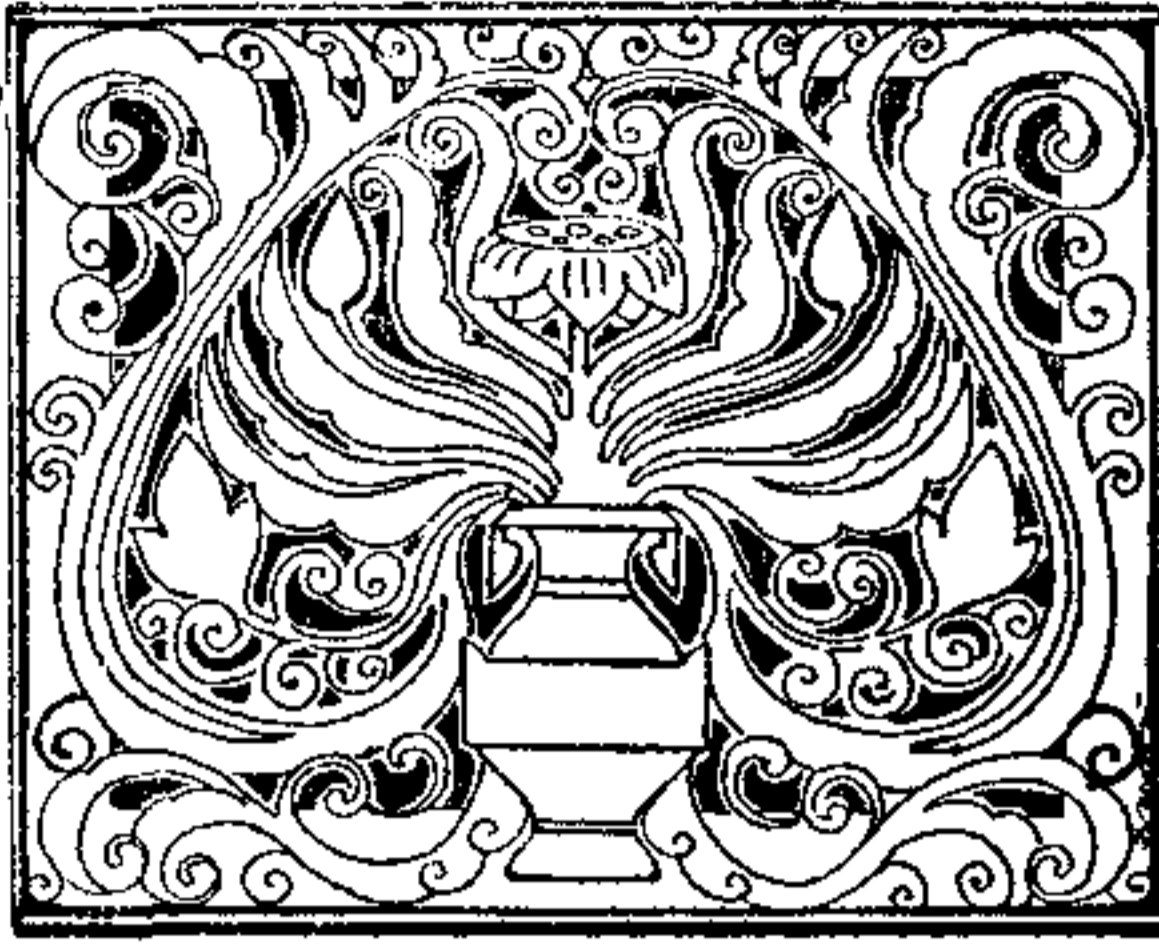


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Prabuddha Bharata

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No. 12

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (asked by Mahimacharan): 'By what kind of work can one realize God?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'It is not that God can be realized by this work and not by that. The vision of God depends on His grace. Still a man must work a little with longing for God in his heart. If he has longing he will receive the grace of God.'

'To attain God a man must have certain favourable conditions; the company of holy men, discrimination, and the blessings of a real teacher. Perhaps his elder brother takes the responsibility for the family; perhaps his wife has spiritual qualities and is very virtuous; perhaps he is not married at all or entangled in worldly life. He succeeds when conditions like these are fulfilled.'

'In a certain family a man lay seriously ill. He was at the point of death. Someone said: "Here is a remedy: First it must rain when the star Svati is in the ascendant; then some of that rain-water must collect in a human skull; then a frog must come there and a snake must chase it; and as the frog is about to be bitten by the snake, it must jump away and the poison of the snake must drop into the skull. You must prepare a medicine from this poison and give it to the patient. Then he will live." The head of the family consulted the almanac about the star and set out at the right moment. With great longing of heart he began to search for the different ingredients. He prayed to God, "O Lord, I shall succeed only if You bring together all the ingredients." As he was roaming about he actually saw a skull lying on the ground. Presently there came a shower of rain. Then the man exclaimed: "O gracious Lord, I have got the rain-water under Svati, and the skull too. What is more, some of the rain has fallen into the skull. Now be kind enough to bring together the other ingredients." He was reflecting with a yearning heart when he saw a poisonous snake approaching. His joy knew no bounds. He became so excited that he could feel the thumping of his own heart. "O God," he prayed, "now the snake has come too. I have procured most of the ingredients. Please be

gracious and give me the remaining ones." No sooner did he pray thus than a frog hopped up. The snake pursued it. As they came near the skull and the snake was about to bite the frog, the frog jumped over the skull and the snake's poison fell into it. The man began to dance, clapping his hands for joy. —So I say that one gets everything through yearning.

'A man cannot realize God unless he renounces everything mentally. A sadhu cannot lay things up. "Birds and wandering monks do not make provision for the morrow." Such is the state of my mind that I cannot carry even clay in my hand. Once, when Hriday tormented me, I thought of leaving this place and going to Benares. I thought of taking some clothes with me. But how could I take money? So I could not go to Benares.

(*To Mahima*) 'You are a householder. Therefore you should hold both to "this" and to "that"—both to the world and to God.'

Mahima: 'Sir, can one who holds to "that" also hold to "this"?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Once, sitting on the bank of the Ganges near the Panchavati, holding a rupee in one hand and clay in the other, I discriminated, "The rupee is the clay—the clay is verily the rupee, and the rupee is verily the clay", and then threw the rupee into the river. But I was a little frightened. "How foolish of me to offend the goddess of fortune!" I thought. "What shall I do if she doesn't provide me with food any more?" Then, like Hazra, I sought help in a ruse. I said to the goddess, "Mother, may you dwell in my heart." Once the Divine Mother was pleased with a man's austerities and said to him, "You may ask a favour of Me." "O Mother," said he, "if You are so pleased with me, then grant that I may eat from a gold plate with my grandchildren." Now, in one boon the man got everything: grandchildren, wealth, and gold plate.

'When the mind is freed from "woman and gold", it can be directed to God and become absorbed in Him. It is the bound alone who can be freed. The moment the mind turns away from God, it is bound. When does the lower needle of a pair of scales move away from the upper one? When one pan is pressed down by a weight. "Woman and gold" is the weight.

'Why does a child cry on coming out of its mother's womb? With its cry it says, as it were: "Just see where I am now! In my mother's womb I was meditating on the Lotus Feet of God; but see where I am now!"

(*To Mahima*) 'You should renounce mentally. Live the life of a householder in a spirit of detachment.'

Question (asked by a Brahmin): 'Can a man realize God in one birth?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Is anything impossible for the grace of God? Suppose you bring a light into a room that has been dark a thousand years; does it remove the darkness little by little? The room is lighted all at once. Intense renunciation is what is needed. One should be like an unsheathed sword. When a man has that renunciation, he looks on his relatives as black cobras and his home as a deep well.

'One should pray to God with sincere longing. God cannot but listen to prayer if it is sincere.'

ONWARD FOR EVER !

If a man comes to me and says a prophet disappeared into the air and went through it, I have the right to see that. I ask him, 'Did your father or grandfather see it?' 'Oh, no,' he replies, 'but five thousand years ago such a thing happened.' And if I do not believe it, I have to be barbecued through eternity!

What a mass of superstition this is! And its effect is to degrade man from his divine nature to that of brutes. Why was reason given us if we have to believe? Is it not tremendously blasphemous to believe against reason? What right have we not to use the greatest gift that God has given to us? I am sure God will pardon a man who will use his reason and cannot believe, rather than a man who believes blindly instead of using the faculties He has given him. . . . We must reason; and when reason proves to us the truth of these prophets and great men about whom the ancient books speak in every country, we shall believe in them. . . . They worked, and that principle expressed itself naturally, and we shall have to work to express that principle in us. They were prophets, we shall believe, when we become prophets. They were seers of things divine. They could go beyond the bounds of senses and catch a glimpse of that which is beyond. We shall believe that when we are able to do it ourselves and not before.

Swikendran

SPIRITUAL DROUGHT—SOME CAUSES AND REMEDIES—II

EDITORIAL

I

In an exquisite hymn dedicated to Śiva, the Great God, Śaṅkarācārya supplicates thus :

'Though single, the sun scatters the darkness filling earth and sky, and becomes perceptible to the eyes. And You, O Lord, have the radiance of ten million suns. But then, why, oh why, are You not perceived? How could my darkness be denser? O Lord, dispel all that darkness and deign to reveal Yourself to me.'¹

That is the piteous cry of the aspiring soul caught in the 'Dark Night'. A single sun destroys the physical darkness every morning. God is an ocean of radiance, splendrous as ten million suns. He is not outside in the Heaven or on the mountain-top, but within one's own heart. How, then, is it that He is not revealed? Is the darkness in the aspirant's heart so dense that even God's brilliance is unable to dispel it? Though the aspirant is bemoaning thus, he has a conviction that God, the Light of lights, exists and He alone should be realized.

II

HOW TO GET THROUGH THE 'PURGATION ACCORDING TO SENSE'

Causes of the spiritual drought being known, it becomes easy to apply the remedies. The first phase of the spiritual drought—or 'purgation according to sense' of St. John of The Cross—occurs because the aspirant needs ethical and moral purity. He must free himself from the vicious clutches of the seven deadly sins. An indulgent attitude towards all or anyone of these will frustrate all attempts at spiritual progress.

¹ Śivānanda-laharī, 58.

Take, for example, the sin of pride. It is a feeling of self-esteem arising from one's accomplishments, possessions, physical beauty, etc., and in many cases it is an exaggerated idea of one's dignity or importance. Pride arises out of mistaken identification with one's mind and body, and so it is a barrier for the identification with the spirit, which act is the purpose of spiritual life. Humility and the spirit of service are the remedies for this sin. Pride can also assume a more subtle and dangerous form. When an aspirant makes some real progress and is very much conscious of it. That is 'spiritual pride', self-esteem born of some little spiritual accomplishments. By carefully detecting one's weak points and reminding oneself about the sublime ideal to be attained, spiritual pride can be curbed.

Luxury is another sin one has to guard against. In these days of technological advancement and higher living standards, men tend to lead a comfortable life. But, a soft life increases body-consciousness and leads to fretting and fuming with even slight inconveniences. The *Gītā*, therefore, very wisely teaches *titikṣā*² or forbearance at the very beginning of its instruction, even before it speaks of motiveless work. An excellent definition of *titikṣā* is given by Śaṅkara in one of his minor works :

'The bearing of all afflictions without caring to redress them, being free (at the same time) from anxiety or lament on their score, is called *titikṣā* or forbearance.'³

Let no one think that it is a sort of impotent passivity, unworthy of the strong. He is really strong who is not upset by unfavourable environment. By preserving one's mental poise under all types of inclemencies and inconveniences, a great amount of mental energy is conserved and that becomes available for spiritual con-

centration and contemplation. This is one of the implications of Swami Vivekananda's reference to external nature in the statement that the divinity potential in each soul is to be manifested by controlling nature, external and internal.

Envy in the ordinary sense of being jealous of others for their physical and intellectual attainments, a spiritual aspirant may not have. But he may become a victim of 'spiritual envy' when he notices other aspirants making rapid inner progress. St. John of The Cross gives a good hint or two on overcoming this sin when he advises aspirants to rejoice in the spiritual accomplishments of others because the Lord is gracious to them. One must avoid the 'race-track' mentality in the realm of spiritual progress. There are many factors, beyond our ordinary ken, which govern spiritual life, such as inherited tendencies, grace of the holy and the spiritual guide, and mercy of God. And who can pretend to possess the measuring rod to determine another's inner progress? Most of the so-called assessment of others' spiritual attainments is either erroneous or a misguided projection. There may be much to be understood in the statement found in one of Christ's parables: 'So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many may be called but few chosen.'⁴

Finally, an aspirant must strictly stand aloof from the deadliest three of the seven deadly sins. The *Gītā* has characterized the lust-anger-greed trio as the threefold gateway to hell.⁵ While commenting on this verse, Śaṅkara makes the pointed introductory remark: 'Now the epitome of all the demoniac attributes is being stated. Though the demoniac attributes are myriad, they can be comprehended in this triad, and by destroying which all that (infinite

² *Bhagavad-gītā*, II. 14.

³ *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, 24.

⁴ St. Matthew, 20.16.

⁵ *Gītā*, XVI. 21.

variety of demoniac qualities) is destroyed. And this (the triad) is the root cause of all ruin.⁶ And this remark is self-explanatory and full of invaluable psychological insight.

Once the spiritual aspirant gets a complete mastery over these deadly sins, his purgation according to senses will be over. One phase of the spiritual drought will have been left behind. A great amount of joy, a lightness of body and mind, and a genuine love for God and the higher life will be manifest in him. Then he will enter the state of the progressive.

