



# 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

Worship, above all, in truthfulness.

*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 2.2.2.20.*

Follow not after vanity, nor after the enjoyment of love and lust! He, who is earnest and meditative, obtains ample joy.

*Dhammapada, 27*

Blessed be the Lord God  
From everlasting to everlasting!  
And let all people say: 'Praise ye the Lord.'

*Psalms, 106.48*

Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.

*St. John, 16.24*

Be ye steadfast in prayer,  
And give the glad tidings to those who believe.

*Koran, 10.87*

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**ONWARD FOR EVER!**

*In a sense you are all Prophets; every one of you is a Prophet, bearing the burden of the world on your own shoulders. Have you ever seen a man, have you ever seen a woman, who is not quietly, patiently, bearing his or her little burden of life? The great Prophets were giants—they bore a gigantic world on their shoulders. Compared with them we are pigmies, no doubt, yet we are doing the same task; in our little circles, in our little homes, we are bearing our little crosses. There is no one so evil, no one so worthless, but he has to bear his own cross. But with all our mistakes, with all our evil thoughts and evil deeds, there is a bright spot somewhere, there is still somewhere the golden thread through which we are always in touch with the divine... there is always somewhere in our heart of hearts, however low and degraded we may be, a little circle of light which is in constant touch with the divine.*

*Trickanawth*

**CREATIVE WISDOM FOR OUR AGE OF ANXIETY****I**

Our age is marked by unprecedented, accelerated advances in the sphere of science and technology. In the early stages man moved slow in making discoveries and slower still in his endeavours at inventions to utilize the forces of nature to his own needs. The duration of a discovery was of the degree of hundreds of years, later scores of years, still later decades. The time span of his invention of tools was of a lower order, betraying his unreliable power and challenging his ingenuity. The challenge has been met in a remarkable manner and today's innovations are indeed without parallel in mankind's long history. Look at the changes which are wrought particularly in the last decade with the development of atomic energy, exploration of space, study of electronics, new knowledge gained in genetics, in chemistry and in soil science. There seems to be no limit to his glorious gains. And yet what is possibly in the womb of the future can be more surprising. Scientists foresee a few feasibilities without the least feeling of surprise or wonder. Night will become a thing of the past when the earth's surface is illuminated during night time with sunlight through giant reflectors attached to satellites. Even the polar regions can enjoy a temperate climate while the heat in the tropics could be reduced by putting into orbit a belt of dust particles over the equator. We might look forward with excitement to planetary travel and adventure when the earth would look like a tiny hamlet owing to space enlargement and speedy communication. The future possibilities might be more potent than the power produced out of the self-sustaining chain reaction of fission of atom.

## II

Nevertheless ours is also an age of anxiety. However breathtaking may be the acceleration of the present, and what more the future technology may bring about, we cannot be blind to the realities of drudgery, neurosis and imbalance existing all along. There is no gainsaying the fact that the benefits of science are not shared by all men, that there are rich and poor nations and that within each nation the powerful are callous to the interest of the weak. It is paradoxical that in spite of phenomenal progress in diverse spheres of arts and sciences, the fruits of progress are not distributed fairly. Man is suffering from malnutrition, affliction and tension; and exploitation of man by man continues with unabated unfeelingness. Man has little control over himself, over his passions and emotions, over greed, anger and hatred. The savage in man still lingers to chase, maul and tear the weak and innocent. Powerful nations arm themselves to the teeth with deadly nuclear weapons which can blow asunder all that we cherish. Instead of controlling and enjoying mastery over the machine, man is enslaved by the machine of his own making. Nay, one shudders with horror to think of the threat of Frankenstein's monster of modern times to overpower not only the scientist who created it but all and sundry. Little wonder that man is dismayed and disenchanted.

What is happening to us? Whither do we march? Whither does the modern civilization take us? These are the inevitable questions that confront us, every one of us, that obsess and harass us, day in and day out. All may not express them in the same words or with the same force; all the same they are there, sometimes coming up to conscious plane and sometimes haunting us in a haze. These are not unwarranted questions, for on their answer rests the future, nay, the survival of man himself. Causing

the collapse of human species is a horrid possibility that can scarcely be dismissed easily.

## III

How is it that we have come so near a heart-breaking brink? No blame obviously attaches to soulless, motiveless machine. Science by itself is neutral but is made use of by man as he wills. It is the inventor, the manipulator of the machine—man, who is the motive power for good or bad. The policy maker, politician, theoretician, worker—each and all have a share of the responsibility, direct or otherwise, for the malignant malady.

It is manifest that we put a premium on intellectual knowledge. The discoveries and development of diverse sciences have been achieved by the exercise and expansion of dry, mechanical intellect. Knowledge came, no doubt, but as an accursed anathema. The tremendous power springing from the vast amount of knowledge that has been gained is used not infrequently for destructive, selfish ends. The industrial civilization emerging from technological invention has led *inter alia* to devaluation of ethical, human values. Deification of intellectual knowledge has made man, to say the least, heartless. The modern malaise is a manifestation of this heartlessness.

## IV

The way out of the wood then is in the apprehension of the lopsided development of intellect and a judicious balancing or integration of intellect and heart, reason and faith, science and spirituality. The insufficiency of intellect has to be recognized. It is too tall a claim that science is 'omnicompetent' and that it is the supreme means of the valid determination of all valuations in all aspects of human and social life. Science after all covers a specific sphere and cannot legislate for all knowledge. It holds good

in matters empirical or objective; there are areas where it is simply incompetent. How a natural phenomenon takes place is explained by science, but not why or whither thereof. Even in the case of the knowledge it gives us, we have to look elsewhere for the direction in which we wish to move with that knowledge and the goals we have set ourselves to achieve. G. A. Lundberg says, 'My point is that no science tells us what to do with the knowledge that constitutes the science. Science only provides a car and a chauffeur for us. It does not directly, as science, tell us where to drive.—Science is the most efficacious means so far discovered by man, for whatever ends he chooses to pursue.—Can science tell man what direction he should go? Yes, if man will tell scientists where he wants to go.'<sup>1</sup>

For scientific knowledge to be applied or used for the welfare of man, it is essential that it is subjected to ethical scrutiny and that we ourselves imbibe moral values. Moral sense is not something to be deduced from the observation and experimentation of natural phenomena. No scientific analysis can prove that it is a suicidal policy to proliferate nuclear armaments that it is good to do good to others, and that it is reprehensible to exploit fellow men. It is not by the discipline of intellect but by the broadening of heart that a man answers to the call or need of men in distress. The heart has the capacity to transcend the realm of intellect or reason and land us in a region where we cultivate the virtues of selflessness, fellow-feeling and charity and where we drink of the fountain of perennial values. Swami Vivekananda declared, 'What is in the intellect or reason? It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible

gates.'<sup>2</sup> It is therefore prudent to point out that a happy harmony of intellect and heart is the desideratum of our anxiety-ridden age so that the former may be free from arrogance, faithlessness and dryness and the latter liberated from superstition, sentimentality and irrationality.

## V

The question might arise: Why should one love one's neighbour as oneself? On what ground ought a person do good to others? The answer is not obtainable from science nor from the humanities. We have to turn to metaphysics for a satisfying reply. There is the Vedanta to come to our rescue and provide the required rationale. It tells us with lucidity and love of the solidarity of mankind. We are all one at the core, in spirit, in spite of surface differences at the physical, psychical, social and racial levels. In consequence a man injures himself by harming others and does good to himself by doing good to others. Moral values thus derive their authority from spiritual verity. In the Gītā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa bases ethics on metaphysics. Reticent as the Buddha was on metaphysical matters, he discovered the solution to the problem of sorrow in nirvana, supermundane plane. The all-embracing love, impeccable purity, reckless sacrifice and self-abnegation of the great world teachers had their roots in metaphysical domain. The significance of ethical actions for the survival and progress of the human race cannot be over-emphasized. No less significant is the need for assimilation of spiritual values for stabilization of moral motivation emerging from the culture of the heart. Spiritual outlook on life gives us the key to the eluding treasures of abiding peace and blessedness.

<sup>1</sup> Cited by William K. Frankena in *World Perspectives in Philosophy, Religion and Culture*, Bharati Bhawan, Patna, 1968, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Eighth edition, 1960, Vol. III, p. 225.

## VI

The present day predicament of peacelessness of man despite his mastery of multifarious arts and sciences is analogous to that of Nārada as recounted in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. The way he got perennial peace suggests a breakthrough that is adaptable to modern times. With all his proficiency in the arts and sciences of his day—the Vedas, epics, ancient lore, grammar, the rules of the propitiation of the manes, the science of numbers, the science of portents, the science of time, logic, ethics, politics, the science of gods, the science of sacred knowledge, the science of elemental spirits, the science of weapons, astronomy, the science of serpents and the fine arts—Nārada was afflicted with sorrow, for he had not known the Self and attained *summum bonum*. Having heard that the means to cross over to the other side of sorrow and gain the highest Good was Self-knowledge, the learned Nārada gave up his pride of erudition and approached the sage Sanatkumāra for the knowledge of the Self. In the course of his instruction, Sanatkumāra said, "The Infinite is bliss. There is no bliss in anything finite. Only the Infinite is bliss." (vii.23.1). Supreme felicity is not to be had from anything finite which only serves to stimulate our appetite for more and more to an insatiable extent and thereby leads to frustration and sorrow. There being no substantial happiness in the finite, Nārada is advised to know the Infinite.

At this stage two questions are likely to assail us : Where is the Infinite? How to know It? Sanatkumāra explained (vii.25.1):

"That Infinite is indeed below. It is above. It is behind. It is in front. It is to the south, it is to the north. It is indeed all this. Next follows the instruction in regard to "I". I indeed am below. I am above, I am behind, I am in front. I am to the south. I am to the north. I am indeed all this.'

The Infinite is everywhere. It is every-

thing. It is none other than the Jiva. Yea, mān is that Infinite, not subject to any limitation, sorrow or death. He has a divine dimension, transcending the phenomenal, human horizons. It is ignorance or loss of memory of this dimension that is the seed of our sorrow or shackles. As an answer to the second question the Upaniṣad describes the discipline by which Self-knowledge is attained (vii.26.2) : "When the mind is pure, the memory becomes firm. When the memory is firm, all ties are loosened." The method is to purify the mind of the dross of lust, anger and greed. With the purification of mind is gained the memory of the knowledge of the Infinite Self. The chapter dealing with the dialogue between Nārada and Sanatkumāra ends by declaring : "The venerable Sanatkumāra showed Nārada, after his blemishes had been wiped out, the other side of darkness...." We too of this age are free, rather well-advised, to take the cue from the Upaniṣad for landing in the haven of peace and happiness.

The message of the Upaniṣads is no less relevant today than when it was uttered ; it could well pass muster under modern conditions of life. 'The problems of human life and destiny', wrote Dr. Radhakrishnan in his preface to the *Principal Upaniṣads*, 'have not been superseded by the striking achievements of science and technology. The solutions offered, though conditioned in their modes of expression by their time and environment, have not been seriously affected by the march of scientific knowledge and criticism. ... The Upaniṣads, though remote in time from us, are not remote in thought'.<sup>3</sup> For man, at the core, is unchanged and ever the same. Man the Infinite resists to be strait-jacketed into mind-life-body measurements. The

<sup>3</sup> Radhakrishnan : The *Principal Upaniṣads*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1943, p. 5.

struggles and sorrows have meaning in so far as they make him dissatisfied with his present finite state and put him on the road to Self-awareness. He may stumble and fumble on the way; yet the elevating and enchanting goal of Infinity, Divinity and Unity, whether he is conscious or not, ever beckons him giving renewed hope, courage and strength. Which man has plumbed the depth of his own being? Who can set a limit to his powers and possibilities that are waiting to be worked out? For behind him is lodged the vast, immeasurable space of infinite power and blessedness. However, in order to manifest the Infinite it stands to reason that we give up the finite—the small joys and sorrows, the little lug for lust and lucre, the tantalizing hopes and illusions of this world. How can the Infinite and the finite, God and mammon, go together? Let go the little things and see how rushes out the ever-pure and ever-free nature of yours. You are not to attain It, as you are already that supreme Self, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. Only know It and be free. Such is the bold burden of the Upaniṣads, which bids fair to free us of the oppressive burden of modern times and make us heirs to immortal bliss and eternal peace. Spirituality in this sense which liberates us from narrowness, hatred and fear is to be distinguished from dogmatic, divisive, morbid religiosity. Spirituality in the sense of Self-knowledge summons up infinite faith in ourselves and endows us with supreme self-composure coupled with potent dynamism to face the formidable problems and challenges of the modern age.

## VII

To sum up: Never was mankind on more severe trial and test than it is today. This is of course a challenge as well as an opportunity. Man is not able to cope with the break-neck speed of technological

inventions. His dignity is diminishing in the industrializing and so-called socializing *milieu*; he is in danger of being reduced to a mere robot or cog in the wheel. There is above all the spectre of nuclear holocaust haunting human species. Limited in its scope, scientific enquiry or reason is deficient to deliver the goods. Man has become the prisoner of his intellect. He is the enemy of man. Selfishness, greed and exploitation are rampant. Moral values which foster selflessness, service and fellow-feeling are at a discount. To get out of this vicious circle, the challenging task is to culture the heart, to extend the emotional horizons, to love others as one's own self.

