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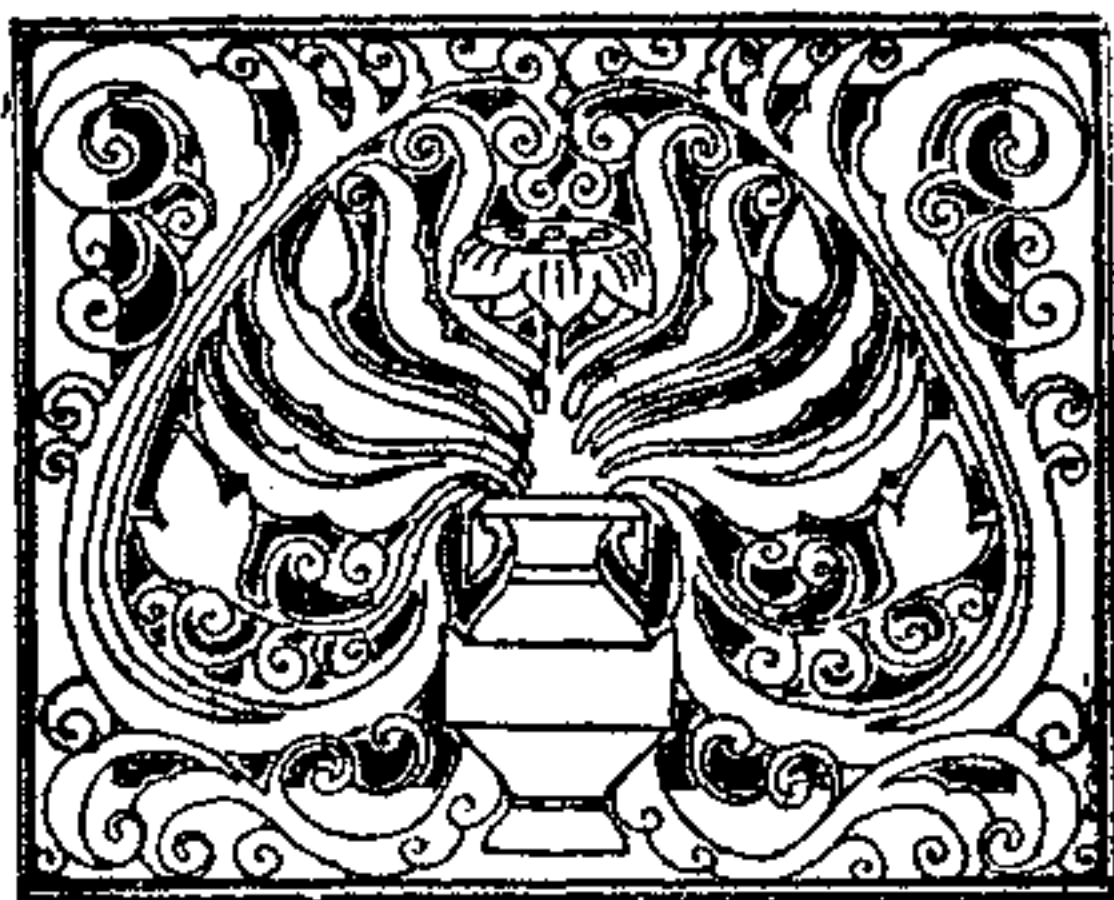
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Prabuddha Bharata

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Prabuddha Bharata

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SEPTEMBER 1971

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Prabuddha Bharata

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No. 9

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (posed by himself): 'Do you know what describing God as being formless only is like ?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'It is like a man's playing only a monotone on his flute, though it has seven holes. But on the same instrument another man plays different melodies. Likewise, in how many ways the believers in a Personal God enjoy Him ! They enjoy Him through many different attitudes : the serene attitude, the attitude of a servant, a friend, a mother, a husband, or a lover.

'You see, the thing is somehow or other to get into the Lake of the Nectar of Immortality. Suppose one person gets into It by propitiating the Deity with hymns and worship, and you are pushed into It. The result will be the same. Both of you will certainly become immortal.

'I give the Brahmos the illustration of water and ice. Satchidananda is like an endless expanse of water. The water of the great ocean in cold regions freezes into blocks of ice. Similarly, through the cooling influence of divine love, Satchidananda assumes forms for the sake of the bhaktas. The rishis had the vision of the supersensuous Spirit-form and talked with It. But devotees acquire a 'love body', and with its help they see the Spirit-form of the Absolute.

'It is also said in the Vedas that Brahman is beyond mind and words. The heat of the sun of Knowledge melts the ice-like form of the Personal God. On attaining the Knowledge of Brahman and communing with It in nirvikalpa samadhi, one realizes Brahman, the Infinite, without form or shape and beyond mind and words.

'The nature of Brahman cannot be described. About It one remains silent. Who can explain the Infinite in words ? However high a bird may soar, there are regions higher still. What do you say ?'

Preacher : 'Yes, sir, it is so stated in the Vedanta philosophy.'

Sri Ramakrishna : 'Once a salt doll went to the ocean to measure its depth. But it could not come back to give a report. According to one

school of thought, sages like Sukadeva saw and touched the Ocean of Brahman, but did not plunge into It.

'Once I said to Vidyasagar, "Everything else but Brahman has been polluted, as it were, like food touched by the tongue." In other words, no one has been able to describe what Brahman is. A thing once uttered by the tongue becomes polluted. Vidyasagar, great pundit though he was, was highly pleased with my remarks.

'It is said that there are places near Kedar¹ that are covered with eternal snow; he who climbs too high cannot come back. Those who have tried to find out what there is in the higher regions, or what one feels there, have not come back to tell us about it.

'After having the vision of God man is overpowered with bliss. He becomes silent. Who will speak? Who will explain?

'The king lives beyond seven gates. At each gate sits a man endowed with great power and glory. At each gate the visitor asks, "Is this the king?" The gate-keeper answers, "No, Not this, not this." The visitor passes through the seventh gate and becomes overpowered with joy. He is speechless. This time he doesn't have to ask, "Is this the king?" The mere sight of him removes all doubts.'

Question (asked by a devotee): 'Has God form, or is He formless?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Wait, wait! First of all you must go to Calcutta; then only will you know where the Maidan, the Asiatic Society, and the Bengal Bank are located. If you want to go to the Brahmin quarter of Khardaha, you must first of all go to Khardaha.

'Why should it not be possible to practise the discipline of the formless God? But it is very difficult to follow that path. One cannot follow it without renouncing "woman" and "gold". There must be complete renunciation, both inner and outer. You cannot succeed in this path if you have the slightest trace of worldliness.

'It is easy to worship God with form. But it is not as easy as all that.

'One should not discuss the discipline of the Impersonal God or the path of knowledge with a bhakta. Through great effort perhaps he is just cultivating a little devotion. You will injure it if you explain away everything as a mere dream.

'Kabir was a worshipper of the Impersonal God. He did not believe in Siva, Kali, or Krishna. He used to make fun of them and say that Kali lived on the offerings of rice and banana, and that Krishna danced like a monkey when the gopis clapped their hands.

'One who worships God without form perhaps sees at first the deity with ten arms, then the deity with four arms, then the Baby Krishna with two arms. At last he sees the Indivisible Light and merges in It.'

¹ A high peak in the Himalayas, which is a place of pilgrimage for the Hindus.

ONWARD FOR EVER!

The soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere (limitless), but whose centre is in some body. Death is but a change of centre. God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, and whose centre is everywhere. When we can get out of the limited centre of body, we shall realize God, our true Self.

A tremendous stream is flowing towards the ocean, carrying little bits of paper and straw hither and thither on it. They may struggle to go back, but in the long run they must flow down to the ocean. So you and I and all nature are like these little straws carried in mad currents towards that ocean of Life, Perfection, and God. We may struggle to go back, or float against the current and play all sorts of pranks, but in the long run we must go and join this great ocean of Life and Bliss.

Jnana (knowledge) is 'creedlessness'; but that does not mean that it despises creeds. It only means that a stage above and beyond creeds has been gained. The Jnani (true philosopher) strives to destroy nothing but to help all. ... Jnana teaches that the world should be renounced but not on that account abandoned. To live in the world and not to be of it is the true test of renunciation.



YOUTH AND THE WORLD

EDITORIAL

I

PARADOXES OF YOUTH

Among the factors that have been shaping the patterns of human civilization and the destiny of mankind in a far-reaching manner, one of the most potent is the youth of the world.

The phenomenon of youth presents two aspects: transitional and perennial. In its individual aspect youth is transient like cherry blossom. An individual youth ages before he recognizes the sure fact of transition; soon enough he is old, and surely one day he passes out too. In classical didactic literature there are graphic descriptions of the ephemeral nature of youth. The gaps in these descriptions can be easily filled up from personal experiences of any discerning observer. These bleak facts, however, can in no way affect the perennial fact of youth in the world. No single person is young for long, but always a considerable proportion of the human race is young.

Among the youth are to be found much poetry and creativity, passion and exuberance, dynamism and audacity, vision and idealism, narcissism and self-abandon, cruelty and generosity, dreaminess and alertness, pluck and power to make and unmake.

The greatest fact about youth is its power-potency. Youth is not authority, but out of power-potency that youth has, an authority may spring forth. Youth is perfectly capable of indiscipline, but youth is not synonymous with indiscipline. At no other age one can so perfectly discipline oneself as in youth. Youth is not wisdom, but neither it is unwisdom *per se*. Out of youth the highest wisdom has blossomed in the past. This is a fact of history. No elder dealing with the phenomenon of youth should ever forget the fact that some of the wisest men of the world—Christ, Śaṅkara, Vivekananda—died before forty, after

finishing their tremendous world-moving life-works. Though in a sense they are ageless, it cannot be denied that they also represent youth at its highest.

It is, therefore, never to be forgotten that these saviours and prophets manifest in a special way the youth-force of the world. The youth of the world can claim them as their own if they will. So it cannot be said that youth as such is synonymous with immaturity and irresponsibility. It equally cannot be claimed that youth is incapable of immaturity and irresponsibility any more than this can be claimed of their elders. In fact, it is difficult to classify youth. Out of its vortex there surges forth a baffling variety of power-waves and urges, each unique in its own way and often most unpredictable.

Strange though it may appear, the fact remains that at one pole of the youth-world there stands the prophet, the world-saviour, and at the other, the drop-out of society—the hippie. Including and between these poles, in all its variety, is the youth of the world, bewildering but fascinating. Is it permissible to ask: is there a link between these two manifestations of youth—the saviour and the hippie? Is there a link between the saviour and the 'acid'-eater of the 'post-modern' era? Only an indirect answer can be given to such a question: if Christ were to walk down the street today it would perhaps be the hippies who would be his most devoted and enthusiastic followers. And Christ would know how to make them whole whatever may be society's appraisal of them. Besides, hippies need him most; not so much those who have made success of their lives without Christ, the thriving go-getters of the world. If Vivekananda were alive today, it would not be a great wonder to find the young firebrands of the New Left rushing to him for guidance and inspiration, though Vivekananda was neither in the left nor in the right, but

grounded in perennial truth, which is all-pervading and all-transcending.

Creative revolution needs as its basis character and strength, compassion and wisdom. If the people of the New Left are sincere in their professions, they would require to know how to transform themselves seeking as they do to transform the world. If the torch has to hold aloft light in darkness, it must itself get burnt. Those who instead of becoming torches in the darkness of the world, set fire to things, are not surely torch-bearers but, literally, ash-makers! World-changing without self-changing is a trap into which many so-called revolutionaries fall and never escape from. So we daily see the sad spectacle of today's revolutions becoming tomorrow's vested interests. The political gossamer who cares not for spiritual insight does not know how to prevent this from happening, but the prophet does. The secret is to remain a seeker of truth and not of prefabricated contingencies of premeditated history.

We find youth denying accepted codes of ethics, norms of good conduct, and challenging established order. Everywhere in the world youth is *against* something which is most cherished and *for* something which is most feared or detested. The elders feel most concerned when they find youth working against themselves, going and growing in a manner most harmful to themselves, destroying things which they would most need in inner and outer life. And the world seems to be pretty bewildered under the impact of their indiscriminate power-thrusts. The bizarre, iconoclastic romanticism which youth revel in their whole-hog passion for absence of restriction, and their bitter contempt of the establishment, the keen devotion of some of them to indiscipline for its own sake,—frighten many.

But it is good to remember that these are not unqualified facts about youth. Within youth there is another power which accom-

panies the foregoing as lightning goes with thunder, or alternates with it, as calm with storm.

Youth is not all wild. That is not the law of life. Youth is not all vehemence—who can laugh like youth? Youth is not all fire and brimstone—who can quiver in tender emotion like the youth? By and large, youth will not slave for untruth. If you can prove that something is untruth, youth will not follow it, or work for it. If you can prove that a certain action is selfish, youth will not be proud of it, though they may not shun it outright. Youth would fain be honourable. If you can bring home that such and such conduct violates their own code of honour, youth will desist from it.

Be it also remembered that where there is a great cause to give life for, when there is a high call for greater good, from which they may have nothing to gain, youth will be prepared to give life away without stipulating conditions. When the country is in peril, when justice is at stake, when oppressors have to be dealt with, youth will rush forth without counting the cost, without fear.

It is the youth of the world, as much as the older generation, who have gone through sufferings, martyrdom and self-immolation to liberate their countries from oppressions, inner and outer. It is the youth of the world, as much as anyone, who pass through bone-grinding hardships in order to widen the horizon of man's knowledge, power, and mastery over the forces of nature. Though it may be little noticed, to this day it is the youth, equally, nay more than the old, who go from home to homelessness, sacrificing their all in search of God and reality, and then return to give their findings and themselves to the world. It may not be common knowledge that every year hundreds of young men and women in various lands respond to the higher call and in a disci-

plined manner pursue the higher values of life with adventurers' enthusiasm.

II

YOUTH, A QUESTIONING GROWTH OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION

It is not being fair to all when we identify the entire 'youth' with the negativism, uncouthness, violence, and irresponsibility of a section of young men and women who create trouble in society, break and burn things, insult, injure and hold responsible people to ransom to exact their demands. True, this is a very real manifestation of the youth force. But this manifestation should be viewed neither in isolation nor as the totality of the phenomenon nor again as an anti-human factor in civilization. It should be looked upon as the questioning growth of human civilization itself.

