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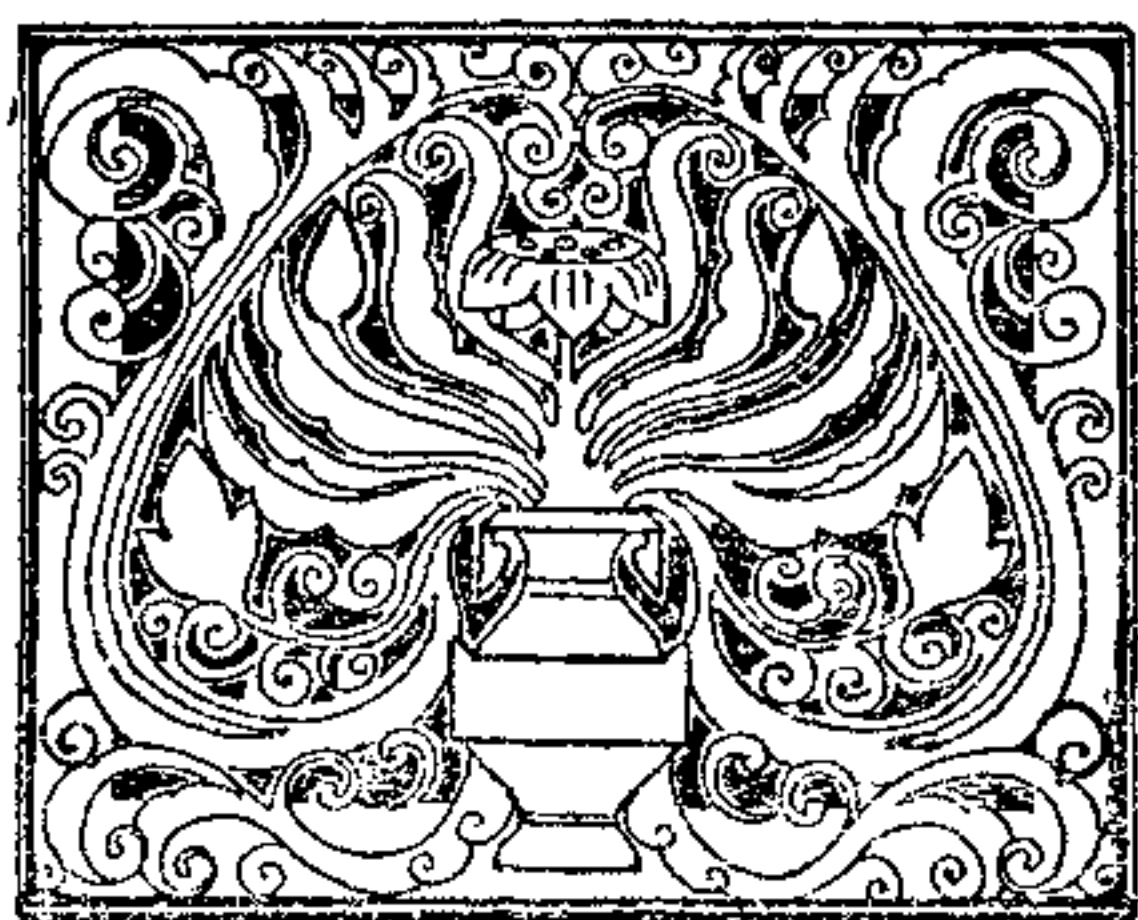
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Prabuddha Bharata

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No. 2

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (asked by a Devotee): 'How can a man get rid of his ego?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'You cannot get rid of it until you have realized God. If you find a person free from ego, then know for certain that he has seen God.'

Devotee: 'What, sir, are the signs of God-vision?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Yes, there are such signs. It is said in the *Bhagavata* that a man who has seen God behaves sometimes like a child, sometimes like a ghoul, sometimes like an inert thing, and sometimes like a madman.

'The man who has seen God becomes like a child. He is beyond the three gunas; he is unattached to any of them. He behaves like a ghoul, for he maintains the same attitude toward things holy and unholy. Again, like a madman, he sometimes laughs and sometimes weeps. Now he dresses himself like a dandy and the next moment he goes entirely naked and roams about with his cloth, under his arm. Therefore he seems to be a lunatic. Again, at times he sits motionless like an inert thing.'

Devotee: 'Does the ego disappear altogether after the realization of God?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Yes, sometimes God totally effaces the ego of His devotee, as in the state of samadhi. But in many cases He keeps a trace of ego. But that doesn't injure anybody. It is like the ego of a child. A five-year-old child no doubt says "I", but that ego doesn't harm anybody. At the touch of the philosophers' stone, steel is turned into gold; the steel sword becomes a sword of gold. The gold sword has the form of a sword, no doubt, but it cannot injure anybody. One cannot cut anything with a gold sword.'

Question (asked by a Pundit): 'Does God listen to our prayers?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'God is the Kalpataru, the Wish-fulfilling Tree. You will certainly get whatever you ask of Him. But you must pray standing near the Kalpataru. Only then will your prayer be fulfilled. But you must remember another thing. God knows our inner feeling. A man gets the

fulfilment of the desire he cherishes while practising sadhana. As one thinks, so one receives. A magician was showing his tricks before a king. Now and then he exclaimed: "Come confusion! Come delusion! O King, give me money! Give me clothes!" Suddenly his tongue turned upward and clove to the roof of his mouth. He experienced kumbhaka. He could utter neither word nor sound, and became motionless. People thought he was dead. They built a vault of bricks and buried him there in that posture. After a thousand years someone dug into the vault. Inside it people found a man seated in samadhi. They took him for a holy man and worshipped him. When they shook him his tongue was loosened and regained its normal position. The magician became conscious of the outer world and cried, as he had a thousand years before: "Come confusion! Come delusion! O King, give me money! Give me clothes!"

'I used to weep, praying to the Divine Mother, "O Mother, destroy with Thy thunderbolt my inclination to reason."'

Question (asked by the Pundit): 'By what kind of bhakti does one realize God?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Three kinds of bhakti are found, according to the nature of the man: sattvic bhakti, rajasic bhakti, and tamasic bhakti.

'Sattvic bhakti is known to God alone. It makes no outward display. A man with such devotion loves privacy. Perhaps he meditates inside the mosquito net, where nobody sees him. When this kind of devotion is awakened, one hasn't long to wait for the vision of God. The appearance of the dawn in the east shows that the sun will rise before long.

'A man with rajasic bhakti feels like making a display of his devotion before others. He worships the Deity with "sixteen ingredients"¹ enters the temple wearing a silk cloth, and puts around his neck a string of rudraksha beads interspersed here and there with beads of gold and ruby.

'A man with tamasic bhakti shows the courage and boisterousness of a highway robber. A highway robber goes on his expedition openly, shouting, "Kill! Plunder!" He isn't afraid even of eight police inspectors. The devotee with tamasic bhakti also shouts like a madman: "Hara! Hara! Vyom! Vyom!² Victory to Kali!" He has great strength of mind and burning faith.

'A Sakta has such faith. He says: "What? I have uttered once the name of Kali and of Durga! I have uttered once the name of Rama! Can there be any sin in me?"

'The Vaishnavas have a very humble and lowly attitude. They tell their rosary and whine and whimper: "O Krishna, be gracious to us! We are wretched! We are sinners!"

'A man should have such fiery faith as to be able to say, "I have uttered the name of God; how can I be a sinner?" Imagine a man repeating the name of Hari day and night and at the same time saying that he is a sinner!'

¹ As prescribed in the books of Hindu ritual.

² By such loud exclamations a devotee of Siva invokes his Ideal Deity.

PRACTICAL VEDĀNTA

EDITORIAL

ONWARD FOR EVER!

This is a world of good and evil. Wherever there is good, evil follows, but beyond and behind all these manifestations, all these contradictions, the Vedanta finds out that Unity. It says, 'Give up what is evil and give up what is good.' What remains then? Behind good and evil stands something which is yours, the real you, beyond every evil, and beyond every good too, and it is that which is manifesting itself as good and bad. Know that first, and then and then alone you will be a true optimist, and not before; for then you will be able to control everything. Control these manifestations and you will be at liberty to manifest the real 'you'. First be master of yourself, stand up and be free, go beyond the pale of these laws, for these laws do not absolutely govern you, they are only part of your being. First find out that you are not the slave of nature, never were and never will be; that this nature, infinite as you may think it, is only finite, a drop in the ocean, and your Soul is the ocean; you are beyond the stars, the sun, and the moon. They are like mere bubbles compared with your infinite being. Know that, and you will control both good and evil. Then alone the whole vision will change and you will stand up and say, 'How beautiful is good and how wonderful is evil!'

Sri Kanchi

I

We all want to be practical men and women. Our modern upbringing has successfully impressed upon us this idea that unless we are practical we cannot succeed. And nothing succeeds like success. Nobody wants to be branded a failure. Hence we all want to be practical.

But what is practical?

The 'mental correlate' of the practical is said to be 'pragmatic'. Pragmatic is that which works, which sells, and which helps. It is obvious from this why in his lifetime William James, the propounder of pragmatism, enjoyed more popularity than any other philosopher ever did, and also why his philosophy stayed 'a philosophy for the philistines'. But his enduring contribution to human thought appears to be here: he in effect indicated that the world of fact has to be respected. If a philosophy does not work, does not sell, or does not help, that by itself, need not prove that it is a great philosophy.

Truly the pragmatic is the practical, the practical is the acceptable. The question 'What is practical?' may be answered this way: that which works, sells, and helps is practical. But who judges these issues, under what terms of reference? In this world there has never been one commonly accepted concept of the practical. Very often what suits our weaknesses or strength and our desires, our conveniences—we call practical. In general it may be said every individual's concept of the practical is derived from his concept of himself, his world, what he wants to achieve in it and the manner he wants to do it.

In the Vedas it is said: a person is born in the world of his own making. And this world of his own making does not only mean his objective world, but also the subjective world constituted by his body-mind, tendencies, and desires. One perceives as

much as one conceives. And one conceives as much as one perceives. On the percept depends the perspective. In the world of his own making a man may be completely ego-centric or utterly cosmo-centric or somewhere in between. Therefore the concept of the practical may vary among members of the same family or community, among people living in different times and countries, or people holding to different faiths, political or religious.

Not only that, the concept of the practical may vary in the different stages of a man's inner revolution. If you are a thief, to steal is practical. If you are not, it is stupid. If you desire spiritual illumination, renunciation is practical. If you want worldly enjoyment, it is stupid.

Our concept of the practical is the idea of both our ignorance and wisdom, our strength and our weakness.

II

In the midst of the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, when Arjuna was afraid to face the situation, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, God incarnate on earth, thought it practical to teach him the highest philosophy.

Life is a battlefield, in regions inner and outer. Fight you must any way. Otherwise you just go under. Whether or not you have lived meaningfully will be judged by the manner of your fighting. Śrī Kṛṣṇa taught in the *Gītā* two secrets of real great fighting in the world :

- (a) Remember the highest and fight.
- (b) Fight with detachment.

And this is the entire secret of practical Vedānta, for manifesting the highest within us.

Why did Śrī Kṛṣṇa teach the highest philosophy, the philosophy of the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Spirit when a great war was to start? In order to turn the whole fighting business of life, in the world of facts or forces, to good

account : to show how the ego-centric man can grow into a cosmo-centric man even while shedding blood of necessity.

Therefore the imperatives are : 'Remember Me (the Highest) and fight.' 'Fight with detachment.'

We are travellers on the highway of life's pilgrimage to the great seeing of the Self, and being in the Self. In the ultimate analysis, that is practical which helps us in this journey, in this great being. Therefore Śrī Kṛṣṇa taught Arjuna : to aim at the highest through whatever we may or may not do ; to fight this life's battle in the manner of the highest. And that all the way through. Because nothing else behoves you. Nothing else works if you understand your Self and your destiny.

We can fight for the highest only in the manner of the highest. There is no other way of doing it. You cannot reach the highest by thinking that you are this little body. You can reach the highest by thinking and functioning in terms of the highest within you. That is detachment in operation. Therefore we must dare to believe in the highest that is within us and within everyone else. We must function in the manner of those who are sort of highest-devoured in the world where the highest goes about. The way you go about, the world goes that way for you. If you are a young bride your husband may appear any moment. If you are a debtor your creditor may appear any moment. You live in your created world. When you reach the uncreated, through meditation, why, the world too is uncreated as spirit.

This is practical Vedānta : to live in the world of the Highest, in the manner of the highest, and for the sake of the highest. And That thou art. Is it possible in the world of facts and forces we know of to live in the manner of the highest without creating difficulties for ourselves and the others ?

It entirely depends on what you are in reality and out to make possible? It depends on what you would dare and care for. Yes, suffering would come, difficulties will be there. But what of that? And what are you talking about? Leave aside the world and others. Do you know 'facts' and 'forces' about yourself? How little do we know.

What is the fact about yourself? What are the forces within yourself?

Swami Vivekananda challengingly asks everyone of us :

'Do you know how much energy, how many powers, how many forces are still lurking behind that frame of yours? What scientist has known all that is in man? Millions of years have passed since man first came here, and yet but one infinitesimal part of his powers has been manifested. Therefore, you must not say that you are weak. How do you know what possibilities lie behind that degradation on the surface? You know but little of that which is within you. For behind you is the ocean of infinite power and blessedness.'¹

'In every man, and in every animal, however, weak or wicked, great or small resides the same omnipresent omniscient soul. The difference is not in the soul, but in the degree of the manifestation.'²

What an unhinging message! And what are we going to do about this? Do you mean to say it is intelligent, it is practical to forget all about our omniscient and omnipotent soul, and just live in this little flesh identified with it completely, and go about with the earmuff on, shivering in the street when the winter wind blows? Are we to dance attendance to the senses all eternity, and that alone is intelligent and that alone is practical?

Vivekananda declares:

'Everything in time, space and causa-

tion is bound. The soul is beyond all time, all space, all causation. That what is bound is nature, not the soul. Therefore proclaim your freedom and be what you are—ever free, ever blessed.'³

We are so practical that we believe that physical concept of man is the thing to be cherished. And what is the result? We have acquired lots of knowledge and piled up armaments. But we are required, for safety, to live in fox-holes which you call fall-out shelters. Just think of the absurdity of the human situation! It is too tragic for common tears.

Is it practical to live in the body, for the body, and then expect the world to spin round for my sake, for my little country's sake? Or, is it practical to enlarge the consciousness and live in and through all?