PLUGGING THE RAT-HOLES

The first indication that a person is turning towards God is seen in his cutting down on desires. A spiritual aspirant must completely overthrow his desires, otherwise he will stagnate. Through the rat-holes of desires, all his godly love and devotion drain off leaving him at the mercy of an incurable drought. Desires are the very stuff of the mind. As the Upaniṣad says, "The self is identified with desire alone. What it desires, it resolves. What it resolves, it works out. . . ."⁷

To the question of Arjuna, why man feels compelled to commit sin, Śrī Kṛṣṇa answers, 'It is owing to desire which is born of *rajas* or the quality of activity. . . . Enveloped is knowledge, O Arjuna, by the insatiable fire of desire, which is the constant foe of the wise.'⁸ The roots of desire go deep into ignorance and egoism. Man does not know what is real and what is un-

real owing to a congenital defect and delusion. Egoism is ever awake in his breast like a cobra with its hood spread out. The only way to keep oneself from falling into the snake-pit of desires is to practise constantly the discrimination between the real and unreal and to cling on to the real. Says Sri Ramakrishna :

'Discrimination is the reasoning by which one knows that God alone is real and all else is unreal. Real means eternal, and unreal means impermanent With the awakening of this spirit of discrimination a man wants to know God. On the contrary, if a man loves the unreal—such things as creature comforts, name, fame, and wealth—, then he doesn't want to know God, who is of the very nature of Reality.'⁹

Śaṅkara argues in the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* that desire is the seed from which sprout actions with selfish motive. Selfish actions, again, breed more desires. And so man's bondage of birth and death never ends. For bursting this vicious circle, Śaṅkara advises 'looking upon everything, under all circumstances, always, everywhere, and in all respects, as Brahman and Brahman alone'. With the ceasing of selfish action, the brooding on sense-objects is stopped. That is followed by the destruction of desires. "The destruction of desires is liberation," says Śaṅkara, "and this is considered as Liberation-in-life."¹⁰

WEIGH THE ANCHOR OF ATTACHMENT

Attachments to persons, ambitions, sentiments, and worldly values act like an anchor to the boat of an aspirant's mind. Without a fierce struggle to detach himself from them all, his progress towards his divine

⁶ सर्वस्या आसुर्याः संपदः संक्षेपोऽयमुच्यते यस्मिन् त्रिविधे सर्व आसुर-संपद्भेदः अनन्तोऽपि अन्तर्भवति यत्परिहारेण परिहृतश्च भवति, यन्मूलं सर्वस्य अनर्थस्य ।

⁷ काममय एवायं पुरुषः ; स यथाकामो भवति तत्क्रतुर्भवति, यत्क्रतुर्भवति तत्कर्म कुरुते ।

Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad, IV. iv. 5.

⁸ *Gītā*, III. 37, 39.

⁹ 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1947), p. 271.

¹⁰ वासनाप्रक्षयो मोक्षः सा जीवन्मुक्तिरिष्यते ।

Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi, 317.

destination will remain a dream. Attachments in their grosser forms may be quickly snapped if he intensifies his desire for the higher life. But subtle forms of attachment are then seen to hinder his concentration. One method of detecting them is to watch the thoughts during all hours of waking and dreaming, not excluding the hours of devotions and contemplation. Thoughts have the tendency of furtively hovering round objects of attachment. By continued and careful observation, the 'filthy objects' of worldly attachments can be detected. Through this practice, the mind also develops a subtle power of observation and the ability for self-monitoring.

Detachment as the pivotal discipline is inculcated by the Roman Catholic Church through its enforcement of the threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience. While poverty refers to non-possession of material and immaterial wealth, chastity implies a poverty of the senses and obedience, the poverty of the will. With considerable insight Evelyn Underhill, a name inseparably linked with mysticism, writes about this theme in her *magnum opus* on mysticism :

'These three aspects of perfection are really one: linked together as irrevocably as the three aspects of the self. Their common characteristic is this: they tend to make the subject regard itself, not as an isolated and interesting individual, possessing desires and rights, but as a scrap of the Cosmos, an ordinary bit of the Universal Life, only important as a part of the All, an expression of the Will Divine. Detachment and purity go hand in hand, for purity is but detachment of the heart; and where these are present they bring with them that humble spirit of obedience which expresses detachment of will. We may therefore treat them as three manifestations of one thing; which thing is Inward Poverty. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of

Heaven," is the motto of all pilgrims on this road.'¹¹

When the anchor of attachment is weighed, purity and grace fill the sails of the aspirant's boat which moves merrily onward. Then rowing becomes barely necessary. Detachment and purity are always followed by a spontaneous inward bliss. 'Remaining spotlessly pure within', says a Hindu mystic, 'is itself blissfulness.'

PRESCRIPTION OF PATANJALI AND PHILOKALIA

'Doubt', 'lack of enthusiasm', 'non-attaining of concentration', and 'falling away from the state when attained', according to Patañjali, are some of the obstacles which directly contribute to inner aridity. Even before he lists the obstacles to yoga, he prescribes the remedy. That is, 'Repetition of *Aum* and dwelling on its meaning'. When this discipline of 'repetition of and meditation' on *Aum* becomes deep, says Patañjali, '(the knowledge of) introspection, and the destruction of obstacles results'. Introspection is a special probing power into one's own mind as well as scriptural teaching. Yoga teachers therefore lay great emphasis on this discipline. Just as the devoted repetition of *Aum* is effective in destroying obstacles, so also is the repetition of every other *mantra*. Because all such *mantras* are word-symbols of God, who is the greatest Teacher and the Embodiment of Knowledge, Truth, and Bliss.

In the inspiring book *The Way of A Pilgrim* we have a parallel to the Hindu practice of *japa* combined with meditation. Following the teachings of *Philokalia* and the guidance of his guru, the Pilgrim practises the 'interior prayer' or the prayer of the mind-heart. 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me'—was the prayer that he practised constantly. As his

¹¹ Evelyn Underhill: *Mysticism* (Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1926), p. 248.

practice attained perfection, he felt a bubbling joy in his heart, a burning love for Jesus Christ and for all God's creatures, and an unusual insight into the teachings of the scriptures. He experienced a complete cessation of all obstacles, internal and external, to his life of devotion. The Pilgrim sets forth the fruits of interior prayer thus :

'... I noted that interior prayer bears fruit in three ways: in the Spirit, in the feelings, and in revelations. In the first, for instance, is the sweetness of the love of God, inward peace, gladness of mind, purity of thought, and the sweet remembrance of God. In the second, the pleasant warmth of the heart, fullness of delight in all one's limbs, the joyous "bubbling" in the heart, lightness and courage, the joy of living, power not to feel sickness and sorrow. And in the last, light given to the mind, understanding of Holy Scripture, knowledge of the speech of created things, freedom from fuss and vanity, knowledge of the joy of inner life, and finally certainty of the nearness of God and of His love for us.'¹²

When joy 'bubbles up' in the heart and the aspirant feels the sweetness of the love of God, how can any aridity exist?

FINAL PHASE OF THE 'DARK NIGHT'

This, according to St. John of The Cross, comes only to the 'progressives' who have passed through the earlier 'sensual purgation' and have remained firm in their resolve 'to be' God, not merely 'to know' God. 'Psychologically, then,' remarks Evelyn Underhill, 'the "Dark Night of the Soul" is due to the double fact of the exhaustion of an old state, and the growth towards a new state of consciousness.'¹³

In this phase of the 'Dark Night' the purification goes to the very root of igno-

rance and delusion. It is as if God's light, purity, and love begin to burn the soul in a final act of assimilation with the Supreme. St. John of The Cross gives the analogy of a burning log. When the log is put in the fire, first it turns black. That is purgation according to sense. As the fire enters into the log and begins to burn from within out, it becomes red, and later white-hot. Generally, this phase is passive, the soul quietly surrendering its will to the Oversoul. In some cases, as for instance Henry Suso, the soul takes up a manly attitude and fights against the dryness and temptations. But even such heroic souls learn the final lesson of 'Not I but Thou, O Lord' or the lesson of 'the school of true resignation'. The end of this purgation is complete freedom and union with the Divine.

III

To be sure, the path of the spirit is the path of the razor's edge, sharp and difficult to cross. But the genuine spiritual aspirant is a brave adventurer and is not a mercenary in his love of God. What he needs is a proper understanding of what religious seeking is, an indomitable will to persist in his struggle, and unflinching sincerity. 'Let me suffer or die!' as St. Teresa exclaimed.

Whenever despondency tries to overpower us, let us remind ourselves about how some of the mystics prayed and exhorted :

'Lord, since Thou hast taken from me all that I had of Thee, yet of Thy grace leave me the gift which every dog has by nature: that of being true to Thee in my distress, when I am deprived of all consolation. This I desire more fervently than Thy heavenly kingdom!'

—St. Mechthild of Magdeburg
(Continued on p. 494)

¹² *The Way of a Pilgrim* (Tr. by R. M. French, Pub. by S.P.C.K., London, 1965), pp. 41-2.

¹³ Evelyn Underhill, op. cit., p. 461.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Almora

12.9.15

Dear . . . ,

Your letter this time is quite lengthy. But what is the use of writing so much? In my case also it has become like Sri Ramakrishna's saying 'squeezing the almanac'. 'What if the almanac forecasts the rainfall for the year? If you squeeze the book, you won't get a drop.' In the scriptures many things are written about the states of *jivanmukta* (liberated-in-life), *paramahansa*, etc. But unless those are realized or manifested in life it is as good as :

'The learning which is confined in books and the wealth in another's possession serve no purpose when the need for them arises.'¹

If I had gained the 'wealth' (i.e., known the truth), should I be in this condition? However, this much I understand that nothing is achieved by being impatient. I feel this to be absolutely true that without His mercy, without His grace, it is impossible to realize Him. Why alone the *paramahansa* state, let it be in any other state—has anyone said anywhere that there is any way (for liberation) other than His lotus feet? I do not think so.

'O ignorant mind! Think of Rāma always ;
what is the good of hundreds of other thoughts ?
O tongue! Chant unceasingly the name of Rāma ;
what gain is there in vain meaningless talks ?
O ears! Hear the story of Rāma ;
what benefit do you get by listening to
music, vocal and instrumental ?
O eyes! You behold everything as full of Rāma.
And give up all else besides Rāma.'

This is the real truth. If this can be grasped, we will be saved. Otherwise endless suffering owing to birth and death becomes inevitable. 'Uncle Moon is everybody's uncle', 'I search and seek but can't get Him. He, who is chosen by Him, gets Him.' Everyone has the right to worship Him. He is everybody's real mother, not a 'god-mother'. No one has come into this world like a piece of driftwood with the tidal water. Why should you consider yourself to be a lowly creature like a 'goat' or a 'cow'? You are the Mother's child. You are Her real children. You cannot be anything but that. Mother's children have no fear. So you also have no fear, nor have I. As She will keep us so shall we remain, this much I know. What is good and what is bad, I do not understand, cannot understand, as it is beyond my comprehension. 'Thou art beyond good and evil, take me also beyond them'—this is my heartfelt prayer. 'I don't know how and through which path You will lead me beyond, but I have

¹ A verse from Cāṇakya

this firm faith that You will.' Sri Ramakrishna has said, 'None will remain unfed. All will eat, but, maybe, some in the morning, some at noon, some in the evening.' Let Thy will be done, amen! My being a knower of Brahman is a far cry—I do not understand all that. I have told you already—'Verily I become ere long their Saviour from the death-fraught ocean of the world'²: this (assurance of the Lord in the *Gītā*) is my support. 'For the goal of the Unmanifested is hard to attain for those who are embodied.'³

Ignorant am I: this false identification with the body does not cease. Therefore, the imperishable and incomprehensible knowledge of Brahman is extremely difficult for me. But then it is not true that without gaining the knowledge of Brahman we are absolutely helpless. But I hope that through Sri Ramakrishna's words this has become a firm conviction with me. Let me tell you what happened one day. I had gone to Dakshineswar to see Sri Ramakrishna. Many others also had come. Among them there was a great pundit of Vedānta. The Master asked him to tell something about Vedānta. With great respect the scholar explained high Vedānta for nearly an hour. The Master was very pleased to hear him. Everybody was amazed. But later on praising the pundit highly the Master said, 'I, however, do not care for all these things so much, my dear sir. I only know that we two are, my Mother and I. Your highfaluting triads of *Jñāna-jñeya-jñātā* (knowledge-knowable-knower), *dhyāna-dhyeya-dhyātā* (meditation-object of meditation-meditator) etc. are indeed very good. But for me, it is "Mother and I", and nothing else.' He uttered the words 'Mother and I' in such a moving way that for the time being at least they were very firmly implanted in the hearts of all. It appeared as if all the conclusions of Vedānta had become just a glimmer. I felt that Sri Ramakrishna's 'Mother and I' was much easier, simpler and more agreeable than all those triads of Vedānta. Since then I understood that I should only resort to 'Mother and I' (attitude).

SRI TURIYANANDA

P.S. *Upāsana* (worship), *japa* (repetition of God's name) and *tapas* (austerity) are mental activities—this is very true. But experience too is nothing other than mental activity. The real *upāsana*, however, is not possible for the sensual mind. It is the activity of the mind cleansed and made pure by *japa*, *tapas*, etc. 'The purpose of *upāsana* is the attainment of Reality'—this means nothing more than that the mind has to be purified. And when the mind becomes pure the Reality is perceived. The attainment of Reality does not mean that the Reality is procured from somewhere outside. Reality is already existing, only it is covered. That covering has to be removed. And the covering also is of the mind. Nothing can veil the Reality. Reality is self-effulgent, ever-perfect. Hence the illustration of the 'gold necklace round the neck'. The necklace is round the neck, but just forgetting all about it a search is made here and there. Later when somehow its existence is discovered, it is said to

² *Bhagavad-gītā*, XII. 7.

³ *ibid.* 5.

have been 'obtained'. When there was no knowledge of the Reality even then the Reality existed. Only no knowledge of it was there. The dawning of knowledge is said to be the attainment of Reality, though in fact it is ever-attained. Only in the pure mind It is known. The pure mind is nothing else than this :

'Too much attachment to sense-objects is called impurity of the mind ; when again it is dissociated from the same sense-objects it is known as the purity of the mind.'⁴

Giving up sense-objects when this mind gets itself attached to God, it turns into pure mind.

When the domestic cat goes to the forest it becomes a wild cat. This imagination matured is realization. Today's imagination is tomorrow's realization. Only firmness is wanted. If one imagines in the beginning then realization may follow. But if imagination is absent, wherefrom will realization come ? First the Ātman should be heard of, then reflected and meditated upon ; afterwards it is seen,⁵ that is what realization is.

TURIYANANDA

4 विषयेष्वतिसंरागो मानसो मल उच्यते ।

तेष्वेव हि विरागोऽस्य नैर्मल्यं समुदाहृतम् ॥

⁵ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad*, IV. 5.6.

