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CONTENTS

Sri Ramakrishna Answers	441
Onward for Ever!	443
Saints and their Uses— <i>Editorial</i>	443
Letters of a Saint	446
Spiritual and Ethical Values — <i>Swami Ranganathananda</i>	447
Excursions into <i>Uddhava-Gītā</i> — <i>Swami Yatiswarananda</i>	455
On Making Spiritual Progress — <i>Swami Budhananda</i>	460
Richard Rolle — <i>Brahmachari Bhumachaitanya</i>	467
Musings of the Musafir: Perspective Maxims for Troubled India	473
Notes and Comments	476
Reviews and Notices	477
News and Reports	480

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No. 11

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (asked by a devotee): 'We read the scriptures. Why is it that we can't assimilate them?'

Master: 'What will one accomplish by mere reading? One needs spiritual practice—austerity. Call on God. What is the use of merely repeating the word "siddhi"? One must eat a little of it.

'The hand bleeds when it touches a thorny plant.' Suppose you bring such a plant and repeat, sitting near it: "There! The plant is burning." Will that burn the plant? This world is like the thorny plant. Light the fire of Knowledge and with it set the plant ablaze. Only then will it be burnt up.

'One must labour a little while at the stage of sadhana. Then the path becomes easy. Steer the boat around the curves of the river and then let it go with the favourable wind.

'As long as you live inside the house of maya, as long as there exists the cloud of maya, you do not see the effect of the Sun of Knowledge. Come outside the house of maya, give up "woman" and "gold", and then the Sun of Knowledge will destroy ignorance. A lens cannot burn paper inside the house. If you stand outside, then the rays of the sun fall on the lens and the paper burns. Again, the lens cannot burn the paper if there is a cloud. The paper burns when the cloud disappears.

'The darkness of the mind is destroyed only when a man stands a little apart from "woman" and "gold" and, thus standing apart, practises a little austerity and spiritual discipline. Then only does the cloud of his ego and ignorance vanish. Then only does he attain the Knowledge of God. This "woman" and "gold" is the only cloud that hides the Sun of Knowledge.

(To the Marwari devotee) 'The rules for a sannyasi are extremely hard. He cannot have the slightest contact with "woman" and "gold". He must not accept money with his own hands, and he must not even allow it to be left near him.

'Lakshminarayan Marwari, a Vedantist, used to come here very often. One day he saw a dirty sheet on my bed and said: "I shall invest ten thousand rupees in your name. The interest will enable you to pay your expenses." The moment he uttered these words, I fell unconscious, as if struck by a stick. Regaining consciousness I said to him: "If you utter such words again, you had better not come here. It is impossible for me to touch money. It is also impossible for me to keep it near me." He was a very clever fellow. He said: "Then you too have the idea of acceptance and rejection. In that case you haven't attained Perfect Knowledge." "My dear sir," I said, "I haven't yet gone that far." (*All laugh.*) Lakshminarayan then wanted to leave the money with Hriday. I said to him: "That will not do. If you leave it with Hriday, then I shall instruct him to spend it as I wish. If he does not comply, I shall be angry. The very contact of money is bad. No, you can't leave it with Hriday." Won't an object kept near a mirror be reflected in it?'

Question (asked by a young man): 'Sir, what is Knowledge?'

Master: 'It is to know that God is the only Reality and that all else is unreal. That which is the Real is also called Brahman. It has another name: Kala, Time. There is a saying, "O brother, how many things come into being in Time and disappear in Time!"'

'That which sports with Kala is called Kali. She is the Primal Energy. Kala and Kali, Brahman and Sakti, are indivisible.

'That Brahman, of the nature of Reality, is eternal. It exists in past, present, and future. It is without beginning or end. It cannot be described in words. The utmost that can be said of Brahman is that It is of the very nature of Intelligence and Bliss.

'The world is illusory; Brahman alone is real. The world is of the nature of magic. The magician is real but his magic is unreal.'

Question (asked by a devotee): 'Revered sir, is a man liberated only when he dies on the bank of the Ganges?'

Master: 'It is the Knowledge of God alone that gives liberation wherever he may die, whether in the charnel-pit or on the bank of the Ganges. But the bank of the Ganges is prescribed for a bound soul.'



SAINTS AND THEIR USES

EDITORIAL

ONWARD FOR EVER!

Let us ask ourselves each day, do we want God? When we begin to talk religion, and especially when we take a high position and begin to teach others, we must ask ourselves the same question. I find many times that I don't want God. I want bread more. I may go mad if I don't get a piece of bread; many ladies will go mad if they don't get a diamond pin, but they do not have the same desire for God; they do not know the only Reality that is in the universe. There is a proverb in our language—If I want to be a hunter, I'll hunt the rhinoceros; if I want to be a robber, I'll rob the king's treasury. What is the use of robbing beggars or hunting ants? So if you want to love, love God. Who cares for these things of the world? This world is utterly false; all the great teachers of the world found that out; there is no way out of it but through God. He is the goal of our life; all ideas that the world is the goal of life are pernicious. This world and this body have their own value, a secondary value, as a means to an end; but the world should not be the end. Unfortunately, too often we make the world the end and God the means. We find people going to church and saying, 'God give me such and such, God heal my disease.' They want nice healthy bodies, and because they hear that someone will do this work for them, they go and pray to Him. It is better to be an atheist than to have such an idea of religion.

Trickman

Giving an introductory talk on astronomy to an undergraduate class, a teacher came to its uses. He said that though astronomy is one of the most fascinating branches of science it has not been turned to any use by man. 'There is, however, one non-material use for it,' he said, 'it teaches man humility.'

Something so overwhelmingly immense as the physical universe—with its planets and stars, globular clusters and galaxies, clusters of galaxies in their millions, and many more known and unknown cosmological wonders—cannot surely be made use of by man who is inhabiting a tiny speck of matter spinning around a point of bright light which is a medium-sized star. All the same, man has been studying the starry vault above from the time he first appeared on earth. And he will continue to study it and make astounding discoveries—without ever being able to make any earthly use of them—till the last human descendant draws his last breath. To ask what use astronomy is to man from the utilitarian standpoint, would be extremely childish. As the teacher said, it can only teach man his insignificance in the immense, boundless space-time universe. And, if he has any higher insight, give him a clue to that Superior Intelligence, 'manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms . . .'¹

Similarly, to demand that saints should aim at being useful to man in improving his material condition is utterly inane. Because saints belong to that rare class of men who have realized their kinship and identity with that Superior Intelligence, or God, an aspect of whose glory manifests as the perceptible universe. If even a fraction of the discoveries about this one aspect of God cannot

¹ Dr. Albert Einstein's contribution, in *I Believe* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1952), p. 72.

be turned to material use by man, it is needless to say that saints, who merge their individuality in God, the Infinite Truth, will prove totally 'useless' to most of us.

