself as a 'widow'. Because some of the widows of certain families had been exempted from 'working', for humanitarian reasons, Mrs. 'Hefty' had also opted for that category, even though having an able-bodied husband. 'Hefty' received the only reply he deserved—a good scolding, but he betrayed no sense of shame whatsoever. This was too much even for A—, who just tore the card to pieces and chucked him out of the camp.

And then there was the clever sophisticated person who could rattle off English, trying to capitalize his cleverness. While a number of people would be standing patiently in the queue he would have no

scruples in breaking the line and pushing his boy to a forward position—but even his English could not save him from Nemesis—a good scolding from A—and the card torn to pieces.

Then again, there was the well-dressed, healthy looking fop who came with his parents' card. On inquiry A— discovered that far from being destitute he had five acres of good land. 'What! Having all this land can't you feed your own parents?' 'No. We have separated. Why should I help?' was the unabashed reply.

\* \* \*

But there is an exquisite balance and compensation in nature; humanity is no exception. And in the present context compensation materialized in the form of 'Kalawati'.

Kalawati came to the notice of A— as she formed a regular constituent of one of the village-groups who came to the relief camp to receive their quota of food-grains. There was nothing striking in her figure; a woman of medium height, thin build and dark complexion—a very ordinary figure. Even her lean, oval face carried no message to the casual viewer; only a close observer might discover that her countenance had a certain sensitive features. But no observant spectator could fail to be impressed by her noble qualities and dignity, which was all the more remarkable since it was combined with a rare simplicity.

She first came to A-'s notice because of her qualities of natural leadership. She was in charge of her village group, constantly instructing them to be orderly; she would be making them form lines and receive their grain quotas one after another without rushing, and conform to other instructions given by the camp volunteers for smooth and expeditious despatch of the relief operations.

She certainly was not rich—far from it; she even wore cloth which was torn but

her behaviour was that of an aristocrat—she would not ask anything for herself, seek no favour. All the way back and forth from her village she came by walk, a distance of some ten miles, to help her people, and would be content to sustain herself by a little puffed rice which she purchased from a shop! Service without seeking privilege seemed to be her spontaneous way of life.

Kalawati was ever ready to advocate and champion the cause of the truly needy. One day she told A— that some twenty persons from her village had not got relief cards. 'Bring them here in person and I shall have a look at them; and we shall issue cards to all those whom you certify' was his answer. She came with that batch of people and cards were being issued. But others tried to crash in and pass themselves as belonging to that group; however they had left Kalawati out of the reckoning. Firmly she strode into the group, sorted out the black sheep into three groups, 'Don't give', 'Don't know', 'Don't deserve'. Some of them she declared as not known to her. Others she dismissed saying, 'These are not in need of relief; they don't deserve.' About the third group she said, 'These are already receiving relief from Government Agencies directly; don't give.' As expected some of the 'dispossessed' raised a hue and cry. 'Why don't you keep quiet? If the Swamis are pleased to give why should you come in the way and deprive us?' But Kalawati could not be put off so easily. She had a rare courage which would not quail before popular uproar, which would not yield to the demands of *vox populi*; for the sake of truth she was not afraid of courting unpopularity. She told them that the Swamis depended on her for correct information and she would not betray their confidence.

The secret of her leadership seemed to

have come to her naturally; her success as a leader was due to her taking the role of the 'first servant' for whom duties come first and one's own claims last. Once when she visited a relief centre with a large group of her wards, milk was being distributed to the needy. Many would come for milk without cups for drinking and the few available vessels had to be passed round, after washing, again and again. All the while Kalawati would be content to wait, to see that all the others were served. Though the volunteers repeatedly pressed her to have a glass of milk she would not accept it till all others were served.

And what a sense of public morality and ethics she instinctively had! Once, in the course of a check up on the cards, two of the card holders were disqualified—one, a woman, because she was not able to work and earn a living; the other, a man, who though able-bodied was trying to use the card in the name of his wife. Kalawati pleaded for the woman but withdrew her pleading when she was convinced that the grounds for disqualification were just. But

with the second person, who actually happened to be *her* brother-in-law she did not even intercede. No nepotism for Kalawati.

Who could resist admiring such nobility? The Ramakrishna Mission relief workers, led by some of the monks, organized a public function to honour this simple but truly great lady. Many prominent citizens, leaders and local officials participated in the function where she was presented with a citation of honour for her noble part in the relief work. She received it with a quiet dignity, and when asked to respond to the address, her brief and gentle reply was, 'I am a girl from a humble family. I am not learned. I have just been doing what I feel to be right.'

Kalawati happened to be the member of a Panchayat Board. What a great blessing it would be for our troubled country if more Kalawatis could represent us at all levels of civic and political life. Then 'Rāmarājya' (Kingdom of Heaven) would not be just an utopian ideal. May her tribe increase.

EXPLORER.

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## SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

The foregoing portion of this article in which was discussed the theoretical aspect of 'Spiritual Unfoldment', ended with the words: 'So the important questions are: how does this spiritual unfoldment happen? Does it happen in a chance mysterious way or can we deliberately work for it?' In this part of the article these questions are answered.

### I

The yoga-psychology holds that we can deliberately work for spiritual unfoldment.

One of the unique contributions of Hinduism to the general fund of spiritual

knowledge of mankind is the knowledge of Kuṇḍalinī Śakti or the serpent power and the methods of rousing that power for attaining spiritual excellence and liberation of the spirit.

Nothing has thrown so much light on the inner world of man as the knowledge of Kuṇḍalinī Śakti. It has explained the reasons of the degrees of the development of spiritual consciousness and thrown revealing flashes on dark corners of human mind. What is more, this knowledge has given in the hands of man the key to open the prison-house of this psychophysical complex and get out in the open of infinitude which is the spirit of man.

We must not commit the mistake of thinking that Kuṇḍalinī Śakti is only a structure of thought, a mere idea. Kuṇḍalinī Śakti is not a mere theory, but a power-play of Reality Itself as far as the essential man is concerned. Sri Ramakrishna vividly describes in the *Gospel*<sup>1</sup> how he witnessed the rising and passage of Kuṇḍalinī within him.

## II

What Sri Ramakrishna explained in the citations of the foregoing part as the mind coming to dwell on higher planes, is the same as rising of the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti or serpent power from a lower to a higher centre of consciousness. It is the rising of the Kuṇḍalinī that makes possible for the mind to dwell on a higher plane.

This dynamic inner march of consciousness toward super-consciousness which one attains when Kuṇḍalinī reaches the *sahasrāra*, is called spiritual unfoldment.

'A man's spiritual consciousness is not awakened unless his Kuṇḍalinī is roused,' says Sri Ramakrishna.<sup>2</sup>

No spiritual progress or experience is ever possible without the rising of the Kuṇḍalinī.

So the most important practical question of spiritual life is: how can we rouse this power?

In Tantrika yoga scriptures like *Śat-cakra-nirūpaṇa* and *Pāduka Pañcaka* translated by Arthur Avalon as the famous book, *The Serpent Power*, classical specific disciplines for rousing the Kuṇḍalinī are described.

But the fact remains that they are highly recondite and technically intricate works, which are not easily understandable even theoretically, not to speak of meeting the demands of those disciplines. Moreover a technician of this yoga, who is the master of those disciplines is not easy to find today even in India. And without personal guidance of such a teacher and living a life dedicated exclusively to that purpose alone, practice of the disciplines of classical Kuṇḍalinī yoga is impossible. Those ill-advised people who only with the help of a book will try to go it alone in a manner, will in all possibility wreck themselves to pieces or go insane.

And yet it is a fact that if Kuṇḍalinī is not roused there cannot be any hope of becoming a truly spiritual person. What then is the way open to people like us, who have perforce to live in situations of a city or country life working for earning our livelihood and are involved in many ways in other activities, though along with that we are undoubtedly earnest spiritual seekers too?

There has got to be some other way for us, if we are to have some spiritual future.

Whether or not there is any way open to us for rousing Kuṇḍalinī in a manner which suits our degree of competency, we ourselves cannot ascertain with the help of our discursive intellect, because the references of our strivings will have to be worked out all the way through, up to attainment of illumination.

For no fundamental question of spiritual life there is any gimic solution. In matters like this, we have to move in a conservative and reverential way and seek guidance of the authentic masters of spiritual life, who

<sup>1</sup> Vide: 'M' *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1964, p. 814.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 814.

besides being masters of the knowledge, are compassionate and ready to help. The incarnations of God, mystics and saints are the persons who can help us. We must not make the mistake of seeking solutions to such problems from mere men of learning or salesmen of religion.

It is, in fact, the business of the prophet of the age, nay, one of the fundamental objectives of his manifestation to reinterpret the ancient spiritual knowledge and also add new knowledge of the spirit, in a way suitable to the generality of mankind of a given time, in order to facilitate their movement to the spiritual destiny.

From such a person we have to seek guidance on major spiritual issues affecting our lives.

Sri Ramakrishna did this work for our age, not only for those who are called Hindus, but for all those who strive to see God and become illumined souls. He did this work consciously, for he himself said, that during the British rule, currency of the Mughal rule is no longer a legal tender. He worked in India no doubt, but his spiritual realm spreads up to there where God is earnestly sought.

If we read Sri Ramakrishna's teachings carefully we shall find more than ample guidance and helpful directions in regard to the practice of spiritual disciplines exactly commensurate with the degrees of our capacities.

And this is a great boon, because now we can start off from where we stand and move directly to the destination without having to change our ways or make life-wasting detours.

Having himself practised them, Sri Ramakrishna knew all the traditional paths all the way through. He understood our strength and weakness thoroughly well. He had infinite compassion for us and was extremely anxious that we reach the highest. His years of spiritual ministry were almost wholly

devoted to devising suitable adaptations from ancient spiritual knowledge for our sake and for our times.

