



Prabuddha Bharata

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

THE UNIVERSAL CALL OF RELIGIONS

Be with us when we stray afar!
Be with us when our home is nigh!
Protect us with Thy help both near and far away!
Protect us ever with Thy help!

R̥g-Veda 1.129.9

Who is there for a protector other than Thyself,
O Wise Lord, Right and Best Thought!

Yasna 50.1

Gladness will spring up within me, and, so rejoicing, all my frame will be at peace. I shall experience a blissful feeling of content; and in that bliss, my heart will be at rest.

Mahāvagga 8.15.13

Show me Thy ways, O Lord. Teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth; and teach me. For, Thou art the God of my salvation.

Psalms 25.4.5

O, our Lord, suffer not our hearts to go astray after that Thou hast once guided us! And give us mercy from before Thee; for, verily, Thou art He who giveth.

Koran 3.6

VIVEKANANDA'S WORLD MISSION AS A WAVE OF THE FUTURE

ONWARD FOR EVER!

Think of the blessedness of that life from which all carnality has vanished, which can look upon every woman with that love and reverence when every woman's face becomes transfigured, and only the face of the Divine Mother, the Blissful One, the Protectress of the human race, shines upon it! That is what we want. Do you mean to say that the divinity back of a woman can ever be cheated? It never was and never will be. It always asserts itself. Unfailingly it detects fraud, it detects hypocrisy, unerringly it feels the warmth of truth, the light of spirituality, the holiness of purity. Such purity is absolutely necessary if real spirituality is to be attained.



I

Sri Ramakrishna left with Vivekananda a simple mandate : to remove the miseries of human beings and bring them knowledge. The dynamics of the ways Vivekananda translated the mandate of his Master into his world-wide mission has to this day stayed beyond the scope of any one historian's comprehensive study and that for good reasons. These good reasons are: Vivekananda worked in two hemispheres, eastern and western ; in two times, present and future ; and on levels physical, mental and spiritual. What is more, his thoughts and deeds are in the operational process in vast areas of the world involving the lives and aspirations of millions and millions of people.

What is already recorded in history as his deeds and is being recorded every succeeding day is stupendous by any count. But what future will unfold could be even more amazing. A study in depth of certain human trends of today will reveal Vivekananda to be more a wave of the future than of the past.

Speaking of Vivekananda's work for India, a very astute political leader of India who is well-known for his non-sentimental insight into human affairs, Sri C. Rajagopalachari said :

'Swami Vivekananda saved Hinduism and saved India. But for him we would have lost our religion and would not have gained our freedom. We therefore owe everything to Swami Vivekananda. May his faith, his courage, and his wisdom ever inspire us so that we may keep safe the treasures we have received from him!'¹

This 'owing everything to Vivekananda'

¹ Vide : *Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume*, 1963.

might mean an accountancy with the past. True, it is a statement of fact. But this fact continues to unfold itself with a dash on the expanding shores of the future. The revolutionary constructive programmes Vivekananda gave to the nation have already become articles of the Constitution of the country. The voltage of his thoughts was so tremendous that men and women arose by millions to give shape of action to his thoughts, and millions more continue to rise.

Vivekananda became not only the focal point of renaissance in religion, but he set in motion creative elan of great power which roused the whole nation to dare and do in diverse fields of worthwhile aspirations.

He made the transcendental religion responsive to human needs and human needs answerable to the Highest. He brought the life-stream of India out of the shell of ages and flung it across the mighty currents of human civilization. A man of God, a Brahmajñāni though, he prescribed for India 'subdued materialism', study of the sciences and judicious industrialisation. He gave back to Indians their potential glory and taught ways of making that glory manifest.

Sri Aurobindo wrote :

"The going forth of Vivekananda, marked by the Master as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer."²

It was literally true in that the nationals of the ruling country became as his disciples, the most dedicated servants of the colony. It was a conquest which defeated none but uplifted everybody; for Vivekananda worked through awakening the Highest in everybody.

Today thousands keep on crossing over the bridge of understanding Vivekananda

built between the East and West. This bridge building was accomplished without any earthly material, by pure soul-force. Over the ways of understanding he opened, a new kind of human commerce grew.

All these and many more you could count as the waves of the past with no doubt relevance for the future. But we are not referring to this as the wave of the future. We are referring to something infinitely more significant for the survival and augmentation of entire mankind.

II

Vivekananda in effect taught that the problems of India and the world issued from an imbalance. In India the imbalance originated from the fact that here the attained control over inner nature superseded the control over outer nature. In India people knew how to control the mind or realize Brahman, but did not know how to make a pin, or have food for all. Vivekananda, therefore, welcomed science and socialism for India but he warned against the limitations and binding effects of both in unmistakable terms. In India of today, there is, however, little awareness of how these two deities could become devourers of their own votaries. Having foreseen this clearly, Vivekananda taught that true emancipation of man for which alone he worked could be brought about in this new age by becoming a new kind of human beings through a new kind of discipline, viz. by being truly scientific and spiritual simultaneously. Though Vivekananda welcomed socialism he said it was only half a bread. Some recent occurrences in the world scene have proved to the hilt how true he was. The erstwhile 'white-man's burden' through undergoing a strange alchemy is becoming 'socialism's responsibility'! More pernicious chains than ever known before are being forged to enslave humanity. Socialism without a foundation

² Vide: *Karmayogin*, 12th Āṣāḍ, 1316.

in spiritual commitment could become the worst engine of tyranny. So he himself undertook the task of flooding the world with spiritual ideas.

We are today going scientific and socialistic, and with all this we can straight walk into the prison house of materialism unless we constantly work for the spiritual emancipation of man also. A whole cycle of history may have to be spinning the human destiny before mankind fully realizes the inadequacy of a mere 'half-a-bread' socialism without spiritual commitment, material well-being without *mokṣa*-mindedness. Vivekananda dared to say that man needs the full bread. Revolutions which are yet in the womb of the future will show how much thought-work Vivekananda had kept done for man in the unreckoned anti-chamber of time. Even today politicians do not yet venture to take note of the inadequacies of the socialist doctrine. Yet in their hearts millions seem to know that one person knew and saw all this as an open book and told them what all to do about this. If millions and millions of Indian people and many from across the oceans are today busy erecting a new place of pilgrimage at the southernmost tip of India where the breakers of three oceans have a perpetual power-play, it is not only as a homage to what Vivekananda did in the past for them, but more so to what Vivekananda means to them in the unborn future.

III

It is a staggering irony that divided loyalties to fractional realities keep mankind always locked in opposing factions of warring ideas and actions, making the totality of human efforts look like an enthusiastic exercise in futility. How can man be liberated from this wasteful enslavement to situations in which he, of necessity, works against himself has been always a

question which history keeps on carrying over to future for being answered.

But what is needed always is not a more complicated and more sophisticated formulation of the question, but a simple understandable answer which will make sense for most of us, who are responsive to fact and reason.

This need is wonderfully fulfilled in Vivekananda's life and work, in what may be called, a galvanizing manner.

Vivekananda's personal genius enfolded within itself abundant solvents across traditionally accepted conflicting situations of life. This makes his life and message so meaningful for the future. For if there is to be extension of human civilization in any creative sense, it must be through getting opposites reconciled and irreconcilables integrated in a super abundant whole. Some one had to show us how this could be done before we were persuaded to believe that it really could be done.

Vivekananda demonstrated through his personal living that it is entirely possible to resolve within oneself the conflicts between past and present, head and heart, *bhakti* and *jñāna*, karma and yoga, east and west, science and religion, the individual and the collective, materialism and spirituality, here and hereafter.

This demonstrated compatibility in depth of apparent opposites on the surface has already started making possible the saving of humanity from periodic colossal historic wastages. In fighting within religions and fighting it out with other faiths have really been rendered superfluous.

The pattern of manhood Swamiji cultivated in himself was inwardly nurtured by the power and plenty of his experiential knowledge of the unity of existence, beyond time, space and causation. Thus while staying very much a man of his times and though firmly rooted in the past, he became essentially a man of the future.

A man of religion fundamentally, he became the most enthusiastic advocate for the proper cultivation of the sciences.

A renouncer of the world though, he literally wore himself off in the service of the world. In his life renunciation and service not only went together but made new meaning for all concerned, renouncers and non-renouncers alike.

In his life East and West met most purposively to give and take whatever was beneficial for each other in most honourable terms.

He organized monasticism in a new way with augmented meaning for the future and he accepted socialism as a way to the new.

He showed the way of removing the inherent conflict between personal advancement and collective good. Without sacrificing the uniqueness of the individual or excellence of the person, he fully responded to the massive needs of the masses. And he showed that the way was one of levelling up and not of levelling down.

The extended meanings he imparted to ancient institutions and the revolutionary spontaneity with which he accepted the new made his teachings relevant across passions of times and aspirations of ages.

To crown everything he did, he personified such an explosion of love for all that in all future all mankind will like to possess it for themselves. Thus the relevancy of what Vivekananda was, did and said, goes on adding unto itself, and in this sense he is indeed more a wave of the future than of the past.

IV

Vivekananda came to the West in obedience to the directions of the Divine. Readers of his biography know this fact. It was the part of his mission of removing miseries of human beings and bringing them knowledge.

Vivekananda's going to the West and working in the midst of the western people

during the most precious part of his ministry was so to say an actualization of divine intervention in the history of the western man. As far as we know, no Brahmajñāni of his type had ever walked on the soil between the Atlantic and the Pacific in America. Besides, he was the chosen messenger of the Lord manifest in the world.

These facts have gone into the history of the western man with all their implications. If it is sure that tomorrow you are going to witness the rising sun, you may be equally sure that what Vivekananda did for the West is going to unfold itself in a most beneficent manner.

It is true that there has yet to be a full recognition of Vivekananda's services to the West by the western leaders of thought. Notwithstanding that, his ministry has been all the time leavening in depth the essential religious thinking and also the spiritual life of those who have been seeking an inspiration which is unafraid of truth and can show the path to illumination.

Vivekananda, contrary to common notion, did not have an easy walk over in America. After the initial success at the Parliament of Religions he had to march like a benign warrior through organized and powerful opposition. He knew his mission, which was nothing less than regeneration of entire mankind and he could not permit human follies to claim much of his attention.

Marie Louise Burke, the famous American researcher on Vivekananda's life in America writes:

'Almost a whole nation had barked after Swamiji, but he stood on unperturbed, chastening where it was necessary with one or two well-directed blows, awakening and quickening the minds of thousands, and bestowing his blessings upon friends and foes alike. Both America and Swamiji had changed from a year and a half's contact with each other. The eyes of the country have been opened to a new vista of thought, and the living seed of spirituality had been firmly planted in the souls of the people, where

it would inevitably grow. Swamiji himself had developed and given form to many of his ideas, he had learned the need of the West for the philosophy of Vedanta and he had seen how that philosophy could be applied to every problem of modern man. He was now ready to nurture the seed he had planted into a sturdy tree whose roots would strike deep and whose branches would give shelter to the world.’³

Elsewhere the same author writes :

‘... during his travels he was consciously or unconsciously, fulfilling the function of a divine prophet to America—scattering seeds of spirituality wherever he went and bestowing his blessings upon innumerable men and women. As he himself later wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda, “I am careering all over the country. Wherever the seed of his power will fall, there it will fructify—be it today, or in a hundred years.”’⁴

More than even the growing Vedanta movement in the West the effect of Swamiji’s spiritual ministry is more discernible in what has been happening to Christianity as a religion.

The West today is in the throes of a great religious ferment. Pope John’s Ecumenical Council, honest-to-God religious thinking in the Anglican Church, rejection by the new generation of Catholic priests some of the cherished dogmas like infallibility of the Pope, original sin, ‘pining for heaven’, avant-garde thinking in the Fourth World Council of Churches at Upasala, and many other signs will indicate that the whole religion of Christianity is seeking a renewal from within in order to tide over the crisis of irrelevancy forced on it by the developing empirical sciences and find an adequacy of faith commensurate with the demands of an age of science.

Exactly seventy-five years after Swami Vivekananda’s spiritual ministry to huma-

nity through the Parliament of Religions at Chicago a Symposium was held on September 15, 1968 in commemoration of that historic event. From what Father Campbell, a Catholic Professor of Theology, DePaul University, Chicago said, we can have some idea how deeply and in what a far-reaching manner Vivekananda’s work and thought have been influencing the Western religious thinking. Referring to the afore-said ferment in western religious thinking what he chose to call ‘possibly the worst crisis in Christianity’, Father Campbell said :

‘I know Swami Vivekananda, the great Swami who spoke here in Chicago seventy-five years ago at the first Parliament of Religions would himself look with favour on most of these trends in the direction of humanistic Christianity, because one of his sayings was “Don’t be concerned about doctrines or dogma or church or temples”, and liberal Christians echo those sentiments one hundred per cent. Also Swami Vivekananda said that formerly in the old religions the atheist was the man who did not believe in God and he said that now in the new religion we call an atheist a man who does not believe in himself and in mankind, and, once again, this attitude would be echoed wholeheartedly by the humanistic, the modernistic, Christian approach. Although Swami Vivekananda would not endorse all the attitudes of the new humanistic Christianity, perhaps the moral code he would not endorse one hundred per cent, still I think he would be in favour of this trend. Especially because it seems to be making more likely the development of the oneness of religions for which he was hoping. Ecumenism, for example flourishes among liberal Christians. ...