The youth of the drop-out variety who indulge in 'chemical vacations' and the youth of the New Left who want to break and burn things without building anything better instead, are both products of the same contemporary history, of the same home of man. Why have they grown in this way? Not to seek the answer to this question within the pattern of the civilization of which they are products is neither wisdom nor courage. What the world witnesses today is a tremendous self-caricature, for the offsprings of X, Y, and Z are obviously extensions of X, Y, and Z in some irrefutable sense, and not a phenomenon unrelated to the world. If parents had been different, children would not but have been different. If it is a fact that no saint is born of a bum, elders cannot complain too much against the sort of youth the world has. There are weighty reasons why elders should not view the youth-problem in a petty, petulant, or self-righteous man-

ner. The youth movement, as we have hinted before, is not an epiphenomenon or a reversion but an advance notice of an inflowing tide. A tide is neither 'good' nor 'bad' but an elemental force. It is up to men how they convert it. By dexterously power-projecting a devastating river you can have power and light.

Elders everywhere in the world complain that in their day they were a much better lot, and did not know so many vices as the youth of today. A non-sentimental analysis of the situation will reveal, however, that 'post-modern' youth is an effect of a complex and frustrating society. The elders of the world must not forget that. If the world is in a mess, it is not so much the handiwork of youth but of the elders. The sort of culture which youth is perhaps searching for will necessarily be a development of modern value-needs from an inherited culture. This development results from unfaithfulness of culture to developing needs of man, adherence to which is one of the roles of a culture to hand down. Dynamics of human needs have overtaken dynamics of human culture.

When youth complain that elders have institutionalized hypocrisy, to deny this would be greater hypocrisy. Elders have barbarized their own nations in the name of national glory, security or integrity. In some countries they have effectively socialized sensuality in the name of culture. Perhaps every single racket in the world which corrupts and degrades human beings, or sets nations against nations, groups against groups, individuals against individuals, is run by elders. Elders shamelessly exploit youth-sex for making money. One has only to look at the advertisement industry of the world to be convinced about this.

From such poison seeds sown what wholesome harvest can be expected? Surely, lotuses do not blossom in bramble bushes. This, however, is not to say there

have not been elders who have not striven to give through their way of thinking and living, an upward-moving shape to things. The effectiveness of their work has not always been particularly obvious because greater number of people were always doing the opposite.

III

ELDERS' RESPONSIBILITY IN YOUTH PROBLEM

It is against this background that the youth problem should be studied. In fact, if we seek to deal with the problem creatively we shall be well-advised not to view it as a problem at all but a developing phenomenon of immense dimension and unpredictable possibility. There is also no reason to think that the youth problem is a special curse of our times. Elders of these days are apt to exclaim :

What is happening to our young people? They disrespect their elders, they disobey their parents. They ignore the laws. They riot in the streets inflamed with wild notions. Their morals are decaying. What is to become of them?

But as a matter of fact these words were written by Plato,¹ more than 2,300 years ago! So the youth problem is no new phenomenon (in this sense the youth of our time are not modern at all). Nor should it be viewed as a curse.

If the elders are worried at the conduct of youth, it is not always because the youngsters are apt to talk fantastic nonsense, but sometimes perhaps because they are apt to talk sense and tell the truth. Youngsters have not to invent lies to shame the elders, they

¹ Quoted by Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, President, Notre Dame University, Vide his article 'Thoughts and Actions' in *The American Review*, July 1969.

have only to point to certain bare facts. What about corruption which is so prevalent everywhere? Youth has lesser share in it, yet they are the major victims of it. Again, the elders are responsible for adulterating much of the food on which the young are nourished. As the Upaniṣad teaches by implication impure food tends to wrongly affect the mind. Have the young no right to protest against this? Are they not entitled to clean food? If the social structure is such that while one is helped to roll in luxury another is forced to wallow in mire of hopeless and senseless misery; if the educational system is such that the educated find no opening in life for self-actualization; if the draft-laws are such that one is forced to go and kill innocent people of another country against whom one feels no enmity; then is it sanity to expect youth not to protest? If the youth exhibits sensitivity to discrepancies between principles and practices, to gaps between creeded values and actual practices—where do they err here? If the youth seeks brothers across separating walls of race, colour, religion, or politics, if they refuse to practise morbid idolatry of a country, what is the sense in finding fault with them on these scores? If the world is not for a few but for all, then many things need to be changed, many conventions set aside, many superstitions discarded. If, in this work of changing, the youth take initiative, is it not making good the default of elders? Patient and respectful listening to disrespectful youthful voice may help one to discover the fact that there is a philosophy behind their unrest.

IV

YOUTH NEED TO BE UNDERSTOOD

Above all youth need to be understood. The youth-mind of any age is a complex

product of inherited tendencies, natural instincts, time-spirit, and dreams. By instinct the youth wants self-expression—expression of what they identify themselves with. They want to enjoy themselves. They want to progress and fulfil themselves. Whatever impedes this natural process arouses their anger.

The youth has a natural reverence for the time-spirit. Generally speaking, they accept with gusto the values brought before them by the time-spirit. The time-spirit of today is dominated by the scientific materialism, revolutionary zeal for socialism, and the pragmatic philosophy of life. In the time-spirit itself there is also examination and criticism of these constituents of the time-spirit, which again form one more ingredient of time-spirit.

Contrary to common belief, the youth have a keen sense of moral power; they have an instinctive proneness to respect it too when they are convinced that there is no window-dressing here. But youth react sharply to hypocrisy, sometimes disproportionately. They respect reason, unselfishness, truth, and sincerity of purpose. And they have a terrific weakness for being accommodative to the herd-manners. They are fascinated by the new, bored by monotonies, and angered by monopolies. They adore strength, dexterity, and fearlessness. They are excited by speed, power, and dynamism. They want to have their own styles of movement, of living and growing, and of protesting. What they relish most is their own style of protesting which sometimes is done for its own sake.

Contemporary facts clearly show that youth have a near fatal weakness for propaganda under whose sway they come easily and completely. Then they can toss away truth and freedom with incredible naivete, and ape their idols in a most shameful and degrading manner. They permit their minds to become so enslaved that they

lose the capacity to think rationally and ask pertinent questions. Then they become like overexcited dolls manipulated by remote control of somebody's fingers, and look upon intolerance of dissent as the capital point of their strength. Proud of their enslavement, they deem that they have discovered a new identity, which they seek to celebrate by discarding all traditional loyalties. But the beauty of their weakness is here: They are ready to worship and give themselves over. But why to the idol, whom you call 'wrong'?

Understanding youth needs great charity of heart, clarity of thought, and a sense of humour. Reverential patience is needed to penetrate the baffling external extravaganza to the heart where youth cherishes the dreams of *satyam-sivam-sundaram*—the true, the good, and the beautiful. Youths who desecrate their own sanctity may not be isolated cases; but even if they were to be counted by the million, it would not prove that youth as such is devoid of good in heart. That can never be as long as youth includes within its orbit the saving and illuminating function of saviours and prophets.

V

YOUTH NEED TO UNDERSTAND

It must not be forgotten that the youth is never the same crowd. It is always changing like a flowing river of power. Those who were to the fore in the youth movements of yesterday may well be the backward-looking, tired, and retired people of today, sitting on rocking chairs and criticizing the excesses of modern youth.

There are not two sharply divided camps, the elders and the youth. There is not a question of youth actually facing the rest of the world. Together they make the world and in this togetherness there are of course

group encounters. But in the ultimate analysis everybody only faces himself, his great self. The youth is the self-projection of the existing life-process. What turns round on elders as a baffling force originates from the central life-pool of which the elders make the senior part, and the youths the junior part.

There is no need to be afraid of the youth however wild they may be. If their activities result in breaking up the world, well, they will have to take the larger share of the consequences than the elders. Youth cannot be prevented from doing things in their own way any more than oceans can be ordered not to break into waves. Yet through these waves it is not impossible to pilot the ship of life dexterously.

What the elders, if there is any such separate group, can do is to rid the world (in their own locus of being and influence) of oppression, injustice, and exploitation. They can stop being static and hypocritical. Above all they stand challenged to be firm in truth and purity of life.

When they have done this, they can face the youth and everything they have to say without suppressed anger. And they can also openly invite youth to take part in life's serious business. Let the youth be trusted and they will be trust-worthy. Let them be given responsibility and they will be responsible. Let them be loved and they will be lovable. And let there be no shop-keeping when one faces one's newer self in the youth of the world.

But youth also need to prove their worth by behaving. They should realize that elders are not their enemies; their enemies are their own self-indulgences, and they cannot help getting what they deserve.

Youth needs to understand that anything the youth seeks to build in the world will have to be done by operating the forces that are embedded in the individual self. There is no other way of operating those forces

except through disciplining yourself. The world that begins with you is the only real world as far as you are concerned. Hence transformation of your world turns with yourself. If you discipline matter you get power. If you discipline your mind you get wisdom. With power (generated without) and wisdom (generated within themselves) youth can transform the world. But this cannot be achieved through confused actions of indiscipline, horror acts of cruelty, and unwisdom, however highly organized they may be.

Strangely enough here in this very modern complex situation ancient religion alone can show a helpful way out. One business of essential religion is to teach how generated, power and wisdom are integrated, and creatively used. So the intelligent and the thoughtful among the youth cannot but see that in essential religion they have a powerful ally which they can ill afford to ignore, if they want to bring about a saner world order. If they want mindless chaos, they have only to follow their mad impulses. But they have to remember that after them will come their progeny, offsprings of their own mad impulses.

There is today a glorious choice before the youth of the world and also a grand opportunity, and withal a grave challenge. If they choose they may inherit whatever they think precious in the world heritage. And they have the opportunity to build a greater human civilization, if they will. When the youth are competent or wise they will never compromise the meaning of truth and freedom. This is the basic test of their honesty of purpose. They will see that truth and freedom are synonymous and that every form of idealism which is not one with the highest is potentially dangerous.

The search for identity obviously does not consist in digging the flesh and reaching the bone. Identity is to be found not

in something which changes every moment but in the unchanging real which remains after all the changes have dissolved in the light of knowledge. Then one sees that one is living in the world like a drop of water in the ocean.

The youth faces a world which is ready to change, nay is changing every moment, of itself, so much so that no youth is as young as he was moments ago, no youth is as modern as he imagines. But against what background is this change to be viewed? The search for identity should not stop halfway. Detours in life may be exciting, but the destination is far away, if one would dare to see clearly.

Either all is I, or no one exists. When one knows fully, he realizes that separate existences all belong to one continuum. The youth are the seemingly junior parts of the elders and the elders are the seemingly senior parts of youth. In truth the father is born as the son. This is biologically irrefutable. So fighting fathers or sons are surely fighting themselves which is an act of insanity. Besides, it is not that one has no share in the shape of things one inherits. One is truly the maker of one's milieu. If one is unable to believe this, one can at least accept the logic of cause producing the effect. Not to own responsibility may be enjoyable romanticism but it does not work in life's crucial situations. We may disown the past but if we want to win the future our thoughts and actions must build it out of things placed before us.

The youth understands the language of stark truth. They are normally roused by moral challenges which call on them to prove their worth. They are anxious to have a cause to serve and chances for self-fulfilment. The language they need to hear is the language of truthful fearlessness from their elders.

The youth need to know that life is no baby-sitter but an inexorable task-master

which never relaxes the laws of cause and effect. Indiscipline is not freedom but imprisonment. Intolerance is no strength but nervous weakness. Violence is not heroism but a loud breakdown of it. Unconcern for the purity of means is no advanced *modus operandi* but a product of incompetent thinking. Sexual non-restraint is no advancement in civilization but surrender to the lower self.

VI

THE CHALLENGE BEFORE YOUTH

The challenge before the entire mankind, particularly the youth, is to build such social structures, economic systems and political orders as may open all needed avenues and provide required help for the self-development and self-fulfilment of every human being. Through historic experiments and experiences, mankind has been in a way advancing towards its evolving destiny. No historic experience, however dark, has been a wastage for it has brought precious education in a general way. Today most of us accept at least theoretically, the bona fides of every human being in the enlightened world forum, just because he is a human being. This disposition has to be carried to the doings and feelings in all levels of life, where hardened superstitions and closed ideologies keep human beings separated in diverse ways. What share youth takes in this historic task will determine their creative worth. It is factually possible to say that youth, more than elders, are spontaneously prone to own their identity with larger and larger sections of humanity. Though youth of our times abhor de-personalization of the modern world, by and large they believe in inclusiveness across many barriers which kept their elders divided in exclusive groups.

Their terms of references are no longer parochial but global. Nationality of ideas is no barrier against adoption. And once an idea is adopted as one's own, youth feels an identity with all those in the world who believe in the same manner. They may be separated by seas, yet they feel like neighbours. But those who do not believe in the same manner, they tend to become like aliens even though they may live under the same roof. There is no exchange of faith with them. This way has arisen new links and fissures in the world the study of which is interesting.

The specific challenge that is squarely before the youth is to show that they are sincerely searching for ways of thought and action which will conduce to everybody's growth, advancement, protection, and self-fulfilment.

The test of anybody's worth is what is he like when alone, away from the crowd. Is he courageous and generous enough to sacrifice all his personal interest and work so that world conditions may be bettered for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many? If he is, he is a power for good in the world. If he is not, his revolutionary professions cannot but produce negative results. The test is here: are you courageous enough to stand alone with your creed against the whole world? Crowd-heroism shows to what extent youth feels insecure from within; so the hankering to move in a massive manner.

Youth movements will be a greater force for good if another weakness can be gotten rid of. Youth, while claiming absolute right to protest and dissent, are not as prepared to grant the same right to their fellow beings within their ranks. When they differ from the prevailing opinion either of a massive majority or a powerful minority, they normally silence opposition by threat or actual application of violence. Freedom of thought, speech, and action is not permitted

when a hard core takes a decision, no matter how wise or otherwise. So, easily there can be a dictatorship of a minority in youth movements. And like all dictatorships, this brand is not free of self-destructive weakness. Those who are not prepared to respect others' freedom should not try to lead others or mould human affairs for such actions can only do harm to society.