The spiritual basis of unity, love and freedom underlines the need for basing our moral and emotional endeavours, for that matter, all our activities and aspirations on the firm foundation of spirituality. The decline of even mighty civilizations in the past is attributed to the neglect of spiritual values. So in the interest of commonweal, the life-giving, liberalizing spirituality must come out of the anchorites' cell and become practical enough to galvanize us with the requisite dynamism for meeting the challenging situations. Cannot spiritual knowledge by which men even attain transcendental, unlimited peace and bliss be harnessed to accomplish the lesser task of our overcoming the modern ills, however insuperable they might appear? It is up to us to pause and consider, to make an attempt and derive the benefit. The future is in our hands, for we are the architects of our destiny. However, it depends on our attitudes and aspirations, efforts and exertions. It is manifest that if we are to usher in an era of abiding peace and happiness, we have to strain every nerve to seek and assimilate the dynamic wisdom which judiciously combines intellect and heart, science and spirituality.

# LETTERS OF A SAINT

## THE LORD MY REFUGE

Kankhal  
29.4.1912

Dear Sri—

I have received your letter dated the 21st. It is good that you intend to stay at the Yogashrama for a few days. But do not be restless, take hold of a steady and sedate attitude. Though it is very difficult to do, keep the remembrance of the Lord always awake within you. The succession of events always try to separate the mind from the remembrance of the Lord. Yet be attentive that you do not neglect making this cultivation of remembrance firm; on the other hand hold on to it with all your might. 'The more a tree is shaken by the storm, the firmer are its roots'—hold this precept always before your mind's eyes. The more the impediments and dangers, the greater is the need for attention and enterprise. To be sure, by Lord's grace every opportunity comes by. Only one need have patience and unshakable faith. Have no fear. Taking refuge in the Lord, pass the days in His remembrance only, and most certainly good will follow; of this there is no doubt.

We shall stay here for two or three months more. Be not troubled, wherever the Lord will place you, there itself will your good ensue. He knows, by being kept where you will be benefited. Try to surrender everything to the Lord. Only do not forget Him. That alone is your duty. Where He will keep you, how He will keep you, or what He Will make you do, that is His responsibility; it will be enough for you not to forget Him. If you can practise like this for a few days everything will become easy. For this, pray sincerely that He may make you remember Him always. He is the indwelling spirit, who rightly listens to the prayer from our heart.

There is a possibility of my going to Kasi from here. If you are going to be there at that time, then we will meet. In short, be not exercised about it. What I am saying try to comprehend and practise that: this is my heart-felt desire and request. The Lord will set right everything. The place is crowded here now. All are doing well. With my blessings.

Your well-wisher,  
SRI TURIYANANDA

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# REFLECTIONS ON DISPASSION

(Selected and rendered from a seventeenth century Sanskrit poem.)

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

Subjects fear their rulers and rulers their enemies. From the first-born downward everyone is afraid of death. Desirelessness is the only kingdom where nobody fears from any source.

If your choice is to desire strongly, let the whole world be your object ; if you prefer tranquillity, your own self may or may not be yours.

Who would like to get pleasure-yielding objects, seeing that they fall to pieces under one's eyes ? Will any one invest money on a dying horse ?

Suppose you have conquered the whole earth, suppose you have come to possess a mountain of gold, suppose celestial damsels are at your beck, what is it all to you when you are fated to die ?

\* \* \* \*

Those who have examined the pleasures of the senses in hundreds of ways totally abandon them and feel blessed. The rest on the contrary, like the crow, consume again what has been spat out.

You are intent on worldly enjoyments and do not weigh in mind their unpalatable conclusion. Meditate on the Supreme Lord who alone is your real Friend to grant your release ; for bondage too is from Him only.

Soaring thoughts of sagely minds are never obstructed. The course of wind is not stopped by rivers, or seas, or mountains, or the expanse of the sky.

\* \* \* \*

The nature of the baby, of the boy, of the youth and of the old man continues in succession ; but no one relishes the expres-

sion of the immediately preceding state in the succeeding one. Spiritual calm too is a stage of life in which the wise man has no relish for the promptings of desires.

They sink in the sea of samsāra just to put out the fire of hunger gnawing in the stomach. Certainly one should not set fire to one's residence to remedy the piercing chillness of snow.

In order to gain happiness in life the body must be restrained and disciplined. Why do then people treat it indulgently ? Sugar canes are not treated as deity by those who want to get sugar from it.

You will eat, drink, walk, attend to your business and rest. Do you ever ponder over the fact that the body has an end ?

\* \* \* \*

Those who are yet to marry have no rest or peace of mind ; those who are already married are uneasy why bigamy is unlawful ; and the polygamous want free love. So domineering is the sex urge.

The entire world responds to the commands of it. Division into animals, men and gods rests on other grounds.

If you do not care an hour for the body or do not eat for half a day its charms will become patent to you. And what an affection for such a body !

The ignorant use the body as a means for enjoyment. The wise take advantage of it to bring about the union with God. But for the crafty it serves neither.

\* \* \* \*

Wealth in surplus of what is needed for one's use is sure to disappear by theft and robbery or by taxation. Where the food



consumed is in excess, correction comes by vomiting or purgation.

Let me obtain a large quantity of wealth first, then I can give it away in charity. The joy that comes from such a plan is only a semblance. Supreme bliss is the outcome of total negation of all possessions.

Richness is not an abstract quality like goodness or the mark of a class. What a person likes, that is his wealth. Absolute non-possessiveness is the wealth of the sage.

When a man is dominated by cravings, he behaves like one haunted by a ghost—supplicates, appeases, begs and becomes wordy and erratic.

\* \* \* \*

I have broadened the irrigation channels; I have replaced the mud walls with the newly made stone ones; I have bought mighty buffaloes for the plough; what more have I to achieve? In this way they are bragging about themselves.

When deluded fools quarrel, they shout at one another: Who will stand surety for the next morning? The very same night what suretyship is there for his own life?

Life lasts only for numbered moments. Part of that is usually devoted as if it were for holy learning. In the meanwhile either confusion is created in the existing systems of thoughts or they are replaced by new ones!

Walking in darkness people do not recognize what they seek—be they near or distant. When the lightning whips on the head even the fool is aware of what he searches about.

\* \* \* \*

From where did you come? I do not know. What is your destination? That too I am not aware of. Where are you now travelling? On the roads of samsāra steeped in darkness.

When the Self is covered in darkness,

what can bare activities achieve? When thick gloom has rendered vision inoperative, can anybody see objects by opening the mouth?

Many people we come across who are experts in law, versed in forecasting, learned in the scriptures and erudite in the precepts of the ancient lore. Men of divine wisdom, too, are rarely met with. But those who are aware of their ignorance are really hard to find.

Those who have attained fully ripe wisdom find everything else a deviation, except steadiness in that alone. They watch their own activities like that of another person.

\* \* \* \*

Objects that give pleasures to the senses may be in proximity, the senses too may be cognizing them. If the mind is made calm what cause is there for anxiety?

Not that men do not have control of mind or that they do not pray to God. But their motives are different, hence they do not lead to release from samsāra.

Seldom one longs for the Bliss of God, if at all it is by good luck in proper time. It is like the youth who never knew what sex was is prompted by it when the age is reached.

If the environment is unfavourable the cure lies in treating the one who is in it. If there is something wrong with the sight, by applying unguents on the objects seen, will any one succeed?

\* \* \* \*

Let what you yourself do daily to secure a place for your father in heaven be a comparison for your son. Will that not be sufficient for a son to get the spirit of detachment?

Usually animate beings get unconscious at the point of death. If a man departs with mental faculties awake he remembers his sons.

When a man is in mortal agony, his wife is anxious about the fate of the children; their children are busy thinking about the division of inheritance; and the dying man's mother is in ceaseless tears. Who then is a friend in his journey beyond?

They see with their own eyes people dying; they infer the death of those who are to pass away in future; they recall those who have been already gathered to majority; and all through, they talk about the workings of death. But everyone goes about his business as if he is to live for ever.

\* \* \* \*

In a period of perversity one thinks that behaviour by sour-grape mechanism is desirelessness; unfitness to receive a reward is self-denial; and refusal to resist is sign of imbecility.

The pot is perishable; the universal idea of the pot is eternal. This sort of discriminative wisdom any one possesses. That alone is genuine discrimination which gives interior peace; all the rest is no wisdom.

The more the entrapped victim is agitated and ever in motion, the more the noose is

tightened. Remaining still the trap may fall off in course of time.

\* \* \* \*

One should not have occasion to say 'I' and 'mine'. If that is impossible let him make it his duty to feel everything 'I' and 'mine'.

The enlightened ones act like the ignorant engrossed in misplaced interests and gratifications, just as parents take part in the play of the children.

The saints are equally beneficent to those who help them or harm. Trees supply fruits and flowers to those who rear them and those who take by stealth.

If the rope round the domestic animal is to be removed it must approach the master. Animals certainly cannot release one another from binding.

Who are your parents? The same as those of the whole world. Who is your master? The Ruler and Master of this extended universe. When differences created by ignorance vanish, there is no room for questions like 'What is this?' 'What is that?'

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The difference between weakness and strength is one of degree; the difference between virtue and vice is one of degree; the difference between heaven and hell is one of degree; the difference between life and death is one of degree; all differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything.

—Swami Vivekananda



### *The Saviour And His Sorrow*

Grief and sorrow are humanity's heritage—the lot of lesser people but the glory of the great. It all depends on how the grief operates: for 'I' or 'thou', for small seekings or for great goals.

From Sri Ramakrishna's own account we learn about his vision of Sita (the divine spouse of Rama) and how she bequeathed to him her 'smile'. The proof of that we witness in his photographed countenance. But no less, she bequeathed her 'grief' also, the grief of a pure, forgiving and forbearing heart—she whose life was a saga of sublime sorrow. And we see Ramakrishna too shedding tears, profusely and powerfully, whether it was for God or man.

To Ramakrishna God was specially the 'Mother', and for the Mother's vision he wept copiously like a separated child, sore at heart. 'O Mother, where art thou?' was his constant cry. As each day passed and the shadows of evening deepened, the shadow of sorrow would begin to grip him. The ringing of the temple bells for evening vespers would start a wringing of his heart. Another day was gone and he had not seen Mother yet. In his agony he would often rub his face against the ground. He became mad for Her. How could Mother resist such importunities?

She had to reveal Herself to him in all Her grace and glory.

No wonder Ramakrishna knew and taught the power of true tears.

His own personal needs or troubles caused him no concern, much less grief. The only concern of his life was to love God and sing His glories, to share God's love with others. Even when he was in the grip of the terrible cancer which proved fatal, he was not grieving; actually those last days were days of great inner bliss for him. It was then that a well-wisher pointed out that Ramakrishna could use his yogic powers and could cure himself by concentrating his mind on the affected part. Sharp came the reply: 'What do you say! This mind has been given up to God once for all. How can I withdraw it from Him and turn it on this worthless body?'

But where the needs of others and their sufferings were concerned, he was all concern and sorrow.

Sorrow stirred him in its different dimensions and several shapes.

Akshay, his dearly beloved and handsome nephew passed away prematurely. Ramakrishna relates how sometime after the event grief hit him. He felt a racking pain at the loss, as if somebody were squeezing his heart like a wet towel. (This is typical of the way he often described the intensity of his feeling). More impor-

tant to us are his reflections on the experience. 'I wondered and thought that Mother was teaching me a lesson. I was not much concerned with the body even, much less with a nephew. But if such was *my pain* at his bereavement, *how much more* must be the grief of the householders at the loss of their near and dear ones!'

Yes, his heart throbbed with sympathy, with empathy.

And then, in 1868, Mathur Babu (the then proprietor of the Dakshineswar temple property) took him on a pilgrimage to Banaras and other holy places. On the way, in a village near Deoghar, something arrested his attention—the wretched condition of the people. He was so moved that he began to press Mathur to feed and clothe them. Practical Mathur protested that it would cost a lot of money and as such would hit the pilgrimage itself. But Ramakrishna would not relent. In tears and anguish, he declared that he would rather give up the pilgrimage itself and remain with those helpless people. And remain he did; just sat down with them. Mathur had no alternative but to get the needed supplies from Calcutta at much expense; and only after they were offered to these 'gods in distress' did Ramakrishna resume the 'pilgrimage'.

Tremendous, again, was his longing to share his various spiritual experiences with pure souls, and through such to transmit his message to the world at large. 'During the day-time I somehow managed to control it...But when the day came to a close, I could not curb my feelings.' The vesper bells would again summon him to his sublime sorrow. Climbing to the roof-top he would cry out at the top of his voice, 'Come, my boys! Oh, where are you? I cannot bear to live without you!' 'A mother never longs so intensely for the sight of her child, nor a friend for his companion, nor a lover for his sweet-heart, as I did for them!'

These pure-souled boys did come. Among them all, there was one who was the focus of Ramakrishna's attention, love and regard. That was Narendra, the future Swami Vivekananda. When he came, Ramakrishna rushed to him and unburdened his heart, amid sobs: 'How could you be so unkind as to keep me waiting so long...I am panting to unburden my mind to one who can appreciate my innermost experiences...I know you are that ancient sage Nara, Narayana's Incarnation, born on earth to remove the misery of mankind.'