There was the talk going around among the Pharisees in Galilee: 'See the world goeth after him and ye count for nothing!' Jesus had become already immensely popular among the multitude. Wherever he went people followed him. People have the curious idea that if you want to become popular you must say naughty, nasty, and small things. Otherwise people will not listen to you. This is nonsense. Mankind is eager to listen to the voice of Truth. If someone says the truth, men will listen. They may kill him. But that is another matter. Killing sometimes makes the process of listening more effective. Christ spoke only of the highest. He did not compromise, he did not temporize. He spoke the stunning truths in the most direct manner: 'Cut out your hand, pluck out your eyes!' Who had ever spoken the truths in that way? And yet he was immensely popular.

And the small man of Galilee did something very practical. They crucified him. And what was the result? Christ-power exploded. And the fire spread all over the world. Remember, when the small men of

¹ *The Complete Works*, (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas), Vol. II (1963), pp. 300-1.

² *Op. cit.*

³ *ibid.* Vol. VI (1963), p. 93.

Galilee were doing something practical, Christ also did something very practical in his own way. He did not escape the crucifixion though it was within his power to do so. He sacrificed himself. And that was the most practical thing any person ever did in the world.

Law of sacrifice is the highest law in the universe. It is said in the Vedas that through sacrificing Himself the Lord created the universe. Whoever embodies that highest law in his life becomes united with the Lord and participates in His power and glory. Christ showed that living for the highest, in the manner of the highest is entirely possible, practical, and pragmatic. It works, it sells, and it helps. Nay, if you can see all the way through, if you can feel all the way through, you can rise all the way through, it alone works, it alone sells, and it alone helps. Nothing else does in the ultimate analysis.

Though our eyes be blind still when sunlight strikes them, we somehow know that something is bringing us an unknown sensation of something eminently acceptable. That is why Christ was so well understood by the multitude. Truth has such an arresting face! But then 'practical' people always appear on the scene and tell you how foolish you are!

Technocracy is the modern man's pride. It is the hallmark of his stupendous practicality. If we can have a machine to work for us we are ready to mortgage the powers of our mind. In fact, in future we may be going to have machines in exchange of our minds. And that as a practical measure, to boot! But when you are aware of higher values, you will keep your mind even if machine has to go.

There is this instructive Chinese story:

'When Tsekung, the disciple of Confucius, came south to the state of Ch'u on his way to Chin, he passed through Hanyin. There he saw an old man engaged in making a ditch to connect

his vegetable garden with a well. He carried a pitcher in his hand, with which he was bringing up water and pouring it into the ditch, with very great labour and little results.

"If you had a machine here," said Tsekung, "in a day you could irrigate a hundred times your present area. The labour required is trifling compared with the work done. Would you not like to have one?"

"What is it?" asked the gardener, looking up at him.

"It is a contrivance made of wood, heavy behind and light in front. It draws up smoothly in a continuous flow, which bubbles forth like boiling soup. It is called a well-sweep."

Thereupon the gardener flushed up and said with a laugh, "I have heard from my teacher that those who have cunning implements are cunning in their dealings, and those who are cunning in their dealings have cunning in their hearts, and those who have cunning in their hearts cannot be pure and incorrupt, and those who are not pure and incorrupt in their hearts are restless in spirit. Those who are restless in spirit are not fit vehicles for Tao. It is not that I do not know of these things. I should be ashamed to use them."

Tsekung's countenance fell, humiliated, and he felt discomfited and abashed. It was not till they had gone thirty *li* that he recovered his composure.

"Who was that man?" asked his disciples. "Why did your face change colour after seeing him and why did you seem lost for a whole day?"

"I thought," replied Tsekung, "there was only one man (Confucius) in this world. But I did not know there was this man. I have heard from the Master that the test of a scheme is its practicality and the goal of effort is success, and that we should achieve the greatest results with the least labour. Not so this manner of man. Coming into life, he lives among the people, not knowing whither he is bound, infinitely complete in himself. Success, utility and the knowledge of skills would certainly

make man lose the human heart. But this man goes nowhere against his will and does nothing contrary to his heart, master of himself, above the praise and blame of the world. He is a perfect man.”⁴

This man who was not ready to lose his mind in exchange of machine—was he or was he not a practical man?

When your awareness changes, your concept of the practical also changes.

In Laotse's Book of Tao, we are given this perspective of the practical in this manner:

‘To yield is to be preserved whole.
To be bent is to become straight.
To be hollow is to be filled.
To be tattered is to be renewed.
To be in want is to possess.
To have plenty is to be confused.
Therefore the Sage embraces the One,
And becomes the model of the world.
He does not reveal himself,
And is therefore luminous.
He does not justify himself,
And is therefore far-famed.
He does not boast of himself,
And therefore people give him credit.
He does not pride himself,
And therefore the ruler among men.
It is because he does not contend
That no one in the world can contend
against him.
Is it not indeed true, as the ancients say,
“To yield is to be preserved whole?”
Thus he is preserved and the world does
him homage.’⁵

In our timidity and blindness we imagine, if we think of high thoughts and become idealistic, we would become fools, for our interests will be lost and our world will topple over. But the wisest of the world have told us differently, that until we have lived for the highest we are never secure. We have not even known what is living. We read

⁴ Lin Yutang: *The Wisdom of China and India* (The Modern Library, 457, Madison Ave., New York, 10022, Giant Edition), pp. 1054-5.

⁵ *ibid.* pp. 594-5.

this grand but simple truth in the Book of Tao:

‘There were those in ancient times possessed of the One.
Through possession of the One, the Heaven was clarified,
Through possession of the One, the Earth was stabilized,
Through possession of the One, the gods were spiritualized,
Through possession of the One, the valleys were made full,
Through possession of the One, all things lived and grew.’⁶

This exactly is the message which Vedānta holds up before the peoples of the world. What exists is one. In that one we are whole and complete. When we function in the world bereft of this knowledge we are poor, puny things. Our problem can then never be solved.

To possess that knowledge intact and then function in the world is wisdom. Far from toppling down, your world will then thrive. Will your business fail just because you understand yourself and the world more clearly? Will all fun be lost just because you see through the joke of Māyā and apprehend the glory of the Ātman? And because we are so ‘practical’ we have not the faintest idea as to what it means to be living in the Ātman. Yet it is perfectly possible for us to do so.

We race with time. If we are this little thing—body—then we must run and rush, grab and snatch. Then comes the palpitation in the heart, the flow of blood to the head. And we just crack up. Why all this? For being practical! Is it really practical to race with time and allow the timeless to do nothing with you?

Imagine the wonder of it: if life could be Ātman-centred, if we knew how to live in the timeless, would it be very unpractical? If Christ is triumphant today, little

⁶ *ibid.* pp. 605.

men of Galilee are failures. Why do we not take this lesson? Because we, timid little things, are afraid to face the fact. Truth gives us no comfort. Light makes us miserable.

Vedānta declares a few ultimate truths about ourselves and the universe we live in:

(1) We are divine in essence. The individual soul is identical with the Supreme Spirit.

(2) All mankind and all existence are one. Here there is no multiplicity. And this can be experientially known.

According to Vedānta, that society is the highest where the highest truth becomes practical. Can we live according to the highest truth? Is it possible? Is it practicable?

One of the achievements of the great life of Swami Vivekananda was to show how Vedānta could be lived and made practical in our times. In fact, a time has come in history when if we do not accept the solidarity of mankind as the basis of our political and economic functioning in the world, it is doubtful whether we can survive. Of course, no one would desire the extinction of humanity.

Mere acceptance of these truths of Vedānta is not enough. They must become the stream of our blood; they must become the beats of our heart, the patterns of our thought and waves of our emotion and action. How do we do it?

Teachers of Vedānta in effect say :

Hold on to the highest truth and spread it around yourself in order to create an area where great ideas can thrive.

Knock out from your minds all delusions of weakness and its degrading associates.

Say 'yea, yea' to all who say to the contrary, but stick to your vision of life.

Do not be puzzled by the talks of profit and loss that go on in the market-place. Few ever know what pays in the world.

While you function in time, let the spirit of the timeless or eternity always brood upon you in the manner the mother-bird hatching the eggs.

Do not condemn the world. Enlarge your consciousness through meditation.

Link every action with the task of manifesting the highest in the thought.

In the battlefield of life function as Śrī Kṛṣṇa has taught : Remember the Lord and fight. And fight without attachment.

This fight should be carried on until the highest is manifested, until the ego-centric life becomes cosmo-centric.

Such a life is worth living; such a life is worth suffering for. Even if all humanity lives differently, and you alone live the cosmo-centric life, it will be as practical as to have a small lamp burning in a room where darkness has dwelt a thousand years. The future of the world is only as bright as that of practical Vedānta.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

Kasi
22.3.1915

Dear —,

This time too your comprehension does not seem to me to be right. So I am writing to you in the light of my understanding. Don't think that I am displeased with you. It is true that the *sattva-guṇa* is free from evil and characterized by quietude, etc.; but, to be sure, everyone is not endowed with the quality of *sattva*. He, in whom *tamas* (inertia) is predominant, will have to reach the state of *sattva* through the cultivation of *rajas* (activity). And the person who is full of *rajas* will also have to acquire a predominance of *sattva* by subjugating *rajas*. It will not do only to know that *sattva* is free from evil, *rajas* gets on involved in exertion, and *tamas* is characterized by delusion. The question is how to bring about the preponderance of *sattva* in oneself. It is true that even spiritual practices when done through overexertion may cause more harm than good. That is why in the scriptures like the *Gītā* it is taught: 'to attain quietude by degrees',¹ 'to be temperate in eating and recreation and in exertion at work',² etc.

Overexertion is not good; that does not, however, mean that procrastination is. Rather, Sri Ramakrishna would instruct us to hold on enthusiastically to the resolve: 'I shall become liberated in this very body.' It is not proper to think, that the instruction which Sri Ramakrishna gave to a particular emaciated person, is applicable to all. Why of Swamiji (Vivekananda) alone, it is the opinion of every authentic teacher that one should practise spiritual disciplines regularly. What need I say about Lord Buddha? He said:

इहासने शुष्यतु मे शरीरं, त्वगस्थिमांसं प्रलयञ्च यातु ।

(अप्राप्य बोधिं बहुकल्पदुर्लभां नैवासनात् कायमतश्चलिष्यते ॥)³

The purport of this is: While seated on this seat, may my body dry up; skin and bone get disintegrated. Yet I shall not stir from this seat without attaining that supernal knowledge which is difficult to attain even through ages.

What is the need of emphasizing the mortifications of the Buddha? The same is the case with many: that is to say, those who attained anything worthwhile could never do so without staking their life in spiritual striving. 'Sanātan, is the Kṛṣṇa-treasure attained easily?'—this is a saying of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caitanya. Do you know about the intense discipline of chanting the Lord's name practised by Haridās and others? They did not know about the passing of days and nights. Read Sanātan Goswāmī's *Bhajan-paripāṭi* and you will see how eager he was for attaining God. The body is not permanent. Certainly one day it will

1 VI. 25.

2 VI. 17.

3 *Lalitavistara*

go. What a fortunate thing it will be if it goes in the midst of spiritual practices and prayers ! When we cannot do this we quote the saying : 'सर्वमत्यन्तं गर्हितम्'⁴ 'All excess is reproachable.' It does not help to speak irrelevance for covering up one's inability. I shall repeat this a hundred times that there is nothing greater than sacrificing one's body for the adoration of God.

It is said in the 'Samādhi-pāda' of Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtras* :

व्याधि-स्त्यान-संशय-प्रमादलस्याविरति-भ्रान्तिदर्शनालब्धभूमिकत्वानवस्थितत्वानि
चित्तविक्षेपास्तेऽन्तरायाः । (३०)

'Disease, mental laziness, doubt, lack of enthusiasm, lethargy, clinging to sense-enjoyments, false perception, non-attaining of concentration, and falling away from the state when obtained, are the obstructing distractions.'

स्यात् कृष्णनामचरितादिसितापविद्या, पित्तोपदुष्टरसनस्य न रोचकैव ।
किन्त्वादरादनुदिनं खलु सेवयैव, स्वादी पुनर्भवति तद्गदमूलहन्त्री ॥

'The name, anecdotes, etc. of Kṛṣṇa are like sugar. Those whose tongues are affected by the bile of nescience will not relish it. But, if they partake of it every day with loving care, gradually it tastes well and that itself cures the disease of biliousness.'

All's well here. I pray for your welfare. . . .

My sincere prayer to the Lord is that by His grace you may devote yourself heart and soul to His work and get immersed in Him and thus your life may become blessed.

Why are you worried ? The Lord will set everything aright about you all.

SRI TURIYANANDA

⁴ Reference here is to the *Cāṇakya-śloka*, 48 :

अतिदर्पे हता लङ्का अतिमाने च कौरवाः । अतिदाने बलिर्बद्धः सर्वमत्यन्तं गर्हितम् ॥

Too much pride brought about the ruination of Laṅkā, too much self-estimation brought the destruction of the Kauravas, too much charity brought Bali's entanglement. All excess is reproachable.

THE MODERNITY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S RELIGION

SWAMI SMARANANANDA

I

To many people the idea of being modern is synonymous with the rejection of religion and all that is associated with it. Modernity is, to some others, a vague notion that is associated with rejecting the past and living a fashionable, snobbish life. In India, modernism is still an undefined concept. The modern age which began, in a sense, with the Industrial Revolution has taken rapid strides in the twentieth century. Today we are living in a world where technology is impinging more and more on social and individual life. In spite of this fact, India with a vast illiterate population, is at once associated with three ages : the ancient, the medieval and the modern.

Broadly speaking, the modern age has three characteristics: the spirit of scientific enquiry, humanism, and democracy; individual liberty; and the idea of collective security leading to universalism as different from nationalism. Basic to these characteristics has been the concept of continual progress, leading to an evolutive and dynamic life, making man go constantly in search of new modes of enjoyment, new time-saving devices, fresh conquests of the secrets of nature. With all, in every country, there is a tendency to seek constant change in an ever-changing world and to abhor a static condition.

If we look at Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings in the light of the foregoing outline of modern trends, we would find that his insight into the nature of man is remarkable. His prophetic vision had, as it were, anticipated the problems of modern man and given him solutions. No doubt, the solutions are necessarily in the background of man's eternal purpose—that of realizing his divine nature. Of course, this goal itself

is liable to be questioned by the modern man. But in the case of Sri Ramakrishna the goal was a self-evident truth that had been realized by him through spiritual experience, and what was needed was an adjustment of modern man's life to this goal. How this can be done is illustrated by incidents in Sri Ramakrishna's own life of spiritual practices and realizations.