Nevertheless, as in the case of astronomy, saints have their own material and non-material uses. They are many, and too important for man to overlook. The usefulness of saints is programmed into the very process of evolution by which man has been brought into 'being'. Man has an infinite dimension and his mission on earth is to realize this inherent infinity. Left to nature and her dilatory and wasteful processes, man would undoubtedly be led back to that goal; but he would have to wait for aeons and undergo untold suffering. Saints have wrested the initiative from nature's grip, become the pilots of their own souls, and reached the final goal of evolution far in advance of the rest of creation. Therein lies their most important use: to remind truant man again and again of his spiritual destiny and to demonstrate the method and manner of reaching it, through their personal examples. 'Their attainment', says Evelyn Underhill in her great work, *Mysticism*, 'is the earnest-money of our eternal life.'

Saints teach us how to rebel against the octopus-hold of nature, internal and external. Their usefulness consists in the example they set of renunciation of the things of the senses and the so-called happiness of the world of appearance. They serve as everlasting sources of re-assurance to every struggling soul that the spiritual destiny, though difficult to get at, is certainly attainable. They teach by their blissful and love-laden lives how to attain unalloyed happiness and how to love the entire creation without expecting any return. To the utilitarians and the narrow-minded among the humanists, saints appear socially sterile and tribute anything to man's material welfare, saints, though they do not appear to contribute anything to man's material welfare,

are indispensable for his psychological and spiritual welfare. Their usefulness is elemental—like the high-voltage lightning that oxidizes atmospheric nitrogen and thus adds tons of nitrates to the soil's fertility; like the vegetation which silently manufactures oxygen, the breath of life, to support all beings including man. 'Take religion from human society and what will remain?' asked Swami Vivekananda, and answered, 'Nothing but a forest of brutes.'² What he said about religion applies equally to saints as they are the living demonstrations of religious truths. Bereft of saints, society would degenerate and lapse into the stinking limbo of downright brutality.³

By their renunciation of sense-life and apparent withdrawal from the stream of common affairs, saints may seem to lose their relevance to man and society. But that is only a superficial view. Some saints, though they withdraw from society during the period of spiritual striving, later return to it with superabundant energy and devote themselves to human amelioration. Some others, though they succeed in obtaining transcendental vision and knowledge, never return to active life but remain silent contemplatives. In any case, the contribution and influence of saints, active or silent, are real though primarily on non-material levels. Though they seem to be dwelling at sublime and unapproachable heights, the subtle vibrations of their purity, love, compassion and wisdom pervade and permeate man and all beings, inspire and sustain them. Their influence on, nay their indispensability to, human society is similar to that of distant stars and galaxies and the 'large scale aspects of the universe' for life on earth. What

² *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati Himalayas), Vol. III (1960), p. 4.

³ *Vide ibid.*, Vol. IV (1962), p. 29: 'The moment it [the world] is absolutely bereft of these, it will cease to be, it will become a hideous hell and will just drop.'

a great contemporary astronomer says about the latter must give us an inkling of the importance of saints to human life and society on the psychological and spiritual levels:

'There is a general impression abroad that the large scale aspects of the universe are not very important to us in our daily lives—that if the earth and sun remained all else might be destroyed without causing us any serious inconvenience. Yet this view is very likely to prove wildly wrong. Present-day developments in cosmology are coming to suggest very insistently that everyday conditions could not exist but for the distant parts of the universe, that all our ideas of space and geometry would become entirely invalid if the distant parts of the universe were taken away. Our everyday experience even down to the smallest details seems to be so closely integrated to the grand scale features of the universe that it is well-nigh impossible to contemplate the two being separated.'⁴

Equally inseparably are linked and held fast—as it were by a 'ghostly glue', that is, by the implacable laws of psychological and spiritual gravitation—the lives of unregenerate man and the illumined saint. The unregenerate man represents an early stage

of an exciting and adventurous journey, and the saint its glorious end. Without the saint at the far, almost nebulous end, ordinary man would ever remain an infant, busy with the toys of sense-objects and learning with the abacuses of material sciences. To disown and discountenance saints as 'freaks' or 'failures' would be to truncate the evolutionary ladder—by which man has been climbing from the level of molluscs to the mammals and then through the anthropoid apes to *Homo sapiens*—whose upper end vanishes in the supersensuous spiritual heights. Man's life on the sense- and intellectual planes is finite, but it is always undergirt and interpenetrated by the Infinite. Saints are the 'astrophysicists' of the spiritual universe. But unlike their physical counterparts, saints have dived into the immeasurable and have returned with first-hand intimations. Life on the biological, psychological and spiritual planes is one continuous fabric of which the saints know the warp and weft, the loom on which it is woven, and the Master-craftsman who weaves it out of Himself. Leave saints out of humanity and you have only the sensual and intellectual fringe of the 'fabric' for whose possession and enjoyment men are ready to exterminate themselves and the rest of creation. Accept them as guides to evolutionary destiny, and you attain supreme wisdom, peace, and bliss, and find the whole creation your kin.

⁴ Fred Hoyle: *Frontiers of Astronomy* (The English Language Book Society, London, 1963), p. 304.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Almora
7.6.1916

Dear —,

The day before yesterday I received your letter of 31st May. Your money order for five rupees has arrived today. I am glad to know that your health is slightly better.

I am very happy to learn that you will exert yourself to get rid of the feeling of despair. You are, to be sure, becoming hopeful; and if you throw off your feeling of desperateness, you will gain plenty of hope. I keep on always praying to the Lord. You too should pray; then He will hear....

There was no place for the Master [Sri Ramakrishna] at Almora. Thanks to Swamiji, this place has become so much known. There was the need of the Ramakrishna Mission's having its own place here. By the Lord's grace it has come to be so. I think many will be benefited by this.

I have read your translation of the 'Veda-stuti', and felt that it has come out very well. The translation of the gloss is quite descriptive. The language is highly suggestive. What after all can I say about the subject-matter? That, indeed, is the essential conclusion of all scriptures:

'Hari, the Lord, is praised in the beginning, middle, end, and everywhere in the Vedas, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the Purāṇas, and the *Mahābhārata*.'¹

There is no other refuge but Hari. For He is the only True and Eternal. Everything else is false—now it is, now it is not. Therefore, if you put your trust in all such things, it will be utterly fruitless; moreover, misery will be inevitable. But the Māyā of the Lord is so powerful that one is not allowed to grasp this simple truth. That is why the Lord has shown the way: 'They who take refuge in Me alone, cross this ocean of Māyā.'²

There is no other way except surrender to the Lord. 'Surrender yourself to Me alone.'³ Our earnest and only prayer to the Lord is that He may graciously keep us held close to His feet.