The fundamental challenges that are heavily on youth cannot be creatively met unless youth fully develop their physical, mental and spiritual potential in an integral manner. Sane youth revolution will be that which asks of the world help, guidance, and sustenance to be enabled to meet successfully these challenges of the time. This goal cannot be reached through agitation alone. Sustained, intelligent and honest work is needed. What is wanting is taking the command of the forces operating within oneself so that one may adequately handle forces that operate in the world. This calls for the skill of self-discipline. Youth who have not disciplined themselves may bring in chaos ;

their lack of wisdom may have terrific destructive power. And if they, without having disciplined themselves want to reach self-fulfilment or think of helping others to do the same, they will be surely disappointed, because they would be expecting results for which they did not work.

Paradoxically enough our revolutionary times face a simple fact for the reckoning of its worth : unless we sow good seeds on well cultivated soil we cannot expect a good harvest.

How true : 'That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them ; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them ! ' ²

Now the youth should 'see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should *understand* with *their* heart, and should be converted...' ³ by the flame of Truth which keeps on shaping the destiny of mankind.

² St. Matthew, 13.17.

³ *ibid.* 13.15.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Kasi
20.1.1915

Dear—,

I am glad to receive your letter of the 15th ... I am very pleased to learn that your work is expanding and gaining recognition. If you work with perfect dedication of heart and soul you will succeed ; but undoubtedly the ideal and the aim is to perform work while being even-minded in success and failure. Being resigned to the Lord you are serving Him for His joy : when you work with this firm conviction, know for certain that you are then performing the best possible adoration (*bhajan*) of the Lord. To do work efficiently and in a proper manner, it is necessary to practise meditation and repetition of the Lord's name (*japa*) ; do not forget to do this. Go on doing work as you have been doing ; without question this will do you good.

With my best wishes.

Your well-wisher
SRI TURIYANANDA

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Kasi
19.2.1915

Dear De—,

... It would appear that because of your continuing ill health, your mind does not remain in a good condition, their relation (i.e. of physical health and mind) being very intimate. Yet you must continually try to practise remembrance of God. If one does not attend to one's own good no one else can.

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥
असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ॥

A man should raise himself by his own self, so let him not weaken this self. For this self is the friend of oneself, and this self is the enemy of oneself.¹

Reflection on the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness and misery ; non-attachment, non-identification of self with son, wife, home and the rest.²

These teachings are to be practised. This cannot be done by dry reasoning ; divine grace is necessary for which one must pray. One should unite one's mind and heart and then pray. The real prayer is one which issues from within. The Lord who is the indwelling Spirit, knows all our inmost thoughts.

One has to take refuge in Him in all simplicity of heart.

You know many things and I have also told you a lot. What more to tell ? In everything there is a time-factor. The Lord is very merciful. One gains even by simply lying at His door and keeping there. Even if this (i.e. spiritual experience) does not happen this very moment, there is no doubt that this must happen some time. Good betides him who is able to just keep lying at His door.

Pray always for devotion to the Lord. When one is able to love Him, attachment to other things drops off of itself. If but once one gets the taste of devotion to Him, one no more relishes any other savour. One has to strive heart and soul to attain such devotion. Can this be achieved without any effort ? Know for certain that if you do not strive yourself, no one can do anything for you.

With good wishes and love,

SRI TURIYANANDA

¹ *Bhagavad Gītā*, VI. 5.

² *Ibid.*, XIII. 8, 9.



TEN VERSES TO GAURI, THE DIVINE MOTHER

BY ŚRĪ SANKARACARYA

The autumn heralds the Divine Mother's coming from the snowy heights of the Himālayas to the rain-soaked, cool and verdant plains. She is fondly imagined by the Hindu as the young bride who returns home after a period of stay with Her Husband in the distant and forbidding snowy heights. The welcome he gives Her is spontaneous and hearty, for She comes not only to gladden his heart but to destroy evil and establish the ascendancy of virtue over vice. Mother Durgā, as the young consort of Śiva, is called Gaurī, the golden-hued Goddess.

Gaurī-daśakam, translated here for the first time, is a beautiful hymn and its authorship is ascribed to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, the great philosopher-saint of non-dualistic Vedānta. In spite of being a staunch advocate of non-dualism, Śaṅkara dedicated hymns to almost all the important deities of the Hindu pantheon. And there are many addressed to the Divine Mother in which the highest philosophic thoughts are entwined with the tenderest of human sentiments. Brahma-Śakti or the Power of Brahman, which produces this illusory existence, is not separate from It, as the burning power of fire is not separate from fire. No doubt, different philosophical schools in India have explained this relation between Prakṛti and Puruṣa—Primordial Nature and the Absolute—in different terms. But the Power which brings about the world-phenomenon was described by everyone in terms of the feminine.

While describing Gaurī, the Divine Mother, Śaṅkara alternates between the most human qualities and the most transcendent attributes. For man feels quite close to the Divine one moment, and describes It in human terms, but the next moment he feels the distance between himself and the Divine. This oscillation between the two levels of existence ceases when he realizes his identity with the Supreme. But, as Sri Ramakrishna put it, the grace of the Divine Mother is necessary for clearing our path in the ascent towards the Absolute; for it is She who unlocks the door that bars our way to the Divine.

In this auspicious month of the worship of the Divine Mother, let us join with the great Ācārya in paying our humble homage to Gaurī, the Divine Mother, the Consort of Śiva.

गौरीदशकम्

श्रीमत्-शंकराचार्य-विरचितम् ।

लीला-लब्ध-स्थापित-लुप्ताखिल-लोकां
लोकातीतै-योगिभिरन्त-श्चिरमृग्याम् ।
बालादित्य-श्रेणि-समान-द्युतिपुञ्जां
गौरी-मम्बा-मम्बुरुहाक्षी-महमीडे ॥ १ ॥

प्रत्याहार-ध्यान-समाधिस्थितिभाजां
नित्यं चित्ते निर्वृत्तिकाष्ठां कलयन्त्रीम् ।
सत्य-ज्ञानानन्दमयीं तां तनुरूपां
गौरी-मम्बा-मम्बुरुहाक्षी-महमीडे ॥ २ ॥

चंद्रापीडानन्दितमंदस्मितवक्त्रां
चंद्रापीडालंकृतनीलालकभाराम् ।
इन्द्रोपेन्द्राद्यचितपादाम्बुजयुग्मां
गौरी-मम्बा-मम्बुरुहाक्षी-महमीडे ॥ ३ ॥

आदिक्षान्तामक्षरमूर्त्याविलसन्तीं
भूते भूते भूतकदम्बप्रसवित्रीम् ।
शब्द-ब्रह्मानन्द-मयीं तां तडिदाभां
गौरी-मम्बा-मम्बुरुहाक्षी-महमीडे ॥ ४ ॥

मूलाधारादुत्थितवीथ्या विधिरन्ध्रं
सौरं चान्द्रं व्याप्य विहारज्ज्वलितांगीम् ।
येयं सूक्ष्मात्सूक्ष्मतनुस्तां सुखरूपां
गौरी-मम्बा-मम्बुरुहाक्षी-महमीडे ॥ ५ ॥

TEN VERSES TO GAURĪ, THE DIVINE MOTHER

1. I adore the lotus-eyed Gaurī, the Divine Mother, who, by way of sport, creates, preserves, and destroys the universe ; who is ever inwardly sought after by unworldly yogins ; and who is a mass of splendour equal to many morning suns.

2. I worship the lotus-eyed Gaurī, the Divine Mother, who always engenders the highest bliss in the minds of those who are devoted to mental restraint, meditation, and *samādhi* ; and who is of subtle form and the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss.

3. I praise the lotus-eyed Gaurī, the Divine Mother, whose beautiful smiling face gladdens the heart of Śiva ; (the Mother) whose mass of dark blue locks are adorned by the ornament *candrāpīḍa* ; and whose lotus feet are worshipped by Indra, Upendra, and the other gods (divinities).

4. I adore the lotus-eyed Divine Mother Gaurī, who shines as the embodiment of the whole (Sanskrit) alphabet from 'a' to 'kṣa' ; who every moment gives birth to multitude of beings of various species ; who is of the essence of *śabdabrahman* and bliss ; and who has the radiance of lightning.

5. I worship the lotus-eyed Divine Mother Gaurī, who is the embodiment of bliss ; who is of subtler form than the subtle ; who, pervading the *suṣumnā* passage from *mūlādhāra* to *sahasrāra* and the paths of *piṅgalā* and *idā*, sports luminously.¹

¹ According to the Tantras, the Divine Mother indwells all beings as the *kuṇḍalinī*, coiled-up serpent-like power, at the psychic centre, *mūlādhāra*, corresponding to the sacral plexus. When this coiled-up power awakes and travels to *sahasrāra*, the thousand-petalled lotus in the head—the abode of Śiva—then a person becomes spiritually illumined. *Suṣumnā*, *piṅgalā*, and *idā* are the three prominent *nāḍīs* or nerves among the innumerable nerves in the nervous system. Of these, *suṣumnā* is the most important because the awakened spiritual energy rises up to *sahasrāra* through this only. This is situated within the spinal column and extends

नित्यः शुद्धो निष्कल एको जगदीशः
साक्षी यस्याः सर्गविधौ संहरणे च ।
विश्वत्राण-क्रीडन-लोलां शिवपत्नीं
गौरी-मम्बा-मम्बुरुहाक्षी-महमीडे ॥ ६ ॥

यस्याः कुक्षौ लीनमखण्डं जगदण्डं
भूयो भूयः प्रादुरभूदुत्थितमेव ।
पत्या सार्धं तां रजताद्रौ विहरन्तीं
गौरी-मम्बा-मम्बुरुहाक्षी-महमीडे ॥ ७ ॥

यस्यामोतं प्रोतमशेषं मणिमाला
सूत्रे यद्वत्क्वापि चरं चाप्यचरं वा ।
तामध्यात्मज्ञानपदव्या गमनीयां
गौरी-मम्बा-मम्बुरुहाक्षी-महमीडे ॥ ८ ॥

नानाकारैः शक्तिकदम्बैर्भुवनानि
व्याप्य स्वैरं क्रीडति येयं स्वयमेका ।
कल्याणीं तां कल्पलतामानतिभाजां
गौरी-मम्बा-मम्बुरुहाक्षी-महमीडे ॥ ९ ॥

आशापाशक्लेशविनाशं विदधानां
पादाम्भोजध्यानपराणां पुरुषाणाम् ।
ईशामीशार्धांगहरां तामभिरामां
गौरी-मम्बा-मम्बुरुहाक्षी-महमीडे ॥ १० ॥

6. I adore the lotus-eyed Gaurī, the Divine Mother, who is the consort of Lord Śiva ; who revels in the sport of protecting this universe ; and in whose acts of creation and destruction, the supreme Lord of the universe—eternal, pure, one, and partless—acts as the Witness (*sākṣin*).

7. I worship the lotus-eyed Gaurī, the Divine Mother, who disports with Her consort, Lord Śiva, in the silvery mountain (Himālayas) ; and in whose womb the entire *brahmāṇḍa* (cosmic egg) remains merged and rises up again and again.

8. She, in and through whom everything whatsoever moving or unmoving exists, as a garland of pearls strung on a thread ; and who can be attained through the spiritual path of knowledge—I worship Her, the lotus-eyed Gaurī, the Divine Mother.

9. I adore Gaurī, the lotus-eyed Divine Mother, who sports spontaneously all alone, pervading all the worlds through powers manifested in different forms ; who is ever auspicious ; and who is like a veritable wish-fulfilling creeper (*Kalpalatā*) to those who take refuge in Her.

10. I worship Gaurī, the lotus-eyed Divine Mother, who effects the destruction of all bondage of hopes and sorrows of those men intently meditating upon Her lotus feet ; and who is the Sovereign of the world ; who shares half the body of Lord Śiva ; and who is delightful to behold

from the base of the column to the head. The *idā* and *piṅgalā* are on the left and right sides of *suṣumnā* and are also called the lunar and solar nerves respectively. —Ed.

HONEN, THE BUDDHIST SAINT

PROF. D. C. GUPTA

The ancient religion of Japan was originally without a name, but after the introduction of Buddhism was called Shinto, the way of Gods, to distinguish it from Butsudo, or the way of the Buddha. It consists in the veneration of ancestors and nature spirits. But the contradictory fact here is that Shintoism considers corpses as impure and unholy and that funeral rites may not be performed in Shinto temples. The principal deity of Shinto is the Sun-goddess and is venerated less as a personification of the sun than as the ancestress of the Imperial Family. The Shinto Sun-goddess was identified with the Buddha Vairocana.

In Japan as in all Far Eastern countries Buddhism is closely connected with the veneration paid to the dead. All funerals are performed by Buddhist priests. All the sects of Buddhism seem to be literally religion of the dead. In Buddhist families the mortuary tablets are placed before the household shrine which occupies a shelf in one of the inner apartments and the dead are commonly spoken of as Buddha (*hoto-kesama*). The Shinto dead become Kami (gods). Buddha and Kami, according to popular ideas, are much the same.

Buddhism had reached the Koreans in A.D. 372 from China and thence found its way into Japan in A.D. 552. In the sixth century Korea was divided into several states, of which the principal were Kokuli or Kokuryo in the north, Pekche or Kudara in the south-west, and Silla or Shiragi in the south-east. Between the southern extremities of the two latter lay a territory called Imna or Mimana, in which the Japanese had certain rights. There was a considerable Japanese population and a Japanese Resident-General.

In A.D. 552, the king of Pekche sent a

mission to Kimmei, the Emperor of Japan, to inform him that the two kingdoms of Kokuryo and Silla were contemplating a joint attack on Pekche and Imna and to ask for the dispatch of an auxiliary force. An image of Shaka Butsu (Buddha) and a number of *sūtras* were among the presents sent to the Emperor, and also they included a memorial in which he spoke of the merit of diffusing the religion, saying:

‘This is the most excellent among all doctrines but it is hard to explain and hard to understand. It can give merit and reward without measure and without bounds and so lead to a grasp of the highest wisdom. Imagine a man possessing treasures to his heart’s content and be able to satisfy all his wishes. So it is with this wonderful doctrine. Every prayer is fulfilled and naught is wanting. Moreover, it has spread from distant India to the three Han (Korea) where all receive it with reverence. Your servant therefore has humbly dispatched his retainer to transmit it to the Imperial Court and to spread it throughout the home provinces, in order the words of the Buddha, His Law, shall spread to the East.’