‘For this reason, I think this trend in the direction of humanism would be applauded by Swami Vivekananda were he here today, because it does seem to be breaking down to a large extent, previous divisions between religions and leading conceivably to one world religion in the future.’⁵

Swami Vivekananda’s ministry to the West is more fundamental than its effect

³ Vide : *Swami Vivekananda in America*, : *New Discoveries*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, 1958. p. 565.

⁴ Ibid. p. 566.

⁵ Vide : Report published in the *Prabuddha Bharata*, December 1968.

as religious ferment would indicate. He dowered the West with the solvent of the problems that were yet to come to the reckoning of the people. That is how the 'divine prophet of America' worked for the western man.

The western problems of living that have been exasperating the thinkers of the technologically advanced affluent countries of the world, also, issue from an imbalance. This imbalance issues from the fact that in the West man's control over outer nature has far superseded the control over the inner nature of man. Western civilization could have no creative and forward looking future unless this imbalance could be corrected. Vivekananda's preaching of Vedanta and yoga to the West was directly addressed to this desideratum in depth of the Western civilization, about which thinkers have of late started becoming aware.

The greatest need was to hold the whole life-process in perspective and correlate every effort of living human beings to the movement towards ultimate freedom and order society accordingly. Therefore, Vivekananda taught that the 'the goal was to be free'. If we become more and more bound to senses and matter through advancement, then our civilization has failed as far as we are concerned, and it calls for inner revolution for the sake of redemption of man.

Vivekananda's teachings set in motion those forces which could eventually bring in the western civilization the needed qualitative changes. So he preached Vedanta and Yoga. Vedanta conceptualizes reality in terms acceptable to the scientifically-minded West and Yoga provides the know-how of being free.

V

The East needed to be shown the way to freedom from one kind of bondage, the West from bondage of another kind. This

colossus of the spirit whom we have known as Vivekananda spanned the whole world by his love and showed to entire mankind how from their respective situations of bondages human beings from both the hemispheres could march in freedom to self-fulfilment in illumination, which alone could make sense and meaning for all our strivings in life.

The tragedy of the modern times is that the more socialistic and scientific the world grows, the more specialized becomes the insectification of man. Vivekananda's revolution is against this desecration of man, minimization of man in the name of helping him. His is the gospel of total maximization of man, complete divinization of man, of never lowering the ideal but of lifting the world there. So he taught: 'Always hold on to the Highest', 'never forget the glory of man', who is identical with the Supreme Spirit.

Revolutions have been fought and are being fought today by holding man in his periphery without any cognizance of man in his essentials, depths and heights. Such revolutions always call for other revolutions for correcting the initial inexorable mistakes. Thus rolls on the awesome fire ball of revolution through the corridors of history burning and breaking, smothering and grinding fine those very people who were expected to be served.

Vivekananda went forth in the world and history with his most daring and challenging gospel of holding man in his highest in essence, and worked for opening up of those forces inside and outside man which would be conducive to the manifestation of the Highest in man for the attainment of self-fulfilment. There is no staying of this revolution which today lubricates all the higher aspirations of mankind.

Failing and faltering man was never upheld so valiantly even unto the last as did Vivekananda. This indeed was the man-

date of his Master. Unless through everything that is done and not done, Siva is progressively called forth within the Jiva, that revolution will have failed. The ultimate Jiva-Siva equation is not a pious tranquilizer for a disturbed theologian but the detonator of reality in the relative world.

This was how Vivekananda took 'the world between his two hands', in the words of Sri Aurobindo, who also said that after taking the world between his two hands Vivekananda would 'change it'. Deep down in the consciousness of homo sapiens this work of changing has been gathering momentum. The freedom movements all over the world which is the outcome of the

authentic movement of the human soul, is one proof of the work going on. But this is a millennial work in which many mighty souls will be joining down the ages.

Much of this part of Vivekananda's work remains yet to be deciphered in the yet unwritten pages of the history of future. But he was fully aware of this and therefore he sang so prophetically in his poem 'The Fourth of July':

'Move on, O Lord, in Thy resistless path
Till Thy high noon o'erspreads the world,
Till every land reflects Thy light,
Till men and women, with uplifted head,
Behold their shackles broken, and
Know, in springing joy, their life renewed!'

This influence being in its nature gentle, would have to wait for a fortunate combination of circumstances, to go out of the country into other lands, though it never ceased to work within the limits of its native land. ... The very same circumstances have presented themselves once more before us. The English high-roads over land and sea and the wonderful power manifested by the inhabitants of that little island have once more brought India in contact with the rest of the world, and the same work has already begun. Mark my words, this is but the small beginning, big things are to follow; what the result of the present work outside India will be I cannot exactly state, but this I know for certain, that millions, I say deliberately, millions in every civilized land are waiting for the message that will save them from the hideous abyss of materialism into which modern money-worship is driving them headlong, and many of the leaders of the new social movements have already discovered that Vedanta in its highest form can alone spiritualize their social aspirations.

Swami Vivekananda

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Kankhal
10.6.1912

Dear Sri—

I am glad to receive your letter today after a long time.

... You must be having holy company. Try to cultivate the company of the One who is within as the essence of existence more than with anybody else. However, the outer holy company is also needed—the Lord Himself will provide for that. But one has to be deeply and sincerely prayerful from within. Be intensely prayerful. The Lord will protect you; have no fear. The work which you have on hand now, do that very work perfectly. When He dispenses differently, then again you will be obeying the command of the Lord Himself.

Cultivate the habit of witnessing in every act the Lord's will and power. By doing so you will be freed from all worries. Of course, in leisure you will devote yourself to study and meditation.

Your aspiration for cultivating knowledge is laudable; this surely will do you good.

My health continues as before... With my best wishes and love,

Sri Turiyananda

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Kankhal
5.5.1912

Dear Sri—

I have duly received your letter of the 28th April. As regards Vedānta : Upaniṣad, Gītā and the Śārīraka Bhāṣya alone constitute what is known as *Prasthānatraya*. One needs to be thoroughly conversant with this. Hence there are a large number of books on the subject. It is difficult to study all of them. *Panchadaśī*, *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, *Viveka Chudāmani*—these treatises are also very famous. By studying *Panchadaśī* thoroughly one can have a good grasp of the basic tenets of Vedānta of the non-dualistic school.

Above all one needs to practise spiritual disciplines. Realization of the truths taught in Vedānta is the main objective. And this depends on *sādhanā* (practice of spiritual disciplines). And in this the study of the scriptures is helpful—that's all.

Please convey my loving greeting to Te— and Ra—. With love,

Sri Turiyananda



CROWNING ACT OF COMPASSION—
ADORATION

Knowledge is power; love is no less. When love and knowledge of the right kind combine and harmonize, the result is something marvellous, miraculous. It is the elixir of life and philosopher's stone compounded into one. It enlivens and ennobles, delights and divinizes all that come into its field and fold. It stirs up compassion in the heart, invests compassion with reverence, and imparts dignity to service. It reveals itself in unconditional giving and service, it is the awakening of wisdom without disturbing faith.

Of this phenomenon Swami Vivekananda's life is a remarkable illustration, specially one of its closing episodes.

It is the year 1901. He is at Belur Math, in the monastery he founded for upliftment of humanity, inspiring people to grow in wisdom and love, uniting knowledge with dedicated service. He is the world-renowned Swamiji, to touch whose feet is considered a privilege and a blessing by many in the East as well as the West. Numerous are the visitors who wish to meet him to have his *darśan*.

One such batch of visitors, wealthy and aristocratic, arrives. But Swamiji excuses himself since he is busy otherwise, engaged in conversation with some others. Who are these 'others', so important?

Only a group of santal (tribal) labourers! No, not the influential representatives of powerful unions. Just ordinary day-labourers hired to work on the monastery grounds. Swamiji's interest is in talking to them—not as part of management-policy, not even as a forced duty. To him it is a relaxation and a pleasure; listening to their problems and suffering he becomes absorbed, his heart melting down in sympathy—an ecstasy of compassion, a kind of *bhāva samādhi* in its own way.

Among the santals, Keshta is the one of whom Swamiji is specially fond. But Keshta is a responsible worker, duty-conscious. So he remonstrates, 'O Swami, please don't come to us while we are at work. Talking and work cannot go on together at the same time; and if the supervising Swami catches us doing this, we don't want to be scolded for neglecting work.'

Swamiji appreciates Keshta's viewpoint. He assures he would take care of that aspect; he would speak to the other Swami and there would be no scoldings. So what can Keshta do but continue the dialogue. But he soon finds out that some of his narrations have moved Swamiji to tears; the Santal too has a heart and intervenes: 'Now, Swami, you must go. We can't bear to see you weeping. Enough of this.'

Swamiji's sympathy does not stop merely with words. With great love in his heart he

proposes to Keshta, 'I would very much like to invite you all for a "feast" and feed you. What do you say?' An unexpected reaction. Lowly Keshta does not jump at the offer; on the other hand he declines: 'Dear Father, we can't accept the invitation.' 'Why!' 'If we eat food cooked by you with salt, we shall lose caste!'

Imagine a miserable, low-caste labourer having the cheek to say this to the great Swamiji, who has condescended to ask them for a feast. What foolishness! What arrogance! What arrant superstition about salt! All this is the result of the pernicious caste-system. Anyway these benighted wretches don't deserve our generosity. ... Such would be the natural reaction of lesser people under the circumstances.

But Swamiji's greatness brings forth quite a different response. He does not dismiss Keshta's objections with scorn or ridicule; nor does he use his position to bully the Santal into submission. Keshta's views are accepted with sympathetic regard, as between two equals each with one's own dignity. The feast must take place, if it be on Keshta's own terms. If cooking with salt be the snag, then let there be no salt in

the cooking; let the salt be served separately.

With this Keshta has no option but to accept, and the result is a delicious feast, with Swamiji himself supervising all the arrangements. The guests are delighted and repeatedly exclaim, 'O Swami, where did you get such wonderful things? We have never tasted such fine things in our life!'

Even more delighted than the Santals is Swamiji himself. The giver feels more happy and thankful than the receiver. 'You are Nārāyaṇas (Gods); today by feeding you I have entertained the Lord Himself!' That is not just an impulsive sentiment, a passing impassioned feeling. It is a living experience which is revealed later, 'I actually saw the Lord Himself in them! How simple-hearted and guileless they are!'

That is loving, reverent service to the God-in-man, in the lowest and humblest, even 'unto this last'.

—EXPLORER.

Source: *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* by his Eastern and Western Disciples, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta.

CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE AND TRUTH

PROF. P. S. NAIDU

That science teaches ungodliness, and that it asserts that matter alone is real, that values are empty concepts, that what the sages and saints down the ages have experienced and proclaimed are but grand illusions and that educators should banish from the curriculum all that savours of the other world and an after life—these are the conclusions that we arrived at the close

of our discussion in the last article.¹ We also pointed out that science is directly and fully responsible not only for the deadly atomic weapons, but also for the perverse mentality behind the hand which dropped the bomb on innocent cities. We then

¹ 'Contemporary Science and Truth' *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXXIII, No. 9, September 1968, pp. 367-73.

raised the question : What is the remedy for the mental perversity caused by science? We now propose to outline the steps for nullifying the deadly influence of science on the human mind.

What are we to do with this science which is to blame for all the ills of the present day and for the deterioration of modern man's moral nature? We are not so narrow-minded as to suggest that science should be totally abandoned. The hall marks of Indian culture are catholicity and tolerance. There are certain elements of value in modern science which should be conserved. But these have been smothered by deleterious activities of the materialists. The question now is : How are the abiding and valuable elements in science to be rescued from the clutches of the materialists?

In the first instance, there should be a frank recognition of the limitations of science. Science is not the whole of truth ; it is not the whole of knowledge. It is rather just a curious branch of knowledge. Life would be a poor affair if there were not many things other than the so-called 'truths' of the sense world with which science is occupied. There are subtle and imperishable truths which sages and seers know with much greater certainty than the scientific man knows any of the limited 'laws' of science. The more scientific we make science, the more remote it becomes from all reality, and the more completely does it take on the character of assumed postulates which are hypothetical in essence.

