



# Prabuddha Bharata

Vol. LXXIV

AUGUST 1969

No. 8

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

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## THE UNIVERSAL CALL OF RELIGIONS

'The man with faith, the devoted, the master of one's senses, attains Knowledge. Having attained Knowledge one goes at once to Supreme Peace.'

*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.39

'Wide open is the door of the Immortal to all who have ears to hear. Let them send forth faith to meet it.'

*Mahāvagga* 1.5.12

'The faithful I meet with faith. The faithless also I meet with faith. That is virtue's faith.'

*Tao Teh King* 49.2

'Know that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy with them, who love Him and keep His commandments.'

*Old Testament: Deuteronomy* 7.9

'... Verily I say unto you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.'

*New Testament: St. Matthew* 17.20

'Let there be no compulsion in religion. Whosoever therefore shall believe in God he will have taken hold on a strong handle that shall not be broken.'

*Koran* 2.257

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## ONWARD FOR EVER!

Those that blame others—and, alas! the number of them is increasing every day—are generally miserable with helpless brains; they have brought themselves to that pass through their own mistakes and blame others, but this does not alter their position. It does not serve them in any way. This attempt to throw the blame upon others only weakens them the more. Therefore, blame none for your own faults, stand upon your own feet, and take the whole responsibility upon yourselves. Say, 'This misery that I am suffering is of my own doing, and that very thing proves that it will have to be undone by me alone.' ... Therefore, stand up, be bold, be strong. Take the whole responsibility on your own shoulders, and know that you are the creator of your own destiny. All the strength and succour you want is within yourselves. Therefore, make your own future. 'Let the dead past bury its dead.' The infinite future is before you, and you must always remember that each word, thought, and deed, lays up a store for you and that as the bad thoughts and bad works are ready to spring upon you like tigers, so also there is the inspiring hope that the good thoughts and good deeds are ready with the power of a hundred thousand angels to defend you always and for ever.

*Wickham*

## THE CHALLENGING QUESTION

## I

Obviously it is not these personalities—the author, the artist, the philosopher, the politician, the entrepreneur and the commander—but the scientist or the inventor who has emerged as the hero of the age. The new dimension to which the recent space adventures have reached out is a testimony to the triumph of science. One is awestruck as the scientist makes bold to inquire into the hitherto unexplored regions and explodes the superstitions of centuries. He evokes not only our admiration but our gratitude for the unending stream of benefits we enjoy. Had science stopped with the theoretical enquiry, it would have been confined to the interest of a few intellectuals. What has made it popular is the demonstrability of the theory. Besides, the scientist's distrust of dogma, reluctance to confirm the postulates till they are put to test and readiness to accept only proven principles appeal easily to the layman. But the layman is hardly aware of the theory of probability and the principle of uncertainty; little does he know of the capricious areas defiant of observation and measurement or, in the words of Einstein, 'the present situation which is characterized—notwithstanding all successes—by an uncertainty concerning the choice of the basic theoretical concepts'.<sup>1</sup>

## II

However, what makes the common man thankful is the practical application of scientific principles to the needs of life. His faith in the efficacy of science is reinforced when he witnesses huge machines doing stupendous work in quantity and

<sup>1</sup> Einstein's foreword to the *Universe and Dr. Einstein* by Lincoln Barnett, Bantam Books, Inc., U.S.A., 1968, p. 10.



quality and delivering products of his daily use. In truth, the impact of machines and gadgets that the technologist invents can scarcely be overestimated. For they function for us, relieve us of drudgery and help us in the enjoyment of our desires. In the process of gratification of desires, one discerns the unpalatable fact that the more one enjoys, the more the tempo of desires grows to an undesirable and insatiable extent and that machines, for that matter, material wealth does not make mankind happy. The machine symbolizing the means of enjoyment tends in course of time to become the master and man its slave.

### III

Human needs are not fulfilled by sheer spectacular successes in the material sphere. Surfeit of enjoyment accompanying possession of pelf and power spells disaster in the long run, as is evidenced in the increasing incidence of suicides and mental illnesses in the advanced countries. It is patent to the keen observer that the means to loosen oneself from the overpowering grip of inordinate desire is not proliferation of means of enjoyment nor unbridled satisfaction of desire but self-control. Buffeted by the hard blows and disillusioned even in today's developed world, a man longs for real peace. In the present-day context of global conflicts and the individual's gnawing agony of *vacuity* in the midst of marvels of modern changes, Christ's challenging question—'For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'<sup>2</sup>—has assumed more and more relevance and importance than ever before. Like physical nature, human nature abhors a vacuum. Having learnt the hard way by experience in the school of the world that not through enjoyment but through renunciation lies the path to peace, a man is on the look-out for

something which will fill the vacuum and satisfy his longing for peace and bliss.

### IV

Religion bids fair to offer him that something. So he turns to it but a little haltingly, for he has heard more of the letter than of the spirit thereof. In tune with the scientific spirit of the time there is little wonder that he demands proof of God or spiritual verities from the theologian who professes knowledge of the scriptures. If the latter takes recourse to dogma, he becomes suspect in the eye of the former and betrays his profession. In these days the authority of even Pope, let alone the lesser ministers, is doubted and questioned. Dogmatic or authoritarian approach proves ineffective to satisfy the seeker. Nor does mere reasoning or vain argument convince the enquirer. Reason is *fact* adduced or *fact* serving as argument or justification. In the absence of fact of perception or experience, no amount of sermon or argumentation on the part of an ecclesiastic can give the needed incentive or guidance to one who, losing peace of mind and heart, seeks religion and asks for proof thereof. Mere intellectual acumen without ardent spiritual endeavour cuts no ice in the realm of religion. The scripture too testifies to the insufficiency of mere intellect or argumentation.

### V

What is called for is a scientific approach in our quest of spiritual truth. In the first place it is fair that we divest our mind of pre-conceived notions and approach the issue with an open and free mind. Secondly, before arriving at any conclusion we shall hear the persons who say that they experienced the truths before preaching them to others. They claim to have traversed the path and reached the goal. As path finders and faith founders they emerged in the

<sup>2</sup> St. Mark, 8.36.



world and their impact on their disciples is evident in that the latter felt themselves blessed and some of them with the requisite qualification even transformed. Thirdly they do not claim such power of spiritual perception for themselves only, nor do they demand our acceptance on dogmatic and doctrinarian grounds. Rather they affirm that the faculty of realizing the truths of religion is inherent in everyone and that if a man does not see God it is because he atrophies the faculty. It is not limited by race or sex, time or place. Godliness is not a prerogative of some individuals only. Those to whom spirituality is not mere conjecture but actual realization at its highest express the essence of their finding as *Tat tvam asi* (Thou Art That). Brahman, the ultimate truth of their experience, is omnipresent and ever-existent. As such, It is open to verification by man at any time. Men of religious experience declare that religion is nothing if not experiential and that the best proof thereof is one's own realization. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya says pointedly: 'The true nature of things is to be known *personally* through the eye of clear illumination, and not through a sage: what the moon is, is to be known with one's own eyes; can others make him know it?'<sup>3</sup> Even the authority of a sage is set aside here. We thus encounter a challenge of far-reaching import—not to take anything for granted on the authority of any one, but to experiment and test, to experience for ourselves the spiritual reality. Before we do this, it will be unscientific on our part to question the authenticity of religion.

Furthermore one has to bear in mind that the path to spiritual experience passes through reason. Intuitive insight, though inaccessible to reason, is not inconsistent with it. However, as realization is beyond the logical categories, there is adequate

reason that one has to transcend the realm of reason. This does not mean that a seeker can forgo it with impunity. Reason is invariably employed at every step of spiritual ascent lest it should be mixed up with obscurantism and sentimentalism. Indeed reason plays a very important role in religion. Even spiritual realization is required to stand at the bar of reason for confirmation. 'Everything it (religion) claims,' Swami Vivekananda averred, 'must be judged from the standpoint of reason. . . . If one does not take the standard of reason, there cannot be any true judgement, even in the case of religions.'<sup>4</sup> In fact, alongside of its insistence on first-hand direct experience, the Vedānta teaches us to subject the experience to relentless logic and critical enquiry.

## VI

Now the question arises: Of what utility is religion to mankind? Can it add to our material comforts and benefits like science? Let us ask ourselves the counter question whether science has always been a blessing. No doubt it has increased our well-being in certain areas; nevertheless there are regions where it is a curse. It all depends on how it is put to use by human will. In disciplining the will for commonweal, deepening our love for brother man and recognizing the unity behind the conflicting creeds and races in the hate-ridden and war-torn world, the role of religion is manifestly momentous. Religion is the motive force for rooting out selfishness, narrowness and smallness and for raising us to the plane of Universal, Infinite Self. In truth, all hatred and selfishness vanish like mist before the sun when spirituality illumines the heart. Rightly does the Upaniṣad proclaim: 'The wise who perceives all

<sup>3</sup> *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*, 54.

<sup>4</sup> Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, Vol. II, 1963, p. 335.

objects as existent in the Ātman, his own Self, and the Ātman in every being, for that reason hates none.<sup>5</sup> The answer to such self-aggrandizing activities as nuclear armament race, racial wranglings and political wars is spiritual awareness which unifies the whole humanity. We can cite as illustrations the Buddha and Jesus Christ who bore, because of their transcendental illumination, boundless love to man, even to those who reviled and persecuted them! Broadening of heart is the clue to elimination of ill will and establishment of peace. And this broadening is possible not only in the case of a few individuals like the Buddha and Christ but also in the case of leaders and common men, societies and nations.

Considered even from the utter utilitarian standpoint, religion, besides being conducive to peace on earth and goodwill to mankind, provides the greatest and highest utility that one can enjoy. The motivation behind discoveries and inventions, planning and execution is search for unalloyed and unlimited pleasure. Let us observe the facts of life, as they are, free from passion and prejudice. We plunge headlong in our endeavours and activities, no matter however hazardous or arduous, in our bid to obtain happiness. Has any man ever got pleasure without pain in the primitive past or in the sophisticated present? A man with a keen insight discovers and learns that there is no illusion more deceptive than to expect

happiness without misery. In the very nature of things, whether we like or not, pleasure and pain are the obverse and reverse of the same coin and neither can be had without the other. But hope is irrepressible in man; he cannot give it up, however hard he may try. Here religion comes in not to crush his hope, but to give the right direction to it, a direction that will lead him to fulfilment. For in an unmistakable manner, religion points out that unmixed joy is the very nature of our Self and that we experience, as sages and prophets have done, infinite bliss by spiritual realization. Like an expert teacher coming down to the level of the student, *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II. 8. 1) describes this incomprehensible, immeasurable bliss in terms that can be understood:

'Let there be a youth, a good youth, well read, prompt in action, steady in mind and strong in body. Let this whole earth be full of wealth for him. That is one human bliss.'

This human bliss is the height of felicity. Starting with this as the unit, the *Upaniṣad* proceeds to assess the bliss of various classes of celestial beings. The unit goes on increasing a hundredfold in the ascending order of the classes mentioned and the geometric progression culminates in the bliss of Brahmā. Even this large measure of Brahmā's bliss is nothing compared to the bliss of Brahman. So in realizing Brahman, we gain the highest utility and fulfilment—the immense, infinite bliss. Our thirst for infinitude is quenched on the attainment of our Self.

<sup>5</sup> *Īśa Upaniṣad*, 6.



# LETTERS OF A SAINT

## THE LORD MY REFUGE

Kankhal  
9.8.1912

She is awakened when propitiated by adoration and worship, and also by meditation.

Dear Sri—,

Yesterday I received your card dated the 4th and was pleased to note all information therein. It is but natural that you enjoyed witnessing the drama *Nasiram*. Girish Babu has presented the very words and ideas of Sri Ramakrishna in the form of a drama. I have read the *Nasiram* but did not witness the drama. I liked reading the drama very much.

You have put a substantial question. Your question reveals the inner working of your mind to the effect that you are gradually making spiritual progress. It is hard to make one understand the reply to a question (especially one of this nature) through a letter. Yet I shall try.

*Kulakundalinī* is the *jñāna-śakti* of the Ātman. She resides within every living being and is known by the names Caitanyamayī, Brahmamayī etc. She is asleep as it were in every living being. Her place is in the ādhāra-padma (or Mūlādhāra) situated near what is called sacral plexus. The yogis conceive of six lotuses within the body for practising meditation. Idā, Piṅgalā and Suṣumnā—these nerves are also within the body. After passing through Suṣumnā as soon as Kuṇḍalinī is united with Parama Śiva one becomes enlightened. When She is awakened, one gets visions and the like.

The place of Parama Śiva is in the thousand petalled lotus in the cerebrum. The Serpent Power, when it gets awakened, passes through Suṣumnā, rises to the brain and is united with Parama Śiva, then alone Jīva becomes spiritually awakened. She is awakened through yoga, worship, adoration, meditation and various other means. When She is awakened one gets the vision of effulgent light and Deities and has various other wonderful spiritual experiences. By the grace of Guru She is sometimes awakened of Herself. The six lotuses are situated : between the base of sexual organ and the anus ; at the base of the sexual organ ; in the region of the naval ; in the region of the heart ; the lower end of the throat ; in the space between the eyebrows and in the cerebrum. The names of the lotuses respectively are : Ādhāra (Mūlādhāra), Svādhiṣṭhāna, Maṇipura, Anāhata, Viśuddha, Ājñā and Sahasrāra.