My best wishes and love,

Your well-wisher
Sri Turiyananda

¹ वेदे रामायणे चैव पुराणे भारते तथा ।

आदावन्ते च मध्ये च हरिः सर्वत्र गीयते ॥

² मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ *Bhagavad-gītā*, VII. 14.

³ मामेकं शरणं ब्रज । *ibid.*, XVIII. 66.

SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL VALUES

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE AND THE DECLINE OF VALUES

In the modern period, as compared to all previous eras, there has been an enormous increase in human knowledge, but side by side there has been a decline in values. Since the end of the Second World War, this situation has been receiving serious attention from eminent thinkers. A highly developed civilization, backed by an efficient science and technology, finds humanity wondering about the whole place of values in human life.

The most prominent contemporary social phenomenon is the breakdown of all ethical and moral codes based merely on an external authority, be it a sacred book, the fiat of an extra-cosmic God, a church, or even a political state, and modern man's incapacity to find a rational basis for his ethical and moral behaviour. Anti-authoritarianism, which has been a developing feature during the four centuries of the modern age, has now become its most prominent social characteristic. The vacuum thus created has resulted in as much distortion in the human personality and the situation, though of a different kind, as that which resulted from that earlier authoritarian ethics. India's philosophy, the Vedānta, has always upheld that ethics, to be rational and universal, must seek and find its sanction in human nature itself, and not in any external reality or authority, sacerdotal or secular. India's depth-study and investigation of human nature had revealed to her great sages an infinite spiritual dimension, beyond the limited and separate organic and psychical dimensions, behind every human personality.

ETHICS VERSUS THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY THEORY OF EVOLUTION

In the nineteenth century, the physical

science of biology had told us that 'struggle for existence and survival of the fittest' was the law of all evolution. This could not support or inspire man in his search for, or practice of, ethical or spiritual values. The nineteenth-century theory of evolution presented the objectives of evolution as organic satisfactions, organic survival, and numerical increase. This position was clarified by Thomas Huxley, collaborator of Darwin, who felt that human society could not go on without ethical and spiritual values, but that, at the same time, biology in its theory of evolution could find no support for these values. Biology teaches us, he said, about 'the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest', but ethics demands 'the fitting of as many as possible to survive'. This contradiction between biological theory and ethical demands could not be resolved in the nineteenth century, with the result that values became impossible to be upheld on the basis of mere physical science, whereas throughout the ages man has upheld values, ethical and spiritual, and the great religions have taught that human life bereft of these values has no meaning at all.

The vacuum thus created by the advance of the physical sciences in the modern age has caused a very difficult situation for humanity. There is an erosion of the traditional ethical and moral values, and no new set of values has been put in their place. Thus the more advanced a society is, the more does it experience this getting away from the demands of ethical and spiritual values. In the absence of the stimulus of higher values, there is increasing stress on organic satisfactions—satisfactions purely at the physical level—and there is an efficient technology which increasingly serves these purposes.

THE POST-WAR DISILLUSIONMENT

But after the Second World War, there has been a protest against this situation. Outstanding western thinkers like the late Professor Sorokin of Harvard University and the late Prof. Bertrand Russell of England, have warned that modern civilization cannot survive unless it is inspired by ethical and spiritual values. Among these values, the most important, which they stressed, was love. Men must learn to love each other. There has been too much hatred and violence, which has been made more grim by the technological efficiency of modern man. And so, these great thinkers protested against the contemporary situation, of man invested with ever greater power, technological and intellectual, without morality to chasten it, without love to give it a higher human motivation and direction. But how is man to increase love in his heart? Can machines, and more machines, help to increase the content of values in human life, individually and collectively? To this question, Bertrand Russell gives an emphatic negative reply. In his post-war speeches, which come to us in a book entitled *The Impact of Science on Society*, this great philosopher discusses in one place this problem of values in our modern machine-dominated civilization. Here are his words (p. 77):

'The machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism. . . . Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

ETHICAL VALUES IN THE LIGHT OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY BIOLOGY

Values are not mechanical; by adding machine to machine and by increasing the efficiency of our technology, we are not going to produce values in society, we are

not going to generate love in the heart of man. These values are not mechanical. They are spiritual. Accordingly, we have to seek for them in the *heart of man* himself. There must be a deeper dimension in him which needs to be stirred in order to help him to express the ethical and spiritual values of love, compassion, dedication and the spirit of service, all those positive virtues and graces that make for the beauty of human character and the integration of man with man within society. This pressing problem of the contemporary world, of the East and of the West, finds a promising avenue of approach from another stimulating western source, namely, its twentieth-century biology. Whereas, in the nineteenth century, physical sciences generally, and the science of biology particularly, could not give any support for ethical and spiritual values, and ethics and organic evolution ran parallel courses, the twentieth-century physics has withdrawn its earlier support to materialism and twentieth-century biology has found ethics fundamental to its philosophy of evolution at the human stage.

This subject of ethical and spiritual values, therefore, needs to be discussed today in the new light coming from the revolutionary advances in biology during the last one hundred years. These advances help to bring this subject of values and the science of biology closer to the teachings of the great world religions. Today, for the first time, physical science and the science of religion speak almost identically on the subject of man, on the subject of his growth, development, and fulfilment. But, unfortunately, whatever advances are registered in the field of pure science take at least half a century to become current coin in society. This is the position now with respect to these wholesome advances in physical and biological sciences.

EVOLUTION : ITS PRE-HUMAN STAGE AND ITS HUMAN STAGE

About fourteen years ago, there was a great congress of scientists in the field of biology held at the University of Chicago, to celebrate the centenary of Darwin's publication of *The Origin of Species*. That was a great occasion which was utilized by the assembled scientists to assess the developments, revolutionary and far-reaching, in the science of biology since the time of the publication of that book by Darwin in the last century, and to study what impacts these new developments have on man, on his life and destiny. The proceedings of this conference were published by the Chicago University in three volumes entitled *Evolution After Darwin*. What impresses one in the panel discussions, and in the papers presented, at the above conference, is the new orientation given to the philosophy of evolution at the human stage, to its objectives and criteria, an orientation which brings the subject close to the spiritual teachings of the religions of the world.