Therefore in all spiritual matters earnest seekers can always turn to Sri Ramakrishna for authentic guidance.

What did Sri Ramakrishna teach in regard to the method of rousing the Kuṇḍalinī to aspirants like us?

Sri Ramakrishna says:

'After great effort and spiritual practice the Kuṇḍalinī is awakened.'<sup>3</sup>

This was his general view. So no aspirant should assume he is addressing himself to an easy task. But he should not also think that it is an impossible task.

Sri Ramakrishna says:

'One's spiritual consciousness is not awakened by merely reading of books. One should also pray to God. The Kuṇḍalinī is roused if the aspirant feels restless for God.'<sup>4</sup>

'The Primordial Energy resides in all bodies as the Kuṇḍalinī. She is like a sleeping snake coiled up... The Kundalinī is speedily awakened if one follows the path of bhakti. God cannot be seen unless She is awakened. Sing earnestly and secretly in solitude:

Waken, O Mother, O Kuṇḍalinī whose nature is Bliss Eternal!

Thou art the serpent coiled in sleep, in the lotus of the Mūlādhāra.

'Ramprasad achieved perfection through singing. One obtains vision of God if one sings with yearning heart.'<sup>5</sup>

The point here to be remembered and practised is this: the Primordial Energy, whom the Hindus worship as the Divine Mother, inheres in every physical system, in a sleeping form as it were. We can awaken Her by earnestly calling on Her directly as Sri Ramakrishna has taught. This is the simple truth.

Sri Ramakrishna has here simplified the difficult yogic practices for us to an incredible extent. Yet he assures us that through

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 456.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 814.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 310.



the practice of this simple discipline, we shall have the same full results of awakened Kuṇḍalinī.

We have on record this record of a conversation between a devotee and the Holy Mother on the subject on hand:

Disciple: Mother, is it good to practise āsanās (yogis postures) and Prāṇāyāmas (breathing exercises)?

Mother: These practices lead to supernatural powers which deflect a man from the spiritual path.

Disciple: Is it good to be going about from one place of pilgrimage to another?

Mother: If the mind feels at rest in a particular place, there is no need of pilgrimage.

Disciple: I find it impossible to meditate. Please awaken my Kuṇḍalinī.

Mother: It will awaken in course of time. Do Japa and meditation. It does not rise of itself.<sup>6</sup>

On another occasion a disciple said to the Mother:

'Nothing is gained, Mother, without the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī.

Mother: Quite so, my child. The Kuṇḍalinī will gradually be awakened. You will realize everything by repetition of God's name.

Even if the mind be not quiet, still you can sit at a place and repeat the holy name a million times. Before the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī, one hears the Anāhata sound; but nothing can be achieved without the grace of the Divine Mother. ...'<sup>7</sup>

Swami Vivekananda says:

'Thus the rousing of the Kuṇḍalinī is the one and the only way of attaining Divine wisdom, super-conscious perception, realization of the spirit. The rousing of Kuṇḍalinī may come in various ways, through love of God, through mercy of perfected sages, or through the power of analytic will of the philosopher.'<sup>8</sup>

Among the brother disciples of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda was a great trainer in spiritual life on personal

level. He hardly ever spoke in public. But he was a superb master who would hold the aspirant singly by the hand and take him to the destination of spiritual life.

One day a disciple asked Swami Brahmananda: 'Sir, how can the Kuṇḍalinī be roused?'

The Swami replied:

'According to some, there are some exercises, but I believe it can best be done through repetition of the Divine Name and meditation. Specially suited to our age is the practice of Japam or constant repetition of Divine Name and meditation upon it. There is no spiritual practice easier than this. But meditation must accompany the repetition of the Mantra (or the mystic word).'<sup>9</sup>

The disciple again asked:

'Maharaj, does the Kuṇḍalinī awaken by the grace of Guru?'

Maharaj: 'Through his grace everything can be had, even knowledge of Brahman, to say nothing of the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī.' But this grace is not easily obtained. You must work hard.

'Practice some spiritual disciplines. Begin now. Devote yourself to it exclusively. Don't think about anything else. Plunge into the very depth of your soul.'<sup>10</sup>

In these most authentic teachings cited, we have a complete answer to the question: How can the Kuṇḍalinī be roused within us though we are not able to practise intricate disciplines of Kuṇḍalinī yoga?

If we faithfully follow these instructions eventually our dormant spiritual powers will certainly be awakened, and we shall experience complete spiritual unfoldment within us.

### III

Three factors are involved in all spiritual strivings: time, personal strivings, and divine grace.

Our very births indicate we have certain desires to be fulfilled. Fulfilment of desires

<sup>6</sup> Swami Tapasyananda: *Sri Sarada Devi the Holy Mother*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1949, p. 492.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 494.

<sup>8</sup> Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Vol. I, 1962, p. 165.

<sup>9</sup> Swami Prabhavananda: *The Eternal Companion*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1955, p. 149.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 151.

means nothing but the soul's seeing through the phenomenal world. Before seeing through the hollowness of the phenomenal world one cannot really develop dispassion. Without dispassion how can one have longing for God? It is longing for God which is the driving force behind awakening of Kuṇḍalinī.

So time is needed. There is enough time for every one. And God is an untiring baby sitter. He gives every baby whatever toy he wants and waits. When one is through with these many coloured toys, then is one's time.

Before the coming of that time no amount of spiritual precept does any good. It will then be a vain attempt of driving a nail on a granite wall.

But when this time has come, even a chance word will be enough spark to ignite a roaring flame of longing for God.

Even when one has learnt to long for God, there is no knowing how long one will have to wait, how many inner conflicts and outer obstacles one will have to face.

Infinite patience, literally infinite patience, is therefore necessary.

Impatience definitely impedes spiritual unfoldment.

Impatience arises from egoism. 'I have done so much, yet I have not gained anything.' This mentality creates a special obstruction to spiritual unfoldment and fulfilment as will be exemplified in the following parable.

"There was a great god-sage called. Nārada. Just as there are sages among mankind, great yogis, so there are great yogis among the gods. Nārada was a good yogi and very great. He travelled everywhere. One day he was passing through a forest, and saw a man who had been meditating until the white ants had built a huge mound round his body—so long had he been sitting in that position. He said to Nārada, "Where are you going?" Nārada replied, "I am going to heaven." "Then ask God when He will be merciful to me; when I shall attain freedom." Further on Nārada saw another man. He was jumping about, singing, dancing, and said, "Oh,

Nārada, where are you going?" His voice and his gestures were wild. Nārada said, "I am going to heaven." "Then, ask when I shall be free." Nārada went on. In the course of time he came again by the same road, and there was the man who had been meditating with the ant-hill round him. He said, "Oh, Nārada, did you ask the Lord about me?" "Oh, yes." "What did He say?" "The Lord told me that you would attain freedom in four more births." Then the man began to weep and wail and said, "I have meditated until an ant-hill has grown around me, and I have four more births yet!" Nārada went to the other man. "Did you ask my question?" "Oh, yes. Do you see this tamarind tree? I have to tell you that as many leaves as there are on that tree, so many times you shall be born and then you shall attain freedom." The man began to dance for joy, and said, "I shall have freedom after such a short time!" A voice came, "My child, you will have freedom this minute." That was the reward for his perseverance. He was ready to work through all those births, nothing discouraged him. But the first man felt that even four more births were too long. Only perseverance like that of the man who was willing to wait aeons, brings about the highest result.<sup>11</sup>

When one develops longing for God one never looks backward and takes inventory of what he has done for God, he looks only Godward and inward and is anxious to know with the strength left in him what more he himself can do in order to press forward to God. He, however, knows very well, no one ever realizes God by having done enough for God. Yet one must keep on striving.

Our teachers have taught us various disciplines for the same purpose. To be sure, a truly spiritual life is a hard life of hard work. By sheer personal exertion one can wear out a great deal of those impediments which obstruct spiritual unfoldment. The rest depends on Lord's grace.

If we read the lives of saints, even of those who were so to say born with pure minds,

<sup>11</sup> Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Vol. I, 1955, pp. 193-94.

we shall find how hard they had to work for bringing about their spiritual unfoldment.

And are we going to get it through living an indifferent life of shallow self-seeking?

God, who is the all, the full, the entire, if we want to attain Him, we must bend our all, full and entire strength.

In fact, after much striving the aspirant discovers a vital fact of the inner life: that without divine grace nothing spiritual really happens in one's life because of one's own efforts. Yet without personal striving divine grace cannot even be understood, even when it is there heaped over our head.

If there is any law or logic behind divine

grace it may be only this: those who have not stinted in giving their all to God, God gives them unstintedly. Yet it is not a barter. God has already given His all to everybody for all times. As Kuṇḍalinī Śakti He fully inheres in man. But only those who have bent all their energy discover this fact. Others do not. This makes all the difference between aspirants.

Success in yoga is the quickest for the most energetic, says Patanjali. And this has been time and again testified in the lives of saints.

(Concluded)...

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## THE RELIGION OF SELF-RELIANCE AND SELF-EFFORT

DR. S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA

The sixth century B.C. was an age of intense intellectual fermentation in India. Never, perhaps, in the history of India traditionalism in matters religious and spiritual was convulsed more forcefully and to the very roots than in this period of time. A class of heterodox thinkers known as the *Śramanas* pitched itself in opposition to the *Brāhmanas*, the traditional followers of Vedic ritualism. The Brāhmanic fold itself split up into two classes—the *karmakāṇḍins* or the ritualists and the *Jñānakāṇḍins* or the followers of the Path of Knowledge or Self-realization who opined that the performance of sacrifices for pleasurable rewards in this world and in the next gave but temporary results and was not the real way to salvation and to the attainment of Immortality.