Idā is on the left side of the spinal column, Piṅgalā is on the right side, and Suṣumnā is situated within the spinal column. (In unregenerate being) the way of the Suṣumnā stays closed. When the Kuṇḍalinī is awakened the way of the Suṣumnā get opened.

So far today. With love,

Your well-wisher,  
Sri Turiyananda





## PROFILES IN GREATNESS

### *When Death Smiled*

DEATH—the Great Leveller! The irresistible ‘bulldozer’ who breaks down, flattens and reduces to dust all created beings! True—yet not wholly. There have been spirits whom even Death could not break down, who, rather than being flattened to dust, have risen up and stood out in rare eminence and glory.

Tender yet irresistible as love, calm yet impregnable as truth—that is what these immortal spirits are. And among such the pride of place goes to SAVITRI, she whose radiant spirit and immortal love have been humanity’s cherished heritage.

Youth, beauty, wealth and intelligence—all this she had in abundance; nay something greater than that—a pure and placid, courageous and confident heart which knew not what depression, suppression or oppression was. Which prince would not consider it his great good fortune to have such a princess as his bride? So complete was her royal father’s trust in her that he left the choosing of a husband entirely to her own choice.

And what was the outcome? Many a prominent prince she met; but none impressed her. But, in the end one did; he conquered her heart even at first sight. Strangely though he was one living a hermit’s life. It was Satyavān, actually born

a prince, but now serving his old parents, specially the blind father who had lost his kingdom and had retired into a forest retreat.

Returning from her quest, Sāvitrī reported to her father about her decision, softly but firmly. The dutiful father, while ready to honour the daughter’s choice, felt also the need to consult wise sages as to the future prospects of the match. To his consternation, he was given to understand that Satyavān was fated to die in a year. Which human—any one with common sense—would insist upon such a match, which meant only courting widowhood within a year? Whoever would? But Sāvitrī would and she did; for hers was something more than common sense, a very ‘uncommon’ sense.

‘Never mind, father; please ask me not to marry any other person, and thus sacrifice the chastity of my mind. That good and brave Satyavān I love and I have accepted him only as my husband. A maiden chooses but once; she never departs from her troth.’

Fear and calculation had to give way before love and truth.

\* \* \*

Married she was to Satyavān and went to live with her chosen husband, serving



him and his old parents. All the while, unknown to them, her mind was alert to the fateful day. When only three days remained for the completion of the year, she sought to strengthen her heart and spirit through severe austerities—of holy fasts and prayerful vigils for three nights. On the fateful day itself, she sought permission to accompany the unsuspecting husband into the forest as he went to gather fuel and herbs.

The tragic moment, alas, did not hold back. Satyavān began to experience a strange dizziness and unearthly sleep overcoming him. The attentive wife immediately made him rest in her own lap; and very soon there itself he expired, true to prediction.

In that lonely forest, sorrowing Sāvitrī stayed on, clasping Satyavān to her bosom, keeping her silent vigil till she was interrupted by the God of Death himself, who arrived to take charge of the expired soul.

‘Daughter, give up this body... You have to. Death is the fate of man.’ Sāvitrī was quiet; no protest nor defiance. Death drew the soul out and proceeded on his way, only to discover a little after that he was being shadowed. ‘Daughter, why are you following me? *This is the fate* of all mortals.’ ‘I am not following you, Father. But *this is the fate* of woman—she follows where her love takes her, and the Eternal Law separates not loving man and faithful wife.’

Mightily pleased at this singleness of heart, Death offered her the choice of any boon *except* her husband’s life. Selfless Sāvitrī, tuned only to the needs of others, readily requested: ‘If so, may my blind father-in-law get back his eyes and be happy’. Gladly was the request granted.

Death resumed his journey and Sāvitrī her quiet trailing.

‘Sāvitrī! You are still following me?’ ‘Father, I can’t help. I try all the time but

the mind goes after my husband and the body follows. The soul is already gone, for in *that* soul is mine; and where you take the soul the body can but follow!’

Astonished at this steadfastness, Death offered another boon—except, of course, the husband’s life. And noble Sāvitrī had no hesitation in asking, ‘May my father-in-law regain his lost kingdom and prosperity.’ ‘So be it’ blessed Death but warned her to desist from her hopeless quest. ‘What can I do? I cannot choose not to follow where you take my beloved one.’ ‘Suppose he was a sinner and has to go to hell...?’ ‘Gladly would I follow where he goes—life or death, heaven or hell.’

Amazed at this unearthly love, beyond bargaining and beyond fear, Death offered yet another boon, not forgetting to add, however, ‘But, dear daughter, the dead should not be expected to come to life again.’ Again did Sāvitrī take Death at his word: ‘Since you so permit me, then let the imperial line of my father-in-law be not destroyed; let his kingdom descend to his son’s sons.’

Marvelling at this extraordinary purity of heart and subtlety of intelligence, Death also responded in an extraordinary way. He smiled! The smile, seemed to indicate some unique step he was to take; and so it was, for he told Sāvitrī, ‘Daughter, here is the soul of your husband. He shall live again. He shall live to be a father and your children also shall reign in due course. Return home!’

Love had conquered the otherwise ‘unconquerable’ Death, and the God of Death acknowledged the fact handsomely and with a smile: ‘Woman never loved like you. You are the proof that even I, God of Death, am powerless against the power of love, abiding love!’

—EXPLORER

Based on the lecture ‘The Mahābhārata’

Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Vol. IV.



## SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

### I

We have been told many things about ourselves and the world we live in. Our parents, educational systems and the books we have read have dowered us with much knowledge. From our own observation also of life in process, history on the move, and the world evolving and revolving, we have learnt a great deal. And then there is no reckoning of the extent of further knowledge we can gather with the least of effort these days.

Man's knowledge has become so vast today, that it is perhaps impossible to have a full catalogue of what he knows.

Alexis Carrel says:

'We now possess such a large information on human beings that its very immensity prevents us from using it properly. In order to be of service, our knowledge must be synthetic and concise. (Then mentioning the books he was writing he said :) This book therefore was not intended to be a treatise on Man. For such a treatise will run into dozens of volumes.'<sup>1</sup>

We suppose Alexis Carrel was quite conservative when he said that such a treatise will run into dozens of volumes. If we only consider how much is known only on a tooth of man not to speak of his entire body, we will realize that a big library will not be spacious enough to house even one copy of each book written on man's body and mind and his affairs in the world.

But, curiously enough, very few of us have been adequately told about one thing. And yet knowing or not knowing this one

thing makes all the difference in life, spiritually speaking.

What is that one thing?

It is this simple truth that the spiritual potentiality of man, of every single one of us, is simply incalculable. It is possible for a human being to become completely transformed into a divine being. He can see God and participate in His glory by becoming an instrument in His hands. Moreover, he can experientially know the identity between his soul and the Supreme Spirit.

These are statements of fact about man.

Swami Vivekananda's *Complete Works* of eight volumes run into more than four thousand pages. Through all these, the one theme which Vivekananda was never tired of emphasizing was the divinity of human nature. To this theme Vivekananda returned again and again with all the power of his conviction, love, persuasiveness, anxiety and sense of urgency.

Some of his most fervent and inspired utterances on man are :

'Christ and Buddhas are simply occasions upon which to objectify our own inner powers. We really answer our own prayers.

'It is blasphemy to think that if Jesus had never been born, humanity would not have been saved. It is horrible to forget thus the divinity in human nature, a divinity that must come out. Never forget the glory of human nature. We are the greatest God that ever was or ever will be. Christ and Buddhas are but waves on the boundless ocean which I am. Bow down to nothing but your own higher Self. Until you know that you are that very God of gods, there will never be any freedom for you.

'All our past actions are really good because

<sup>1</sup> Vide his: *Man the Unknown*, Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1935, p. xii.

they lead us to what we ultimately become. Of whom to beg? I am the real existence and all else is a dream save as it is I. I am the whole ocean; do not call the little wave you have made, 'I'; know it for nothing but a wave Satyakāma (lover of truth) heard the inner voice telling him:

"You are the infinite, the universal is in you. Control yourself and listen to the voice of your true nature."<sup>2</sup>

'Never forget the glory of human nature'. Of the nature of your near ones, the distant ones, of those whom you hate, of those whom you call your enemies, and also of your own nature, never forget the glory. When at the back of our mind there is this constant awareness, then we start reconstructing ourselves, whomever we meet and our world.

To the world of external nature we have not yet been able to add one grain of sand, however resourceful we may be. Neither have we been able to add any thing to what is there already within us. The challenge and the only task of life is to unfold what has been kept enfolded within us.

Do we really know what has been kept enfolded?

Swami Vivekananda says:

'Man is like an infinite spring, coiled up in a small box, and the spring is trying to unfold itself; and all the social phenomena that we see are the results of this trying to unfold.'<sup>3</sup>

In another place he says:

'Do you know how much energy, how many powers, how many forces are still lurking behind that frame of yours? What scientist has known all that is in man? Millions of years have passed since man came here, and yet but one infinitesimal part of his powers has been manifested. Therefore you must not say that you are weak. How do you know what possibilities lie behind that degradation on the surface? You know but little of that which is within you; for

behind you is the ocean of infinite power and blessedness.'<sup>4</sup>

Further says Swami Vivekananda:

'Each man is the infinite already, only these bars and bolts and different circumstances shut him in, but as soon as they are removed, he rushes out and expresses himself.'<sup>5</sup>

Infinity has been literally kept enfolded in man. That has to be unfolded. That alone is life's supreme and ultimate purpose and job. The brave ones among human beings must enthusiastically accept these.

## II

This Vedantic concept of man cherished in Indian view of life down millenniums is, however, singularly different from other concepts of man current in the contemporary world.

Spiritually speaking, what view we hold of man, that is of ourselves, is any day more important than what party we vote for. The cherished image of today becomes alive tomorrow. The mind makes out of you, what you thought you were. Hence we must be careful in having as authentic and as comprehensive a view of man as possible. For this, even a cursory comparative study of the views of man current in the contemporary world may well be of some help.

*The Materialistic view:* There is the mechanistic view of materialists among scientists who regard man as nothing better, higher, or different from other material objects. Man is a part of the physical order which obeys physical and chemical laws like any other object of the physical world. Man has shape, size, colour, undergoes chemical changes, due to functions of various organs and glands.

*The Vitalist view:* The Vitalists hold

<sup>2</sup> Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, Vol. VII, 1958, pp. 78-79.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. I, 1962, p. 389.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. II, 1963, pp. 301-2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. V., 1964, p. 298.



the view that homo-sapiens is but one of the millions of species of animals that inhabit the earth. The unit in human body is the cell, which is composed of various chemicals. Man like others animals, eats, moves about, sleeps, grows, reproduces, learns from experiences and dies. In his will to live and for preservation of the species he is one with other animals.

*The Sociologist view:* Sociologists study man in relation to other human beings, and find him different from other animals inasmuch as man has power of articulation, invention and organization through which he has developed society, culture, civilization, industry, education, government and religion.

*The Psychological view:* One of the youngest of sciences is psychology. The various and varying schools of psychology have sought to explain the phenomenon of man by sensation, perception, memory, will, desire, libido or motor activity and so on and so forth.

*The Marxian view:* Another view of man which is held perhaps by a third of the human race is the Marxian view. According to Marx, man never was, is or can possibly be anything except the product of the social or economic forces. His ethics, religion, tastes and preferences are not his free choice but simply what his environment has forced upon him.

Another view of man which is fashionable among intellectuals of the world today looks on man as a driftwood floating and sinking in a sea of unreason, brooded over by a destiny which is callous, if not cruel. And life is a drama of the absurd. And so it does not matter that it does not matter!

Undoubtedly from a study of the various views about man we get much valuable information for understanding the phenomenon of man or what man thinks of himself.

But the Vedantin believes that none of these views of man taken singly, nor all of them together give us adequate concept of what man is. All of them fall short of the spiritual stature and total concept of man. They do not even touch the real man; they only partially describe the apparent man.

The Vedantin holds the view that man is cosmic being. What we see of him does not manifest his true nature but only obscures it.

We seldom think of this our body as a part of the cosmic body. But in fact, it is so. It is composed of the elements which in their subtle and gross aspects, make the entire universe, that can be perceived.

Our little individual mind is in direct communication with the entire universal mind.

And, as in spirit there is nowhere any dividing boundary, which our bodies and minds artificially create, we are identical with the Supreme Spirit.

### III

These almost unbelievable truths about man's true being, are not accidental acquirements of some fortunate few. They are statements of potential facts about every human being.

You may very well ask: well, if these are statements of facts about me too, why do I not know them to be so?

The answer is: What has been kept enfolded cannot be known unless it is unfolded. May be even then you doubt it!