If Narendra failed to come to Dakshineswar for a few days, he would weep and pray to the Divine Mother, 'Blessed Mother, I cannot live without seeing him.' 'For six months I suffered excruciating agony for him...I loved the other young devotees too, but it was nothing in comparison with what I felt for Narendra.' So much was the longing that when Narendra failed to turn up for a while, Ramakrishna himself went in search of him. And for the sake of this special person, he was prepared to undergo any difficulty or even humiliation. 'O My Naren, do you not know,' he once declared to that disciple who was then in great distress but too proud to beseech help, 'that I would do anything for you; that for you I would even go about begging from door to door?'

A most touching proof of his supreme trust and regard he had for Narendra we witness in an incident which took place during Ramakrishna's last illness at the Cossipore garden-house.

The householder devotees took care of the monetary needs and the young men, the future monks, attended to the personal needs and nursing of their Master. Due to lack of time as well as experience they could not pay much attention to keeping accounts. When, however, the monthly

bills began to mount some of the donors grew sensitive and started demanding a clear accounting. They were not satisfied with one statement because of some 'discrepancy', even though it was only microscopic. Sensing trouble from their looks, Ramakrishna called the young men and forbade them to accept money any more under such conditions. He would rather live wherever Narendra and other boys would take him, remaining satisfied with what they got by begging. Fortunately the extreme step did not become actually necessary due to the intervention of the great dramatist-devotee Girish Ghosh. He just tore the account book into pieces, and undertook to meet all expenses himself.

It is no wonder that to this beloved Narendra Sri Ramakrishna passed on his spiritual 'powers' and the responsibility for looking after the future Ramakrishna Order. No less did he bequeath to this

spiritual heir his sublime sorrow for suffering humanity; and Narendra proved fully worthy of this priceless inheritance. As Swami Vivekananda, he admonished us, 'Feel from the heart...Love opens the most impossible gates...Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless?' He revealed to us, 'Well...this is the school of misery, which is also the school for great souls and prophets for the cultivation of sympathy...'

*Explorer*

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## 'BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD'

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

My theme is taken from a passage in one of the Psalms. (46:10). So it is fitting that I begin by quoting a great Christian mystic—Meister Eckhart.

'There must be perfect stillness in the soul before God can whisper his word into it, before the light of God can shine in the soul and transform the soul into God.'

Spiritual life has this one ideal—to attain the unitive knowledge of the Godhead.

Sri Ramakrishna in this age emphasized this truth, saying, one can see God, one can talk to him and ultimately reach union with him.

He would give the illustration of a man who hears about milk, then sees milk, and

as he drinks milk only then gets real satisfaction.

In the same way, one may hear of God, and may believe in him, but that is one thing. To see him and talk to him—such are the convincing proofs of his existence. And true ultimate peace, 'the peace that passeth understanding', as Christ says, comes when we attain our union with him.

This is the one ideal and goal of human life. Sri Ramakrishna in our present age was the living example of this ideal, and the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, whom we had the blessed fortune to meet, were the living examples before our very eyes.

In one of the Upanishads the seer de-

clares: 'Hear, oh ye children of Immortal Bliss, I have known that Supreme Being, you also having known him reach your immortality.'<sup>1</sup>

It is this knowledge alone that can give us salvation and freedom. Go to the source of any religion, and you will find the same ideal. To quote Jesus: 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.'<sup>2</sup> Or again, 'Be ye perfect even as the Father which is in heaven is perfect.'<sup>3</sup> And St. Paul commenting, as it were, upon that, said, 'Ye are complete in Godhead.'

We read in the Upaniṣads: 'Brahman may be realized while yet one dwells in the ephemeral body. To fail to realize him is to live in ignorance, and therefore subject to birth and death. The knowers of Brahman are immortal: others knowing him not, continue in the bonds of grief.'<sup>4</sup>

Of course, it is true, everyone will ultimately reach Brahman—for that is the goal towards which all are moving. But why wait? Blessed is this human birth, for it is only the privilege of a human being to attain Brahman.

Ye are the children of Immortal Bliss. Every moment of your life you live, move, and have your being in God. You are carrying the kingdom of heaven within yourselves.

Truly has it been said by a seer of the Upaniṣad: 'As one not knowing that a golden treasure lies buried beneath his feet may walk over it again and again, yet never find it, so all beings live every moment in the city of Brahman, yet never find him because of illusion by which he is concealed.'<sup>5</sup>

In the Gospel according to St. John (I : 5) we read: 'The light shineth in

darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.'

The *Gītā* clearly defines, 'The Atman is the light: the light is covered by darkness. This darkness is delusion. That is why we dream.'<sup>6</sup>

What is this ignorance or delusion?

Though we live in the city of Brahman, and live, move and have our being in God, we go out through the doors of the senses to enjoy the objects of the world and we become attached to certain objects which give us pleasure and enjoyment and feel aversion to certain objects that give us pain and suffering. We are only interested in God's creation, forgetting that the Creator is dwelling within the shrine of our own hearts.

Do you remember the Lord's prayer—'Lead us not into temptation.'<sup>7</sup> What is this temptation? The Lord's creation—this world.

Sri Ramakrishna also in one of his prayers prays 'Oh Rāma, give me devotion at thy lotus feet and may I not be deluded by your world-bewitching Māyā.'

What is the way?

Let me quote once more Meister Eckhart: 'When the passions are stilled and worldly desires silenced, the word of God can be heard in the soul.'

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the *Gītā* teaches, 'When the mind is under perfect control and freed from all desires, he becomes absorbed in the Atman and nothing else.'<sup>8</sup>

Patañjali (*Yoga-Sūtras* I. 2) defines Yoga, or the path to union with God as 'Control of thought-waves in the mind.'

Mind may be compared to a lake. When the lake is lashed into waves, the reflection of the sun or the moon is distorted, and if the bottom of the lake is full of dirt, what

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad* II. 5, III. 8.

<sup>2</sup> St. John VIII: 32

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew V: 48.

<sup>4</sup> Vide *Kena Upaniṣad* II. 4, 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VIII. iii. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Vide *Gītā* V. 15.

<sup>7</sup> St. Luke XI: 4.

<sup>8</sup> Vide *Gītā* II, 52.

treasure may lie at the bottom, remains hidden.

The principle is to calm the lake of the mind and clean up all the dirt accumulated through deeds and thoughts of the past—the *Samskāras*, or impressions in the mind.

The Kingdom of God is within—there is the presence of God in his infinite aspect in each one of us. Not that a part of his being is in me and another part in you and so forth. The Infinite cannot be divided into parts. So he is present in all his glory and perfection in every one of us. Only the waves of worldly desires and passions stand on the way of our vision and union. So the principle is to silence the thought-waves of the mind.

Is this a passive silence—not to think of anything and try to make the mind blank? If that were so, when we go into deep sleep or become unconscious through a drug or a heart-attack, we could reach the illumined knowledge of God. But we do not.

As Swamiji once said, if a man goes into deep sleep as a fool, when he wakes up, he still remains a fool. But if even a fool goes into *Samādhi*, the transcendental consciousness, he wakes up as an illumined soul.

Swamiji compared this silence to an intense form of activity. The illustration is given: suppose a carriage is drawn down the hill by four powerful horses, and the rider holds the reins so tightly that the carriage stands still. The passions are stilled, worldly desires are silenced—the impressions of past deeds and thoughts are held in complete abeyance—that is the kind of stillness and silence.

How to control the thought-waves of the mind?

*Abhyāsa vairāgyābhyām tannirodhaḥ.*—'By constant practice and by the exercise of dispassion, they can be controlled.'<sup>9</sup>

Śrī Kṛṣṇa also expresses the same truth

when the disciple Arjuna complains how difficult it is to control the mind. He remarked, 'I think the wind is no wilder.' To that Śrī Kṛṣṇa replies: 'Yes, Arjuna, the mind is restless no doubt, and hard to subdue. But it can be brought under control by constant practice and by the practice of discrimination.'<sup>10</sup>

What to practise? It is to practise and form a regular habit of prayer and meditation. Our character is formed from habits. Each thought we think or each one of our deeds leaves impressions in our minds. And the sum total of these impressions form our character. We are but a bundle of habits. And one bundle of habits can be replaced by creating another bundle of habits. Hence the necessity of the practice of regular prayer and meditation. As we also read in one of the Psalms (4:4) 'Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still.'

This practice again means 'the practice of concentration upon a single truth', in the words of Patañjali: That is to say, the truth of God's existence. God has many aspects, and so there are innumerable approaches to him. Follow the one that appeals to you most.

At the same time we must exercise dispassion. The exercise of dispassion is necessary to achieve purity of heart. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'<sup>11</sup> In the Upaniṣads we read, 'To the pure in heart the Truth becomes revealed.'<sup>12</sup>

But this purity is not achieved and dispassion does not come all at once. We must follow certain moral and ethical principles of life, which may summarily be described as: *yama*, which includes: not hurting any creature by our words, thoughts

<sup>10</sup> Vide *Gītā* VI. 34, 35.

<sup>11</sup> St. Matthew V. 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* I. iii. 12.

<sup>9</sup> *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patañjali I. 12.

or deeds. In a positive sense, this means that we must cultivate love for all, and try to see the one Self within everybody.

Our words and thoughts must be truthful, always in conformity with the facts. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that true spirituality consists in making the heart and the lips the same. But we must be careful not to hurt others by saying what is cruel, even if it happens to be true. On such occasions we have to remain silent.

We must not harbour any feelings of covetousness, either towards persons or objects.

Chastity in word, thought and deed.

These are known as *yama*, the basic rules of conduct.

Then we must form some regular habits, such as those of purity, contentment, austerity, study and surrendering the fruits of our actions to God.

Purity is cleanliness both physical and mental. Physical cleanliness is easy. To be clean mentally is to feel the presence of God, the Atman, dwelling within and thus feel purified by the presence of God. Contentment is a habit to be formed by not complaining about our external conditions. To quote Laotze in this connection, 'Truly he who has once known the contentment that comes simply through being contented, will never again be otherwise than contented.'

Austerity is the practice of the control of inner passions—lust, anger and greed.

Study, in this connection, refers to what is known as *japa*, or repetition of a prayer, the name of God.

Lastly we must form a regular habit of surrendering the fruits of our actions to God, every day of our life.

In connection with the means of achieving purity of heart, and how it leads ultimately to attainment of the Truth, let me quote a passage from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VII, xxvi. 2) :

'When the food is purified, the heart becomes pure, and when the heart becomes pure, there comes constant recollectedness of the Reality and thus all the bondages of ignorance are loosed, and the Truth becomes revealed.'

Here 'food' does not mean merely what we eat, but it has the general sense of any knowledge or experience we gather through the senses. How could knowledge or experience gathered through the senses be purified? The secret is that though we may move amongst the objects of sense, we must learn to be free from attachment and aversion to them. As already stated, attachment and aversion to the objects of sense are the bonds of ignorance.

True it is that attachment or aversion to the objects of the world are natural, but we must learn to be self-controlled. That is the only secret.

From that arises constant recollectedness of God. That is the one test of purity of heart—our mind runs spontaneously towards God.

My Master used to insist that we do not merely practise meditation a few hours a day regularly, but that we must persist in keeping recollectedness of God even though we are engaged in action. That, of course, depends upon creating the habit of thinking of God while sitting, walking, riding, and so forth.

Man remains subject to the pairs of opposites—such as pleasure and pain, success and failure, birth and death, and he can also transcend these pairs of opposites and become an heir to life and bliss immortal, depending upon where his mind dwells.

According to the mystics there are seven centres of consciousness. There are the three lower centres, situated near the anus, the generative organs, and the navel. These are the seats of lust, greed, power, name and fame. Ordinarily, man's mind travels within these three lower centres. When the



spiritual awakening comes, mind learns to dwell in the centre, near the heart—within the shrine of the heart. Then gradually love for God grows. The very nature of love is divine, all expressions—all attractions are attractions of the divine, but we are ignorant of it, and hence our love is misplaced; ultimately when we learn to love God, then alone comes fulfilment.

In the Jewish and Christian tradition also, a great emphasis is laid upon this love to be directed towards God. The first two commandments are 'Love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength', and the second commandment is: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' But today there is a greater emphasis given to the second commandment and the religions of the West seem to be moving towards Godless religion—and becoming humanism. But in fact, it is not possible to have love for mankind, a selfless love, without the love for God in our hearts.

To come back to our point, when the mind dwells in the shrine of the heart, the heart centre, as it is technically called, as love grows, one may experience ecstasy and become drunk with love for God and there comes the vision of the blissful divine light.

The next higher centre is known to be

situated near the throat. When the mind rises to this centre, there comes constant recollectedness of God, and one becomes established in purity.

As the mind rises higher to the centre situated between the eye-brows, one attains the lower *samādhi*—technically known as *savikalpa*, when one has the vision of God—but there is still a difference between the knower and the known. You seem to be witnessing a wonderful experience of God, and your heart melts in joy, the world becomes forgotten.

Ultimately when the mind rises to the highest centre, situated in the brain, one attains the highest *samādhi*. Love, lover, and the Beloved become one. The knower, the object of knowledge, and the process of knowledge become unified. You realize your identity with Brahman. This is the unitive knowledge of Godhead—the supreme goal of human life.

Then you realize all is Brahman. The eye of the spirit opens up, and you see the one Spirit, one Brahman everywhere. Referring to this experience, my Master once said to me, 'Show me the line of demarcation where matter ends and spirit begins.'