What is the nature of that orientation? A clear demarcation is made by these developments between evolution at the pre-human stage and evolution at the human stage. This orientation stresses the uniqueness of man compared to all pre-human organisms. In the nineteenth century, evolution was presented by biology with a view to shattering that concept of human uniqueness long upheld by Christian theology which held that man was a special creation of God. Science cannot entertain that kind of special treatment to any species, and so biology set itself to breaking down that type of human uniqueness. But twentieth-century biology has brought back the concept of human uniqueness, though in a new and rational formulation.

THE UNIQUENESS OF MAN

Man is unique in more ways than one,

says Sir Julian Huxley, who has also written a book bearing the title *The Uniqueness of Man*. That uniqueness arises from his developed cerebral system, his capacity for reasoning and speech communication. Man is unique through these new developments in him, through which evolution has become self-conscious in him for the first time. He has the capacity to understand and to direct the course of evolution. The importance of these new developments has compelled twentieth-century biology to reconsider the goals and criteria of evolution at the human stage, and recognize that they are quite different from what they were at the pre-human stage. The nineteenth-century theory of evolution presented, for the pre-human stage, three goals, namely, organic satisfaction, organic survival, and numerical increase; and these were presented as equally applicable to man as well. But in the present century, these are accepted as relevant only for the pre-human phase of evolution. At the human phase, they become secondary and cease to be primary. And *fulfilment* is presented as the primary goal at the human stage.

Following from this new concept of fulfilment, twentieth-century biology also presents a new criterion of evolution at the human stage, namely, *quality* and *richness*, as opposed to *quantity* and *uniformity* of the pre-human phase. In the course of his speech at that Congress at Chicago, Sir Julian Huxley said that organic satisfaction, and material production thereto, are valid, but only up to a certain point. Material production is but a means to a further end. That further end is *fulfilment*. And fulfilment implies *qualitative* enrichment. Can we bring quality into human life? Quantity becomes secondary; but quality is primary. So he says :

'Once we truly believe . . . that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for human beings and fuller

achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or T. V. sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, and not an end in itself.¹

PSYCHO-SOCIAL EVOLUTION

We may remember that, in the last century, evolution was formulated, first, as organic evolution. This was extended to the pre-organic phase as cosmic evolution. And soon the concept of evolution became comprehensive and invaded every field of existence and thought. With the emergence, from cosmic evolution, of organic evolution, with the appearance of the living cell, a *first breakthrough* occurred, and continued steadily onward through a process of internal organic complexity and organic integration, accompanied by an increase of the value of awareness and of the consequent grip of the organism on the external environment. This process has achieved a *second breakthrough*, with the emergence of man, says twentieth-century biology, consequently changing the pattern and direction of evolution in a fundamental way. What is the nature of that fundamental change in the pattern and direction of evolution at the human stage? The answer to that question is most revolutionary. Evolution at the human stage, says biology today, is *not organic evolution*; it is something else. And that something else is presented in a significant phrase: *It is psycho-social evolution*. When nature has endowed man with the remarkable organ, namely, the cerebral system, what other new organs does he need to

evolve thereafter? With the help of his cerebral system, man can invent any organ he may need more efficiently and quickly than nature can give it to him through her long and wasteful evolutionary processes. Instead of wings on his body, he can invent, has invented, the powerful aeroplane. And so, if evolution has ceased to be mainly organic in man, what else has it become in him? It has risen to the level of *psycho-social evolution* in him, says twentieth-century biology.

If modern civilization can grasp the full significance of this term and concept of psycho-social evolution, and proceed energetically to implement it today, we shall witness a significant breakthrough out of the prevailing confusions and despairs of the contemporary human situation. It will then be *the third breakthrough*, most significant of all, in the long story of the evolutionary process.

Psycho-social evolution is evolution above the organic level. Man's intellect, sharpened by modern science and technology, has become a source of fear for him because it is conditioned by, and is in thralldom to, his organic system for the satisfactions of which he is prepared to exploit others. This alienation from others converts him into a focus of tension and nonfulfilment. Referring to this predicament of modern man, Bertrand Russell says:

'We are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends.'²

So far as *means* are concerned, we have plenty of efficient knowledge with us, both theoretical and practical. But so far as *ends* are concerned, we are governed by folly. We are prone to use those means to exploit each other, destroy each other. There is a hidden fear that modern humanity, not

¹ *Evolution After Darwin* (Published by the University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.), Vol. III, p. 259.

² *Impact of Science on Society*, p. 123.

guided by high ethical values and ideals, may utilize this efficient knowledge to destroy itself. This is a very real fear in the advanced countries of the world today. And, continuing the argument, Bertrand Russell concludes with the significant remark :

'Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.'

PSYCHO-SOCIAL EVOLUTION AS SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This is the contemporary tragedy : knowledge has grown enormously, but wisdom has tarried. All this knowledge is in the service of the ego, the little self centred in and in thrall to man's organic system. Can man grow beyond that ego ? Can he transform his dismal knowledge into luminous and saving wisdom ? To this gnawing question, biology gives a positive answer in its concept of psycho-social evolution, echoing the message of man's spiritual growth as expounded in India's ancient and perennial philosophy, the Vedānta.

Man need not remain a focus of tension and nonfulfilment ; he can grow ; he can evolve ; he can achieve fulfilment. What is the nature of that growth, of that evolution ? So far as science had been willing to admit, there had been only two types of human growth : one was *physical* growth, and the other was *intellectual* or *mental* growth. Are there only these two types, or is there a growth of man in a higher dimension, in a third dimension ? It is this question that finds a positive and hopeful answer today in modern biology, on the one side, and in the spiritual insights of the great world religions, on the other. These tell us today that man must grow not only physically, not only intellectually, but also spiritually. He must rise above the limitations of his organic system, of his ego conditioned by that organic system—with the help of that

organic system itself—and expand spiritually so as to experience his oneness with other human beings, with all other beings ; he must learn to extend his affections to others and to have others extend theirs into him, by carrying his evolution from the organic to the psycho-social level. And this spiritual evolutionary advance, *this third breakthrough*, which is the struggle for the realization of the possibilities lying within that second breakthrough of evolution, he should take into his own hands, for which mother nature has endowed him with the necessary organic equipments, and not leave it to nature to accomplish it for him through her long and wasteful processes.

This is a fascinating theme and provides a heroic adventure to the indomitable spirit of man, in the light of which his religious traditions yield much saving wisdom and inspiration and his energies of knowledge find their upward purpose and direction. It is through this spiritual growth that we can visualize the emergence of a new humanity, with the capacity to rise from knowledge to wisdom, from exploitation to service, from indifference and hatred to human concern and love.