Look at these beautiful flowers. These fortunate fragrant blooming things have reached the Lord's altar after covering by stages their pilgrimage. Those who have worked in the garden know that in the black soil, in fertilizers they use, or even in the seed, out of which comes the tender plant there is hardly any poetry. And yet one day you witness this wonder happening before your eyes, this blossoming forth



of the fairest thing on earth with its fragrance which like the soul of man you cannot see, its exquisite colours, its unspeakable personality of tenderness.

Where were all these wealth hidden? In a tiny seed. A man who has only seen the seed of a flower and has never seen a flower or observed the growth of a plant, will not believe that such a thing is possible. But a man who has seen has grounds and reasons to believe.

It requires properly cultivated soil, sunshine, (or properly controlled heat), air, water, time and also proper care for the blossoming of a flower out a seed, to happen.

What has been kept enfolded in a man is much more mysterious and amazing, so much so that even he himself tends to disbelieve them. And so men hold varied inferior views, or say, different views about themselves.

But after witnessing the blossoming of flower you cannot anymore reasonably doubt what has been kept enfolded in a seed. Likewise, you cannot anymore doubt the potency of man after seeing man in whom perfect spiritual unfoldment has taken place.

#### IV

It is an interesting psychological fact to know that what view of ourselves or general human nature we are going to hold depends on the plane in which our mind has gravitated to dwell.

In the *Gospel* Sri Ramakrishna explains the seven planes of consciousness.'

To follow what Sri Ramakrishna teaches on this point we need have a general idea of what is known as Kuṇḍalinī Śakti (the Serpent Power).

'It is the spiritual energy lying dormant in all individuals. According to the Tantra there are six centres in the body, designated as Mūlādhāra, Svādhiṣṭhāna, Maṇipura, Anāhata, Viśuddha and

Ājñā. These are the dynamic centres where the spiritual energy become vitalized and find special expression with appropriate spiritual perception and mystic vision.

'These centres, placed in the Suṣumnā, form the ascending steps by which the Kuṇḍalinī or the spiritual energy passes from the foot of the spine to the cerebrum. When an easy pathway is formed along the Suṣumnā through those centres, and Kuṇḍalinī encounters no resistance in its movements upward, and downward, then there is the *Ṣaṭcakrabheda*, which means, literally, the penetrating of the six cakras, or mystic centres. The Mūlādhāra Cakra, situated between the base of the sexual organ and the anus is regarded as the seat of Kuṇḍalinī. The centres are metaphorically described as lotuses. The Mūlādhāra is said to be a four-petalled lotus. The Svādhiṣṭhāna Cakra, situated at the base of the sexual organ, is a six-petalled lotus. The Maṇipura, situated in the region of the naval contains ten petals. Anāhata, placed in the region of the heart, is a twelve-petalled lotus. The Viśuddha, at the lower end of the throat, has sixteen petals. The Ājñā, situated in the space between the eyebrows is a two-petalled lotus. In the cerebrum there is the Sahasrāra, the thousand-petalled lotus, the abode of Śiva, which is as white as the silvery full moon, as bright as lightning and as mild and serene as moonlight. This is the highest goal, and here the awakened spiritual energy manifests itself in its full glory and splendour.'<sup>6</sup>

It is more important to remember that Kulakundalinī Śakti, or Serpent Power, is none other than the Divine Mother inhering in every human being in that form. She remains asleep as it were in Mūlādhāra. What we call going beyond the Maya, awakening of spiritual consciousness, going to Samadhi, or having vision of God or mystic experience,—everything is the outcome of the awakening and ascending of the Kuṇḍalinī.

One day a musician sang a song about the awakening of the Kuṇḍalinī :

<sup>6</sup>'M': The *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* translated by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1944, Explanatory Notes, p. 967.



Awake, Mother! Awake! How long Thou hast  
 been asleep  
 In the lotus of the Mūlādhāra!  
 Fulfil Thy secret function, Mother:  
 Rise to the thousand-petalled lotus within  
 the head.  
 Where mighty Śiva has His dwelling:  
 Swiftly pierce the six lotuses  
 And take away my grief, O Essence of  
 Consciousness!<sup>7</sup>

On hearing the song said Sri Rama-  
 krishna:

'The song speaks of Kundalinī's passing through  
 six centres. God is both within and without.  
 From within He creates various states of mind.  
 After passing through six centres, the Jīva goes  
 beyond the realm of Maya and becomes united  
 with the Supreme Soul.'<sup>8</sup>

Elsewhere Sri Ramakrishna points out:

'The mind of a worldly man generally moves  
 among the three lower centres: those at the  
 navel, at the sexual organ, and at the organ of  
 evacuation.'<sup>9</sup>

In that state of the mind when the con-  
 sciousness cannot penetrate to any higher  
 level, a man stays steeped in worldliness  
 bereft of higher awareness or vision, and  
 brooding over lust and lucre.

The psychology involved in this situation  
 has some helpful lessons for the spiritual  
 aspirants.

When the mind dwells on these three  
 levels of consciousness we have perceptions  
 and perspectives commensurate with this  
 locus-standi of the mind.

It is possible to have a very learned and  
 penetrating view of things when the mind  
 is dwelling on the three lower levels. But  
 every thing we perceive and think of, will  
 be coloured by the tint of the level of the  
 mind.

The Freudian view of man cannot be  
 said to be untrue to the extent it goes. But  
 how far does it go? All his penetrating

study of human psychology might well have  
 been done when his awareness stayed lock-  
 ed in the three lower levels. If this were  
 the case, it was psychologically impossible  
 for him to have a different reading of  
 human psychology.

When we, readers of his works, have our  
 minds per force commuting in these three  
 lower levels we are psychologically pinned  
 down to think: how true is Freud!

If we look at ourselves and at others  
 through a tri-focal lens of anus, sex and  
 navel, we are bound to perceive other  
 human beings as creatures dominated and  
 motivated by impulses and urges generated  
 from these centres of consciousness. Our  
 so-called 'objective' study cannot be inde-  
 pendent of the tint of the subject's state of  
 being.

We are afraid that the fact is pretty  
 ignored that the psychologist is a victim of  
 his psychology.

Fortunately, however, human psychology  
 does not stop there.

Our perception, percept and perspective  
 change the moment our mind is able to  
 rise to a higher level of consciousness.

As Sri Ramakrishna says:

'After great effort and spiritual practice the  
 Kuṇḍalinī is awakened. ... The Kuṇḍalinī when  
 awakened passes through the three lower centres  
 and comes to the Anāhata which is at the heart.  
 It stays there. At that time the mind of the  
 aspirant is withdrawn from the three lower  
 centres. He feels the awakening of Divine  
 Consciousness, and sees light. In mute wonder  
 he sees that radiance and cries out: "What is  
 this? What is this?"'<sup>10</sup>

At that time the world of the senses  
 ceases to have wonted attraction for him.  
 Now, can we with any pretension of rati-  
 onality claim that this experience, disposition  
 and predilection too are not authentic  
 human psychology just because it is different  
 from the gross states we are familiar with?

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 106.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 166.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 425.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 425.

When leaving behind the three lower planes, the mind comes to dwell on the fourth plane or the heart, the very same man undergoes inner metamorphosis. Something *unknown so far* goes open in him. He sees things which he has not seen before; he knows things which he has not known before. His perceptions and perspective become different, because he himself has become a different person. Things which he has desired before appear inconsequential, nay loathsome, to his newly awakened consciousness.

The awakening of spiritual consciousness brings about such a transformation in his aspirations and sense of values, that it becomes impossible for him to desire old things in the old way. He now desires unknown things in a new way. He now aspires for things spiritual, as distinguished from things temporal.

Hence ensues within him a struggle between old habits and instincts and new awareness and aspiration.

Inner struggles, spiritually speaking, is a good sign at a certain stage of our life. They indicate that within us some thing is up against the dictates of the animal in man.

But inner struggles can be greatly distressing and self-defeating too, if we do not know how to take motherly care of our newly awakened spiritual consciousness.

It is obvious that the aspirant can never be safe even when his mind dwells on the fourth plane. It is a region of storms and stresses. From here, however, one gets the inner assurance that the hide bound concept of animal-man is a false one, for the total man is not confined to the three lower planes of consciousness.

Greater things happen when the mind rises to the three higher planes of consciousness. He now knows that he is more than what he had thought himself to be.

And hence everybody else too is in the same way greater than his known empirical self.

Sri Ramakrishna says:

'The centre known as Viśuddha is the fifth plane. The centre is at the throat and has a lotus with six petals. When the Kuṇḍalinī reaches this plane, the devotee longs to talk and hear only about God. Conversation on worldly subjects or "woman and gold", cause him great pain. He leaves the place where people talk of these matters.'<sup>11</sup>

When the mind dwells on the fifth plane our struggle with our lower nature is on its way to an end.

But Sri Ramakrishna warns:

'Even from this position a man may slip down to the three lower centres. So he has to be on his guard.'<sup>12</sup>

From the standpoint of the strategy of inner life, some significant psychological truths we may always remember with great profit.

As long as our mind dwells on the three lower planes of consciousness, we are not likely to have any inner struggles in the manner of some lower animals who do not seem to have any.

But on the fourth plane inner struggle is inherent. Awakening of spiritual consciousness does not bring us peace but throws us into bitter struggle with our lower nature. Symbolically speaking this might have been what Christ meant by 'the sending of a sword'.<sup>13</sup> A spiritual aspirant should not grudge the passing sword.

Another important psychological truth that is worth remembering is this: We cannot get rid of the inner strife in that plane of consciousness where by nature of things struggle is inherent.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 425.

<sup>12</sup> *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1938, p. 282 (saying No. 907).

<sup>13</sup> Vide: St. Mathew 10.34.



There are stormy regions in the geography of the world where you must expect and experience storms. If you do not want storms to blow off your roof, then go elsewhere to build your home.

We cannot get rid of animal passions when the mind dwells on the three lower planes of consciousness, for passions are inherent in those planes.

The strategy of spiritual struggle is not to remain stay put on those planes and then giving a mad fight, but in doing those practices which lifts the mind to the higher plane. When the mind is lifted and established on the higher plane, the battle is won without a fight!

To face the fact of our inner struggles intelligently we should always remember two principles:

(a) Our essential self is different from our mental states. Hence we should never identify ourselves with any physical or mental state.

(b) The solution of problems inherent in a particular mental state is in ascending to the higher plane of consciousness.

As the mind rises from the fourth to the fifth plane, one becomes as it were a newly reborn person. With ignorance and illusion left in the lower plane of consciousness, he lives in divine awareness enjoying nothing but talks on God and things divine.

It is the same man who once revelled in lower passions. Today he cannot even stand worldly talks. How could it happen? The answer is : something has gone open in him.

This transformation does not happen only in the case of an elect few. This is the general law. When Kuṇḍalinī rises in X to the fifth plane he will have the same experience as Y will have in the same case.

An analogy may be given: In the basement of the Empire State Building in New York nobody expects to see sunshine and blue of the sky. But whoever takes the ex-

press lift and ascends to the topmost floor will see blue of the sky, sunshine and he will see the vast horizon.

Continuing Sri Ramakrishna says in the same discourse quoted above:

'Then comes the sixth plane, corresponding to the centre known as Ājñā. This centre is located between the eye-brows and it has a lotus with two petals. When the Kuṇḍalinī reaches it, the aspirant sees the form of God. But still there remains a slight barrier between the devotee and God. It is like a light inside a lantern. You may think that you have touched the light, but in reality you cannot because of the barrier of the glass.<sup>14</sup>

When a person sees form of God day and night, can he any more think that the world is any more real than God? He cannot. Moreover he experiences such attraction toward God, that the world becomes relatively less important for him. The devotee becomes somewhat God-intoxicated. In that state his psychology has little in common with that of the person who dwells in the three lower levels of consciousness. Therefore such a person's conduct is often not understood by common people.

When you see everything but God you behave in one way. When you see God constantly, certainly you behave in a different way, and that may be quite a mad way, to the onlookers.

Sri Ramakrishna Assures:

'... he (the aspirant) is above all fear when his mind reaches the sixth centre opposite the junction of the eye brows. He gets the vision of the Paramātmān and remains always in Samādhi. There is only a thin transparent veil between this place and the Sahasrāra or the highest centre. He is then so near the Paramātmān that he imagines he has merged in Him. But really he has not. From this state the mind

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<sup>14</sup> 'M': The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna translated by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1944, p. 426.



ALL PERVADING HUMANISM  
OF  
RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA

SRI V. V. GIRI

[Text of a speech by Sri V. V. Giri, the then Vice-President of India, presiding over the Ramakrishna Birth Anniversary Public Meeting at 5-30 p.m. on the 23rd February, 1969, held at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi—Ed.]

I deem it a privilege to be here today to offer my respectful homage to the sacred memory of Ramakrishna Paramahansa on the occasion of the 134th birthday celebrations of this great saint whose influence and message transcend the boundaries of our motherland and also whose philosophy goes beyond the limitations of any sect or religion. I have had the privilege of reading a few works on Ramakrishna Paramahansa when I was in jail in the forties and also read the collected works of Swami Vivekananda recently when I could to some extent comprehend the principal tenets and teachings of these great personages.