In other words, with our physical eyes, we see only matter, but with the divine sight we see only Brahman, who is the one and only Reality.

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His infinite mercy is open to every one, at all times, in all places, under all conditions, unflinching, unswerving. Upon us depends how we use it. Upon us depends how we utilise it. Blame neither man, nor God, nor anyone in the world. When you find yourselves suffering, blame yourselves, and try to do better.

—Swami Vivekananda

# RAMAKRISHNA-SARADA-VIVEKANANDA LESSON FROM THEIR LIVES

SRI B. N. CHAKRAVORTY

With British rule firmly established in India, English education was instilling among our educated youngmen nothing but contempt for Indian civilization and culture. Many got converted to Christianity and it became quite fashionable to revel in the atheistic ways of life. Mighty movements for socio-religious reforms sprang up to bring us back to our ancient moorings. Both the Brahma Samaj and the Arya Samaj which followed it, looked upon the Vedas and the Upaniṣads for inspiration, and revived once again the concept of the formless Brahman. While the Brahma leaders like Keshub Chunder Sen were intellectuals of the western type, Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaj, was pre-eminently a fighter, who refused to compromise with any one who would not acknowledge the divine origin and infallibility of the Vedas. He saw no need to be influenced by alien ideals. In this sense the Arya Samaj struck a more genuine Hindu note. The Brahma Samaj and the Arya Samaj succeeded in repelling the hypnotic spell of Christianity and thereby went a long way to save the Hindu way of life. They certainly attracted the intellectuals who were moving to Western ideals, but could not lure the vast masses of Hindus from their old ruts. The reformers refused to recognize the post-Vedic developments of Hinduism and rejected, as rank superstition, many important aspects of Hinduism. That is perhaps the reason that the masses did not accept these reformist movements.

In its quest for truth, Hinduism had evolved many divergent creeds. These comprised the highest philosophy of the Vedantist, the austere and mysterious rites of the Tantrik and the ritualistic devotion

of the followers of the Bhakti cult. Ramakrishna realized the complexity and the wide variety of all the creeds and cults included in Hinduism, ranging from the sublime to the grotesque. One can pick up and choose whatever path really appeals to him. His life and message was in perfect tune with all that Hinduism stands for, both in thought and practice. His message was that one can realize God and the highest truths of religion in one's life. He himself had succeeded in doing so, and any one also can do so if only he tries enough. When Vivekananda asked him 'Have you seen God?' the answer was unambiguous, 'Yes, I see him just as I see you here, only in a sense which is more intense. One can see and talk to Him as I am doing with you. But who cares to do so? People shed torrents of tears for their wife and children, for wealth and property, but who does so for the sake of God? If one weeps sincerely for Him, He surely manifests Himself.'

According to Ramakrishna, spiritual realization is possible through any of the paths—*mārga*—, Karma Yoga (work), Bhakti Yoga (love and faith), Rāja Yoga (psychic control) or Jñāna Yoga (philosophy). It is wrong to reject any of the paths without trying it and experimenting with it. If one tries seriously enough, any of these paths will lead to the goal of spiritual realization. Ramakrishna tried realization through all these paths and more. He first went through the Tantrika method, a combination of Karma and Yoga, characterized by many rituals. He proved that success could be achieved by this method without any material connection with wine or woman with which Tantrik practices have

been associated. He next experimented with Vaiṣṇava Sādhana—essentially the path of love and faith. He achieved success through this path too. Thereafter, he fell under the spell of Tota Puri, a Vedantic monk coming from the Punjab. He led Ramakrishna along the path of Sādhana, the path of knowledge as prescribed by Advaita Vedānta. He taught him that 'the formless, limitless, eternal, uncaused and unconditioned Brahman alone is real. Everything else is unreal.' Tota Puri was amazed to find that Ramakrishna reached in a day the height he had taken years to attain. After all this experience Ramakrishna could claim to have practised the paths of Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna. He could thereafter say with conviction:

'When I think of the Supreme Being as inactive, neither creating nor preserving nor destroying, I call Him Brahman, or Puruṣa, the Impersonal God. When I think of Him as active, creating, preserving, destroying, I call Him śakti, or Māyā, or Prakṛti, the Personal God. But the distinction between them does not mean a difference. The Personal and the Impersonal are the same Being. It is impossible to conceive the one without the other. The Divine Mother and Brahman are one.'

Having completed his practice of different cults of Hinduism, he next wanted to try out the alien paths of Islam and Christianity. The paths of Islam and Christianity also led him to the same spiritual realization which he had achieved through other paths. Through his own experiments, Ramakrishna thus proved that all these paths, different though they are, lead to the same spiritual goal—a truth that our ancient sages have always taught us, the essential unity of all religions. That is why they enjoined that we should equally respect all religions which after all are different paths leading to the same God.

Ramakrishna used to say: 'I have practised all religions, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and I have also followed the paths

of the different Hindu sects...I have found that it is the same God towards whom all are directing their steps, though along different paths... Wherever I look, I see men quarrelling in the name of religion—the Hindus, Mohammedans, Brahmos, Vaiṣṇavas and the rest, but they never reflect that He who is called Kṛṣṇa is also called Śiva, and bears the name of Primitive Energy (Śakti), Jesus and Allah as well—the same Rāma with a thousand names. The tank has several ghats. At one Hindus draw water in pitchers, and call it 'Jala'; at another Mussalmans draw water in leathern bottles and call it 'Pāni'; at a third Christians do the same and call it 'water'. Can we imagine that the water is not 'Jala', but only 'Pāni' or water? How ridiculous! The substance is one under different names and everyone is seeking the same substance; nothing but climate, temperament and names vary. Let each man follow his own path. If he sincerely and ardently wishes to know God, peace be unto him! He will surely realize Him.' *Ekam sat, Viprā bahudhā vadanti*. Truth is one, sages call it by various names. What Ramakrishna proved, practised and preached is the universality of religion.

The more orthodox masses of the Hindu community were satisfied with the teachings of Ramakrishna. They looked upon him as an *avatār* who had succeeded in holding communion with God. The more radicals also found in his words a solution of their national doubts. People who took pride in atheistic philosophy fell under his spell. They could find the solace and satisfaction that they looked for, by talking to this extraordinary man of spiritual insight. Ramakrishna was not a fiery orator like Keshub Chunder Sen, nor had he the vast erudition of Swami Dayananda. In fact, he had not taken his studies seriously. His sole ambition was to hold communion with God. He had no regard for impious teachers who

could not help him in achieving his objective. He honoured only those that possessed the right kind of learning, sanctified with purity and devotion. In his boyhood, he did not find teachers who could direct him to the path of godliness. His education, as we understand by that word, was thus neglected. He always behaved like a child and humility was his strong point. Yet, he was as wise as our ancient sages and he could explain the abstruse philosophy of the Upaniṣads and the Vedas in the simplest terms and in a form intelligible to all. The simile and metaphors that he used when talking to people, were those which could be understood or appreciated by the simplest villager. He had a strong sense of humour. He himself claimed no credit either for his extraordinary wisdom or the capacity for the most scholarly exposition of the Hindu scriptures. It was not mere modesty, but perhaps the truth, when he himself ascribed the wisdom of his discourses to the Divine Mother who he claimed, moulded his thoughts and expressions. This must explain why the intellectuals were so enthralled when listening to him. As Gandhiji had said:

'The story of Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. No one can read his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion. Ramakrishna is a living embodiment of Godliness. His sayings are not those of a mere learned man, but they are pages from the Book of Life'.

The second important aspect I would like to emphasize is Ramakrishna's attitude towards suffering humanity. He believed in the divinity of man. Service to suffering humanity is worship of God Himself. Such service should not be prompted by pity or a feeling of condescension. On the contrary, one should feel that he is earning some merit for himself by serving God in the form of a needy person. Speaking to his disciples he said one day:

'They talk of mercy to the creatures! How audacious it is to think of showering mercy on the Jiva, who is none other than Śiva. One has to regard the creature as God Himself and proceed to serve it with a devout heart, instead of taking up the pose of doling out mercy.'

In this respect, Ramakrishna's outlook was materially different from compassion prescribed in Buddhism or the Christian injunction of love. In his view, it is not enough to work for one's own salvation but one must work for the uplift—both material and spiritual—of countless human souls.

It is perhaps for this reason that though he was basically a monk, he did not avoid the duties and responsibilities of a householder. In his life, he showed that one could be a *sannyāsin* and yet do the duties of a *gṛhastha*. If he had been only a *Sannyāsin*, he need not have troubled himself over the miseries of mankind that he could see all around him. His teachings, if followed, would make us better men. If universality of religion could be sincerely worked for, a better world with less conflicts would come into being.

Ramakrishna was married; yet he was a *Sannyāsin*. His behaviour towards his wife was truly remarkable. When his wife once asked him what he thought about her, his reply was amazing: 'The Divine Mother who is worshipped in the temple is verily the mother who has given birth to this body, and again it is she who is massaging my feet at the present moment. Verily I look upon you as a representative of the Blissful Mother in human flesh.' It is not easy to understand how he could see the Divine Mother in his wife and yet as a husband, allow her to massage his feet. He actually worshipped her on one occasion as the Divine Mother. Yet he treated her as his wife as well, and allowed her to look after him.

Holy Mother too was remarkable as she

was Wife, Nun, Mother and Teacher rolled into one. It was amazing how she managed to harmonize in her life all these apparently conflicting duties. She was married to Sri Ramakrishna and kept his company and served him as a dutiful wife to the best of her ability. She participated fully in the spiritual ideals of her husband as a *sahadharminī*. Being the wife of Ramakrishna, who insisted on celibacy as an essential discipline of spiritual life, she remained a Nun, despite her being a married woman. She could not have any children of her own. But she had numerous disciples to whom she was a mother and much more. She was a Guru, a teacher but not of the ordinary type. Her daily life consisted of performance of duties not only to her numerous disciples but towards her relatives as well. In her life we find the unique example of one who bore the worries of family life to the fullest extent but at the same time kept intact her spirit of renunciation and devotion. Despite her life full of trials and tribulations, despite all her physical ailments, one cannot but marvel at the fact that she was always in a state of serenity and cheerfulness. This could only be explained by her constant communion with God. She was unique in the sense that unlike Ramakrishna himself and his disciples who were monks, she did not live outside the family. Yet she had a full spiritual life.

In her life, the Holy Mother demonstrated that a wifely devotion is possible even by observing celibacy, that maternal love can be manifested without bearing children herself and that Godliness can be attained even living the ordinary family life with all its trials and tribulations. She had no regular schooling of any kind and she was no intellectual or an exponent of any particular system of philosophy. Yet she was a teacher of great excellence, as would be apparent from the record left of the instructive

conversations she had with her disciples. Even intellectuals like Vivekananda would consult her. All this could only be explained by a certain divinity in her. It was God's grace which gave her the spiritual wisdom denied even to most philosophers. She was the Śakti behind the movement and brought spiritual comfort to the afflicted souls of many of her sons and daughters. The principal subject of her teaching was that the path of devotion leads to God, and if people follow this path they can have happier homes.

The teachings of Ramakrishna might never have been known to the world if he had not chosen Vivekananda as the instrument to spread his message throughout the world. If Ramakrishna was the *Avatār*, Vivekananda was his apostle. Vivekananda was a rationalist and would not accept anything without proper verification. He took some time before he could get convinced of the truth of the Master's message, through his own experiments and observations. Once he had his own realizations, he presented with his usual dynamism, these teachings to the world at large in a form and manner easily understandable to all.

Vivekananda was not merely an eminent religious teacher but he was also a great patriot, one of the pioneers of Indian renaissance and creators of modern India. He travelled extensively, from the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari. He swam across the sea to a rock cut off from the mainland. From this position he tried to visualize the entire motherland. He could see its age old culture but he also saw to what depth of degradation it had reached. India was a sleeping giant which once again needed a spiritual awakening and had to be roused from its lethargy. He believed that society like an individual was also subject to the laws of Karma. It was the exclusiveness of the Hindu, it was the scourge of untouchability, that are responsible for his miseries. For-

getting the divinity of man and the catholicity of his religion, he was calling others *mleccha*. He no more believed in the universality of religion, than the Muslim who called others *Kafir*, or the Christian who called them 'heathens'. Vivekananda used to say, 'It is we who are responsible for our degradation. If India through her own follies had not undermined her unity and thereby lost her own strength and vitality, physical, intellectual and spiritual, no one could have brought this nation under his heel'. It was indeed an irony of fate that Hinduism which was catholic enough to enjoin respect for all religions and which believed in the concept of universal religion, universal brotherhood, had instead of being an example to others, got itself steeped in superstition and caste prejudices. He explained how Hindus could get back their national solidarity by going back to the liberal teachings of the Upanishads. 'Let me tell you that we want strength and every time strength. And the Upanishads are the great mine of strength.' He was prophetic in declaring: 'After preaching spiritual knowledge, along with it, will come that secular knowledge and every other knowledge that you want. But if you attempt to get the secular knowledge, without religion, I tell you plainly, vain is your attempt in India; it will never have a hold upon the people.' How true this is, we can all see for ourselves today. Vedic religion may have been forgotten, but it is undoubtedly still the greatest inspiration for Hindu masses. If the latent energy of the masses has to be roused, it could be done only by reviving religion based on the original Vedantic ideas.