* * *

Honen lived from A.D. 1133 to 1212. This was the period of the civil wars, riots and rebellions. He was the son of an official, Tokikuni, and his mother’s maiden name was Hada. As they had been childless for years, they offered fervent prayers to Gods and Buddha and to their great joy their prayers were at last granted by the birth of a boy on the seventh of the fourth month of the second year of Chosho (1133), in the reign of the Emperor Sutoku. At the birth of the boy a purple cloud appeared in the sky, and two white banners alighted on the luxuriant branches of a lofty *muku* tree with double trunks at the west side of their

home. Bells attached to the banners sounded in the sky and the patterns shone brightly in many colours in the sunbeams. After a week, however, the banners ascended into the sky and disappeared.

The newborn child was named Seishi Maru. He was nine years of age when his father was attacked and fatally wounded. When the end of his life approached, he called Seishi Maru to his death-bed and told him that his sad fate was predestined by his past conduct, and that if the boy would try to revenge his death, it would be endlessly paid for. 'Therefore,' said his father, 'forsake this worldly life at once and become a priest in order to attain Buddhahood.' Having thus spoken, Tokikuni breathed his last. In the gallant days of Bushido, revenge was regarded as the flower of the Samurai (warriors). Revenge was considered to be a sacred duty for the survivors.

The boy showed such talents that a local priest persuaded his mother to allow him to be sent to study at Hieizan, the centre of learning and culture in those days, where his genius might have full play. Mother gave a reluctant consent, but tears rolled down her cheeks in spite of herself. In parting, Seishi Maru comforted her heart in these words: 'Mother, I must be grateful for being born a man. I must be still more grateful for the privilege of listening to the teaching of the Buddha. When we realize the uncertainty of life and transitory nature of things, we must reject the glory of this dream-world. Moreover, father's dying wish rings in my ear. The true and only way to show gratitude is to attain Buddhahood as soon as possible.'

After being ordained a priest he retired to Kurodani on the outskirts of Kyoto. He abandoned all worldly desires and fame, and applied himself heart and soul in the study of holy *sūtras* for six years. He read

through the whole of the 'Tripitaka' many times over, but he did not find any doctrine which satisfied him. He went to the Seiryōji Temple in Saga and spent seven years in fervent prayer to the Buddha to show him salvation. This was the period of civil wars. The Emperor was exiled; members belonging to the same family fought one another; morality was degenerated, and the age was descending step by step into an abyss of immorality and darkness. Naturally a religious and gentle soul like Honen felt that the great need of mankind amidst such turbulence was religious peace.

The teachings of the Kegon, Tendai, and Shingon schools that all men have in themselves the Buddha-nature but that must be developed and realized by gradual practices, in which meditation as a rule played an important role, were beyond the grasp and understanding of the ordinary people. In order to discover the true way of salvation, Honen continued to study the whole scriptures of Buddhism all over again, and at last hit upon a book called Ojoyoshu by Eshin, which was based upon a commentary by Zendo. He devoted himself to read through and examine this commentary, and finally came across the following passage :

'Repeat the name of AMIDA wholeheartedly. Do not stop the practice even for a second, no matter whether you are walking or standing, sitting or lying. This is the deed which brings forth salvation without a single exception as it is in accordance with the Original Vow of Amida.'

He, for days and nights, meditated over the passage, and came to the conclusion that the common people, no matter how far they were removed from the age of the Buddha, might be saved by the virtue of the Original Vow of Amida. Finally he cast away all other forms of religious disci-

pline and devoted himself entirely to the practice of the NEMBUTSU (Namu Amida Butsu), and founded the Jodo Sect, i.e., (Pure Land School) of Buddhism. It was in the spring of the fifth year of Shoan (A.D. 1175) in the reign of the Emperor Takakura, when he was in his forty-third year. He founded his new religion not for the learned and the wise, but for the common and the ignorant. This was indeed a great revolution. Religion up to that time was all aristocratic. The poor, on account of their poverty, could not be saved. Unlike other revolutionists, he carried out this great revolution without bloodshed, and this was chiefly due to his noble character.

Among the court-nobles who had ardent faith in Honen's teaching the foremost was Kanezane. He earnestly begged Honen to expound the doctrines of Pure Land for him. Honen summoned two of his learned disciples and let them take down a dictation of his teaching which he called the Senchakushu. In the first place, he acknowledges that man is endowed without exception with the Buddha nature, and yet even today man endlessly wanders in the circle of transmigration, of repeated life and death. The reason is because man does not rely upon either one of the two superior laws—the Shodo (Holy Path) and the Jodo (Pure Land). The result is that he is not blessed with salvation. Salvation is obtained by faith, which is the gift of Amida, and it begins in this world as soon as faith begins in the believer. Honen said, 'How happy is the thought that though we are still here in the flesh we are numbered among the holy ones of Paradise !'

The Senchakushu opens by dividing religious practices into Shodo, or Holy Path, and the Jodo, or Pure Land, which are equivalent to the distinction between Jiriki, or reliance on one's own strength, and Tariki, or reliance on the strength of

another. The only hope for mankind is to endeavour to reach the Paradise called the Pure Land and to do so not by accumulating merit but by trusting simply and solely to the benevolence of Amida, that is, the Buddha Amitābha or Amitāyus, for the shorter form answers to both the original longer names. Amida vowed to become a Buddha and save mankind. Shaka (Śākyamuni) is looked upon as the teacher of the world and Amida is the saviour of the world. But, in general, Shaka and Amida are regarded as one and the same.

Honen preached numberless repetitions of one prayer. But he did not deny that in certain cases to say the Nembutsu ten times, or even once, was enough to secure Ojo (rebirth in the Pure Land). In the 'One Sheet of Paper' he expounded the three states of mind with great eloquence and makes it plain that the repetition of the *Namu Amida Butsu*, as he contemplated it, was not merely mechanical. The definition of the three states of mind originated with Zendo, who laid it down that prayer should be offered with a sincere heart, a deep-believing heart, and a longing heart. A sincere heart is one in which every thought is true and full of genuine devotion. A believing heart explains itself : 'If a man thinks there is any uncertainty about his birth in the Pure Land, it is uncertain, whereas if he thinks certain, it is certain.' By a longing heart is meant one which wishes all the merits which it may have acquired in this or previous existences to be presented and dedicated to the Buddha with one object of attaining birth in the Pure Land.

'As the body called *Namu Amida Butsu* includes all Gods, Buddha and Bodhisattvas and everything good and every good work, what need is there to worry your mind about various works and things good ? The name *Namu Amida Butsu* is itself the complete body of all good and of

every good work,' Rennyō says. It is remarkable that here, as often, *Namu Amida Butsu* (Reverence to Amida Buddha) is treated not as an ejaculation or invocation but as the name of Buddha. It is stated still more definitely : 'Amida Butsu is the Buddha whose name is *Namu Amida*

Butsu. This is Sanskrit¹ and when translated means "The Glorious One who has boundless Life and Truth"—the Buddha essence and the Buddha name are one and the same thing.'

¹As far as we know, *Namu Amida Butsu* is not Sanskrit in language.—Ed.

ABSOLUTE DEVOTION

SWAMI MAITRANANDA

Absolute devotion is unconditional dedication or consecration of the devotee's whole personality—body, mind, and soul—to his beloved God.

The main conditioning factor of personality being the ego—the I-consciousness in association with the body-mind—the absence of the ego is the prerequisite of unconditional dedication. The grace of God in its full glory descends on a soul devoid of ego.

The devotee in his passionate flight to God reaches the threshold of the Kingdom of God. The ego with its retinue of reason, mind, and words has no entrance there. They recoil baffled. The exhausted ego drops out at this stage and the grace of God descends on the devotee in all its glory. Hereafter the 'flight of the Alone to the Alone' is on. In a flash the triad—lover, love, and beloved—is crossed over. The soul of the devotee loses its identity in God.

It is the culminating experience of all devotional disciplines incomparable with any on this side of it. It is like a dumb man's delight, indescribable. Without the 'I', who is there to describe it? Even the attempt to recapture a glimpse of that experience by one who had it, fails. He is instantaneously thrown back into that

'I-less' experience, which, according to mystics and literature on mysticism, is unthought by mind and unsung by tongue.

Scriptures on devotion mention this experience as the eternal fruit of man's striving, as everlasting bliss, release, perfection, supreme goal, etc.

With the drop-out of the ego in the final stages of a soul's flight through the path of Love, life's miseries are for ever overcome. The disrobed soul, touched by the grace of God, realizes itself as divine, immortal and perfect as the 'Father in heaven is Perfect'.

Perfection, divinity, and bliss are the intrinsic nature of the soul. 'The Creator has endowed the human soul with the intelligence to realize the Supreme Being', 'God made man in His own image', 'The soul is a spark from the Divine', etc., are expressions in various religious scriptures of the world pointing to the inherent nature of the soul. It is the birthright of the Son to be one with the Father; of the soul to realize its identity with the Supreme Being; of the spark to return to its original source.

So the path of devotion welcomes all souls to it. Its promise of release is for all as a birthright. No bar is put on sinners, the weak or the unrefined. The path is

open to any pilgrim with an urge for release and faith in the grace of God.

Though absolute devotion in the sense of unconditional self-surrender is an indescribable experience, the nature, glory, and disciplines of primary devotion leading to this indescribable experience as well as the characteristics of one who has attained it are dealt with in detail in the devotional scriptures.

This primary devotion is intense love of God which merits immortality as a gift from God.

The characteristics of a soul that has attained this gift of immortality is perfection, divinity, and contentment: perfection in the sense of oneness with God, divinity in the sense of holiness, and contentment in the sense of unperturbed self-fulfilment. The soul is released from the ego, is beyond the three modes of nature, beyond all dos and don't dos. He has no more any selfish desires, no personal grief and no hate. Being immersed in bliss lesser joys do not excite him. He never exerts for himself. His thought, word, and deed are never ego-centred or ego-nourishing. He has no ego to prompt or attract him. He is desireless of personal salvation even. He has no personal grief but sympathy for others less fortunate. He has no hate but love for all. He is unattached to feelings of joys and sorrows of the world. If at all he exerts, he exerts only to ameliorate the miseries of others.

He may often be in rapture or in ecstasy through an overpowering sense of love for God. He may appear to be drunk to others. He may at times be dead to the world, immersed in the bliss of the Self. The external surroundings including his own body and its different states cease to have any influence over him. They cease to exist for him deeply immersed as he is in his own inner Self which is bliss.

Supreme love is intense love of God to

the exclusion of everything else. It is anti-lust and anti-world, as renunciation of lust and wealth and all else but the beloved God is involved in it. None can be in two boats, i.e., love God and Mammon at the same time. Where there is God or genuine love of God, there cannot be world or love of world. Christ and anti-Christ cannot co-exist in the same heart. So in the path of love, throughout its disciplinary stages, renunciation of lust and wealth is imperative. Without renunciation, devotional disciplines lose their sharpness, clarity of vision, and become diffused in their spiritual purpose.

While renunciation is common to all paths leading to perfection, there is a certain amount of moderation or concession in the rigour of it prescribed for those on the path of devotion. Here there is no attempt to negate the world as in Jñāna-yoga or the path of knowledge. To one on the path of devotion, the world and the objects in it that are helpful to him in his service of the Beloved, helpful to him to be God-centred, are acceptable. Only those things and persons that are unhelpful and detrimental to his God-centred life and loving service to God are rejected and renounced.

Even these rejections are enjoined only so long as one is on the path. Once he reaches his destination he is no more bound by any scriptural injunctions. But then he does not violate them. He validates them lest others to whom he becomes a model, a guide and teacher may go astray. As regards daily routine of life, he may be carrying on just like others with the difference that he is thoroughly unattached and bodily life as far as he is concerned is carried on by the momentum of bodily habits.

The disciplines prescribed for those on the path of devotion are threefold. They are ritualistic worship of the beloved God, hearing and talking about God, and contemplation and meditation on Him. The devotee's life should be a saga of these three

disciplines intended to make him fit for absolute self-surrender to God. These three-fold devotional disciplines are for the purgation and purification of the body-mind. The soul is ever perfect. It is caught and held bound by body-mind. Purgation and purification are relevant to and necessary only for the body-mind complex.

Nature's design of body and mind is for receiving and reacting to sensate impulses. They have to be reshaped and readjusted to receive and react to spiritual impulses. Then only they will be able to imbibe and retain spiritual ideas and ideals and experience them without getting deranged or damaged. Therefore the scriptures very wisely emphasize the necessity for bodily actions in consonance with spiritual emotions and thoughts. Loving service rendered to the chosen deity during ritualistic worship serves this purpose. In the course of daily acts of loving service during ritualistic worship, the nervous system and brain cells get purged and purified without any special struggle for it.

Loving service to God would be possible only when the devotee is aware of the glory and grace of God. This awareness is born only with the knowledge of God and remembrance of it during worship. Hearing and talking of God gives this knowledge. Constant engagement in hearing and talking about God and His auspicious qualities chastens the emotions and purifies and transforms them to pure spiritual emotions.

Contemplation and meditation go to a deeper level of the mind. Thought and will get purified and spiritually oriented.

Thus the threefold discipline is intended for purging and purifying the body-mind complex. When purified they get integrated, strong and powerful to stand and retain all spiritual impulses, emotions, ideas and experiences.

Constant loving service rendered to God by the devotee who has renounced all sense

enjoyments and even the craving for them may merit the grace of God. The grace of God or the mercy of His devotees engender the supreme love of God. Hence the scriptures on devotion repeatedly emphasize the company of the great devotees of God as the first and most important step on the path of devotion. Devotees of God are the conduit pipes through which the grace of God flows into the hearts of ordinary mortals. They are living examples and models of the ideal of Love and they are the sure guides. Scriptures are theoretical guides. The devotees of God are the practical guides. The discipline of living with them and modelling one's life in their pattern is 'Upasid in practice' and the surest way of success in all disciplines aiming at release.