What struck me most in reading about Ramakrishna was his simple and common approach to problems, and his philosophy is one which could be understood even by an ordinary man not well-versed with the nuances and technicalities of highly intellectual approach to problems of religion. The quintessence of the message of Ramakrishna, if I may sum up in one word, is 'Humanism' and that naturally has drawn me closest to his writings. What Ramakrishna preached is as relevant today as it was when he propounded them and I have no doubt in my mind they will continue to inspire mankind for ages. His many allegories and anecdotes from the day to day life of the people are simple and Ramakrishna Paramahansa could drive a point home which even the most ordinary person could understand.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa was indeed

a realized soul who could sift the chaff from the grain and separate the pure milk from the water. The essence of all philosophies, he could sum up in a few simple words and he could draw many adherents and followers because he preached what he practised and practised what he preached. An embodiment of infinite religious ideas, Ramakrishna rendered the monastic order founded by him broad-based and comprehensive in its outlook. While many other religious movements did not succeed in full measure because of their sectarianism, Ramakrishna Mission because of its robust universality is spreading not only in our country, but throughout the world. Ramakrishna was indeed a wonderful gardener, for he made a bouquet of different flowers radiating many hues and colours and exuding varieties of fragrance.

The life and teachings of Ramakrishna constitute one of the few unifying forces in the welter of present-day conflicts and tensions. The imperative words which fell from his lips are reaching human hearts and reverberating throughout the nooks and corners of the Mother Earth, for his message transcends time and space and has a direct and universal appeal, attracting all types of people, no matter what their background or their faith is. He was the fountain-head of spiritual enlightenment and sublimity. He attained a state of 'Bhāva-Mukha'—a state in which the mind could ever dwell in the Divine both in its absolute and relative aspects, and yet without the



least distraction from this union, apply it-  
self actively to the mundane affairs of life.  
He was established in a state of inward  
bliss, mental equipoise and radiant joy.

'The story of Ramakrishna Parama-  
hansa's life is a story of religion in practice.  
His life enables us to see God face to face.'  
This is how Gandhiji has depicted Rama-  
krishna's greatness. He was the embodi-  
ment of all religions. By sheer dint of his  
relentless '*tapasyā*', dynamic vigour, scintil-  
lating intellect, profound insight into the  
mine of spiritual values, Ramakrishna has  
carved out for himself an abiding niche in  
the hearts of the people. His utterances  
and actions bear the stamp of a spiritual  
genius. Ramakrishna left behind him a  
band of spirited disciples to carry out his  
work for the well-being of humanity. After  
the passing away of Ramakrishna in 1886,  
a monastic order bearing his name was  
organized by his devout disciples headed  
by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda.  
From the inception it set up a two-fold acti-  
vity of preaching Vedanta and social work  
irrespective of caste, creed or colour.

The greatest contribution of Ramakrishna  
was to draw as his principal disciple young  
Narendranath and who after being ordain-  
ed became Swami Vivekananda and  
who brought name and fame not only  
to Hinduism but to India. The  
refreshing catholicity of thought, the  
capacity to perceive in every religious sys-  
tem sublime elements which elevate and  
ennoble life, the intense, stormy religious  
fervour which Ramakrishna possessed in  
such a remarkable degree, and the deep  
mysticism which was evident behind his  
devotional ecstasy—all these were trans-  
ferred to Narendranath as if by a magic  
touch. The young disciple in turn was  
prepared to carry out the mission of arous-  
ing the Indians from their stupor to shed  
fear and face the world with confidence.

Swami Vivekananda, the cyclonic Hindu

as he was called, was more concerned with  
removing the poverty from the earth and  
the emphasis he laid on his master's teach-  
ings of work and patriotism placed him on  
the lofty pedestal much above the common  
Sanyasis. Strength of character and physical  
well-being were given proper emphasis as the  
major requirements for developing the per-  
sonality of an individual and he himself  
said, 'What the world wants is character.  
The world is in need of those whose life is  
one of burning love—selfless. That love will  
make every word tell like a thunderbolt.  
Awake, awake, great souls! The world is  
burning in misery. Can you sleep?' Again  
Swamiji thundered, 'Strength is the one  
thing needful. Strength is the medicine for  
the world's disease. Strength is the medicine  
which the ignorant must have when oppres-  
sed by the learned.'

Swami Vivekananda did not preach a  
philosophy of inaction. He stressed the fact  
that work was worship. 'Work, work and  
work'—that was his motto. He said, 'If a  
man curses the world, goes into a forest,  
mortifies his flesh and kills himself little by  
little by starvation, makes his heart a barren  
waste, kills out all feelings, and becomes  
harsh, stern and dried up—that man has  
missed the way.' There is the strong cur-  
rent of humanitarianism and consideration  
for the poor and the downtrodden which  
runs through all his thoughts, writings and  
speeches. Positive fearlessness, incessant  
work and continuous striving towards the  
goal should be the guiding spirit of every  
activity. According to him, 'If there is a  
sin in the world, it is weakness; avoid all  
weaknesses, weakness is sin, weakness  
is death.' Here is a new interpretation of  
religion exploding the myth that religion or  
spirituality was only a negative approach to  
life.

Vivekananda often mentioned in his work  
of the economic fetters and social barriers  
which stifled all progress. He therefore

wanted the misery and poverty to be liquidated from every hearth and home. His foremost desire was to wipe out the tears from every eye. He believed in the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden, in popular education and the young Indians standing on their own legs. While he emphasized material progress, he did not ignore the spiritual enhancement.

In all these things, Swami Vivekananda drew inspiration from Ramakrishna, for Ramakrishna Paramahansa mentioned that saintliness was not exclusive of patriotism or humanitarian service. He elevated spirituality to the lofty pedestal of social ser-

vice, catholicity of outlook and compassion. No wonder, Romain Rolland has described Ramakrishna as the fulfilment of the spiritual aspirations of the millions of Indians during the past three thousand years. Service to man is the highest form of worship. All religions ultimately lead their sincere devotees to the same Godhead. Ramakrishna thus sowed the seeds of 'Daridra-nārāyaṇa'—the sapling which was nurtured and watered under the tender care of Swami Vivekananda who proclaimed, 'We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas.'

I had the privilege of participating in the

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can come to the fifth, or at the most, to the fourth centre, but not below that.<sup>15</sup>

Further says Sri Ramakrishna on Kuṇḍalinī:

'After passing the six centres the aspirant arrives at the seventh plane. Reaching it the mind merges in Brahman. The individual soul and the Supreme Soul become one. The aspirant goes into samadhi. His consciousness of the body disappears. He loses the knowledge of the outer world. He does not see the manifold anymore. His reasoning comes to a stop.'<sup>16</sup>

By going into samadhi the aspirant directly perceives Brahman. Perceiving Brahman means experientially knowing oneself as pure consciousness, and everything else as the same.

As the Upaniṣad says, whosoever knows Brahman becomes Brahman.<sup>17</sup>

In this Brahman-become-man the animal man is forever dead. Though apparently living in a body, in awareness he encom-

passes the whole universe as non-dual being. He has attained immortality and eternal bliss. He is liberated while living.

An unregenerate man whose mind used to dwell on three lower levels of consciousness, gradually, through some process came to have a higher opening into his own being, accompanied by appropriate mystic experiences, until he came to the seventh plane of consciousness and experienced wonderful things. This process of higher and higher inner blossoming is known as spiritual unfoldment, which takes place only when, through the practice of appropriate spiritual disciplines, the Kuṇḍalinī is awakened and risen unimpeded to its highest destination.

In fact religious life makes little sense unless and until one finds one's way to this spiritual unfoldment.

So the important question is: How does this spiritual unfoldment happen? Does it happen in a chance mysterious way or can we deliberately work for it?

(to be concluded)

<sup>15</sup> Vide: *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1938, pp. 282-83 (saying No. 907).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>17</sup> Vide. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 2, 2, 9.



activities of the Ramakrishna Mission in different parts of India and in Ceylon. They are the first one to reach the people in times of need and necessity. Whether it is floods or drought, the members of this Holy Order are there to render succour to the suffering millions. It only shows the training that is imparted by the Ramakrishna Mission and is indeed true to the gospel of Ramakrishna whose one religion was all pervading humanism.

I must confess here I cannot consider myself to be religious in the accepted sense of the term. My only religion is humanism, for after all religion preach the same fundamental doctrines of Truth, Charity, Goodness and Love and if we only realize this, the bickerings and antagonisms that prevail between those that claim to be the faithful followers of different religions will end. This is indeed the message of Swami Vivekananda also who fully realized that the true religion is to provide solace to the starving man.

Swami Vivekananda has graphically portrayed his guru's fascinating personality: 'His face was distinguished by a child-like tenderness, profound humility and remarkable sweetness of expression. No one could look upon it unmoved.' Such was the radiance attained by Ramakrishna who adhered to his own dictum: Whatever the faith we profess or the method we adopt, if we do it with pure heart and devotion, we can attain Supreme Bliss. True devotees of any religion will honour the followers of any other religion with great humility. All religions will lead us to the Supreme Reality.

The best way in which we can celebrate the birthday anniversary of a saint and seer like Ramakrishna Paramahansa is to recapture the essential unity of all religions and put down those ugly forces through persuasion and education. That alone will be the true homage that we can pay to Sri Ramakrishna. Let us resolve towards the realization of this objective.

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## THE CONSTRAINTS ON HUMANITY

DR. G. S. MURTY

If one ponders over the history of human society, one begins to see that there is a problem which is recurring so often that it can be called an eternal problem. The word 'problem' has a (clear) meaning in our mind. The inherent capacity of the (human) mind to think about and organize the affairs of (human) being is responsible for its capacity to comprehend the meaning of the word 'problem'. The problem under discussion can be posed in an operationally meaningful way also for the same reason. In fact this problem has indeed been faced earlier by the ancient thinkers.

What is being done now is to use the phraseology of physical theories so that a significant part of the human society can see the content of the problem and the solution. Even those who had no formal education would be able to follow the discussion due to the fact that they had some experience of life to guide them. Several examples will be given at suitable places to illustrate the concepts involved in the discussion.

Now, the problem we all face today is this. What is the best way to optimize the output of interacting systems with mis-

matched constraints? The key words in this question are two: 'Optimizing' and 'Constraints'.

Optimization of an output is a general requirement of every system. Two examples will be given to illustrate this concept. First, suppose we want to have a steam engine that will give maximum power for a given input of fuel. Second, suppose we want that maximum number of students should pass with good grades for a given effort of the school. We have in the first example the problem of optimization of the power of the engine for a given fuel, and in the second example, we have the problem of optimization of the number of students with good grades for a given effort of the school, which includes the teachers, students, library, etc.

In the above two examples one should notice a difference. The steam engine is an inanimate object while the student is not. This difference is crucial. The steam engine can be designed relatively easily in any way we choose, but this is not true in the case of students. In fact the constituent parts of the school can be subjected to different constraints that are not the same for all parts, and if this happens, the problem of optimization becomes very serious. This is characteristic of all biological systems that interact with each other while they are subjected to different constraints individually. Here, we see also that it is in general not possible to transfer bodily the knowledge acquired in the study of inanimate systems into the study of biological systems. We can of course imagine that we can devise a combination of biological and inanimate systems that interact giving rise to optimum output. However, we shall restrict our attention in this article to only human systems in interaction with each other when they are subjected to different constraints.

As examples of human systems that

could be subjected to different constraints we can quote: a student-teacher system; a husband-wife system; a government-people system; a government-government system; a scientist-politician system; a mathematician-physicist system; a historian-philosopher system; an artist-accountant system; a moralist-gambler system; and so on. One can quote innumerable other combinations of human beings, each subjected to different constraints. They all belong to one category, namely, the category of systems with some constraints. One can study every such combination and determine the optimum output, if any, of their interaction. Though this is a legitimate way of studying these systems under some situations, this is not the best way open to us. The reason is that it is hopeless to exhaust all conceivable combination of human beings. Further, it is not obvious whether a husband-wife system should be studied as such, or as a people part of the Government-people system. If we agree to study both, then it becomes necessary to carry out such duplication in every conceivable way. The need then arises to study all conceivable systems in all conceivable combinations which is really a hopeless task. Therefore, one should adopt a more practical way of dealing with the whole problem. It would be interesting to see if one can get near a general truth which has a validity irrespective of which particular combination of system one is interested in. Fortunately, there is at least one truth which is of universal validity.

This general truth happens, as we shall see, stutable only as an impossibility theorem. It is so simple that its validity will dawn on the human mind at the first hearing and can even be dismissed by the unwary as of no significance. I choose to emphasize here the importance of this truth, because almost all the suffering of humanity since ancient times till today



arises from a non-recognition of the elementary truth embodied in the impossibility theorem. In the history of science, one finds several examples of fundamental truths appearing as impossibility theorems which are sometimes called negative theorems. The three laws of thermodynamics are examples of this. One can also find such instances in pure mathematics e.g. Gödel's theorem. These impossibility theorems or laws helped us to mark out a clear boundary to the human endeavour and thereby achieved two ends; first, they prevented man's mind from embarking on achieving the impossible; two, they channelled the human effort in finding the optimum benefit with a given effort under given constraints. Therefore, negative theorems played really a decisive role in human thought.