This is not surprising if we remember that Sri Ramakrishna's guiding light is meant for the modern times. He came at a time which was, as it were, the twilight between the medieval and the modern ages in India. Calcutta was then the capital of British India and leading modern intellectuals of this city were confronted by this humble Brahmin from a remote village in Bengal, untrained and uneducated in modern ways. And they found him to be more than their match.

Sri Ramakrishna's rejection of education is very significant. He branded it as 'bread-winning education' and rejected it. Of course, the reference was to the knowledge of priestly profession which his elder brother Ramkumar wanted him to acquire. But by this remark his penetrative mind had rejected all kinds of 'economics-oriented' education. Modern education, particularly in India, is only economics-oriented, or still worse, job-oriented. Young people in modern times have to devote the best part of their lives in acquiring a university degree or proficiency in some trade so that they can earn a living when they grow up.

But man does not live by bread alone. The purpose of education should be to bring into blossom all that is great in the individual. Sri Ramakrishna had insisted that he would have only that knowledge by which God—the Ultimate Truth—could be

known. This insistence puts the finger on the weakest point in modern education, the purpose of which is not to develop an integrated personality in the educated, but to make him fit to earn his living after acquiring his academic qualifications.

In spite of this rejection of the economics-oriented education, we perceive in Sri Ramakrishna's actions the time-spirit of modernity operating.

II

At the back of scientific spirit is the idea that nothing should be accepted without experimentation, without having verifiable proof in the form of direct perception by oneself or by some reliable authority. One is not prepared to accept anything merely on belief.

We find ample evidence of this spirit in Sri Ramakrishna. Only the tools of the experiment were different. Material knowledge could be obtained through experiment in science laboratory. But for spiritual knowledge one must experiment with his own body and mind. This is what Sri Ramakrishna did. The religion he practised was not based on mere beliefs. He wanted to see the Divine Mother face to face and succeeded in doing so.

During his days of intense hankering for the vision of the Divine Mother, he would sometimes sit before the image of Kālī and say to her, 'Art Thou true, Mother, or is it all a fiction of the mind—mere poetry without any reality? If Thou dost exist, why can I not see Thee? Is religion, then, a phantasy, a mere castle in the air?'¹ Once, to test whether the Mother was real, he took a piece of cotton wool and held it under Her nostrils. Strangely enough, it moved. At last, after he had the first vision of the Divine Mother, he could have Her

vision whenever he wanted and She became more real to him than the external world.

In all his spiritual practices, this attitude of a researcher was always prominent. In later life, when his disciples came to him, he always encouraged them to test everything before accepting. Narendra, the future Swami Vivekananda, once wanted to find out whether the Master's reaction to the touch of metal or coins was real. Therefore once he slipped, unknown to the Master, a rupee coin underneath his bed. When the Master came and sat on the bed, he jumped up in excruciating pain, as if stung by a scorpion. The disciples who were present tried to find out what was wrong in the bed and were astonished to find nothing more dangerous than a rupee coin! Narendra was shamefaced! But the Master reassured him by conveying his satisfaction over his disciple's attitude of testing before believing.

On another occasion he said to a disciple: 'You must examine a *sādhu* by day and by night before believing in him.'² Years later Swami Vivekananda would often say: 'Do not believe in a thing because you have read about it in a book. Do not believe in a thing because another man has said it was true. Do not believe in words because they are hallowed by tradition. Find out the truth for yourself. Reason it out. That is realization.'^{2a}

Thus we see that the spirit of enquiry and reasoning was not stifled in the religion taught by Sri Ramakrishna. On the other hand, these were encouraged, befitting the scientific spirit of the modern age.

III

Man's concern for fellow-man was not much in evidence in the Middle Ages, though Buddhism and Christianity had

² *ibid.*, p. 400.

^{2a} Swami Nikhilananda: *Vivekananda A Biography* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, 1964), p. 8.

¹ *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, 1964), p. 69.

introduced philanthropic activities as a part of their religious practice. It is the modern spirit of humanism that has set in motion great activities of social service in the modern world.

Sri Ramakrishna's concern for suffering humanity was phenomenal. His concern for others was not restricted to the physical plane. We in the modern world often believe that only such actions as medical service etc., are philanthropic acts. But man, it must be recognized, is not merely a physical being. He lives on three planes: physical, mental, and spiritual. And humanity needs help on all the three planes.

While compassion and love are basic to all kinds of service rendered to humanity, all people do not have the capacity to serve others on all the levels. For instance, an affluent man alone can make big charities. It is not possible for a beggar to do so. Similarly, only a man equipped academically and is learned himself can help others in acquiring education and mental development. The spiritual level is the highest level of human existence. And only a person who is spiritually advanced in a great measure can help others in this direction.

Sri Ramakrishna was a spiritual teacher *par excellence*. He had realized truth through hard spiritual practices over long years, and his realizations had proved to him the ephemeral nature of worldly existence. He could have withdrawn completely from the world, had he chosen to do so, designating it as *māyā*. But his immeasurable compassion for suffering humanity would not allow him to do that. He yearned for a band of earnest disciples who would spread his message and bring solace to others through spiritual awakening. And in the evenings, when the temple rang with the sound of bells and conch-shells during the evening service, he would climb to the roof of the building in the garden and cry out at the top of his voice: 'Come, my

boys! Oh, where are you? I cannot bear to live without you!' ³ A mother's yearning for her child or that of a lover for his beloved was nothing compared to the intensity of the Master's yearning for his devotees.

And when the disciples began coming, he gave himself for their sake without the least selfish thought. Even when he was lying critically ill at Cossipore during the last days, he could not be prevented from uttering a few words of spiritual solace and awakening to anyone who came to him.

Thus we see that the humanism of Sri Ramakrishna was tuned to the highest plane of human life—the spiritual. Nevertheless, his compassion for suffering humanity in other levels was also evident on various occasions. Thus when he had been with Mathur to Baidyanath Dham on a pilgrimage, he was moved to tears by seeing poor people not having even the wherewithal for a single meal. He asked Mathur to feed them sumptuously and give them clothes, and refused to move from the place unless Mathur carried out his wish.

Sri Ramakrishna was not content in helping humanity himself; he wanted his mission to be carried forward by Sri Sarada Devi, his divine consort, and his chief disciple Swami Vivekananda with the help of his brother disciples. His instruction to them in this respect is significant.

Once, during his last days at the Cossipore garden house, the Master in an indrawn mood said to the Holy Mother: 'You see, the people of Calcutta appear to be crawling about like worms in the dark. Do look after them.'⁴ He impressed upon her on various occasions that she would have to continue the work of spiritual ministration after his departure from the world.

³ *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 296.

⁴ Swami Gambhirananda: *Holy Mother Shri Sarada Devi* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-4, 1955), p. 120.

The same concern for suffering humanity was evident when he admonished Narendra (future Swami Vivekananda), who wanted to remain always absorbed in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. He said :

'For shame! How can you ask such things? I thought you were a vast receptacle of life, and here you wish to stay absorbed in personal joy like an ordinary man! ... This realization will become so natural to you, by the grace of the Mother, that in your normal state you will realize the One Divinity in all beings; you will do great things in the world; you will bring spiritual consciousness to men, and assuage the misery of the humble and the poor.'⁵

On another occasion, Swami Vivekananda was startled by the Master's words : 'Not compassion, not compassion, but service of man in the knowledge that it is service of God (*Śiva-jñāne jīva-sevā*).'⁶ When he heard these words at Dakshineswar, he told his companions that, to him, a new light was thrown upon religious life that day.

Thus we find that Sri Ramakrishna's concern for suffering humanity knew no bounds. It was not the shallow humanism of modern thinkers. He had infused a new sense of fulfilment and a higher purpose to the concept of humanism, and made it embrace all the three levels of human existence—physical, mental, and spiritual.

IV

Nothing could be far from Sri Ramakrishna, the God-intoxicated, than the political concepts of democracy and individual liberty. But if we have a close look at his life and teachings, we would find that the essence of these concepts have imperceptibly

found a place in them, as applied to religion and spiritual life.

Democracy has for its base the concept of individual liberty. Man, by his very nature, seeks freedom and the modern man wants the greatest opportunities for its expression. But even in the modern age, individual freedom has hardly any scope in most religions. Each cult demands rigorous adherence to its principles. Some religions hold that theirs is the only true religion and that all others are false or at the most half-way houses. Such religions demand unqualified acceptance of all their dogmas. Any questioning is considered as heresy. In the Middle Ages, in Europe, one accused of heresy had to pay for it with one's life. Therefore, religion seems very much opposed to the concepts of democracy and individual freedom.

But Sri Ramakrishna's religion, founded on the great Vedāntic principles, is truly broad-based. It gives wide scope for each individual aspirant to practise whatever religion he pleases. In his religion the concept of *iṣṭa-devatā* (one's chosen deity), has a pivotal role to play. For religion, which demands man's whole being for fulfilment, cannot reach its heights if curbed by inhibitions imposed by priestcraft. Only when it is practised out of one's own sweet choice can religion bear its fruit. Therefore the concept of *iṣṭa-devatā*, as opposed to that of *kula-devatā* (one's family deity) was encouraged by Sri Ramakrishna.

His dictum, 'As many schools of thought, so many ways of reaching the Goal', emphasized the fact that everyone was free to follow the path of that religious practice which appealed to him most. Every great *avatāra* (incarnation) preaches the doctrine that is most suitable for the age in which he appears. Earlier incarnations had emphasized the importance of the creed they proclaimed, often to the exclusion of other creeds. Only Śrī Kṛṣṇa who preached the

⁵ Romain Rolland: *The Life of Ramakrishna* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, 1947), p. 268.

⁶ Vide Swami Saradananda: *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master* (Tr. by Swami Jagadananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-4, 1952), p. 821.

synthetic gospel of the *Gītā* was an exception. In the modern age, when the concept of individual freedom is in ascendancy, Sri Ramakrishna's liberal religious ideas have helped religion to withstand the onslaught of new ideas.

Alongside of the concept of individual freedom, the idea of collective security and universalism is making headway in the modern world. Often it is thought that the concept of individual freedom is opposed to that of collective security and therefore it should be curbed by all means. Inherent in this conflict is the suspicion that individual liberty may deteriorate into licence to the detriment of society as a whole. This suspicion is not baseless; instances of such a deterioration of individual liberty are not wanting.

Applying this idea to religion, one may consider it desirable that all humanity should be converted to one religion. Such a belief has led in the past to the rise of proselytism and consequent religious wars and conflicts.

But religion in its higher reaches is essentially individualistic. Otherwise, there can be no spiritual practice. But that does not mean that one should impose one's religion on others. Collective security and universalism lie in allowing each man have his own way, without impinging upon the other man's interests. This is particularly true of religion, where fanatical zeal to propagate one's own belief to the detriment of others retards spirituality.

It was to demonstrate true universalism, therefore, that Sri Ramakrishna accepted all kinds of religious beliefs and practised many of them in his own life at different times. He did not approve of criticism of even such religious practices which had in them the potentiality to debase a *sādhaka* (religious aspirant) and lead him away from the goal. Thus, once when Narendranath railed vehemently against a particular sect given to

immoral practices, he put in quietly: 'But, you see, there is a backdoor entrance also to every house. These religious practices are backdoor entrances to spirituality. Some aspirants may find them suitable.'⁷

Thus in Sri Ramakrishna's religion individual freedom and collective security were not conflicting ideologies but complementary to each other, and these two together led to universalism.

V

It is also significant that Sri Ramakrishna was aware of some of the acute social problems of modern India. The simple unpremeditated solutions that became revealed in his conversations are unique. Thus we find that his solution to the caste problem is striking. He said that devotees had no caste—they all belonged to the same caste. Love of God purifies and unifies all. All distinctions of caste or social status, race or colour, disappear through its purifying influence. Therefore if men turn their attention to the essential aspects of religion, the social differences will melt away into nothingness.

Similarly, the position of women, which is even today an unsolved question in many countries, was raised to the highest level by Sri Ramakrishna. For him every woman was an embodiment of the Divine Mother and as such worthy of respect. He himself had worshipped Kālī, the Divine Mother, all his life. One of his chief preceptors was Bhairavī Brāhmanī, a learned nun. He respected highly his own wife and worshipped her as the embodiment of the Divine Mother.

When one of his monastic disciples, then a young man, said concerning women, 'Oh, I cannot bear them!', he reproved him saying, 'You talk like a fool! Look down upon

⁷ vide *The Complete Works*, Vol. VIII (1959), p. 267.

woman! What for? They are the manifestations of the Divine Mother. Bow down to them as your mother and hold them in respect. That is the only way to escape their influence....'⁸

Indeed, today in India, the position of women is vastly different from what it was some fifty years ago. Nevertheless, there is a great scope for improvement. And that can come about on the basis indicated by Sri Ramakrishna.

The modern man is often pragmatic in his outlook. He asks, 'If such and such a thing happens, what of that? How shall I benefit from it?' We find in Sri Ramakrishna's religion this element of pragmatism. He abhorred theories. 'What is the use of counting the leaves of mango trees?' he said. 'When you are in a mango grove, eat mangoes to your heart's content.' If God is truth, put forth all your efforts to realize Him instead of wasting time in idle argumentation.

⁸ *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 477.

Thus we find that the religion preached by Sri Ramakrishna was meant for the modern man, and significantly enough he came at the dawn of the present age. In his own words, 'The coins that were legal tender in Mogul times, cannot be so in British times!' Similarly, though the truths preached by prophets who preceded Sri Ramakrishna have an eternal value and are applicable to all times, the methods of religious practice advocated by them were meant for the times and climes in which they lived. Sri Ramakrishna's advent was in modern times and he spent most of his life in a modern city coming in close contact with modern men, recognized for their accomplishments of head and heart. In this modern setting he presented the eternal verities of *Sanātana Dharma* in a language that was simplicity itself, spiced with his exceptional sense of humour, and these verities the modern man needs most if he is to understand the world around him in a clearer perspective.

MIND

PROF. S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

I

In a way the merits of philosophical systems are to be determined by their treatment of the nature of mind. It has happened in the history of philosophy that views tending towards a religious or idealistic or mystical conception of the world have sought to accord to mind the greatest importance, while philosophers seeking a materialistic or naturalistic solution of the riddle of the universe have tended to belittle mind in the scheme of things. The doctrinal complexion of a school of thought is largely to be made out by its attitude to mind. Hence,

every opportunity given to a student of philosophy to consider the nature of mind is an opportunity for him to present his philosophical point of view at its best.