This company of the devotees of God will be available and be beneficial only to those who have given up the company of non-devotees. For the genuine devotees do not mix with the non-devotees. They scrupulously avoid their contact as they cannot stand it. It is the devotees of God who sow the seed of devotion. And it is they who help it to sprout and then nourish it till it grows and bears fruit. Any company other than that of the devotees is harmful to an aspirant on the path of devotion, and therefore to be shunned as the most unfavourable in the world.

God out of His mercy has endowed every living heart with the tendency and capacity to love. Ordinarily this noble emotion is directed towards the objects of the world for sense enjoyments. When the same emotion is withdrawn from sense objects and directed towards God, it serves for the final release. Hence devotion is considered as the easiest of all paths in the pilgrimage to perfection. It is both the end and the means.

Though it is said that to love is the noblest of emotions and the easiest to practise, the pilgrim on the path of love is cautioned against traps and pitfalls. Pity and

sympathy for the poor and suffering may masquerade as love of God. Before one's devotion gets firmly grounded in God and is sure of its roots in God, one should not indulge in pity and sympathy for the poor and suffering. For such indulgence is likely to decoy the pilgrim from the right royal path of devotion into alluring traps and pitfalls of pride and vanity from which he may find it difficult or impossible to extricate himself later. Hence the great teacher of Love, Jesus Christ, gives as the greatest commandment: 'Love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind' and secondly only, 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. Very often before getting established in wholehearted love of God, other loves are indulged in with seemingly best motives and both are lost in due course.

A genuine devotee has surrendered himself and the whole world to God. He is therefore not to bother about the world or its suffering. As far as he is concerned, it is God's creation and God is merciful and all-powerful. He will take care of it as He thinks fit. The duty of the aspirant is to love God, realize Him and afterwards, if God commands him, play the part of a servant of His creatures as an instrument in His hands. Before attaining God, compelled by circumstances if he is to serve any of the fellow creatures, he is to do it as loving service to his beloved God and not as an act of benevolence to a creature. Any other attitude may go against the sense of humility and dependence that an aspirant on the path of Love should cultivate and nourish. Teachers of the path of Love endorse these injunctions of the scriptures.

Service to God gets imbued with inspiring love only when some intimate relation is established between the devotee and his beloved God. An approach to God in an intimate relationship with which the devotee is familiar quickens the pace of progress and deepens concentration on the Beloved. Hence

the scriptures on devotion advise the aspirants to have and to develop attitudes towards God that are human—attitude of a subject towards the king, of a servant to the master, of a friend to his bosom friend, of a child to its parents, of a lover to the beloved, etc. These are only different phases of one and the same emotion of love. There can be as many phases of love as there are human relationships. The difference is only due to the difference in taste, temperament, etc. of the individuals. The best of these attitudes is intense love that cannot bear separation. The anguish that a devotee fears he may be subjected to by separation from his beloved is the supreme test of intense love.

So far we were discussing only the primary or supreme devotion which merits God's grace and final release. There is a secondary stage of devotion which leads to or matures into the primary one. In the secondary stage of devotion, the love of the soul for God is manifested through the body-mind not purged and not purified. The progress from the secondary stage to the primary one is in proportion to the thinning of the ego—body-mind complex—by spiritual disciplines. In the secondary devotion the manifestation of the intrinsic love of the soul for God is coloured by the complexes of the ego. And as a result the manifestation of love appears static and mechanical. In the primary devotion wherein the ego is less or *nil*, the manifestation is to that extent pure, spontaneous, and dynamic. The love is the same. The difference attributed to or observed in these two manifestations is clearly due to its appearance in the secondary one through the ego and in the primary one unobstructed by the ego.

Because of the ego, in the secondary devotion the love of God may be motivated by desires other than God and therefore impure. In the primary devotion the motive

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ILLUMINATING DIALOGUES FROM INDIAN LORE

DESIRELESSNESS : THE WAY TO TRUE HAPPINESS

Śrī Rāma : Tell me, Sir, what is meant by craving for worldly objects? What desire leads to Mokṣa (liberation), what to bondage? How to liberate oneself from this bondage?

Vasiṣṭha : Belief in the body, without discrimination between the body and self, and constant dwelling on the body alone is craving. This leads to bondage. The conviction that the Ātman pervades everything and there is nothing for one to love or hate in this world is non-craving. Such detachment arises in the mind of those liberated persons who neither foster worldly desires nor hanker after lesser things. There is neither 'I' nor 'you' for the detached mind. At its will it enjoys pleasures of the world or turns away from them. This is known as the path leading to Mokṣa. Detached persons neither court action nor inaction : renouncing all fruits of action, they do not care which of the two courses they adopt. The wise say that these are persons devoid of cravings. Know also that there is no craving in one, if he willingly renounces the fruit of actions and not if he merely renounces actions. Through it the stains of ever-growing action will cease and Mokṣa is attained. It is because of craving that one goes through a long chain of

births, disappearing at every stage like bubbles in the ocean.

Craving is twofold. One is called fruitless (vandhya) and the other is called fruitful (avandhya). The former pertains to the ignorant while the latter is an ornament of those who have realized the self. Fruitful craving generates knowledge of the self and discrimination, and thereby rebirth is arrested. Fruitless actions bring recurring cycles of existence in this world through nescience (ajñāna) and attachment to worldly objects.

O Rāma, know clearly the true nature of the two kinds of attraction. The mind, mistaking evil things for good and attracted by enjoyments, revels in them, like a vulture preying upon carrion. Those who are immersed in the evils of fruitless actions fall to the lower levels of existence. But when discrimination grows, one is diverted from the visible things of māyā. Then the mind is divested of its cravings for material life and Jīvanmukti (freedom-in-life) is attained.

Now hear of the true nature of the mind of the Jīvan-mukta (living-free) who is always in different moods, whose consciousness pervades all creatures, and who performs all actions. The living-free soul is quiescent in Knowledge. Though associated

with visible things, he enjoys supreme Bliss. Having no material cravings, the Jīvan-muktas do not associate with the distorted consciousness of the world. They are not affected by the results of actions and always enjoy bliss. They are great, intelligent, and full of knowledge and bliss. Their minds are stable like a mountain. The Jīvan-muktas always transact their duties. They neither long for future things nor ruminate upon things past. Their minds are neither attracted towards men bound by the worldly pleasures nor affected by misery. They appear as devotees amongst devotees; conduct themselves tactfully amongst men of duplicity, as children amongst children, strong among the strong, young among the young. They appear as grief-stricken while in sympathy with the aggrieved. Virtuous acts are their glory.

This world appears diversified because of the fluctuations of the mind, like innumerable eddies in a swift stream of water.

Śrī Rāma : Because of what does the mind fluctuate ? Through what will it not fluctuate ? What are the means to control it ?

Vasiṣṭha : The fluctuations of the mind are associated with the mind itself like oil in sesame or whiteness in snow. There are two paths to destroy this fluctuation : Yoga and Knowledge. Yoga is that which makes the activities of the mind integrated. But Knowledge is that which enables one to enjoy happiness in all objects. Persons who have as their ornament the supreme Vedas hold that the mind is nothing but fluctuation of Prāṇa (vital force). With the control of Prāṇa, the mind is also controlled. With the control of mind's fluctuation, rebirth will also cease.

—Sañjaya

Source : The *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, Upaśama Prakaraṇa, chapters 67-77.

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and aim is God and nothing but God and therefore pure love.

To sum up, the aspirant on the path of devotion, by disciplines of loving service, hearing about God and contemplation and meditation on Him achieves the annihilation of his ego. The grace of God releases

him from the ego for ever. The one and only barrier standing between the soul and God thus removed the soul merges in God and loses its identity in God which is absolute devotion. One who has this absolute devotion sees and serves the whole world and himself as God.

“A hater may do great harm to a hater, or an enemy to an enemy ; but a wrongly-directed mind will do greater mischief unto itself. A mother, a father, or any other relative will do much good ; but a well-directed mind will do greater service unto itself.”

—DHAMMAPADA

WHAT VEDĀNTA MEANS TO ME

BY SHYAMA

At the outset the teachings of Vedānta appealed simultaneously to all my needs on the aesthetic-emotional, psychological, and intellectual levels.

On the aesthetic-emotional level, the need to love fully, freely, wholeheartedly desired its fulfilment. I yearned for a perfect, complete love, which I knew intuitively could not be found with another human being. It was a crying out in the darkness for divine love, for the love of God. I was a romantic, but not fully enough to delude myself that human love promised perfection or ultimate fulfilment or was an end in itself.

On the psychological level, I had always been conscious of a desire for freedom—freedom from conflicts, fears, anxiety, passions—the freedom to be wholly, fully, simply myself, whatever that meant, undaunted by the contradictions of life. Positively, it was the desire to be completely 'at-one' with my truest self, loving and giving without cessation.

On the intellectual plane, there was a craving for knowledge, a hunger to know all, everything, to penetrate the mystery of life itself. In short, a hunger not for scholarship but for wisdom.

So, in retrospect, it appears inevitable that my footsteps were led to the path of Vedānta. Vedānta means my very existence but I can only point to the various signs that led me to Vedānta and touch upon how this contact is affecting my entire life.

The first overt sign of my philosophical probings came toward the end of a college course—Introduction to Philosophy. Final examinations were coming and, not having studied much, I had to cram in one weekend, from Friday night straight through to Sunday night. A chapter in the textbook called 'Free Will vs Determinism', awakened

my mind to an intellectual excitement never before experienced. This was my first confrontation with metaphysical exploration, and I was fascinated. I felt at home at once in this new atmosphere. No doubt something beyond intellect also responded, for the big questions about the meaning of life and the purpose of existence had begun to invade my solitary hours. The question, What are we all doing here? tugged at my mind.

I had no definite materialistic goals. Marriage *per se* had little appeal, although I wanted children and had automatically assumed that I would one day follow the herd. Before then, the writer-artist in me wanted to write and explore life fully. Germinating within was the desire to break all bondages and discover the root cause of everything. Ideals at this stage were not lacking; what was lacking was the proper emotional and psychological equipment, as well as wise guidance, in order to realize these aspirations.

Being introspective, my first step in practical terms was psychiatry. In my middle teens, I was full of conflicts and at the sensitive age of seventeen, I wanted desperately to know *why* in order to change and be a better person. A few years of first bi-weekly and later weekly psychiatric sessions (which I paid for by working part-time) helped me to be less fearful and reticent and to face myself with less shame. But after so many talking sessions, I felt the need for action; I had to become more involved in life and learn to live with much more flexibility. The universal questions about the meaning of life and its intrinsic value were, of course, left unexplored in psychiatry.

At this point, I wavered between some vague instinctive awareness of what I was

searching for and doubt as to where and how to find it. I was afraid of getting caught up in the everyday world of stress and struggle, of fight and competition, lest I should lose the desire to expand, to know, and miss hearing the *answer*—if and when it should come. Admittedly, I was a coward, afraid to plunge in and have my lofty idealism trampled on in the crowd. Careful reasoning had to precede any action.

The search continued. I explored intellectual life, grasping at pieces (sometimes chunks) of truths from *The Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, the philosophies of humanism, general semantics, Sartre, Camus, and others. Camus struck me as the most honest of contemporary philosophers. Still, no one idea, no startling convictions propounded by others captured me or inspired me to discipleship.

Along with my quest for meaning ran my ambition as a writer. Writing seemed the best way for me to deal with mental and emotional conflicts. The beauty and power of words, the dramatic intensity of the poet, the high levels of feelings and thoughts that were potentially open to the writer offered enticing escapes, flights of transcendence, promises of self-expansion. So I wrote and took writing courses. But I could not be satisfied for long. I could not take the role of writer seriously enough to label myself as such and, therefore, resisted the necessary discipline.

Although I had talent in both nonfiction and fiction writing, my propensities were toward nonfictional writing, and poetry. To write fiction well, one must believe in changing reality, in *māyā*, as an end in itself, and something within me resisted this idea. This, at least, was my rationalization at the time. The truth was that I needed most of all to find myself as a *person* first. At the time, name and fame were not compelling enough motivations. Writing, too, had to have an aim beyond itself.

As I continued writing, I discovered that writing perpetuated my ego—the little self with all its faults, imperfections, limitations—and enhanced the sense of separateness by the dogmatic self-assertion implicit in the written word. The writer can unrealistically exaggerate his struggles, visions, ambitions, and disturbances. I could not commit my dramatic imagination thusly in bold print.

Often synonymous with the artist's life is Bohemianism—a kind of idealistic hedonism. In theory, this life promised a more self-expansive freedom. I tried, by placing myself in the environment, to believe in this way of life but soon failed to accept its validity, and instead found myself an observer, a 'witness'. In all honesty, I could not plunge into Bohemian life. Most of the Bohemians I knew struck me as being self-deluded—they were *playing* at freedom. This did not seem to be a life true to one's self, for me. The 'eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may die' creed failed to inspire me. The search continued.

A small experimental college in Monterey (where I became a student six months after my arrival in California in January, 1962) served to further the search and led me about a year later to Vedānta. The college itself was a huge old three-storied Victorian mansion planted on a hill just two blocks from the Pacific Ocean. One side of the house was landscaped by a would-be vegetable garden, and my first day at the college found me uprooting weeds alongside a handful of students and teachers.

I had always felt a kinship with nature: the woods, mountains, country-side, the sea. The ocean soon became my God. The sea, the stars, the vast stretches of tawny sand punctuated by jagged rocks, cypress trees, landscaped by acres of grass—all spelled p-e-a-c-e. This was harmony, this was real. Many nights I walked to the ocean or rode by bicycle along the quiet road alive only with

the subtle sounds of nature, under a sky replete with stars. I would stop, scuffle barefooted on the beach, and sit on the rocks that jutted out along the shore. Nights were especially serene: the stars and moon the only light, the foamy waves gushing around the cavelike rocks and evaporating into the sand, and the dynamic stillness of night itself all whispered a world of beauty, freedom, tranquillity. The days, too, especially the damp rainy ones, had their mystical charm.

For several months I pursued silent nature and worshipped that infinite expanse of water as my God—limitless, all-powerful, mysterious: the mighty unfathomable sea!