(Continued from p. 491)

'Prostrate at Thy feet let me be, in
unwavering devotion,
Neither imploring the embrace of
Thine arms
Nor bewailing the withdrawal of
Thy presence
Though it tears my soul asunder.
Oh Thou, who stealest the hearts of
Thy devotees,
Do with me what Thou wilt—

For Thou art my heart's Beloved,
Thou and Thou alone.'
—Śrī Caitanya
'Even if there be no God, still hold
fast to love. It is better to die seek-
ing a God than as a dog seeking only
carrion. Choose the highest ideal and
give your life up to that. "Death be-
ing so certain, it is the highest thing to
give up life for a great purpose."'
—Swami Vivekananda

SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA'S MEMORIES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

TRANSLATED BY SWAMI CHETANANANDA AND BRAHMACHARI BHUMACHAITANYA

(Continued from the previous issue)

One day Girishbabu came to Dakshineswar quite drunk with wine. Seeing him in that condition, the Master said to me: 'Hello, go to his carriage and see whether he left anything there or not. If you find something, bring it here.'

I did as I was told, and found a bottle of wine and a glass. I brought both to him. When the devotees saw the wine bottle they began to laugh. But the Master said to me: 'Keep the bottle for him. He will want it for a final drink.' Just see how liberal the Master was toward his devotees!

Girishbabu arrived one night at Dakshineswar with Kalipada Ghosh. Kalipada was a terrible drunkard. He refused to give money to his family, spending it for wine. But his wife was very pure. I heard that much earlier she had come to the Master for seeking some kind of medicine to change her husband's tendencies. The Master sent her to the Holy Mother, who, in turn, sent her back to the Master. This exchange went on for three times. At last the Holy Mother wrote the Master's name on an offered *bet* leaf and gave it to Kalipada's wife, telling her to chant the Lord's Name.

Kalipada's wife chanted the Lord's name for twelve years. When the Master met Kalipada later, he remarked: 'This man has come here after afflicting his wife for twelve years.' Hearing this, Kalipada was startled, but said nothing.

Then the Master asked him: 'What is it that you want?'

Kalipada, that knave, shamelessly asked: 'Can you give me a little wine?'

The Master replied with a smile: 'Yes, I

can. But the wine I have is so intoxicating that you will be unable to bear it.'

Kalipada took him literally and said: 'Is it real British wine? Please give me a little to soak my throat.'

'No, it is not British wine!' said the Master, still smiling. 'It is purely home-made. This wine cannot be given to just anyone. Because not everyone can stand it. If one tastes this wine just once, British wine will seem dull. Are you ready to drink my wine instead of that one?'

For a moment Kalipada remained thoughtful, and then I heard him say: 'Please, give me that wine that by it I may remain drunken my entire life.' When he said this, the Master touched him. At this, Kalipada started to weep. He kept weeping, despite our attempts to stop him.

Once the Master was going somewhere by boat with Kalipada. In the boat he wrote a *mantra* on Kalipada's tongue. Later Kalipada became a great devotee, and offered much in the Master's service. Just see! If the wife is pure and loving, she does not hesitate to practise austerity for the welfare of her husband. It was because of his wife that Kalipada was rescued.

I used to accompany the Master to the theatre. There Girishbabu would show him much respect. He would arrange a high box seat for the Master and appoint a man to fan him as well. Girishbabu often would meet with the Master on the upper level. Once a strange thing happened. Quite drunk, Girishbabu approached the Master at the theatre and said to him endearingly:

'You be my son. I have not been able to serve you in this life—but if you are my son, I can do so. Please promise that you will be my son.'

'What do you say?' said the Master. 'Why should I be your son?' When Girishbabu heard this he became very angry and scolded the Master right and left. Seeing all of this, I could not stop my anger. I had a stick in my hand and was about to hit him. Then Devenbabu [a householder devotee of Sri Ramakrishna] said to me: 'Since the Master is bearing all of this, why do you raise your stick?' I am sure that if Devenbabu had not told me that, I would have given Girishbabu a nice blow. I was that angry.

While all of us were returning to Dakshineswar, Devenbabu told the Master what happened. When he heard this, the Master said: 'What! Would it not have been awful to hit Girish? Didn't you notice that after he berated me, he fell to the ground when I boarded this carriage and took the dust of my feet? Did you observe his faith?' And during the trip, the Master repeatedly prayed: 'O Mother, Girish is an actor. How can he understand your glory? Mother please forgive his failing.'

The devotees heard about the theatre incident. All of them said to the Master: 'It is not good that you should visit such a person.' Rambabu also heard about it, and came to Dakshineswar the following day. As soon as he entered the room, the Master asked him: 'Ram, what do you have to say about Girish?'

'Sir,' said Rambabu, 'as Kāliya told Kṛṣṇa, "Lord, You have given me poison. Where do I get nectar?"'¹ Girish's con-

dition is the same. Where will he get nectar? Why then, sir, should you be displeased with him?'

Hearing this from Rambabu, the Master said: 'Then, Ram, let us take your carriage to Girish's.' Saying this, we all started for Girish's.

Meanwhile, Girish had been very repentant. He refused food and wept day and night. We finally reached him a little before evening. Hearing the Master had come, Girish approached him with tears in his eyes and fell at his feet. It was only when the Master said, 'All right, all right', that he finally rose up. Then a long conversation began. I remember Girish saying, 'Master, if you had not come today I should have been unable to regard you as a *paramahansa*, beyond praise and blame, the holder of unitive knowledge. Today I have realized that you are that Supreme One. You will not be able to deceive me any more. I shall never leave you. My responsibility is now yours. Please tell me that you will assume such responsibility, that you will rescue me.'

Once, at Bhadrakali [on the opposite side of the Ganga, at Dakshineswar] we went with the Master to hear a pundit. But he spoke such foolish things that the audience grew confused. At this, the Master said to him: 'After much *tapasyā* [austerity], a man achieves faith in God; and you, only a scholar, bring Him into doubt! What type of learning do you have?'

The pundit replied: 'Please, Sir, do not mind me. I was only joking.' Then the Master understood that the pundit was try-

Him. But Kṛṣṇa jumped over his 'hoods' and danced on them. At once the snake began to spew out poison in great quantities. Seeing this, Kṛṣṇa asked him, 'Why are you vomiting your poison?' Kāliya replied: 'Lord, it is You that have given me poison. It is all I have with which to worship You. Where shall I get nectar?'

¹ According to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Kāliya was a venomous snake which polluted the sacred waters of the Yamunā river, as well as killing both shepherds and cows of Vrindavan. The shepherds told Kṛṣṇa of the snake's destructiveness. Accordingly He approached Kāliya. The snake attacked

ing to hoodwink the people. He touched the pundit's body and said : 'Your insides have become dry. Your life has been lived in vain. Have you, after reading so many scriptures, only learned hypocrisy?'

When the pundit heard this he became nervous and finally left. In this way the Master would deal with certain false teachers.

Balarambabu would serve the monks whole-heartedly. To do this, he saved money from his household budget, and his relatives thought him a miser. I never knew how rich he was! One day, seeing him lying on a narrow bed, I said : 'Why do you not find yourself a larger bed? This one is too narrow for you.' Do you know what he replied? 'This earthly body will one day return to earth; why should not the money for my bed be spent as a service to holy people?'

One day Balarambabu hired a horse carriage for the Master. The fare from Calcutta to Dakshineswar was only twelve annas. Such a cheap carriage caused much trouble for the Master. While en route, one wheel of the carriage came off. The horses did not behave either. If whipped, they ran; if not whipped, they did not move. The Master did not return to Dakshineswar until midnight. The Master would often joke about this incident.

The followers of Keshab Sen invited the Master to be with them at the garden house in Sinthi during the time of their annual festival. Many famous people would come there. There I first met Shivanath Shastri, whom the Master loved. The Master would say : 'When a hemp smoker meets another hemp smoker, he becomes happy. So like that I am happy.' But Shivanath would avoid the Master. One day he said he would come to Dakshineswar, but he did not keep his word. At this, the Master said : 'He promised me he would come, but

did not. That is not good. One should not break one's word. To speak the truth is the *tapasyā* of the *Kaliyuga*. He who does not adhere to truth cannot realize God.'

Once he said to Shivanath : 'Is it true that you have said my brain is unbalanced? Day and night you think of worldly things and consider your head all right; day and night I think of God—and you think my head unbalanced!'

One day the Master told Mani Mallick [a householder devotee] : 'Hello, why do you calculate so much? A devotee should spend all he earns.' When Mani Mallick would come to Dakshineswar, the Master would say : 'How did you get here?' Mani Mallick would walk from his home to Garanhata [in West Calcutta], then he would take a share-carriage [in which several split the fare] to Baranagore, and then on to Dakshineswar on foot. So the Master would ask him that question. On some days his face would be scorched from the sun. Seeing him, the Master would say : 'Why do you come here under such hardship? Can you not come all the way by carriage?'

At this Mani Mallick replied : 'If I drive a one-horse carriage my descendants will think it necessary to ride one with two horses. And also, you say that a householder should save money as well for his children and charity or he will be abused, will he not be?'

Once Mani Mallick, returning from pilgrimage, said to the Master : 'I find that some *sādhus* [holy men] are constantly asking for money.'

The Master replied : 'You are irritated because *sādhus* ask you for one or two *pice*? One should not go on pilgrimage with this sort of attitude. While on pilgrimage, one should be charitable. *Sādhus* earn no money, so one should give a few *pice* to them. You people want to enjoy

all the good things of this world and let the *sādhus* renounce. Then they can live on air!’

Once there was a scarcity of water at Rakhal’s birthplace. The Master asked Mani Mallick to dig a water pond there.

When his son passed away, Mani Mallick came to the Master and told him about his grief. The Master listened to everything. Then he began to sing. When he had finished, Mani Mallick’s grief had disappeared.

Mani Mallick would also donate money for the education of poor children. One day, the Master told him: ‘Hello, now you are old. Forget this world [*samsāra*] and meditate on God. One should meditate on God in the heart; thus love grows.’

The Master would often go with us to Adhar’s house at Shobhabazar [in Calcutta]. He would look upon Adhar’s house as his parlour. Now and then Adhar would arrange a festival in his house and would feed us nicely. His mother was a great devotee. She would buy costly mangoes in the off-season and send them to the Master, together with bananas and sweets. The Master took great delight in these things.

One day we were invited to Adhar’s. But Adhar forgot to invite Rambabu, who was much offended by this. Rambabu complained to the Master: ‘What wrong have I committed to be avoided in this way?’ The Master tried to console Rambabu and said to him: ‘Look Ram, Rakhal was entrusted with this and simply forgot to invite you. Should you be angry with Rakhal? He is a mere boy.’ Afterwards, Adharbabu himself went to Rambabu’s house and invited him to the gathering.

On another occasion, while staying at Adhar’s house, the Master told Adhar, ‘Please be sure and not give me a sour mango.’ So Adhar went inside and brought him the best mango he could find. The Master greatly relished it and said;

‘Most likely this one was selected by your mother!’

It was also at Adhar’s that I first saw Bankim Chandra Chatterjee [the celebrated Bengali writer]. Bankimbabu was a very intelligent person, and he tried to test the Master. But he was defeated. When he was about to leave, he asked the Master to visit him. But he never sent an invitation. So the Master did not go to his house.

Adharbabu would come to Dakshineswar every day, even bringing his food with him. One day he asked the Master: ‘What powers do you have?’ At this, the Master laughed and said: ‘By the grace of the Mother, I lull to sleep those deputy magistrates who frighten so many others.’

The Master told Adhar not to ride a horse, but he would not listen to him. As a result, he was killed when a horse threw him. When the Master heard the news of Adhar’s death, he said: ‘One by one my parlours are closing. I see an end coming to my gatherings.’

Many famous *kīrtan* [devotional music] singers would come to Adhar’s house. I remember hearing a song based on the *Candī*. It impressed me a great deal.

The Master would visit the Kalighat [famous Kali temple of South Calcutta] now and then, and Adhar would provide his carriage for the purpose. The Master would rejoice there with the devotees.

Often after coming to Dakshineswar, Adharbabu would fall asleep. Some people would criticize him for this. Do you know what the Master said about that? He told them: ‘You silly people, what do you know? This is the place of the Divine Mother. It is the abode of peace. Instead of engaging in worldly talk, he sleeps. That is good. A little peace still comes to such people.’

Sri Ramakrishna once said to me: ‘Wine, woman, and wealth create doubt regarding

God. They are obstructions. If you are attached to any one of them, it will stop your spiritual progress. Know that the yogī who is attached to women and the devotee who drinks and thinks he is meditating, but is only drunk—these are hypocrites, and deceive themselves.'

With these words, the Master opened Latu's eyes. The Swami said later: 'One day I was going to the house of Rambabu in Calcutta. There was a wine shop at the Cossipore Road junction, and when I was passing that place I became upset. I did not know the cause. When I returned to Dakshineswar, I mentioned the whole thing to the Master. "That wine smell", he said, "has upset your mind. Avoid it from now on."'

The manner in which Latu Maharaj followed the instructions of his Master has been brought to light in the following conversation between Rambabu and Sri Ramakrishna:

Rambabu: What have you asked of Latu? In order to follow your advice, he walks eight miles to Calcutta [the normal distance is four miles] through some roundabout way.

Ramakrishna: What? I do not remember saying any such thing to Latu.

Rambabu: You asked him not to smell any wine; as a result, he will not go near a shop where it is sold. And not only that, he will not even walk down a street where such a shop is located. He takes an alternative route.

Ramakrishna (to Latu): Leto, I asked you not to smell wine; I didn't forbid you to walk down the street where it is sold. It will not cause you harm to pass near the shop. Remember this (pointing to his body), and no intoxicating drink will be able to attract you.

After coming to Dakshineswar, Latu never left his room in the morning without first seeing the face of Sri Ramakrishna. Each

morning he would salute the Master, and only then begin his daily tasks. One morning, for one reason or another, he did not see Sri Ramakrishna first. So he shouted from his room: 'Where are you?'

Hearing his voice, Ramakrishna shouted back: 'Hello, wait a minute, I am coming.'