Thus science is incapable of handling truth in its totality. After all, a scientific 'law' is just a pragmatic rule or regulation. If it fails to work in practice, it is unhesitatingly discarded by its authors. The history of science is replete with examples of 'truths' which, in course of time, turned out to be untruths. The road traversed by science is literally strewn with the corpses

of dead theories and principles once considered to be gospel truths. Expediency and present convenience are the norms of scientific generalizations. Pragmatism is the quintessence of the spirit of science and pragmatism as we know is 'neither flesh nor fish nor good red herring' so far as truth is concerned.

And now for ways and means of improving science and its teaching. Science is being taught and should be taught in the elementary school. But in teaching science, we must see to it that the seeds of ungodliness are not sown in young minds by the exaltation of brute matter and force. The best way of doing this is to impress on the tender minds, over and over again, that science is but incomplete, partial and unsatisfying knowledge of a very narrow part of just one aspect of man's experience. The best way by which the teacher could go about this task is (1) to show first of all *the purpose* of the phenomena studied by science, pointing out, at the same time, that science is incapable of revealing purpose, (2) then to deal with the purely scientific aspect of the topic on hand, declaring that science has only a very humble role to play in human knowledge as a mere *describer* of events in the grand scheme of Divine Creation, and (3) to revert to purpose in the cosmos and stress the need for recognizing the fact that science should invariably be supplemented by philosophy and corrected by religion in order that students' nature may be properly controlled and developed harmoniously.

Let us illustrate what we have said just now. The behaviour of water at 4°C and below, as it cools down, is a puzzle to the scientist. Physics very quietly dodges the problem. Why does cooling water suddenly start expanding from 4°C downwards? No positivistic and deterministic or mechanistic explanation is possible for this apparent 'defiance' of the so-called law

of science. But an explanation is easily and readily available if you look for the purpose which this *unscientific* behaviour of water serves in the vast scheme of Divine economy of Creation. There are hundreds of exceptions in the realm of concrete life to the abstract laws of science : the rise of sap against gravity, the inclination of the earth's axis, the dropping off of half of the number of chromosomes at the time of the conjunction of the ovum and the sperm, the giddy spiral dance of the electrons, and a few of these strange phenomena. The *purpose* of these should be explained to the young pupils who should be made to realize that science is not competent to deal with the whole of life and nature.

As the young learners proceed to the college stage of education then curriculum should be philosophically oriented. Science should, of course, be there, but science should be an adjunct to philosophical studies. The edifice of science should be built on the foundation of philosophy. All students of science should seek, as Jeans, Eddington, Whitehead, Alexis Carrel, Haldane and Kohler are seeking, the true func-

tion of science in its service to Philosophy and Religion.

The next higher branches of learning should be made accessible only to those who have a well-developed moral nature. Higher scientific knowledge, particularly research knowledge, should not be broadcast before all and sundry. Like the great sages of the old, the teacher of science should first test the moral character of his pupil and impart such knowledge as the latter is fit to receive. For knowledge (particularly scientific knowledge) is power, and power is a great corruptor of human nature unless held in check by moral and spiritual restraints.

Finally the highest reaches of science should not be made accessible to those who have any kind of attachment to the material world. Creative research should be undertaken only by those who have renounced the world and are beyond the control of the rulers of the material world.

Only thus, by spiritualizing science, can we rescue young men and women from the undesirable influences of current-day science. Only then will science be able to rise to the level of Ultimate Truth.

REALITY AND APPEARANCE IN ŚANKARA AND BRADLEY

DR. B. N. SINHA

Śaṅkarācārya (788-820), an eminent exponent of the Vedānta and the renowned founder of the Advaita Vedānta school of thought, propounded his profound philosophy after going through all bright and dark sides of the doctrines of earlier schools of Indian philosophy. Thus, his philosophy stands on a well-established foundation which makes it an ever-green tree in the garden of Indian philosophical specula-

tion. Radhakrishnan sums it up by saying:

'It is impossible to read Śaṅkara's writings, packed as they are with serious and subtle thinking, without being conscious that one is in contact with a mind of a very fine penetration and profound spirituality.'¹

¹ Dr. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 446

Yet, his whole philosophy can be expressed in one sentence, namely :

'*Brahma satyām jagannmithyā Jivobrahmaiva nāparah*' i.e. Brahman is the Ultimate Reality, the world is entirely false, and there is no difference between Jīva (soul) and Brahman. However, it is easier said than done to understand Śaṅkara's philosophy in this half verse. Through its help one can know essential ideas of his philosophy, which may, then, serve one as a search-light for entering into the vast land of his philosophical contemplation.

Śaṅkara postulates the necessary existence of reality for differentiating the real and unreal, because one cannot class anything as unreal unless he affirms the existence of the real.² It can be said that this world is imagined, yet simple logic states that nothing can be imagined without any basis for such an imagination; therefore, there must be some reality behind it and that reality is self-caused and self-sustained. This reality is Brahman, the Ultimate Reality. It is non-dual, because there is nothing similar to it nor is there anything different from it; it cannot be put in any class of logical categories, because it is beyond everything phenomenal, spatial, temporal and sensible.³ It envelops all causes and effects which are known respectively as *Sāmānyas* (universals) and *Viśeṣas* (conditions), because it is the great *Sāmānya*. But it cannot be regarded as a mass or a bundle of *Sāmānyas* and *Viśeṣas* or the great whole consisting of the different parts, because its nature is unitary.⁴ It pervades and penetrates the whole of universe, thus being known as ubiquitous, but it has no relation to any particular thing in space or time. Therefore it is said to be nowhere. It is the ultimate consciousness, and Jñāna is its essence, not its property.

It is absolute because it has no relation. It is *Nirguṇa* (unqualified), because it is supra-logical and transcendental. Moreover, whatever is qualified is objective but Brahman is never known as an object. It is eternal, because its perfection is not limited by time and space. It transcends all opposites, such as the finite and infinite, parts and whole, change and permanence, etc. It is beyond any positive description (*Anirvacanīya*), because it cannot be described by any finite mind;⁵ moreover any description would impose upon it certain limitation. Therefore a negative method is used to describe it, i.e. *Neti-Neti*, 'not this—not this'. It is called *Saccidānanda* (*Sat* = Existence, + *Cit* = Consciousness, + *Ānanda* = Bliss). But this description also conveys the negative meaning, in which *sat* means that it is not *asat* (non-existent); that *cit* is not *acit* (non-conscious); and that *Ānanda* is not *Duḥkha* (not bliss).

Thus, Brahman or the Ultimate Reality is omnipresent, omniscient, eternal, infinite, absolute, unqualified, indescribable and non-dual.

Brahman becomes *Īśvara* (God) when it reflects in *Maya* and it becomes *Jīva* when it reflects in *Avidyā*. *Īśvara* is *Saguṇa-Brahman* (Qualified Brahman) or *Apara-Brahman* (Lower Brahman). Being the personal aspect of Brahman, He is the highest and perfect personality as well as the highest appearance. He is unreal, but not for all. One who realizes the non-difference of *Jīva* (soul) and Brahman, knows Him to be unreal. He creates, sustains and destroys the world.

There is difference of opinion concerning *Maya* and *Avidyā*. Some of the later Advaitins as the followers of the *Bhāmātī* School of *Vācaspati*, teach that *Maya* is different from *Avidyā*. They say that *Maya* is positive in character, a cosmic

² *Brahma Sūtras* III. 2.22, Śaṅkara's commentary

³ *Ibid.* IV. 3.14; III. 2.22; II. 1.6

⁴ *Ibid.* I. 3.1

⁵ *Bhagavad Gītā*, XIII. 12, Śaṅkara's Commentary

power of projection, and made of *sattva* (real or existent), while *Avidyā* is negative individual ignorance and made of *sattva*, *rajas* (foulness; principle of motion) and *tamas* (darkness; the principle of inertia). *Avidyā* can be removed by obtaining *Jñāna* but the same is not true of *Maya*, because it is eternal. *Maya* is the condition of *Īśvara* while *Avidyā* is the condition of *Jiva*.

Others, like the followers of the *Vivaraṇa* school of *Prakāsātman*, including *Śāṅkara*, consider *Maya* and *Avidyā* as synonyms. They emphasize the difference between the two sides (functions) of *Maya* or *Avidyā*.⁶ The first which is called *Āvaraṇa* (concealment) is their negative side, because it conceals the reality. The second which is called *Vikṣepa* (projection), is the positive side, because it projects a wrong idea. A man seeing a rope has the illusion of seeing a snake and, consequently, is filled with fear. In this case, there is the primary concealment of the knowledge of a rope and the secondary projection of the false knowledge of a snake.

Maya is neither absolutely real like *Brahman*, nor completely false like the sky-flower. Neither is it regarded as identical with *Brahman* nor is it known as different from It. If it were identical then it would be the same as *Brahman*; if it were separate from It, the consciousness of this separateness would be a duality. It cannot be the material cause of the world, because it is not a substance. It is simply a process (*Vyāpāra*) of measuring the immeasurable and forming the formless. Thus it is a dividing force, and also a feature of *Saguna* *Brahman*. If one tries to establish a relation between *Maya* and *Brahman*, It (*Brahman*) becomes *Īśvara* and *Maya* becomes His energy which helps Him to produce this world. Therefore *Maya* is

identical with forms and names which constitute this world, and is similar to *prakṛti*.⁷

Maya is called *Avidyā*, because its nature is deceptive. *Avidyā* is false knowledge; therefore the appearance of *Brahman* is regarded as the world. It means this world is an appearance of Reality. It is not separate from *Brahman*,⁸ rather it is dependent upon *Brahman*. If it were independent, there would arise the same difficulty of dualism. There can be no relation between this world and *Brahman* because unreal cannot be related to real.⁹ One can say that the relation between the world and *Brahman* is similar to that of waves and sea, vessels and clay, branches and tree but the latter relations are those of parts to whole, while this world is not a part of *Brahman*. Therefore, this relation cannot be applicable to the world and *Brahman*.

Śāṅkara accepts the theory of *Vivarta* (appearance), but not that of *Pariṇāma* (transformation). The rope appears to be a snake, but the milk transforms itself into curd. *Brahman* also appears as the world. It does not transform Itself into the world. One may assume that *Brahman* transforms Itself into world, but then the question arises, whether *Brahman* changes Itself wholly or partly. If It changes as a whole, it means that *Brahman* exists as the world and then there is nothing apart from this world. If It changes only partly, it means that It is made of parts, and therefore cannot be absolute.¹⁰

The phenomenal world is always viewed by *Śāṅkara* as unreal. Therefore he likens it to *Rajju-sarpa* (rope-snake),

⁷ *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* IV. 10; *Gītā* VII. 4.

⁸ *Brahma Sūtras* II. 1.20, *Śāṅkara's* Commentary

⁹ *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* 7.

¹⁰ *Brahma Sūtras* II. 1.26; *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* VI. 19

⁶ *Dṛgdrśya Viveka* 13, 15.

Śukti-rajata (shell silver), *Maricyambhah* (mirage-water), etc. Its multiplicity of names and forms is just like that of things seen in dreams or like the double-moon seen by the man who has defective eyes.¹¹ But the highest appearance is *Īśvara*, under whom all other appearances, or un-reals follow in descending order. Radhakrishnan describes thus :

'Īśvara has less of reality than absolute being and the other objects represent an increasing deprivation of reality. At the bottom of the scale we get something which has no positive qualities to be deprived of, that from which nothing more can be taken away, which, in a word, is there, but is there as not-being, a nothingness which rises like a blank wall where reality ends.'¹²

But one can know the unreality in an ascending order. The knowledge of the snake in a rope is reality of illusory standpoint (*Prātibhāsika satya*) but once one knows the empirical reality (*Vyāvahārika satya*), the former Satya becomes unreal. In the same way, when one knows the absolute reality (*Pāramārthik satya*), the empirical knowledge becomes unreal.

II

F. H. Bradley (1846-1924) was the most original thinker of Great Britain at the turn of the century. His metaphysical thought has become one of the sources of the new British philosophy. He ranks very high among the Western Philosophers. Mayer summed up his estimate of Bradley in these words :

'The approach to philosophy and to the Absolute, Bradley suggested, is best illustrated through feeling, not through reason. Furthermore, he did not accept Green's fundamental category—that of relation. Rather he emphasised, the absolute must

transcend all plurality and be conceived in monistic terms. In describing the absolute he made it clear that it contains all appearances. The Absolute, however, can never be approached completely in our finite experience, for we think in terms of space, time, energy, matter and causality, which have only symbolic and approximate truth. The absolute he wrote includes all levels of life.'¹³

The centre of Bradley's philosophy is the distinction between 'reality as the subject of judgement, and the ideal content which judgement ascribes to it',¹⁴ i.e. the difference between Reality and Appearance. Therefore, his philosophy is divided into two parts; constructive i.e. the philosophy of reality and destructive i.e. the philosophy of appearance. Bradley starts with the destructive side and proceeds to the constructive one.