The *Śramanas* or the heterodox thinkers propounded all sorts of views. It is worthwhile noticing the variety of views propounded by them in order to get a picture

of the welter of ideas with which India was seething at the time. One Ajita Kesha-Kambalin propounded the view known as *Ucchedavāda* or annihilationism according to which there is no transcendental or future life and the distinction between good and evil and merit and demerit had no validity. Another Makkhali Gosāla taught the doctrine of chance causation (*adhiccha samutpāda*) or fortuitous origination of things (*yadṛccha-vāda*). Perfection, he said, could come about of itself and no effort on the part of man was necessary. A third Pūraṇa Kassapa taught that moral distinctions had no significance as the soul was inactive by nature. A fourth Sanjaya Belatta-putta propounded sceptical views. A fifth Pakudha Kachchāyana taught *Sāssata-vāda* or 'eternalism' according to which material and spiritual elements were both real but there was no interaction between them.

Two of the heterodox teachers at the time became very prominent and their

teachings and influence spread far and wide. They were Nigantha Nāta-putta, more popularly known as Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the 24th Jain Tīrthaṅkara and Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. It is an interesting fact that both Mahāvīra and Buddha were contemporaries and that both were born and carried on their activities in Magadha, the modern province of Bihar. Both were born on dates removed from each other by the interval of a month only, Mahāvīra on the 13th day of the second half of the month of Caitra and Buddha on the Vaiśākha Pūrṇimā day. Vardhamāna Mahāvīra was elder in age than Gautama. The two never met each other but kept themselves informed about the teachings of each other through the intermediary of their disciples. There is much that is common between them, though the differences are by no means negligible.

The birthday of Lord Mahāvīra fell on the 31st of March last and on the 2nd of May, the Vaiśākha Pūrṇimā day the birthday of Lord Buddha was celebrated all the world over. As a tribute to both, I shall give here a brief resume of the common malaise in the contemporary socio-religious situation from which both retreated in their common affirmations as well as the differences between them. The malaise of socio-religious circumstances, against which both Jainism and Buddhism were reactions, comprised excessive and complicated ceremonialism and ritualism, the propitiation of gods and goddesses for pleasurable gains in this world and the next by performance of bloody sacrifices, the ascendancy of priestcraft and tortuous caste discriminations, authoritarianism and metaphysical disputations which led nowhere and the plethora of mutually antagonistic doctrines and dogmas. Mahāvīra and Buddha left the beaten tracks to find out *for themselves* the true meaning and purpose of life and

proclaimed what they discovered by their own creative insights.

As against dependence on gods and God, they taught the religion of self-reliance and self-effort. Mahāvīra called his religion *Kriyāvāda* or the Religion of Energism. The goal of life was not to be attained by the grace of any god or God but by one's own self-effort. Man becomes bound by his own deeds and can attain salvation by his own efforts. Man is the maker of his destiny. He himself is responsible for all his happiness and sorrow, and none else. The essence of *Kriyāvāda* is summed up in the words: *sukhadukkham sayamkatam*—'Happiness and sorrow are brought about by oneself.' It is *akriyāvāda* which holds: *sukha-dukkham paramkatam*—'Happiness and sorrow are given by others.' We are reminded of the following verse in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyana* (II. 6.6):

*Sukhasya duḥkhasya na ko' pi dātā paro dadātīti kubuddhiresā. Svayaṁ kṛtaṁ svena phalena yujyate śarira he vistara yat tvayā kṛtam.*

Nobody gives you happiness or misery; it is perversity of thought to hold that some one else gives you this. A deed done by thee joins itself to its own fruit; suffer ye, therefore, the result of what thou hast done.

The celebrated words of the Buddha are:

*Attā hi attano natho ko hi natho paro siyā  
Attanā hi sudantena nātham labhati  
dullabham.*

Self is the Lord of self; what other Lord could there be? When a man subdues well his self, he will have found a Lord very difficult to find.

—Dhammapada, 160.

Again,

You yourself must put forth exertion; for the Buddhas (*Tathāgata*) are but sign-posts; those who have entered the path and are meditative will be liberated from the bonds of Māra.—Dhammapada 276.

In fact, self-effort has been stressed by all

the great spiritual Teachers of mankind. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* has put forth the matter no less forcefully:

One should raise oneself by oneself; one should not let oneself down. The self alone is the friend of the self and the self alone is the foe of the self.

In the climate of theistic religions, however, with many people proneness to dependence on God for His grace has a slackening tendency on self-effort.

Mahāvīra taught that when one attains *kevalajñāna*, he realizes his Ātman as endowed with Infinite Bliss, Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Power. The Ātman then is seen to be the Paramātman. Thus Jainism, though not professing theism, is not atheistic in the opprobrious sense of the term. It envisages actualization of the potential divinity of the Soul by the complete removal of *karmic* bondage as the goal of the spiritual life. It is similarly wrong to stigmatize Buddhism as atheistic. The Buddhist *Nirvāna* has been grossly misunderstood as annihilation of the self. It is, in the words of the Buddha himself, reaching the Uncreate (*akataṃ*), the Immortal State (*amataṃ padam*). 'When thy impurities are blown away', said the Buddha, 'and thou art freed from sinful bent, thou shalt no more come again into birth and old age.' (Dhammapada, 238).

It was the glory of self-conquest and the grandeur of Self-realization that the Buddha taught. (He denied the reality of the self in the realm of empirical existence, in the successive series of 'aggregates', not transcendently.) No god or gandharva or Māra or even Brahmā, said the Buddha, could bring down a man who had attained self-conquest.

Both Mahāvīra and Buddha laid emphasis on the ethical transformation of life as the essential core of religion. It is purity of heart, simplicity of mind, compassion to all living beings, humility and love, not dogmas, beliefs and rituals which constitute the pith and marrow of the religious life and lead

man to Nirvāna. Mahāvīra brought his religion within the framework of three principal categories—*Samyaka Darśan* (Right Faith), *Samyaka Jñāna* (Right Knowledge) and *Samyaka Cāritra* (Right Conduct); so did Buddha bring his religion under the three heads of *Prajñā* (Wisdom), *Śīla* (Virtuous Conduct) and *Samādhi* (Concentration and Meditation).

In the religious history of India, Jainism and Buddhism are examples of a purely humanistic religion, a religion of self-culture, kindness and compassion, with no theological props or the soul-crushing paraphernalia of the priestcraft or the tyranny of casteism.

Though Jainism and Buddhism are so remarkably similar, there are doctrinal differences between them too. It is not our purpose in the present article to dwell *in extenso* on these differences. I shall content myself with pointing out one difference which is too conspicuous to pass unnoticed. While Jainism advocated the practice of the mortification of the flesh and asceticism down to the point of denying the wearing of clothes altogether and fasting unto death, the Buddha saw the futility of extreme self-mortification and advocated a *via media* between excessive indulgence and severe asceticism.

Buddhism and Jainism are not antagonistic to Hinduism. In spite of the theoretical and practical differences between them, they are the trees grown on the same cultural soil, nourished by the sap of common ideas—the futility of sense enjoyment, perfection in the cardinal virtues of *ahiṃsā satya*, *asteyā*, *brahmacarya* and *aparigraha*, the potential divinity of the Soul, and mokṣa or riddance from the round of births and deaths as the ultimate goal of life. The goal is the same the paths are many. Let them be—that is in the nature of things. 'As many faiths, so many paths', said Sri Rama-krishna. Religious tolerance has been the  
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## ILLUMINATING DIALOGUES FROM INDIAN LORE

### SĪTĀ AND ANASUYĀ

After the departure of Bharata to Ayodhyā the illustrious Rāma accompanied by Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa left Citrakūta. He reached the hermitage of sage Atri and paid him obeisance. The holy sage looked upon him as his own son and personally welcomed him with every honour due to guests. Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa were also received with genuine kindness.

The sage Atri, knower of Dhārma and ever devoted to the good of all, calling to his side his aged, virtuous and ascetic wife Anasūyā, whispered to her: 'Welcome Sītā.'

Then the holy Atri said to Śrī Rāma: 'Formerly when rain withheld for a considerable period and the earth nearly dried up, this virtuous lady, Anasūyā, by her great austerity produced fruits and berries for the sages and caused Ganges to descend so that they might bathe therein; thus by her arduous ascetic practices did she dispel the impediments in the path of the sages. This Anasūyā, O Sinless One, is like a mother to you. Let Sītā approach this aged, ascetic lady who is worthy of being saluted by all created beings and is ever free from anger.'

Śrī Rāma answered: 'Be it so.' Then looking at Sītā who was full of piety he said: 'O Princess, you have heard the

words spoken by the sage. For your own good, therefore, quickly approach the ascetic lady who is worthy of great reverence and who has attained fame in the world through her actions as Anasūyā "free from jealousy".'

Thereafter Sītā approached Anasūyā who was proficient in every virtue. On account of her age Anasūyā's physical frame was feeble and emaciated, her hairs grey and limbs trembling. Sītā made profound obeisance to her and uttering her own name to obtain her blessings, she held her palms together in reverence and pleasantly enquired about Anasūyā's welfare.

Anasūyā was glad to see Sītā, so noble and virtuous, and said: 'Happily you are mindful of Dhārma. Dear Sītā, you have left your relations; and casting off your pride and giving up your comforts, you have happily followed Rāma who is exiled to the forest. To women of noble character the husband is the supreme deity, whether he be vile in conduct, a rake or one devoid of riches. Worlds that are attended with great prosperity await those women to whom their husband is dear, no matter whether he lives in a city or in a forest, happy or unhappy. On a careful consideration I find that there is no rela-

tion who is superior to this (husband) and more worthy in every respect, even as the undiminishing results of austerities performed. But bad women whose hearts are tainted by passion and who lord over their husbands, do not, in the above manner, understand what is good and what is bad. Women who belong to that bad category fall from virtue and become vile. Women who, like you, are possessed of good qualities and know what in this world is good and what is bad—they shall attain heaven, even as those who perform their own duty. Therefore, looking upon your husband as foremost object of your worship and remaining devoted to him, practise Dharma in co-operation with your husband. Thereby you will attain prosperity and religious merit.'