Until Ramakrishna entered, Latu kept his hands tightly pressed to his eyes. When the Master came in, he opened them and saluted him.

When this happened on one other occasion, Latu was again shouting for Sri Ramakrishna to come to his room; but instead the Master asked Latu to come outside. Latu walked out on the western veranda of Ramakrishna's room and saw the Master in the flower garden. Latu asked him: 'Sir, what are you doing there?'

'Yesterday', said the Master, 'a devotee brought that pair of sandals for you, and I am able to find only one of them. A jackal must have taken the other. I am looking for it.'

Hearing this, Latu became very upset and said: 'Sir, please come here. Don't search for that sandal.'

'But I shall feel sorry if you cannot wear these new shoes,' replied the Master, 'since it was only yesterday the devotee brought them.'

'Sir,' said Latu anxiously, 'please stop. If you continue to search for my sandal, it will be harmful to me. This is not your duty. Now my whole day will be spent in vain.'

With a smile, Ramakrishna replied: 'Do you know what day is really spent in vain? That day when the Lord's name is not chanted.'

THE PASSING AWAY OF THE MASTER

Every night, just before going to bed, the Master would say: '*Hari Om Tat Sat* [Verily, the Lord alone is the Reality and exists in all].' That last night he uttered this as I was fanning him. It was nearly

eleven at night. Then he heaved a sigh, and seemed to go into samadhi. Brother Loren asked us to chant *Hari Om Tat Sat*. We continued to chant until one o'clock, when the Master came down from samadhi. Then he ate a little farina pudding which Sasi fed him. Suddenly, he entered samadhi again. Seeing this, Loren grew worried. He called Gopaldada [Swami Advaitananda]: 'Can you fetch Ramlaldada [the nephew of Sri Ramakrishna]?'

Gopaldada and I immediately left for Dakshineswar, and Ramlaldada came back with us. He examined the Master and said: 'The crown of the head is still warm. Please call Captain [Vishwanath Upadhyaya, a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna].'

Early that morning, Mahendra came and examined him and said: 'He has given up the body.' Then shortly after that Captain arrived. He asked us to rub the Master's body with *ghee* [clarified butter]. Sasi rubbed his body and Vaikuntha his feet, but it was to no avail.

The Holy Mother was unable to restrain herself. When she came to the Master's room, she cried: 'O Mother Kālī, what was my fault that you left me?' Seeing the Mother weeping, Baburam and Yogin went to her, and Golap-Ma took her to her room.

In the meantime, the Calcutta devotees had received the news, and one after another began to arrive. A photo was taken of the Master with the devotees. Thus the day ended.

The Master's body remained on a cot, beautifully decorated, until it was carried to the cremation ground at Cossipore. Rambabu told me to stay at the gardenhouse until Aukhoy returned from the cremation ground. So I stayed there. Only once did I hear the Holy Mother weep; after that she was silent. Never have I seen such patience in a woman.

That night I went to the cremation ground. I saw many persons sitting quietly on the

bank of the Ganga. Sasi was near the funeral pyre with a fan in his hand, and Sarat was with him. Both Sarat and Loren sought to console Sasi. I took him by the hand and tried to raise him—but he remained motionless with grief. Then Sasi collected the ashes and bones of the Master and poured them in an urn. These he placed on his head and carried them to the gardenhouse, where they were kept on the Master's bed.

The following day, Golap-ma told us that the Master appeared to the Holy Mother in a vision in which he forbade her to remove her bracelets, and said to her: 'Have I gone? No, I am here. I have just passed from one room to another.' When those who were mourning heard this from Golap-ma, they cast away their doubts. 'Service to the Master is to be continued as before,' they said.

Niranjan [Swami Niranjanananda], Sasi, the senior Gopal, and Tarak [Swami Sivanda] stayed on at Cossipore that day. Yogin [Swami Yogananda] and I, as instructed by the Holy Mother, went to Calcutta to collect food and materials for his worship, and that noon cooked food was offered to the Master. Afterward, all sang *Rāma-nāma* together, and then left for their homes, except the senior Gopal, and Tarak, and myself.

Three or four days later, the Holy Mother went to Dakshineswar with Golap-ma, Lakshmididi [niece of Ramakrishna], and me, but we returned before nightfall. I heard later that Rambabu had visited Cossipore in the afternoon; at noon Sasi, Niranjan, Loren, Rakhai, and Baburam came. Rambabu wanted to vacate the gardenhouse, so he asked the disciples to return to their homes. Both Niranjan and Sasi were shocked to hear this, for they wanted the worship of the Master to continue. That very night Niranjan left for Balarambabu's house.

The next day, Balarambabu arrived at

Cossipore to escort the Holy Mother to his home with various articles of the Master's. I stayed on at Cossipore with the senior Gopal and Tarak. Everyone would arrive at noon and leave during the evening. Rambabu wanted to enshrine the relics of the Master at his Kankurgachi gardenhouse and establish a monastery there. But Sasi and Niranjan refused to accept this idea. They told him: 'We will not give you the relics.' Loren tried to pacify them, and said: 'Brothers, it is no good to quarrel over this urn. We have no monastery of ourselves, and Ramdada is willing to transfer the title of his gardenhouse in the name of the Master. It is a good proposition, and we should begin the worship of him there. If we can build our characters according to the ideal of the Master, then the goal of our life will be fulfilled.'

Latu Maharaj continued: The day before Janmāṣṭamī [birthday of Śrī Kṛṣṇa], I went to Rambabu's house. The next morning we formed a procession, and walked from there to Kankurgachi, singing *kīrtan* the entire way. Sasi carried the urn with the Master's ashes on his head.

During the interment of the urn, as they were covering it with earth, Sasi cried out: 'Oh, the Master is in pain!' The others there wept to hear his words.

Earlier, while returning from the cremation ground, Upenbabu had been bitten by a snake. Nityagopal [Jnanananda Avadhuta] used a red-hot iron to cauterize the wound.

Although his injury had not healed, Upenbabu still joined in the *kīrtan*. He used to like holy company very much.

After the Kankurgachi ceremony, Ramlaldada made arrangements for a feast at Dakshineswar. There was also *kīrtan* on that day. Ramlaldada went to Balarambabu's house to invite the Holy Mother to come to Dakshineswar, but she refused. However, I did attend the feast myself.

After the Master passed away, I could not stay at Cossipore any longer because of the grief I felt. So I would go to Rambabu's house now and then. And from there I would also go to Loren's house. Loren would recall many things about the Master. I would say to him: 'Brother Loren, I tell you frankly—the Master loved you so much he could not live without you.' Hearing this, Loren would laugh and say: 'Brother, never mind that. He loved you, Sasi, and Rakhal so much that he will always be *with* you. How little I served him in comparison with how all of you have!' Just see how humble brother Loren was!

One day one of the disciples was lamenting: 'So, the Master has left us.' I was shocked to hear this remark. I said to him: 'He is dead to sceptics, but alive to those who believe in him. Did you not notice that he appeared to the Holy Mother? When you have that type of faith, he will appear to you also.'

(Concluded)

ASCENT OF WOMAN

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

['How difficult it is to understand a woman!' exclaimed a young man once to us. Why only woman, it is difficult to understand man too. Not simply that, every little thing, animate and inanimate, is a great riddle. But the key to the understanding of anything lies in the knowledge of That which manifests Itself through the duality of sexes and the variety of creation. 'Without realizing God', said Sri Ramakrishna once, 'it is not possible to understand woman rightly'. Because, until the vision of God, concupiscence and selfishness intervene as a distorting smoke-screen between man and woman. With the God-vision, that screen lifts, and God stands unmasked in every being and thing.

The three characteristics, as Swami Nityabodhananda observes, of the contemporary society are 'collectivity, the search for power, and alienation'. Science has greatly accentuated these characteristics by divorcing the heart from the intellect, the 'woman' from 'man'. 'Patient co-operation, love-fruitfulness, intuitive understanding are woman's characteristics.' '... the ascent of woman is the growing practice of her charism, the practice of the above-mentioned qualities, as dimension of the new consciousness....' 'But there is no question of manipulating woman. She has to be studied with intuition and guided with love, as she enshrines an energy which is explosive and intelligent at the same time....' 'It is the *Śakti* of the Hindus, the energy of being which desires to be manifold....'

Sri Ramakrishna, who became illumined by worshipping God as a 'Woman', the Divine Mother Kālī, once explained the concept of Rādhā, the beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, thus :

'There are different aspects of Radha. In Her seductive aspect She was Chandravali. In Her aspect of love She participated in Sri Krishna's *lila* at Vrindavan. Nandaghosh, Krishna's foster-father, had the vision of the Eternal Radha.

'First is the seductive Radha, then the Radha of love. If you go farther, you will see the Eternal Radha. It is like taking off the layers of an onion one by one. First the red layers, then the pink, then the white. Afterwards you don't find any more layers. Such is the nature of the Eternal Radha, Radha the Absolute....' (*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, 1947, p. 909)

The surface-seeing man gets stuck up in the seductive aspect of the Eternal Feminine and refuses to progress to the 'love' and 'Eternal' aspects. And so he degrades himself, his counterpart, and the society. Said Goethe, 'And the Eternal Woman draws us towards the high.' By following that higher attraction, man can elevate himself and in the process the woman and the society. Of course, women have their own role in this self-elevation.

'Ascent of Woman' by Swami Nityabodhananda, the founder-head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Geneva, Switzerland, is a revealing and constructive study of an important theme. The article, a product of rare grasp, deep insight, and vast scholarly sweep, was originally delivered as a lecture at the auditorium of the 'Musée des Monuments Français', Tracédro, Paris.—*Ed.*]

I

The current of thought or the 'philosophy' called absurd, which starts with the idea that life is absurd, affirms that man can be saved by what he has, by his own strength. On the other hand, there are other currents, specially that of Kafka, which assert that man cannot be saved by what he has; he is condemned because the evil is beyond all remedying. The zero-man who produces physical enjoyments for a society who has no goal in life, the man who has completely lost the love for his neighbour and who treats the collectivity like an 'object': these are the topics in *The Castle* and *The Trial* of Kafka.

The tragically deformed, emaciated and denatured man constitutes the topic of artist-painters like Giacometti and de Buffet. And how can man be not helpless and lost in front of the rush of events, the demographic explosion, the life which forces him to resort to power and competition as a means to success; the estrangement or the alienation that he feels deep down in himself?

It is often said that we are living in an age of mutation; mankind and even man's consciousness are changing. The idea of mutation draws our attention towards man's interior and his responsibility instead of letting us assume an attitude which ascribes the responsibility of changes to external causes. There is something true and powerful in the idea of mutation, for, there is in it a call to man to gather up his physical and spiritual forces and to formulate an adequate and progressive attitude with regard to the latest developments, namely, the collectivity, the search for power, the estrangement. Today, emphasis is put on the quantity and not on the quality. The individual has to choose between developing with the collectivity or perishing in isolation. With regard to power and competition as means to success, he has to decide

to co-operate or to perish crushed by the power and competition. Quantity means 'more', to live more. But to live more does not mean to live longer; it means to live more intensively. The intelligent man must know that it is not physical strength and competition that can arouse this intensity; it is love which intensifies the quality of our life and personality. If humanity has survived the critical moments of history, it is due to the preponderance of co-operation over competition, due to the excess of love over power. Fruitful co-operation and collaboration are in the long run the motive power of evolution. So also love which does not rule, but which creates; because true love is fruitfulness, the surest impetus to evolution. Love which tries to know better instead of knowing more, love which includes imagination and intuitive understanding, the author of the creative and complete act. To promote mutation man is called upon to choose love and to renounce power.

With regard to estrangement, the third factor of our malaise, there too a ray of love can show us the way. Where does this estrangement come from? At the very bottom of our western civilization there is a Manichaeian trace—I would rather call it a scar—which opposes Spirit to Nature, to flesh, a deeply rooted dualism which is expressed in the dicta: *Man and Nature*, *Spirit and Matter*, *God and His creation*. Where can the origin of this mysterious 'and' be found? First in the science which tries to rule and overcome Nature. Then in the Cartesian dualism which has divided the universe into two: a cogitation which is pure thought, without spatial extension and devoid of all materiality; and matter which is pure extension, devoid of qualities. The science which glorifies analytical knowledge and the intellect, and which cultivates the distance from the object, has suppressed in us the faculty of knowledge

by uniting and melting with the object. Science has overshadowed the poet's vision and the intuitive understanding which, recognizing the polarity of opposites, embraces them and thus gathers a knowledge of the oneness beyond all division. Science has suppressed our ability of being balanced, of arriving at an equilibrium between heart and intellect. In this connection the confession of the German poet Novalis is a revelation: after the death of his fiancée Sophia he wrote: 'Born with a weak character, my intellect developed more and more and slowly usurped the throne of the heart. Thanks to Sophia the heart had found its home again. Her death can bring back the rulership of the usurper (the intellect) which will kill the heart out of revenge.' Novalis' dry rational attitude is the weapon he has created to defend himself against congenital softness. He will regain his equilibrium by uniting with the woman. His statement shows that intellect and heart are in opposition and in this opposition the heart is bound to the 'woman', not to the 'female' but to the whole and integral woman.

Our age puts stress on rationality and positivism and has abandoned the 'woman', the woman who is mother of the race, who by a real union with Being brings forth the child. There is a 'mystical sharing' between mother and child. A wise mother does not only teach her child to love her, the mother, but to love other mothers. She does not only teach him to be attached but also to be detached. The child's age of reasoning comes much later; the love-fertility precedes reasoning.