As he moves in the land of his metaphysical thinking, he refutes the principle of relation by which different categories seem to be united. A relation cannot connect two terms, because any such relation should be itself related first with the terms which it tries to relate, before connecting them, and in this way it will go ad infinitum. Thus Bradley concludes that 'a relational way of thought—any one which moves by the machinery of terms and relations—must give appearance and not truth'.¹⁵ He also repudiates one by one the theories of primary and secondary qualities, space and time, motion and changes, causation, activity, self and things-in-themselves, because they all deal with contradictions either of things or of ideas, which have been regarded by him as the

¹³ Frederick Mayer, *A History of Modern Philosophy*, p. 480.

¹⁴ Perry, R. B. (Webber and Perry), *History of Philosophy*, p. 544.

¹⁵ Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 28.

¹¹ *Gītā* XV, 4

¹² Dr. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 572.

characteristics of appearance. After criticising and commenting on all prior principles, he deduces that 'everything so far, which we have seen has turned out to be appearance'.¹⁶

The *aspect of pleasure and pain* is an appearance because it cannot be the substance of reality. Nothing can be its adjective and be dependent upon it because it cannot resolve other things (adjectives) into itself. Moreover pleasure and pain are abstract, thus being different from the concrete pleasant and painful; they also contradict each other as far as their characteristics are concerned. *Feeling* is appearance because it 'has a content, and this content is not consistent within itself, and such a discrepancy tends to destroy and break up the stage of feeling'.¹⁷ The *perceptual or theoretic aspect* has no special existence because it is found united with the practical one from which it is gradually separated. It is assumed to be completely different from (essence of) the object. Thus, it is considered 'as a something accidental and irrelevant'¹⁸ which causes it to be classed as appearance. The *practical aspect or attitude* is also an appearance due to its one-sidedness and insufficiency. Even though the will creates ideas as well as actual existence, it needs help from ideality and appearance, in order to have its beginning, and it establishes a kind of harmony which is always finite, unsuitable and incomplete. In the same way the *aesthetic attitude* is also an appearance because, 'beauty is not really immediate or independent, or harmonious in itself. And, attempting to satisfy these requirements, it must pass beyond its own character'.¹⁹

Appearance neither belongs to the extended, nor is it separate from it.²⁰ It 'consists in the looseness of content from existence; and, because of this self-estrangement, every finite aspect is called appearance'.²¹ Though every finite is an adjective of Reality, it is not real in itself. Appearance, neither singly nor collectively can be the Reality, but it exists, and that is why it belongs to Reality.²²

As far as *error and illusion* are concerned Bradley maintains that everything can be classed as non-existence and Reality, but error is such a dangerous and difficult subject that it cannot be assigned to either; therefore, it has no place for existence. It seems to be outside the experience of an individual. It is 'the same as false appearance, or...it is at any rate one kind of false appearance'.²³ It is identifiable with wrong inference and is comparable to a typical model. It relates itself with that which is quite different from it but its relation with its own reality is found loose. Therefore 'it is an appearance which not only appears, but is false'.²⁴ It is negated and ignored by reality because it is self-contradictory while reality is harmonious. It is the qualification of being self-contradictory. But it is partially true (when supplemented) and partially false. It can be changed into truth with the help of division and rearrangement though it (error as a partial truth) is necessary for the finite aspects of our incongruous life.

Illusion is that which causes conflicts between our experience both external and internal, and our own views, thus creating disorder, confusion and pain. In error our ideas are not found to be the same as reality while in illusion this difference,

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 114.

¹⁷ Ibid p. 407.

¹⁸ Ibid p. 408.

¹⁹ Ibid p. 412.

²⁰ Ibid p. 12.

²¹ Ibid p. 430.

²² Ibid pp. 430, 114.

²³ Ibid p. 165.

²⁴ Ibid p. 166.

between our ideas and reality, creates clash in our nature. Thus Bradley concludes that 'everything is error, but everything is not illusion.'²⁵ Error which has been shown as a necessary aspect of the finite life, and is expected to be present everywhere, is also, to some extent, the cause of illusion. Consequently illusion is the want of correspondence between an idea and its existence. Illusion occurs at numerous places but 'the whole is not an illusion.' In the life of the finite souls several 'disappointments and cheats' take place but 'in general and in the main, life is illusory cannot be rationally maintained.'²⁶

Turning now to *Reality*, Bradley holds that it is non-contradictory.²⁷ It is non-dual or One. If it were many in number, it would be relative. But it is absolute. It is one because it possesses a positive nature which is beyond all differences. This positive nature of Reality envelops all differences in one harmony and holds everything in the unity of the Real. Therefore it is also an individual. It is a concrete universal and a concrete unity in diversities. Reality is sentient experience, i.e. it is an experience which is actually felt. Nothing can be real without being sentient. Abstract thinking does not make the ideal reality felt. Thus, 'being and reality are (in brief) one thing with sentience.'²⁸ Reality or Absolute satisfies the whole being which consists of three faculties, i.e. feeling, willing and thinking. It means, it is the synthesis of all. Reality embraces all appearances or diversities. All worldly divisions merge into it. But a question arises: in what forms do the appearances exist in Reality? Are they merged in one or dwell separately?

²⁵ Ibid p. 486.

²⁶ Ibid p. 487.

²⁷ Ibid p. 120.

²⁸ Ibid p. 129.

'Every flame of passion, chaste or carnal, would still burn in the Absolute unquenched and unabridged'.²⁹

This quotation would appear to indicate that Absolute is only a bundle of contradictions because all contradictions stand unchanged in it. But, actually this is not the case; 'reality is not the sum of the things.' It is neither the total of appearances nor something without them. Reality (Absolute) cannot be realized fully to the last detail by finite minds. Thought, being an abstract thing, can give only the bare outline of the reality.

There is nothing absolutely real or absolutely appearance. The thing which contains more contradictions is more appearance and less real, while the thing which possesses fewer contradictions, is more real and less appearance. It means that the presence of reality and appearance is determined in certain degrees. 'The Absolute is its appearances, it really is all and everyone of them'³⁰ Though it is each and every one of appearances it is not one of them as such. The appearance cannot appear without reality nor can reality be known without appearance. Hence Bradley concludes that,

'The Absolute we may say in general, has no assets beyond appearances; and again, with appearances alone to its credit, the absolute would be bankrupt'.³¹

This shows the co-existing nature and co-operating relationship of Reality and appearance to each other as well as their interdependence.

III

A closer examination of Śaṅkara's and Bradley's philosophies brings out a number of affinities as well as of opposed views. They both agree that Reality is non-con-

²⁹ Ibid p. 152.

³⁰ Ibid p. 431.

³¹ Ibid p. 433.

tradictory, non-dual or One, absolute, beyond space and time, and beyond forms and features. Bradley maintains that Reality is concrete, not abstract. The word concrete, here, does not mean material or perceivable but rather it is not imagined. Therefore, Reality is not imagined. Śāṅkara holds the same view. Moreover they both state that Reality appears as the appearances which we perceive in the phenomenal world. According to Bradley the presence of Reality in appearances is in different degrees; thus the thing having less contradictions is more real while the one with more contradictions is less real. Therefore, appearances have different degrees of this presence. Śāṅkara also agrees that appearances have their degrees, because he declares Īśvara to be the highest appearance. Neither Śāṅkara nor Bradley accepts any degree scale in Reality. Though Śāṅkara has accepted Prātibhāsika satya, Vyāvahārika satya and Pāramārthik satya, only Pāramārthik satya is the Reality while the other two only appear to be real; they are not actually real. Brahman of Śāṅkara becomes Īśvara when it reflects in Maya, and Jīva when it reflects in Avidyā, while the Absolute or Reality of Bradley always remains absolute. Brahman cannot be known by thought, i.e. by finite mind, but as Bradley says one can by thought know the bare outline of Reality even if not the sum total of its details. Śāṅkara introduces the negative method to describe the ultimate Reality but Bradley remains silent on this possibility of approach.

Maya of Śāṅkara and appearance of Bradley seem to be analogous, because Maya has co-existence with Brahman just as appearance has with Reality. Maya is eternal and depends upon Brahman, similarly, appearance is eternal and depends

upon Reality. Śāṅkara's Brahman does not depend upon Maya as Bradley's reality does upon appearance when the latter says that 'reality without appearance would be nothing'. In the same way Avidyā of Śāṅkara seems to be similar to error of Bradley. Both affect the individual. But, while Avidyā is removed by Jñāna, error is 'made truth by division and rearrangement.' It means Avidyā or Ajñāna vanishes for him who obtains Jñāna, but error is transformed into truth by rearrangement. The same is the case with appearance and Reality. According to Bradley, *all* appearances merge into Reality, i.e. diversities or unrealities change into unity or Reality, while, according to Śāṅkara, they (appearances or diversities) do not change into Reality. Rather, they are destroyed as the darkness is destroyed in the presence of light. Hence a conclusion can be drawn that Śāṅkara and Bradley differ from each other more often than they agree.

On the whole, Śāṅkara is a metaphysician as well as a theologian because he thinks not only of Brahman, the Ultimate Reality but also of God who creates, sustains and destroys this world; while Bradley is simply a metaphysician who throws light on the Reality only. Śāṅkara's philosophy seems to be supra-rational and often goes beyond human understanding when it deals with the reflections of Brahman in Maya and Avidyā, destruction of Ajñāna in the presence of Jñāna, and so on, while Bradley's philosophy seems to be rational and within the limit of human understanding, because it suggests the transformation of errors into truth by rearrangement, etc. Moreover Śāṅkara does not go beyond the limits of Upaniṣads and Brahmasūtra, thus following the ancient tradition, while Bradley is not so particularly interested in the ancient tradition.



ILLUMINATING DIALOGUES FROM INDIAN LORE

GĀRGĪ AND YĀJNAVALKYA

SWAMI TADRUPANANDA

The country of Videha was ruled by the great King Janaka. Once he performed a sacrifice in which plenty of gifts were given away to scholars and pious men. Erudite Brahmins from Kuru and Panchāla, the famous seats of learning, were assembled there either on invitation or as spectators. At the sight of that large gathering of vedic scholars, a desire arose in the mind of King Janaka to know who was the most erudite among them. He had a thousand young cows with horns adorned with gold brought near the place where the sacrifice was being conducted. Then, addressing the assembly, he declared, 'Respected sires, let him, the greatest vedic scholar among you, take away these cows home.'

Silence prevailed for a time, for none dared to claim that supreme honour for himself. Then Yājñavalkya rose and ordered his disciple to drive the cows to his home. But then a number of Brahmins sprang to their feet and challenged Yājñavalkya's tacit declaration of his own supremacy in scholarship. Volleys of questions were shot at him, to all of which he gave convincing replies. When one by one the scholars were silenced, there rose Gārgī, the daughter of Vācaku, to engage Yājña-

valkya in a scholarly dispute. What followed is one of the most famous of upaniṣadic dialogues.

Gārgī: 'If all that is composed of earth is pervaded within and without by water, what pervades water?'

Yājñavalkya: 'Air pervades water.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades air?'

Yājñavalkya: 'Sky pervades air.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades the sky?'

Yājñavalkya: 'The worlds of the Gandharvas (celestial minstrels) pervade the sky.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades the worlds of the Gandharvas?'

Yājñavalkya: 'The worlds of the sun pervade the worlds of the Gandharvas.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades the worlds of the sun?'

Yājñavalkya: 'The worlds of the moon pervade those of the sun.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades the worlds of the moon?'

Yājñavalkya: 'The worlds of the stars pervade those of the moon.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades the worlds of the stars?'

Yāj. : 'The worlds of the Gods pervade those of the stars.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades the worlds of the Gods?'

Yāj. : 'The worlds of Indra pervade those of the Gods.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades the worlds of Indra?'

Yāj. : 'The worlds of Virat pervade those of Indra.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades the worlds of Virat?'

Yāj. : 'The worlds of Hiranyagarbha pervade those of Virat.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades the worlds of Hiranyagarbha?'

At this stage Yājñavalkya realized that his illustrious interlocutor was going too far. The Reality which is beyond Hiranyagarbha or the Cosmic mind cannot be known by the ordinary mind, much less described in words. Mind and speech turn backwards unable to reach the Supreme Reality which can be known only through direct intuitive experience. Therefore, Yājñavalkya told Gārgī, 'Do not, O Gārgī, endeavour to go further in your attempt to know the Supreme Reality that pervades Hiranyagarbha and, for that matter, pervades all the worlds previously mentioned. If you persist, your head may fall off!'

Thus admonished Gārgī desisted from further questioning. Then Uddālaka, the son of Aruna, rose and put a series of brilliant questions to which Yājñavalkya gave luminous answers. When Uddālaka sat down, Gārgī again got up, this time with two more questions which she wanted to shoot, like arrows, at Yājñavalkya. But before asking those questions she asked for the permission of the erudite assembly. The consent was given and Gārgī straightway held forth :

Gārgī: 'As water pervades the elemental earth, so what pervades the Sutra which is above heaven and below the earth, which embraces heaven and earth as well as the

region between them and which according to the scriptures is timeless?'