VEDANTA AS A SCIENCE OF HUMAN POSSIBILITIES

There are tremendous possibilities hidden in everyone, says Vedānta, which also shows man the way to realize them. Sir Julian Huxley similarly says that what we need today is a new science, namely a science of human possibilities, a science which calls for the study of *man in depth*. And it was such a study that the great sages of ancient India undertook and accomplished ; and their insights, as much as the scientific methods and attitudes adopted by them, are available to all humanity in that immortal literature—rational and universal, ancient and yet modern—known as the Upaniṣads. They bear a close kinship with the modern scienti-

fic spirit and temper, and have evoked the appreciation and admiration of many modern scientists. Conveying such admiration in his letter of critical appreciation of the first edition of *The Message of the Upanisads*, Sir Julian Huxley says:

'Please thank the Swami again for sending me his book—though, as you see, I am critical of certain points in it, it has given me new knowledge and understanding of various aspects of human nature.'³

GROWTH OF MAN FROM INDIVIDUALITY TO PERSONALITY

That depth-study of man by the Upanisads has revealed an infinite vista of human possibilities. It proclaims man as immortal and divine in his essential nature, and details the techniques for its manifestation by him, and defines religion accordingly, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, as 'the manifestation of the divinity already within man'. This finds echoes, in its early stages, in the concept of psycho-social evolution of modern biology. This is the insight that now should find a central place in modern man's philosophy of education, in his philosophy of human growth, development, and fulfilment. That philosophy, as obtaining at present, is based on a surface view of man and his possibilities. It views him entirely as an organically conditioned ego ever in search of organic satisfactions. It conceives of his education entirely in terms of the strengthening of his ego, of the strengthening of his individuality centred in that ego. And Vedānta points out that this is the main source of the prevailing tension and unfulfilment, individual and collective, in the modern world, and summons modern man to use his enormous knowledge and talents to carry his evolution beyond his organically

conditioned and trivial ego into the expansive spiritual freedom of his true self. 'All expansion is life, and all contraction is death', says Swami Vivekananda. Stagnation at the ego level is death for man, because the ego is only 'one of nature's devices, a convenient provisional delusion of considerable strategic value', as remarked by the authors of *The Science of Life*—that voluminous digest of modern biological knowledge by H. G. Wells, G. P. Wells, and Julian Huxley.

A baby, before its birth, has no individuality; it is part of its mother's body. But as soon as it is born, it becomes an identifiable individual. And the first education of the new-born child is the strengthening of its ego, of the individuality centred in its ego. But this first education must be followed by a significant second education, which will make it respond to, and welcome, other babies in its environment. And in achieving this second capacity, it transcends, grows beyond, its organically limited ego, side by side with its steady growth in its more obvious physical and intellectual dimensions. Without that spiritual growth, with its by-products of the ethical values such as love and concern for others, the child's growth in the other two dimensions of his body and intellect is bound to be a source of nonfulfilment, as much for himself as for others. But by growing in that third dimension—from his 'unripe ego' into the 'ripe ego', in the words of Sri Ramakrishna—he grows from *individuality* to *personality*. This is the first fruit of his spiritual growth, of his psycho-social evolution, which enables him to enter into, and be entered into, by other persons. If this growth does not take place, man becomes incapable of communicating with other human beings. And this incapacity is a prominent and growing trait in modern man—between husbands and wives, parents and children, and in other areas of society. It was expressed to me by an

³ Swami Ranganathananda: *The Message of the Upanisads* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpathy, Bombay, 2nd edition, 1971), p. 572.

American girl student in a precise remark about the limitation of modern education: 'It does not help me to communicate with other people.' This problem was defined by Bertrand Russell when he said that a mere strengthening of his ego, centred in his organic individuality, converts man into a billiard ball, and that the only relationship between one such billiard ball and another is *collision*. A billiard ball cannot enter *into* another billiard ball. But we want our children 'to enter into' other children. If so, then by all means help the child to grow beyond individuality to personality. Give him the capacity to acquire that large humanness. That is the technique and fruit of psycho-social evolution. Put every child on the way of his spiritual growth, along with his physical and intellectual growth. Then alone will he become a *person* and not remain a mere *individual*. What is a person? What is personality? And what is the difference between an individual and a person? Here is a fine definition by Sir Julian Huxley given in his Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man*.

'Persons are individuals who transcend their merely organic individuality in conscious (social) participation.'

When one consciously participates in the life of other individuals, one ceases to be a mere organically limited individual, a mere 'unripe' ego, and becomes a spiritually expansive *person*. This is *personality*, which suggests a growth, an expansion, an evolution beyond the organic level. A child must start as an individual, as an ego, but should not stop there. He should soon be led on the road of his spiritual growth into a personality, to become a person among persons. Creativity and spontaneity come to man at that level only.

Through psycho-social evolution, the psyche in man, by the disciplined and creative use of his cerebral and emotional

systems, becomes liberated from its tether to the little ego centred in his organic system, and grows and expands, so as to experience its basic spiritual unity with increasing numbers of psyches in the social environment. Every step on this road of spiritual expansion is a liberating experience, says Vedānta, and bestows on man a sense of fearlessness, in the words of the *Gītā*: *Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*.⁴

PHYSICAL SCIENCE VERSUS THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

This is a new idea in all physical science, even in the almost non-physical borderland-physical science of biology. But it has always been there as the central idea in the science of religion. Today there is a possibility of bringing together these two streams of knowledge, these two vital human disciplines, to provide a philosophy of an integrated human development for the fullest flowering of man's possibilities. Science physical and science human, coming together and combining their resources and leading man to total fulfilment, individual and collective—that is the promising and much-needed prospect before us. This will constitute the most effective challenge to human wisdom, to face and overcome the formidable problems thrown up by the amazing but disconcerting modern scientific, technological, and social developments.

This is why this subject of ethical and spiritual values needs to be treated as fundamental to all education, and needs to be viewed in the light of the highest human insights in the realms of the physical sciences and that of spirituality. At the end of the last century, modern man treated religion as merely a relic of his superstitious primitive past. But since the end of the

⁴ 'Even very little of this dharma saves a man from the Great Fear.' *Bhagavad-gītā*, II, 40.