The important result that we should realize in the problem of interacting system with different constraints is this:

It is impossible to find an optimum output of interacting systems with mis-matched constraints.

To realize the validity of this basic truth, we need the help of some self-evident truths about human systems which are stated as follows:

- T1 Every system is subjected to some constraints.
- T2 The set of all constraints of any two systems may or may not be equal. If they are equal we call them identical systems.
- T3 Even if a set of constraints of one system A, is not equal to a set of constraints of another system, B, there can still exist some other set of constraints of A which are equal to some set of constraints of B. When this happens we say that systems A and B are partially equal or matched systems.
- T4 Two systems may be matched, but may not be identical. This follows from T2 and T3.

T5 When a system is not matched to any other system, we can know nothing about the output of such a system, because there is no way of knowing about its real qualities, because all real qualities of a system are derived from the output of interaction with other systems.

T6 When two systems are matched, it is possible to find an output which is non-zero, because we can know the qualities of the systems from the output of interaction between them.

Among these six truths T5 needs a little more elaboration. The systems that are mis-matched behave in a strange and unpredictable way, and so their qualities cannot be fixed unambiguously. Therefore it is impossible to understand anything about such systems. T5 shows that if the systems are not matched, it is impossible to know anything about their output, and therefore it is impossible to find an optimum of output. T6 shows that if the systems are matched then we can indeed find an output which is non-zero, and therefore it is possible to find an output which is optimum.

We come now to the central theme of this article. When human systems interact with a constraint which is the same for all, that is, if they are matched systems, it is always possible to find an optimum output. This is the reason why the Prophets and Saints who wanted to save the humanity from avoidable hardship and consequent death tried to bring humanity under some constraints. The ten commandments of Moses, the Nine Rules of Mohammed, the Eight fold way of Buddha. The Three Fundamental rules of Zoroaster, (Good thoughts, good words and good deeds), the insistence of Hindu Vedanta to realize the individual self as Brahman, the aphorisms of Confucius, the tenets of Jains, Sikhs and other religious communities and the Divine

Love of Jesus Christ, of Chaitanya and of Sri Ramakrishna and many other spiritual beings—all these are aimed at one goal, namely, to instil in the human hearts a constraint that is the same for all human beings. The purpose of these great men who loved humanity deeply was to save it from death caused by mis-matched interactions among individuals. In their times, what they achieved was enough. They did succeed in putting their contemporaries into one constraint. But this very success gave rise to a new situation. The group of people united among themselves by the constraint of their masters became mis-matched with members of other group (people who were bound by their own master). The way out of this situation is to find a set of new constraints that have an appeal to all men and women. Fortunately one can decipher such a set of constraints, known to almost all men at least vaguely. When they are explicitly stated, everybody will realize that they are acceptable to all. The willingness of men to accept these depends on whether they realized the value of the impossibility theorem stated earlier in this article. It is hoped that what has been said so far is adequate to show its importance, and on this assumption the following points are made to serve as constraints on human thought. It is possible to substantiate the validity of these points if they are not clear at the first sight, but no such attempt is made to discuss them exhaustively in this article. Now the constraints on human thought should be:

1. Realize that every event in life has two causes: individual cause and collective cause.
2. Realize that individuals shaped the destiny of mankind through effort.
3. Greatness lies not in being great, but in making greatness possible.
4. There is enough to support life, pro-

vided life is based on replenishable resources.

5. The human body is a means of action, but not an end in itself.
6. If a donkey works without food for a day, do not try to see if it can do so every day. Give it food and rest every day, just as you give it the daily work.
7. Never cut, nor even bite, the arm that feeds you.
8. Never be in such a hurry that you have to trample on others' feet.
9. If a ship, full of people, is unbalanced, do not carry out a quick change of people from side to side.
10. Do not forget God's name, whatever its sound may be.

A few comments about the nature of these constraints are in order. The first two contain the essence of history of human society. The third constraint is the source of all ethics known to us and all the efforts of moralists have a validity only because of this constraint. The fourth constraint is a statement about life, and follows from the fact that life is replenishable (a fact known to everybody) and therefore should be based only on replenishable resources. This constraint is particularly important in a technological civilization where we are banking much on non-replenishable resources. This constraint should be the central philosophy of every economic, political and social philosophy. The fifth constraint tells us to look at our body as we look at every other thing in the world. Constraints six and seven help us to remove misery caused by human greed. Constraints eight and nine point out that all actions should be done at their normal speed only. If actions are begun in time, then they can be carried out at normal speed. Unusual speeds become necessary only when actions are begun too late. These two constraints demand that we should start action in time.



The tenth constraint is the only constraint which cannot be easily explained, because, one needs to know some basic truth about the way of man's learning process. The tenth constraint is intended to help human mind to reach levels of thought and perception that are not normally available to it. There are however innumerable human beings who know the value of this constraint. Even those who know nothing of this can verify in their life the unfailing effectiveness of Divine Name in revealing to them truth so far unknown to them and making them feel an incomparable joy of existence.

All the afore mentioned constraints, except the last one can be understood by everyone who had some education. Those that have read about the life of great men, for example, the life of the Mahatma, will realize that the tenth constraint is also known among the human beings. In fact,

the tenth constraint can do singly what other constraints can do collectively. But I have included it as one of the ten constraints because many men have not realized the role of Divine Name in life so far. It is hoped that all human beings will realize the importance of these constraints and make an effort individually to bring into the world a state of mind of man where love of heart and peace of mind become as natural as the breathing of man. One can then be sure that humanity started to move in the godward path, a path chalked out already by innumerable spiritual beings. When that is done, the achievements of man in the physical sciences will have a tremendously different and exciting meaning. One will then know man's relation with other men, and also with the universe at large. May all attain the noblest in life! I close with reverential salutation to the Teachers who educated me.

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## THE TRUE WELL-BEING OF THE STUDENT: SRI AUROBINDO'S VIEWS

SRI T. NATARAJAN

Education is to society what civilization is to evolution. It (Education) is an institution evolved by the society to carry forward the evolutionary purpose on the plane of the mind. Mind, in a large sense, includes every part of the being that exhibits a little of the thinking faculty. The central figure here is the student. It is he who alone can be the repository of the past in a future generation. It is his well-being that makes for meaningful education. Sri Aurobindo, as every other great thinker, has had his views on the subject. He has examined the systems of education of the East and the West—he himself had the

advantage of going through the grind—in the light of his new philosophy for earth, shown us what is to be discarded and what cherished. As is usual with him in every other domain of intellect he touched upon, here too, he adds a new dimension to what is hitherto known as education, the new element being the status he has accorded to the student. In essence he makes the student the hero of the field of education, even as he has made man the king of nature. All knowledge is within the heart, it is only to be evoked by process of education. It is not something to be instilled from outside. Nothing is to be forced on

the student—not even character. The student must be let known that discipline is not an external force to which he must offer obedience, but it is a system of inner responses to external stimuli. Having made the student the hero of the occasion, he enjoins on him the task of finding himself and lending himself to be shaped by the inner and outer guides. It is no mean task. The student is to observe *brahmacarya*, remove the clouds on his mind and other parts and restore himself to his original greatness. In doing so he must train the primary faculties of his mind, memory and judgment. Only judicious exercise makes for objectivity. Sri Aurobindo lays down the significance of the body in the attainment of this ideal. It is the body that holds this fabric of knowledge together, as it were. Hence the rigorous training he prescribes for the maintenance of its health. Nor is it to be achieved by ascetic rigours; it is to be persuaded into understanding and health.

The welfare or well-being of the student community, we may say, has two sides. The first being what he is to be given by the parents, the society, the environment, the school and the teacher; the other is his own part in the acquiring of it. He must be a willing partner in the endeavour. His destiny he must know and exhibit a living awareness of it. What comes to him, he must readily receive and assimilate. He must lend himself to be shaped by what he knows to be the desired end. Still the task of consolidation of attainments is ahead of him.

In the present context, in India, the attitude of the parent in upbringing the child or student is far from the ideal. His one preoccupation is to 'discipline' the youngster. Often he errs on the wrong side. We now know the harm done by such practices. Sri Aurobindo says 'you can impose a certain discipline on children, dress them

into a certain mould, lash them into a desired path, but unless you get their hearts and natures in your side, the conformity to this imposed rule becomes a hypocritical and heartless, a conventional often a cowardly compliance.'<sup>1</sup> It is necessary for the parent to be on his guard in the light of this warning. Anyway he suffers from severe limitations of his own. The one permissible relation between the parent and child even in the context of teaching, is love; and the rule of love must acquire the force of ordinance. The parent must hold the future unhindered well-being of his child dear and constantly remind himself of his duty to the child. He must keep in mind that 'we cannot be satisfied with a mere resuscitation of some past principle, method and system that may have happened to prevail at one time in India, however great it was or in consonance with our past civilization and culture.'<sup>2</sup> It is to the future that he must look forward. The measure of the child's well-being is a function of the parent's enlightenment.

The student who emerges out of the family is received partly into the school and partly into the society that surrounds him and the school. Both have great roles to play in finding his true welfare. At school the student must be given, 'an education proper to the Indian soul and need and temperament and culture we are in quest of.'<sup>3</sup> He is to receive there, 'a true national education,'<sup>4</sup> which takes its foundation, 'on our own being, our own mind, our own spirit.'<sup>5</sup> Sri Aurobindo sets high

1 Sri Aurobindo: 'A System of National Education' in the collection entitled *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education*, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, 1960, p. 21.

2 Ibid. 'A preface on National Education' p. 4.

3 Ibid. p. 5.

4 Ibid. p. 8

5 Ibid. p. 8



store by what the Indian genius can do in evolving a higher synthesis of scientific methods. He speaks of 'the possibility of the Indian mentality working freely in its own nature discovering new methods or even giving a new turn to physical science.'<sup>6</sup> This being the national potential the school must help the student train the powers of his mind. They are the *citta*, the *manas*, the *buddhi* and the element of genius. The *citta*, the active memory is to be improved, the *manas* to be 'trained by the child himself under the teacher's direction',<sup>7</sup> the faculties of the *buddhi* 'to be raised to their highest and finest working power',<sup>8</sup> the phenomenon of genius to be welcomed and nourished to perfection. All the time the teacher, says Sri Aurobindo, 'can only put the growing soul into the way of its own perfection.'<sup>9</sup> To interfere with it with a schoolman's mind is to do violence to the flowering spirit. He must transmit vitality and not impart instruction. Cramming the mind with odd details of knowledge is always detestable to him. At best it might produce a spineless wonder perfected with a skill.

Sri Aurobindo holds the system of reverent emulation of the Guru of old 'a far superior method of moral discipline';<sup>10</sup> but in the present day wishes 'to substitute the wise friend guide and helper for the hired instructor'<sup>11</sup> of the borrowed European system. He feels the restoration of Guru-śiṣya system impossible. Yet the student is to inherit 'the thirst of knowledge, the self-devotion, the piety, the renunciation of the Brahmin—the courage, ardour, honour, nobility, chivalry, patriotism of the Kṣatriya—the beneficence, skill, industry, generous

enterprise and large open-handedness of the Vaiśya—the self-effacement and loving service of the Śūdra,'<sup>12</sup> as these 'constitute the moral temper we desire in our young men'.<sup>13</sup> No hired instructor can ever attempt this much! Sri Aurobindo is against 'merely teaching the dogmas of religion'<sup>14</sup> to children. On the other hand he says, 'whether distinct teaching in any form of religion is imparted or not, the essence of religion, to live for God, for humanity, for country, for others and for oneself in these must be made the ideal in every school'.<sup>15</sup>

In teaching a subject he favours 'simultaneous and successive teaching'<sup>16</sup> that arouses the interest of the child and leads into a greater and more comprehensive grasp of what is taught. He would not have the schools teach many subjects in snippets. 'Teaching by snippets must be relegated to the lumber-room of dead sorrows',<sup>17</sup> says he. The student is 'to develop his instruments of knowledge with the utmost thoroughness'<sup>18</sup> and not fill his memory with odd pieces of out of date information.

'The perfection of the senses as ministers to thought must be one of the first cares of the teacher',<sup>19</sup> he wrote. He would have the student purify his nerve currents so as to illumine his sense perception. This he says can either be done by simple breathing exercises or by the more developed art of *nādi-śuddhi* of yogic discipline. Proceeding faithfully he says, the aspirant can land upon 'telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, presentiment, thought reading, character reading,'<sup>20</sup> all of which 'belong to the

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 'A System of National Education' p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

*manas*'.<sup>21</sup> To this end he must purify the nervous system, get rid of warping emotions, discolouring moral habits.

To the fostering of memory and judgment he allots the pride of place. If done well, he says, 'There is no scientific subject the perfect and natural mastery of which cannot be prepared in early childhood by this training of the faculties to observe, compare, remember and judge various classes of object'.<sup>22</sup> Two more faculties that are needed to bring the mind of the student to the rounded perfection are imagination and the logical faculty.