Yājñavalkya: 'O Gārgī, it is the unmanifested ether that pervades the Sūtra thus and which is timeless.'

Gārgī: 'Salutation to you, Yājñavalkya. I am satisfied with your answer. But now, my second question.'

Yājñavalkya: 'Ask, O Gārgī.'

Gārgī: 'What pervades the unmanifested ether.'

Yājñavalkya: 'O Gārgī, the knowers of Brahman describe It as undecaying and unchanging. They say Brahman has no dimensions nor has it any colour. It is utterly unlike earth, water, air, fire or ether. It is partless, is neither internal nor external. Unlike the body and mind It has no organs.'

Thus indicating the attributeless nature of Brahman, Yājñavalkya proceeded to say how it nevertheless is the support and substratum of the entire manifested universe.

Said he, 'By the supreme command of this imperishable Being the sun and the moon keep their courses, the earth and sky remain apart, the illusion of time in all its subtle divisions is experienced, the rivers maintain their courses and the mountains tower over everything else. All beings, O Gārgī, even the departed souls, depend on Brahman for their sustenance.'

Yājñavalkya then exhorted Gārgī to know the truth of Brahman by praising it: 'O Gārgī, all the merits derived by the performance of sacrifice are evanescent, Brahman alone is imperishable. One who leaves this world after gaining the knowledge of Brahman, he alone is a blessed

soul, the others are all miserable slaves.’

But the knowledge of Brahman cannot be gained for the asking. It is extremely subtle. To impress this fact on Gārgī’s mind, Yājñavalkya says next, ‘O Gārgī, this Immutable One is not the object of sight, of hearing, of the mind or of the intellect. It Itself is the Seer, the Hearer, the Thinker and the Knower. It is Consciousness itself. It is all-pervading and sees through all eyes, hears through all ears, thinks through all minds, knows through all intellects. Indeed, It pervades all elements from the earth to the unmanifested ether.’

The above words so authoritatively spoken by the great sage had silenced all her doubts. And with that magnanimity that characterises great minds, she concluded her debate with the following words: ‘Venerable Brahmanas, you should consider it a great thing if you can get away by saluting Yājñavalkya. I am convinced that he stands supreme amongst you all in the knowledge of Brahman.’

So saying the daughter of Vācaku ceased talking.

Source: Chapter III, sections 6 and 8 of *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* with translation. Published by Sri Rama-krishna Math, Madras-4.

THE GĪTĀ-PRINCIPLES OF DETACHED ACTIVISM

SRI R. K. GARG

When we read the *Gītā* between the lines, we find certain fundamental moral formulae or principles by following which man can doubtless be detached while acting and can no doubt solve the riddle of life while living. These formulae are as follows:

1. Work on the maxim that ‘action is thy duty not the reward thereof’.
2. Work on the maxim that ‘thou art not an end to thee but to the entire humanity’.
3. Work on the maxim that ‘actions are done by *Prakṛti*, not by the Self’.
4. Work on the maxim that ‘thy actions are devotion to God’.
5. Work on the maxim that ‘thou art to work selflessly in accordance with thy station in life’.

Śrīkṛṣṇa, the Lord, had taught these five formulae to his dedicated disciple *Arjuna* in

order to rid him of the shackles of action. Each of these formulae is in fact perfect in itself and shines like a diamond by its own brilliance. Anyone following any of these formulae is sure to get freedom in action and accomplish one’s perfection. Let us explain these formulae one by one.

When *Arjuna*, horrified by the havoc of war, shows a morbid nervousness and an inclination to desist from his duty as a Kṣatriya, the Lord reminds him of his sacred duty and obligation of performing the duty selflessly. *Śrīkṛṣṇa* says to *Arjuna*, ‘In work alone lies your duty, never in the fruit thereof; do not work for the fruit nor should you desist from the work’.¹ *Śrīkṛṣṇa* teaches this giving up of the fruits of action because it is the easiest and the best

¹ The *Gītā*, II, 47.

way of acquiring tranquillity.² To obtain tranquillity is the aim of every activity of human life. Tranquillity is achieved only after the abnegation of desire for the fruits. The Lord, therefore, pronounces that renunciation of the fruits of action, while performing duty, is the real renunciation.³ As such it is denominated as *Sāttvika*. Speaking of *Sāttvika* action, He further says, 'Duty performed without attachment, free from attraction or repulsion, by one not desiring its fruits is said to be *sāttvika*.'⁴ Only by performing one's duty one reaches that supreme state of happiness and beatitude which redeems him from the tricycle of birth, death and rebirth.⁵ It is indeed a unique state, attaining to which man does not return and gets perfection.⁶

It is evident from the above that through selfless action man attains not only to freedom in action but also to his perfection.

The second universal principle of the *Gītā* implies that one's good lies in the good of others. One should, therefore, bear a cosmopolitan outlook and work for the entire humanity. By selfless service for the Universal good, one should realize that one is not an end to oneself but to the entire humanity. One should, therefore, be actuated by the ideal of *Lokasamgraha* (human welfare) because it raises one above one's self and enjoins upon one to treat humanity as an end, never as a means. *Śrīkṛṣṇa* asks *Arjuna* to work on this maxim of *lokasamgraha*.⁷ The ignorant people work with selfish motives and hanker after fruits. But a wise man is advised to work with the motive of *lokasamgraha*.⁸ He is at the same time warned not to disturb the ignorant people in their pur-

suits for material gains. On the other hand it is suggested to him that he ought to put a glaring example of detachment before them, so that the ignorant may also come on the same lines.⁹

This maxim, thus impresses upon man to work for humanity keeping in view the ideal of social welfare and prosperity. Denial to work on this maxim brings individual as well as collective fate to a bad end. Approbation to work in accordance with this ideal, certainly adds to the individual and collective welfare and prosperity. We may here cite two unique examples of *Janaka* and *Śrīkṛṣṇa* from the *Gītā*. *Janaka* is said to have pursued this maxim and thereby attained to his perfection. *Kṛṣṇa*, in spite of being ever-liberated, still works for the welfare of ailing humanity.¹⁰ He forwards a very rational argument for His coming into the world. He says that ordinary ones follow the great ones. If the great ones desist from action, it would not only set a bad example but also cause an unavoidable disaster to humanity at large.¹¹ That is why, the Lord Himself works for the good of entire humanity.¹²

We now see that this maxim is equally good for both man and society. It enjoins upon man to make himself perfect through the service of society without any personal consideration.

The third universal maxim of the *Gītā* emphasizes that *Prakṛti* and the Self are two different entities. *Prakṛti* is material and the Self is spiritual. The Self being ever liberated is by no means the actor. It is *Prakṛti* which acts because it is made of three *guṇas* (*triguṇātmikā*) and *guṇas* are of the moving nature; therefore, *Prakṛti* is also moving. All actions are done by *Prakṛti*.

² Ibid, XII. 12.

³ Ibid, XVIII. 9.

⁴ Ibid, XVIII. 23.

⁵ Ibid, II. 51.

⁶ Ibid, XV. 6.

⁷ Ibid, III. 20.

⁸ Ibid, III. 25.

⁹ Ibid, III. 26.

¹⁰ Ibid, III. 22 & IV. 8.

¹¹ Ibid, III. 21.

¹² Ibid, III. 23, 24.

Prakṛti is the spring of action.¹³ Those who know this truth that actions are performed by the *gunas* of Prakṛti, remain themselves unattached to these *gunas*.¹⁴ Men are therefore, repeatedly advised to know that the Self is ever free and has nothing to do with actions and their effects. It is Prakṛti which produces action. Having once realized this fact, men understand that they are not the doers.¹⁵ When men realize that there is no other active agent than the *gunas* of Prakṛti and also realize That which is beyond the *gunas*, they attain to their goal.¹⁶

The *Gītā* thus makes it clear that the cause of man's attachment to action is his false and egoistic thinking that he is the doer of actions. As soon as man gets rid of this false notion, he experiences the Reality and becomes unattached to actions even if absorbed in the most intense activities.

The fourth maxim demands of man that he should devote his actions to the Lord as a sacrifice because it liberates man from the bonds of actions. By devoting his actions to the Supreme Power man gets liberated. All the world—sentient or insentient—has evolved out of the Supreme Reality i.e. Brahman. The Lord, therefore, teaches man to devote actions to that Brahman which is all pervading and thereby to attain to perfection.¹⁷ By devoting actions to Brahman, man gets freedom from the binding force of actions and becomes free from the good as well as the bad effects of actions.¹⁸ This truth has been repeatedly emphasized. It indeed kills two birds with one stone. On the one hand, it makes man devoted to God without striving for the results of devotion and, on the other hand, brings man's per-

fection nearer and nearer and ultimately culminates in *Brahma-Sākṣātkāra*. The *Gītā* gives a unique simile to bring out the underlying idea that one who keeping one's actions in Brahman without attachment acts, is not affected by the sin and comes out as unaffected as the lotus leaf is unaffected by water.¹⁹

It is thus plain that to devote one's action to God without any attachment is to attain one's perfection.

The fifth maxim of the *Gītā* asks man to work selflessly in accordance with his station in life. It accepts four-fold order of society. It implies a hierarchy of four social groups arranged according to man's station in life. These groups have not been made keeping in view the birth or colour of a man but they are made according to his inherent qualities, aptitudes and actions. These four groups consist of men of pure nature (Brāhmaṇas), of virile nature (Kṣatriyas), of gain-loving nature (Vaiśyas) and of the subservient nature (Śūdras). The Lord has imparted to these four groups the specific duties to perform according to their specific mental dispositions, capacities, attitudes, inclinations, tendencies and aptitudes. These duties determine man's station in society. All these four groups viz. Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras are asked to do their duties according to their station in life. Brāhmaṇa's duties are enumerated as serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, knowledge, experience and faith and they are asked to stick to them. Kṣatriya's duties are enunciated as follows :—bravery, courage, fortitude, dexterity, never fleeing away from battle, generosity and lordliness. They are enjoined to strictly work on them. Vaiśya's duties are said to be cultivation of the soil, rearing of cattle and trade; and they are asked to follow them. Śūdra's duty is said only to serve the fore-mentioned

¹³ Ibid, III. 27.

¹⁴ Ibid, III. 28.

¹⁵ Ibid, XIII. 29.

¹⁶ Ibid, XIV. 19, 20.

¹⁷ Ibid, XVIII. 46.

¹⁸ Ibid, IX. 27, 28.

¹⁹ Ibid, V. 10.

groups and they are asked to adhere to it. Thus everybody is asked to do his duty according to his station in life because adherence to his duty leads man to his *summum bonum* of life.²⁰ If he falls short of his sacred duty, he commits suicide as it were. The highest end of his life is to attain to perfection. Perfection can be attained only through performance of duty. If a man desists from his duty and sits idle, he forfeits his birth right of attaining to perfection. This is why, *Śrīkr̥ṣṇa* warns *Arjuna*, when he declines to fight, that it is against the duty of a Kṣatriya to desist from war.²¹ *Śrīkr̥ṣṇa* again cautions him that if he desists from war, he will commit an inexcusable sin, and the most disgraceful thing for a Kṣatriya like him, the Lord warns, will be that the society will rebuke and reproach him and will attribute no honour to him.

²⁰ Ibid, XVIII. 45.

²¹ Ibid, II. 31.

He will die a miserable death, unsung and unwept. He brings this fact, too, in *Arjuna's* knowledge that the dishonour of an honourable man is worse than death.²² He further emphasizes the need of performing one's duty. He declares that it is duty and duty alone that sustains man's life. If man gives up his duty and takes up another's duty, he is sure to come to a bad end.²³ The Lord, thus cautions *Arjuna* of his duty and advises to face his enemies.²⁴

This maxim insists on the performance of one's duty selflessly and disinterestedly in accordance with one's station and position in society.

We may now say in conclusion that the above-stated five formulae tell us the way to detachment, and thus open the gateway to perfection.

²² Ibid, II. 33, 34

²³ Ibid, XVII. 47, 48 and III. 35.

²⁴ Ibid, XI. 33.

Work on as if I never existed. Work as if on each of you depended the whole work. Fifty centuries are looking on you, the future of India depends on you. Work on. I do not know when I shall be able to come. This is a great field for work. They can at best praise in India, but they will not give a cent for anything; and where shall they get it, beggars themselves? Then, they have lost the faculty of doing public good for the last two thousand years or more. They are just learning the ideas of nation, public, etc. So I need not blame them.

Blessings to you all!

Swami Vivekananda



WHAT
INSPIRES ME
MOST IN
HOLY
MOTHER'S
LIFE

ROBERT P. UTTER

To speak of the Holy Mother is to attempt to speak of that which can never quite be spoken, a child's relationship with his own mother. How can such a relationship be told? For it is the primordial relationship of all, established before the formation of the conscious mind, before birth, in the blood, in the cell, in the womb. All subsequent relationships which a person forms, either as a child or adult, depend on that. His world flowers out of this first pre-conscious relationship; it is the umbilical relationship that stems and roots him to the universe.