While emphasizing the need for religion, the Swamiji was not blind to the untold misery that has been brought on mankind in the name of religion. He said: "Though there is nothing that has brought to man more blessings than religion, yet, at the

same time, there is nothing that has brought more horror than religion. Nothing has brought more peace and love than religion; nothing has engendered fiercer hatred than religion. Nothing has made the brotherhood of man more tangible than religion; nothing has bred more bitter enmity between man and man than religion. Nothing has built more charitable institutions, more hospitals for men, and even for animals, than religion; nothing has deluged the world with more blood than religion.' Like all other conflicts, religious conflicts also stemmed from ignorance, fanaticism and brutality, dormant in man. Religion is, of course, not responsible for all the cruelties done in its name.

Vivekananda's patriotism was not, however, narrowly nationalistic. In fact, he looked upon every human being as belonging to the same family. He wanted Hindus to be better men so as to constitute a better nation because he thought that this was the essential pre-requisite to the betterment of the entire human race. He exhorted his countrymen to build up their own nation, because only then they could bring about peace and harmony through love and service to mankind as a whole. He drew upon the fundamental teachings of the Vedanta and said: 'I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses of India are once more well-fed, well-educated and well-cared for.' He therefore insisted on social service.

The Swamiji decided to go to attend the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, as he thought it would be the best forum to expound the teachings of our ancient sages and spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna. The time was ripe for the world to know about the universality of religion as taught by the Master. A favourable response from the West would also incidentally en-

able Hindus to shed their inferiority complex and love for everything Western. His message to the world was that all religions must be respected as they are all different paths leading to the same God. He said, 'The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality.'

He undoubtedly raised the image of India in the esteem of the West as was evidenced by Press comments: 'After hearing him, we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation.' He became the best Ambassador of India after Buddha. The eulogies received by the Swami in the West naturally excited Indians and convinced them that the West no longer considered Indians as savages, lacking in all culture. On the contrary, the West had realized the greatness of Hindu religion and culture and no longer looked down upon them as a bundle of superstitions. Hindus need no longer be ashamed of any constituent of their religious faith or way of life. Indians found in the Swami an eminent exponent of our glorious heritage and were overjoyed to hear him say of India: 'None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more for the infinite giant is rising to her feet. The longest night seems to be passing away.' These visions no doubt

cheered them but the Swami urged the people to work hard towards this end. The catholicity of the Upaniṣads would not only uplift the Hindu society but it would then make them worthy to contribute something to world culture and towards building up a universal religion. They must know that India has some real contributions to make to mankind.

It is a matter of deep regret that despite the teachings of Ramakrishna and his apostle, we continue to remain steeped in superstition, we still practise the original sin of untouchability and we have yet to learn the virtues of social service. We have forgotten our religion; yet we still continue all kinds of misdeeds, in the name of religion. Instead of working for universal brotherhood, peace and harmony in the world, we are continuing the existing barriers in the Hindu community itself and disintegrating it. Far from building up unity and strength as advocated by Vivekananda, we are frittering away our energies on non-essentials and becoming weaker and weaker. No wonder, the vision with which the Swamiji had enthused his followers, have not materialized; nor have we qualified for his benedictions. 'And may He who is the Lord of every sect, help us, may He give strength and energy unto us.' May the Lord give us the wisdom even now so that we may retrace our path and remember the message of the Master and his apostle.

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It is true I believe Ramakrishna Paramahansa to have been inspired. But then I am myself inspired also. And you are inspired. And your disciples will be; and theirs after them; and so on, to the end of time!

—Swami Vivekananda

# FOUNDATIONS OF INDIAN CULTURE

DR. J. N. TANDON

Of all the countries of the world, both ancient and modern, India has the richest storehouse of culture and civilization. Since time immemorial, she has been the spiritual nurse and guide of humanity at large. Long before any of European civilizations, Greek and Roman, took any tangible shape, she was on the zenith of her glory. There was no sphere of human activity in which she did not claim to her credit splendid triumphs, and such noble achievements as could not wither with the lapse of time. It is a happy sign that serious thinkers and mature minds of the West are now paying attention to the message of India and realizing the need of grafting the best elements of Indian culture on the tree of Western civilization.

## ADAPTABILITY

What is the secret of the longevity and imperishability of Indian Culture? Why is it that such great empires and nations as Babylon, Assyria, Greece, Rome, Persia could not last more than the footprints of a camel on the shifting sands of the desert, while India which faced the same ups and downs, the same mighty and cruel hand of time, is still alive and with the same halo of glory and splendour? The answer is given by Prof. J. B. Pratt of America,<sup>1</sup> according to whom the Hindu religion is the only religion which tends to survive the present crisis in the life of all religions. Hinduism, which he calls the 'Vedic way' is a 'self-perpetuating' religion. 'The Vedic', he says, 'is the way of constant spiritual re-interpretation leading to life, which is self-perpetuating, self-renewing and which for the individual and for the world may be

eternal.' Unlike other religions 'not death, but development' has been the fate of Hinduism: 'That which is not vital and true, cast off the old shell and clothed itself in more suitable expression, with no break in the continuity of life and no less in the sanctity and weight of its authority.' It is for this reason that Indian culture has retained its true spirit through shocks of centuries, hundreds of foreign invasions, and thousands of social and political upheavals. The time has come when vital changes in the old outlook have to be introduced, we cannot live without doing so. 'The world as it is constituted to-day', writes Pandit Nehru, 'is in a stage of revolutionary change, so that you just cannot help trying to change yourself, otherwise you get into trouble.'<sup>2</sup> But the desired changes will not be imposed from outside but grow naturally from the cultural background of the country. Instead of combating or rejecting the new changes, India would rationalize them from its own spiritual point of view and fit them into its own psychological framework.

## SYMPATHY AND TOLERANCE

Another secret of the vitality of Indian culture is its sympathetic and tolerant attitude. As the professor quoted above observes: 'Mutually contradictory creeds can and do keep house together without quarrel within the wide and hospitable Hindu family.' 'Hindu thought... because of its ingrained conclusiveness, its tolerance, and its indifference to doctrinal divergences, stressed the essential unity of all Indian Dharmas, whether Hindu or Buddhist, and minimized differences.' This tolerance of

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<sup>1</sup> *Why Religions Die*: Grosset & Dunlop, New York, 1932, pp. 17-18.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Discovery of India*: The signet Press, Calcutta, 1946, p. 227.



differences of opinion and creed within its own fold and even outside itself is an essential characteristic of Indian culture. 'With everything whether it is above or below, remote or near, visible or invisible, thou shalt preserve a relation of unlimited love without any animosity or without a desire to kill.'<sup>3</sup> This is the teaching of the Upanishads and the crux of our culture. 'All the diverse doctrines and paths originating at different times and different countries, however, lead ultimately to the same Supreme Truth, like the many different paths leading travellers from different places to the same city,' says Yogavāsistha.<sup>4</sup> Every Hindu prays, therefore, to the ultimate power behind and pervading the universe in the following way: 'May the Lord of all the three worlds hear and answer our prayer—the Lord Hari (*Vishnu*) whom the Shaivites call Shiva, the Vedantists call Brahman, the Buddhists call the Buddha, the Logicians (*Naiyayikas*) call the Creator, the Jains call Arhat, and the Mimamsakas call Karma.'<sup>5</sup>

#### EMPHASIS ON SPIRITUAL VALUES

The essential characteristic which distinguishes Indian culture from the modern scientific culture of the West, is a constant emphasis on spiritual values. To us, the goal of life is the communion with the Supreme. It is a life of realization, an inner intuitive vision of God, when man achieves absolute freedom and escapes from the blind servitude to worldly experience. There are many more aspects of reality open to man in himself than those which sense-observation of external nature reveals. Science cannot give us knowledge of the real nature of man, his spiritual being. Hence, the growing dissatis-

faction with the modern ways of science in the minds of those who are gifted with deeper awareness. Alexis Carrel, the eminent scientist, deplors this state of things and suggests that 'the only possible remedy for this evil is much more profound knowledge of ourselves.'<sup>6</sup> It is this 'profound knowledge of ourselves,' that mainly characterizes Indian culture.

The Indian knowledge of man, and of the universe of which he is a product and a part, has gone too deep to be fathomed by the methods of modern science. The Indian seers did not depend merely on sensory observation. They refined and perfected the processes of introspection, intuition and mystic experience and through them they opened the gates of the vast unconscious and the limitless superconscious strata of being lying within them. They discovered that man is a centre of a circle whose circumference is nowhere, that his dimensions are infinite in extent and that in his deeper nature he is one and identical with the deepest and ultimate spirit that holds, supports, sustains and pervades the universe.

#### THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN LIFE

This profound knowledge of inner man, and of ultimate reality underlying the universe, has led religion to serve as the bedrock of India's culture and civilization. Religion in India is not a thing to be put on and put off like Sunday clothes. It is the warp and woof of the whole texture of Indian life. Whatever an Indian does, however great or small it may be, is coloured by religious sentiments. From the planting of a tree to the building of a temple, all are regarded as pious acts. The duties of life have been saved from dryness by

<sup>3</sup> Hanumanprasad Poddar: *Mysticism in the Upanishads*, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, 1937, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Hanumanprasad Poddar: *The Divine Name and Its Practice*, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, 1940, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> *Man the Unknown*: Michael Joseph Ltd., 14 Henrietta Street, W.C. 2, 1944, p. 57..

being endowed with emotion and regarded as debts we owe to our ancestors, to our country, to our fellow-men, to the entire creation and to God. Social and political institutions, training and education, marriage and procreation, birth and death are all tinged with religious emotion and sublimated. If we read the *Vedas*, the *Upanisads*, the *Epics*, if we visit the temples of Ellora, Tanjore, Khajraho, the Ankarbhat and Barobunder, if we go to the ruins of Sanchi, Sarnath and Bharut, and study the inscriptions and sculptures of the pillars of Asoka and the paintings of Ajanta and Bagh, we shall understand how religion has acted as the basic drive and inspiration of Indian art and literature, craft and culture.

#### SELF-DISCIPLINE

The Indian word for culture is *Sanskriti*, taken from a root which means to purify, to transform, to sublimate, to mould and to perfect. A cultured man is a disciplined man who has brought his natural instincts under control and has shaped himself in accordance with the idea placed before him by his moral consciousness. The ancient Indian thinkers knew that it was possible to conquer the world and yet remain a slave to oneself. That is why they insisted on self-control. Manu, one of the earliest leaders of Indian social thought, says that by nature we are all barbarous, uncultured and uncivilized. It is discipline that raises us to a higher status in life.

#### IDEALS OF TRUTH AND NON-VIOLENCE

Indian thinkers have given us various types of ideals that may suit diverse men and women and have worked out in minutest detail the processes through which the ideals are realized in life. However, truth and non-violence are the key-ideals to all greatness. In the history of India for the sake of truth great and noble sacrifices have been performed. The Prince of Kapilavastu

gave up everything that kingship could offer him and voluntarily accepted the robe of the sannyasi to seek the deliverance of humanity from pain and suffering. For the sake of truth, Ramachandra, the Prince of Ayodhya gave up kingship for fourteen years, and lived the best part of a young prince's life in forest. Asoka lived up to the ideals of rājarsi avoiding all pleasures and doing everything for the welfare of suffering humanity. Emperor Harsha gave up regularly in charity his accumulated treasures at the end of every five years and borrowed second-hand garments from his sister Rajyasri. In recent times, in accordance with the glorious traditions, Gandhiji fought and fell for the defence of truth and righteousness.

Another great teaching of Indian religion is non-violence or freedom from ill will against all beings at all times and in all ways. Lord Buddha and Mahavira were the great advocates of this ideal. They thought not of man alone; but the entire living was the object of their care and thought. 'Harmlessness to all living creatures' was the substance of their message. Kabir and Chaitanya taught us the same lesson of love to all creatures. They tried to create a fusion of different cultures into one harmonious whole. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, Swami Ram Teerth—all of them taught the lesson of love, truth and sacrifice. Last but not least, came Mahatma Gandhi, who, with his glorious message of *Ahimsā*, roused the slumbering people from their age-long lethargy. He extended the scope of non-violence and applied the teaching of Lord Buddha on a more extensive scale, and made world-wide appeal for its acceptance as the surest means of solving the difficulties of the age, the riddles of materialistic civilization.

## CONCLUSION

India is standing to-day on the threshold of a new era. She is preparing to make her contribution to the world of the future. In the past she produced her great culture, and in the present age she has an equally important role to play in evolving the culture of the New World which is emerging slowly from the wreckage of the old. This is a momentous period of her history, pregnant with precious possibilities, when any disinterested offer of co-operation from any part of the West will have an immense moral value,

the memory of which will become brighter as the regeneration of the East grows in vigour and creative power. It is up to the youths of our present generation to come out of the narrow shell of factions and party-politics, and illuminate the track of humanity by holding high the lamp of their ancient wisdom, by giving form and shape to the great and noble dreams that were cherished by the immortal prophets and philosophers of the past, so that the whole world might declare that the light has come from the East and saved the West from doom and destruction.