Eventually, however, like chewing the same piece of gum for hours, this nature-worshipping life lost its flavour. I would sit, dream, contemplate, cogitate, feel peaceful and wholesome, write, and be left, finally, with myself—the self-conscious ego. I was one thing and that intriguing expanse of water was another—separate from each other. I could not lose myself in the ocean. A confrontation came: Is this all? What am I to *do* with my ocean-God? There was no answer but to leave it and move on.

Again I turned to psychology: Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Jung. They acknowledged something beyond the ego-self of man and spoke of integration in more universal terms. There were truths to be found, but they were, upon closer analysis, too fragmentary.

There were several moments during this period when I felt, in retrospect, what surely must have been the hand of God, bidding me to turn Godward. One incident I will always remember.

At Emerson College I had been asked to start a literary magazine from the writings of the students and teachers there. I began writing letters to writers and poets at other colleges around the country, for there did not seem to be enough good writing at

Emerson itself. Material began coming in. Two other teachers at the college acted as editorial advisers. Only four students submitted material we considered publishable. Most of the students and teachers did not like the direction of the magazine; they wanted it strictly limited to the college. A meeting was called, and students and some teachers attacked me and the magazine's image. I sat silently, as an observer, experiencing a new and strange sense of detachment. I did not stop to wonder where this came from, but accepted and enjoyed being a 'witness' at my hearing, as it were. One or two students and my Vedāntist teacher-friend defended me, but still my state of calmness remained level. I was asked, finally, to speak. I don't remember what I said, except that this new strength and detachment remained with me, calm and quiet. I was later congratulated on the way I handled myself. I felt happy, but not proud, for deep down, though not articulated to myself, I sensed that this had been a special kind of grace. The memory of that day remains with me as a beautiful moment of dispassion in an otherwise self-conscious and passionate existence.

At another time, when I heard about something called meditation, I sat alone one night outside the college and tried to 'meditate'. I felt good and peaceful, and wondered what meditation *really* consisted of.

About this time, a Vedāntist, a teacher and friend at the college, talked a little about Hinduism, especially Vedānta, and suggested I read a book called *Western Psychology and Hindu Sadhana* to add a new dimension to my interest in psychology. Another suggestion came from a student who had begun to study Vedānta: read an essay or two in *Vedānta for the Western World*. Both books were agreeable, but no lights flashed. A week or two later, I chanced upon a copy of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Probably I understood little of its philos-

ophy, but I will never forget the experience of wonderful peace that took hold of me after I had finished the reading in one night. After I put the book down, I joined a group of students (or rather just stood where they had gathered in front of a blazing fire-place), and for a long, serene sweet moment, I felt a sense of the unreality of human attachments (persons clinging to each other). It may be far-fetched to say that I felt myself in another realm, but that long moment (lasting about half an hour) of detachment, or transcendence, or grace, or call-it-what-you-will, was very real, for it was entirely spontaneous, inward, and thought-less.

This marked the beginning of my initial contact with Vedānta. The more direct beginning came a few months later when I first heard Swami Prabhavananda lecture in Hollywood. Everything that Swami said, or rather his whole radiant being and the power behind his words, struck me as entirely right, very real. He captured my complete attention. (I know now that it was simply the authenticity of his holiness, the strength of his all-encompassing love, which is irresistible.)

The search had ended, but the struggle—the new life as a spiritual aspirant—had yet to begin. Here at last was something true, something I could give myself to, completely, forever. Questions about the meaning and purpose of life were soon answered during ensuing lectures and classes, and intellectual doubts evaporated in an atmosphere full of the wisdom and loving understanding created by the Swamis. Never before had I felt so totally at home! Intellectually, answers to long-buried, half-forgotten but inwardly persistent questions were quickly offered by the Swamis and almost as quickly accepted by me—to an extent. This was the world of beauty, of truth, of goodness that I had stubbornly persisted in believing did exist somewhere

in the universe. Of course, unknown at the time, the deeper implications involved in the *practice* of Vedānta eluded me. I could not resolve the dichotomy within myself between God and the world, between ideals and daily practice.

The intellectual doubts were but a part of the problem. Above and beyond the aesthetic and intellectual levels of human need, the most important of all is the practical level—how one practises every moment and day by day the living truths of essential religion. Growth of character and, further, spiritual unfoldment, can come only through practice, which opens one to divine grace.

My contact with Vedānta, and more especially, my discipleship to Swami Prabhavananda, marked the start of my real emotional development. And only at this level can one begin to feel the powerful influence of holiness and benefit accordingly. Without direct personal association with my guru, the teachings of Vedānta would have remained for me only on the philosophical and intellectual level.

On the one hand, I yearned to be truthful and honest with myself but, on the other hand, I was a hypocrite, too proud to face the fact that I was not so noble and good as I secretly wished to be. I could not stand the pain of not liking myself, and I refused to confront my baser faults and tendencies. My intellectual insights were far above my emotional development, and so I tenaciously clung to living more on a theoretical level of existence, proud of my intellectual 'wisdom'.

The practice of religion inevitably produces a change in oneself, and one longs more and more to be *sincere*. The deep dark secrets of fear, shame, desire, are forced out of hiding. Vedānta strips away all masks, pretensions, ego-defences, false-identifications, self-delusions. Through the grace of the guru, I had to learn little by

little how to 'face the brute', in the words of Swami Vivekananda.

What Vedānta taught me most of all perhaps is to be honest with myself. To learn to face myself bravely, to be true to myself—at least to *want* passionately to do so! We know from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* how Sri Ramakrishna offered everything to the Divine Mother, impurity and purity alike, but Truth alone he had to cling to always.

As I began to be more honest with myself, to face courageously my weaknesses and ignoble tendencies, while avoiding self-

pity and depression, a huge stone was, as it were, lifted from my heart; it was as though the door of a damp, dark, dusty attic were suddenly flung open and the bats, cobwebs, and ghosts all vanished. I felt freer and lighter, more confident to face, with a discernible measure of faith, whatever life and my own hand brought forth. It gives a curious strength really to embrace the truth, 'As ye sow, so shall ye reap.'

I was self-willed and stubborn and had to suffer many long years, but the Lord will have His way after all and forever—and one begins to await happily that blessed day!

IS THERE A PLURALITY OF TRUTHS?

PROF. P. S. NAIDU

The fashion in metaphysical thinking oscillates between pure monism to unlimited pluralism. At the moment pluralism seems to be very much in favour. In regard to Truth also, it seems to be the fashion to speak of degrees of Truth or levels of Truth. But all the time there is an uncomfortable feeling in the minds of pluralists that Truth may, in the last resort, be one and undivided.

A couple of years ago, learned men of letters and scientists met and asked the question: 'What is literary truth?' The discussions then tended to draw distinctions between literary truth, scientific truth, spiritual truth, and so forth. Some members of the discussion group came to the conclusion that Truth is relative to time and place: 'Truth can be observed only in relation to a certain situation.' This would warm the heart of the pragmatist!

The trouble is that there is a general feeling that science has a monopoly of Truth. Science presents 'correct and accu-

rate truth, free from bias and prejudice, and completely objective'. The general view seems to be that if one could jump out of one's skin and see things, then one would see them as science describes them. Scientific findings are *objective*, that is completely independent of the observer. So they are universal and eternal.

This, we must say, is a tall claim! Apart from the fact that one cannot jump out of one's skin—even the scientist cannot!—we have now the very disconcerting situation that all that the scientist once swore by as Biblical truth, is now completely forsworn! This has happened once too often to be of comfort to the scientist. In fact the long trail blazed by the scientist is liberally strewn with the corpses of discredited scientific theories. Moreover recent researches in science have given rude shocks to the main foundations of science—matter, energy, and causality. Matter is now immaterial and may be converted into energy: energy has now become material and may

be re-crystallized into matter. As for causality, it is no longer the rigid deterministic law that it was; it is only a formula conveying statistical averages as in sociology. Relativity, immateriality, indeterminacy, and uncertainty are the ruling concepts today in science.

Scientific 'truth' is at best limited and partial. It is only a working hypothesis, never an established law. When it ceases to work it should be and has been discarded without much ado. Of Absolute Truth, science has no knowledge and can never have any knowledge in the very nature of the limitations it has imposed on itself, and in the very nature of its peculiar methodology. Apart from all these considerations, science has no place for values in its scheme. In fact, the scientist pours contempt on *values*. And truth without value is just non-existent. Thus, what is called truth in science is no truth at all.

As against science, we have art. Art, whether it is literary, plastic, graphic, or musical, is the outpouring of the heart. The gifted creative artist has come face to face with something unique in the universe and has felt it in his heart. He is trying to communicate, through his chosen medium, something that is not communicable through the ordinary media, such as language. The gifted artists' inspiration is divine and so he has to create an adequate channel for communicating with others who have had no such inspiration. This channel is not the rational, logical channel of the so-called 'objective science' but it is thrilling poetry, moving drama, inspiring painting or sculpture, or soul-stirring music. He tries to touch a tender chord in the human heart. And it is to be remembered that what he is trying to communicate is truth, truth which is as valid (or invalid) as the truth that the scientist is trying to communicate through his 'laws', 'principles', or 'formulae'. The scientist sees truth in its bare

skeletal form, while the artist sees her in all her alluring drapery. The artist has seen truth in appealing mood and attire and is trying to project this image on to the minds of *sahridayas* (sympathetic connoisseurs). The artist may not ferry you over to the moon or Venus, but he alone can reveal to you the truth about the beauty of the moon and Venus. And most certainly he alone can interpret for you their meaning, purpose and value in the grand design of the universe according to divine will, and their purpose, meaning, and value to you in your own individual life. The scientist and the artist see truth, but each sees it from his own standpoint. Each sees a part and never the whole. And each partial view is as good as the other, is as valuable as the other. To boost scientific truth and to decry artistic truth is futile. Vainglorious is the scientist who claims a monopoly of truth. Scientific truth and aesthetic truth being what they are, namely, partial and incomplete, what then is Truth in all its totality, completeness, and unity? Let it be understood clearly *Truth is one*. There is no plurality of truths. Truth cannot be described: it is to be possessed. As some one at the learned conference pointed out, you have to have 'darśan' of Truth! You have to have a vision—a non-mediate perception, a direct apprehension. In such a direct vision you cease to be 'you'. The 'I' or 'ego' in you dissolves. Duality disappears and you become one with *That*. In the vision of Truth which is One, you realize that not only your ego and all other egos, but every living and non-living thing—the very stones and the rocks and the particles of sand on the seashore—all these are one with you and you are one with them. You become transformed. 'Śivoham', 'I am Śiva'! Your personality is transformed into pure gold. Your face glows with unusual brilliance; your eyes sparkle with celestial splendour; you radiate peace and

joy. You have seen the Unalterable and you have become one with It.

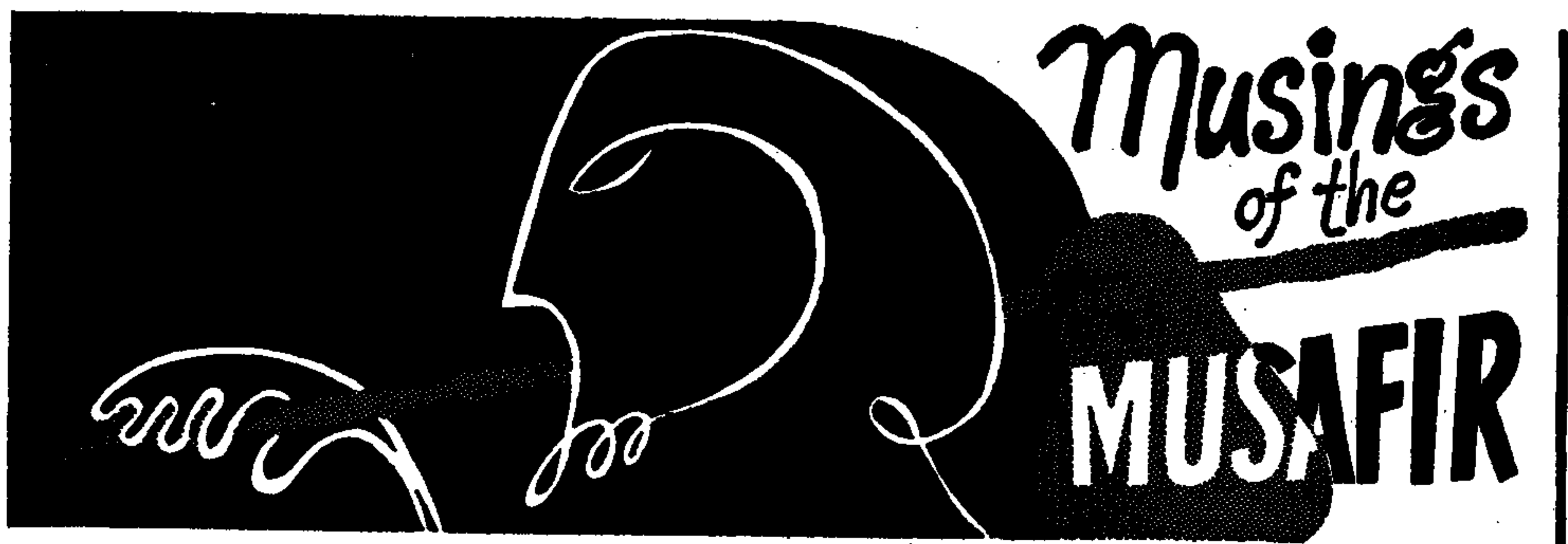
He who has seen Truth is all humility and compassion. His ego has been completely wiped out. He is selfless in the most exalted sense. He has obtained Beatitude and Blessedness which science could never have conferred on him through its 'objective truths'! Scientific truth swells the head without changing the attitudes. In the absence of humility and universal compassion, scientific truth tends to create disintegration of personality. Nor is literary truth any better. Instead of a swelled head it generates a swelled heart which is morbid. Feeling runs amuck and the literary artist is in the same boat with the scientist. Not so the

devotee who has seen the Truth in all Its totality and unity. He walks in the steps of the godly!

Is there no hope for the scientist and the artist? Luckily there is. If they become fully conscious that what they have is only partial truth, and if with sincere longing, they seek for Truth, then the scientist will find himself steadily moving from scientific truth to full and true wisdom, and the artist will find that his mind is uplifted from the level of mere beauty to the exalted regions of holiness. When mere scientific knowledge matures into true wisdom, and when mere aesthetic contemplation of beauty confers holiness, then and then alone the scientist and artist will *attain Truth*. And not till then!