All this modern psychologists know, but they do not go far enough. They search for the roots of life in the mother relationship established in the womb. It is good to trace back to subtle beginnings, but why stop with the beginnings that we can see? Vedantic thought has for centuries traced the individual's life back to prenatal influences, but these go far back beyond any one life, hence far beyond the beginnings of physical life. The individual's present birth is no more than a single leap of a dolphin out of the water. The dolphin leaps many times, and below all the leaps is the invisible ocean, mother of all. The real mother of all of us, of all beings, is the Universal Divine Mother who alone has created all the diverse beings in the uni-

verse and who alone can liberate them from bondage to the creation. Our union with the Divine Mother is the most inward of all bonds; that thread is our innermost consciousness of self. The human mother is thus a symbol of the Divine Mother, for our link with our human mother is the most inward of all earthly bonds and hence the most potentially liberating of bonds because it can lead us back to our source, our true self. For this reason in India the earthly mother has been worshipped as divine from time immemorial.

In the Holy Mother there was a special manifestation of the Divine Mother. Many who came in contact with her saw their own mother manifested in her. Many also saw in her the Divine Mother as well. Sri Ramakrishna, very early in his relationship with her, worshipped her as the Divine Mother and so established her as the special vehicle of the Divine Mother for humanity. Why was a special vehicle needed? Because the divine is essentially formless, and though it pervades our whole life within and without, we cannot see it. If we were to ask a fish in the sea where the sea was, it would not know. It is the same with us. Though Divine Reality permeates every pore of our being, we do not realize this truth. The Divine is our Mother and Father, our very breath and heartbeat, the

soul of our soul. It is closer to us than our earthly mother, for our earthly mother becomes separate from us, but our Divine Source never separates from us. Yet we cannot see the Divine within us, and must have a sign in order to believe, a condensation of the formless into form, as clouds condense out of the invisible air and become visible. To condense into visible form the intimacy of our relationship to the Divine, the symbol of the Mother is the most effective of all symbols. That is why the Holy Mother companioned Sri Ramakrishna in his Incarnation, in order to manifest the motherhood of God more effectively to mankind. Our relationship to her remains largely subliminal, inexpressible, just as our relation to our earthly mother eludes all description. Yet a few things may be said that may help us to understand her unobtrusive greatness.

Perhaps her most basic quality was her universality. The Holy Mother was as universal as the sky. How could she manifest motherhood and universality at the same time? Most human mothers are focused and polarized in their love, focused in that they love their own families intensely, polarized in that they exclude all others from the circle of their love sometimes to the point of hatred of outsiders. But in the Holy Mother there was no focusing and no polarization. She neither excluded nor hated. She included all in the breadth of her love. She once said, 'My children are spread all over the world.' She accepted all, even criminals, drunkards, and thieves, if they but called her Mother. Thus she revealed her difference from ordinary mothers. Her love was universal as air, as unpolarized as space, as same-sighted as sunlight. She manifested motherhood, but she manifested it on a divine scale.

Though she appeared as a human being, she never lost touch with her divine nature.

She easily ascended from the human level to the divine, and as easily descended again, as astronauts ascend from the earth through the air to outer space and then return to earth again. She performed the humblest of household tasks without losing the cosmic sweep of her divine vision. She was like space that equally contains galaxies and atoms.

She achieved this universality by deliberately refusing to see the faults of others. She continually taught her devotees not to find fault with anyone. Early in her life she prayed to the Divine Mother to give her this power to see no faults in anyone. Her last words were, 'If you want peace, don't find fault with others'. Thus we can see that this supreme virtue of hers was one which she cultivated and practised as deliberately as one practises skill on a musical instrument. It became her dominant characteristic. She excelled everyone in this quality, even Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. When Sri Ramakrishna asked her not to associate with a certain woman of ill repute, Holy Mother said that she could not refuse anyone who addressed her as Mother. When Swami Vivekananda expelled someone for some misbehaviour, Holy Mother remonstrated with him and made him take the offender back. Through her undeviating adherence to this ideal she uplifted the lives of robbers and criminals in a way that no amount of force or scolding or exhortation could have done. Just as mothers the world over welcome their children back home after any amount of foolish or wicked behaviour, so the Holy Mother accepted all who sought her out in sincere devotion. They did not have to formulate their devotion in set religious or theological terms; just heartfelt love for her was all that was needed. Reasonless love—that was the key to her heart. No amount of reason could substitute for this reasonless love. This love was the inner heart of

her equal acceptance of all. Mother love never quibbles nor argues; it just accepts the child as it is. This was her mother love for all her devotees, high or low, rich or poor, sinful or virtuous, intelligent or foolish. This acceptance cost her much suffering in the form of personal inconveniences of various kinds and even physical pain from the evil karmas of her devotees, but she bore it all without complaint. She was a living Bodhisattva; she gave herself totally for the good of others, without a thought of her own comfort. In this selfless love for all she manifested the love of the Divine for the world.

Sri Ramakrishna was the most universal God-man in the history of the world, for he practised according to many different paths and religions and realized the same God at the end of each path. Yet Holy Mother was a fitting companion to the Master, for she was as universal as he but in a more quiet way. She exemplified the teachings of Jesus, who said, 'But one thing is needful,' and, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' and, 'Love thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy might.' She never taught by any elaborate arguments

or theologies; she just manifested mother love for all beings, and by so doing she manifested these three sayings of Jesus to perfection. Since in two of these Jesus was quoting from the Old Testament, we can say that she also manifested the inner spirit of Judaism as well as of Christianity. She also manifested the teachings of Buddha in her self-sacrificing compassion for all beings and in her unshakable serenity. She also manifested the spirit of Sita in her unswerving devotion to the Master. She also manifested the spirit of karma yoga as taught by Krishna in the Gita by her years upon years of humble household service to Sri Ramakrishna and all his and her devotees. She also manifested the spirit of Advaita Vedanta as taught in the Upanishads and the Gita and by Shankara by her same-sightedness and her seeing God in every being. She thus united the religions of all the world in her one person and her one life without any fanfare or talk or book learning or theological arguments. She cut to the heart of the matter and wordlessly revealed the essentials of universal religion. I do not know how anyone could be more inspiring than this.

OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM

SRI J. M. GANGULI

Optimism and pessimism are two attitudes of the mind. It is true enough; but it is not true to say that the attitudes are changeable and adjustable under and by the will of man. Be cheerful; why worry? Why do you think that the light will fade under an advancing cloud? Why not look out for brightness over the horizon where a mist may have for a time formed?—all that is good counsel, and very well intentioned

to give comforting diversion to sorrowful thoughts, a soothing touch to depressed mind and a faith-recovering stir to feelings when hopes are sunk and vision is held by a dead, colourless beyond. But it hardly helps more than a peg of a stimulant that may bring an hour's forgetfulness to worrying mind or an anaesthetic treatment which dulls the nerves for a time to pain.

Like different individual constitutions,

attitudes of the mind also are by birth individually different and they develop, take course and react differently. They are parts of one's nature, and if one's born nature remains essentially the same through life those attitudes of the mind also persevere through the incidents, happenings, circumstances and environmental influences which come in life. Rather they develop and more sharply form through them. No princely luxuries and attractions could deflect the pessimistic outlook of Goutam nor divert the mind of Janak from its philosophic detachment. The two attitudes grow and show up gradually one after the other, rather than independently and separately, in the course of the evolutionary development of the mind and its observing and thinking power, pessimism following optimism.

In early life the young mind is very generally prone to be optimistic, but with the maturity of the mind and its increasing keenness, like a growing child curious to know the world outside the nursery and the real life there, an amusing glimpse of which had been shown to him in the form of toys and dolls and little games in the nursery, it wants to see and know more that may be beyond the screen and cover, which keep our vision and interest confined to eating, drinking, earning and playful merry-making in life. The optimist may be right in prescribing such simple and unthinking life as good and even essential for what he calls happiness and his warning that holing the walls of the little confinement wherein man is placed to peep out to look beyond will only bring gloom and depression, may have significance, but the growing mind, the developing intellect, the increasing urge of curiosity, the waking passion for knowledge makes man even impetuous and reckless to over-ride caution and ignore prescriptions for bliss and happiness. Have even almost sure risks to life and most dreadful dangers

held man's spirit of adventure to explore and discover? This spirit is an evolutionary phenomenon in man's life and so is his keenness to know more and ever more not only about the things and matters which concern this life within its short span, stretched between its destiny-fixed two limits, but also about the fundamentals, the fundamental cause and purpose of life, and about the background perspective behind it. And as physical pains and sufferings come to the explorer in his adventure, so comes gradually, pessimism to the knowledge-seeker, to the life's and the world's mystery explorer. For, what confronts his vision is less bright than gloomy, less inspiring than depressing.

Life's start and end both appear not only as most uncertain and unpredictable, but unlinked to any purpose or continuity. And the doings and activities in life, which we love to call our performances and achievements, fade out in the dusky landscape of continuous upheavals of creation and destruction making and breaking, which overlap without a pattern and without any meaningful purpose. If we keep sentiment and faith aside for a moment, we are unable to discern anything in this endless panorama to support enthusiasm in life and to sustain and guide the line of hope through the mist beyond. Notwithstanding nature's artful tricks to keep him amused in life through pleasurable physical satisfactions, and through movement, work and activity by physical urges or by causing his mental stimulation or by excitation of his physical urges, man's vision extends over the narrow limits of this physical existence, and then pessimism overtakes him. The back pages of human history—take from the earliest times—give scant evidence of survival of the results of man's achievements in his life after his death or continuity of the effects of his life-time work. Great warriors have fought and won; great emperors have built

empires ; great scientists have postulated and theorized ; great religions have been propounded and preached ; but have they left any mark or scratch on the world or on its course and track? Any touch on its laws and ways?

Optimism flounders before the scene of this desolation, of this chaotic ending of all our work and acts, efforts and achievements. When we cherish the memory of the Great or worship our heroes and celebrate their birth centenaries or put wreaths and garlands over their memorials, we do all that for personal satisfaction, out of personal feeling and sentiment. Whether the dead derives any comfort and satisfaction therefrom is far from being definitely known. But, even in the case of survival and rebirth, there is no knowing if the surviving spirit retains any sentimental and emotional relationship with the past, which could give it pleasure and satisfaction when celebrations are held in its memory.

This picture of life and its abrupt, discontinuous ending can hardly be conducive to the sustenance of optimism in life and a little contemplation on it takes away enthusiasm from work and faith and confidence in effort and forward-looking. But the urge of nature is irresistible and it keeps man moving on, working on, hoping on, even though almost every moment he says 'Dust to dust returnest', to one or another companion who falls to ground on the way. Dust to dust returnest—is indeed not just a ceremonious farewell to the departed, but it is a spontaneous expression of the realization that the end of life is apparently as completely purposeless as its advent. The inevitable pessimism surrounding this realization the theologians ardently seek to break and dispel by a projection of many a picture of wishful after-life and many a word of prayerful consolatory words to the bereaved and the sorrowful, which, though very sincere and earnest, are but efforts to pull

back the forward view of the distressed mind to within the folds of a blissful ignorance about the dark abyss wherein life seems to get lost. Ignorance is bliss, yes,—but born in ignorance man's eyes are opened by nature and his mind opens to the reacting thoughts started and provoked by all that come and happen around him in his drift through the changing phases of life. Our bitter repeating experience that knowledge or rather the little shallow knowledge of the world, its creation and purpose, which, at best, man may at all hope to acquire, leads nowhere, except to discontent, sense of helplessness and resulting unhappiness, and all our earnest wish to close our eyes and mind again to get back into the soothing darkness of ignorance do not help us in discarding the impressions and memories of things once seen. It is here that a man in despair looks out for philosophy and religion and wants to clutch them as a sinking man holds out his hand to catch a straw. Religion and philosophy are after-thoughts and not truths in the sense that they came objectively along with creation and evolved as the many other natural instincts and emotions, but they originated in man's realization of the dust-to-dust-returnest destiny of life.

Indeed religious philosophy has been like a druggist's preparation of a balm to apply to a burning wound, a bleeding sore. When man bitterly cried:

Life has purpose, they had said ;
I strived and climbed, on I sped ;
Up the hill the path lay,

There its glory, joy and bliss did sway.
Hope and faith bore me well,

On top a crack, down I fell,

religion sprang up to give comfort—No, there's life, joy, bliss and purpose beyond death. But, whether that is true or not, since man is unable to behold the beyond after death, his enthusiasm in life and his faith in to-morrow fail to be revived and to

stand firm and erect longer than that of a fatigued actor in a night show on the stage. It is easy to imagine a man, a saint or a sage, breathing his last with joy, optimism and faith in the continuance of the purposeful life he had lived, and there is plenty of stories of such happy deaths described by devoted disciples and admirers of the saints, but the pain of death, for longer or shorter spells, is manifest on the face of the dying and the gloom of pessimism at the abrupt cutting off of the fondly aimed activities of life without their reaching a purpose or finality is in his eyes.