## ŚRĪ VEDĀNTA DEŚIKA

SWAMI HARSHANANDA

## I

There was a great commotion inside the temple of Lord Venkateśvara at Tirupati. The bell used at the time of daily worship in the *sanctum sanctorum* was missing! The temple authorities were holding an emergency enquiry and were trying to fix the responsibility on the poor priests who were pleading innocent. Just then word was received of an extremely strange happening in the township. A pious Brāhmin couple, pilgrims from Kāñcīpuram (Anantasūri and Totadryambā by name), had had a wonderful vision the previous night in which an exquisitely beautiful divine child appeared with a bell in its hand, commanded the good lady to open her mouth, put the bell into it and asked her to swallow it! Attempts at verification ended up in confirmation. The great God himself put the seal on the episode by revealing that everything had happened in accordance with His own will!

So the commotion subsided. And the story began.

This pious couple had trekked all the way from Kāñcī to pray to the Lord of the Tirupati hills to bless them with a worthy son. The Lord had granted their prayer. So they returned.

In course of time a son was born to them. They christened him Venkateśvara, after the great Lord of Tirupati.

The boy underwent the various sacraments, sanctioned and sanctified by thousands of years of tradition. He grew into a fine young man highly educated in the sacred lore and equally refined and cultured. Even before twenty he made a mark as a great scholar, poet and philosopher. Though married, he lived practically like a recluse, never caring for the comforts and enjoyments of the world. The only ambition that consumed his soul was the systematization and propagation of the teachings of Śrī Rāmānujā, the great Ācārya who preceded him by two centuries.

He is said to have lived the full human life span of one hundred years. Like the

bell of the Lord, whose incarnation he was supposed to be, he sent the message of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta ringing to all the corners of his country. He travelled extensively, preached intensively, wrote profusely and worked vigorously to fulfil the mission of his life. While journeying through life he had to weather many a storm: now arguing and convincing, now spoiling the machinations of unscrupulous rivals, now organizing the traditional centres of his religion—all the while keeping his head absolutely cool and the heart fully warm. His prodigious learning was matched only by his simplicity and humility. His wide fame was equalled only by his intense renunciation. No wonder that his contemporaries honoured him with such names as Vedānta Deśika (the teacher of Vedānta), Sarvatantra-svāntara (the knower of all sciences and arts), Kavi-tārkika-simha (poet and lion among the logicians) and so on.

He passed away peacefully at a ripe old age.

This was the end of the story, but the beginning of a new page in history.

## 2

His was a peerless personality. It is really very difficult, if not impossible, to state which of his innumerable virtues and gifts was more dominant than the rest. However, since we have to begin somewhere, let us begin with his astounding scholarship.

His knowledge of the ancient texts on religion and philosophy as also some of the sciences and arts, was extensive as well as deep. His writings are prolific. In quality, they are a class unto themselves.

To combine dry philosophy with exquisite poetry is like squaring the circle. But he achieved it to an admirable degree! In his works, like *Tattva-muktā-kalāpa*, it is difficult to judge whether poetic grandeur supersedes philosophical acumen or *vice versa*.

He also wrote purely literary works which are sometimes extolled as next only to Kālidāsa's.

Learning often begets pride and egoism. But he was a unique exception. He was humility personified. His humility was born out of a deep conviction that whatever virtue he possessed was due to the Lord's grace alone. Once a great poet of his times challenged him to compete with him in composing one thousand stanzas in one night. The proud poet chose the Lord's feet as his subject. Deśika chose the Lord's footwear! Praying intensely for the Lord's grace and drowning his little ego in His current, he effortlessly poured out one thousand verses (now well-known as the *Pādukā-sahasra*) before daybreak whereas his illustrious opponent after great struggle could compose only three hundred! But even in his victory Deśika was humble and magnanimous. 'Well, your composition is like the young one of the elephant whereas mine is like the brood of pigs'!—this was the tribute he paid to his opponent!

His devotion to God was remarkable. It was not a sentimental feeling nor a mere emotional upsurge. It was intense love welling up from the depths of his soul, because of enlightenment wrought about by hard austerity and deep meditation. It is said that he was blessed with an idol of Lakshmī-Hayagrīva by Garuda Bhagavān, which he worshipped throughout his life. This idol is cherished in the shrine of the Parakāla Maṭha of Mysore even today.

Another important trait of his was his spirit of supreme renunciation resulting from his utter dependence on God. Vidyā-ranya, another great soul of his time, tried his best to honour him through the king of Vijayanagar, but in vain. Though living practically on alms he considered the honours conferred by kings as mere straw compared to the joy of utter dependence on the King of kings.

It was exactly this that made him absolutely fearless. He stuck to truth. He clung to God. What fear had he of mortals? It was the other way. The ordinary mortals who cared little for truth or for God were mortally afraid of him!

With all his humility he was not meek and submissive, much less cowardly. When challenged he responded vigorously, rising to the occasion. Several disputants tasted defeat at his hands. Even persons well-versed in black magic could do little harm to him!

He was a philosopher, a poet, and a saint all rolled into one. He was a versatile genius of the highest order. He was the 'salt of the earth'.

### 3

Putting Śrīvaiṣṇavism along with its philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita on a firm foundation was the main achievement of his life. In this he was next only to Rāmānuja.

This necessitated a prolific production of high quality works in which logic, philosophy, devotion and ritualism blended harmoniously. They number 107. Several of them are in Sanskrit and the rest in Tamil.

Among the works which describe the essence of Śrīvaiṣṇavism, *Arthapañcaka* seems to be the most popular. It deals with the doctrine of Prapatti or self-surrender to God.

However it is in *Rahasyatrayasāra* composed in the maṇipravāḷa language (Sanskritized Tamil) that we find a magnificent exposition of all the aspects of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. In a way, this may be called as the *magnum opus* of Deśika. The exposition of the aṣṭāksarī and dvaya-mantra as also the carama-śloka (Gītā XVIII, 66) are simply marvellous.

*Yatirāja-saptati* (a hymn on Rāmānuja) and *Pādukā-sahasra* are the best known among his hymns.

*Yādavābhyudaya*, composed as a challeng-

ing reply to the *Rāghavābhyudaya* of Diṇḍima Kavi (of Vijayanagar) as also *Hamsa-sandeśa* and *Saṅkalpa-sūryodaya* are works of exceptional literary merit. The last one was composed on the lines of *Prabodha-candrodaya* of Kṛṣṇa Miśra who was defeated in a disputation, whereas *Hamsa-sandeśa* was an imitation of the *Megha-sandeśa* of Kālidāsa.

Among his independent works on Viśiṣṭādvaita special mention must be made of *Nyāyapariśuddhi* and *Tattvamuktākalāpa-Śatadūṣaṇī* is another work which levels 66 arguments (and not 100 as the name implies) against Advaita.

He has also written commentaries on *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* and other standard works. *Tattvañikā* and *Tātparyacandrikā* are commentaries on Ramanuja's *Śrībhāṣya* and *Gītābhāṣya*.

### 4

Dharma has got two aspects: the personal and the social. They are complementary to each other. A society in which the former is forgotten disintegrates. A society in which the former is developed *at the cost of the latter*, paves the way for its own destruction by alien forces. This latter has been the fate of our society, at least during the last thousand years.

The century in which Śrī Vedānta Deśika lived was a period of great stress and strain to the Hindu society. Often it was a question of life and death, a question of sheer survival. It was here that a judicious combination of the characteristics of Kṣatriya and that of Brāhmaṇa was absolutely necessary. The latter seeking out the former, inspiring it and solidly supporting it—that was the need of the hour. Śrī Vidyāranya the great contemporary of Śrī Deśika fulfilled this need.

Since this great king-maker, who was himself an equally great ascetic, knew Śrī  
(Contd. on Page 278)



WHAT  
INSPIRES ME  
MOST IN  
HOLY  
MOTHER'S  
LIFE

NANCY POPE MAYORGA

The only way to live a great life, the sages tell us, is to have a measure of self-knowledge. It is a noticeable fact that as soon as a man begins to search out his self, he begins to take on stature. This searching can be done by all, and is done by a few. But truly great ones are different. They, by God's grace, know who they are from the beginning. They are born full-grown, as it were. Such a great one was Sarada Devi of Jayrambati. The ideal virgin wife, she became the mother of all.

The role of women in the lives of divine incarnations is always deeply meaningful and touching. There were Chaitanya's mother and his young wife, who gave him up to God, and by that act inspired some of the most beautiful Bengali poetry, and the lovely girl who was Buddha's wife and became his first disciple, and Radha who recognized Kṛṣṇa and loved him as more

than man, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, who knew from the beginning that she had no ordinary child. Along with these, playing a most meaningful and moving role of her own, is Sarada Devi, the wife of Sri Ramakrishna.

There are two things that set her off from the others. In the first place, we know more about her. We know almost everything about her, for she belongs to our own, self-conscious age which is always careful to keep records. Many people wrote in loving detail about her. In the second place, she knew more about herself and the part she had to play. Modest and retiring as she was, this self-knowledge gave her an incontrovertible authority. And considering her humble background, her complete absence of formal education, her lack of familiarity with the world, this quiet self-assurance is one of the most impressive things about her.

(Contd. from Page 277)

Deśika's capacities and capabilities, it was but natural for him to try to get the latter also associated with the badly needed work of regeneration of the Hindu society. That Śrī Deśika refused royal honours is understandable. But could he not, with his sharp insight, gauge the motives behind that

princely honours? Did he place his vairāgya above the welfare of the nation? Could he not have utilized his talents better by working for the Hindu society as a whole instead of toiling only for his sect? Would not have the results been far better if he had accepted the royal help?

Well, these are for the wise to decide!

She was born at Jayrambati in December, 1853. As a five year old girl, she was touched by God, chosen to be Ramakrishna's bride. Then when she was about fourteen, and visited her husband's family and became acquainted with him, she tells of a strange joy that filled her, that was welling up inside of her all the time. 'I then felt as if a pitcher of bliss was kept in my heart.' And when, at eighteen, still in her father's house, she heard rumours that her husband had gone mad, that he had forgotten all about her, she took matters into her own hands and decided to go to Dakshineswar where he was, and see for herself. This was no small decision for a young girl, lacking in experience and living the sheltered life of a Hindu daughter. The trip meant several days of walking, hardships perhaps. But although apprehensive about the outcome, Sarada had no doubts about her decision. Her father finally agreed that she was right, and said that he would take her. She was right. Ramakrishna welcomed her, and she found him to be not mad, but perhaps the only sane man in the world.

Immediately Sarada Devi showed who and what she was. When Ramakrishna asked, 'Have you come to drag me down into Maya-' she answered, 'No. I have not come to drag you down but to help you in your spiritual practice.' And help him she did, all the rest of his life, so that he came to depend upon her greatly. Once, toward the end of his life at the Cossipore Garden House, when Sarada was sick and could not climb the stairs to nurse him, he suggested jokingly to his disciples, 'Why don't you put her in a basket and bring her up to me?' This was all the more touching because he could not speak, and the joke was made with gestures. More than physical help, too, she gave. 'If she herself had not been so pure,' he said, 'I might have fallen.' Fact or not, the comment is an in-

dication of her greatness and of his recognition of it.

Wives are exhorted to see God in their husbands. But Sarada Devi knew her husband to be God. Had she not met him intimately in the depth of her soul when he performed that extraordinary worship of her, the Shodasi Puja? Later, when describing him, she said that his skin was golden and had a glow to it, and that when he came from his room, people would line up and say 'Here he comes! Here he comes!' So she knew the divinity in him. She stood in awe of him. Nevertheless, she had an autonomy of her own. When someone asked her if she obeyed her husband in everything, she answered, 'In spiritual matters, absolutely. In practical matters I use my commonsense.'

It was to go farther than that. Once, when Ramakrishna chided her for receiving a woman of unsavoury reputation, and said that she should not receive her, Sarada replied, 'In this I cannot obey you. She, too, is my daughter.' This was a very significant statement. It was an acknowledgement of her eternal role of Mother, who rejects no one.

Of course, Ramakrishna knew. This very knowledge he had imparted to her when they were both in deep samadhi. Sarada's own mother felt that her daughter was living a most unnatural life, and she complained to Ramakrishna about Sarada having no children. He answered, 'In the future she will have so many children that she will be tired of being called Mother.'

But in the meantime the role was growing upon her. She served. Under the most difficult conditions, in cramped and uncomfortable quarters, she served her husband and his disciples, and strangers who came, for seventeen or eighteen hours a day, saving for herself one little period at three in the morning for her bath and her spiritual practice. She cooked at all hours of the

day and night, and very often cooked to order for some particular palate. Always her husband had to have special food because of his delicate digestion, and she often coaxed him and tempted his appetite and disguised the quantities because the sight of too much food alarmed him. Often she must have felt that she was his mother, too.

When he died, she was only thirty-three. She had half her life and her whole ministry ahead of her. For thirty-four more years she would obey God's command to be the mother of all. What she taught by her words was the very purpose of life and religion—well taught to her by her husband—how to realize God. But what she taught by her life and actions would be impossible to express adequately in words. She was Mother. Not merely in name. She actually felt that mother's love for everyone, everywhere, even, by her own admission, for birds and animals. She became known as Sri Sri Ma. The Indian name carries an affectionate and reverent spirit with it which cannot be matched by the English 'Holy Mother.'