Let us resume our topic which we brought up before: In order to respond to the three problems, of collectivity, power, and alienation, in order to quicken the mutation of consciousness, the prevailing demand of life, man has to choose co-operation, love-fertility (fertility which

answers to the destructive power by endless creative repetitions), and intuitive understanding which gathers knowledge by con-naturality and consubstantiality of opposites. It is only intuitive understanding—another name for love—which can rectify the primordial lack in man's unconscious, the lack which pushed off the 'woman', the *mater* (Latin), 'mother'. Patient co-operation, love-fruitfulness, intuitive understanding are the woman's characteristics. Then it is up to the woman to practise these virtues more diligently so that she leads the whole world towards the high. As Goethe says it so wonderfully:

'All that is transitory
Is but a symbol;
The unattainable
Is realized;
The undescribable
Is here expressed;
And the eternal Woman
Draws us towards the high.' (*Faust*, II)

This new consciousness embodied by the woman, so necessary to quicken the change, I would call it the *charism of woman*. The charism is a force of love which is able to save mankind. For us, the ascent of woman is the growing practice of her charism, the practice of the above-mentioned qualities, as dimension of the new consciousness. This endeavour is the duty of men, as well as of women. But women embody these virtues more than men. The ascent of woman by her emancipation, her ability to take part with intelligence in all the domains of social life in the same way as men (see the number of jobs occupied by women) are actual facts. In Russia 70% of the doctors are women. Three quarters of America's economy-powers (the most important of the world) are in women's hands. According to a book of Oriana Fallaci *Il Sesso Inutile* (Milan, 1961) 65% of the shares of big American companies, 75% of

insurance policies are in the hands of women. America's politics is dominated by women, the cultural life almost completely. In 1940 there were 1.5 million more women than men, in 1975 there will be 7.5 million more. However, we are not thinking of this kind of ascent. Although these facts illustrate well our thesis, our search helps us to find in the practice of the three virtues, essential to women (which is the charism of women) a call to man to return to the source of love-fertility, to the Mother, to Nature. This appeal constitutes the eternal topic of man's separation from his source and his return after an analytical and dialectical itinerary as well as of doubt and sensuality; this is Faust's case until he meets Helena. The return which we are speaking of here takes into consideration the need of man to release the activism and man's insatiable curiosity, for the conquest of his complement, the woman, symbol of sacred passivity, and acceptance. This is the nuptial union with Being. Our attempt is to find in this separation and return the model of the creative act at every moment which, after having passed through the delightful torment of reasoning, is crowned by intuition—love—in the equilibrium of man and woman. Our effort will also be inclined to interpret today's events in the light of this marching charism, such events as the outburst of nudism in all fields, the collectivism, etc. In the West this going back to woman is well illustrated in Faust's theme. Goethe, like Kierkegaard, was all along his life obsessed by the person of the tempter. For Kierkegaard, Faust's and Don Juan's problem was twofold: doubt and sensuality, doubt of his own efficacy as winner which makes him fall a prey to the next. For Goethe the two motives are the two aspects of one single force, seduction, to which he dedicates the first part of *Faust*. The desire to fascinate comes from restlessness and curiosity, from absence of contact

with one-self. Faust as man is driven by frantic activism, by curiosity, by his love to conquer.

One certainly should not renounce these motive powers of man, but find their sublimation in the Woman who is sacred fruitfulness-passivity. After his engagement to Helena, when Faust goes down to the sphere of the Mothers, he is crowned with a nuptial union with Being. At this very moment he reaches his redemption. At this moment the poet calls to our mind the Feminine Eternal which draws us towards the high, it reveals to us our vertical dimension which we can awake thanks to women.

In India, this theme is often met with in one way or another, be it in the story of Rāma and Sītā, be it in the one of Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs, of Śiva and Pārvatī as well as in Kālidāsa's play called *Śākuntalam*. This theme emphasizes that the duality between woman and man is not a real duality, but that it constantly tends towards a non-duality, an antithesis which strives unceasingly to touch the synthesis, the restoration of unity. This tradition is so universal and frequently expounded that it can be found again in the Taoism, in the Cabal, in the Upaniṣads, and in Christianity. In the Taoism there is Yin the feminine, the calm, black and receptive principle, and Yang the masculine, the active, white and generating principle. An eternal motion of exchange between the two is maintained by a higher principle, the Tao. The Tao is conceived as a creative power, animating and renovating the universe. All the possible forms of individuals are contained in it. The Being which is taking birth in the Non-Being, it is the Mother of everything. The gateway of the mysterious Female is called the Root of Heaven and earth. She lasts perpetually and exerts herself without getting exhausted. Thanks to her, every fragment of this multiple universe is connected with the creative unity. The erotic mysticism of the Cabala

shows a striking likeness to the Chinese tradition. Heaven as Tiph'ereh is the male principle which is in constant union with the earth, Malchuth, the female principle. According to Genesis, God made man in His own image, male and female *before* Eve's separation from Adam's body—thus emphasizing that the entire man or the entire woman has no sex, is neither man nor woman, but man-woman at one and the same time.

In this connection, Aristophanes' declaration in Plato's Symposium is famous: 'Man and woman return in the sexual embrace to the primordial unity of the human being in its totality, a unity which had been broken one day.' We find the same idea in the Indian tradition in the concept of *ardhanārīśvara*, Śiva who shares his body with His wife. We find this idea also in the Upaniṣad: 'But He (the Ātman) did not have the joy in the beginning. Then His substance divided itself into two, into man and woman. The body is therefore only half.'¹ One can derive from these utterances that the polarity of sex is a complementarity and if the polarity is used for insisting on the inequality, this would mean the loss of the whole being.

The current tendency of boys to keep long hair and to dress like girls—and vice versa—confirms our thesis: man's androgynous character. In our era which is distinguished by freedom, boys and girls want to assert that man is not all man, that a girl is not all girl, but that the two stretch their hands towards reciprocity which is the elaboration of unity.

The words mother, *mère*, *Mutter*, *mātrī* (Sanskrit), and matter, *matière*, *Materia* are etymologically tied up. Matter, the generative Mother of forms, the first step that the supreme Being takes to manifest, is a thought which comes as leitmotive in different traditions, in one way or the other. If

our relationship with matter, with mother Nature, is one of a technological victory, this is equivalent to a union without love between man and matter, equal to ravishment, and the damage is twofold: loss of the poetical vision of the world and loss of the gnosis which is a specially Christian key for opening the mystery.

It seems that we have lost this key. But not entirely. Those who are proud of their analytical and positivist vision of science have lost it. But others who are tired of the scientific dryness are in search of their supreme fiancée or betrothed, Nature. At their call and to awaken those who are still unconscious of their feminine foundation, the Eternal Feminine answers in different ways. First by its appearance in complete nakedness. We complain often that everywhere, in publicity, in films, etc., the naked female body has gained the upper hand. Is it not true that Nature, the woman 'love-fertility', chased by life revenges herself and comes back in all nudity to catch first our imagination and then to make us understand her depth. The naked woman is Nature stripped of all 'clothes' which man has assigned to her; this is the shameless state before sin atrophied the conscience, before the full spontaneity of the conscience became restrained. Shame and its friend which revenges itself, the pornography, are the children of a suppressed spontaneity. This spontaneity is called by the Hindus, *sahaja*, and by the Chinese, *Tsu-jan* (another word for Nature). Sin is the restrictive consciousness: it is the conscious will of the ego. It goes against the full conscience, against what escapes its power.

The feelings of sin and of shame arose simultaneously in the first man² which means, in other words, that by a relaxed consciousness which tends towards the *sahaja*, one can chase the sin. The woman

¹ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, I. 4.3.

² Genesis, 3.7.

in her nakedness comes again to show us that the *sahaja*, spontaneity, is still possible.

Here is a story from the Hindu mythology, from the *Mahābhārata*, to be more precise:

One day a prince asked a sage, who was more complete: the man or the woman? The sage answered with the following story:

Once upon a time there was a king who performed a worship in honour of the Gods in order to propitiate them. But unfortunately he forgot Indra who becomes angry and awaits a favourable moment to punish him. One day as the king was hunting in the forest he loses contact with his retinue. Tired after a long search he goes down to a lake to drink. But how surprised was he as he came in contact with the water of the lake to see his body transformed into a woman's body! (This is the artifice which Indra has used to punish him by making the lake magic through his power.) The sad king, rather the sad queen returns to her kingdom. She marries a second time and gives birth to more children. At the age of fifty (as was the custom in India), the queen leaves the throne to devote herself to meditation and divides the kingdom between the children she has had as man and those she has had as woman.

In the forest where she led a contemplative life she sees one day her ministers arriving with the sad news that all royal princes have died in a war which was brought about by litigation. They ask her to return to her capital. The upset queen began to pray ardently. Then Indra who found that her penance was sufficient descends and grants her a boon: He is ready to restore to life either the children she has had as woman or those she has had as man. The queen prefers to meet again the children who were born to her when she was a woman. Indra, becoming even more merciful towards her, grants her a second boon and restores to life also those children which were born whilst she was king. Then he grants a third boon: he leaves her the

choice to become a man again, if she wants it. The queen bows down to Indra to tell him that she prefers to remain a woman.

II

In the world of today, the demographic explosion is a general phenomenon. This explosion puts stress on the growing collectivity which is a favourable ground for the development of woman's charism. The woman's position is moreover a key position in the collectivity; Marx, and after him Lenin understood it well. Marx says: 'Social progress can be measured only by women's social position', and Lenin: 'It is impossible to draw the masses towards politics if women are not included in the movement. We have to win for our cause the millions of women who work in towns and villages, specially our aim being the communistic transformation of society. There can be no true mass-movement without women.' This comes to admitting to the woman a position of equality with man, or rather a complementarity with equal intensity. French sociologists such as Foignin and Fourier, have further developed these ideas: Fourier considers women to be superior to men (except, of course, in the domain of physical strength).

There is as well a remarkable similarity between the 'face' of the woman and the 'face' of the masses. It is said:

The women, like the masses, are super-emotive.

The women, like the masses, are ego-centric.

The women, like the masses, are on the surface unsteady, but at the bottom there flows an undercurrent of conservatism in the women as in the masses.

To arrive at a right understanding, these statements have to take as the basis the standpoint that the energy of the woman is a neutral energy, which lends itself to be guided if the master sentiment which lives

in every woman's unconscious is touched with love. A leader can deal with the masses because he is master of the master-sentiment which is in the masses' unconscious and can manipulate it. But there is no question of manipulating a woman. She has to be studied with intuition and guided with love, as she enshrines an energy which is explosive and intelligent at the same time.

We have noticed previously that one of the factors of the individual's crisis is the collectivity which crushes him. We observed also that if the individual changes his point of view (that is to say, if he thinks that his evolution has to develop along with the collectivity, and that with this aim in view co-operation is more effective than competition) he can evolve instead of being lost. In this sense, the phenomenon of collectivity can lead us to further changes of practice and outlook.

It is Nature, the fertile foster-Mother, who multiplies in numbers. It is the *Śakti* of the Hindus, the energy of Being which desires to be manifold. This energy is of neutral character, in the sense that it can be directed in one way or the other. It is neither good nor bad but both at the same time. It is neither male nor female but both at the same time. A society which does not accept the equality or the complementarity of woman and man, which does not recognize that woman and man together build the social individual, the total human being, cannot be the place where the neutral power of *Śakti* can spring forth. The 'masses' is not a simple agglomeration bereft of any message. There is a direct link between the variety of human forms and the direction of destiny which the individual bears in his heart. The will of Being which multiplies is not a blind will (as in Schopenhauer's thought) but is a will-of-love which sows in the heart of the individual the elements which will allow him to get hold of his destiny, such as contradiction, self-criticism, and

higher knowledge. This will wants us to discern its message behind the quantity, the message of quality.

From the psychological standpoint, the woman—neutral force—unravels a structure in three facets. The aspect of passivity, of masochism, and of narcissism. These terms have to be explained.

Passivity puts up with events. It carries in itself a force of duration, of continuation to be independent of events. This force flows without ever exhausting itself, in an eternal flux. It accumulates in underground layers awaiting favourable circumstances for shooting forth like a living spring. Patient and flexible, passivity understood in this way shows a constant informulation which—when it asserts itself—can appear in contrary expressions. This is not a contradiction but the expression of a totality.

The woman is masochist only on the surface. Her pleasure is not suffering in itself which would be perverse. Suffering rather shows how far one can give oneself, the extent of one's love. The woman seeks to transcend suffering by love, this is the first gift; and the highest gift which accepts suffering and makes the latter the messenger of love.

Narcissism is defined as self-admiration. This is the admiration of the hidden perfect woman so as to bring the perfection to daylight. This admiration rises from the need to please and fulfils itself in the need to shine. It follows a movement towards the centre. It imitates in this, the reflexive movement of knowledge which comes back to itself to understand itself.

Nature has endowed the woman neither with masochism nor with narcissism. It is habit and society which have made her thus. The woman which awakens in man the primordial impulse of creativity—like Beatrice in Dante—is neither 'masochist' nor 'narcissist'. She embodies for man complete and eternal Love, what I would call *ānanda*

or Bliss, Love which harmonizes the supreme Good and supreme Beauty. From this standpoint, passivity turns into creative neutral power, perpetual flux, constant information, the masochism turns into an untiring capacity to give, and the narcissism into the faculty of admiration.

The constant information, mother of all forms, eternal movement of the creative principle, *Śakti*, is the force at the heart of Being. She is endless creativity which gives shape to what exists. *Śakti* does not create; She builds, makes and remakes the forms, the numberless worlds. She is duration—She is not evanescent beauty; She is beauty which vanishes and starts again, which frames the Eternal in the evanescent moment. To desire such a beauty is to desire the Eternal. The constant capacity of information is a renewing power. If a person is capable of renewing himself unceasingly, it is because he carries in him the principle of non-satisfaction. From the standpoint of renovation or non-satisfaction which is the woman, it is useful to study the current phenomena, such as the revolt and contesting all that is established. One cannot renew oneself without destroying, at least partially, the existing form. All creation implies destruction. All creation is destruction and creation at the same time. But there is an autonomous principle entering into this twofold process: it is the principle which makes the choice; because, to create means to choose certain elements and to reject certain others. This self-contained principle which is an inexhaustible treasure-house is never satisfied. It goes to the periphery to exhaust itself in the act of destruction and re-creation and then comes back to the centre to load itself. In the aspect of *Kālī*, the cosmic energy is conceived as destroyer, but She is not only destroyer, She is fertile and creates again. A revolt and contestation which is satisfied with destruction only practises therefore a

part of the resources of this double energy.

In the symbol of the Cabala, the woman is symbolized by water, water which flows and renews itself and man by 'fire-light'. In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus says: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'³ That is to say, reborn. Water is the womb of creation, it is the Mother. From this point of view, the symbolism of baptism is a return to the Mother, a getting immersed in her bosom for a new birth.