Ignorance and optimism are like twin sisters, agreeable to each other, but both are short-lived. The shell of ignorance, wherein optimism thrives, is continually perforated by streaks of knowledge which strike our consciousness as we move through life. And as we gradually emerge from the shell, the shrinking optimism lags behind and misty pessimism advancing from over the horizon, seizes us. This is in the natural course of evolution of consciousness, which cannot be arrested, but which we need not dislike, fear or try to shake off, because pessimism tends to bring more steadiness to thoughts, feelings and emotions than optimism. And, contrary to commonplace notion, it leads to a sort of happiness or what may be called equanimity in our sense-reactions, which may be different from what passes as merry feeling that comes and stays during moments of optimism, but which at least is more soothing and enduring in so far as it is not to be shaken by climatic changes which are unavoidable in the weather of joy and sorrow to which life is subject.

Pessimism, indeed, instead of narrowing the outlook, widens it over a broad perspec-

tive where ties of attachment between things, incidents and happenings appear to be loose and insignificant. Our sentimental concentration on such ties, which are more unreal than they appear to be, brings grief, sorrow and disappointment as soon as the apparent ties snap and the seemingly joined units separate out in the process of fulfilment of their own functions. Pessimism thus brings the truer knowledge of things and happenings in the world and wakes our consciousness to the fact of each entity in the world having its own functional operation to perform, for which it may have a passing relationship for a time formed with another, but which relationship is without the value or significance which is worthy of drawing and holding our emotional feelings and sentiments. Such feelings and sentiments are bound to be now and then shocked and ruptured as different ties are formed and broken in the timeless sequence of events and happenings in the world. When the pessimistic outlook, formed by deeper and deeper probe into the nature of things, living and non-living, exposes the falsity of attachment to a near by drifting thing in the current of life, we look up over the quiet encircling horizon on the background of which the ripples and waves, which brought turns of joy and sorrow as appear on a child's eyes when it wins or loses in nursery games, pale and we are left in an enduring harmony with a Great Significance, in which all exciting significances of life merge.

And if contemplation, unexcited and un-sentimental contemplation, on this Significance is not Yogi's *Samādhi*, a Buddha's *Nirvāṇa*, and life's most coveted goal—*Mukti* or salvation, what else indeed can that be?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Swamiji,

May I be allowed to comment upon the 'Musings' in the March, 1969, issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*, entitled, 'Is America Ready For a Sita or a Maitreyi?'

While agreeing with the thoughts expressed in the article, I think it has quite rightly been questioned, in the final paragraph of it: 'Do Indians today cherish Sita-Maitreyi as the core-treasures of their hoary civilization?' And I think it may also be asked: 'Can present-day India claim, with any amount of certitude, to be the land of Sita and Maitreyi?' Are we not witnessing daily a steep decline in the ideals which went to create such great personalities? In the quotation noted from Swami Vivekananda I have marked, especially, that he said: 'Sita is typical of India—the *idealized* India.' (Italics are mine). Did Swamiji even then observe that the ideal was or would be wavering and waning?

So we ask: 'Are the ideals exemplified in the lives of Sita and Maitreyi still a guiding force in India?' Probably, the answer would not be a definite affirmative. And this is no doubt due, for the most part, to the pressure on us of civilizations other than our own, to the turning away from all that is uplifting and ennobling in the culture of India. This is particularly true of the educated people living in urban areas. We find that the old ideals are being tossed carelessly aside and are forgotten. Parents do not inspire their children with these and so they become easy prey to outside influences.

The enervating and disruptive forces of foreign acquired habits and customs have not, of course, penetrated the vast populace who live in rural areas. But, if things are left unchecked, it is probably only a mat-

ter of time until they percolate down through the whole of society, layer after layer. What the 'affluent' do today, the less so want to do, and *do* do tomorrow. What the 'developed' nations are doing, the 'under-developed' ones are trying to do. It is mainly due to this *imitation of others* that the ideals that our forefathers cherished are gradually being forsaken. 'Why should we bother about spiritual ideals? The countries of the West did not emphasize such things, so why should we?' seems to be the attitude. 'They became rich and powerful without such ideals. Let us do the same.' And they join the scramble.

Such an attitude, of course, shows a complete lack of discrimination. We cannot expect the youth to have this quality very highly developed, but mature persons should have it. And their voices should be strong enough to be heard by the youth of the country. External influences are growing day by day, and these ideas and 'ideals' which are penetrating Indian society are not the only or the best ideas the West has to offer. They are the debris, the 'throw-out' of Western civilization; they represent the failures, not the successes, of that way of life. Unfortunately, in trying to emulate the habits and customs of others, we in India are only picking up the discarded crumbs, the left-overs, the habits of the 'fringe' of society, not the habits of the majority of people in Western countries who also frown upon the idiotic behaviour of their irresponsible youth.

It goes without saying that no nation can live today in isolation. There must be an exchange from one country to another. But why should we in India hold the 'wrong end of the stick' in this exchange of cultures by accepting the worst, while our foreign friends take the best we have to

offer? Indian youth is taking the worst, thinking that it is getting the best. What could be more foolish?

We may wonder, in what specific ways are these degrading ideas, and their natural and eroding consequences, filtering into Indian society? It may be summed up: Through cinemas, radio, (television is still too young in India to be a menace), through trivial literature, through magazines and newspapers. For instance, I wonder whether parents, guardians or teachers of the young realize the trend of advertising in Indian newspapers and magazines today. One need only observe the large English papers to be convinced that something should be done, and done quickly, to stop this process of slow and gradual poisoning of our thinking. But it seems that it is hardly noticed at all, or if so, we have only a callous and careless attitude about it. True, once in a while, some brave soul will write to the editors complaining about such things, but no lasting action is taken.

Five years ago, such suggestive, objectionable advertisements were not seen in India. But the advertising lads have learned to imitate the 'copy' of their Western counterparts! So, we are subjected to such things. It is part of 'big business', where the slogan is, *anything goes!* The most important thing is to *sell* your ideas (and products) no matter in what way you do it.

The youth of today will be the adults, the wives and husbands, of tomorrow. If the ideals of a sane and healthy family life in an orderly society are not to be maintained, 'a Sita emanation in a nation is not a thinkable proposition', your writer has remarked. If the ideals of Sita and Maitreyi and our other great spiritual personalities are trodden upon generally, and obliterated by society, even the individual realization of these ideals will be much more difficult to achieve. We must have an environment somewhat, at least, free from mental obstacles; otherwise, we

will not be able to find the key to unlock the door of our souls where the 'eternal Sita' is seated in all her glory!

Before it is too late, something should be done, and since a concerted action built upon public opinion is not to be acquired overnight, some of our popular young leaders should force the issue and ban by law, if necessary, all such forms of playing with the mind of the public, especially the more impressionable minds of its youth.

It was once a proud saying that, 'What Bengal thinks today, the rest of India thinks tomorrow'. Could not the young leaders of Bengal today give a lead in this matter? And can we forget those brave young men of Bengal, and of India generally, 'terrorists' and Satyagrahis alike, who fought and died to free the country from a *foreign political influence*? Is this our answer to their sacrifices—that we will gladly accept and embrace a low type of *foreign cultural influence*, forsaking our own heritage, and become mental slaves to such a grafted-on 'way of life', which is laughed at and spurned even by Westerners of any consequence?

It seems to me that we should not be complacent regarding the position of modern India and the idealism that brought into being the great spiritual ideals of Sita and Maitreyi. It is no doubt true that the West is not ready to receive these ideals. But India is *forsaking* them! Is that not much more reprehensible? To have had such idealism and to have thrown it away—is it not a very sad state of affairs? Not yet to be ready to have it, is a mild fault in comparison. The amazing thing is that while a growing section of the youth of the West, particularly of America, is reaching out for the grand spiritual ideals of India, of Sri Ramakrishna and of Swami Vivekananda, a great part of the Indian youth has no eye or ear for them. They think only of

(Contd. on p. 322)



IN THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMAPADA

BEWARE OF WHAT YOU THINK

Thus teaches the *Dhammapada*:

'All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thought, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.' verse 1.

'All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.' verse 2.

Thought-made we are; thought-made are the situations of our life. Thought-made are the people whom we call our friends; thought-made are also the people whom we call our enemies. Think of the devil and he is there. Think of the angel and he is there too. The world is filled with our mind-borns.

If we are not better than what we are, it is because we have not thought better. If we are not worse than what we are, it is because we have not thought worse. Events are incarnations of our thoughts. If we intend to have better events, our thoughts must be better.

Every thought is a potential act. Every

act is a potential result. Every result is a binding commitment. Pain or happiness originates from the character of our thought, evil or good, which can be changed.

Changed thinking is changed becoming.

Thought is a tremendous power and a great responsibility. Man destroys himself by using the power wrongly. Man becomes his own saviour by making right use of this power.

Vivekananda says:

'Each thought is a little hammer blow on the lump of iron which our bodies are, manufacturing out of it, what we want it to be.'¹

¹ *Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, vol. VII, 1964, p. 20.

(Contd. from p. 321)

turning their faces and senses towards whatever winds blow from the West. Perhaps, one day, they will accept these very ideals,

in another guise, from the West, thinking them to be products of Western civilization! Irony, isn't it?

An observer

'We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care of what you think.'²

'Every vicious thought will rebound, every thought of hatred which you may have thought, in a cave even, is stored up, and will one day come back to you with tremendous power in the form of some misery here. If you project hatred and jealousy, they will rebound on you with compound interest. No power can avert them; when once you have put them in motion you will have to bear them. Remembering this will prevent you from doing wicked things.'³

If a small man speaks and acts with evil thought, he brings down on him a proportionate disaster. But if a man of high position and great responsibility, speaks and acts with evil thought he may bring down on a whole nation a great disaster.

We all know what Hitler brought down upon Germany and how. History sometimes pays it cash down, sometimes it gets processed the consequences of our thoughts through mazes of events which we are not able to unravel. But if we can get at the root-thoughts a nation has thought through the brains of its leaders, it will not be impossible to find why we suffer pain, or enjoy happiness, the way we do.

The nations which accumulate violence potential and meditate on the annihilation of supposed enemies, keep hanging disaster on the heads of their own children. The nations which exercise restraint on evil thoughts, even under provocations, save their own children from disaster. The same is true of individuals and communities.

The root point is this: there is no escaping the law of return. Release evil from

within you, you will be engulfed by it, hundred fold. Release good from within you, you will be engulfed by good, hundred fold. Choice of either good or evil is free. But the consequences of the choice are binding. You cannot escape it through cleverness.

The higher your position in society, the greater your responsibility to harbour good thoughts for *all*, for otherwise you involve society in wrong actions which will cause suffering to all concerned. Removing evil from our thought and action is a personal need and a social responsibility. If we do not think rightly and practise humility when we are placed high, it will not be long before we will be humiliated, and that through the force of our own thought.

In these days of easy communication the poison of evil thought spreads all over so quickly, that before we have known, we often find ourselves reaping the consequences of our thoughts. Such being the case, our times have cast upon us a special duty of right thinking.

Left to ourselves, we may not know how to remove evil from our thoughts and actions. In that case let us seek to learn from those who know.

In fact we have a shining heritage of priceless thoughts brooding over us. We must claim that treasure. Vivekananda says:

'We are heirs to all good thoughts of the universe, if we open ourselves to them.'⁴

May we have the disposition that is helpful to our own well-being.

² *Ibid*, p. 14.

³ *Ibid*, vol. I, 1965, p. 262.

⁴ *Ibid*, vol. VII. p. 20.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

This passage 'Onward for Ever!' occurs in the *Complete Works* Vol. IV, 1966, p. 176.

The editorial surveys the crucial relevancy of Vivekananda's mission for the future of mankind.

In 'Profiles in Greatness', the 'Explorer' brings to our view a significant aspect of the greatness of Swami Vivekananda in a touching scene at Belur Math where the Swami's overflowing compassion to the labourers was transmuted to actual adoration of God in them while he entertained them to a dinner.

Prof. P. S. Naidu in his illuminating article 'Contemporary Science and Truth' outlines the steps for nullifying the wrong influences of science on the mind, particularly of the youth.

In his scholarly article 'Reality and Appearance in Śāṅkara and Bradley'. Dr. B. N. Sinha, M.A., Ph.D., Banaras Hindu University, brings out a number of affinities as well as of opposed views in the philosophies of Śāṅkara and Bradley.

Sri R. K. Garg, Department of Philosophy, M. H. H. Postgraduate College, Gaziabad, in his article enunciates the principles in the Gītā by which one can carry on one's activities without attachment.