As the normal mother with five or six children manages to give devoted attention to each, so Holy Mother, with thousands of children, made each one feel that he was her special own. One disciple, wondering at her loving interest in his welfare, asked her, 'Shall I always have this affection?' And she answered, 'Yes. In my love there is no ebb tide or flood tide.' Many times she was asked, 'Are you our real mother?' There was never any hesitation in her answer, 'I am your real mother.' How many times in how many first-hand accounts we read these same touching words, 'When I was leaving, she followed me part of the way and stood watching me with tears in her eyes.' She never allowed anyone to say 'Goodbye'. She always said, in the Indian way, 'Come again'.

The mother relationship went even deeper, for she recognized her own. 'Haven't we met before? Haven't you been here before?' Swami Prabhavananda tells of his experience when he was a very young boy and met Holy Mother for the first time as she passed through his village. She put her fingers under his chin and said in most affectionate tones, 'Haven't I seen you before?' 'No,' he answered surprised, and today he adds, with emotion, 'I didn't know. I didn't realize then.'

As she grew older, she was worshipped by thousands as the Divine Mother, the living goddess. On the days that people were allowed to touch her feet, the line of those waiting would extend down the stairs, out from the building, and a block away. It is said that the slight and reverent contact with her feet would send an electric shock of joy through the devotee. People would come back week after week to receive that blessing. No divine incarnation was worshipped while living as Holy Mother was. All this she accepted, not herself, but for the God she felt in her. She herself would rather not have had it—it caused her actual physical pain—but she knew it was a matter of divine duty, and that knowledge kept her resigned, simple, modest, available to everyone.

In her every day life she did not have an easy time. Her health was not always good, and her worldly family was a constant exasperation. When she was in her village, she worked as hard as, if not harder than, any ordinary village woman. When she was in Calcutta, she was constantly besieged by devotees wanting favours. From beginning to end her life was a complete giving of herself. She felt that through her efforts people could be helped to achieve liberation, and she was constantly performing japam for the good of the world. In spite of all her outer activity, her life was, as Sister Nivedita said,



'one long stillness of prayers.' This could be true only because she knew God in the depth of her soul.

She knew her divinity, and as she grew older, she was more outspoken about it. It was not only that she could give extraordinarily intuitive and right advice. As Sister Nivedita noted, no matter what the unfamiliar problem was, she always went right to the heart of the matter and 'set the questioner in the true attitude to the difficulty'. No, it was more than that. She accepted the fact that the power of God was working through her.

Once a Brahmin woman cook came to her in the evening and said, 'Mother, I have touched a dog. I must bathe.' The Mother said, 'It is now late in the evening. Don't bathe. It is enough to wash your hands and feet and change your cloth.' The cook said, 'Oh! that won't do.' The Mother said, 'Then sprinkle some Ganges water on your body.' That also did not satisfy the cook. At last the Mother said to her 'Then touch me.'

A word from her, a touch, could wipe

out a lifetime of sinful living. As Swami Premānanda said, 'The poison we cannot swallow, we send to Holy Mother.' In other words, the seemingly hopeless sinners they sent to her, and she transformed them.

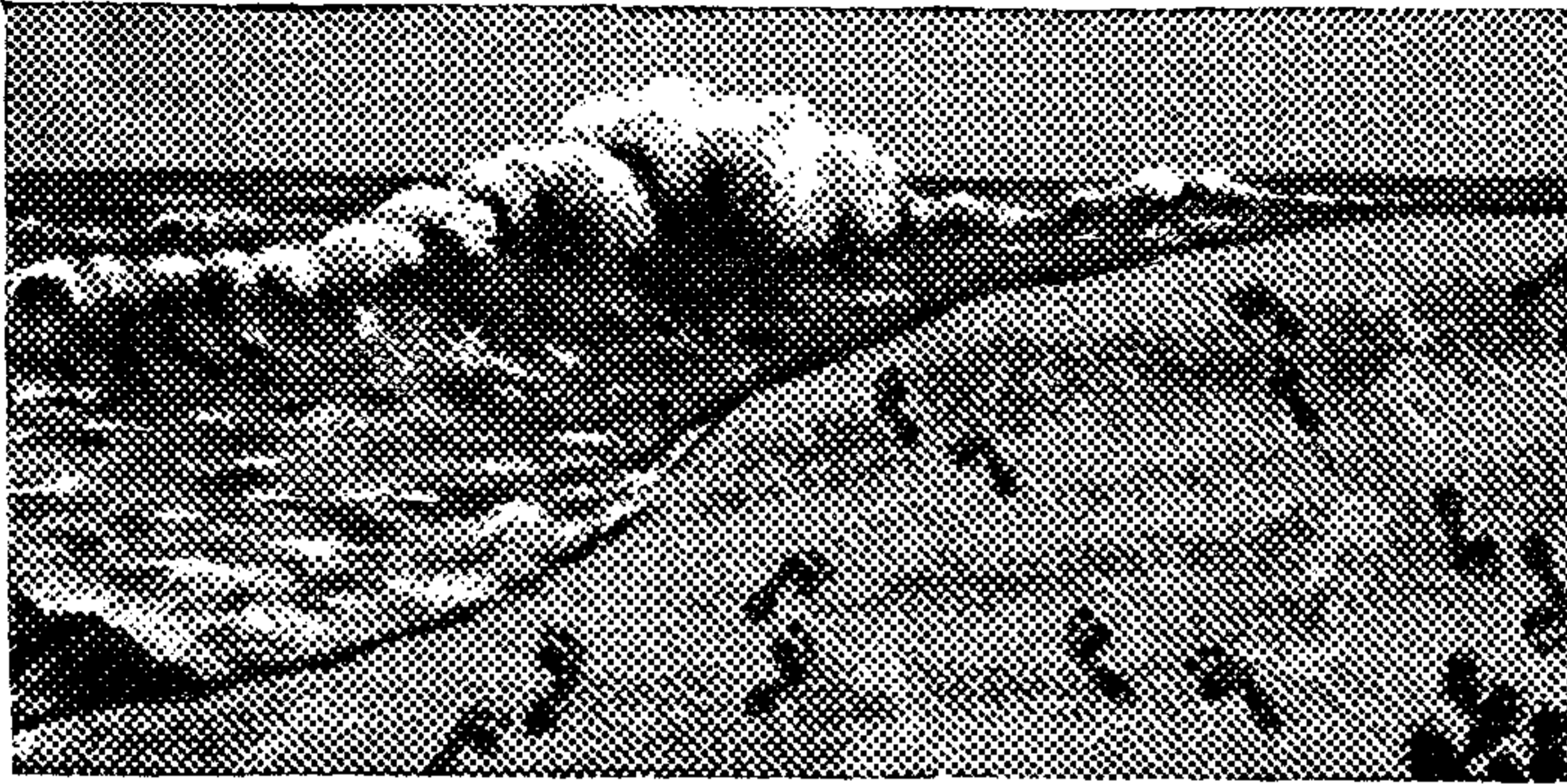
Never were more beautiful words spoken at the end of a life than what Holy Mother spoke just before she died. And her words have an added poignancy because she lived them and because they sum up that extraordinary life: 'If you want peace of mind, do not find fault with others. No one is a stranger. The whole world is your own.'

If one is a spiritual aspirant and willing to struggle, he can, no doubt, meet Rama-krishna at the deepest level of the soul and be one with him. But that will be an heroic struggle indeed! How much easier to meet Sarada Devi in the heart and love her as Mother! Over and over again, with a conviction that could not be argued with, she said 'Yes. I am your mother, your own mother.'

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You should do work, no doubt. Work saves the mind from going astray. But, then, prayer and meditation also are necessary. You must sit for meditation at least once in the morning and once in the evening. That will be like the helm to a boat.

—Sri Sarada Devi



# HUMAN TRENDS

## ANY MEANING IN CAMPUS TURMOILS?

The winds of change are blowing strongly these days in all corners of the globe but nowhere so strongly as on the college campuses. Hardly a day passes that one does not read about trouble on a college campus some place in the world and here in the United States the reasons given are numerous and varied—not enough Negroes being admitted to the schools; lack of proper Black Study courses; dissatisfaction with the draft system and with the war in Vietnam, students not being given enough power in college affairs, etc. There is a very real temptation to turn one's head and to ignore the disturbances saying they will dissipate and disappear and things revert to normal if we are just patient. But this, one knows, is just wishful thinking. For what can be defined as normal these days? The times when students went from high school on to four years of cloistered college life are no more. Most of the students in the era prior to World War II spent their four years, or more, depending on what profession they had decided to follow, studying and preparing to eventually take their place in the establishment, and prior to completion of their college courses, not too many of them became involved in affairs beyond the campus gate. And not as many youngsters

could go on to the halls of higher learning those days. The stock market crash of 1929 and the years of depression which followed precluded many intellectually gifted from obtaining a college degree. The young of those days are the parents of the present-day rebellious students and one must ask why so much rebellion?

Certainly it is evident there has been a noticeable shift in goals and values. Parents who grew up in the depression years were deprived, as children, of most of the material things taken for granted today and, as is so often the case, these parents wanted to be able to shower their children with all they had lacked. Hence, they worked long and hard to secure well-paying jobs and to provide their children with all the comforts of modern living—cars, televisions, homes in the suburbs, to mention but a few of the musts. And this brings us face to face with the youngsters and college students of today who have been satiated with material possessions. It is rather amazing to meet numerous young men and women who prefer to live away from a comfortable home in some run-down tenement or apartment and to observe how little regard they have for fine clothes or fancy food. So many of them

really ask for the very minimum of such things and seem to point up the oft quoted fact 'that man does not live by bread alone.' Perhaps our generation, by providing a life of affluence for the younger generation, has given them an opportunity to question the belief that monetary success is a worthy goal. After all, they have been able to observe many who are successful in a monetary way but who are morally bankrupt.

One must take into consideration, too, that a large proportion of college students today are older than those of a generation or two ago because in many instances their education has been interrupted by military service or by service in such organizations as the Peace Corps and, hence, they are very much aware of problems that exist not only in their own country, but in the world at large. Volumes are being written about college uprisings and the causes. Statistics and studies do show, however, that the majority of young people are earnest and dedicated in wanting to help to make the world a better place and they show a real concern and interest in their fellow men. Why, then, do we find so much frustration and disillusionment on the college scene today? One basic charge is that there are not enough really dedicated teachers nowadays. When we were youngsters, teaching was almost always a vocation. Rarely were there any married women teaching. Many of our teachers were almost nun-like in their living and their sole interest was in the welfare of their students and their greatest satisfaction was in being able to mould and guide their charges along the right path. Teaching has too often since become just a job, and the benefits of long vacations and good pay lure many into the field, and so it seems reasonable to believe there is an element of truth in the charge that there are not enough really dedicated teachers any more and also that too many

instructors at the college level are more interested in research than teaching because research is one thing that pays off in grants and prestige. And the students also complain that much needed counselling is just not available.

Studies show it is not the students who come to college knowing what profession they wish to follow who become involved in protest movements. After all, when one has decided to become a doctor, or an engineer, or a geologist, or whatever, it is just a matter of taking the necessary courses, both required and elective, and passing the necessary examinations to eventually earn the desired degree. It is the so-called liberal arts students, often the brightest young people, who come to college not too sure of what they want to do with their lives, believing there they will be counselled and guided in their efforts to find their rightful place in the scheme of things and that a college education will be meaningful in equipping them to go out in the world and live a beneficial life, not only for themselves but for their fellow men. They begin to feel confused and even a bit cheated when so much of what they are required to study has no relevance to the problems of the times, and when there is no one around to counsel them and help them with their doubts and questions. These very students, feeling caught in a dilemma, then become easy prey for militants who do want to create disorders on the campuses for no other reason than to be destructive and disruptive.

So here we are at the crux of the matter for it is at this point that violence often occurs, and it is this very violence which will bring down on the students a more and more rigid policing which, of course, no one wants. However, force on the part of the students can only result in greater force being brought to bear on them. It is axiomatic, as all know, that anything ob-

tained by force can also be taken away by force. So there is no solution in this direction. Where, then, does a solution exist?

The educators and authorities know that there is only a very small number of dissidents creating campus turmoil and though their number is small it is recognized that many are not needed to start a revolution, especially in areas where there are already feelings of dissatisfaction and unrest, however vague. Recognizing the fact that the hard-core dissidents are in the minority is the first step in correcting the situation. It is felt that this group can be isolated and handled separately. One spokesman feels that the campus revolts are really a part of the whole urban crisis and that there are real grievances which must be brought out in the open and righted wherever possible. No one wants to silence the voice of dissent. After all, isn't that what democracy is all about and what our country is founded on? But there are legitimate ways of being heard and of having wrongs corrected and it is not by destruction of property and injury to others. That is the way of anarchy and suicidal. Let the students examine their motives and when demanding their rights let them remember that others—parents, teachers, taxpayers who make the school system possible—too, have rights. If the students are pure and idealistic in their actions and aims, they will find many, many who will rally to support and help them in bringing about much needed changes.

When I hear the word revolution being used in connection with college turmoil, I would like to believe that it is a revolution, but one of ideas and ideals, and that what the young are revolting against, though they may not be quite aware of it as such at this point, is the concept that worldly prosperity and greater and greater material acquisition are the only measuring rods of success. I would like to believe that this is the beginning of a shift of values from the material to the spiritual. I would also like to believe that this is the birth of a new age, and that all the present-day pain and travail are its birth pangs. I would lastly like to believe that more and more young people will come to learn the wisdom of restraint in all their actions, and that more and more they will also come to the realization that nothing will bring them greater happiness and joy than discovering and bringing forth from the depths of their own beings all the wonderful qualities they will find there—qualities such as love, kindness, forbearance and compassion. Then, these qualities coupled with their higher learning and intellectual knowledge, will enable them to truly serve mankind in the only manner that will bear lasting fruit; the manner spoken of so often by Swami Vivekananda, that great patriot-monk of modern-day India, which he called the worship of God in man.