Thus addressed by Anasūyā, Sītā spoke gently with all respect: 'What you have spoken to me is expected of a noble woman. I am too well convinced that to a woman her husband is her Lord. Noble lady, even if this my husband be devoid of good conduct, yet he must be served without any hesitation by me. How much more so must he be served when he has praiseworthy qualities, when he is merciful and steadfast in affection, when he has conquered his senses and become the soul

of virtue, and when he loves me as a father and mother would? With his great powers of self-control, Rāma conducts himself towards all other women in the king's household in the same way as he behaves towards Kausalyā. Giving up self-esteem, the valiant Rāma, who is devoted to his father and who is the knower of Dharma, regards women looked upon with affection by the king but once, as his mother. As I was coming to the uninhabited and fearful forest, I was given the same good advice in this manner by my mother-in-law; and those precious words of advice are stored in my memory. I was also given words of advice by my mother when long ago I was placed before the sacred fire at the time of giving me away in marriage. Those words are also remembered by me. And all that advice has been rendered new and fresh by your words, O Venerable lady! There is no other holy task prescribed for a woman than attendance on her husband. Sāvitrī attended on her husband and is honoured in heaven.'

Anasūyā, very glad on hearing the words of Sītā, caressed her endearingly.

Source: *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*, Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa, Cantos 117-18.

—*Sañjaya*.

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keynote of the Indian civilization all down the ages. An inscription originally found at Khajuraho has the following prayer at its commencement:

*Yam vedāntavido vadanti manasaḥ sam-  
kalpabhūtaṁ śivam Brahmaikam para-  
mākṣaram tadajaram tamcāmaram  
tadvidah*

*Anye tam śivameva buddhamalam anye  
jinam vāmanam Tasmāi sarvamayai-*

*kyakāraṇapate śarvāya nityam  
namah.*

We salute Śarva whom the knowers of Vedānta know as the Śiva of their mind's contemplation, the one Brahman, the Supreme Imperishable, the Unborn, the Immortal. Others call him Śiva only, others Buddha the Pure, others Jina and still others Viṣṇu. To that Śarva who comprehends all and is the one ultimate cause of all existence, our eternal salutation.

# CONTRIBUTION OF HINDUISM TO HUMANITY

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

This is a large subject, but I shall bring it into focus by pointing out some of those salient features which have imparted strength and steadiness to the great religion that developed in India, a religion of five thousand years' history, a religion bearing the significant name of Sanātana Dharma, Eternal Religion, one that has approached and studied religion from various angles and built up a dynamic spiritual tradition, rational and universal, which inspires nearly a seventh of the human race. It is of great importance to the world of religion, therefore, to understand the beginnings of this religion, how it developed, how it became enriched in subsequent ages, and what spiritual message it holds for humanity today.

The Hindus derive their religion from the great and sacred literature known as the Vedas, the most ancient literature of man. The Vedas constitute beginningless knowledge according to the Hindus. But this cannot pertain to mere books. Books have a beginning; but the knowledge contained in these books, the truth contained in them, are beginningless because they deal with fundamental verities of life. What is the nature of man? What is the nature of this universe? What is the destiny of man? How to realize it? What is the relationship between man and man? These are all matters that lie deep in the mystery of existence and the sages and seers of the Vedas discovered these truths as a result of their own inner purity and penetration. As observed by Swami Vivekananda, in the course of his historic address to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893:

'By the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times.

Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so it is with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical, and spiritual relations between soul and soul and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before their discovery, and would remain even if we forgot them.

'The discoverers of these laws are called *Rsis* (sages), and we honour them as perfected beings. I am glad to tell this audience that some of the greatest of them were women.'<sup>1</sup>

This idea that man can discover spiritual truths for himself and that such effort and discovery form the most vital core of religion, constitutes the fundamental basis of Hinduism. Hinduism does not say that religion consists in just believing that someone in ancient times—be he or she or even an incarnation of God—realized God. Belief is not the foundation of religion but experience. Spiritual truths are hidden in experience. Great sages have blazed a trail in their investigation and discovery of these truths; and they invite us to follow them and test these truths for ourselves with whatever spiritual strength we possess. And even a little bit of this discipline will save man from great fear, *Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt* says Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of divine incarnations, according to Hinduism, in the *Gītā* (II 40). It is open to every one of us to enter into this great discipline, this great spiritual adventure in the context of our daily life and action and thus enrich our life in a fundamental way by the acquisition of spirituality, says Hinduism and adds that, this spirituality is the birthright of everyone, the innate nature of everyone. Man is essentially divine, says Hinduism; hence

<sup>1</sup>Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Vol. I, 1962, pp. 6-7.



the possibility of its experience or realization. *Ātmā vā are draṣṭavyah*—'The Atman has to be realized', says Yājñavalkya to his wife Maitreyī in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II.iv.5). There is no religion in mere belief or even in mere scholarship. Religion is a matter of experiment and experience; it is realization. Referring to this in his address to the Chicago Parliament of Religions, Swami Vivekananda said:

'This is the very centre, the very vital conception of Hinduism. The Hindu does not want to live upon words and theories. If there are existences beyond the ordinary sensuous existence, he wants to come face to face with them. If there is a soul in him which is not matter, if there is an all-merciful universal Soul, he will go to Him direct. He must see Him, and that alone can destroy all doubts. So the best proof a Hindu sage gives about the soul, about God, is: "I have seen the soul; I have seen God."'

And that is the only condition of perfection. The Hindu religion does not consist in *believing* a certain doctrine or dogma, but in *realizing*—not in *believing*, but in *being and becoming*.

'Thus the whole object of their system is by constant struggle to become perfect, to become divine, to reach God and see God, and this reaching God, seeing God, becoming perfect even as the Father in Heaven is perfect, constitutes the religion of the Hindus.<sup>2</sup>

We experience the world through the five senses. The world so revealed is found on investigation to be a world of change, of death, of relativity and finitude. Is there anything changeless and immortal in this universe of change? Religions generally believe in a God who is immortal, or in a reality which is unconditioned and free; and mortal man finds peace and fulfilment in this immortal God, in this unconditioned and free reality. But an immortal God or an unconditioned reality is difficult to accept because whatever we see, whatever

we touch, every aspect of the universe that comes within our sense experience, is subject to mortality, is subject to cause and effect determinism. So where is the relevance of a God who is immortal or of religion which is centred in Him or in an unconditioned and free reality?

The history of religion reveals that man first sought for God in the external world; he believed in a God in a heaven, far away in the celestial sphere. But, later on, philosophy developed, and under its scrutiny it was discovered that in the external world there was nothing that was changeless, nothing that was immortal; everything there is subject to change and mortality. This is one of the most important conclusions of Hinduism in its philosophy of Vedanta; it is also one of the most important conclusions of Buddhism. They discovered the ephemeral character of the universe of the not-self and the essential character also of much of what constitutes the Self. Our body and our mind, even our sense of individuality centred in the ego—all these fall within the realm of change or mortality.

This itself is a great and bold conclusion; but it was not bold enough for the sages of India. They recognized the shattering effect of this discovery on all religion, and especially on monotheistic religions centred in an extra-cosmic personal God. They, however, were impelled to treat this only as a provisional truth till they had investigated the full significance of the reality of the self in human experience, till they had studied man in depth. They realized that nature revealed her deeper aspects not in the external world but in the inner world of man. Man is the finest and most significant product of her evolution. Hence before pronouncing conclusive answers as to the nature of the external world, or the destiny of man, they felt the need to turn the searchlight of thought on the inner world

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Vol. I, 1962, p. 13.

of man and uncover the mysteries hidden in its depths. If nothing changeless or immortal was found there, they were ready to proclaim that the belief in an immortal God or unconditioned reality was without any true basis and that man would be wise in conducting his life and achieving his destiny according to the dictates of his sense-bound reason.

This was the challenge that India faced thousands of years ago in her Upaniṣads with a courage and fruitfulness which hold deep implications for man and his destiny in this modern scientific age. The scientific spirit and rational temper and spiritual daring of that investigation and the insights gained therefrom constitute the great philosophy of Vedānta. The sages of the Upaniṣads 'had no public to please or critics to appease', to distract them from their pursuit of truth, as remarked by Max Muller. Their only passion was truth and human welfare through truth; and there was no all-powerful church or jealous political state to constrain them; and they had minds disciplined in moral purity and intellectual detachment. With these assets, they built up an edifice of philosophic and spiritual thought which has stood the test of time and circumstance. In the words of Professor Max Muller:

'It is surely astounding that such a system as the Vedānta should have been slowly elaborated by the indefatigable and intrepid thinkers of India thousands of years ago, a system that even now makes us feel giddy, as in mounting the last steps of the swaying spire of an ancient Gothic cathedral. None of our philosophers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant, or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightnings. Stone follows on stone after regular succession after once the first step has been made, after once it has been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been but One, as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it Ātman or Brahman.'<sup>3</sup>

The Upaniṣads register this orientation in the search for the highest truth of experience from the external to the internal world. The sages found sufficient intimations of the inner dimensions of nature—'intimations of immortality', as poet Wordsworth called them—in the mysterious inner world of man. Here is man, one of the products of evolution, in whom nature has become not only aware, but he also is self-aware. That is the uniqueness of man. If we can penetrate into the heart of the mystery of this unique phenomenon, thought these sages, we may discover the key to open the mystery of all other phenomena of nature. The Upaniṣads embodies this significant orientation in one of its profoundest verses:

*Parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayambhuḥ tasmāt  
parāñ paśyati nāntarātman;  
Kaścit dhīraḥ pratyagātmanam aikṣat āvṛttacakṣuḥ  
amṛtatvamicchā—*

'The self-existent Lord fashioned the sense organs (and mind) of man with the initial defect of an out-going tendency. Therefore man sees things of the external (not-self) world but not the self within. A certain *dhīra* (wise man), however, impelled by his desire to seek for the immortal, turned the direction of the energies of his senses and mind inward, and realized the *Pratyagātman* (the immortal and divine Inner Self).'<sup>4</sup>

The discipline of the out-going senses and mind is physical science; by this discipline man discovers the truths of the external world and gains control over its forces. But he is baffled in his attempts to understand the truth of that external world; the more he attempts, the more that mystery only deepens, disclosing at his farthest reaches a greater mystery overshadowing that mystery of the external world, namely the mystery of his own self, the mystery of man the observer.