II

It is good to start with elementary fundamentals. We may attempt facing the question: 'Is there a distinct piece of reality, describable as mind?' No such definite realm of existence may be conceded. But the age-old consideration has to be faced. The fundamental character of mind is consciousness or awareness. How can the being

or reality of consciousness be denied, such denial being itself an exercise of consciousness? St. Augustine, Descartes, and Śāṅkara urge this consideration with utmost clarity and force. Unless one discards altogether the law of contradiction, denial to consciousness of the status of reality is a hardly conceivable possibility. There is the further argument that we can posit something as real only on the ground of its presence to consciousness. Denying consciousness or its absence robs everything of its possibility of being affirmed as real. Consciousness is the *ratio cognoscendi* of existence. Therefore all affirmations and denials register their acknowledgement of the reality of consciousness.

Among recent philosophers Gilbert Ryle takes up the heroic position of denying the distinctive reality of mind. But driven by the dialectic of the negative position, in the course of his elucidation, he has been compelled to admit the 'systematic elusiveness of the "I"' and that admission, if fully committed to, brings in fully the very ghost he labours hard to banish.

III

While the reality of mind compels admission, further attempts to define its status are called for. There is the classical materialistic hypothesis that mind is a product of matter itself, in the circumstance of a highly specialized configuration of matter. The old Cārvāka school laid down the pattern of supposition on the question. There is no philosophical position, Śāṅkara contends, which crumbles under scrutiny more than this materialist standpoint. It is rewarding to put together all the vulnerable ingredients of such a materialism.

It takes for granted the reality of matter or extramental reality. It is harder to prove the existence of this reality than to prove the existence of God. When G. E. Moore

published his refutation of idealism, it appeared as if idealism was crushed out of existence once for all. But the Realists committed the strategic blunder of concentrating on the analysis of perception. The old problem that made Berkeley possible, that of relating sense-datum and physical objects, reappeared in all possible aggravation and to this day it remains intractable. No wonder Realists are turning phenomenologists and the case for matter as such, for the 'vacuous reality' in the words of Whitehead, stands as unsupported as ever. Lotze, the prophet that he was, did make what appears a final pronouncement: 'So far as regards plainness or clearness we find no idea so obscure as this of matter.... matter is never itself the object of sensuous intuition, it is on the contrary conceived by reason alone and added in thought, as a supplement, to the manifold variety of sensuous appearances.'¹ It is a 'logical construction' possibly, sharing the uncertain metaphysical fate of all such constructions. We may risk the conjecture that the reality of matter transcending sensuous experience stands or falls along with the reality of mind transcending its material encrustation.

There is the further difficulty that materialism employs the idea of causation in its attempt to reduce mind to the level of a derivative of matter. Causation bristles with problems. To start with, the apprehension of a causal law through mere sense-experience is ruled out by the analysis furnished by Hume. The apprehension can be resurrected if and only if the mind reads into nature the category of causation, as in the philosophy of Kant. A totally extramental matter can hardly be regarded as supporting the causal process. Unless matter is sufficiently 'mentalized', it cannot bear the attribution of causal process. The

¹ Lotze: *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion* (Indian Edition, 1954), p. 46.

conclusion is fairly accepted in the activity-theory of causation.

Further probing into the theory of matter producing mind devastates it beyond repairs. Matter and mind are separated from one another in their distinctive nature, by the 'whole diameter of being' as urged by Stout in his classic refutation of materialism, and this disparity of nature between matter and mind is a bar to the transformation of either to the other. The matter out of which mind could emerge should be more than mere matter. The full nature of the cause should be construed not as it appears prior to the causal operation but in the light of what it reveals itself to be through its entire range of effects. 'We must read back the nature of the latest consequent into the remotest antecedent.'² On such a view we do not have a position that could satisfy materialism, for matter has ceased to be mere matter. 'Such extremely clever matter—matter that is up to anything, even to writing *Hamlet*, and finding out its own evolution, may be fairly regarded as a little too modest in its disclaimer of the attributes of mind.'³

IV

At this stage we have to pass on to the next issue of importance. William James, in his famous essay, 'Does Consciousness exist?', gave expression to a problem of the greatest importance. How are we to conceive of the self, mind, or consciousness? Are we to think of it as a string of physical events, a series of functions or as a unitary substance, an abiding core of consciousness, a persistent centre imparting stability and unification to the mental happenings?

There is a parting of the ways among

² Pringle-Pattison: *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, pp. 11-2.

³ Quotation from Martineau by Daws Hicks in *Philosophical Bases of Theism*, p. 202.

philosophers on this question. Hume and early Buddhism champion the notion of the self as an aggregate and a series, with only collective unity. This is a bold hypothesis but there are insuperable hurdles to its acceptance. The sense of self-identity is one such difficulty. The *Vedānta-sūtra* raises the question of accounting for recognition. But recognition may be misplaced as far as the object recognized may be concerned. But the recognizing mind must be identical and run through two perceptions at least in order to commit even an error of misrecognition. The consciousness of a series or succession cannot itself be a series or successive. In the same way the apprehension of both unities and manifolds in nature implies the continuity and identity of the apprehending mind. The argument is applicable to all levels of cognition starting from the simplest unit of perceptual judgment and stretching up to protracted processes of chains of reasoning. It is a pity that Immanuel Kant who found 'this transcendental unity of apperception' so utterly necessary for his epistemology refused to accord to it metaphysical cognizance. This is one of the anomalies of his philosophical position. The epistemological presuppositions of knowledge with regard to the subject of knowledge cannot be dropped out in the metaphysical conception of the subject. What the self is in the setting of knowledge is surely a revelation of its nature in its essential being. Kant's aversion to metaphysics as such and his special theories concerning the category of substance, misled him into dogmatizing that the epistemic function of the subject offers no clue whatever to the nature of the self, which exercises that function. Knowing is a synthesizing process as Kant emphasized and the subject that knows must surely be so constituted as to be capable of effecting the synthesis. It has to be a unity from which the required unification can flow.

V

There is a great paradox awaiting our effort to understand the nature of the mind or self at this stage. The conscious principle in us must be one and abiding if knowledge is a genuine possibility. But what of the changing phenomenon of consciousness, the psychic stream of happenings, by way of acts of thought, states of motion, and exercises of volition? This is the famous riddle of the transcendental and empirical selves in man. The abiding and unitary core of personality has to be somehow related to the ever-changing flow of psychic happenings. To this already overflowing fund of psychic turmoil must be added, the ever-present stock of dispositions and properties and the unfathomed depths of the subconscious and the unconscious. This enormous volume of the empirical ego must be connected in some logically satisfactory manner with the central self-identical factor of personality. It will not do to disown the abiding and unitary self, impressed by the changing mass of the empirical self. The circumference may be vast and bewildering but it cannot even be except by virtue of the potency of the centre. There is one striking expedient by which the problem has been met. The system of Sāṅkhya is to be credited with the proposal that we should not mix up the unchanging self and the changing ego. The former is the pure uninvolved spectator (*sākṣī*) and the ever-shifting stream of consciousness is the empirical ego. The two are utterly distinct. Of the two the spectator-self is primary and eternal and the empirical self is derivative, and can be eliminated altogether. Its genesis is by the mingling of the transcendent self and the ethereal essence of the physical organism. This mingling is not to be construed as a physical event but lies in the misidentification of the pure self with the subtle element of the physical personality, the *antahkaraṇa*. In other words, the em-

pirical self is a hybrid product being at once physical and psychical. It is in this context that Indian thought differentiates the spirit and the mind, the *Ātman* and the *antahkaraṇa*. We have a clear analysis of personality into two selves, transcendent and empirical, and perfect unity and unchanging permanence pertain to the first, while all the diversified and fluctuating mass of psychic processes constitute the empirical self. This is certainly a noteworthy solution of the problem and both the Yoga system and Advaita Vedānta adopt it with minor variations of detail. There is only one difficulty in the position. The formation of the empirical self is not a physical happening. It is a result of mistaken identification of the spectator with the physical part. Who or what is the author of this basic misconstruction? It cannot be the empirical ego, for that ego emerges into being from this error. The transcendent self must bear the responsibility for the misidentification. To admit this is to bring it into the realism of the historical process and attribute to it possibilities of right and wrong cognitions. It becomes, in that case, the knowing self and knowing is a notoriously fluctuating phenomenon.

It seems to be that the bifurcation of consciousness into spirit and mind is no tenable hypothesis in the long run. Somehow the dynamic aspect of consciousness must be integrated with its abiding aspect and we ought to think of the self both as one and abiding and also as undergoing alterations in direction, scope, and depth. Extreme positions, here as elsewhere, yield abstractions that can explain nothing and cannot explain themselves. The integration necessitated is perfectly intelligible if we see in the self the two necessary aspects. The self is aware of itself and does have what Alexander called 'enjoyment'. It also becomes aware of everything else, in accordance with the laws of its life and herein it exercises what Alexander described as 'contemplation'. In

its enjoyment it is one and abiding, and in its contemplation it is subject to change, progress and evolution and even perversion and suspension. Between the two aspects the enjoyment is basal as self-awareness is the presupposition of the awareness of the entire realm of non-selves. There does not seem to be any radical problem or mystery about the unitary self being the subject of manifold and varying experiences. Older philosophers like Leibniz, Lotze, and T. H. Green regarded precisely this character of the self as its fundamental claim to metaphysical ultimacy.

VI

In the light of the point of view thus gained we may consider the conventional problem of the relation between mind and body. The problem arises out of the presumption that the two entities so opposed in nature cannot possibly interact. It is to be noted, in the first place, no interaction is conceivable if the entities are not two but only one. Interaction requires sufficient difference between the interacting substances. The degree of difference and opposition in nature, beyond which interaction is impossible is hardly determinable. It is possible that the difference between mind and matter is just sufficient for interaction but not too much to preclude the possibility of interaction. The epiphenomenalist solution of the problem is wrecked by the refutation of the materialist derivation of mind from matter. Psycho-physical parallelism postulates an unexplained and unexplainable correspondence between mind and matter. Far from solving any problem, it itself poses a problem, that of accounting for the parallelism in question. The Spinozistic hypothesis of mind and body as two attributes of a single substance may have other merits but it overlooks the objection that two entities too opposed in nature even to interact cannot possibly be constitutive of a single principle

as its attributes without importing into it internal division and essential bifurcation in its own basic structure. Incompatible predicates imply dualism in the very heart of the subject. The old argument that interactionism violates the scientific law of conservation of energy has lost its force. 'Modern scientists', observes Dr. Ewing, 'are more doubtful about the principle of conservation of energy being universal, even in its modern amended form, and are finding reasons to think that mechanism conceived in the sort of way in which Newton conceived it does not hold universally even in the inorganic world.' Kant suggests that the problem of interaction is virtually solved if we concede the conclusion of his critical philosophy that we do not really know what matter is in itself. Even a moderate acknowledgement of the insufficiency of our knowledge of matter renders the assertion of the impossibility of interaction rather premature and dogmatic. If mind and body fall within the same systematic scheme of the universe, interaction between the two is not merely possible but seems to be actually inevitable. The reciprocal conditioning of the soul and body was not a problem in Indian philosophy in the hands of its masters.

VII

While such is roughly the metaphysical story of the self or mind, it remains for us to enquire what the deliverance of its consciousness signifies with regard to the nature of existence as a whole or its own final destiny. Is the mind by its very constitution committed to any special manner of interpreting life? It could hardly be otherwise, for the perspective is governed by the orientation of the percipient. The primary characteristic of the self is that it seeks integration. It is this natural bent that deter-

⁴ Dr. A. C. Ewing: *Non-linguistic Philosophy* (Allen and Unwin), p. 167.

mines its procedures. When the mind seeks to be one in itself bringing to harmonious operativeness all its proclivities in such a way that each act or impulse gains depth and effectiveness by that very co-ordination, it is seeking the good. When it seeks to build for itself an authentic version of reality and thus integrate itself with reality by way of thought emancipating itself from the prison of subjectivity, it has to achieve an all-encompassing synthesis of the varied messages it receives from the real. The measure of this synthesis is an index of the measure of the self-transcending objectivity in thought. When engaged in this pursuit the mind is seeking truth. Setting aside provisionally its concern with truth and goodness, if the mind dwells with delight on the sensuous appearances of the real by way of contemplation, arranging them into harmonious wholes, it is enjoying beauty. Great beauty owes its greatness to its unconscious and unintended approximation to goodness and truth in unison. Carried forward by the spirit of synthesis, if the mind achieves a vision of the real such that the vision itself constitutes the consummation of all endeavour at goodness, it is having what is called the religious experience. It is fulfilling itself in the perception of the Divine. Aesthetic experience is a foretaste of religious experience under restrictions brought about by abstraction from moral and intellectual preoccupations. Religious experience is a fulfilment of the trend initiated by aesthetic experience, wherein the old restrictions are broken through and the mind dwells on the real itself and not appearances and finds itself in enjoyment of the supreme blessedness of self-integration. Beauty is literally the image of the Deity and in the experience of the

Divine is accomplished what aesthetic experience could only foreshadow and not compass. So in the concept of God hallowed by the usage of saints is to be discerned the ultimate destiny of mind. Mind which seems to take birth in the dark matrix of matter attains its rebirth in the boundless effulgence of God.

VIII

This story of the mind's pilgrimage is of course glorious but it depends upon the credibility of Divine Existence. Without deviating into the traditional arguments, one can point to some general considerations on the question derived from the conception of mind itself. The intellectual criterion of truth must lie in some kind of integration. No theory of truth does overthrow the integration criterion altogether in the larger sense. That naturally implies that reality is an ordered whole, an integrated system. Whether the integration required of reality can be sub-mental or extra-mental admits of the answer that only mind can fulfil the needs of the situation. The minds, such as we are, are themselves labouring towards integration and they are still in the process towards completeness of unity. Therefore, the concept of a cosmic mind or infinite spirit is the only one that could fit into our abstract notion of ultimate reality. Full working out of this thought is out of the question; but the conviction forces itself on us as a revelation that somehow mind holds the key to the interpretation of reality. When religious experience crowns this conviction and the finite mind surrenders itself to the integral experience of the Divine, no shadow of delusion and affliction remains. Such is the height to which the mind can ascend.