*Anna Nylund.*

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

In this age of anxiety in spite of striking achievements of science and technology the editorial stresses the need for integration of intellect and heart to obtain abiding peace and happiness.

'Reflections on Dispassion' are selected and rearranged from the *Vairāgya Śataka* of Nīlakantha Dīkṣita, grandson of Appayya Dīkṣita of the 16th Century, by Swami Vimalananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

Swami Prabhavananda is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and the Head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California Hollywood, U.S.A. In his article 'Be still and know that I am God' the Swami directs our attention to the hidden divinity in us and with parallel quotations from Hindu and Christian literature shows us the way to reach the Ultimate.

'Ramakrishna — Sarada — Vivekānanda: Lesson from their lives', is from the text of a speech delivered by Sri B. N. Chakravarty, Governor of Haryana, on March 1, 1969 in inaugurating the annual joint celebrations at the Ramakrishna Mission, Chan-

digarh. In this speech Sri Chakravarty tries to outline the broad lessons one can draw from the lives of these three great teachers.

Dr. J. N. Tandon, M.A., LL.B., Ph.D., Associate Professor of English, Agra College, Agra, brings out in relief the perennial foundations of Indian culture.

Swami Harshananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, gives a brief account of the life and work of Sri Vedānta Deśika, philosopher, poet and saint.

Mrs. Nancy Pope Mayorga is a professional free lance writer and a member of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, at Santa Barbara, U.S.A. In writing on 'What Inspires me most in Holy Mother's Life' Mrs. Mayorga gains for herself the all-important discovery that it is easy to meet the Mother in the heart and love her as mother, for you are convinced she is indeed your mother.

Anna Nylund in her writing captioned 'Any Meaning in Campus Turmoils?' brings to bear a fresh insight on a world problem which has baffled many a Government, and not a few of thinker-educationalists.

## HOMAGE TO THE LATE PRESIDENT ZAKIR HUSAIN OF INDIA

Dr. Zakir Husain, President of India died at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, at 11-20 a.m. on May 3, 1969. He was seventy two.

Death is not only a leveller but also a revealer. This was especially felt in India with the death of President Zakir

Husain. As if a fabulously great rose has suddenly blossomed and the country was filled with its fragrance, soft but powerful.

Many of his countrymen had been the witness of the many qualities of his head and heart as he steadily rose on the life's spiral of attainments. Yet it was only

when death came with the suddenness of a lightning, that the summation of those impressions was made possible in a manner creative and fruitful.

As tributes from Indian leaders of thought and action, and those from overseas poured in filling the pages of newspapers and as people emerged in tears out of the big hall where he was lying in state, one wondered if the President knew while living how highly venerated and well beloved a person he was.

Funeral orations often tend to be a wordy and routine affair. But one felt as one listened to the tributes paid to Zakir Sahib, that everyone spoke from the heart. These words were in fact responsive echoes to the man's sincerity of purpose, who had just passed.

Scriptures of all the religions practised in India were intoned by the votaries of respective faiths by the side of his death bed. Leaders of differing political parties forgot all their differences as they paid homage to the departed leader in one voice. Why were people impelled to do so? For the simple reason that in his inner life Zakir Sahib had transcended the

exclusiveness of faith, religious and political.

His death revealed particularly that he personified an integrating power which India needed and valued so much at this moment. The impact and importance of his quiet work were especially felt as death snatched him away.

Death provided the millions a peep into the sanctuary of his home life of a *Sad-grhastha*, a noble householder, who had disciplined his life into a harmony of love, faith, good conduct, refinement and simplicity.

A man of deep learning and noble character, a lover of flowers and fossils alike, a zealous educationist and a gentleman, a friend of low and high, a lover of God and a brave thinker, rooted in tradition and yet modern in outlook, a soul of courtesy and a dependable guide—Dr. Zakir Husain in dying, gave himself to India in a special manner as the fulfilment of a promise eloquently made in the national struggle for independence and the Indian Constitution.

India and the world would again surely like to see the like of him in qualities of head and heart as the President of India.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE SAGE OF SALISBURY: THOMAS CHUBB (1679—1747)** By T. L. BUSHELL, Philosophical Library, 15 East 40 Street, New York, 1967, pages 159, Price \$ 5.00.

Thomas Chubb is a nearly forgotten name today. A glover by trade and a thinker of the enlightenment, Chubb's lifelong mission was to establish man in the conditions of freedom and responsibility. The gentle, wisely tolerant and fair-minded sage of Salisbury had no status of birth or riches; nor was he an academic philosopher. Yet by sheer force of character and understanding he became one of the powerful protagonists of the spirit of rational-historical enquiry in the eighteenth cen-

ture England. But curiously, perhaps because he was a commoner surrounded throughout his life by working class conditions, we have become accustomed to bypass him and to think of the enlightenment exclusively as an activity of the professional aristocrats. Dr. T. L. Bushell is keenly aware of this unfortunate position and shows in his book under review that to remember Chubb is indeed a matter of some importance; and Chubb's thoughts and works have relevance even today. He has drawn materials from various sources, mainly from the works of Chubb himself, and analyzes systematically Chubb's views on ethics, society and religion. Although Chubb's thoughts

on morality and society are remarkable and penetrating no doubt, his approach to the question of religion is perhaps daring. His remarks on Bible and Jesus, for instance, is something which many of us will not dare pronounce even today. But Chubb did have the courage to pronounce it publicly more than two hundred years ago.

Dr. Bushell, therefore, must be congratulated for the exceptional care and ability with which he has brought back to us one of the most powerful minds of the enlightenment that Thomas Chubb was.

PROF. A. K. BANERJEE

THE INDIAN SPIRIT BY K. SATCHIDANANDA MURTY, ANDHRA UNIVERSITY PRESS, WALT AIR, 1965, pp. 296, Price Rs. 10/-.

Spread over eight sections this book offers a study of some aspects of the Indian mind. Mr. K. Satchidananda Murty claims that his is a humanistic approach to Indian culture. In doing this, he tries to correct some of the errors found in the western writings about India. But unfortunately the free use of the first personal pronoun in the singular does not fall in line with the Indian spirit and it is jarring on the ears.

India, it is claimed, is not specially spiritual; and the basic Hindu scriptures are not opposed to progress and prosperity. The second chapter offers a good critical examination of the views of de Riencourt. The exposition of the Hindu ethos is good, though the author is eager to catch up with the prevailing modern temper of a secular democracy.

The Greek image of Indian philosophy does scant justice to the observations of Apollonius as recorded by Philostratus. Chapters five and six are slightly philosophical.

Though the author calls them chapters, the book has eight essays, each being independent of the rest. The book as a whole would have been a better one devoted to the past and the present of Hindu culture, if only the author tried to present it in an objective manner. Instead, the *I* does damage the value of the book.

P. S. SASTRI

DAY BY DAY WITH BHAGAVAN FROM A DIARY OF A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR. Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, S. India pp. 397, Price Rs. 10/-.

Modelled on the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, this book sets out the interviews which the devotees had with Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvannamalai during the period 1945 to 1947. Most

of the pages were read out to Bhagavan and had his approval. The appeal of a book like this, as of the *Gospel* is that it constitutes the spiritual testament of a great saint and preserves his teachings in print for the benefit of thousands of earnest seekers who did not have the good fortune to meet him face to face and receive his instructions direct from his lips. Yet, the pages preserve the directness and intimacy of the conversations and have succeeded in recreating the aroma of the *asrama* atmosphere. The Conversations touch Hindu religion and philosophy at diverse points and also lead the aspirant on to heights of spiritual comprehension in a manner that is unique.

PROF. P. SANKARANARAYANAN

THE MAHARSHI AND HIS MESSAGE BY PAUL BRUNTON: T. N. Venkataraman, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, South India, 1968, pp. 78, Price Rs. 3/-.

This book is a reprint of three chapters of Paul Brunton's *A Search in Secret India*. They deal with the author's encounter with Sri Ramana Maharshi, the great saint and philosopher whom the author accosts as 'this last descendant of India's Rishis'.

This is an elevating book.

PROF. P. SANKARANARAYANAN

## HINDI

GITA MATA KI GOD MEN BY 'SIKAR', Sri Gita Ashrama, Vol. II, Part I. Delhi Cantt. Pages: 152 plus 37; Price Rs. 2.00.

The letters written by the author to his relatives and subsequently published in the weekly *Loka-Seva* have been collected and brought out in four volumes, the first three volumes having two parts each. The book under review is the first part of the II Volume and like the other volumes deals with various spiritual topics, some of them occurring in the Gita. Written in simple languages, the book is of great utility to common people engaged in the activities of the world, but who have spiritual inclinations and who want satisfying and logical answers to their spiritual questions. Each essay answers some vital problems of Hindu Religion and Culture and gives suggestions on practical spirituality. If some of the minor mistakes in language and expression are corrected and if avoidable references to political personality are omitted (e.g. Page 5—President to God, Page 55 etc.) the value of the book will increase. The book has a great educative value.

SWAMI BHAKTANANDA

## NEWS AND REPORTS

ADVAITA ASHRAMA

MAYAVATI, ALMORA, U.P.

REPORT FOR 1967-68.

Under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda, this Ashrama was founded in 1899 by two of his English disciples, Capt. J. H. Sevier and Mrs. Sevier. The monastery is situated in the solitude of the Himalayan forests, and commands a magnificent view of the snow-range.

During 1967-68, the editorial office of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, now in its 73rd year, functioned at Mayavati as usual. The Ashrama's Library had more than 7,500 books. Its Charitable Hospital with 23 beds treated 583 indoor and 15,487 outdoor cases of which 9,451 were new.

*Branch:* The Ashrama has a Branch at 5, Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta 14. The Publication Department housed here reprinted 16 books this year. The *Prabuddha Bharata* was published and despatched from there as usual. For the general public, weekly religious classes numbering 49 with an average attendance of 150 were conducted in the auditorium of the Branch; bhajans were also held. Besides these, members of the Ashrama gave lectures and discourses from time to time in different parts of West Bengal, Bihar, U.P., Assam etc. The Library and Reading Room had 7,530 books, 84 magazines, and 5 newspapers. During the year under review, it had 194 borrowers and 9,337 books were lent. Average daily attendance at the Reading Room was 27.

*Charities and Grants:* According to the terms of the will of the late Upendra Narayan Deb, as modified by the order of the court, the Advaita Ashrama, besides preaching the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, has to grant annuities to his legatees, dole out cereals, cloth, cash etc. to the poor and grant money to some charitable institutions. The average number of poor people receiving weekly doles in 1967-68 was 225. The annuities amounting to Rs. 420/- were paid to the legatees and Rs. 1,977/- were given as grants to philanthropic institutions of various types. In addition, 156 pieces of dhotis and saris, 95 pieces of cotton blankets and 268 pieces of garments were distributed among 255 recipients.

*Our Needs:* The Hospital at Mayavati and the Library in Calcutta need funds for improvement and additions. Moreover, if sufficient funds are

forthcoming, we can make available our publications at cheaper rates.

Contributions, however small, towards any of the above objects, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the President, Advaita Ashrama, P.O. Mayavati (Almora) U.P. or by the Manager, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION TUBERCULOSIS SANATORIUM

P.O. Ramakrishna Sanatorium, Ranchi, Bihar.

REPORT FOR 1967-68

Attention of all charitably disposed persons is drawn to the work of the Ramakrishna Mission T. B. Sanatorium, Ranchi. This Sanatorium was started in 1951 with only 32 beds. It has now grown into a well-equipped Sanatorium of 250 beds, having all facilities necessary for the diagnosis and treatment of Tuberculosis patients including major chest surgery. There is also a Rehabilitation Centre where ex-patients are given training in various departments of the Sanatorium, such as Laboratory, X-Ray Department, Nursing, Stores, Office, Power House, Water Works, Poultry Farm, Tailoring Department etc.

During the year 1967-68, 578 patients were treated of these 333 were discharged. 76 Surgical Operations were performed, including 1 pneumonectomy, 6 lobectomy, 60 thoracoplasty. 86 poor T. B. patients were treated free of all charges and 14 at concession rates in the In-patients' Department, with the help of the donations, subscriptions and the income derived from the endowments and estates at Calcutta and Patna. 505 T. B. patients and 917 patients suffering from other diseases were also given free medical advice and treatment in the Out-patients' Department. 145 beds were maintained free by different organisations and agencies. 35 ex-patients were accommodated in the After-care Colony & Rehabilitation Centre. Most of them were employed in the Sanatorium after completing their training in various departments.

During 1967-68, the income was Rs. 7,52,173-86 P. and the expenditure Rs. 8,73,334-31 P., resulting in a deficit of Rs. 1,21,160-45 P. The yearly per capita expenditure which had been Rs. 3,469-19 P. in 1965-66 rose to Rs. 3,866-75 P. in 1967-68.

This discouraging state of the institution's financial position has been causing deep concern.