Second World War many great scientists have begun to feel and to express the conviction that the spiritual core of the higher religions, as different from their creedal and institutional forms, is needed very badly today to lead man to total fulfilment, and that the physical sciences by themselves are incapable of achieving this. One such scientist, the astrophysicist R. A. Millikan, in a testament at the close of his *Autobiography*, says :

'It seems to me that the two great pillars upon which all human well-being and human progress rest are, first, the spirit of religion and, second, the spirit of science or knowledge. Neither can attain its largest effectiveness without support from the other. To promote the latter, we have universities and research institutions. *But the supreme opportunity for everyone with no exception lies in the first.*' (italics not by Millikan)

PSYCHO-SOCIAL EVOLUTION AND MODERN MAN

Creedal religion by itself cannot lead man to total fulfilment ; physical science by itself cannot similarly lead man to total fulfilment. They both need to be integrated in a comprehensive philosophy of human growth, development, and fulfilment. This is the work that the Vedānta attempted and achieved in so early a period of human history, and which Swami Vivekananda expounded in East and West in the modern age with much rational appeal and spiritual conviction.

Man, in the modern technologically advanced civilization, is well-equipped, thinks Vedānta, to advance evolution to this psycho-social level. If he will not do so,

his psychic energies will stagnate at the organic level and kick back on himself with increasing virulence—a tragedy which is increasingly being enacted already all over the world. And if modern man decides to choose the path of his psycho-social evolution, he will need to take the help of the science and technique of man's inner life, which is the meaning and scope of religion according to Vedānta.

The message of religion as spiritual growth, and the message of evolution, in modern biology, as psycho-social evolution, is what the philosophy of Vedānta sees as the manifestation of the infinite divine possibilities lying within man. Vedānta views all ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual values as the by-products of such growth, of such manifestation. This philosophy breathes the spirit of true *religion*, in its approach to human development from the within, through the manipulation of the inner milieu, and the spirit which underlies all true *politics*, in its approach to man's development from the without, through the manipulation, by positivistic methods, of the socio-political conditions of his external life.

This philosophy finds expression in a brief testament of Swami Vivekananda :

'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one or more or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details.'⁵

⁵ *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas), Vol. I (1962) p. 257.

EXCURSIONS INTO UDDHAVA-GITĀ

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

(Continued from the July issue)

ATTAINMENT OF HEAVENLY PLEASURES THROUGH RITUALS

The concepts of heaven and other worlds of enjoyment have been present in Hinduism from very early days. But they were never considered the ultimate goal or *summum bonum* of life, except by a small group of philosophers called the Mīmāṃsakas. These latter believed that through ceremonial sacrifices (*yāgas* and *yajñas*), one could obtain admission to heaven. Hence they attached great importance to the performance of Vedic rituals. But in the Upaniṣads, in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, in the works of Śaṅkarācārya, in the *Bhāgavatam*, and other scriptures, we find this hankering after heavenly pleasures strongly denounced. The Vaiṣṇava teachers too taught that heaven should not be the goal of a spiritual aspirant. The supreme abode of Viṣṇu, the all-pervading Divine (*tad viśnoḥ paramam padam*) should be the goal of spiritual aspirants.

According to the Mīmāṃsakas the souls are real and many in number, and so also are the worlds of enjoyment. The souls after death go to these worlds according to the results of their actions on this earth. The Mīmāṃsakas do not believe in an omnipotent God or Īśvara and their goal is not *mokṣa* or liberation, but heaven which they hope to win through the performance of ritualistic sacrifice. They, of course, do not believe in the one Existence-knowledge-bliss Absolute, the Brahman or Ātman taught by the Upaniṣads—whose apparent manifestation is everything, internal and external.

By following the path of rituals and

ceremonials one will earn some merit, no doubt. One may go to higher spheres, but then one has to fall down again because these places too are impermanent. There can never be an eternal heaven or an eternal hell. Everything phenomenal is controlled by time, appears and disappears in time.

‘The man of sacrifices goes to heaven, worshipping the gods through sacrifices here below. Like a god he enjoys there celestial pleasures which he himself acquired....’ ‘He enjoys pleasures in heaven till the merits of his good deeds are exhausted. Then on the expiry of his merits he falls down, against his will, being propelled by time.’¹

One should not waste one’s energy in running after the pleasures of this world or the next. This dispassion is one of the essential qualifications of the Vedāntic aspirant. Why go in for the perishable pleasures of heaven, not much different from those obtainable here, when it is possible for you to attain to the imperishable blessedness of communion with God, the source of all bliss? There is happiness of various types. The question is, which type do you choose? One must be very clear and definite about this. There is joy in self-indulgence, and there is joy in self-control. There is still greater joy in transcending both and enjoying the freedom of the Soul. Decide once for all which one you want. If you choose the spiritual path, if you fix God-realization as your goal, then you must renounce all desire for pleasures

¹ *The Last Message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa* (Tr. by Swami Madhavananda, Pub. by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, 1956), Verses 23, 26.

here and hereafter. You must be prepared to face all the trials and tribulations that beset the path of such divine renunciation.

This does not mean that one should give up all one's actions. What is important is to give up the desire for enjoyment which prompts our actions. All actions are to be performed without any desire. This is selfless work. When work is done in this way it will purify the mind and make it fit for receiving the light of God. If you cannot perform your actions without selfish desire, then surrender the fruits of your actions to the Divine. In the *Gītā* it is said :

'By worshipping Him from whom all beings spring and by whom all this is pervaded—by worshipping Him through the performance of duty does a man attain perfection.'²

Worship the Lord with your actions. That is one of the best ways of worshipping Him. Even rituals and ceremonials are useful if performed with the sole intention of pleasing the Lord. They may even be necessary for many in the early stages. But there are higher forms of worship. The spiritual aspirant should take up these higher forms of worship and approach the Divine more and more. If you are capable of taking up the higher forms of worship, why remain satisfied with the lower forms ?

However, there is one point to be noted here. The highly refined heavenly enjoyments of the Mīmāṃsakas are definitely superior to the gross, vulgar, animal pleasures that ordinary people indulge in right here in this world. The former is no doubt inferior to the bliss of God-realization and may have been strongly condemned by the scriptures. But they are far better than grovelling in immorality and corruption. The Mīmāṃsakas have a strong sense of dharma. In fact they have, of all the schools of Indian Philosophy, discussed

ethics at the greatest length. According to them, following the Vedic injunctions and avoiding those actions prohibited by the Vedas constitute the duty of man. One of the great exponents of the Mīmāṃsaka philosophy upheld the doctrine of duty for duty's sake and his concept of obedience to Vedic injunctions is not much different from the categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant. Dharma (righteous living) has always been a sobering principle in all schools of Hinduism. In Hinduism, fear of God is not so much stressed as the fear of infringing dharma. One is afraid of violating any law or religious ruling. Everybody must follow the dictates of dharma. An unprincipled fellow has no place in Hinduism. The spiritually advanced soul may transcend some of the grosser aspects of dharma but nobody violates the fundamental principles.