TAGORE'S CONCEPT OF RELIGION

DR. (MRS.) REBA CHAUDHURY

Philosophy and religion do not stand sundered in India. Like most Indian systems, religion forms a major part of the philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore.

The basic principle in Tagore's philosophy is Upaniṣadic. His father was a great lover of the Upaniṣads and his life and thought have been considerably influenced by them. The ultimate reality, according to him, is the one Infinite Spirit who is immanent not only in human beings but in the entire universe. The whole world has its existence in one grand reservoir of consciousness—the Divine Mind.

'The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measure.'¹

The different levels of existence, from the lowest to the highest, are the expressions of the same Reality in different degrees. It is because of the emphasis on this immanence that the Hindu *Gāyatrī mantra* had such an appeal to Tagore.

'By its help we try to realize the essential unity of the world with the conscious soul of man; we learn to perceive the unity held together by the one Eternal Spirit, whose power creates the earth, the sky, and the stars, and at the same time irradiates our minds with the light of a consciousness that moves and exists in unbroken continuity with the outer world.'²

He was also very fond of the opening statement of the *Īśā-upaniṣad*: 'Everything that there is in the universe is to be enveloped by God.'³

But in spite of his leaning upon the Upaniṣads, Tagore is more a theist than an absolutist. He feels that the unqualified absolute monism of Śaṅkara which regards Brahman as a featureless, attributeless, impersonal Reality^{3a} cannot satisfy the religious, moral and aesthetic requirements of mankind. Man needs a personal God who would be interested in his thoughts and actions and not simply look at him with cold eyes regardless of his selfless devotion and love. The belief in a personal God is therefore indispensable. Even the Upaniṣads refer to Him as the Supreme Person (*puruṣam mahāntam*).⁴

Tagore does not agree with Śaṅkara and Bradley that personality and infinity are incompatible. God is a person but unlike human persons, His is a perfect personality and so He is infinite. It is the demand of religious experience that God should be both personal and infinite. Tagore's God is thus an Infinite Person (*ananta-puruṣa*).

The nature of this Infinite Person may be described as blissful (*ānandamaya*). He is infinite and we cannot reach Him where He is in Himself. But He is not unknown. He manifests Himself in His work of creation which comes from the fullness of joy (*Ānanda-rūpam amṛtam yad vibhāti*). The creation of the world is not imposed upon Him from outside, but it is His freedom. The world comes from Bliss

¹ Rabindranath Tagore: *Gitanjali* (Macmillan & Co., London, 1952), p. 64.

² Rabindranath Tagore: *Sadhana* (Macmillan & Co., London, 1947), p. 9.

³ *ibid.*, p. 17.

^{3a} As an outstanding systematizer of Advaita School of Vedānta, Śaṅkara had to stress on the essentials of his system one of which is the Absolute Brahman. At the same time he recognized the importance of Īśvara or the Personal God with whom a *Sādhaka* or spiritual aspirant can establish a loving relationship. Śaṅkara's commentaries on the *Vedānta-Sūtras* and the *Bhagavad-gītā* as well as his authentic hymns amply bear out this fact.—*Ed.*

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 17.

(*ānanda*), is maintained by Bliss, progresses towards Bliss, and enters into Bliss. Tagore's poetic mind looks at creation as God's *līlā*—His revealment in multitudinous finite forms.

The finite is thus the expression of the Infinite and this revealment is seen in its perfection in the soul of man.⁵ Man is the best expression of God in this world. God sets a barrier in His own being and the self-separation on the part of God takes the forms of finite individuals.⁶ This self-differentiation is necessary because without it God is incomplete. He is love and love becomes meaningless when difference is abolished.

'O thou Lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not?'

Man, however, fails to realize his relation with God because he is covered by all sorts of external paraphernalia. His fascination for earthly things makes him a prisoner.

'Obstinate are the trammels, but my heart aches when I try to break them.

Freedom is all I want, but to hope for it I feel ashamed.'

But this bondage is not final. In man there are both spirit and nature and as it is spirit which overlaps nature in him, he does not find abiding happiness and contentment in the finite. He feels that he is truly represented in something which exceeds himself. He is aware that he is not imperfect but incomplete.⁹ And his attempt to proceed towards completion is what we call his religion.

'The higher nature in man always seeks for something which transcends itself and yet is its deepest truth; . . . This is man's *dharma*.'

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 41.

⁶ Rabindranath Tagore: *Gitanjali*, p. 66.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 51.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁹ Rabindranath Tagore: *The Religion of Man* (Unwin Books, London), p. 36.

¹⁰ Rabindranath Tagore: *Sadhana*, pp. 75-6.

Tagore's conception of religion thus follows from his conception of reality. He was born and brought up in a Brahmo family, and yet what he preached is neither Brahmo religion nor Hinduism. It is the Religion of Man in which the Infinite is defined in humanity.¹¹

Man, according to Tagore, is not only finite and individual but also infinite and eternal. The finite self is real but more real is the infinite perfect self which dwells ideally in man and inspires love in him for this ideal, urging him more and more to realize it.¹² Man must exist for this ideal self and must express it in his science and philosophy, art and literature, service and worship.¹³ He must try to realize the presence of the divine within him and become true by this realization. This is his *dharma* and his freedom lies in the realization of this *dharma*. A free individual feels in all his actions the impetus of infinite energy and finds the same impetus everywhere.

The principle with which life works is a mysterious inner interrelationship. The diversity is true but truer is the underlying unity. The consciousness of this unity is spiritual and our effort to realize it is our religion. A religious soul is delighted in the realization of his own self in others and this is what we call love. Being a poet Tagore finds the strongest human relation in love. It is only love which inspires man to dedicate his narrow finite self for the cause of humanity. And this love is joy. Our truest joy lies not in getting but in giving ourselves up to what is greater than ourselves. Our soul can enjoy itself truly only by denying itself—*tena tyaktena bhujñjithāḥ*—'Therefore find your enjoy-

¹¹ Rabindranath Tagore: *The Religion of Man*, p. 96.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 11.

¹³ *ibid.*

ment in renunciation.¹⁴ A religious man gives himself up to the idea of his country, of humanity, and of God.¹⁵ He overcomes the fear of death and enjoys complete freedom and supreme bliss. Spiritual universe of man is ever claiming self-renunciation from the individual unit. A god-possessed soul spends his life in the service of humanity.

Tagore thus shows that religion is not anything which can be imposed from outside. It lies within the man himself. In

¹⁴ Rabindranath Tagore: *Sadhana*, p. 19; *The Religion of Man*, p. 44.

¹⁵ Rabindranath Tagore: *Sadhana*, p. 152.

the Sanskrit language, religion goes by the name *dharma* which means the essence, the innermost nature, the implicit truth, of all things. The *dharma* of man is to realize his essential nature—the Eternal Supreme Person within him—just as the *dharma* of the seed lies in its destiny of becoming a tree.¹⁶ Human personality is divine and service to God must be realized through serving all mankind. It is thus the idea of the humanity of God, or the divinity of Man the Eternal, which Tagore preaches in his 'Religion of Man'.¹⁷

¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 74-5; *The Religion of Man*, p. 89.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 11.

MODERN AIMS AND A RELIGIOUS IDEAL

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI PARAHITANANDA

We come now to the last aspect of the endeavour to broaden and deepen awareness. It is the attention paid to the nature and spirit of the means adopted to secure an end. Method and style are emphasized rather than ends to be achieved. Large sections of the rising generation are opposed to violence and exploitation, whether between persons, communities, or nations; hence their experiments with various forms of nonviolent group or mass action. Incidentally, this must also be accounted a sign of rationality.

The modern insistence on method is seen in the importance attached to living in the present, to the quality of one's personal relationships, and to the spirit and manner in which protests are made. There is a moral side to most of this which will be noted presently; but the insistence on right

means also derives from the effort to live to the full at all times. In life, no sooner have we achieved one end than we adopt means to achieve another; or the achievement of one end is a step on the way to achieving a more ultimate end. Our lives are spent in process, in endeavour. If we are to live abundant meaningful lives we must find the abundance and meaning in the process, in every moment. The attainment of an end is one moment among many moments of non-attainment. Living for ends is a very attenuated manner of living.

There is also a simply practical aspect to the importance attached to means. The younger generation are well informed about recent history and current international affairs. They are aware that there is a relation between means and ends which can be ignored only at the cost of achieving

something that was not intended. The nature and spirit of the means determine the result brought about. The general law is that violence leads to more violence, not less. The question of nonviolence is a practical one as well as a moral one.

4. *Search for Beauty*

Artistic expression and its appreciation is a form of interpersonal communication. Modern people set a high value on art and immerse themselves in it. It is typically here rather than in religion that they seek meaning. If we understand religion, on the subjective side, as the search and apprehension of ultimate meaning, then, more than anything else, art has been modern people's religion. Art is basically the communication of meaning, which is to say knowledge. According to the Western tradition, and for that matter the Indian, it is knowledge that is beautiful; knowledge is the vehicle of beauty. Beauty appeals to the intellect. In such a view, 'knowledge' and 'intellect' are not to be understood in the narrow senses they have usually had since the Renaissance.

Modern people search for knowledge, or meaning, that concerns and nourishes the whole man. This is the sort of knowledge that art has to do with; and this is the sort of knowledge that is beautiful. It is with the beautiful as it is mediated by the fine arts that modern people chiefly occupy themselves.

Communication is giving and receiving. In the communication of important meaning, receiving seems to be completed in giving. When we make the effort to express, to give out, what we have 'learnt', then we learn what we have 'learnt', that is, we truly assimilate what we have 'learnt'. In expression the process of receiving is clinched. Furthermore, when we have assimilated something important, we are not able and do not want to be non-expressive. The deeper and more comprehensive the knowledge the greater its power to overflow.

It is because modern youth see that education of any value cannot simply be a matter of passively receiving what is projected towards them, that they seek new ways of learning and expect university authorities to experiment with new ways.

Overt teaching is only one form of expression. Our every word and act are expression, and so is our non-action. It is knowledge, or meaning, that is expressed. Such meaning is provisionally imbibed under one or another mode, but it is only digested and made our own when it has been expressed under our own mode. Most of us are not trained in one of the fine arts or crafts, so that the only mode of expression at our disposal is that of the usual circumstances of life—but of course, the circumstances that attend our own particular life.

To be fully human is to be giving as well as receiving. It is to be an artist. The nature of the artist is to give, to communicate such meaning as he has apprehended; which meaning he only apprehended because he was at some time receptive. 'The artist is not a special kind of man', as Ananda Coomaraswamy happily put it, 'but every man is a special kind of artist'.

This brings us to a less pedestrian understanding of modern youth's stress on how things are done, on the spirit in which they are done, in short, on style. They are glimpsing that to be a person is to be an artist. Apart from any special medium we may have the habit of, there is the common medium of the stuff of our lives, namely our daily actions, especially our personal relationships. The complete life, the fulfilled life, the spontaneous life, is a masterpiece of art. But however restricted and humdrum the scope of our life, it cannot be without opportunities for artistic expression, the expression of such vision as we have.

We do not say that this is the way that

young people think. It is a constructive interpretation based on a traditional understanding of art. It renders some features of the modern situation intelligible and may be useful in organizing our thought on the possibility of a convergence on a religious ideal.

Supposing this model is tentatively accepted; what is the vision that modern youth seek to express? Is it the intuition that multiplicity is not the last word? Is it the vision of unity? It seems to be something like that. Contemporary youth have had clues enough: Whitman's poetry, oriental and other mystical ideas, Unified Field Theory and other bits of science, William James' 'stream of consciousness', German idealism, consciousness-altering drugs,—to name some of the more easily discernible ones. The modern cultivation of community and communication means of fostering a consciousness of identity and is an expression of it. The feeling of a unity back of the conventional separation of self and world is creeping in.

On a more cautious reading, the pre-occupation with art is a reaction against the soullessness and ugliness of recent decades. In the life-style of the pre-industrial West, as in that of the East, the articles of ordinary use were made with art, or rather, the art with which things were made was of a superior kind. By now industrial designers have acquired some mastery of the habit of their new materials; so, once again, many of the things of daily use, at least those of the more expensive qualities, are a delight to see and handle, and a means of re-integrating our minds. In spite of this, however, the reverence paid to Art does not seem in the least likely to abate. It can hardly be explained only in terms of a reaction against the ugliness of the Industrial Revolution. The search for Beauty is the search for meaning. To search for meaning is to be human.

5. *Shrewdness, Moral Honesty, Simplicity, Dedication*

Modern youth have been brought up in an age of slogans, manifestos, propaganda and advertising: now they are wary of the lot. The discrepancy between the words and deeds of their parents, of their elders generally, and of institutional and national leaders is evident to the younger generation; but they are on the alert for hypocrisy and bombast in themselves, and not in their elders only.

The pretensions of philosophy, as its purpose and possibilities have usually been understood in Western history, have in this century, if not in that of Kant, been largely exploded. And then the concept of the rationally-determined individual has been battered by Marx and Freud. The tendency now is to explain the conscious life of man in terms of natural causes and subrational motivation. History is viewed as the necessity of natural, social, and economic laws. Every effort is made to avoid admitting that the Transcendent enters history. Religion is treated as a human phenomenon to be explained psychologically or historically.

This is the sort of thought-environment in which modern youth have grown up. In spite of it, there is a new openness abroad; hence the scope for talking religion. But, as will be pointed out later, such talk will be more pertinent if given a subjective orientation.

Modern clearheadedness finds expression in the demand that learning and theorizing should be involved in life, that they should directly or not too indirectly serve the purpose of life. This in conjunction with the awakening conscience of youth and their emphasis on process and style gives rise among some sections to involvement in national and international affairs.

If things are going wrong now and people suffering as a result, it may not be right to wait for the three, but often several more,

years of university training before one does something about it: this, we think, is the modern line of thought. For these years is one to confine oneself to learning and a mostly academic life, and then start living to the full as a responsible member of society only after the completion of studies, which, for a post-graduate student, may be at the age of thirty? A proportion of students, even in those countries where students have usually been politically inactive, are now beginning to answer No. They have become politically conscious, but not in the manner of party politics.