Perfection is the aim of any endeavour deserving attention. For us the aim is the true well-being of the student. He would have perfected his well-being only when he carries it to all levels of his existence. The remoter he reaches, the more perfect will he be. To Sri Aurobindo the basis of the student's effort must be his perfected body. In speaking of physical culture he says perfection 'must be the aim of our physical culture also'.<sup>23</sup> This is so because his 'ultimate aim.....is the Divine life.....in the conditions of material universe'.<sup>24</sup> Further the physical body 'may even in the end be suffused with a light and beauty and bliss from the Beyond and the life divine assume a body divine'.<sup>25</sup> As the body has grown out of the soil of inconscience he says 'even in its fullest strength and force and greatest glory of beauty, it (the body) is still a flower of the material Inconscience'.<sup>26</sup> And this physical vesture of the divine soul inside must exceed itself, its narrow limitations to render possible the divine life, the life of Light, Love and Power.

When the body is patiently taught to respond to the newer needs of a hazardous situation as obtains in wars, expeditions and the like, its 'endurance can reach astounding proportions and even the inconscient in the body seems to be able to return a surprising response'.<sup>27</sup> There is a vaster source of capacities in the 'impulses and instincts of our subtle physical being which is an unrecognized but very important element and agent in our nature'.<sup>28</sup> Miracles of endurance and skills would become matters of course when this source is drawn upon. To accomplish this 'there are two conditions'.<sup>29</sup> They are 'an awakening..... of the body consciousness',<sup>30</sup> and 'an evocation of its potentialities'.<sup>31</sup> And the high results are limited only by the limitation 'of the individual temperament and nature'.<sup>32</sup> The need for an ideal physical base for making higher functions of mind possible is illustrated by him in the field of poetic inspiration. He says, 'In what seems to be an exploit of the spirit so purely mental as the outpouring of poetic inspiration, there must be a responsive vibration of the brain and its openness as a channel for the power of the thought and vision and the light of the word that is making or breaking its way through or seeking for its perfect expression. If the brain is fatigued or dulled by any clog, either the inspiration cannot come and nothing is written or it fails and something inferior is all that can come out; or else a lower inspiration takes the place of the more luminous formulation that was striving to shape itself or the brain finds it more easy to lend itself to a less radiant stimulus or else it labours and constructs or res-

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 39.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 'Perfection of the Body' p. 43.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 43.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 45.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 46.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 51.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 51.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 51.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 52.



ponds to poetic artifice'.<sup>33</sup> In other words body in the best of health is plastic enough to let the Divine express Himself through it; and while in lesser plasticity contrives to rob the heavenly poem of its sweetness of content rendering it a mere product of human brain. Hence the insistence on the many sided perfection of the body too.

On the part of the student to lend himself to be the raw material of this great process one needs an energy of stupendous dimensions. Where is it to come from? Here too, Sri Aurobindo refers us to the eternal wisdom of the ancients who gave us the institution of *brahmacharya*. By this, man's natural physical energies are gathered, conserved, purified and sublimated into nervous, mental and spiritual energies. He says, 'To raise up the physical to the spiritual is *brahmacharya*'.<sup>34</sup> Again he says, 'The fundamental physical unit is the *retas*, in which the *tejas*, the heat and light and electricity in man is involved and hidden. All energy is latent in the *retas*'.<sup>35</sup> Self-control conserves the energy in the *retas* and conservation increases the store. Again, '*retas* is *jala* or water, full of light and heat and electricity in one word, of *tejas*. The excess of the *retas* turns first into heat or *tapas* which stimulates the whole system'.<sup>36</sup> All forms of self-control generate heat and 'turns to *tejas* proper, light, the energy which is at the source of all knowledge; thirdly, it turns to *vidyut*, or electricity, which is at the basis of all forceful action whether intellectual or physical. In the *vidyut* again is involved the *ojas* or *prāna śakti*, the primal energy ..... (which) fills

the system with physical strength, energy, brain power and in its last form of *ojas* rises to the brain and informs it with that primal energy'.<sup>37</sup> And finally, 'it is the *ojas* that creates a spiritual force or *Vīrya*, by which a man attains to spiritual knowledge, spiritual love and faith, spiritual strength'.<sup>38</sup> Thus it is *brahmacharya* that fills ourselves with utter energy for the works of the body, heart, mind and spirit. It is this the student must aspire for, achieve, foster and employ to his desired goals. No longer rises the problem of want of energy now that the eternal source is tapped with success.

It is well known that Sri Aurobindo has enunciated the theory of oneness as seen in his seer vision that every aspect of life is an aspect of the Spirit. Only that each man understands according to his poise of mental, spiritual understanding. Hence his famous dictum ALL LIFE IS YOGA. In utter consonance with that basic ideal he looks upon the student and his well-being as aspiring aspects towards that Godhead of oneness. Among all the manifestations of nature there is one which can exceed its limitation if it so chooses. It is man. Man has in him, the spark, the divine representative who is constantly aspiring to rend the veil between him and God so as to restore his unity with God. He is the only being who stands erect, who looks upto heaven even by his physical posture. The student who is to pass on to manhood finds his true welfare in finding his mission as man, the Godward journey. The one and only duty of the student is to God, his Creator. He finds his true welfare in the measure he fulfils this duty to God.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 54.

<sup>34</sup> Sri Aurobindo: *The Brain of India, Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry, 1967, p. 14.*

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 16.



# ILLUMINATING DIALOGUES FROM INDIAN LORE

## YUDHIṢṬHIRA PROMISES TO BE ANGRY AFTER THIRTEEN YEARS

SWAMI TANMAYANANDA

The five brothers, accompanied by Draupadī, came to the forest to live for twelve long years. Till the day before their arrival they had been the royal princes enjoying wealth, power and honour. But they then lost everything and came to the forest like beggars. Hardship of the forest life and every kind of privation were their lot then. What a terrible fate had overtaken the virtuous, innocent and good-natured Pāṇḍavas!

Behind the grim fate was waiting the glorious Dharma as though to proclaim their greatness to the humanity at large. Yudhiṣṭhira the personification of Dharma could see this. He was calm, silent and gathered in thought, though repentant for the cause of grief to his brothers and beloved Draupadī. But others were burning with agony for all the evils inflicted upon them by the wicked Duryodhana, Duṣśāsana, Śakuni and Rādheya.

Bhīma's heart was bursting as it were with sorrow and anguish. His eyes were red with anger. There was no word to express the feelings of Draupadī who was like an image of sorrow. How much that virtuous lady was insulted and put to shame by the Kauravas in the assembly hall!

The grief-stricken Draupadī addressed Yudhiṣṭhira:

'My lord, it breaks my heart to look at you in these surroundings. When I look at your brothers, my grief is even more terrible. But you, in spite of this, can smile and be happy. My frame burns day and night with anger and humiliation. It appears, you are not at all affected by all these things. This is not befitting to a Kṣatriya. It is your duty to protect us.

'You are a great believer in the virtue called patience. But, my lord, misplaced patience is wrong. This is not the time for patience, but for wrath against your enemies. Both the virtues are necessary no doubt—wrath and patience. But you must not make a fetish of this virtue of patience. Listen to my words; my lord. Please show some spirit, at least for the sake of your unhappy brothers, if not for my sake.'

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

'My dear queen, I see you and I see my brothers. Please do not think that the sight of the five of you does not affect me. Do you feel, I am so heartless as all that? I feel too the anger that is in your heart. But the time is not propitious. This is not the time to give way to anger.

'This is the time for Patience. Anger is a terrible thing. It blinds the eye of wisdom. It kills the soul. It leads man to commit wrongs. It is not an ornament as you seem to think. We must practise patience. The more difficult



it is, the more should be our desire to achieve it. We must go through these thirteen years in exile. I have promised. I can never think of going back on my words, and yield to anger, which is a weakness. We must try to control it. I am afraid my words do not please you. But we must face facts. Please be not angry for these words !'

Draupadī could not be pacified by these words. She was fury personified. She never relished the talk of Dharma. She said,

'Your madness for Dharma is even more powerful than your love for us. What is this patience you talk about? It is a stranger to me.'

Yudhiṣṭhira smiled at her and said:

'Patience is a wayward woman. She chooses some people for her dwelling place. You are not favoured by her. She seems to think that Yudhiṣṭhira is the only person fit enough for her. She did not choose any one of you or Duryodhana. She had chosen me. I am honoured. I cannot think of deserting her !'

Bhīma, who had been listening to their talk all the while came near Yudhiṣṭhira. He was as angry as Draupadī. Torrents of words like arrows flew from his mouth and charged the patient Yudhiṣṭhira. Bhīma wanted that they should march into the city of Hasthināpura, destroy the Kurus and establish their kingdom. He concluded:

'You must not behave like a man who has lost all interest in life. Please be like a Kṣatriya.'

Yudhiṣṭhira heard everything and was silent for a few moments. He then said:

'Bhīma, I do not blame you for the harsh

words you spoke. They hurt me. But you are right. I deserve all your criticism. Whatever had to happen has happened. I made slave of you, my beloved brothers. As for my losing Draupadī, it is too painful to even think about it. When you two wound me with your angry words and reproaches, I am silent because you both are justified. I deserve all that you say. But, if you think that your words will make me change my ideas of right and wrong, then you are sadly mistaken. I mean to follow what I have promised. I must stay in the forest for twelve years and one year in disguise. To me truth means more than all the wealth of this earth. At the end of thirteen years if the sinful Duryodhana refuses to give us back the kingdom, then, Bhīma, I will become as angry as you want me to. Not before that. I know the greedy Duryodhana will not like to part with the kingdom. You can then have to your heart's satisfaction a fight with the Kauravas. Draupadī, you can then feast your eyes by looking at the dead bodies of all your enemies. I too, shall fight with you against them. I shall also get angry. I shall bide my time to give vent to my indignation confined for thirteen years. No one will be able to believe that it is the same Yudhiṣṭhira who stood silent in the Court of Kauravas under the greatest provocation. But mind you, Bhīma, all this will be thirteen years hence. Not now.

'Bhīma, do you know why did I try to stop you from giving vent to your outraged feeling, on that agonizing day? It was because of this: one should not do a wrong thing on the impulse of the moment. We will get our chance. Then, within the bounds of Dharma, you can do anything you please. But not now. You must listen to my words though they are not pleasing to you. No one can make me *swerve* from Dharma.'

Source: *Mahābhārata: Āraṇya Parva*,

Pub: Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

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Patience is power; with time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes silk. —Chinese Proverb.

# WHAT IS CHARACTER?

PROF. O. P. GUPTA

Character is no rigid affair and concept. It is something living, something flexible, something in unison with the time and place in which it comes into display. Rigidity, as a matter of fact, can never be a feature of good and great character. Rigidity is the very source of vice and ill will. Life and rigidity go ill together. Flexibility or elasticity is the very essence of life. One who cannot adapt oneself to the time and place in which one is asked to function cannot lay claim to much of character. Toleration and adaptability go together. Toleration is a chief feature of character. A man of character is essentially a man of understanding, a man of toleration, a man, who listens to others because he is listened to.

Toleration requires a bit of more explanation. It is the essence of character. What is the basis of toleration? It is the noble and firm conviction that truth is nobody's monopoly, that nothing is final in this world and that many paths may lead to the ultimate reality. It cuts at the root of all rigidity and lopsidedness and is as much elastic as life is. In ancient India, Ashoka practised toleration in plenty and that is why, the world counts him as one of the greatest kings of all times, whereas other more powerful and tyrannical kings have succumbed to the indifference of time. His toleration has become proverbial. Akbar, too, was a tolerant king and so among the great Moghuls, he holds a position of unequalled eminence and glory.

Toleration presupposes patience and perseverance. The lesser the patience in a man, the scantier is the toleration that he will be in a position to display. A man who is provoked into anger over trifles certainly lacks some element of character.

A tolerant person has, sometimes, even to tolerate trash and humbug and dirt. It is difficult to irritate him. He remains unruffled even in the midst of trials and agonies of life and is therefore certainly a man of character.

Character is a wide, wide term yet something very deep. It is the very genius of life. All that leads to life and strengthens and confirms life is of character. All that undermines life could not be in any way connected with character. Character promotes life. Character is confirmation of life. It could never be the negation of life. It springs from and is regularly fed upon the very founts of life.

Character is also a social concept. It is the outcome of man's contact with other man or men. From this standpoint, in the absence of human intercourse it loses all relevance and validity. One's character signifies one's character towards other individual or individuals. It does not exist or thrive in the void. A man or woman, living isolatedly in a jungle, does not require character. Character is noble behaviour between two individuals or among more than two individuals. Animals don't have any character and we don't expect any from them. Character is one's attitude towards a fellow being and so all that urge us to remain away from our fellow-beings must be inimical to character.

Live and let live, which is basically and essentially a social maxim is a cardinal feature of all character. All varieties of anti-social conduct fall within characterlessness. Anything that taints and vitiates and pollutes the life of community is certainly reprehensible.