The water is mobile, active. But mobility means also inconstancy. Women are rebuked for being fickle. The poet says, Fickleness, thy name is woman. The Hindu thought anticipates this weak 'face' of the woman, but does not see a weakness in it. It sees in it even a stage which, to be complete, has to combine with its opposite. Admitting that the woman has a weak point, the Hindu thought sees in it the entrance of destiny which breaks up an equilibrium in order to remake it and turns the disharmony into harmony. In the same way as in a happy life the advent of suffering acts as an incentive to self-criticism and gateway to destiny, so also the weak point in the woman's character announces an eternal beginning again.

Sītā's life and her mission give us a perfect example of it. Sītā, the perfect woman, a spotless character, lived in the forest with her husband, Rāma. As Rāma had left her to go in search of the golden deer, the married couple is for a moment separated. The golden deer which Sītā wants to possess is moreover a trick which Rāma's enemy, Rāvaṇa, uses to remove Rāma from Sītā. Rāvaṇa hopes that he is thus able to carry off Sītā. Hearing a cry, Sītā believes that her husband is in danger and

³ St. John, 3.5.

asks Lakṣmaṇa, her brother-in-law (who assured his protection), to go to his brother's help. Lakṣmaṇa answers Sītā that her husband is God Himself and that nothing can put his life into danger; that on the other hand Sītā risks much if he leaves her alone. At this moment Sītā utters the words which are not worthy of a woman as perfect as she is. She says that Lakṣmaṇa wishes his brother's death so that he can marry her, but that his dream would never be realized. Lakṣmaṇa therefore leaves Sītā and Rāvaṇa finding her unprotected takes her and carries her off to his capital.

The author of the epic draws the attention to the fact that the mission of Rāma and Sītā—that is the destruction of Rāvaṇa, the demon-King—could not have been fulfilled if Sītā did not have this weak point in her otherwise perfect character.

It is opportune here to speak of the creative act in its full scope because the main point of woman's charism is her aspect of creative energy.

There are two types of creation: one, creation by union between the woman—principle of fruitfulness which receives—and the man—active and creative principle. The other, creation in solitude or isolation in the depth of the human being. *Śakti*, to be fertile, does not need man, in her depth she is fullness—fertility without a medium. This creativity in solitude is full of risk. For in this creativity man risks his individuality, the last image of himself to which he clings with attachment. But it is only through that creativity that he can change the *status quo*, transform the face of things. It is only through that creativity that man can assure perpetuity. To create intensively and constantly, in that resides his immortality, not an immortality as post mortem condition, but from now onwards. To stop the flow of time, the temporal series by creation which enshrines the unique in the present moment, and then let time pass by,

begin again and catch the moment to install eternity in the present.

To reach his depth man has to integrate himself and 'pass through' the two women who live in him: the one who needs love and physical union for the creation; the other who needs mystical love which can create without union, in solitude. This last woman is able to awaken in herself the masculine principle. According to Indian thought—specially the Sāṅkhyan school—this is *prakṛti*, the feminine who reveals to man the presence of the two women in him. To the man who has passed through experiences and temptations and who has arrived at the end of his 'itinerary', who therefore is mature, *prakṛti* says: 'I have bewitched you, I who have taken a feminine form. I am the two women who have lived in you, the physical and the mystical. I am interdependent with you. I have come out from you. Now my play is finished. You are immune from temptations which the "woman" can sow around you. The drama is finished, I re-enter into you for ever.' This is the state of absolute independence, *kaivalya*—creativity in spiritual solitude, in an isolation where man is alone with his spiritual capital, in a void. This void is populated by his interior certainties.

The Indian thought emphasizes that this state of independence represents a purity which has known impurity and which consequently is immune to it. The context which we qualify as 'temptation' is a state where the spirit is caught in the trap of matter and not the contrary. Usually we think that it is the physical or matter which comes to atrophy the spirit. The reality is nevertheless altogether different. The Spirit which is the perpetual impetus of evolution, comes to touch matter and provokes an awakening in it, disturbing the state of passivity. The spirit beleaguers it with life and desire. It produces the human personality which seeks an autonomy through

experiences, through doubts and agonies. The consciousness which notices these experiences is the gift of the spirit. Thus temptations are the contexts where the Spirit awakens in matter the consciousness of temptation and gives matter the choice to submit to it or to conquer it.

When man gets independence he starts a new life where the crutches which he has used before have no more value. Face to face with himself, before his second self, the feminine half, he begins a life where Being can expand without effort. He has already acquired the purification of thought, the illumination of feeling, and the elaboration of will; these three are necessary for the complete and creative act.

The equality of the sexes, the respect for woman, has always been a reality in India. Manu, the author of the moral code of the Hindus says: 'Where women are worshipped, the gods, and heaven rejoice.' The Hindu husband calls his wife the 'joint-pilgrim' on his way to Truth. Where matriarchy rules, the woman does not guide with an administrative genius but with gentleness and intuition. Her right to practise all professions is recognized, included the one of being prime minister. She can become a nun since the Buddhist era. Buddha's wife, Yaśodharā, is the first nun in India's history.

Vivekananda reckoned that dedicated women have an important part to take in India's regeneration, and Nivedita (literally, 'she who is dedicated'), his Irish disciple, left her country in order to put this programme into practice. She founded a girls' school, later known as Sister Nivedita Girls' School, in Calcutta. Today a convent works in the same way as the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order. This convent, the Sarada-Ramakrishna Mission, is in Calcutta and has several branches in India and America. Vivekananda's dream is realized.

When we read the Gospels we can as well notice how important the woman's role is in

Jesus' environment. 'Jesus walked through towns and villages, preaching and announcing the good tidings of the Kingdom of God. The Twelve accompanied him as well as some women ... who helped them to their best.' Jesus has always defended the woman. By saying: 'Whosoever puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery'⁴, he proclaims the indissolubility of marriage, thus opposing the practice of his time which permitted one to dismiss one's wife for the least reason. Numerous episodes are referred to where Jesus gives his teachings, thanks to a dialogue with a woman. In the episode of the woman of Samaria,⁵ he speaks to a woman as an equal; (at that time the woman was despised in the Mediterranean world); moreover that woman belonged to a heretic sect and she was a sinner! Numerous other episodes could be quoted where Jesus defends the woman, the one of the adulterous woman,⁶ the one of the sinner among the Pharisees.⁷ And the first message of Jesus' resuscitation is confided to a woman, Mary Magdalene.⁸

To be woman does not only mean to be the mother of children. The maternal instinct and the 'femininity', instead of being limited to the family circle can expand to the social circle. A woman who is dedicated to a spiritual ideal, who refuses marriage and maternity, can expand her love to all children as if they were her own. There she slips from the 'want to multiply' to the 'want to be', to want to be woman. To be mother of a family is a very confined expression of this 'want to be woman'. Our age, an age of mutation of consciousness pushes us to stop the war between the sexes, and to start

(Continued on p. 513)

⁴ St. Mark, 10.11.

⁵ St. John, 4.5-30.

⁶ St. John, 8.3-11.

⁷ St. Luke, 7.36-50.

⁸ St. John, 20.17 and St. Matthew, 28.10.



THE MIRROR OF FIGURES AND FIGURES IN THE MIRROR

Here is a news-item from *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, dated September 13, 1972 :

MEDALS TALLY

MUNICH, Sept. 12 (AP)—The following is the final medals table in the 1972 Olympics, which closed here yesterday :

	G	S	B	Total
Russia	50	27	22	99
United States	33	31	30	94
East Germany	20	23	23	66
West Germany	13	11	16	40
Japan	13	8	8	29
Australia	8	7	2	17
Poland	7	5	10	22
Hungary	6	13	16	35
Bulgaria	6	10	5	21
Italy	5	3	10	18
Sweden	4	6	6	16
Britain	4	5	9	18
Rumania	3	1	4	8
Cuba	3	1	4	8
Holland	3	1	1	5
France	2	4	7	13
Czechoslovakia	2	4	2	8
Kenya	2	3	4	9
Yugoslavia	2	1	4	7
Norway	2	1	1	4

North Korea	1	1	3	5
New Zealand	1	1	1	3
Uganda	1	1	—	2
Denmark	1	—	—	1
Switzerland	—	3	—	3
Canada	—	2	3	5
Iran	—	2	1	3
Belgium	—	2	—	2
Greece	—	2	—	2
Austria	—	1	2	3
Colombia	—	1	2	3
Mexico	—	1	—	1
Pakistan	—	1	—	1
Tunisia	—	1	—	1
Argentina	—	1	—	1
South Korea	—	1	—	1
Lebanon	—	1	—	1
Turkey	—	1	—	1
Mongolia	—	1	—	1
Brazil	—	—	2	2
Ethiopia	—	—	2	2
Spain	—	—	2	2
India	—	—	1	1
Jamaica	—	—	1	1
Niger	—	—	1	1
Ghana	—	—	1	1
Nigeria	—	—	1	1

Youth of India, would you be pleased to look up your figures in this mirror and care to tell me through the Editor of the

Prabuddha Bharata what you think and how you feel about it all?

About one thing I am pretty sure. C.I.A. has nothing to do with what you see of yourselves in this mirror. It is a genuine un-touched-up picture of the true state of your physical efficiency.

In one sense this is a very secure situation, for you could not possibly fall lower

in physical efficiency and skilfulness! From here only an upward journey is possible.

If you want to rise upward physically, mentally and spiritually, one thing that will help you as the first step, more than anything else in the world, is a careful study of Swami Vivekananda's *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*.

25 October, 1972

(Continued from p. 511)

an era of mutual appreciation and admiration. This age urges us to prove that man is able to solve the mystery of creation which has created two into one, and one into two, that is to say which has created duality with an underlying unity. To recognize the androgynous character of the human being, the complementarity of the sexes, allows the integral man to manifest his best potentiality.

The destiny of man is not the destiny of a nation. The destiny of man (not his fate), conceived as awakening of the consciousness of its vertical dimension to see its transcen-

dence is facing himself, is the presence of the integral man or woman with all that this includes.

The awakening to the vertical dimension is an eternal renewal. The man of today who is tired will find in it new strength and another outlook towards life. Man endeavours to know more; the woman to know better. Between the West which seeks to know more and India which seeks to know better, the time has come for a spiritual marriage. But maybe it has already been consummated.

HER PLAY—IN FIVE ACTS

(For simple souls)

I

When she ran to the fields with daddy's tied-up tiffin in her hand, he sat her in his lap, touched his fingers to her chin, and kept her captive munching *mudi*.¹ At the bathing-steps, when she splashed water, mummy pretended to be angry, but only loved her all the more—and sometimes splashed water back at her. This was the setting of Act One, in the hamlet beginning with Jay. The time, by Nature's counting, was when the dates ripen; by English counting, her age was five or thereabout. And the event? Well, she was married. He was a Chatterjee and she was a Mukherjee. Now, most girls are married to men and regard them as God; but this wee one was married to Him who had become man without ceasing to be God. Most girls' marriages are fixed up by parents and astrologers; but this girl's marriage would seem to have been fixed up from all eternity. After the ceremony they took from her while sleeping the jewels borrowed for the occasion: the jewel who had stolen her heart they could not take from her.

II

Trekking eastward, we come to where the two sisters, Gaṅgā and Kālī, sit side by side. There Act Two took place. The time was just a hundred years ago, when the one of whom I sing was a young woman of no ordinary grace. The event: God worshipped her. He best knows why He did it. But His doing it has lit up the meaning of marriage for all time to come. This couple has left us in no doubt of marriage in its deepest purpose: a partnership of souls for the spiritual evolution of both and for the good of the world. We see it as the gradual path by which we learn what, to be authentic men and women, we all have to learn. Learning unselfishness we learn everything. And what of the worshipped one, when God lay down at her feet? She moved no fraction from her native modesty, then or later. Is that not proof that she was something more than woman?

¹ Parched rice,

III

The next scene is a carriage-drive away, a place with Kāśī in its name. Kāśī is a city to leave one's body in, and just now a body has been left aside. Fifty years have gone by since our lady's Lord took birth. In that space He has lived five thousand years of the spiritual life of the Indian people—yes, has uttered a new Veda and packed in it inspiration for five thousand more. All that the senses can now see of Him is stretched-out skin and bone. Sorrowing, His men-disciples stand round, when His wife is brought. — 'Mother Kālī, what was my fault that You left me?'— Every man alive was torn to pieces to hear that cry of hers. Unbearable suffocation it was to watch that woe. O Lord, death we may witness, but spare us *that* sight again! After the first paroxysm of pain, no further cry of hers was heard, so inward did she then become. A silent serenity stole through the scene. He Himself gave assurance that He had but passed into the next room. The meaning of this moment in our still-young mother's play is not yet clear. She and we are at a turning in the road. We shall not see the shape that things are taking till we reach the next turn, the next Act in her play. She has been commissioned for her mission, and we know in words what that mission is : to reveal the Motherhood of God to the world. That is it in brief, the rest following from it. But what these words mean, more years must yet go by ere she can show, or maybe even fully understand herself. She has had the first part of her preparation—a queen confined in a canary-cage, just imagine! But unlike canaries, creatures of leisure that they are, our queen was rolling *rotī*² day and night for strapping college lads. After the Act now ending she is like another kind of bird—one that has lost her mate and lives a fugitive existence, now this nest, now that, each lacking what her cramped cage had.

IV

The waters get deeper as the play goes on. My task is to unmask a mystery. You see, this play does not look at all mysterious, but just the usual Indian thing : the *guru* passes on, so his wife, by courtesy and custom, is given honour. The ordinary appearance of our mother's life hides its depths. Over this she

² The unleavened whole-wheat bread of N. India.

draws another veil by taking her brother's daughter Rādhi to her arms. If our grasp is equal to the challenge, we shall penetrate these veils ; otherwise, save she part them for us, we shall not understand. In this Fourth Act she is back in the village of her birth. The sun of a new century has lifted over the warm sea of field and thicket. Though she has passed her prime, she has borne no children, her marriage being—unnatural No, but supernatural, the while fulfilling nature. Her Lord distinctly said that she would have children so many that she'd be dazed to hear their calls of 'mother'. Already she has seen in germ the truth of this, for has He not left her jewels of sons and daughters, and are not more being born to her in spirit day by day ? For all this, a certain sense of emptiness remains. It is her fullness, her perception of Infinity, that makes her feel caged and frustrated here. She, bride of God, would wing her way to the blue, did not Destiny have other plans. So it is that Rādhi is made to make her entrance and play her part. Our dear mother ties tight her heart to Rādhi so that the play may not prematurely end.