Their shrewdness makes them sceptical of certain dogmas by which Western governments in the past tried to justify unscrupulous actions. They see that technology and communications have made the traditional role and relevance of the State or nation out of date. Dr. Donald Bishop, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Washington State University, writes:

“The dissenting student sees himself as a citizen of the world first and of a particular segment of it next.... He rejects a blind, uncritical patriotism.... He believes that a person has a moral obligation to disobey his country if he believes it is engaged in wrong....⁹

Modern youth are pioneers in being world-minded and in glimpsing what world citizenship involves and demands. This has a moral aspect too. And, indeed, a newly-developing moral honesty is to be found running through other aspects of their life also. Dr. Keniston, the observer quoted earlier, mentions the following as characteristic of them:

“They insist on taking seriously a great variety of political, personal, and social principles that “no one in his right mind” ever before thought of attempting to extend to such situations as dealing with

strangers, relations between races, or international politics.”¹⁰

In the kind of job they take young people tend to ask first of all whether it in any way contributes to violence or exploitation in any part of the world. If it does they seek a job elsewhere. They ask of any work or supposed duty: ‘Why am I doing this? What is the point of it?’ Some work they decline to take up on the ground that it is unnecessary or non-productive. For instance: ‘Why should I spend so much of my life keeping accounts just because people are not trusted to be honest, or cannot be trusted?’

They are against being forced to do anything. They simplify their living so that they have to work less. If they do work, it is not necessarily to get on in the world, to live in luxury with savings to spare. On the other hand they are not shy of work that needs doing. Educated young people of good families will drive lorries, work as cleaners and do other manual work without a thought as to its superiority or inferiority.

Many of them are willing to undergo austerity for a good cause. It is not rare for a whole college to observe a one-day fast in protest against a wrong. Some of them live simple, even austere lives. A few dedicate themselves to the good of society in this or that direction and lead an appropriate life. More devote a part of their time to helping people in need. Quantitatively, taking the whole youth of a nation, these developments may at present be very small; but qualitatively they are significant and promising for the future.

It may seem odd to imply that modern youth are developing afresh a moral sense when many of them are so free in their sexual relations; but there is some honesty in their attitude. By traditional norms such relations were permitted only within marri-

⁹ ‘The Philosophical Basis of Student Activism in the 1960’, *The Aryan Path* Feb. 1970, pp. 66-7.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

age. The validity of those norms, many young people would say, is not evident to them. Their criteria of the propriety of sexual intimacy is the existence of mutual love and willingness between the partners. Without this love and willingness sexual expression even within marriage (for instance an unhappy marriage) is immoral; with it, such expression outside marriage is moral. Until they see the desirability of continence or restraint within or without marriage, and until they see the desirability of restricting intimacy to the marriage relation, they feel a lack of integrity in following tradition for its own sake, or for fear of censure or of 'ruining their career'.

ADDITIONAL POINTS RELATING TO RELIGION

There is next a feature to mention which characterizes the modern era in the West, and not just the younger generation today. It is a complete disregard of the Christian teaching of the fundamental sinfulness of man. In his Gifford Lectures Reinhold Niebuhr said:

'Modern man has an essentially easy conscience; and nothing gives the diverse and discordant notes of modern culture so much harmony as the unanimous opposition of modern man to Christian conceptions of the sinfulness of man. The idea that man is sinful at the very centre of his personality, that is in his will, is universally rejected. It is this rejection which has seemed to make the Christian gospel simply irrelevant to modern man, a fact which is of much more importance than any conviction about its incredibility.'¹¹

Here we have the emphatic observation not of someone who is arguing against Christianity, but of one of the most balanced of Protestant theologians who is arguing for its relevance.

Christianity also has a doctrine of original goodness, for it teaches that man is made in the image of God; but somehow the doctrine of his original sin has overshadowed that of his original goodness. The more thoughtful of modern people are too clear-headed to deny that the doctrine of original sin is groping to express some deep, and therefore not fully intelligible, truth: history—conspicuously since Niebuhr spoke—contains corroboration enough. But even if Christianity is correct in situating sin so centrally in man's personality, is it not better to emphasize man's original goodness than his original sinfulness? This would seem to be the modern response, rather than a denial of human sinfulness.

It is fairly evident that talking about religion with the modern needs to have a subjective orientation if it is to be of interest to him. For the medieval world the starting-point of thought was God. Either they took His existence for granted, or they gave the demonstration of His existence their first attention. Then they considered His purpose in creating the universe and His intentions for man. By contrast, the sole fundamental certainty of the modern man is his own existence, and his central problem is the meaning and purpose of it. He has become a problem to himself. Formerly, from his point of view, he was a problem for God: how would or could God save him? Now man wonders how he can save himself.

The modern is typically unwilling to swallow whole a scheme of ultimate truth. He starts out from his present position, that of dissatisfaction or disappointment, loneliness or boredom, anxiety or bereavement, or whatever drives him to be serious. He tries to open himself to such meaning as the experiences that happen to him impress on his intuition. Religion, philosophy, and art are useful in providing clues, in showing the meanings that other people have found. Those meanings are interesting to him if he

¹¹ *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, (Nisbet, London, 1941), Vol. I, p. 24.

can see the possibility of his having first-hand experience of them himself. First-hand experience of the meaning of his existence is what he seeks. If he is to hear religion or philosophy, he wants to hear it from someone who passionately believes in what he speaks. When somebody comes to him in a special kind of dress, or with a title or name distinguishing him from the rest of the world, or as the accredited representative of such and such an accredited organization, the typically modern reaction is that here is somebody with a doctrine to uphold, somebody whose life and words are tied to some formula or orthodoxy, who is not free to follow the inspiration of the moment.

This generalization is not one that can be pressed. Firstly, modern people are typically ready to give anyone a hearing, uniform or no uniform, Establishment or anti-Establishment, if he believes what he speaks. They may not listen to him for long, but that is another matter. Secondly, the brown skin of the Indian is still a 'uniform' that carries its own credentials. Thirdly, the strong character, the holy soul—these are exceptions to a good many generalizations. Even so, this generalization does indicate an existing trend.

It is difficult for the modern to see that freedom and orthodoxy are not necessarily incompatible. He prefers to listen to the committed amateur like Kierkegaard or Nietzsche than to the preacher or thinker who has expertise but not personal involvement in what he preaches. He is more interested in religious and philosophical ideas which are mediated to him through acquaintance with a live personality, or through the personalities and actions of novel or play, for here those ideas are exhibited in the many shades and dimensions of life, while theology and philosophy deal in abstractions. The block universes of some of the traditional religions and of metaphysics possibly have meaning for a cosmic mind, or for

someone who takes its standpoint, but it is typical of the modern to be unable to become enthusiastic about them. One of the reasons why Zen could catch on among some sections of Western youth is the non-schematic nature of its teaching.

Whether we accept our creed in a lump or whether we search for ultimate meaning and fulfilment by probing outwards from the position of our present convictions and experience, we have to accept something on faith if we are to become real, if we are actually to achieve freedom. In the latter alternative we have to accept less on faith, namely a few hints about the direction of search and certain psychological principles whose validity it will be helpful to admit provisionally, pending confirmation in our own experience. The latter alternative, then, calls for a smaller leap of faith than does assenting to a more or less complete dogmatic structure, and it is therefore generally speaking more practicable for modern people. The fundamental faith that life does have meaning and purpose is inherent in everyone, so no leap of faith is required in respect of that. And, incidentally, it is difficult to see, except in the perspective of a religious view of life, how it is that this faith could be innate in us.

A PROSPECTIVE NOTE

The effort to make a constructive survey of some phases of the modern outlook and style is over. What does the survey suggest with regard to the nature of the religious ideal on which the younger generation would find it possible to converge?

A modern emphasis on freedom, inclusiveness, openness, awareness, clearheadedness, moral integrity, and community was noted. These are values that are strikingly acknowledged in Advaita Vedānta. But we found the modern at the same time insisting on personal relations, on wealth of sensuous, emotional, aesthetic, and every other pos-

sible form of experience, and on accepting people and things as he finds them. These are tendencies that find fullest scope in devotional religion.

Being involved in, and having a partiality for, a universe of relationships, most of us modern people cannot all at once do without a religion of relationships.¹² The dualistic religions give us this. The trouble with them, however, is that they find the meaning and value of self and experience, not within experience, but in God, an absolutely other. Even when they situate God within the heart He still remains absolutely other, absolutely distinct. This is difficult for us to accept, and to this extent, at the least, we are monists. We are not disposed to seek the value of what is present to our consciousness, namely the contents of it, in what is absent from our consciousness, namely a God who is totally independent of us, even though described as dwelling within us. These objections are not theoretical only. A proportion of young people have had a glimpse of the truth of monism through the use of drugs. There will also be a few who, probably at some moment of crisis in their lives, have had it by grace, without drugs.

Is there a religious ideal which can give us as much monism as we want when we have a mind for it, and give us the personal, the lovable, the beautiful when we are in the mood for that? Yes, of course there is. There is the filled-in Advaita Vedānta of Sri Ramakrishna—a marvellous fusion of Advaita and Tantra, of knowledge and love. No doubt it is a fusion of much more than these, but they are its essential elements.

This is the religion that Sri Ramakrishna

¹² In the past the word 'religion' implied the idea of relationship. On such a view Advaita is supra-religious. But it is more convenient to use 'religion' in a wide sense to include Non-dualism, Zen, etc.; and in fact it is commonly used in a wide sense nowadays, as for instance by Tillich.

lived by. It is also the religion that Swami Vivekananda lived by. Though Vivekananda undoubtedly gave prominence to Advaita Vedānta when he spoke in the West, we cannot think that he did this disregarding Ramakrishna's—and Hinduism's—teaching that the path of devotion was best suited to the present age.¹³ The surest guide to what Vivekananda thought to be a complete religion is the religion he lived by; and that was without doubt the filled-in Advaita of his master: 'Drifting about in the will-current of the Mother, has been my whole life',¹⁴ wrote this great monist in his last years. The results of our survey suggest that, like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, modern people will want full scope for the exercise of their devotional and aesthetic, as well as their intellectual, faculties, whether on the way to the goal, or after the goal is reached while life lasts.

In speaking of a filled-in Advaita, it is not implied that Śaṅkara's doctrine lacks anything for those who go deep into it. In *Vivekacūdāmaṇi* he is positive that the universe and Brahman are identical, that Brahman is all the gods, that Brahman is the only thing we have ever perceived, that It is the common experience of all. In his life, too, Śaṅkara was a great worker, a great poet, and a great devotee, especially of the Divine Mother. He has been called the 'establisher of six religions'; that is, all the main devotional sects of his time were shown as ultimately harmonious with one another and consistent with a solid intellectual basis, namely Advaita. In spite of this it is understandable that on a shallow acquaintance his doctrine should seem to be a cold, abstract affair.

Sri Ramakrishna filled Advaita with all

¹³ 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (trans. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1957), e.g., pp. 406, 418, 422.

¹⁴ *Selections from Swami Vivekananda* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, 1970), p. 487.

the spiritual personalities and iconography of the spiritual heritage of mankind without compromising the truth: the last word is Advaita; but so long as we are conscious of ourselves as separate persons, so long as we seek to overcome separateness, the essential teaching of Tantra, meaning Śākta doctrine, is true and particularly valuable. This essential teaching is the identity of the God-head or Self (Nirguṇa Brahman, Ātman, Śiva) of the man of knowledge, and the God (Saguṇa Brahman, Īśvara) or Divine Mother (Śakti) of the devotee. Śakti is 'Śiva in action'. Becoming is Being as it is apprehended by mind.

Though Ramakrishna filled in Advaita with everything true in every religion, he especially filled it in with the Divine Mother. Analysis of the modern situation only confirms what Sri Ramakrishna taught: that worship of the Divine Mother is especially relevant to modern needs. That is a study in itself.

A few paragraphs back it was said that we modern people cannot all at once do without a religion of relationships. The statement served a purpose there, but it leaves something out and also implies that a religion of relationships is inferior. Admittedly a religion of relationships is inferior if it is not completed by a religion which points to and leads to the transcendence of relations. But while we live in a relational world we shall not 'get the full weight',¹⁵ as Ramakrishna said, if our religion is pure monism.

We believe that many modern people have the capacity to see the pre-eminent beauty of this filled-in Advaita Vedānta, seeing that it has now been expounded non-technically and been exemplified in detail by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. In the West, what has been understood inside the Catholic monastic tradition is beginning to

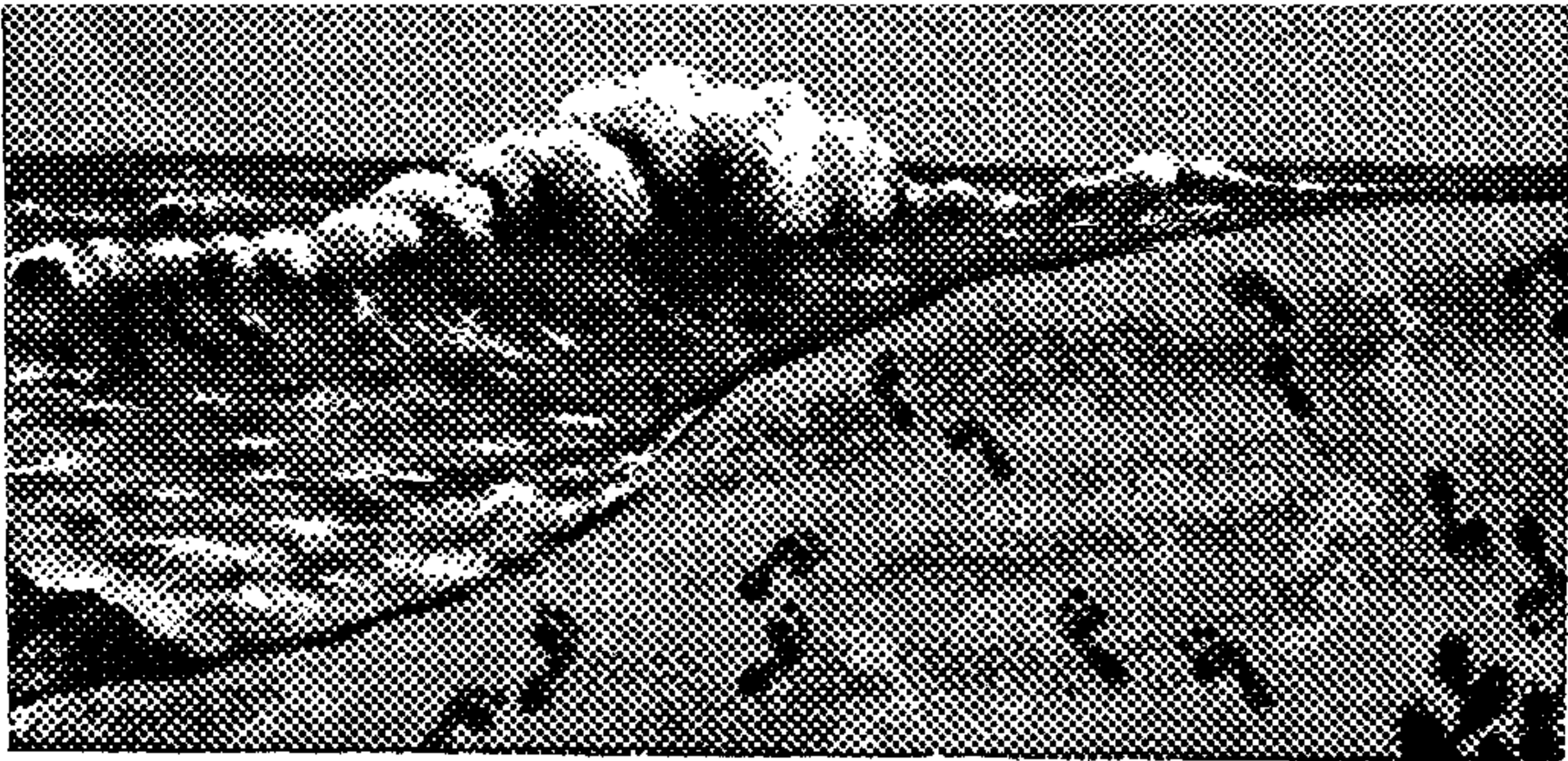
be understood outside: that religion is a matter of having first-hand experience of what it speaks about; and that such experience, though it may be had without training, cannot be possessed without training. It is not going to be difficult for those of the younger generation who are open to religion to see the value of a religion of relationships, and even the need for most people to practise one, if they are to rise to the non-relational intuition that Vedānta, Buddhism including Zen, Plotinus, and Eckhart speak of. And it should not be difficult for them to see the exalted fitness of retaining a devotional attitude even after having the intuition, while existence as an embodied person continues.