Character is something dynamic, something mobile, ever-moving. If mobility is



the very law of universe, it is equally the law of character. Character is not in any way static. It abhors all types of stagnation. It is a flow undivided in the same way in which life is a continual never-beginning, never-ending flow.

Character is something inner, something mental and spiritual. It is what a man is from within. Character is the soul of a man or a woman, not his body. So character is a spiritual affair.

Is character agility or smartness? Very much so. Is character initiative or the pioneering zeal? Yes, it is. Is character courage and fortitude? Yes, it is these things. Is character insight or a keen sense of perception? Yes, it is. Is character foresight? Yes, foresight has something to do with character. Is character the ability to speak and the ability to write? Very much so. Has character to do something with sympathy and a sense of accommodation and a sense of consideration? Yes, it has. As a matter of fact, character includes all the above detailed qualities, but while, including them, transcends them. Character, after all, is an integral unity of all the conceivable qualities of head and heart and should be viewed synthetically. Of course, the above qualities should be harnessed to right ends; otherwise they separately and collectively cease to have anything to do with character.

Decidedly, character has much more to do with heart than with head. It is, essentially, a gentle and virtuous heart. Character, first, means emotion and then the control of it. A man who lacks emotion and is therefore cold and indifferent at heart cannot lay claim to much of character. Sentiment, right sentiment is the first thing about character. Absence of emotion means absence of character. Cold, calculating and inflexible beings do not obviously possess much of character. All character is based upon emotion. Kindness,

sympathy, generosity, charity etc. all belong to the fold of emotion. In a way, character is self-expression, the expression of one's controlled and trained emotions.

But if character is partially self-expression it is also self-control. It is both 'impulse' and 'law'. What is 'law'? It is nothing but check of impulse. So if character is the expression of impulse, it is equally the control of it. Without a timely and proper control or curb, emotions may run riot, when expressed.

Wordsworth, the greatest poet of nature in the whole range of English poetry has given expression to these concepts of 'law' and 'impulse' in his short poem: 'Three Years She Grew In Sun And Shower'. He says :

'Myself will to my darling be  
Both law and impulse; and with me  
The girl, in rock and plain  
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower  
Shall feel an overseeing power  
To kindle or restrain.'

This signifies that nature takes upon itself to impart both the skills of self-control (that being law) and self-expression (that being impulse) to Lucy the girl in question, thus ensuring a fuller and harmonious development of her character and personality.

Character does include a sense of proportion, a sense of unity, a sense of harmony, a sense of symmetry. It does partake of the aesthetic taste and is artistic. If one is not able to appreciate the artistic quality of a poem or a painting, this may be viewed as a glaring lack in his character. A man of character is expected to possess an artistic sensibility and sensitivity which is not the exclusive possession of artists.

Character is not something sophisticated and urbanized. It steers clear of all cant, hypocrisy, affectation and pretence. What is hypocrisy which is the bane of our present-day society? Hypocrisy is the dis-

parity between the inner self of man and his outer self. It is the divergence between his word and his action. It is the jarring dichotomy which urges a man to hide his ignoble interior from others and to wear a mask of nobility and virtue and friendship. Character has little to do with this disparity or dichotomy.

Character is not necessarily the fulfilment or realization of traditional virtue. It is neither uniformity, nor conformity, for both these are manifestations of rigidity itself. It has an originality of its own and this originality is the sure mark of flexibility. A great character assimilates the virtue of all that it comes into vital contact with and discards the vice. It is a growing and a developing entity. Unthinking constancy may not be its trait, for constancy of that type, once again, implies rigidity. Constancy, by a wit, has been described as the virtue of fools.

Character is science too, in addition to being so many things. If one is not scientific or reasonable or objective in one's approach, one hardly deserves to be called a man of character. In other words character is detachment. Attachment, except when it is to God is the source of misery

and therefore it is to be shunned, as our scriptures enjoin. The Gītā emphasizes the value of detachment and holds it aloft as the supreme virtue.

What is detachment? In simple and clear words, it is transcending one's ego—one's likes and dislikes—one's hopes and fears—one's flesh and senses. It is clear and unmixed vision which looks upon the object as it is in itself and does not permit its prejudices to stand in the way of appreciation of other things. It is the quality of lotus which arises from mud, but does not partake of the earthiness of mud. A detached being is a cool being; he thinks dispassionately, but not indifferently; he is disinterested and not uninterested. Character lies ultimately in this disinterestedness which, to use an expression of Wordsworth, can see into the life of things.

But at the same time a man of character does realize that the scientific is not all; it is only a partial apprehension of a part of reality. Character is a total concept and deals with man in the totality of his feeling, thinking and being. It baffles all analysis, but for our convenience we do analyse it and our analysis, in the nature of things, is bound to be incomplete.

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Purity of personal life is the one indispensable condition of building a sound education. When your heart is not pure and you cannot master your passions, you cease to be an educated man. And what is education without character? And what is character without elementary personal purity?

*Mahatma Gandhi.*





WHAT  
INSPIRES ME  
MOST IN  
HOLY  
MOTHER'S  
LIFE

### SWAMI TADRUPANANDA

Sri Ramakrishna's approach to God is strictly scientific. Even a scrupulous sceptic cannot scoff at his experiences and utterances without running the risk of being scoffed at, because the realizations of Ramakrishna are open and accessible to anyone fulfilling those conditions which he fulfilled. Through his unparalleled struggles and experiences of God, he declared that God is both with and without form, and many things more. 'None', he said, 'can put limits to the infinite and inscrutable ways of God.' As did the ancient Indian Rsis, he too realized God in the dual aspect of Brahman and Śakti. He saw that the whole universe was an interplay of Śiva and Śakti. For him this Śakti was identical with Brahman as 'water and its wetness or milk and its whiteness'. He addressed that Śakti as Mother and considered himself as Her beloved, trusting child. Till the end of his life he remained a blessed child of the Blissful Mother. Naturally he saw the manifestation of the Mother in all, especially in women, his wedded wife being no exception.

Sarada Devi came into his life as a wide-eyed wisp of a five-year-old. She survived the Master by nearly thirty-four years. Any earthly relationship between them being impossible, Sri Ramakrishna helped her to attain her supreme spiritual stature.

He unambiguously announced his own non-difference with her. He paid the highest tribute to Sarada Devi by worshipping her as the Divine Mother in the right royal way. The appellation of 'Holy Mother' was first used by Swami Vivekananda while referring to Sarada Devi.

What inspires the present writer most in the Holy Mother's life can be put down in a few paragraphs. Something, however, always remains unsaid about the Holy Mother for she is after all not fully comprehensible.

First of all, it is the natural and informal way she enters the consciousness of a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. At the beginning of one's acquaintance with the Master, she hovers like a shadow at the mental periphery, as she used to do at Dakshineswar during his lifetime. 'Who is that woman, there?' one begins to wonder. By the time the wonder wanes, the peripheral woman will have become the central Mother. She claims half the berth reserved for the Master and very casually occupies it! That is the natural way—the way sunlight streams in at the morning or the southern breeze flows into the room or the spring suffuses nature—she comes into a devotee's life.

Secondly, it is the noble attitude she kindles in us with respect to women. In

a world staggering with the heady wine of 'sex and gold', the devotee can find a sobering antidote in the Mother. With her at the focus of the mental eye, the alluring female is transmuted into the assuring Divinity. The very thought of the Mother acts like a depth-charge to destroy the subliminal carnality. She thus bars and bolts the 'gateway to hell' and opens wide the 'gateway to liberation'.

Finally comes the Holy Mother's unbounded love for one and all. There is no question of anyone's deserving it. The Master's love might be a trifle discriminatory, but the Mother's is all-inclusive. Once the great Master wanted to question the Mother's prerogative in this domain, but the Mother, docile though she was,

firmly told him that she would look to it! The Master, with a knowing wink, must have enjoyed the snub. The Mother once said to a devotee, 'I am your own, real mither—"satyakār Mā"': It means that she is the greater-than-mother Being that nourishes him. With the earthly mother there is the umbilical separation, but not with her! It is to her that all must return at the eventide of life. The Mother's love envelops all like the sky, and yet its intimacy is felt in the throb of the heart. To the dismayed and disconsolate child, sitting amid the shambles of the play-house, it comes as the reassuring voice and the gentle clasp. 'Here I am, my child,' assures the voice and the child smiles. The smile never fades from its face.

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## METAPHYSICS—ITS NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE

DR. SHASHI BHUSHAN PRASAD SINHA

Here, we want to briefly discuss the necessity and importance of the study of metaphysics. It is not possible to go into details of the problem in this brief article. Naturally, we shall confine ourselves to following three things. Firstly we shall see what we mean by metaphysics. Secondly, its importance will be stated. Lastly, we shall show that we cannot really live without metaphysics.

Metaphysics has been generally understood as the study of the 'reality' or 'the ultimate reality'. The term 'metaphysics' is said to have been used for the first time in 70 B.C. by Andronicus of Rhodes. Richard T. De George has aptly observed:

'The term was first used (about 70 B.C.) by Andronicus of Rhodes in editing Aris-

totle's works'.<sup>1</sup> We further know in this context that this term was used for those treatises of Aristotle which came just after (meta) those which were known as Physics (physica). It is well-known that, philosophical problems were discussed by Aristotle here. Aristotle has tried to describe metaphysics as follows: 'There is a science which studies Being qua Being, and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature'.<sup>2</sup> We do not wish to give other definitions of metaphysics. It may be sufficient to state here that metaphysics has been considered to be the heart of philosophy and is said to be concerned with the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard T. De George—*Classical and Contemporary Metaphysics*, Hold, Rine Mart and Winston, New York, 1962, page 1.

<sup>2</sup> Richard T. De George has presented extracts from Aristotle's *The metaphysics*, Ibid, page 4.



study of the reality as such. Without lengthening our discussion further here, we may safely say that metaphysics may be understood as the study or the vision of the reality. It is a synoptic vision of the reality. It is something like our 'world view'. It may not be justified to see metaphysics only as the science or the study of the superphenomenal reality or transcendental reality or something like that because in that case we shall not do justice to empirical metaphysical systems.

After briefly mentioning what we mean by metaphysics, let us state its importance very concisely. In this context, it may be mentioned at the very outset that metaphysics is really the heart or the kernel of philosophy as stated above. Of course, we cannot ignore various anti-metaphysical movements which have appeared at different intervals in the history of world philosophy and which has culminated in the recent movement of logical positivism and in the school of analytic philosophy (linguistic analysis). But these tirades against metaphysics have been also subjected to scathing criticisms. Here, it is neither possible nor desirable to state and examine them for want of space. But, we may state in this context that metaphysics cannot be eliminated in the unqualified sense of the term. We feel that one may be critical and sceptical of a particular type of metaphysics, but not of metaphysics as such. Really, even so-called anti-metaphysicians are brother-metaphysicians. We may add in this connection that this remark holds good of the school of logical positivism as well. Now so far as the present day analytic school of philosophy is concerned, it may be humbly stated that their approach may be described as non-metaphysical at best. So, metaphysics is really the 'highest wisdom' as it was visualized by ancient Indian seers.

Metaphysics cannot be supplanted by

sciences. Really, they are not antagonistic to each other. We all know that sciences give us piece-meal fragmentary knowledge of the reality. Besides this, they are based on some presuppositions and postulates. So, sciences have their limitations. Therefore, sciences cannot expect to overthrow metaphysics. Here, we should not be misunderstood. We do not decry sciences. They have their own utility and importance. Instead of further discussing the relationship between the two, which may admit of a separate article, we like to observe here that metaphysics has its unique importance as it is the 'highest wisdom'. As stated earlier also it is the vision of the reality, something like our world view. It will not be inappropriate and irrelevant to state here that the importance and necessity of metaphysical wisdom is all the more greater in this age of scientific and technological developments. Rightly Mr. K. Bala Subramania Aiyer has observed while welcoming delegates to the 38th Philosophical Congress in Madras: 'Even the experiments of nuclear explosion have affected the health of the present generation and the future generations as well. Philosophy should, therefore, occupy a pre-eminent place in this nuclear age'.<sup>3</sup> It is evident that what he holds of philosophy is fully applicable to metaphysics as well.