V

A crowded quarter in the City of Kālī is where Act Five takes place—when the flower of Europe's manhood has fallen on Flanders' fields and Dyer has lately done what he thought to be his duty. A river of tasks and toils and loves and losses has surged through our blessed mother's tender frame since she twined her life with Rādhi's for our sake. She has given intimations of what it really is to be a mother. Motherhood in its highest possibility cannot be a state of love alone. It must be also knowing what is good for who, and having power to bring about that good—where 'good' means spiritual good, in which all other goods are summed. So God, and only He, can truly be a mother. Whether this mother-housewife-*guru*-nun was God, or only God-like, in her motherhood is for readers to decide—and how will they decide till they themselves become the same ? Now, Act Five is the surrender of the last breath of a surrendered life. Even for us death is not the end. How much more must this be true of one whom God worshipped as God ! whom God definitely declared to be divine in a sense different from that in which each one of us is so !

She, He said, was Goddess of Learning and Giver of Highest Wisdom—this almost unlettered one ! A cat under ashes—were His words to print the riddle of His wife on listeners' minds. By our records He did not say that she was Love made flesh and blood ; but there must have been many things He could have said if He had chosen, and this, I vow, was one of them. In a sea of vexing trivialities rare whispers of exasperation escaped her lips : they are adornments that draw us to her more, giving assurance, as they do, that she was not unlike us—that she was not patient just because she sat aloof in heaven or in Yoga, rather, that she was human, whatever else she was. — And now, shall we tie up matters with a *Mahā*-this³ and *Mahā*-that, in fine Sanskrit style ? On this side there is not the slightest personal objection—but it is true, we live in a sophisticated age. Then also, is this the only way to enshrine one who always wore the sari of modesty ? Will it not be this very modesty that takes the world by storm, as her sister Mary's did and does ? With a stream of life so enigmatic, a few bubbles on whose surface we are lucky to discern, is it not just as well to leave the string untied ? Are sonorous phrases the only way ? Even if we know their meaning, are we to spill the milk in the market-place ? Simply loving is a better way. Let us rather end by asking, as scripture does : Who knows what that adorable Spirit was—and is ?

— S. P.

³ *Mahā*, meaning great or supreme, is often prefixed to names or descriptions of the Divine Mother in hymns glorifying Her.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Questions and answers are from: 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1947. References: Questions 1 and 2, pp. 616-7; 3, p. 678.

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' are from: *The Complete Works*, Vol. VI (1963), pp. 12-3.

Following the analysis of some of the causes of spiritual drought and a discussion on them in last month's *Editorial*, we are offering a discussion on their remedies in this month's.

The second and final instalment of the reminiscences of Sri Ramakrishna by Swami Adbhutananda is offered to our readers this month. Many aspects of Sri Ramakrishna's sublime character come alive in the events narrated here. The end portion of these reminiscences is connected with Sri Ramakrishna's passing and the happenings immediately after. Lata Maharaj's simple words—'He is dead to sceptics, but alive to those who believe in him. Did you not notice that he appeared to the Holy Mother? When you have that type of faith, he will appear to you also'—have a ringing certainty which may sustain the drooping spirits of many a devotee.

This month the Musafir has chosen to muse on the 'Medals Tally' of the Munich Olympic games. His musings are rather brief. But he says enough when he recommends to our youth the study of Vivekananda's *Lectures from Coimbo to Almora*. Those lectures come to the aid of Indians whenever 'man-making' becomes a national emergency: 'Muscles of iron and nerves of steel' and a 'will' which is made of 'the essence of the thunderbolt'—all ingredients of man-making and incidentally of a Olympic gold-medal-winning athlete. Let not the energy and will-power of our youth find their expression and fulfilment in bus-burnings and campus-disruptions. Let them become creative and dynamic in elevating their country to the top rungs of the 'Olympic Medals Table'. Not to speak of economic and other 'Medals Tables'.

At Dakshineswar, a hundred years plus a few months ago took place the great event of Sodasi-puja in which Sri Ramakrishna worshipped Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, as the Cosmic Mother Herself. That was the Second Act of 'Her Play—In Five Acts'. The whole of 'Her Play' has been arrestingly retold by 'S. P.' in free verse, and we offer this composition to our readers this month when the Holy Mother's birthday will be observed wherever her devoted children are living.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ENGLISH

PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTENCE: By JOHN MICALLEF, Published by the Philosophical Library, New York, pp. 235, 1969, \$ 6.50.

This book is concerned with the analysis of the phenomenon of existence. 'It is structured', says the author, 'on the manifestation of existence as it is experienced in everything that exists.' He starts with the fact of his own existence which is not open to doubt or denial. Later he becomes aware of the existence of other men and things. Himself, other men, and things are only manifestations of the phenomenon of existence. He then becomes aware of his existence as well as that of others. Existence comes first, awareness next. We are aware of only existing things.

The book consists of fifteen chapters divided into four parts. At the beginning of each part the author gives a brief synopsis of its contents. There are also several charts and diagrams illustrating the ideas that are developed. The author's poems, bearing on the same theme, are interspersed throughout the book.

By drawing out the implications of the concept of existence, the author develops a philosophy of life which comprises all the chief values, such as the good, the beautiful, and the true. He observes that 'he is committed to the truth wherever or in whatever shape it may show up, for he is searching for truth as a way of life'.

At the end of the book the author asks his readers whether the study of the book has compelled them to modify their set of values and whether it has furnished any criterion by which they could assess the value of existence as human beings. These are worthwhile questions that any reader would do well to ask himself when he comes to the last page of the book.

It seems to us that the value of existence as a human being could be better assessed by directing the inquiry into the implications of existence along *a priori*, rather than *a posteriori*, lines. This line of inquiry will consist in eliminating, by the method of analysis, all that is adventitious and contingent and realizing what the nature of pure existence is. Rid of all that is accidental, existence will simply stand for 'being' in the widest commonalty spread. When all names and forms, to adopt the language of the Vedanta, have been eliminated what remains is not pure nothing but 'pure being'. Since, on the author's own showing, existence is associated with awareness, we must conclude that Pure Being is

also Pure Consciousness. Just as we eliminate by analysis all the particular forms and modes of existence and arrive at the rock-bottom fact of 'Pure Being', even so we eliminate all the contents of the conscious states and arrive at the basic fact of awareness which is Pure Consciousness. Pure Being and Pure Consciousness are not two independent realities but two facets of the reality. There being no second to cause any tension, the basic reality must be taken to be free from every kind of discord. It will therefore be of the nature of Pure Bliss. We arrive at the conception of pure bliss by the same process of analysis and elimination. The combination of these three fundamental concepts results in the notion of Being (*sat*), knowing (*cit*) and bliss (*ananda*). This is the Brahman of the Vedanta. It seems to us that this is the logical conclusion of the inquiry undertaken to lay bare the foundational implications of the phenomenon of Existence.

SRI M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

THE UNKNOWN NIETZSCHE: By SUBHASH C. KASHYAP, Published by National Publishing House, Darya Ganj, Delhi 6, 1970, pp. 299, Rs. 32.50.

The German thinker, poet, critic and mystic Nietzsche has been one of the great men who moulded life and thought in this century and who gave a new direction to the human endeavour in this age of anxiety, neurosis, and alienation. Sri S. C. Kashyap studies in this volume the socio-political thought and influence of this great philosopher. The seven chapters of the first part explain and examine Nietzsche's social and political thought. The ten chapters of the second part trace the influence on Hitler, Mussolini, Shaw, Iqbal, Berdyaev, Gide, O'Neill, Existentialists, and Hippies.

During his own time and later Nietzsche was denounced by some Christians as the Anti-Christ. Nietzsche was blunt in denouncing Christianity and thinkers like Kant. As an antidote he asked the Europeans to read *Manu-Smriti*. His attachment to Indian thought is well known, though the critics of Nietzsche have somehow ignored it. At the socio-political level he advocated mixed economy, nationalization of heavy industry and trade, heavy taxes of luxury goods, abolition of adult suffrage, introduction of functional representation, and honouring the intellectual and the spiritual persons. He also advocated birth control, disarmament, abolishing apartheid, putting an end to war and violence, and united Europe. Sri Kashyap has given a lucid account of these ideas in the first part. The second part is a critical exploration of the consequences

of Nietzsche's thought when it is well or ill understood by the persons. It also offers a corrective to some of the dangers implicit in Nietzsche's thinking. It is a well-written and carefully documented work which deserves a careful study.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL ANNUAL: ED. BY T. M. P. MAHADEVAN, VOLUME SIX, 1970, Published under the Auspices of the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1971, pp. 188, Rs. 10/-.

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, the able Director of the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, has succeeded in bringing out the sixth Volume of the Indian Philosophical Annual. The first part covers the papers and talks presented before the international Seminar on World Philosophy. Six papers here cover the panel discussion on Freedom and Responsibility by distinguished scholars like Deutsch, Lewis, Mercier, Devaraja, and Kalidas Bhattacharya. Deutsch argues that real freedom lies in consciousness being free to attend to Reality. Lewis affirms the value of responsibility, as though it can be delinked from freedom. Devaraja admits that he is 'more or less free', probably fighting shy of the concept of self-determinism. Freedom for Bhattacharya is transcendence, and his is an ably argued case. A similar approach is found in the papers of Tripathi and Mercier.

Five papers are devoted to the Indian philosophical perspective and these are followed by three lectures. The second part has eight special articles covering a wide range of problems like Sankara and Aquinas, Buddhism, Moksha, concept of person, and liberation. The paper on Aquinas fails to note the great distinction between *parinama* and *vivarta*.

The eighteen scholars who contributed to this volume deserve our gratitude. They provoke us to a serious thinking. Dr. Mahadevan deserves all support for the rich fare he could collect here.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

THE PHILOSOPHICAL LIFE OF THE SENSES: BY DONALD BURTON KUSPIT, Published by Philosophical Library, New York, 1969, pp. 126, \$ 3.95.

This is a puzzling book. The author is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and so the reviewer naturally looked forward to a philosophical treatise on the refined life of the senses at the pure metaphysical level. As the reviewer read through the book, he found that it was the outcome of the pen of a poet, visionary, and epigrammatist, all in one. Here are a few epigrams;

God: The parasite who kills its host, the world (p. 19).

Truth: It has no destiny. Its clarity and solitude are the dead ends of destiny (p. 21).

Philosophy mistakes the heart-strings of life for the purse-strings of death (p. 45).

And on goes the list. Even the longer paragraphs have the same flavour. Whatever they may mean, they do not seem to tell us about the life of the senses. Philosophical students who have a flair for the bizarre and the recherche, for something corresponding to modernistic painting and sculpture in literary composition, may find this book quite exciting. The reviewer with his limited range of philosophic receptivity confined to the region of metaphysics proper, finds himself at sea in the realm of thought outlined in this book. He had put it down with the feeling that philosophy is being brought down to the level of the senses, instead of the senses being uplifted to the level of philosophy. Students of philosophy in our universities should read this book to see what is happening in some regions of contemporary philosophy!

PROF. P. S. NAIDU

BENGALI

SRI-MA DARSHAN: BY SWAMI NITYATMANANDA, Published by the Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Srīma Prakasan Trust, 579, Sector 18B, Chandigarh, Vol. VII, Bengali Era 1377 (1970-71 A.D.), pp. 303, and Vol. VIII, Bengali Era 1378 (1971-72 A.D.), pp. 309, Rs. 8/- each.

'In the *Kaliyuga* holy company is an effective way that leads to the realization of truth,' exhorted Sri Ramakrishna. The two volumes under review, emphasizing two essential messages of Sri Ramakrishna, that is 'God first, all else next' and 'As many faiths, so many paths', in the VII and VIII volumes respectively, do definitely serve as holy companions to the seekers of Truth.

'Life', defines 'M', the great recorder of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, 'is the history of one's mind and soul' (Vol. VIII, p. 26). *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* revealed besides other things the gradual unfoldment of the mind and soul of 'M'. On the other hand, *Sri-Ma Darshan*, a masterly annotation on the *Gospel*, throws further light on different aspects, so long wrapped in dim light. Thus it illuminates further the life-stories of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, and other contemporary celebrities of their times. So also has its author, Swami Nityatmananda, painted marvellously, in 'M's' own technique, the life of 'M' who had become 'diluted' in the 'nascent solution' that was Sri Ramakrishna. When 'M'

says, 'Attain devotion to God. Be calm yourself first, then try to pacify others or the world', he only echoes the words of his Master. These volumes tell us also how 'M' used to inspire young men as well as devotees and help them lead a godly life.

Readers no doubt await eagerly the promised seven volumes to complete the series, but a more integrated image of 'M', his views on Indian culture, spiritual life etc., could have emerged had these writings been placed chronologically.

No doubt, in future editions correction of some mistakes in Sanskrit and English quotations and riddance of certain exaggerated and repeated statements would improve the volumes greatly.

These volumes will certainly be received by the students of the *Gospel* as its 'extension study'; and all pilgrims on the pathway to God would turn to this series as to wise and dependable guides.

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

HINDI

TANMATRA TATHA VISHWA KA MANO-MAYA MULA: BY DR. R. S. BHATTACHARYYA,

Published by The Astrological Research Hall, 134, Hauz Katara, Varanasi, pp. 64, 1970, Rs. 1/-.

The book is an exposition of the concept of *tanmatra* in the Sankhya philosophy and other allied systems. The author has explained in a lucid style that there is very little basic difference between modern scientific theories and the Sankhya explanation of evolution. The Sankhya system goes further than modern physics and reaches the conclusion that nature is incomplete without the presupposition of a conscious entity which the Sankhya calls Purusha. The concept of *tanmatra* is an unique one in Indian philosophy. It is neither the atom, nor the molecule, nor the atom of the Vaiseshika system. It can only be experienced by the Yogins. The learned author has given an exposition of the concept and attempted a synthesis of naturalistic and idealistic philosophies. He has definitely contributed to a better understanding of the Sankhya philosophy which had been criticized by unsympathetic interpreters on the ground of being dualistic. The book is useful for all students of philosophy.