Mr. Robert P. Utter, who writes on 'What Inspires me most in Holy Mother's Life' is a teacher of English and Philosophy at City College in San Francisco. He is also a student of Vedanta at the Vedanta Society of Northern California in the same city.

Sri J. M. Ganguli, from Calcutta, in his article 'Optimism and Pessimism' expounds that the latter 'brings the truer knowledge' than the former.

The Industrial Worker

To be sure, the industrial worker occupies a pivotal position in society in these days of industrialization. For the movement of the wheels of the machine hinges upon the output of labour done by him. This truth becomes glaring when it attracts our attention to the loss sustained on his ceasing to do his job for a short while due to some cause or other. With this cardinal point conceded and brought home to us, the significance and need of his welfare cannot be overstated. The approach to the consideration of his interests should include all the aspects of his life.

Who was the worker? Where was he? In most cases he was just a rural rustic.

Mobility of the villager to the urban environment has effected a big but unwholesome change in his life. His emotional make-up is breaking, as it were, on his being uprooted and placed in an atmosphere, physically cramped and culturally exotic to his instinct. In the rural set-up he enjoyed open air, stillness, and milieu made of certain attitudes and values centering round institutions like joint family and socio-religious festivals. Naive love, service, respect for elders and faith in God marked his life. A child of nature, he was contented, peaceful and moral. The customs and manners of his society were based on ethical and religious principles. If he

migrated to urban area, it was because of the paucity of material goods in his village. In the town where he is employed, he, his wife and even his boy and girl get enough wages. This does not of course refer to the vast numbers of unemployed in India even after two decades of Independence.

In the new surrounding the worker faces a complex challenge, that of adjustment. He finds himself nobody in the industry where he works. The deep love and active sympathy that marked the behaviour of others with him in the village are no more in evidence. There is artificiality, no spontaneity, all around. Gradually he gives up his old, elevating, moralizing, spiritualizing values and becomes a victim to the sophistication of the city. Nothing ennobling and worthy replaces his past character and conduct. The money that he earns is often wasted on reprehensible pastimes and pleasures. His intelligence and emotion, strength and energy are used, rather misused for debilitating and destructive causes. An explosive situation out of his morbid sensation tends to develop detrimental to personal health and social stability.

This is a matter of no small concern to those who have the welfare of the nation at heart. The State, the society, the labour union and above all the employer have to tackle the problem with all the seriousness it deserves. There can be neither national progress nor social welfare as long as the interest of the worker is neglected. The approach to the worker's problem should reflect an awareness of his dignity, his creative energy, his goodness and even his divinity. The Indian worker is by nature gentle and moral. It is not therefore difficult to devise a policy which will strengthen his gentle and moral nature and at the same time unleash his tremendous energy for healthy and constructive causes. Mr. V. V. Giri, as Vice-President of India in the course of his inaugural address to the Asian Labour

Ministers' Conference in New Delhi on 28th January 1969 drew attention to the springs of creative energy of the worker. He said, 'The basic aim of labour policy throughout developing Asia should be to uncover the springs of creative energy that lie hidden in immense reserve of manpower that Asia possesses in abundance'. (Vide : *The Hindustan Times* dated 30th January 1969)

In order to help the worker unfold his potentialities, it does not suffice to take steps for security measures. What is of greater need and significance is to enable him to discover and identify the secure foundation in cultural moorings and provide him with an education—not mere literacy in the three Rs—that will summon the strength and faith in himself and in the lasting values. True, industry in India has provision for workers' education; however, it is scarcely comprehensive enough to fulfil this imperative need. No education can ignore the natural, inborn aspirations and ethos of the worker without imperilling his interest. It has to install in him his own dignity, making him aware that he is by no means less great than anybody else. For each man contributes to the welfare of the society by following his vocation faithfully and thus each is as great as the other.

Furthermore the worker should feel proud of his nation, its glories and achievements; with this end in view, the education he receives has to be in tune with the national heritage. Luckily for the Indian worker, the country's legacy is one that can not only lift him up spiritually but also bring out tremendous energy and self-confidence, we mean the Vedantic principles. As spirituality is the heart's blood of the nation, it behoves those in charge of workers' welfare to inculcate the liberal, life-giving truths of religion. Any effort to stimulate and sustain the springs of energy and enthusiasm of the

worker will go vain in India unless it appeals to and deepens his spiritual instinct. When spiritual knowledge is imparted along the right lines and spirituality in its broad sense is awakened, he is sure to feel a sense of fulfilment and be transformed to a dynamo of infinite energy as well as infinite good. The springs of his action will then be canalized to creative purposes. Adapting the timely, inspirational words of Swami Vivekanandā, we can safely stress that if a worker thinks that he is the Atman, he becomes a better worker. He needs to be

culturally and emotionally rehabilitated by making him a proud inheritor of the shining, socializing and spiritualising truths that form the glorious heritage of India. At the same time let him learn the arts and sciences that make for higher standard of living. For spirituality is not opposed to decent living. Taking his firm stand on the perennial values of spiritual striving, he yet becomes resilient enough to meet the winds of change without being blown off his feet and modern enough to actively contribute to economic and social advancement.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

GLORY OF THE DIVINE MOTHER—DEVĪ MAHĀTMYAM BY S. SANKARANARAYANAN, Dipti Publications, Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry 2. 1968, pp. 322, price Rs. 12/-.

Devī worship in this country goes back to a remote antiquity. It can in fact be traced to the Veda itself. In the Rg-Veda there are hymns addressed to *Aditi* who is regarded as the Mother of the Universe. There is also *Śrī Sūkta* addressed to Devī. The twenty-four syllabled mantra known as *Gāyatri* is essentially an invocation to a goddess.

In course of time Devī worship developed into a special cult and came to be known as Tantra or Śākta Mata. The Devī Mantra consists of fifteen syllables and is widely popular as the *Pañcadaśākṣarī*. Advanced practitioners add one more syllable and do devout meditation on the sixteen syllabled Mantra known as *Ṣoḍaśākṣarī*. It is taught only to adepts. Otherwise it is kept as a closely guarded secret. Hayagrīva taught it to Agastya only after obtaining the specific permission of Devī.

Round the Mantra have gathered the usual rituals such as *kavaca*, *argala*, *keelaka*, *nyāsa* and *prayoga*. It is thus a full-blown cult.

The next stage saw the production of great books bearing on the cult. The classic texts relating to Devī worship are *Lalitā Sahasranāma*, *Saundarya Laharī* and *Devī Māhātmyam*, otherwise known as *Saptaśatī*. The book under review is both an exposition and a faithful English translation of the last mentioned work. In the course of an intro-

ductory chapter running to eighty-four pages the learned author gives a most lucid exposition of the Devī cult in all its aspects. It shows that Devī worship is not opposed to the Veda, but is rooted in it. The Brahman of the Upaniṣads figures as the Mother of the Universe in the Devī cult. She is the Prime Mover and also the ultimate guarantor of eternal Dharma. In the exercise of the latter function She undertakes the task of punishing the evil-doers. In this capacity She has great achievements to Her credit. The work describes in great detail the destruction of great evil-doers like *Chanda*, *Muṇḍa*, *Śumbha*, *Niśumbha* and *Bhandasura*.

Devī has also a benign aspect. She is the embodiment of compassion and is full of the milk of human kindness. Her heart is soft like butter and melts easily at the sight of human misery. She extends Her prevenient grace on the devout worshippers. Through Her grace the devotees acquire the saving knowledge and attain release from the shackles of empirical existence. It may be mentioned that in the *Kena Upaniṣad* *Umā* confers Knowledge of Brahman on Indra and other gods. She is therefore worshipped as *Brahma-vidyā svarūpini*.

The author, evidently a devout Devī-worshipper, has done full justice to all aspects of the cult in general introduction and in the brief prefaces that he has appended to the several sections. He has drawn much useful information from Bhas-

kararaya's commentary on the Saptasatī known as Guptavati. He has also drawn from other authentic sources such as the writings of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Kapali Sastri.

The translation of the original into English is both faithful and quite readable. Altogether it is

a very valuable contribution to the extant literature on the subject. We gladly recommend it to all devout Devī-worshippers. The printing and get-up of the book leave little to be desired. The Śrīcakra in the frontispiece adds charm to the book.

M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH DEOGHAR

REPORTS FOR 1966-1968

The activities of the Vidyapith, a residential Higher Secondary School, during the period under review were the following:

School: There were 350 students on the rolls during the close of the period, 77 of them being merit scholars hailing from different states of India. All the 12 boys who appeared in the All-India Higher Secondary Examination in 1968 came out successful, 4 of them securing 1st Division and 7 obtaining the 2nd Division.

Financial help to the extent of Rs. 9,270/- was rendered to 25 poor and meritorious students.

During the period 92 boys visited most of the important places in South India, where they went on an educational tour.

Library: Total number of books in the Library during the close of the period was 7080. There were 35 monthlies and weeklies and 12 dailies in the Reading Room. Daily average attendance in the Reading Room was 150.

Charitable Dispensary: The Dispensary rendered medical relief to patients who are mostly the poor villagers from neighbouring places. The total number of patients served in 1967-68 was 9156 of whom 3847 were new cases. In the Indoor Hospital for boys, 200 boys were admitted.

Vivekananda Nihsulka Uchha Prathamik Vidyalaya: This is a free Primary School up to Class V. 160 poor children were given education, food, clothing, books etc. free of cost.

Drought Relief Work: The Vidyapith started Drought Relief Work on a large scale in 1966-67 when Bihar was under the acute grip of drought and rendered help to 12,256 persons.

Birthday Anniversaries: The Birthday Anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda and of the direct disciples were celebrated with great solemnity. Sarasvatī pūja, Kālī pūja, Janmāṣṭami and Śivarātri were also observed.

The Management of the Vidyapith appeal to the generous public for funds near about four lakhs of rupees to meet the various urgent development programmes.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH, COSSIPORE

AN APPEAL

“Don't you think it will be nice to purchase Krishnagopal's garden at Cossipore? ... In my opinion it is advisable to do so. All our associations are with that garden. Indeed, it was our first monastery. ... We must have it. ... Try your best for the Cossipore property.”

Thus wrote Swami Vivekananda to Swami Brahmananda on the 13th July 1897.

The Ramakrishna Math, 90 Cossipore Road, Calcutta-2 is situated in the famous garden-house, popularly known as the Cossipore Udyan Bati, associated with the hallowed memory of Sri Ramakrishna Deva. It was in this garden that he passed the closing days of prophetic ministration in moulding and giving final touches to the spiritual life of his illustrious disciples, Swami Vivekananda and others. It was also here that these ardent souls were first assembled to devote themselves wholly to the nursing of their sick Master and to dedicate themselves to the fulfilment of his mission. The place has been made holy by the severe austerities and spiritual practices they went through here under the direct guidance of Sri Ramakrishna and the spiritual illumination with which they were blessed.

The “Kalpataru” episode and such other notable incidents, namely, transmission of his spiritual power to Swami Vivekananda or Narendra of those days, giving shape to the nucleus of the future Ramakrishna Math and Mission, training the disciples individually to dedicate their lives to the service of all men as the veritable forms of God—all these have taken place in this historic garden-house.

The Udyan Bati is thus a source of spiritual inspiration to the religious-minded people of all faiths, coming from all over the world to pay their respect to the great Master who was really the embodiment and consummation of the spiritual thoughts and aspirations, ideas and ideals of all humanity throughout the ages.

For these reasons, as well as for the fulfilment of the cherished desire of the great Swami Vivekananda, the authorities of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, Howrah, purchased this garden-house and started a math centre here. It is their desire that the garden-house, including several houses, tanks, roads, gardens, boundary wall, etc. within the entire compound should be renovated, to give it the look and shape it had in the days of the Master.

Thus preservation of the entire garden-house as an international memorial to Sri Ramakrishna, thereby fulfilling an earnest desire of the great Swami Vivekananda, is a sacred trust to all the citizens of free India irrespective of caste, creed or community.

We are glad to mention here that the house in which Sri Ramakrishna lived and passed away was reconstructed just according to the old plan by a devotee several years back. We have now to work out the rest of the entire scheme, namely, construction of the monks' quarters and various other development works mentioned above.

It is roughly estimated that a sum of Rupees five lakhs (5,00,000) will be necessary for the purpose.

We, therefore, appeal to the generous public to contribute liberally to our funds for the noble cause. Contributions may kindly be sent to the following address by post or handed over to our authorized representative. Crossed cheques may please be drawn in favour of *Ramakrishna Math, Cossipore*.

SWAMI SADHANANANDA
President, Ramakrishna Math
90 Cossipore Road, Calcutta-2

N.B. Donations to the Ramakrishna Math and Mission are exempted from income tax under Section 15-B of the Indian Income-tax Act, Order No. 12834/8E/3/52-53C.T. Commissioner of Income-tax, West Bengal, dated 7. 6. 1954.