The conclusion expressed in the preceding paragraphs was this: the religious ideal in which all the contemporarily-stressed rational values are fully acknowledged and given scope for realization is the filled-in Advaita Vedānta which has just been described. The second conclusion is still simpler: the realization of all these values is pre-eminently exemplified in the personality and life of Sri Ramakrishna. He is modern to a degree that no man or woman that we have record of ever has been.

To anybody who has studied Ramakrishna's life, this conclusion is so glaringly just in every detail that to substantiate it is unnecessary. To anybody who has not studied his life, now is not the occasion to start on the story of its substantiation. It is true that we do not find modern shortcomings embodied in him: he is not modern in that sense. But if we look at modern youth in all the elements of their life-style, and not just at the more rational elements as we have done here, we shall find that all these elements cannot co-exist in a thoroughly integrated person: some of them will have to be transmuted. So if one of the younger generation is to become a free person and

(Contd. on p. 75)

¹⁵ 'M', op. cit., p. 621.



HUMAN TRENDS

SOCIETY, RELIGION AND PRESENTDAY CIVILIZATION

[Mayavati received many guests, both Indian and foreign, last October. Of them Dr. Donald S. Harrington and his wife were from New York. They spent three quiet days with us. As Dr. Harrington and his Community Church are actively engaged in social amelioration, we took the opportunity of his visit to elicit his views on some important issues concerning society both in his country and in India. He very readily and kindly answered all our questions. We give below our questions and his answers, which, we hope, will be appreciated by our readers.—*Ed.*]

Question: Dr. Harrington, you are the leader of an influential Church in New York City. You are in intimate touch with a wide cross-section of the American people. Can you tell us and our readers, in brief, what ails modern American society?

Answer: Modern American society suffers from a variety of ailments, some of them mortal, yet paradoxically it remains the one place on earth where most people would like to go and stay. Its problems arise from its blessings of freedom and great material affluence. Where men are set free to work for themselves and to better themselves, where there are few impediments to free expression of opinion or enterprise, where anyone who is able to pass his exams may have higher education and anyone ready to work hard can move up in the world, human energies are liberated and the result is a vast surplus of the material things.

However, there are accompanying problems. Where there is as much freedom as

in America, huge corporations tend to dominate not only the economy but many aspects of social life. Priority falls upon the production of goods for individual consumption rather than upon the provision of public services such as education and mass transit. Basic priorities get out of kilter, and there is much consequent suffering. The mass media of television, radio and the press are geared, not for the education and uplift of the people but for their exploitation. They are programmed to attract the largest possible audience, which in turn will sell the greatest amount of goods advertized. They indulge in vast amounts of violence, sex, and sensationalism of every kind to keep people looking—with a resulting degradation of the minds of vast multitudes of people.

The American government, which theoretically has the power to regulate the mass media, interstate commerce and public utilities, has tended to turn the regulation job over to 'those who know most about them',

namely the very men who profit from their operation, with the result that the regulation is not in the wider public interest.

At the moment we are suffering from a paralysis of our democratic government. Our Congress seems unable to democratize its functioning to the point that it can respond to today's needs, and thus its power is taken over by the Presidency and the Supreme Court. Our election procedures are corrupted by the huge amounts of money needed to run for office. Eventually those who pay the election bills can from behind the scenes control legislation in their own favour, and so far election reform has eluded us.

Finally, the immoral Vietnam war has demoralized our people. We have discovered that Americans are capable of doing to others things as bad as Hitler and the Nazis. We have spent untold billions of dollars and 50,000 American boys on a war that has corrupted our own souls and robbed our nation of needed aid for housing, mass transit and public education, but seem unable to extricate ourselves from it despite an almost universal demand to do so.

So there is widespread demoralization in our country today, and a resultant demand for change.

Question: Some are of opinion that, influenced by dazzling achievements of science and by various theories and ideologies, modern man has given a permanent go-by to religion. What do you say?

Answer: It is quite true that organized religion is suffering a decline in the United States, though not nearly as catastrophic as in Western Europe, where the churches are largely empty. You will find American churches well-filled and well-supported still. Yet, there is a problem. Science, at the same time that it has produced immense power for man, has undermined the myths upon which Western religion was built.

Scientifically trained people find it impossible to believe in virgin births, bodily resurrections or in places called Heaven and Hell, and so many are drifting away from the church, and the church as an influence upon public morals is in decline.

At the same time, there is a vast revolutionary reform underway within the churches, shaking them up as they have not been shaken in many centuries. Some believe this to be a more fundamental revolution than that of Luther's reformation of the sixteenth century. Theology is being forced into a lesser role. Creeds are being rewritten or discontinued. Reason is given a new paramountcy and people are allowed to drop beliefs which are contradicted by scientific fact. Religious rituals are being translated into vernacular languages and myths are understood as being not literal, but only symbolically true. Especially the Roman Catholic Church is engaged in the deepest soul-searching. Many priests are demanding the right to marry, feeling that celibacy is not the best basis for understanding the problems of average people. And the whole church has gained a new social uplift interest, involving an active participation in our country's political life.

On the whole, I am not discouraged or fearful for the future of organized religion in America because I see the needed reforms beginning to take place.

Question: On the other hand, we see unmistakable signs of a revival of interest in religion among young men and women. For instance, the Jesus Revolution. How far is this trend real and powerful?

Answer: Our young people are our greatest hope. They are in utter alienation and rebellion against the corruption and selfishness which they see in our market-economy society. Many are refusing to go along with, and are dropping out of the age of affluence, going back to simple, more human ways of living.

At the same time that they are abandoning the organized religion which gets lost in rituals and creeds, they are searching for spiritual disciplines and social responsibility. Some have turned to Hinduism and Buddhism for leadership. Others, the so-called 'Jesus-freaks' embrace a kind of highly emotional, pentecostal, apocalyptic style of Christian celebration—feeling themselves to be living in the age of the new apocalypse, the hydrogen bomb.

They will not rest content until the American church has been reformed and purified, and American democracy revitalized and reborn.

Quite a few, I am sorry to say, get lost in drugs or turn to magic, astrology and tarot cards, but even this is in an effort to recapture the dimension of depth, the mystical contact, communion with the Eternal God, and the more dangerous aspects of their experiments may prove quite temporary, for they are at heart pragmatists and quickly learn what works and what does not.

Question: Are the traditional and family-based society and its norms fast disappearing? And is such a trend beneficial for the spiritual growth of humanity?

Answer: It is proving difficult to maintain the family as the basic, formative unit of society in a society where most of the family's functions have been taken over by other institutions: Education, the preparation of food, work, entertainment. These activities today are all handed over to outside agencies. Father and mother both work. The children go to school. Television and radio fill communication time even when the family is together at home. One third of our marriages end in divorce, with much resultant suffering of both parents and children. And this trend appears to be massive.

I am one of those who feel, however, that here we are on the wrong track, that culture

cannot be transmitted without the family, and that the dehumanization and depersonalization from which our American world today suffers is partly the result of the disintegration of family life. We are going to have to find our way back to smaller units, to more face-to-face living in small communities in which people share their lives if our American society is to survive. We are going to have to recultivate close relations across the generations, realizing that grandchildren need grandparents, and grandparents grandchildren, if continuity of the past through the present into the future is to be maintained.

One sign of hope is the young people who, even while they are throwing off traditional sexual prohibitions, are returning to closer family and small community situations. They are seeking a warmer human character and personal kind of living.

Question: Large sections of us in India have a tremendous fascination for American modes of life and thought. So social changes and modes of life from over there are affecting adversely the strong religious and ethical foundations of our family and society. No doubt, our people have to learn some good things from your society. Can you tell us frankly what we have to preserve of the ancient values and what we can learn from your people?

Answer: I hope that India can find a way to maintain and modernize its traditional multiple family structure, so as to keep a close communication across the generations. This will require, however, a democratization of these relationships and an abandoning of some of the traditions which have relegated women to an inferior place. It will require a slowly changing relationship of attitude of parents to children and vice versa. Otherwise, I suspect that with increasing affluence, more houses and more mobility, your three-generation-family will also disappear.

I wish also that India could avoid the horrible social syndrome of the drifting of the best young people away from the villages into the huge, amorphous, impersonal cities. We have reached the point in America where we are now trying to find new models for village, town and city life. Our 'new cities', like Columbia, Maryland, are actually composed of about 12 'towns' of 15,000 population, each of which is divided into 'villages' of 800 population, all gathered around a common core including a university and rich cultural and economic base.

We are also trying to revitalize village and

small town life by economic development, cultural opportunities and a new democratic spirit. But this is terribly hard work, and the drift to the cities continues.

If India could find an up-to-date model for village life, with adequate economic opportunities, rich cultural life, education for all, cooperative banking and printing services, and the spirit of public service over private gain, it might help show the whole world the way of a richly human, face-to-face, natural, non-exploitative way of life. The challenge is there, and the question is whether India can find the spiritual resource within to respond to it.

(Contd. from p. 71)

thus become truly modern by achieving the modern aim, he will have to outgrow or transmute some of his present traits: otherwise he will remain a medley of sub-persons.

Contemporary youth will have to drop or sublimate the non-modern elements in their make-up, namely the elements that are antagonistic to the full development of those of the values they stress which are mutually consistent. If we call the modern-stressed values which are consistent with each other and with the attainment of freedom (or ful-

filled life or full personhood, however the modern ideal is described)—if we call these values modern, then of them Ramakrishna is the embodiment.

Finally, if Sri Ramakrishna is indeed the modern *par excellence*, then it is likely that the religion he lived will be suitable for the majority of modern people. This is another way of reaching our first conclusion, which was about the religious ideal on which they would be able to converge.

(Concluded)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

RETURN OF THE EVACUEES TO THE PROMISED LAND

The evacuees from Bangladesh who found shelter in India from unspeakable Pak atrocities have been returning to their free homeland in their thousands every day.* The Government of India, firmly backed by the people of this country, had promised that the evacuees would be sent back in honour and safety to free Bangladesh. This promise is being fulfilled. It is hoped that by the end of February 1972 most of the evacuees will have returned home.

No doubt, the Government of Bangladesh is just now facing a tremendous task in resettling the evacuees. But we are sure that the new Government, manned as it is by revolutionary patriots of proved integrity, will rise to the occasion and satisfactorily solve the problem in the near future with the people's most active and enthusiastic help. Official and non-official services from India will be continuing to help in solving this problem.

There were many among the evacuees who never hoped that such a day would ever smile on them. So the joy is great amidst continuing suffering because the end of it is in sight. Not all the evacuees in the world could see the end of their tragic days coming in such a dramatic and glorious manner as did the evacuees from Bangladesh.

The succession of events that led to this consummation is well known. The evacuee problem had descended on India as one of her greatest in recent history. The way India shouldered the problem speaks well of her resilience of spirit and high sense of

values and realistic idealism. Though economically poor, India never resorted to small calculations, never flinched in giving shelter to the millions of evacuees. The borders were kept open to whoever wanted to flee from oppression and take shelter in India. India had done this down the ages and did so again at considerable risk to her economy, security and internal order. There was no audible selfish demand in the country for sealing the borders. The highly risky open-border policy of the Government had universal approval of the people of India. And it was obvious to all in India that this policy was not a calculated political strategy, but a humane civilization's response to a colossal human tragedy. When the Prime Minister of India declared that India would feed the evacuees, even if people of India had to starve for doing so, it was no empty rhetoric. There was such a spontaneity in this response that nobody seemed to be counting the cost. This reckless abandon of the whole nation in the service of the evacuees proved at a crucial moment of history how unerring was Swami Vivekananda when he declared that renunciation and service were the national ideals of India. If these ideals were not in the very marrow of the people, the nation would have faltered. But it did not.

No doubt, international help came to a certain degree for the service of the evacuees and for this, all concerned should be grateful. The fact, however, remains that but for the spontaneous readiness of the Indian people to sacrifice their self-interest in the service of the evacuees to the extent needed, a vast majority of them would have perished. And in doing this self-sacrifice nobody had to make any special effort in creating

* Of the 10 millions of evacuees who came to India, 47,24,976 persons have already returned to Bangladesh according to a press report published on January 21, 1972.

a public opinion through activizing the communication media. The hoary but vibrant culture of the nation did the job.

When a war was thrust upon India on the related issue, the need arose to take up arms and fight a 'war of compassion'. 'The Mother's heart and the hero's will' inspired the whole nation and the armed forces and the result was the liberation of Bangladesh but for which the evacuees could not have returned home.