PRITI ADAVAL

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE GENERAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION FOR APRIL, 1970—MARCH, 1971 (With some later information)

(We are presenting here a brief summary of the latest report of the 'Ramakrishna Math and Mission' which will give our readers some information about the activities of these twin organizations. The report was issued by the General Secretary in August 1972 from the Headquarters at Belur Math, P.O., 711-202, District Howrah, West Bengal, India.—Ed.)

The Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission

Though the Ramakrishna Mission and the Ramakrishna Math, with their respective branches, are distinct legal entities, they are closely related, inasmuch as the Governing Body of the Mission is made up of the Trustees of the Math; the administrative work of the Mission is mostly in the hands of the monks of the Ramakrishna Math; and both have their Headquarters at the Belur Math. The Math organisation is constituted under a Trust with well-defined rules of procedure. The Mission is a registered society. Though both the organisations take up charitable and philanthropic activities, the former lays emphasis on religion and preaching, while the latter is wedded mainly to social betterment. This distinction should be

borne in mind though the 'Ramakrishna Mission' is loosely associated by people with Math activities also. It is necessary to point out that the appropriation of the name of Sri Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda by any institution does not necessarily imply that it is controlled by the central organisation at Belur.

The Math and the Mission own separate funds and keep separate audited accounts of them. Though both the Math and the Mission receive grants from the Central and State Governments and public bodies for their social activities, the other activities of the Math are financed from offerings, publication, etc., while the Mission is supported by fees from students, public donations etc. Both the Math and the Mission funds are annually audited by qualified auditors.

Summary of Activities

Like the last two years the year under review was also beset with financial and administrative problems arising out of labour unrest, students' agitation and political disturbance in certain States of India. In spite of this, special attention was paid during the period to relief and rehabilitation work as well as activities in the rural and tribal areas. During the year two major relief operations were conducted in West Bengal and the Mission's educational activity was further intensified in the tribal areas of Arunachal Pradesh and Ranchi.

The new constructions during 1970-71 comprised the Botany Block of Vivekananda College and the building for electives at the Ramakrishna Mission Technical Institute, Madras, the Students' Home at Jamshedpur, and annexe of the Dispensary at Patna and a new Prayer Hall at Gauhati Ashrama. Foundations were laid for a Prayer Hall at Kankhal and a Dispensary building at Allahabad. At Seva Pratisthan, Calcutta the works of land acquisition and construction were in progress.

For a long time the Mission had been trying to purchase a small portion of Swamiji's ancestral home through private negotiation. The effort is still continuing; but as this involves prolonged litigation, the Mission has approached the West Bengal Government for the compulsory acquisition of 5 plots, including the one where Swamiji was born, as also the 2 plots, involved in private negotiation.

Under the Math section steps were taken for developing a new sub-centre at Ganges town in the United States of America.

As in the previous years, our connection with the East Pakistan centres was very tenuous. With the help of local friends and devotees the five monastic workers with Pakistan nationality somehow managed to carry on the usual activities, though on a reduced scale.

Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon, our only centre in Burma was managed as before by some local friends, constituted into a Managing Committee by the Headquarters.

(N.B. Owing to the recent civil war in East Pakistan all the monastic members of Pakistan nationality had to take refuge in India, but soon after the inception of independent Bangla Desh some of the centres have reopened and steps are being taken to revive the others.)

Centres

Excluding the Headquarters at Belur, there were in March, 1971, 117 branch centres in all, of which

53 were Mission centres, 20 combined Math and Mission centres, and 44 Math centres. These were regionally distributed as follows: 2 Mission centres, 5 combined Math and Mission centres and 3 Math centres in East Pakistan; 1 Mission centre each in Burma, France, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Fiji and Mauritius; 1 Math centre each in Switzerland, England and Argentina; 12 Math centres in the United States of America; and the remaining 45 Mission centres, 15 combined Math and Mission centres and 26 Math centres (86 in all) in India. The Indian centres were distributed as follows: 29 in West Bengal, 11 in Uttar Pradesh, 12 in Tamil Nadu, 7 in Bihar, 5 in Kerala, 4 in Mysore, 3 each in Orissa and Assam, 2 each in Maharashtra, Meghalaya and Andhra, and one each in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chandigarh. Moreover, attached to the branch centres there were over 23 sub-centres, where monastic workers resided more or less permanently.

(N.B. To provide educational facilities to the people in Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh a new Branch of the Mission has recently been opened at Narottam Nagar, P.O. Deomali, Dist. Tirap, Arunachal Pradesh.)

Types of Work

Medical Service: The Math and Mission institutions under this head served the public in general, irrespective of creed, colour or nationality. Typical of these are the indoor hospitals in Calcutta, Varanasi, Vrindaban, Kankhal, Trivandrum and Ranchi. In 1970-71 there were altogether 10 full-fledged Indoor Hospitals with 1,383 beds, which accommodated 28,084 patients and 68 Outdoor Dispensaries, which treated 38,46,035 cases, including old ones. Besides, the centres at Salem, Bombay, Kanpur, New Delhi, etc. had provision for emergency or observation indoor wards attached to their dispensaries. The Veterinary section of the Shyamala Tal Ashrama treated 1,043 cases. The Sanatorium at Ranchi and the Clinic at New Delhi treated T.B. cases alone and large sections of Seva Pratisthan of Calcutta and the hospital at Trivandrum were devoted to maternity and child welfare work, while the latter had also a department of Psychiatry.

Educational Work: The twin organisations ran during the period 5 Degree Colleges of general education at Madras, Rahara (24 Parganas), Belur (Howrah), Perianaickenpalayam (Coimbatore) and Narendrapur (24 Parganas) with 4,392 students on

their rolls. The last three were residential. In addition there were 2 B.T. Colleges at Belur and Perianaickenpalayam with 260 students, 2 Basic Training Schools at Perianaickenpalayam and Madras with 236 students, one Post-Graduate Basic Training College at Rahara with 98 students, 4 Junior Basic Training Colleges at Rahara, Sarisha and Sargachi with 301 students; a College for Physical Education, another for Rural Higher Education and a School of Agriculture with 97,226 and 127 students respectively at Perianaickenpalayam, one Agricultural Training Centre at Narendrapur with 127 trainees, 4 Engineering Schools at Belur, Belgharia, Madras and Perianaickenpalayam with 1,305 students, 15 Junior Technical or Industrial Schools with 706 boys and 414 girls, 92 Students' Homes or Hostels, including some Orphanages, with 8,633 boys and 580 girls (The number of inmates in the Students' Homes in East Pakistan excluded), 3 Chatuspathis with 14 students, 14 Multi-purpose Higher Secondary Schools with 5,888 boys and 461 girls, 9 Higher Secondary Schools with 3,988 boys and 2,038 girls, 15 High and Secondary Schools with 7,605 boys and 4,578 girls, 36 Senior Basic and M.E. Schools with 5,373 boys and 4,526 girls (Students in East Pakistan excluded), 45 Junior Basic, U.P., and Elementary Schools with 6,693 boys and 2,621 girls and 125 L.P. and other grades of Schools with 6,485 boys and 4,711 girls. The Seva Pratisthan, Calcutta and the Math Hospital at Trivandrum trained nurses and midwives, the number of trainees being 221. Besides these, the Institute of Culture in Calcutta conducted a Day Hostel for 250 students, and a School of Languages for teaching different Indian and foreign languages with 1,074 students. The Ashrama at Narendrapur conducted a Blind Boys' Academy with 95 blind students, and the centres in Raipur and Ranchi (Morabadi) ran a 'Panchayati Raj Training Centre' and a training centre in farming ('Divyayan') respectively. Thus there were altogether 53,973 boys and 20,150 girls in the educational institutions run by the Math and the Mission in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Fiji and Mauritius.

Recreational Activities: Some of the Math and Mission centres have been providing scope for recreational, cultural, and spiritual activities to young boys at stated periods outside their school hours. The 'Balaka-Sangha' of the Bangalore Ashrama has a fine building of its own. At the Mysore Ashrama also a considerable number of boys take advantage of the various kinds of facilities provided for them, and the Juvenile Section of Janasiksha Mandira, Belur, is engaged in similar activities.

Work for Women: The organisation has ever been conscious of its duties to the women of India. Typical of the work done for them are the Maternity Sections of the Seva Pratisthan, Calcutta, and the Hospital at Trivandrum; the Domiciliary and Maternity Clinics at Jalpaiguri and Kherti; the women's sections of the hospitals at Varanasi and Vrindaban; the attached Invalid Women's Home at Varanasi; the Sarada Vidyalaya at Madras; the Girls' High School at Jamshedpur; the Sarada Mandir at Sarisha (24 Parganas) and two training schools for nurses in Trivandrum and Calcutta. Besides, there are special arrangements for women in other hospitals, dispensaries and schools, and some institutions are conducted especially for them. The Madras Math also conducts a High School and a Primary School for girls.

Rural Uplift and Work among the Labouring and Backward Classes: The Math and Mission have all along tried their best to serve their unfortunate countrymen who have fallen back culturally or otherwise. In addition to the more prominent village Ashramas like those at Cherrapunji, Sarisha, Ramharipur, Manasadwip, Jayrambati, Kamarpukur, Sargachi, Along (Arunachal), Perianaickenpalayam, Kalady, and Trichur, quite a number of rural sub-centres—both permanent and semipermanent—are run under the branch centres at Belur, Rahara, Sarisha, Tiruvalla, Kankurgachhi (Calcutta), Malda, Ranchi, Narendrapur and Cherrapunji. Of these special mention may be made of the numerous village-sub-centres started for educating the hill tribes in Meghalaya and a youth training centre in Ranchi meant for local Adivasis. Our educational and cultural activities in the Arunachal region are also proving very useful and popular. During the period under review, in the rural and backward areas the organisation ran 7 Multipurpose Higher Secondary Schools, 2 High Schools, 40 Senior Basic, M.E. & U.P. Schools, 41 Primary Schools, 50 Night Schools for adults, 9 Vocational Training Centres—with a total of 11,663 students. The organisation also conducted 12 Outdoor Dispensaries and 2 Mobile Dispensaries (serving more than 30 villages) with a total of 2,29,069 patients treated during 1970-71 besides running 170 Milk-distribution centres—all located in the rural and backward areas. In addition to such numerous activities, preaching and educative tours with magic lanterns, movie-films and such other means are also undertaken frequently. For the labouring classes in industrial areas the Mission conducted a number of night schools, community centres, etc.

Mass Contact: From the foregoing account it will be evident that the organisation's activity is not concentrated in urban areas alone; it is spread over other fields as well. It will be wrong, again, to suppose that the organisation has no real contact with the masses. As a matter of fact, the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda is spreading steadily in all parts of India, which fact is evident from the participation of innumerable people during the annual celebrations. The temples and Ashramas also draw thousands of people throughout the year. Besides these there are a number of medical institutions where millions get free medicines, and thousands are treated in the indoor departments. In the educational institutions also, a considerable number of poor students get free education, board or lodging. The organisation is also running a good number of free libraries in the rural areas. The publication centres sometimes sell booklets at nominal prices to suit the pockets of the masses.

Spiritual and Cultural Work: Both the Math and the Mission centres laid emphasis on the dissemination of the spiritual and cultural ideals of India, and through various types of activity tried to give a practical shape to the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna that all religions are true. The centres established real points of contact between people of different faiths through public celebrations, meetings, classes, publications, etc. They also conducted Libraries and Reading Rooms. A number of Sanskrit Chatshpathis too were run. At least ten centres published books on religious subjects and ten magazines in different languages. The Math centres at Mayavati, Baghbazar (Calcutta), Madras, Nagpur, Mysore, Rajkot, Bhubaneswar and Trichur in particular, have to their credit a considerable number of useful publications. Special mention should also be made of the Institute of Culture in Calcutta, which has been trying to bring

together eminent men and women of India and other lands in cultural fellowship.

Relief and Rehabilitation Work: As usual the Mission undertook in 1970-71 some relief and rehabilitation works either directly through the headquarters or in conjunction with some branch centres. Some works were also conducted by the branch centres themselves. Under the first head may be mentioned the *East Pakistan Migrants' Relief* in co-operation with the branch centres at Taki and Rahara; and the *West Bengal Flood Relief* with the assistance of the branch centres at Belur, Rahara, Belgharia, Baranagore, Narendrapur, Taki, and Seva Pratisthan and Advaita Ashrama in Calcutta. Under the second head come the different relief operations undertaken by the Math centre at Rajkot and Mission centres in Bombay, Purnia and Jalpaiguri.

Annual Celebrations: Most of the Math and Mission centres ceremonially observe the days sanctified by the advent of great saints and prophets. The general features of the celebrations of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda are: Special worship, Homa (making offerings in the sacred fire), chanting of scriptural texts, Bhajan and Sankirtan (devotional music, often in chorus), distribution of Prasad (sacramental food) to the devotees, feeding of the poor in large numbers, and lectures on the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda by eminent speakers, including Swamis of the Order. Thus the message of Sri Ramakrishna and his associates is steadily spreading, and many young and ardent souls are coming into closer touch with the ideals of the Math and the Mission. In co-operation with the local public some centres celebrate the more popular Hindu festivals, accounts for these being maintained separately.

OUR THANKS AND APPEAL

We are deeply grateful to all those friends who, by their ready assistance, financial and other, have helped us carry on our activities. Our thanks are also due to the editors of newspapers who kindly published our reports and appeals, and to the officials and other persons who, in times of emergency relief, came forward with help. We thank, too, those local physicians, engineers, lawyers and others who kindly volunteered their services to our different centres.

We hope the public all over India and abroad will continue to help the Math and Mission generously. All friends of India and of the afflicted will find here an opportunity to earn the blessings of the Lord by serving and worshipping Him in their less fortunate brothers and sisters.

Finally, we appeal to high-minded, courageous young men who appreciate the life-giving message of Swami Vivekananda, to respond to his call by dedicating themselves to his unitary ideal, 'for one's own liberation and for the good of the world'.