This verse refers, in a condensed statement, to the lure of this new mystery, the

<sup>3</sup> *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> *Kātha Upaniṣad*, IV. 1.

mystery of the inner self of man, to the inquisitive minds of the ancient Indian sages, to the revolutionary technique they adopted in its investigation, and to the unique result of that investigation. It conveys the news of a momentous discovery with a noble discipline behind it; and this constitute the science of religion. And on the trail blazed by this *kaścit dhīra*, by this pioneer explorer in this strange new field, marched a procession of the most gifted seekers and discoverers of India, establishing in the process a scientific tradition in man's search for God, in his search for truth and fulfilment, and giving to humanity the blessings of a new science, namely the *Adhyātmavidyā*, the science of the Ātman, the science of the study of man in depth, the science of God.

In several of his lectures in the West, in the wake of his speeches in the Chicago Parliament of Religions, Swami Vivekananda has referred to this scientific approach to religion as cherished in the Indian tradition. Speaking on 'Religion and Science', he said:

'Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be....

'Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of (external) nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science, because he reads the wrong book—the book within and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he too reads the wrong book—the book without.'<sup>5</sup>

The importance, to the modern age, of this Indian contribution to human knowledge and fulfilment is deep and far-reach-

ing. Religion in the Western tradition increasingly failed to derive its nourishment from experience and got stuck up in frozen creeds and irrational dogmas. In becoming thus stagnant, it also became the enemy of all free inquiry even in the physical sciences. Reason which was the life-blood of science was considered to be the death-knell of religion. As the science progressed through the centuries in spite of the opposition of religion, Western man's allegiance increasingly shifted from religion to science and to the secular welfare of man. Modern thought treated religion as a dangerous error in the beginning; it now treats it as a harmless illusion. The crisis of religion continued to deepen through the decades of this century until today it finds itself overwhelmed, unable to face the challenge of modern scepticism, materialism and worldliness.

In his lecture on 'Reason and Religion' delivered in England in 1896, Swami Vivekananda referred to this developing crisis resulting from religion's refusal to take the help of reason :

'The foundations have all been undermined, and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in the privacy of his heart that he can no more "believe". Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows to be impossible for him. There are, of course, a number of people who seem to acquiesce in the so-called popular faith, but we also know for certain that they do not think. Their idea of belief may be better translated as "not-thinking-carelessness".'<sup>6</sup>

And pleading for the application of reason to the vital field of religion as in all other fields, he continued:

'Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation which we apply to sciences and knowledge out-

<sup>5</sup> Swami vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Vol. VI, Sixth Edition, p. 81.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Vol. I, 1962, p. 367.

side, to be applied to the science of religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes, the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could happen. All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation. Not only will it be made scientific—as scientific, at least, as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry—but it will have greater strength, because physics or chemistry has no internal mandate to vouch for its truth, which religion has.<sup>7</sup>

When religion derives its sanction from experience, it will not only be scientific and join the great stream of tested human knowledge, but it will also free the religious mind from the endemic vices of bigotry and intolerance, and become the more important factor for the blossoming of human life and achievement of human fulfilment in a fundamental way than all the other sciences, though in hearty co-operation with them.

This is the blessing that Indian religion received from the Upaniṣads, from the Vedānta; and this is the blessing that the world's great religions will gain today from that same perennial source. Man must *grow* spiritually, says Hinduism. Ethical and moral values, social awareness, aesthetic sensibility, and divine experience are the products of this spiritual growth. This growth is the product of an inner discipline—the discipline of the *sensāte* man and the manifestation of his infinite divine dimension. The sages realized this infinite immortal dimension of their finite moral personality and called it *Ātman*, the Self; and they realized It too as the Brahman, the Self of all and the Self of the universe, and proclaimed this truth in the majestic statement of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, (VI.II.I):

*Ekam eva adviṣṭyām Brahman*—Brahman is one only, non-dual.

Hinduism did not remain content with the Absolute of speculative philosophy and with the extra-cosmic God of monotheistic religion. 'Is God or the Absolute given in experience, and if so, can we realize this truth?' asked the Upaniṣadic sages, and proceeded courageously to seek the answer from experience itself with the aid of their minds made penetrating by the discipline of moral purity and intellectual detachment. There is a passage in the Upaniṣads which describes this orientation of thought from speculative philosophy to experimental religion. A student in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (III.IV.I.) goes to a spiritual teacher and asks him to tell him about the true God. The student is thoroughly dissatisfied with believing in an Absolute which is purely the product of a speculative venture, and in a God which is the fruit of a dogmatic creed. That Absolute, being a logical Absolute, can only be the co-relative of the relative, and cannot be truly Absolute. That God, being extra-cosmic, can be as much demolished as established by human reason. He asks: 'Please expound to me that Absolute, if you have realized any such, which is immediate and direct, and which is given in experience as the innermost Self of all': *Yat sāksāt aparokṣāt Brahma, ya Ātmā sarvāntaraḥ*. And the Upaniṣads expound Brahman as the spiritual unity of the Absolute of metaphysics, the Self of mysticism, and the God of religion. As reiterated in the *Bhāgavatam*, that classic of *Bhakti* or the path of love, of a later day (I.II.11):

*Vedanti tat tattvavidāḥ tattvaṁ yat Jñānam advayam ;*

*Brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate—*  
'Knowers of Truth declare that it is one and the same non-dual Consciousness that is spoken of as *Brahman* (the Absolute, by the philosophers), as *Paramātmān* (the Supreme Self, by the my-

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 367.

stics) and as *Bhagavān* (the blessed God of love, by the devotees).'

We have the declaration of the spiritual unity of all existence in the opening verse of the very first Upaniṣad, namely, the *Īśā*:

*Īśāvāsyam idam sarvam yat kiñca jagatyam jagat ;  
Tena tyaktena bhunñjīthāḥ mā grdhaḥ kasyasvit dhanam—*

'The whole universe of experience, moving or unmoving, is enveloped by the Lord: Enjoy life through renunciation in Him; don't covet what belongs to another.'

This vision of the spiritual unity of all existence of the Hindu sages has far-reaching effect on human life and destiny. It unifies the secular and the sacred; it provides a rational basis and spiritual stimulus for ethical behaviour; and it makes for love and service, in place of hatred and exploitation, as the valid form of inter-human relationship. In the ringing words of the *Īśā Upaniṣad* (verses 6 and 7):

*Yastu sarvāni bhūtāni ātmanyevānupaśyati ;  
Sarvabhūteṣu cātmānamtato na vijugupsate—*  
'Whoever, verily, realizes all beings in his own Self and himself in all beings, will not, in virtue of that vision, hate anyone.'

*Yasmin sarvāni bhūtāni ātmaivābhūt vijānataḥ ;  
Tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śokaḥ ekatvam anupaśyataḥ—*

'When, to the knowing one, all beings have become his own Self, what delusion, what sorrow, can afflict him who is the seer of the unity of all existence?'

The *Gītā* makes this vision the basis of its ethics of social equality and its unification of work and worship, action and contemplation, through its message of a comprehensive spirituality.

In his profound introduction to his commentary on the *Gītā*, Śaṅkarācārya of the eighth century A.D., the greatest philosopher of India, brings out the basic features of this unifying spirituality of Hinduism:

*Dviividho hi vedokto dharmāḥ pravṛttilakṣaṇo  
niṛttilakṣaṇaśca jagataḥ sthītikāraṇam,  
prāṇinām sākṣāt abhyudayaniḥ śreyasa-  
hetuḥ—*

'Two-fold, verily, is the religion taught in the Vedas, characterized by *pravṛtti*, energetic action, and *niṛtti*, calm withdrawal, or inward direction, conducive to the stability and maintenance of the world by ensuring for all beings their true welfare, material as well as spiritual.'

Hinduism does not look upon the legitimate pleasures of life as evil; wealth is needed to experience sensual satisfactions; and wealth is the product of labour—intelligent, co-operative labour. All this involves the development of a political society. Man as the creator of civilized society and the enjoyer of its delights is fully recognised in Hinduism. This is the significance of the term *abhyudaya* in the above passage. But *abhyudaya* does not constitute the entire range of values sought after by man. He has an infinite spiritual dimension within, wherein lies his true freedom and fulfilment. This is *nirśreyasa*, spiritual emancipation; it is the fruit of an inward-directed action. The Upaniṣad and the *Gītā* teach man to engage himself in this inward spiritual journey along his outward journey in search of a real satisfactions and welfare; to combine meditation with work. If this is not done, warns Hinduism, his search for mere worldly security and welfare may land him in greater insecurity, tension, and unfulfilment.

The comprehensive spirituality of Hinduism unifying the secular and sacred, finds a new formulation from one of its greatest sages of the modern age, Swami Vivekananda. Says he :

'Each soul is potentially divine.

'The goal (of life) is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external (through the physical sciences, technology, and socio-political processes), and internal (through the science of morality and spiritual discipline).

'Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic

control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and BE FREE.

'This is the whole of religion.

'Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'<sup>8</sup>

When we speak of Hinduism, it does not mean just one religion. It is really a federation of several constituent religions and a unity of several paths to spiritual realization. Each one of these constituent religions, such as Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, Śāktism, is a full religion in itself with its distinctive theology, mythology, ritual, and church organization, and with followers running to scores of millions. Hinduism's scientific approach to religion is reflected in its classification of all religious phenomena. Apart from their two-fold classification into *pravṛtti*, action, which is the path of affirmation, and *nivṛtti*, contemplation, which is the path of negation, referred to earlier, based on the felt interests and longings in the heart of man, Hinduism makes a four-fold classification based on human temperament and inclination. This is the well-known classification into the four yogas of *Jñāna* (philosophy), *Bhakti* (love centred in a personal God), *yoga* (concentration and psychic control), and *Karma* (dedicated action).

Hinduism has evolved scientific terms and concepts to describe the whole gamut of the phenomena of the religious consciousness. What the West has done in this field for the physical sciences India has done for the science of religion in its Vedānta. In its light, Buddhism in its Theravāda and Zen forms and certain aspects of Vedānta belong to the *jñāna* type; Christianity, popular Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and most of Mahāyāna Buddhism belong to the *bhakti* type.

*Rāja yoga* and *karma yoga* enter into the

above two expressions in a general way, though they are not absent in their specific forms among a certain type of seekers both in ancient and in modern times. The active type of spiritual seekers of an extra-religious and extra-metaphysical disposition have always resorted to the pure form of *karma yoga*. The contemplative type of seekers who are extra-religious and extra-metaphysical in disposition have always been drawn to the *rāja yoga* for its deep psychological approach.

This classification is not exclusive, says Hinduism; it rests only on the predominance of a particular disposition.

In spite of such diversity of religions in its constitution, Hinduism represents a unitary vision, the philosophic and spiritual vision of unity in diversity; *Mayi sarva-midam protam sūtre maṇiganā iva*—'In Me are all these strung like the many pearls in a string', says Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (VII. 7) Hinduism never upheld or practised the policy of a dull, dead uniformity either in the field of religion or in the field of culture. Such a policy is based on intolerance and leads to violence, both of which found no place in Hinduism. Even as early as the *Rg-Veda*, India had received the message of this vision: *Ekam sat, viprā bahudhā vadanti*—'Truth is One; sages call it by various names'. This had been further amplified by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in his message of the *Gītā* (IV. 11):

*Ye yathā mām prapadyante tām tathāiv bhajāmyaham;*

*Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ—*

'In whatever way men approach Me, I receive them accordingly only; all paths that men take, O Pārtha, are invariably paths to Me only.'

The impressive record of toleration in Hinduism derives from this message of its great teachers and its emphasis on experience and not creed as the basis of religion. This message did not remain confined to

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 124.

saints and sages but also percolated society in a pervasive way and influenced the common man and the political state. Asoka, the great Indian emperor of the third century before Christ, widely spread this message in his vast dominions, which included portions of central Asia also, besides most of India and Pakistan as of today, both by example and precept. Nourished by this spirit of toleration as active acceptance, the mother-heart of Hinduism welcomed, in the succeeding centuries, the persecuted refugees of other religions that had their birth outside India and continued to cherish and nourish them ever after.

This vital message of Hinduism found a glowing expression in our modern age in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. He expressed this message in one of his pithy sayings: *Yato mat tato path*—‘As many religions, so many paths (to God).’

In its long history of over five thousand years, Hinduism has experienced many ups and downs of fortune, which has chastened its spirit and made it the repository of ‘the tolerance and gentleness of the mature

mind, the quiet content of the unacquisitive soul, the calm of the understanding spirit, and a unifying, pacifying love for all living things’,<sup>9</sup> in the words of Will Durant. Her impressive continuity and continued vitality, in spite of centuries of political subjection, a fraction of which has destroyed many a religion and culture, bear eloquent witness to the presence of enormous reserves of energy within, created and nourished by its spiritual vision. Its history demonstrates the truth that ‘the world in the end belongs to the unworldly and that the meek shall inherit the earth’, as observed by Dr. Radhakrishnan. The vast assimilative capacity, which Hinduism and Indian culture have manifested in the past in response to challenging situations, is helping her to face the unprecedented challenges of the modern age by throwing up great teachers and new movements more dynamic and sweeping than those of the past ages of her long history.

<sup>9</sup> *The Story of Civilization*, Vol. I, p. 633.

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a tentative truth, as a trial to see whether they can be taken to be true to explain the whole physical universe, has been taken seriously by rabble. Modern physics finds Democritus’ principle very unsatisfactory, but common man does not know much about it. The latest concepts of Modern Physics should be more publicized.

We have lost faith in God as if to signify that the cycle is completed and the world will start *de novo*. The world will start afresh in the same sense as Jesus Christ or Buddha or the sages of the Upanishadic age started afresh. The end of a Godless world is imminent.

When Nietzsche uttered ‘God is dead’, he was preaching more theism than atheism.

Nietzsche wanted to kill God—the intellectual, barren, abstract God, but not, perhaps, the God who enlightens, who desires, who makes us great. Nietzsche wanted us to be our own Gods till true God dawns in us. That is why he preached us to drive out all humility, to become real men, to become real God. Our humility suppressed our Divine potential.

First Nietzsche and then Kierkegaard have thought what is God today. The days of faith are gone. Today men have accepted the spirit of Science. They want direct verification. Hence Kierkegaard’s sermon: Be God-conscious. You will have God. Every moment without God-consciousness is wasted. This feeling is badly needed in today’s world.

# THE DIVINE SPARK WITHIN US

SRI ALOK CHATTERJEE

'God' undergoes an evolution in the life of a man, a community or a nation. The primary purpose of this conception has always been survival. The primitive men called a certain tyrannical, whimsical super-human as God—who is highly vindictive—both in his favour and favour of his arbitrarily selected proteges; and the extreme antithesis (a later development) is found in Hinduism and Christianity, in myriads of their subdivisions where God is a loving Being and Love is all about Him.

It is very difficult to say about God because most of the things we know are unnecessary and we do not know most of the necessary things. We have tucked all sorts of historical informations about God—we can say at a stretch what is the doctrine of Trinity, who were the Detanists or Pelagians or what is Saguna or Nirguna Brahman and how we arrive at their logical coherence; we can say what revolution God's conception underwent since Immanuel Kant's time. But somehow all these insular pieces of knowledge do not get linked up, they do not produce any synthetic action. They are all barren intellectual informations, they don't move us. Somehow we have forgotten the origin of the concept of God—the concept that moves us, energizes us. If we make God-concept merely intellectual we will soon end in boredom. History of philosophy is a means for synthesizing our thoughts, but of late our tendency has been to make it an end in itself.

The fact that God is still alive in spite of the hard campaign of His death only points to the fact that God is essential to us. God is much more essential to us than air for breathing or water for drinking. The cynic may retort, 'if God is so essential how is it we never feel that He is so neces-

sary?' The answer is simple, because we have too much of God. If one is drowned in water, then while he gasps, he knows how much air is necessary for him, but not before that. Similarly when we land into a Godless world, as in Dostoyevsky's 'Notes on a dead house' we realize what God means to us.

Even at ordinary times luckily we sometimes get a glimpse of what God means to us. Personally I can never complete all the works of my plan in spite of my best intentions. A lethargy forcefully creeps in. But I have been astonished at the amount of work done after my best prayers. All these apparently insignificant, incoherent points in various individuals lead to a common belief in God.

Marvellous are the powers of prayers. They tune us to the mysterious ALL, fill us with courage. Who is afraid? He who is alone. Who is fearless? He who feels oneness with the whole universe. Prayer is our most powerful weapon against anything, but unfortunately this age has accepted a substitute for prayers: 'Science—worship'. This is a very crude crudest form of materialism that has ever been known. Even Cārvākas, (and of course, Hedonists, and Epicureans) are much less vulgar materialists. They, in principle, accepted a higher aim of life, in spite of all their heresies. They tried to build their life view. But our age cares a straw for any higher aim of life. The only faith in our age is that everything in the universe is made of tiny atoms. Life is but one manifestation of the motion of these atoms, consciousness is nothing but the shadow of the motions of the particles in our brain. What was thought of by Dalton and accepted by other scientists only as

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

The words quoted in the column 'Onward For Ever' occur in the *Complete Works*, Vol. II, 1963, pp. 301-2.

The editorial of this month gives a glimpse of 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Charter to the Devotee' as embodied in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and *Srimad Bhāgavatam*. This gift of God is a source of perennial inspiration and guidance to the spiritual seekers.

In 'Profiles in Greatness' of this issue, the 'Explorer' finds greatness not in luminaries immortalized in history, literature or legend, but in an indigent, illiterate and modest woman whose nobility of character was manifest during the Bihar famine relief organized by the Ramakrishna Mission in 1967.

Dr. S. N. L. Shrivastava, M.A., D.Litt., Professor and Head of the Department of

Philosophy, Vikram University, Ujjain in his article draws our attention to the fact that 'self-effort has been stressed by all the great spiritual Teachers of mankind', particularly Mahāvīra and Buddha.

In the 'Illuminating Dialogues from Indian Lore', 'Sañjaya' focusses our attention on the Dharma of a wife by relating the conversation between Sītā and Anasūyā.

Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Order addressed a Symposium of Religions organized by the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago, on "Contributions of Hinduism to Humanity" at Luthern School of Theology, Chicago, 15th of September, 1968.

Sri Alok Chatterjee, a post-graduate student of Combustion Engineering in Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, writes 'The Divine Spark Within Us' stressing the need for practising God-consciousness in today's world.

### MAN ON THE MOON

#### THE BLESSING AND THE THUNDER

There was always a little of the symbolic moon in man.<sup>1</sup> But it was only on July 20, 1969 that two men were on the moon for the first time. And they came safely back home on the 24th July to the universal joy of mankind.

'That's one small step for man, one giant step for mankind' were the first few words of man from the moon. Three American heroes, Neil A. Armstrong, Edwin E. Aldrin and Michael Collins, backed by the devoted, sustained work of more than 400,000 participants—scientists and engineers, blue-collar

workers and administrators, technologists and clerical employees—and the spending of uncounted wealth of the nation, made this greatest ever of human achievement outside the global sphere possible. Behind this achievement was the man's indomitable will, and work of centuries by uncounted scientists of many countries.