Now coming to the necessity and importance of metaphysics, it may be observed that the necessity and importance of metaphysics as the highest wisdom should be something beyond the shadow of doubt and dispute. We, human beings, really cannot live without it. We are thinking beings and so we are bound to think about things and beings which surround us. It is a different matter that everybody may not be a con-

<sup>3</sup> Sri K. Bala Subramania Aiyer—*Future of Philosophical Studies in India*, Bhavan's Journal, Vol. XI No. 17, March 14, 1964, page 39.

scious and consistent metaphysician. But perhaps this is a fact that every reasoning thinking being uses metaphysics directly or indirectly, advertently or inadvertently. Here we may refer to Mr. Keightley and to Dr. Radhakrishnan. Mr. Bertram Keightley has observed: 'So whether you like it or not, you actually are, in fact a metaphysician and you act, live, think and feel upon a Metaphysical assumption: however much you may deny it or call it nonsense.'<sup>4</sup> Dr. Radhakrishnan has also stressed on the necessity of metaphysics when he has thus observed: 'Man as a reflective being needs a metaphysical view. Even those who are opposed to metaphysics find metaphysical thinking inescapable. Whenever thought grows conscious of itself we have a metaphysics.'<sup>5</sup> We may add here that Kant who was critical of transcendental metaphysics had to admit the necessity of metaphysics. He remarked:

'That the human mind will ever give up metaphysical researches is as little to be expected

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<sup>4</sup> Mr. Bertram Keightley—*The Necessity for Metaphysics*, Review of Philosophy and Religion Vol. 7, 1938.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Radhakrishnan—Foreword in *Metaphysics, Man and Freedom* by K. S. Murty. Asia Publishing House, New York, 1963.

as that we, to avoid inhaling impure air, should prefer to give up breathing altogether.'<sup>6</sup>

Instead of giving further views, we may conclude our discussion by stating that man, so long he is a rational being, cannot fully live without metaphysics. It is really disquieting that during this present era metaphysics is tried to be banished by votaries of linguistic analysis which should be at best a branch of epistemology or logic or linguistic. After all, metaphysics should not be treated as the handmaid of logic or of science or any such thing. Really, it is highly imperative that we students of philosophy should realize the rightful status and importance of metaphysics. We should try to revive the true importance of metaphysics, not only in the academic interests only, but also for promoting and fostering intellectual, moral, social, religious and international peace and prosperity.

The intellectual vacuum and anarchy can be attributed largely to this apathy and indifference to metaphysical wisdom. So, metaphysics has to be restored to its rightful place of importance. We, Indians, for whom this study is something like the highest wisdom, (the lamp of all sciences as Kautilya has characterized it) have to take a lead in this auspicious work of the restoration of metaphysics to its due place of importance.

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<sup>6</sup> Kant—*Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Indian Polio, New York, page 116.

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No one is trying, or has tried within living memory, to tyrannize over natural science in the name of metaphysics. From metaphysics properly so called, the attempt to ascertain the absolute pre-suppositions of thought, a natural science that does its work conscientiously can have nothing to fear.

R. G. Collingwood.

(An Essays On Metaphysics, Page—168)



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

By listening to the Universal Call of Religions one finds one's way open to the Highest from where one stands.

Man blunders, founders, sins and suffers only when he stagnates on the way. The Vedic seer therefore breathed the *mantra*: *Caraveti*, move on. One who keeps on moving reaches the goal. The same life-quickenning *mantra* vibrated again on man's consciousness in Vivekananda's words of power: 'Onward For Ever!' In this column 'Onward For Ever!' we will present such words of the Swami as can rouse, inspire, and guide every human being to the luminous destiny.

The *Complete Works*, Vol. II, 1963, p. 225.

In drawing our attention to 'the Challenging Question' the editorial points out the feeling of emptiness in the individual. It poses the question of utility of spectacular scientific successes and marvels of modern developments, as the highest fulfilment is not got by mere material means.

In the column 'Letters of a Saint' is published letters of Swami Turiyananda (1863-1922) a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. These intimate letters of an illumined soul provide seekers with spiritual inspiration, authentic guidance and a rare type of holy company. Except when specifically otherwise mentioned, the letters will be translations from Bengali originally published in the book, *Swami Turiyanander Patrāvali*, Udbodhan Karyalaya, Calcutta.

In 'Profiles in Greatness', the 'Explorer'

illustrates how even Death could be conquered by pure love.

'Essays on Applied Religion' by Swami Budhananda will be designed to show, in the light of the teachings of the authentic teachers, how to apply essential religion in and through the struggles and problems of life and attain qualitative self-improvement leading to supreme self-fulfilment.

Dr. G. S. Murty, a scientist in the Bhabha Atomic Energy Centre, Bombay, discusses the 'constraints' that can bring into the world 'love of heart and peace of mind'.

Sri T. Natarajan, an experienced educationist gives a lucid exposition of the views of Sri Aurobindo on the 'True Welfare of Student'.

In recounting an illuminating dialogue from the Mahābhārata, Swami Tanmayananda of the Ramakrishna Order depicts the determination of Yudhishthira to keep to his promise under trying situations.

In his article 'What is Character?' Prof. O. P. Gupta, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Head, English Department, Government College, Jind (Haryana) analyses the concept of character, knowing well that it baffles all analysis.

Swami Tadrupananda of the Ramakrishna Order records here 'What Inspires me most in Holy Mother's Life'.

Dr. Shashi Bhushan Prasad Sinha M.A., B.L., D.Litt., of the Department of Philosophy, L. S. College, Muzaffarpur, in his article 'Metaphysics: Its Necessity and Importance' shows that 'we cannot really live without metaphysics'.

## WORLD UNDERSTANDING

World understanding is one of the noblest ideals man needs always to earnestly work for even when he is beset with many immediate problems. Being one of the noblest, it is not however, easily attained. We may talk a great deal about it without having a bit of it. At a given point of time, may be a handful of rare human beings, have world understanding, truly speaking. These are the seers and sages of the world.

Why need I, a small man, have to think of world understanding? Let the sages think of high things. I need to think of small things, practical things, which make for my convenience. This is the questions we normally ask.

The point is: the narrower the ideas with which we live, the more painful and meaningless is our living. And we certainly do not want to increase our sorrows. Hence it is good to open windows of our minds once in a while and allow winds of great ideas to blow in carrying dust particles from distant stars and fragrance of dream-flowers from the no man's expanses of the universe.

If the newly born babe is placed in the vast universe by the Creator for living, there is meaning to it. For the dead body of a man, the space within the coffin is more than enough.

World understanding is not just a suave cliché which we softly discuss for the nonce over a steaming cup of coffee in a dimly lighted hall, but a spiritual experience. It is bread for living, manna for growing.

The content of this experience is lucidly presented by the great teacher in the *Gītā*:

'With the heart concentrated by Yoga, with the eye of evenness for all things, he beholds the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self.'

VI, 29

'He who judges of pleasure and pain everywhere, by the same standard as he applies to

himself, that Yogi, O Arjuna, is regarded as the highest.'

VI, 32

When we find a person manifesting such awareness and disposition in his unprompted spontaneous conduct, we may be sure that he has it. The word 'Yogi' here means one who has experientially known about the fact of unity of existence, and solidarity of mankind. Only such a person has genuine world understanding.

He alone knows that we never smote on anyone else's cheek but our own. There was never any other whom we could do harm. We have always hurt ourselves, our very beloved ourselves. Today it has become too far-reaching a game. Hence the need of knowing the rules of playing.

By and large we all are creatures of illusions, delusions, make-believe and false identifications. We do not even understand ourselves. Then how can we have world understanding?

Going about in India today we will find how shamefully inhospitable we are growing to ourselves. In some states, if you are travelling, unless you are a linguist, you will not understand what is written on the buses and mileposts. The authorities there obviously do not think that it is any of their responsibilities to be understood. They are so self-sufficient! In India of today the one species that is becoming rarer and rarer to find, is the Indian. Where is he today? How few really think, feel, talk and acts like Indians? We have mostly become narrow and chauvinistic, linguists, utterly devoid of an all-India emotional awareness. Everyone is loudly and bitterly demanding what India should do for him, but no one is telling what he should do for India. Before we can have world understanding we urgently need to have an all-India consciousness. In proportion to our growth in all-India consciousness, our sufferings as



Indians will diminish. There is really no need to suffer so much as we do. By being true Indians we can outgrow most of our sufferings.

For making world understanding an actuality for us, we shall have to shed our illusions, come out of delusions, give up make-believe, and drop all false identifications. In fine we shall have to dehypnotize ourselves. Then if we practise Self-chastening disciplines, inner transformation will come, a new understanding will open up within ourselves,—we may even say—a new consciousness, which is not a prisoner of this limiting body and mind.

With the dawning of this new understanding we will be able to look upon ourselves, the world and mankind in a new perspective conducive to developing world understanding. Love will then flow from our heart for all, like spring water, without reason and measure. This love is the thing needed for being able to live in India like Indians and for world understanding. It is this love which enabled the Buddha to offer his own life for saving that of a lamb. It is this love which enabled Christ to cry for the pardon of those very persons who were in the process of killing him in the most cruel manner.

Loving all equally without expectations and demands is the supreme secret of the millennium we all wish for.

When this love is awakened within our heart, only then we will be able to believe that everybody really wants to live, to

grow, to be protected from harm and attain self-fulfilment. (Some may understand by self-fulfilment spiritual illumination, others may take it to mean progressive worldly well-being). These are the common human aspirations of every human being all over the world.

In our unregenerate state, our commitments to selfish loyalties, and suicidal narrowness make it impossible for us to even theoretically accept the bonafides of these human aspirations other than those of our own. We tolerate others' aspirations; we do not accept them. We think: if others are to live, that could have sense and meaning only by making our living more comfortable. We have right to self-fulfilment, because, we are more cultured and have subtler comprehension, while it should be enough for others to just survive.

Theoretically, world understanding means that we do not seek the triumph of any theory or creed of religion, philosophy, sociology or politics, but we seek triumph of man, of every man, even unto the last.

Functionally, world understanding means that we enthusiastically work for making it possible for everyone to live, grow, be protected from harm, and attain self-fulfilment.

If we can come out of the prison-house of narrow and selfish loyalties and serve mankind in all-inclusive dedication, setting service above self, we will have been working for world understanding.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

DISPUTED QUESTIONS IN PHILOSOPHY  
BY JAMES F. KELEHER, Philosophical Library, 15  
East 40th Street, New York, 1965, pp. 90,  
price \$ 3.50.

Prof. Keleher's 'Disputed Questions in Philosophy' is rather provocative than definitive. He takes up certain basic problems of philosophy and seeks

to solve them with an open mind. According to him 'no philosophic questions are to be regarded as insoluble, and that any well-considered solution is entitled to the consideration of other thinkers and may become a distinctive contribution to the question at issue, an aid in the development of the continuity of enquiry.' Man is possessed of the rudi-

mental knowledge, we cannot ignore it. Human knowledge is the outcome of dynamic activity of the human mind. Organized knowledge of science, inventive knowledge and autonomous, appear to be sufficiently explained in their respective context. But it is required that they should be consistent with the entire body of human knowledge. In connection with substance and matter the author observes, 'The substratum provides a stable somethingness of some sort, which is posited as external to the thinker. It may be named as space, or inatter, or the ether, or the Absolute. But it is never more than a name for a mental operation, which is not needed to account for the activities of the Primary Substance, nor for any events in the physical world. For all these events are the actions, reactions and interactions of the Primary Substances.' For Prof. Keleher 'the cosmos is not only contingent as a whole, but also contingent in every detail'. He considers 'That there is a cos-

mos is well-established, whatever may be its nature in the current view. But it is not ours to portray in any sort of full detail. We clearly have certain responsibilities, and even some privileges within the universe. But it is not our entire responsibility, in any respect. Nor are privileges its paramount concern.' The author raises very many questions of philosophical importance and arrives at unprejudiced solutions in his own way. The author concludes 'by our very nature, then, we are immediately in the Divine Orbit. It is our natural human vocation to know, to love and to serve God. And all our arts, crafts, trades, and sciences are deficient in so far as they fail to contribute to the human vocation. They are competent in so far as they contribute to that vocation.'

The author is always lucid in his explanation of the difficult philosophical issues.

—DR. DEVAPRASAD BHATTACHARYA

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION KAMARPUKUR, HOOGHLY

REPORT FOR 1966-67

A brief report of the activities of the Centre is given below :

*Educational* : There were four different schools conducted at Kamarpukur. The Nursery School which has become very popular in the locality had on roll 50 children between three and five years of age. The two units of each of the Junior and Senior Basic Schools imparted education to 297 boys and 147 girls in the former and 146 boys in the latter. The Multipurpose School had an enrolment of 176 boys. The results of these schools have been uniformly good.

Prevocational Training Centre was started in 1966. The boys received preliminary vocational training in fitting, carpentry, welding etc. The total enrolment is 81. Audio-Visual Mobile Unit showed sixty documentary and devotional films to the people of rural areas. A night school for adults was also run with roll strength of 25. The Sanskrit Vidyalaya, started in 1964 to encourage

the Sanskrit education, conducted classes on Kavya, Purana and Upanishads.

*Medical* : Homoeopathy Charitable Dispensary, under a qualified homoeopathic physician gave free medical aid to 15,290 outdoor patients.

*Immediate Needs* : Construction work in schools, compound fencing, sanitation and electricity arrangements, monks' quarters, water supply in the Math premises are some of the urgent needs of the Ashrama for which donations will be thankfully received.

### 28th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ORIENTALISTS

The 28th International Congress of Orientalists will be held at the Australian National University, Canberra, A.C.T., from 6th to 12th January, 1971. All scholars of the languages, history, literature and culture of Asia are welcome.

Enquiries should be addressed to :

The Secretary-General,  
28th International Congress of Orientalists,  
Australian National University Post Office,  
via CANBERRA CITY, A.C.T. 2601

AUSTRALIA.