THE IDEAL OF VEDANTA IS FREEDOM

The ideal aimed at in Vedānta is to attain to a state that is beyond all birth and death, from which there is no falling off, a state of freedom. Freedom or liberation can only come through dissociation from our bodies and our minds, in other words, from our false personalities. Absolute independence of material objects is real freedom. Dependence on anything other than one's true Self is bondage and misery. The perfected soul depends on his Self alone, not on others, and enjoys the bliss of the Self. He is called *ātmārāma*—'one who revels in his Self'. He transcends all kinds of gross and subtle enjoyments of the mind and the senses. To an illumined soul even heavenly happiness is misery, because he has enjoyed a much higher state of happiness and freedom. Granting that heavenly pleasures are better than earthly pleasures, still they are not permanent and do not enable one to transcend one's limitations. That is why all serious-minded spiritual aspirants are advised to consider any desire for heaven

² *Bhagavad-gītā*, XVIII. 46.

an obstacle to spiritual progress. Instead of following the path of rituals and ceremonies which lead to perishable results, one should cultivate more and more of dispassion, knowledge, and devotion.

Death is staring you in the face and you are thinking of enjoyment! Such is the power of *māyā* that we go on spending our precious time in all sorts of ridiculous things and creating newer forms of bondage forgetting the supreme ideal of liberation. Sri Ramakrishna's parable of the fisherman's net and the fish is clear in its meaning. A way out of the net is open, yet only a few escape through it. The rest bury deep in the mud thinking they are cosy and safe there. So also is it with us. This world which we think is the most secure place disappears from our eyes when death overpowers us. We need not have any morbid fear of death. But we should not be foolish enough to overlook its reality. If life is real, death is real too. Let us chant once in a while passages such as given below in order to cultivate the proper spirit of renunciation and detachment in us.

'COUPLETS ON RENUNCIATION' BY SANKARA

'Day and night, evening and morning, winter and spring, roll on; time is having its sport, life is being spent away, yet vain desire does not go. Worship the Lord, worship the Lord, worship the Lord! O thou fool, when death approaches, rules of grammar will be of no avail.

The body has become feeble, hairs turned grey, the mouth toothless, and the old man is walking supporting himself on a stick, yet he will not give up desire. Worship the Lord, etc.

The child is engrossed in play, the youth attached to his sweetheart, and the old man is burdened with anxiety; no one is engaged in the thought of the Supreme Spirit. Worship the Lord, etc.

Birth, death, and life in the mother's womb come by turns again and again; O Lord, out of Thy grace protect me in

this *samsāra* (relative existence) which is really hard to cross over. Worship the Lord, etc.

Nights, days, fortnights, months, half-years and years roll on, yet desire leaves not. Worship the Lord, etc.

When old age comes, can there be passions (i.e., can passions still be fulfilled)? When water dries up, can there be a lake? When wealth is lost, where are the relatives? When truth is known, where is this world? Worship the Lord, etc.

The physical beauty of a woman, know this but as a form of delusion, brought on by *māyā* and unreal; it is but a modification of flesh, fat, etc. Thus discriminate again and again in your mind. Worship the Lord, etc.

One may go on a pilgrimage to the place where the *Gāṅgā* meets the sea, or observe austerities, or give wealth in charity; yet by these alone, without knowledge, liberation cannot be attained even in a hundred lives. Worship the Lord, worship the Lord, worship the Lord! O thou fool, when death approaches, rules of grammar will be of no avail.'

SEVERAL DIMENSIONS OF THE SELF

Here Uddhava asks Kṛṣṇa to resolve a pertinent doubt:

'O Thou best of the knowers of (answers to) questions, answer me this question. My doubt is this: is the same soul eternally bound and eternally free?'³

This is a common doubt in the path of Advaita. In order to find out the answer to this question we should know the Advaitic concept of degrees of Reality. The world we perceive all around with our senses is real as long as it lasts. It has empirical reality. The Self as the knower and enjoyer of this reality is the empirical self. The empirical world is more real than the illusory world of dreams and false perceptions. But it is less real than Brahman, the ultimate Reality. From the

³ L. M., V. 37.

standpoint of Brahman, that is, Existence-consciousness-bliss Absolute, the empirical world and the empirical self are both illusory. How does Brahman, the one and only Reality, appear to become the many? In order to answer this metaphysical problem Advaita Vedānta posits a second category and that is *māyā*, a mysterious power which hides the Reality and projects this illusory world. Bondage and misery appear only as long as the power of *māyā* is there. But as soon as it is transcended, there is neither bondage nor misery. That is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches His disciple Uddhava at the beginning of the sixth chapter.

‘The soul is described as bound or free from the point of view of My *guṇas*, but it is not so in reality. And since the *guṇas* are the creation of *māyā*, there is, in My opinion, neither bondage nor liberation.’⁴

The principle of egoism is called the *Jīva*. Three things are necessary to constitute *Jīvahood*: (1) the internal organ or mind (*antahkarana*); (2) ‘I’-consciousness; and (3) the reflection of Brahman in the mind, called *chidābhāsa*. All the three together constitute the *Jīva*. Of these, the presence of the internal organ is the basic element. This in turn is a special product of the three *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—which constitute *māyā*. It is this internal organ which gives rise to ‘I’-consciousness and reflects the light of Brahman. The reflected light along with the ‘I’-consciousness makes up the *Jīva*. When the reflector or the internal organ is destroyed with the help of higher knowledge, what happens to the reflection? It was Brahman that was originally reflected and in the absence of the reflector, the reflection remains non-different from Brahman. In other words, *Jīva* and

Brahman are one when the *guṇas* are transcended. As long as the reflector is there, the *Jīva* is present; it is limited, bound. But when the reflector vanishes Brahman alone remains, for which there is neither limitation nor bondage; It is the Infinite, the Absolute, the One without a second.

Of course, this is a very high standpoint—the highest standpoint ever reached by mankind anywhere in the world. It is far away from the reach of most of us at present, and it may take several years or births to attain it. What then must be our immediate concern? Our immediate problem should be to separate the reflection from the reflector. Brahman shines through the mind but we are so preoccupied with the various modifications of the mind (that is, thoughts) that we do not really understand the Light that shines through it. We see this reflected light, only when the mind is purified and remains free from modifications. Then we see the light distinct from thoughts. Not only that, *simultaneously we come to the realization that this reflected light is really a part of an infinite unbroken Light*. First of all, however, we must get some glimpses of our own higher self. The question of the Infinite comes later.