The American nation by this unsurpassed achievement has made quite a few contributions to world culture :

1. It has proved the might of man to man in a new mighty way. It has proved what the powers of human mind—concentration, inventive genius and organizing ability—can achieve.
2. It has released the human mind from

<sup>1</sup> Vide : 'The moon became the mind and entered the heart.' *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, I. 2.4.

the necessity and futility of short circuit earth-bound limited human aspirations. It has shown by doing that even physically man need not end up with the earth. The heitherto closed door of absolute space is now open to man for purposive exploration along an endless vista.

3. It has added a new meaning to the word 'progress', on which will be based further unforeseen advancement of man in the relative universe.
4. It has released an ennobling sentiment by leaving on the surface of the moon a plaque with these words engraved on it :

"Here man from the planet earth set foot upon the moon

July 1969 A.D.

We came in peace for all mankind" and signed by the three astronauts and the President of U.S.A.

If we could really make this sentiment flow through our endeavours on earth, if we could feel this solidarity here on this planet and work in peace, long back we would have beaten our swords into ploughshares and the world would have become a shining place of joy and self-fulfilment.

The success in landing on the moon has removed a credibility gap that has been slowly but surely creeping in the American way of life, which may be characterised as : growth in freedom and freedom in growth. Unfortunately there have been plenty of signs littered around of decay and decadence in freedom. Social and psychological problems of the nation had been mounting to menacing proportions raising doubts in the minds of thinkers as to whether the American civilization had wholly gone sensate and thus lost its creative vitality for greater achievements. There was no denying the fact that internally America's problems were more agonizing than those of many other countries. Hence a terrific

despair had gripped a part of the national mind with the result that a generation of boys and girls grew like debris of a civilization sans faith and purpose.

But by landing on the moon the American man has vindicated to the world and himself the American way of life. He has proved that somehow that way of life has known how to save its sound core for further self-development. The landing on the moon is a great new breakthrough of the American way of life for all to see and draw conclusions from. One may have one's opinion about the achievement. But obviously the stalled journey of the pilgrim man of America who went on a long detour after the Gold Rush, seems to have been resumed once again. Now, the chosen destination will determine whether it will be a new pilgrimage or mere a toilsome hiking in Space.

When the whole world was naturally excited over this singular achievement of man in the sky, some eminent persons of the world made some observations worthy of attention :

'Pope Paul said in his weekly Sunday speech that it will be a historic day when humanity sets foot on the moon. But he cautioned against allowing the developments of the space age to become a form of worship. He said that the wonders of the space technology should not distract mankind from the wars plaguing the earth.

Speaking to pilgrims outside his summer residence in Castle Gondolfo only hours before the U.S. astronauts land on the moon the Pope said : "In the ecstasy of this prophetic day—a real triumph for man-made means, for domination of the universe—we must not forget man's need and duty to dominate himself."

He said three conflicts were raging on earth—in Vietnam, Nigeria and the Middle East—and a fourth flared up recently between El Salvador and Honduras.

'Hunger still afflicts entire populations', he added and asked 'What would be the true progress of man if these misfortunes persist and worsen -'

(The *Hindustan Times*, July 22, 1969)

Distinguished English historian Arnold Toynbee said :

'If the Americans and Russians accepted their space-race as a substitute for war "their race for landing on the moon will have reprived humanity from inflicting a supreme disaster on itself."'

Prof. Toynbee who was commenting on Apollo 11 flight to moon added: "But does competitive spacemanship make war less likely or more likely, this is still an open question, and since for me this is the crucial question that the moon-race raises my final feelings about this enterprise—or escapade—all dubious."

The professor said that he was not much impressed by science and technology that had made the moon landing possible adding: "Man's conduct is morally quite inadequate for handling the terrifying material that his intellect has now placed in his hands."

(*Northern India Patrika* : July 23, 1969)

Bertrand Russel the noted English Philosopher, protesting against the impending violation of the moon, wrote in *The Times* in the third week of July 1969 :

'It is for us to grow to the stature of the Cosmos, not to degrade the Cosmos to the level of our futile squabbles. It is not the whole of what should make up human life to cause changes, however vast and however clever. Contemplation also must play its part. If we allow it to do so, some element of wisdom in human affairs may be reflected into our lives from the contemplation of the heavens.'

(Quoted in an article appearing in the *Hindustan Times*, July 20, 1969)

The Prime Minister of India Srimati Indira Gandhi said:

'Armstrong and Aldrin, who walked on the moon today (July 21, 1969) are delegates of the imperishable spirit of man—the spirit which discovered fire and thought, song and science, the spirit which crosses oceans on a bundle of reeds and leaps from one celestial body to another in a small vehicle of its own making.

'This moment of triumph and achievement is also a moment of humility and self-search. Has man, who seeks heavenly suburbs, made his own earth more habitable, friendly and beautiful? Let us direct this power of man which soars

starward into strengthening the bonds of peace and brotherhood on earth.'

(Reported in the *Hindustan Times*, July 22, 1969)

'Eminent physicist and National Professor Satyen Bose (of India) ... said that man landing on moon was "no doubt a good performance." But, he added, it was not the greatest achievement in human history.

'He said: "I do not think that the vast resources, and the amount of energy in perseverance (?) of the moon landing are used in the right direction for advancement of human civilization one step further."'

The professor said he attached much more importance to Gautama Buddha abandoning the throne to serve suffering humanity or the Jesus Christ.'

(Reported in *Northern India Patrika*, July 23, 1969)

'*The New York Time* quoted artist Pablo Piscasso as saying: "It means nothing to me. I have no opinion about it and I don't care."'

(Quoted in *Hindusthan Standard*, July 23, 1969)

Notwithstanding wise and critical words that would be pouring on this achievement of man in history, somehow except for one or two countries, all mankind has hailed this as one all glorious deed of man. In this the poorest of the poor also did join setting aside for the time being the consciousness of his own grinding problems. He did not stand out and say: why did they go to the moon before thatching my cottage, or stitching my tattered cloth? As an after thought they may now say good many things. But they were not saying so at the moment of wonder. The reason for not doing so is psychological: in this act somehow somewhere there was participation of all humanity. Two men were on the moon physically, but mentally there were millions and millions. It was one small step for Armstrong and Aldrin from Lunar Module but it was a giant leap for whole mankind from earth to moon.

It was significant that 'Police in Rome discovered the most crime free night (the night of moon landing) of the year yesterday. Even the crooks they said, stayed home to watch man land and walk on the moon.'

(Reported in *Hindusthan Standard*, July 23, 1969).

If not anything else, this performance of man lifted the mind of man for the nonce from many demoralizing petty concerns, the terrific weight of boredom which drives man to the sordid and sardonic ways, and for a few days held his imagination riveted on new wonderful possibilities.

This achievement also brings to us back here a new perspective for looking at things here on earth, for man's terms of reference which were confined to global limits have been meaningfully shattered once for all. This meaning may be uncomfortable to security loving establishments and individuals. But there is no more any escaping from its implications. Further, if man has succeeded to go out and away, perhaps he will be better able to come within too with his newly manifested powers, for the all-important secret here is the attained power of concentration. With the same key he will be able to unlock the treasures within if he be well-advised.

The entire gamut of man's labour will never conform to the neat blue print which the conservative and wise people make for the total welfare of man according to the moral concepts prevailing. The relish of the forbidden fruit never leaves man's tongue. He will therefore always tend to lapse into extravaganza. It will never be the case that all men will work according to the same idea. While some will walk along the trodden path, some others will forsake them and face dangers of untrodden ones. Some will cleverly count what is on hand, some others will gamble their all for gaining something new. If this moon achievement

was really a blunder, all must agree that it was truly a grand and marvellous blunder. Who will restrain impulsive man when twinkling stars ingratiate into him the call of the unknown? It would be good if we all mended our falling fences. But then some do not care to stay in old homes. How can you bind them with the laws of your parlour economics, which according to him is child's prattle? Some will always recklessly go out to achieve new things. Some of them will never return to report their failures. Some will return with glowing faces looking great. And then we will call them heroes of our species.

This achievement which has enhanced man before man, has brought back new challenges to man's brain and honour for true discernment of facts as they prevail on earth. It compels us to pause and muse how much of unnecessary suffering we have worked for and accumulated in this world. The root cause of this enormous suffering was not in the stars or the moon, but in the ego-centricity of Man at various levels and spheres. In its place we need to practise cosmo-centricity. We need enlargement of our awareness, expansion of our heart and quickening of our intellect. Landing on moon as a symbolic act of man's enhanced capability, can bring in this world's work new zest and confidence. And this can immensely help in solving our problems.

America's not too a few slum dwellers can now forcefully ask why should not a nation which has so much wealth knowledge and skill for landing on the moon and returning safely to earth, know how to provide the basic needs of its suffering people? The answer is also likely to come in a fuller measure and quicker pace.

Compared to man's achievement on the moon all our petty violences, inconsequential upheavalism, in-fighting in groups for political or other so-called gains would appear specially ugly and repelling. How is

it the same man, who has so much power in heaven is so fragile on earth? What is the wrong with him here: man may ask himself more searchingly. This asking is a clear gain, though all the problems continue to exist.

This we may ask with effect our Indian youth: how is it friends, that while the gallant youth somewhere in the world are opening new avenues in the absolute space for human endeavour to advance on unending vista, in some of the cities of India, we do not know even how to keep the sewage clear, how to have streets clean or how to have drinking water flowing through pipes?

While men of another land in a supreme team work have achieved this marvellous feat, here in India could not some of our bright young men know hardly anything better than the cult of burning, breaking and killing and other enthusiastic self-cancelling endeavours? And yet there is no reason to think that at least some of these have brains and other given qualities equal to those of American heroes. This comparative study should bring a new awakening among the bright youth of India.