Today, the Indian people watch with considerable gratification the trek back of the millions of evacuees to the promised land of new sunshine of freedom. Back home, they fervently hope, the evacuees will build up a glorious Bangladesh where not only oppression of man by man will be unknown, but realistic idealism will become the pattern of day to day normal human conduct.

January 21, 1972

IN THIS NUMBER

Questions and answers are from: 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1957. References: Questions 1, 2, 3, p. 405; 4, p. 437; 5, pp. 450-1

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' are from the *Complete Works*, Vol. II (1963) pp. 181-2.

Vedānta has been taught and practised not only in forests and caves but also in royal courts and common households. If it could be practised by Arjuna on the Kurukṣetra battlefield, we, at our desks and tools, assemblies and laboratories, are having a better opportunity. 'Advaita must become living, poetic,' was Swami Vivekananda's great desire. The Editorial analyses the implications of making Vedānta practical in today's world.

Sri Ramakrishna's life is a bold answer to all those moderns who challenge religion and its veracity and utility. Though un-schooled and unlearned, he embodies in his life and message all the answers to the questions and the conflicts of the modern educated men and women. Swami Smarananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, discusses 'The Modernity of Sri Ramakrishna's Religion' with reference to

the dominant trends of the spirit of enquiry, humanism, democracy, liberty, and collective security.

Study of mind inevitably forms a part of philosophy. In spite of the claims of materialists, the study of mind will lead one to that which animates and transcends it, namely the real self of man. Prof. S. S. Raghavachar, Professor and Head of the Dept. of Philosophy, Manasa Gangotri, University of Mysore, discusses this subject from both Western and Hindu standpoints.

Rabindranath Tagore's celebrated *Gitanjali* is a strong witness to the God-mindedness of the great poet. Almost all the songs in the anthology concern God and reflect the personal-impersonal concept of Him found in Tagore's writings. Dr. (Mrs.) Reba Chaudhury, Lecturer in Philosophy, Bihar University, makes a brief study of 'Tagore's Concept of Religion' based on some of the important works of the poet.

Rev. Dr. Donald Szantho Harrington, A.B., B.D.S.T.D., D.D., is the senior minister of the Community Church of New York City, where he succeeded Dr. John Haynes Holmes who was a great American admirer of Gandhiji. Dr. Harrington has been a student of Gandhiji and a good friend of India. As a noted intellectual, he is the author of two books—*As We Remember Him* and *Religion in an Age of Science*—and many articles and pamphlets.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SUTRA BHASHYARTHA TATTVAVIVECANI, PART 3, BY SRI SACCIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI, published by Adhyatma Prakasa Karyalaya, Holenarsipur, Mysore, 1970, pp. 312, price not stated.

The great grammarian Nagesa attacked the 'Vivarana' and 'Bhamati' schools of Advaita in his *Vaiyakarana-Siddhanta-Laghu-Manjusha*. Nagesa claimed to accept Sankara's Advaita, and not the interpretations of Padmapada, Prakasatman, and Vacaspati. The ablest and most satisfying answers to the ill-conceived remarks of Nagesa were given by Sastra-Ratnakara Polakam Srirama Sastri in his Sanskrit introduction to his edition of the *Panchapadika*. The learned scholar on pages 113 and 114 of his introduction referred to Sri Saccidanandendra Sarasvati's first two books and stated that the latter has been using only Nagesa's arguments and sentences without acknowledging the source. That was said in 1958. Since then Sri Saccidanandendra Sarasvati has published books which amply bear out the truth of the charges levelled by Srirama Sastri.

In the book under review the author dismisses disparagingly eminent thinkers like Padmapada, Prakasatman, and Vacaspati. He refuses to believe that the author of the *Panchapadika* was a direct disciple of Sankara. In his view only Gaudapada, Sankara, and Suresvara represent Advaita as taught by Sankara. Sri Srirama Sastri has shown how Padmapada, Vacaspati, and others have taught what is found in Sankara's commentaries and also in Suresvara.

The present work is a commentary on the third and fourth aphorisms of *Brahma-sutra*. He identifies *adhyasa* with *avidya* (p. 4). Sankara on Vedanta Sutras 1.2.21, 1.4.9, 2.1.3 etc. points to a distinction. The commentary on 2.1.9 shows that the word *mithyajnana* is made up of the words *mithya* and *ajnana*. That *avidya* is other than *bhranti* is clear from the first *adhikarana* of 3.1. There is *mulajnana* in deep sleep according to 2.3.19. *Maya-vritti* appears under 2.1.2, 2.3.15. In the commentary on the *Gita* we read :

'*trigunatmika avidya-lakshana prakritih suyate
sacaracaram*';
'*maya-saktih ... utpattibijam*';
'*avidya-lakshandayam kanya-karanakarena
parinatayam*'.

In the commentary on *Kathopanishad* we read :
'*anadyavidya-prasuptah*'.

In the commentary on *Mandukya-upanishad* we find :

'*avidya-nimittam hi janma*'.

Countless other passages too are found in Sankara. They speak of *Mulajnana* or primal *avidya-sakti* and its power to conceal. In Suresvara's great *Vartika* we read : '*avidya prathate mauli*' (1.2.136). The present author rejects these, following Nagesa, and yet claims to be a true follower of Sankara's teachings. In his eagerness to show off his originality he has added a few remarks which are not found in Nagesa. Thus he rejects Padmapada's view that the second aphorism refers to statements of causation while the fourth refers to statements of identity. His arguments are not convincing (p. 30). He does not mind contradicting himself in the same paragraph (pages 21-22). He does not accept the evolution of *maya* (p. 23) even if Sankara said :

'*Prakritischa trigunatmika sarva-karya-karana-
vishayakarena parinata*'. The author swears by *adhyaropa-apavada* maxim though Sankara said that it is the result of *avidya*.

As far as the literal meaning of Sankara's text is concerned, the author does a good job in simple Sanskrit. But when he seeks to emulate Nagesa's example, he blunders irrevocably. His attitude to the great masters like Padmapada and Vacaspati is reprehensible. To attack his arguments point by point is beyond the scope of this review. When he follows Nagesa to attack the ablest Advaitins of antiquity, he should remember Suresvara's great verse :

'*Yaya yaya bhavet pumsam vyutpattih
pratyagatmani
Sa saiva prakriyeha syat sadhvi sa
canavasthita*'.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MIND BY HANS RAJ BHATIA, published by Pearl publications Pvt. Ltd., 249 D. N. Road, Bombay 1, 1970, pp. 214, Rs. 4/-.

This is a brief but well-written book on mental health. The author tries to apply the principles of some of the leading schools of contemporary psychology to the study of the causes of mental illness, and to the prescription of suitable remedies. Mr. Bhatia has done well to formulate criteria for judging mental health. The more important of these found among normal persons are healthy adjustment, social conformity, harmony, and contentment. The last includes all the others. But the author has just missed reaching up to the real meaning of contentment. He should have em-

phasized and expounded Sri Krishna's teaching on contentment in the *Bhagavad-gita*.

Emotions and their nature in general—anger, fear, guilt, anxiety, phobias, frustrations—and characteristics found among those who are mentally unhealthy are discussed clearly from the psycho-analytic standpoint (chapters 2-5). But the remedies are rather oversimplified (ch. 6, sec. 1). The 'Inferiority complex'—the bane of many a modern man (and woman)—receives adequate treatment in the book. As bulwarks against the corroding effects of this complex, self-knowledge, self-adjustment, self-expression, self-fulfilment are suggested. But self-control, self-purification and self-realization are conspicuous by their absence.

Unlike many a psychologist who looks upon religion as a 'great illusion' (Freud), our author devotes the last chapter to the discussion of this most important remedy for all mental illness. The discussion, however, is lop-sided and inadequate. The last paragraph but one at p. 210 contains a number of unfortunate statements. One example will be enough: '... it is difficult to see how a good man can also be considered a mentally healthy person.' This is astounding.

Despite these drawbacks, the book makes excellent reading for the layman as well as the student of psychology.

PROF. P. S. NAMDU

SHRIMAD-BHAGAVADGITA, BY SHRI S. D. GOKHALE, published by the author, 437, Gaonbhag, Behind Maruti Temple, Sangli, (Maharashtra), pp. 334, Price Rs. 15/-.

As the author points out, more than 1300 editions of the *Bhagavad-gita* have been brought out in 32 languages, and the work has been interpreted in diverse ways. There are speculations regarding the possible interpolations in the text, the hand of more authors than one, etc. Saint Jnanadev of Maharashtra has rightly treated this scripture as of one piece, and shown in his classic commentary, *Jnaneshwari*, how each verse follows naturally the previous one, how each chapter is a sequence to the preceding. Sri Gokhale elaborates in this book the special features of the approach of Jnaneshwar.

According to him, the *Gita* consists of two blocks, chapters I to 9 (the main argument), and chapters 10 to 18 (explanatory appendix). The usual division into 6 chapters each expounding *karma*, *bhakti*, and *jnana* is not accepted. The theme that runs through is one: the evolution of the universe out of the Being of Brahman and the 'involution', the return of the creation into the Infinite Brahman

(*yogi param sthanam upaiti ca adyam*). This return journey is along the two pathways of action and knowledge. The *Gita* analyses the process in its successive steps of God-realization, God-intoxication, God-immersion. The author quotes profusely from the *Jnaneshwari* (in Marathi), discusses the view-points of other philosophies like the Sankhya, cites the lives of Shankara, Ramadas, Tilak, etc., as exemplars of the *Gita*-ideal 'Action in Yoga' and sustains his argument.

A prolix but an earnest writing.

M. P. PANDIT

BENGALI

JAGADGURU VIVEKANANDA, BY DR. PRAFULLA CHANDRA GHOSH, published by Sadhana Shome, Sabita Prakashan, C-32, College Street Market, Calcutta-12, 1970, Pages 221, Price Rs. 5/-.

The book with a Preface, Introduction, and seven chapters gives a clear, consistent and lucid account of the life and work of the great savant and 'karmayogi', Vivekananda, and is extremely readable.

By reason of his extensive study of the letters of Vivekananda, the author has brought out in bold relief many of the facts that are comparatively less known to the general public and are at the same time highly interesting and significant. Thus, in his significant letter to Mrs. Bull and on the significant date the 26th January, 1901, Swamiji wrote (what should read in retranslation as), 'The new century has arrived, but the darkness is not dispelled; if anything, it has become more dense' (p. 205).

The book is certainly a contribution to our existing knowledge about the life and work of the great Swami and we recommend it to all most sincerely.

DR. PARESH NATH MUKHERJEE

SHIVANANDA-SMRITISAMGRAHA (PART III), COMPILED BY SWAMI APURVANANDA, published by Ramakrishna-Shivananda Ashrama, P.O. Barasat, 24-Parganas, (W.B.), 1377 B.S., p. 473, Price Rs. 6.50.

This volume, the third in the series, contains memorable reminiscences of Swami Shivananda, one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Fifty-three monks and devotees, mostly disciples, have contributed many valuable gems which were hidden in the inner chamber of their hearts. These memoirs, though recorded after a long time and with some attendant defects in some cases, will serve the readers in two ways: first, the valuable dialogues and admonitions of Swami Shivananda

serve as a beacon for seekers of God; and second, they help to provide an authoritative basis for a future history of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement.

We congratulate the compiler on his earnest endeavour to bring out such a beautiful book. We shall be glad if he can execute a similar scheme for the other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna also.

We hope that the book will be widely read.

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

BOOKS RECEIVED

STUDIES IN THE PROTO-HISTORY OF INDIA
By D. P. MISHRA, published by Orient Longmans

Ltd., 17, Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta 13, Rs. 20/-.
ETERNAL VALUES FOR A CHANGING SOCIETY, THE MESSAGE OF THE UPANISHADS, BOTH BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA, Both published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Bombay 7, price Rs. 50/- and 35/- respectively.

SWAMI SHIVANANDA, BY VARIOUS AUTHORS, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 7, Rs. 3/-.

PATHWAY TO GOD, BY M. K. GANDHI, price Rs. 2/-, TOWARDS NEW EDUCATIONAL PATTERN BY K. G. MASHRUWALA, Rs. 3/-, both published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad 14.

NEWS AND REPORTS

OBITUARY

SRI MOHANLAL SAH

With heavy heart, we record the death of Sri Mohanlal Sah, who was closely associated with Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, since its very inception. He breathed his last on Thursday, the 30th December 1971, at 3-30 p.m. at Lohaghat, 3½ miles from Mayavati. He was 95. Since 'Sahji', as he used to be lovingly called by the local people, was unmarried, he leaves behind him only his elder brother's wife, who was looking after him during the latter part of his life.

Sahji's associations with Mayavati date back to much earlier years than its inception. In his death the last living link with the beginnings of Mayavati is broken. He had the great good fortune of meeting Swami Vivekananda four times, both before and after the Swami's visit to the West. A native of Almora, Sahji, then a young man, first met Swamiji there in 1891, at Lala Badri Sah's house, where Swamiji was staying. In later years, he would recall that Swamiji appeared to him like a Buddha during that first meeting. Again, Sahji was present at a public meeting addressed by Swamiji at Almora after his return from the West in 1897. On a third occasion, when Swamiji went to Almora for a few weeks' rest and was staying at Thomson House with some of his western disciples, Sahji had occasions to see him more closely. That was in 1898, when *Prabuddha Bharata* had been shifted from Madras to Almora. Swami Swarupnanda, one of Swamiji's monastic disciples, was made

the Editor. Sahji was assisting the Editor in composing press matter and doing such other odd jobs. When *Prabuddha Bharata* was shifted to the newly founded Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati, in March 1899, Sahji went there with Swami Swarupnanda and Capt. and Mrs. Sevier.

From then onwards, Sahji was living at Mayavati for more than three decades. He was present there when Swamiji visited Mayavati in 1901. Sahji had the privilege of meeting some of Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples who visited Mayavati from time to time. In later years, when his elder brother died at Lohaghat, he went to live there.

During his long association with Mayavati Ashrama, he had won the love and affection of the Swamis who had been living there. Indeed, in recent years, a visit to Sahji at Lohaghat was a 'must' to all devotees and Swamis visiting Mayavati, to hear the old man talk with a glitter in his eyes about Swamiji and other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna whom he had met. Besides Hindi, Sahji could speak Bengali and English. He had expressed a desire that, when he would die, his body should be cremated at Mayavati, by the side of the mountain stream below the Ashrama, in a thickly wooded gorge, where Capt. Sevier and Swami Vimalananda (another disciple of Swami Vivekananda) had been cremated six decades earlier. His wish was fulfilled.

May his soul rest in peace!