Attain emptiness to the utmost,
 Hold quietness firmly.
 The ten thousand things develop simultaneously,
 Yet in them I can see the process of returning.
 Things, however flourishing,
 Return each to their root.
 To return to the root is called "quietude".
 It is called "accepting fate."
 Accepting fate is called "constancy."
 To know constancy is called "enlightenment."
 Not to know constancy
 Leads to reckless actions which bring misfortune.
 To know constancy is to be open.
 To be open is to be impartial.
 To be impartial is to be kingly.
 To be kingly is to be in accord with heaven.
 To be in accord with heaven is to be in accord with Tao,
 To be in accord with Tao is to endure.
 Though the body dies, it does not die.

—LAO Tzu



THE AIR-BUBBLE AND THE POT-HOLES

American astronauts—David Scott, James Irwin and Alfred Worden—have done it again. Their Apollo-15-mission success is a tremendous contribution to man's conquest of space. While the whole human race takes pride in this most daring adventure of these sons of men, the American people have a special reason to be gratified by this achievement. This is a most impressive attainment of the nation's wealth, knowledge, will, character and efficiency. Though only Scott and Irwin landed on the moon, hundreds and thousands of Americans participated in this most complicated project. If one single worker in this project had not done his part in the most precise manner, the over-all co-ordination would have been adversely affected as a result of which the mission could have failed. But this not only did not happen, on the contrary, as TV drama revealed there was an abundance of self-assurance perfectly grounded in the participants' individual and collective character and efficiency. It was reported:

The tightly co-ordinated team work operating across a quarter million miles (4,00,000 Km) provided a smooth, unfolding scene of two men working with seeming ease and non-chalance. Man appeared deceptively to have shed most

of the trammels binding him to his own, small, blue planet.

Man's massive scientific knowledge and efficiency alone could not have achieved this. What was needed was character. Without character this perfect co-ordination and orchestration of efforts would have been impossible. Everybody had to be sincere, honest, dependable and had to give his very best to ensure perfection. In other words, everybody had to merge their little selves in the mission. And the result of this was a marvellous display of human integrity and workmanship, which attained such incredible excellence that ground control at Houston, reading telemetric data, detected an air-bubble in the cooling water in Irwin's life-supporting back-pack—potentially a major danger. Scott, on instructions, from ground, drained the system and refilled it; thus the danger was averted.

Just think of it! The ground control could detect an air bubble a quarter of a million miles away and control it.

* * *

Now, look at the dangerous pot-holes in Calcutta-Howrah streets. A little comparative study of the character and efficiency of the two peoples may not be out of place here. American people can detect and era-

dicating an air-bubble on the moon from this earth, whereas the people in Calcutta are incapable of doing anything about the pot-holes in their own streets!

It is really incredible how a civilized people could have reached this abysmal inertia. You cannot say that people here do not have education, intelligence, scientific knowledge or even money. Calcutta is not a poor city. If it were poor, so many poor people would not have come here to make their living. What then has brought civic life in this part of the country to such a shameful pass? If a straight answer is wanted it is here: before those holes appeared in the Calcutta streets they had appeared in the character of the people here. They were translated to the streets from the character of the people, and as long as these holes in people's character remain, not only will road conditions in Calcutta-Howrah not be better, but in all departments of life you will see only degeneration. Pot-holes in the streets are only signs of the over-all deplorable human situation obtaining here. There is hardly any need to mention various aspects of it: they are too well-known and depressing.

The disturbing questions are: how can a people who cannot overcome the challenges of the pot-holes in their streets and whose civic affairs in general are at such a low ebb—how can they at all face the challenges of the space age? How can they ever solve their national or international problems in a creative manner? How can they help remaining a second rate, if not a third rate nation, always subservient to this or that great power? In this fiercely competitive world what then is the future of the country?

The younger generation to whom we normally turn for the prospects of better days, has hope and an answer to offer. But what can we expect from that section of the young who without sincerely and

honestly trying to understand and learn their subjects want to pass their examinations by the sheer force of evil and violent means, or who are too prone to kill fellow human beings and destroy things in the name of revolution? They are already victims of the crisis in character. They do not even seem to realize that they are acting towards themselves like the worst of their enemies. As the number of these self-enemies continues to grow, the bewildered country hardly knows where to turn for hope.

Is there no hope then for this country? There is always as much hope for the country as it cares to have and is ready to work for. The larger part of the hope lies of course in the growing generation itself; it lies in convincing them that through character and efficiency they can attain everything in the world, and not through destroying themselves in a thoughtless manner, and in showing them more by example than by precept how to develop them. But one must know where to launch an all-out attack in order to turn the tide of human affairs in the country. Not much can be achieved by superficially tinkering with contingent situations. What is needed is to unlock the springs of inspiration for living and growing, and for individual and collective self-betterment.

Political preaching of different sorts has nearly destroyed people's respect for life, human integrity and sound hard work in this part of the country. And this has degraded masses of men and brought the country near paralysis and ruination. Now, no more will any political cleverness help. Enough of it has been seen. What is needed now is a powerful practical philosophy which can uplift and transform every human being wherever he may be and create in him an irresistible upward movement, instead of degrading him by the massive pressure of circumstances. This philosophy

has not been imported from any foreign country. It has been here in this country from time immemorial; only we have not cared to put it to practice for some time past. The philosophy is in these teachings of the *Gītā* :

Devoted each to his duty, man attains the highest perfection. Listen how, engaged in his duty he attains perfection. From whom is the evolution of all beings, and by whom all this is pervad-

ed—worshipping Him with his own duty, a man attains perfection.

The need of the hour is to recapture this philosophy in a pervasive manner in all spheres of national life, and to reassert respect for life, work, self-betterment and collective well-being. Then individual and national character will be developed as a matter of course, and the upward journey of the people will again be assured.

August 18, 1971

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Questions and answers are from: 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1957. References: Question 1, pp. 152-3; 2, pp. 300-1.

The passage quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' is from: *The Complete Works*, Vol. V (1959), pp. 271-2.

Youth movement is a global phenomenon that has attracted and captivated the attention of world thinkers. The Editorial, while making an analysis of the phenomenon, presents a remedy based on understanding, introspection, and self-discipline.

'Ten Verses to Gaurī, the Divine Mother' is a splendid composition by Śaṅkara and it embodies all the important aspects of the concept of Divine Motherhood. The commentary and translation are by Swami Smaranananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

Japa, or repetition of God's name or sacred formulas, forms an important part

of spiritual discipline in all great religions. Honen, the founder of Jodo sect of Japanese Buddhism, practised and preached the efficacy of Japa for the benefit of common people. Prof. D. C. Gupta is from Osaka University of Foreign Studies, Osaka, Japan.

'Absolute Devotion' is the paper read by Swami Maitrananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, at the World Parliament of Religions held a few months ago at Sastamkotta, Kerala, India.

The *Yoga-Vāsistha* is a depository of numerous spiritual truths. 'Sañjaya' culls a dialogue on desirelessness and mind-control from this source.

'Shyāmā' is a new contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*. In her article 'What Vedānta Means to Me', she portrays the struggles of a modern young Western enquirer in quest of meaning and purpose of life, and more, the appeal of Vedānta to such a seeker.

Science, art, literature, etc., are modes of comprehending Truth. Because of inherent

limitations in their approach, their grasp is partial. Truth in its totality is graspable through the direct vision of It within oneself. Prof. P. S. Naidu, who is well-known to our readers, discusses the question 'Is There a Plurality of Truths?' and answers 'Truth is One'.

The Musafir hopefully tries to bring this

home to his readers that if Americans could have had such a tremendous success in their latest moon mission, people in Calcutta should be able to do something about the pot-holes in their streets. Situations can change for the better only through the application of character and efficiency, he thinks.

REMEMBER YOUR EIGHT MILLION GUESTS

Undoubtedly the millions of evacuees from Bangladesh are the guests of mankind. But international response to their desperate needs seems to be as yet far from adequate. It was reported in the press that U.N. relief preparations were already in the grip of crisis (vide: *Amrita Bazar Patrika* August 11, 1971). Yet the evacuees are still pouring into India at the rate of forty thousands every day. And there is no knowing how many more millions will be coming, and for how long they will have to be maintained.

However, this one thing is certain: whatever may be the measure of international help forthcoming, the Government of India backed by the Indian people have pledged that they will even go hungry in order to feed the evacuees. In assuming such an attitude towards the evacuees Indians have thrown to the winds all socio-economic considerations and calculations, and have been guided by the finest of human considerations, nurtured by the hoary culture of the nation.

But the assumption of this responsibility will try to the utmost the physical, mental and spiritual stamina of the people who already have no end of problems of their own. Under these circumstances if the Indian people are to prove themselves equal to the completion of the task, then they must grow every day in unity of purpose

and dexterity of action. Given these two things, even though the Indian people are generally poor, they will have the required strength to fulfil their pledge. To develop unity of purpose and dexterity of action, the people will have to manifest a sacrificial spirit of service, which is very well understood in this country.

The Government of the country have so far had good backing from the people in handling the evacuee problem. This backing should be strengthened so that the Government can adopt forward looking measures to meet the uncertainties of the challenge. Recent floods have already done great harm to the country's crops. This perhaps could not be avoided. But what is humanly possible in the way of making good the loss should be done by intensifying agricultural and industrial production. Here much can be achieved through unremitting co-operative efforts. All dissensions born of the selfish pursuit of sectional interests should cease. This is not the time to indulge in this luxury. And there should be no extravagance and wastage of any kind in any sphere of national life.

Coming to the personal needs of evacuees in the immediate future, besides their food, shelter and medical requirements there will next winter be great need for warm clothing and blankets. The requirements of children, old and sick people should receive

special attention. Immediate energetic efforts of the Government and private agencies are needed to make these things available in right time so that people may not die of diseases brought on by cold in the inadequate shelters of the evacuee camps. Malnutrition has already brought a large number of evacuees to physical breaking point; so winter is going to hit them hard. But it will not be at all easy to provide even the minimum of the woollen clothes and blankets needed by the millions of evacuees. The international community can be of great service in this regard. Another appeal to the world from the Prime Minister of India could well go forth on behalf of her country's guests. If a proper response comes, well and good; if not, the Indian people will have to carry on as best as they can.

Obviously, however, this is not the basic solution of the world's greatest problem of the day involving the destiny of nearly eight millions of people. The real and the only solution lies in help creating a situation in Bangladesh, assuring life-security, honour and justice, which will irresistibly invite evacuees to return home. The international community can substantially contribute in creating such a situation if only it can find its way to place the interest of the suffering millions above all political and other considerations. Humanity is on trial. If any nation is failing to play its honest and humane role in this matter let the youth of that nation arise and awaken the conscience of their elders too.

August 31, 1971

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: BY V. P. VARMA, published by Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal, Hospital Road, Agra-3, 1970, pp. 544, Price Rs. 30.

The book in four parts, having 41 chapters and appendices, is an exhaustive work on the subject and embodies considerable hard work. In Part One Methodology, in Part Two Political Philosophy of Hegel and Marx, in Part Three Some Major Schools of Political Philosophy, and in Part Four Systematic Political Philosophy have been treated.

Dr. Varma, a scholar and Professor of long standing, has treated the abstruse subject with consummate skill as is naturally expected from a scholar of his reputation. One special feature of this work is that a very proper effort has been made to synchronize ancient Indian political philosophy with modern political philosophy emanating from the West.

It is to be hoped that in the future edition of the book a separate chapter on Gandhian approach in politics will be added which will certainly add to the utility of the book further.

We recommend the book to the scholarly world.

DR. P. N. MUKHERJEE

QUEST FOR THE ORIGINAL GITA: BY DR. GAJANAN SHRIPAT KHAIR, published by Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 172, Naigaum Cross Road, Dadar, Bombay 14, 1969, Pages xiv+248, Price Rs. 32.00.

There have been diverse interpretations of the *Gita*, beginning with that of Sri Sankaracharya. Each great commentator sought a unity of interpretation making one doctrine central to the text. A great thinker like Madhusudana Sarasvati considered the second chapter to be the basic text and he read the rest of the *Gita* as an exposition of this chapter. Dr. Khair thinks that the text was not the work of one author, but of three authors who came at different times. The third one is said to have recast the complete text. The first author wrote parts of the first six chapters; the second gave chapters 8, 13 to 15, 17 and 18; the third one wrote the other six and added some verses to the first six. This contention is based on an examination of the terms used, on the syntactic structures, and on the ideas. Also use is made of the way the personal pronouns are employed. Each author is said to have presented what was

relevant to his age. The text as per the threefold authorship is given at the end.

The book reveals the great pains taken by the author. But what one fails to understand is the refusal to recognize a simple fact of tradition: Why did the Hindu tradition recognize the *Gita* as an Upanishad? If it is an Upanishad, the text with 700 slokas has to be taken as a single unit. We cannot brush aside the traditional idea of an Upanishad because it is an indispensable part of the *Prasthanatraya*. Why did the earliest commentator not know of the three authors? Do we find a unity of doctrine in an Upanishad like the *Chandogya* or the *Brihadaranyaka*? If not, are we prepared to accept multiple authorship for these too? The number 700 is a fixed number pointing to another text having 700 mantras, viz. the *Durga-Saptasati*. The *Gita* was older than the present text of the *Mahabharata*. Only later did the compilers of that *Itihasa* include the *Gita* into the text.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

GEMS FROM THE TANTRAS: SECOND SERIES, SELECTED AND EDITED WITH AN ENGLISH RENDERING BY SRI M. P. PANDIT, published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras-17), 1970, pp. 114, Price Rs. 6.00.