To say: give us the money and we shall do what the Americans have done on the moon is to exhibit an unawareness of what an amount of national *tapas*, practise of self-improving discipline of that country has gone into this work. In a sense it has been a sacrificial work of knowledge. All accumulated knowledge of science were applied in a pioneering venture with a quality of skill of which there is no known precedent. No nation of which science had not become the very part of life could do this by mere verbal bravado. Besides, it is no sign of maturity not to remember the fact that no body gave America the money for doing it. Americans earned that money through hard labour and spent it in a manner which calls for much ingenuous and

sophisticated education, which only a few nations can claim to have.

The stupendous technical efficiency, inventive genius, organizing ability and superb discipline exhibited in the whole performance have no parallel in human history. The project which entailed a journey in the unknown of about a million miles to and fro, was behind schedule only thirtyfour seconds. If we compare with that the performance of our city or national transport systems, some not too flattering facts will certainly be revealed.

For any developing nation it is good to search for facts and build their future on solid grounds and not live in self-hypnosis of various colours.

Let all mankind continue to draw inspiration from this great achievement of man. To be sure, there is no other achievement of man in the outer world comparable to this one. If President Nixon exclaimed on seeing the astronauts safely back to the earth, 'Gee, you look great. ... This was the greatest week since creation', his pride is understandable. Let it be viewed, as untutored millions all over the world have done, as the achievement of homo-sapiens, and earnest enquiries be made into its background. As Americans have done it in the open, facts can be gathered without difficulty.

This achievement was deliberately set as the national goal and diligently and single-mindedly worked for, without being discouraged or deviated by innumerable impediments that were apt to come on the way.

Eight years ago on May 25, 1961 addressing the Joint Session of the United States Congress in a special message on Urgent National Needs, the late President John F. Kennedy had, now seems, prophetically said:

'I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal before the de-

cade is out, of landing a man in the moon and returning him safely on earth.'

This has been done before the decade is out, and not one but two men were landed on the moon and also brought back safely on earth and with them came twenty pounds moon rocks and soil for the scientists of the world as the most precious present.

It is a great education to study how step by step the project advanced towards fulfilment. There had to be perfect rapport between man and machine, a perfect concord between the worker and the management, the scientist and the dreamer, between government and the tax payer, and a magnificent orchestration of human efforts set in motion by a high-voltage purposiveness, before this undertaking could be pushed through towards success. Developing nations will do well to specially note that progress in scientific development call for whole-hearted and even reckless self-application, and perfect honesty of purpose. Unless public duties are done with personal devotion such achievements are impossible. If only a few of those 400,000 workers engaged in that stupendous undertaking failed to do their duties fully well, the whole project might have ended in a fiasco.

In developing nations, where there should be undivided loyalty to work, along with the welcome development of trade union movements, there is a clear trend of disastrous lack of devotion to work. The worker who does not respect his tools and his work—even more than his wages—bordering on worship, cannot discover a more advanced tool, which is one source of his progressive prosperity. Science has been carried so far ahead only through self-sacrificing worshipful devotion and self-application. There is no other secret.

Let the workers of developing countries who surely dream of glorious days for themselves learn to respect their machines more and treat them in a friendly manner. Then

they will discover this truth: if you stand by your machines and not wilfully desecrate them for crude selfish purposes, machines will become the givers of plenty and power.

This all important point also naturally arises.

There appeared a cartoon in the *Hindustan Times* July 10, 1969, depicting 'Nixon's dinner to astronauts cancelled for fear of infection?' This raises an intriguing question: is the possibility of infection to earth from outer space more real than the infection of outer space by man?

Years ago, we remember, another cartoon appeared in another Indian newspaper showing a supersonic space craft on flight. Two ugly bat-like creatures were seen somehow clinging at the bottom of the flying thing. And they were named 'Hatred' and 'Jealousy'!

In fact the more real danger is that man will infect his new domains with the same blindness, smallness and hatred which he so assiduously and energetically cultivated against brother man here on earth. It will not be long before Russians will also be on the moon. How long will it then take for storm to rise in the sea of tranquillity?

When this journey to the moon was ostentively undertaken, as was said on the plaque left on the moon, on behalf of all mankind in space, the wisest thing would have been to plant not the national flag of U.S.A. but the flag of mankind on moon—a white flag—which not being a symbol of any competitive nationalism could be owned by all mankind as its own most heartily. But this opportunity was lost once for all in the vast universe for all times to come. In this all glorious act this was the hidden tragedy from the idealistic point of view. Man could not break away from the shackles of nationalism even after reaching the moon. This cosmic failure will colour man's all future in the outer space,

It is in this context what the Pope said about the urgency of man dominating himself, and what the other leaders of thought said about minding other urgent business on earth, assume special gravity.

While mankind has taken a giant leap in the outer space, it is meet that he takes a small fruitful step in the inner space also. Otherwise the imbalance will be greater and catastrophes more terrible.

Let man not desecrate the outer space also with his inner blemish. To be able to do this man needs engage himself as enthusiastically for gaining the control over his inner nature as he has done for gaining control over outer nature. That is the only safeguard against all fears that have been voiced by eminent persons of the world.

One word more. It is but natural that man is proud of this achievement of man. But let us not be over proud. For look at

the night's sky, and discover the reason written large for staying humble.

True humility before the cosmic grandeur of the universe will be the proper mood for the next step to be taken toward outer advancement and also for growing in inwardness.

Man can face this tremendous challenge brought by man's landing on the moon by being simultaneously truly scientific and also truly spiritual. This challenge has suddenly burst upon both the collective mankind and the individual man. No man is more responsible than the other for being wise or otherwise. So on every head is the blessing and the thunder. Let everyone be of good cheer and take courage.

The ultimate task on the hand of man is to control nature, both inner and outer, and be free. Every step taken in this direction knowingly or unknowingly is right and glorious.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**SANKARA AND BRADLEY:** A comparative and critical study By S. N. L. Shrivastava. Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, First edition 1968, pp. 1-272 Price Rs. 25/-.

In the author's own words, the book is an 'attempt to narrow the gulf which lies between the Absolutism of Bradley and that of Advaita Vedanta.' Sankara is taken as the representative of the Advaita Vedanta. Some readers may wonder, as the author himself seems to feel, whether such a study is worthwhile in view of the emphasis on Existentialism and Logical Empiricism at present in Europe and also taking note of the fundamental difference between the Indian and European philosophical problems. In India at least the dominant theme of philosophy has been the important and perennial problems of life based on the Upanishads. Hence from this context the book is a welcome addition to Vedanta literature especially as it clarifies some important

Advaita concepts which have always been misunderstood by other systems.

The author discusses the similarities in the thought of both Sankara and Bradley. At the same time he does not hesitate to criticize the European thinker whenever he is guilty of inconsistencies in his exposition of the Absolute. These two thinkers agree in holding that the Absolute is non-relational but they differ widely in their interpretation of the supra-rational Absolute. The author holds that Sankara's conception of reality as noumenally one and ineffable appearing phenomenally through avidya as the world of multiplicity of objects and individual souls is far more logically cogent than Bradley's 'many-in-one', the 'concrete individuality', or the concrete unity of sameness and difference. This point is discussed in the several succeeding chapters.

The author has made real efforts to correctly expound Sankara's theory of the unreality of the world and has refuted the thoughtless criticism of

the opponents that Sankara is an illusionist. He has very ably explained the sense in which Sankara has described the empirical world as having no reality. The real merit of Bradley, as the author points out, lies in the fact that he boldly asserted that the fact of appearance and the diversity of its particular spheres cannot be explained. The 'why' of the appearances cannot be answered. The author applies the term Maya to this attitude but one may feel that Maya is not merely the inexplicability of the empirical world and that it has some ontological significance.

The author clearly brings out that Sankara is not a dogmatic theologian disbelieving in the efficacy of reason. Bradley also does not minimise the importance of reason. The book has thirteen chapters and all the chapters discuss such questions as the nature of the Absolute, the nature of the Self, the status of the empirical world, the principle of maya-vada, the criteria of reality as

understood by Sankara and Bradley and other such important questions. The last chapter is devoted to the treatment of Sankara's philosophy in the context of contemporary philosophy and science. One very appreciable feature of the book is the profusion of quotations from the works of Sankara and from such other relevant texts like the *Iṣṭa Siddhi*, *Vedanta Paribhāṣā*, *Khandanakandakhadya* etc. A patient reading of the work will be amply repaid by the greater clarity in the understanding of the thought of these two great thinkers.

The Index seems to be too brief to be of real use to the reader. The list of words wrongly spelt given in the errata is by no means exhaustive. Also the price of the book which contains about 270 pages only seems to be a bit too much. The book is a good addition to the Indian Philosophy library.

PROF. P. SANKARANARAYANAN

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, SHYAMALA TAL, HIMALAYAS

REPORT FOR 1967-68

The Sevashrama is a charitable hospital functioning as a part of the Vivekananda Ashrama, Shyamala Tal, situated at a height 4,944 feet above the sea level. Since its inception in 1914 it has been serving the poor and helpless people of this distant hilly region with medical aids through its outdoor and indoor departments irrespective of caste or creed. This hospital with its 12 indoor beds is the only one of its kind within

a radius of 15 miles. The total number of patients treated through its outdoor and indoor departments during the year under review was 7653 of which 145 were indoor patients.

The Veterinary Department of the Sevashrama treats the domestic animals of different species. The total number of cases treated was 1940.

The following needs of the Sevashrama are quite urgent:

1. Permanent fund for the up-keep of the Sevashrama.
2. Permanent fund for veterinary department.
3. Construction of a water reservoir.

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### A CORRIGENDUM

*Prabuddha Bharata*, August, 1969 page 342 second column 7th line: Please read sixteen in place of 'six'.