Sri M. P. Pandit is familiar to us as an indefatigable crusader for the cause of Yoga. He is a brilliant exponent of the Tantras and an equally valuable commentator on the spiritual problems of perennial interest. In the present text he has brought together 113 passages selected from various Tantric texts and Shakta works. The lucid rendering of these passages emphasizes the nature of Divine Reality as Supreme Consciousness; and Sri Pandit emphasizes the significance of this aspect for the spiritual evolution of man. The Divine is present in all levels of existence, and the duty of the individual lies in not only becoming aware of this but in attuning his consciousness to the Divine. Sri Pandit deserves our warm thanks for this excellent book.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ORIENTALISTS, NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4-10, 1964, VOLUME-III, PART-I, EDITED BY R. N. DANDEKAR, published by Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona-4, India, 1969, Pages 524, Price Rs. 60/-.

The first two volumes of this work deal mainly

with general information, Egyptology, Iranian studies and so on.

The present volume is confined to India. There are 102 papers with summaries and titles of some other papers classified in three sections: Vedic Studies, Classical Sanskrit, and Religion and Philosophy. Papers by some very distinguished scholars like Dr. V. S. Agarwal, Wolfgang Morgenroth, Ludwig Sternbach, Paul Thieme, and others have added to the value of the work and some of the research papers are of considerable value and throw a flood of light on comparatively less known facts.

It is a valuable addition to our storehouse of knowledge and of special help to all research workers. It is certainly not a book for lay men although they can also benefit by its study. We recommend the book to the reading public without reservation.

DR. P. N. MUKHERJEE

ANJALI: WHAT THE GREAT MASTERS OF INDIA HAVE TO SAY ON PRAYER AND DEVOTION, BY VARIOUS AUTHORS, Published by The Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College, Udipi-2, Pages 230, Price Rs. 3.50.

All forms of religion involve prayer of some kind. Even the purely intellectual systems have an important place for devotion and prayer. In our own country great souls have not only believed in prayer and devotion, they have also said something of immense value on these. Prof. K. S. Haridasa Bhat, Dr. K. B. Ramakrishna Rao, Sri A. Krishna Rao and Sri T. R. A. Pai have edited this most useful volume. Forty distinguished persons have provided extracts from their works. They include Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, and Sri Aurobindo from the modern times. There are valuable passages from Nanak, Tulsi Das, Sankara, Ramanuja, Andal, Jnaneswar, Surdas, Purandaradasa, Mira, Madhva, Basava, and Narayana Guru. At a time when people have started believing that they are modern because they disbelieve in religion, when people have come under the auto-hypnosis of secularism, a work like this is a ray of hope. The presentation done by more than forty scholars is lucid, clear, and effective. This is a work which should be rendered into all the Indian Languages. It must be read by every Indian.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

SRI NARASIMHA VIJAYA CAMPUH: BY SRI NARASIMHA SASTRI, published by Sri V. B. Nataraja Sastri, 28 Tennur Road, Tiruchirapalli, 1969, pp. 256, Price Rs. 5.00.

The 'Srimukha' from the Kamakoti Pitha Sankaracharya and a foreword by Prof. V. Subrahmanya Sastri have added immensely to the value of the Champu under review. The author was born near Tiruchirapalli in 1830 and he wrote this Champu in 1878. This Champu offers a poetic and spiritual account of the Nrisimha-vatara. The work is charged with a rare devotional spirit from the beginning to the end. The spiritual synthesis of Bhakti and Jnana achieved by the author is highly refreshing and original. At the same time it should be mentioned that this Champu lives up to the standards we find in *Visvagunadarsa* and others. Poetic excellences are many. The author's own commentary on the text is very lucid. The Stotras by the same author appended to the text are sincere devotional lyrics. This book is a must.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

THREE ARGENTINE THINKERS: BY SOLOMON LIPP, published by the Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th St., New York, N. Y. 10016, 1969, pp. 177, price \$ 4.95.

Philosophy, in any sense of the term, is after all a product of the human mind; and all human activities including the different modes of thinking are to a very great extent determined by the general milieu in which man lives and breathes. For, thinking does not occur in a vacuum. It has its roots in the spirit of the age, and is nourished by the thought-currents of history prevalent at that age. Unfortunately, we do not always remember this fundamental truth, and our treatment and understanding of any philosophical system becomes dull and lifeless. But happily, Prof. Lipp's study of the three major thinkers of Argentina is a rare exception to this. For, Prof. Lipp takes great care to trace the development of Argentina from the early decades of the colonial period in the New World to the advent of positivism in the 19th century; and analyzes the historical setting in which all the three thinkers under discussion developed their respective philosophies. The positivistic naturalism of Jose Ingenieros, the personalism of Alejandro Korn, and the transcendental anthropology of Francisco Romero are not merely three philosophical outlooks of three independent thinkers. They represent three stages in the historical process of spiritual evolution of an awakened country; and Prof. Lipp, like an expert guide unfolds that fascinating story in a manner that shows delightful combination of scientific outlook and

deep philosophical insight. *Three Argentine Thinkers*, therefore, is sure to have a wide circle of readers who, at the moment, do not know much about the Latin American countries; and even for those who do know, Prof. Lipp's study will undoubtedly enrich their store.

PROF. A. K. BANERJEE

THEORY OF AUTODEISM: BY ALBERTO GERNUSCHI, published by the Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016, 1969, pp. 59, price \$ 3.50.

This is a striking publication, covering only 59 pages. Autodeism is a challenging book. Written by a scientist, the brochure outreaches the bounds of science and grasps at the transcendental realm of the spirit. The author starts with the age-old questions: 'Where do I come from? Where am I going?' (p. 1). He gives a glimpse of the answers propounded by ancient religions and philosophy (chapters 1 & 2) and then he hitches his arguments to the concept of Evolution, but he develops this concept along surprisingly new lines. Man is on the peak of the evolutionary process, but there is bound to be further evolutionary development when man, throwing off the body, will go along in an incorporeal state and reach God-hood ultimately! (chs. 3 & 4) This undoubtedly is Vedanta dressed to advantage in Western garb for the benefit of Occidental thinkers. It is well to remember that it is a 'scientist' who is speaking with his mind trained in objective observation and detached modes of reasoning.

In chapters 5-11, the author points out the limitations of human knowledge, and soaring high into the spiritual realm tries to reinterpret 'soul' to the West, to present 'Universal Energy' as *Parashakti* and to expound the idea of 'God-man'. This is an inspiring book, almost Advaita Vedantic in outlook, and eminently suited to rouse the lethargic mind of modern 'scientists', 'literateurs', politicians, and statesmen to face in a truly religious spirit the problems of the contemporary world afflicted with moral and spiritual atrophy.

PROF. P. S. NAIDU

FRENCH

LA BHAGAVAD-GITA. Published by Albin Michel, 22 Rue Huyghens, Paris, pp. 378.

This is a careful rendering in French of the *Message of the Gita* in English which is compiled from the monumental *Essays on the Gita* by Sri

Aurobindo. It contains translation of the entire text of the *Gita* and relevant extracts from the *Essays* under each verse or group of verses. Sri Aurobindo's emphasis on the positive character of the yoga enunciated in the *Gita*, the synthesis of Work, Love, and Knowledge developed in the instruction, the doctrine of Purushottama which reconciles the *kshara* and the *akshara*, the full significance of Avatarhood, are well brought out in these pages. No previous interpretation is rejected, all the viewpoints are given their due value.

SRI M. P. PANDIT

LE GUIDE DU YOGA: BY SRI AUROBINDO, published by Albin Michel, 22 Rue Huyghens, Paris, pp. 280.

Containing excerpts (translated in French) from the letters of Sri Aurobindo to his disciples in answer to queries in the course of their *yoga-sadhana*, this volume is a priceless guide to the seekers of the Divine. The letters are grouped under self-explanatory titles: Bases of sadhana; Conditions; Calm-Peace-Equality; Difficulties; Food, Sleep, Sex; Planes and parts of Being; Surrender; Work etc. They deal with problems—of mind, life and body—that invariably arise in the course of yoga and every page of the book is a powerful help.

SRI M. P. PANDIT

HINDI

MOKSHARTHA DIPIKA: BY SRI SWAMI AVINASHVARANANDA, published by Yog-Vasistha Ashram, Tungesh, The Peak, P.O. Cheog, Via Fagu, Dist. Mahasu (H.P.), 1969, pp. 148, Price Rs. 2.25.

Aptly titled 'Light for Salvation,' this is a practical handbook for spiritual Sadhana useful for everyone who is awake to the higher call. Neither scholarship nor rituals can ensure spiritual progress, says the author, but aspiration, disinterested service, discrimination, self-enquiry, self-restraint and holy company are the sure means for release from ignorance.

He emphasizes on the need of solitude and warns against slackening of effort after the first flush of enthusiasm is over.

He cites appropriately from the Upanishads, the *Gita*, the life and utterances of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and makes the reading worthwhile.

SRI M. P. PANDIT

BENGALI

SĀMKHYA KĀRIKĀ OF ĪSVARAKRṢṆA: TRANSLATED BY SWAMI DIVAKARANANDA, Published by Sri Jagannath Burma, vill. Matilal, P.O. Mandir Bazar, Dist. 24 Parganas, pp. 175, Price Rs. 3.

The Sāṃkhya which was founded by the sage Kapila is generally regarded as the oldest of all the Indian systems of philosophy. In course of time a very popular and lucid treatise namely *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, was written in Sanskrit verses by Īśvarakṛṣṇa probably in the third century A.D. It presents in a nutshell all the topics discussed in the *Śaṣṭhitāntra* composed by Pañcāsikha, a veteran and illustrious master of Kapila's thought. Although a good number of treatises on the Sāṃkhya have gone into oblivion, Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* has indeed stood the acid tests of time! While refuting the Sāṃkhya which is the foremost opponent for the monistic Vedānta, Śaṅkara, its greatest exponent, mainly criticized the controversial points raised in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* to which more than a dozen commentaries and glosses were subsequently added. The *Māthara-vṛtti* is one which makes a clear exposition of the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* in elegant Sanskrit. But to the uninitiated readers, the texts as well as their Sanskrit glosses will ever remain a jargon, until they are made home in vernacular. Fortunately for us, Swami Divakarananda of the Ramakrishna Order in consultation with Pundit Naresh Chandra Shastri of Belur Vidya Mandir has of late prepared a Bengali edition of the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* and appended intact the *Māthara-vṛtti* in Bengali script probably for verification of the genuineness of his Bengali translation and elucidation of the textual portions. His mode of presentation in a systematic order of word-analysis, prose order, translation and elucidation is very nice and commendable. Pundit Naresh Chandra Shastri's learned introduction as well as the editor's faithful translation and critical annotations will immensely benefit the inquisitive Bengali readers and go a great way in creating a genuine taste for mastering the Sāṃkhya system. We hope, constructional and syntactic defects, printing and spelling mistakes etc. occurring in many places of the book, will be rectified and language improved in future editions.

PROF. P. G. BANERJEE

BOOKS RECEIVED

(1) HARISHCHANDRA, (2) THE STORY OF RAMA, (3) THE PANDAVA PRINCES, (4) SHAKUNTALA, (5) THE STORY OF KRISHNA,

(6) SAVITRI, (7) NALA AND DAMAYANTI, ALL EDITED BY ANANT PAI, Published by India Book House, 249 D. N. Road, Bombay 1, price Rs. 1.50 each.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MIND BY HANS RAJ BHATIA, Published by Pearl Publications Private Ltd., 249 D. N. Road, Bombay 1, price Rs. 4/-.

PREM YOGA, BY PARAMANANDA SWARUP AND SHRI CHAMPAKBHAI, Published by Sri Paramananda Prakashan Mandir, 72, Nagindas Master Road, Bombay 1.

JAPASUTRAM, BY SWAMI PRATYAGATMANANDA SARASWATI, published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Pvt. Ltd., Madras 17, price Rs. 15/-.

THE RELIGION OF THE SIKHS, B. GOPAL SINGH, Published by Asia Publishing House, Calicut St., Ballard Estate, Bombay 1, Price Rs. 24/-.

THE SIKH GURUS AND THE SIKH SOCIETY, BY NIHARRANJAN RAY, Published by Punjabi University, Patiala, Price not mentioned.

GLEANINGS FROM THE GITA, BY P. R. KRISHNASWAMI Iyer, Published by P. K. Venkataranghavan, 8, Ellappa Naicken St., Komaleeswaranpet, Madras 2, price Rs. 2.50.

A PHILOSOPHY OF MAN AND SOCIETY: BY FORREST H. PETERSON, price \$ 8.50; AS ABOVE SO BELOW: BY JOSSIE L. HUGHES, price \$ 7.95; WITH CHARITY TOWARDS NONE: BY WILLIAM F. O'NEILL, price \$ 10.00—All published by the Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y. 10016, U.S.A.

MORAL EDUCATION IN A CHANGING SOCIETY: EDITED BY W. R. NIBLETT, published by Faber and Faber Ltd., 3 Queen Square, London, W.C.1, price 9s.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, RAJKOT

REPORT FOR 1966 TO 1970

Activities of the Ashrama during the period under review were as follows:

The Ashrama had regular temple services—Puja, Arati, prayer, sacrifices (Homa) etc. Regular religious discourses were arranged. The monks also went out for preaching.

The publication department of the Ashrama has so far brought out some 65 books—big and small—of great value for the Gujarati-reading public.

Medical Service: The Ashrama conducts an Ayurvedic and Homoeopathic free outdoor dispensary. On an average over 65,000 poor patients took benefit of this medical relief centre.

Vidyarthi Mandir: The Home was run on the Gurukula system. Boys were admitted without distinction of caste, colour, and creed. Most of the boys taken were from the villages. Every care was taken to ensure their all-round development—physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. Training in self-help and discipline formed the essential feature of the home. A few meritorious but poor

students were also maintained free or part-free. Stipends were awarded on the merit of the student without any reference to the community. Total strength: 80. In 1969-70 nine students appeared for S.S.C. examination. All of them passed; 7 secured first class.

Free Library and Reading Room: It had 16,895 books and 121 dailies, monthlies etc. A separate reading room for the ladies was provided at the request of the public. A neat and beautiful children section was a great attraction to the children of the locality. The library had a valuable reference section.

Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Essay Competition throughout the State for schools, colleges and universities had been a special feature for the youths. Elocution competition was also introduced to draw the attention of the students to the moral and religious values of life. Very attractive prizes were given.

Relief: Ashrama participated in the recent Assam Flood, Scarcity and Drought Relief in Bihar, U.P. and Bengal. The work of Surat flood relief is just coming to a close.