HOW TO GET BACK OUR LOST FACULTY OF DIRECT VISION?

Intuition, the power of direct vision, lies dormant in us. It should be regained. Through that alone come the glimpses of the higher Reality. How to develop the higher power of intuition? Just watch how you enter into sleep and how you get out of it. You will find at first the sense-organs are withdrawn back into the mind. Then the thoughts die down and you will have just a vague ‘I’-consciousness. Finally this ‘I’ merges in deep sleep. When you wake up the reverse happens. At first the ‘I’-consciousness emerges and then this gets con-

⁴ बद्धो मुक्त इति व्याख्या गुणतो मे न वस्तुतः ।
गुणस्य मायामूलत्वाच्च मे मोक्षो न बन्धनम् ॥

nected to the thoughts, which arise in the mind, and the objects around. So, just after waking up there is a shadowy intermediate period when you retain pure 'I'-consciousness for a split second. At that point the world appears shadowy. Something of this pure awareness should be attained consciously during our waking hours. That is the real task before the aspirant. We should attain to that plane where the dividing line between light and darkness is very thin.

In the *Brhadāranyaka-upaniṣad*⁵ King Janaka questions the venerable sage Yājñavalkya: 'What serves as the light for man?' The sage replies that it is the light of the sun. It is by the light of the sun that he sits, goes out, works, and comes back. When the sun has set what serves as the light? The moon. When there is no moon? The fire. When there is no fire? Questioning like this he reaches back into himself. It is the mind that recognizes external objects. But behind the mind stands the luminous Self with the light of which we dream objects within. Think about that light of which we dream objects within. Think about that light which reveals the dream objects. What is that light? It is the Self itself. The Self is self-luminous. It reveals itself. Nothing can reveal it. It reveals other objects. When the objects vanish the self-luminous Ātman alone shines. Between the two states of waking and deep sleep we remain for a split second as this pure Self. The task is to attain it permanently during the waking hours. Then it is never lost.

By making the best use of our threefold faculties of intellect, feeling, and will, we develop the forgotten faculty of intuition in us. First of all, these faculties are to be purified. Purification is a difficult task. It takes a long time. The impressions of

previous experiences are there lying hidden. It takes time to remove them. Some of these have to be just erased by an effort of will. Some are to be restrained with the help of other impressions. Some others are to be changed into other forms. The energy stored as impressions (*samskāras*) in the mind is to be directed into higher channels. This is called sublimation. Here comes the need for Karma-yoga. By just thinking you have overcome hatred, you do not overcome it. You must put the idea into practice, show it in your life. Ideas must be converted into actions. The results of good actions are stored away as good *samskāras*. These purify the mind and strengthen it. Some of the *samskāras* can be modified or overcome through regular *japa* (repetition of the Lord's name) and meditation. Meditation also helps in coordinating and integrating the various faculties. When purification, integration and concentration of the three faculties of feeling, willing and intelligence are achieved, the faculty of intuition is discovered. The light of the Ātman shines forth, at first in the form of flashes but later on as a steady beam.

Then we find that the Self as Jīva operates through the mind, through the sense organs, through the physical body. In his famous *Hymn to Dakṣiṇāmūrti* as Guru, Śrī Śaṅkara makes this idea clear:

'Just as the rays of the light hidden in a pot with a number of holes emanate through those holes, the Self manifests itself through the eyes and other sense organs giving rise to the notion "I know". Every object shines (i.e., is known) after the Self manifests it. I bow down to that teacher who is known as Dakṣiṇāmūrti, who is none other than the Supreme Self.'⁶

⁶ नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभाभास्वरं
ज्ञानं यस्य तु चक्षुरादि करणद्वारा बहिः स्पन्दते ।
जानामीति तमेव भान्तमनुभात्येतत्समस्तं जगत्
तस्मै श्री गुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

⁵ VI. iii. 1-7.

When we get this experience we will be able to separate the instruments from the real Self. Then what we had been previously calling the self appears to be the false self. The false self is an aggregate of body, mind and senses. The real Self stands behind all these illuminating and enlivening them. Our present task is to discover this luminous Self manifesting itself through us. That

is our immediate goal. The ultimate goal of course is to merge this little self in the infinite supreme Self or Brahman. But that problem does not arise now. Let us begin from where we are and move forward purifying our way through our daily *japa*, meditation, studies, and selfless discharging of duties.

(To be continued)

ESSAY ON APPLIED RELIGION

ON MAKING SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

THE GRACE OF ONE'S OWN MIND

What does getting the grace of one's mind really mean? We may have practised ethical disciplines, we may have received instruction from a competent teacher, and we may have also manifested energy. Yet to our utter dismay we may notice that we are not advancing at all spiritually. What impedes our spiritual advancement at this stage?

'There is a saying among the Vaishnavas, "The three, namely the spiritual teacher, the chosen Ideal and the devotees (of God) are kind indeed; but not having the kindness of one, man has been sent to rack and ruin." Here "one" means one's own mind. As the mind is not kind, the man is ruined.'¹ It is not until we take to spiritual practices

seriously that we begin to feel how badly we require the grace of our own mind, by the side of all the other graces we may have received.

Most of the inner problems of our life are created by our own minds. And what we suffer from have been manufactured by ourselves. But in order to be able to practise spiritual disciplines, we must have good minds. Where do we get them? The good mind is not a special type of mind available somewhere outside of man. Our own mind, when deliberately moulded for the purpose of serving as the instrument for spiritual practices, becomes the good mind. A mind is bad or good, for practical spiritual purposes, insofar as it does or does not present to us distracting thoughts, often in the form of various temptations. That is the crux of the mental difficulties a spiritual aspirant suffers from.

When we suffer from mental obstructions

¹ Swami Saradananda: *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master* (Tr. by Swami Jagadananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1956), p. 480.

or temptations in our spiritual life, it is no use trying to go to the root of all problems. We just cannot understand everything, even with the help of highly advanced psycho-analysis. There is this Christian teaching:

'Do not seek to find the causes of temptations or whence they come; only pray to suffer them with gratitude, as St. Mark says: "When a temptation assails you, do not seek to understand why and wherefore it comes; your only care should be to bear it gratefully and without rancour" (St. Mark on exculpation by deeds, Ch. 198). Again: "Since there is no man who could please God without temptations, one should give thanks to God for every sorrowful occurrence" (ibid., Ch. 200); and: "Every affliction reveals the disposition of our will, whether it inclines to the right or to the left. An affliction is therefore called temptation, because it puts to the test the man afflicted by it, proving his inner disposition" (ibid., Ch. 204).'²

In the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has given a basic solution to the mental problems from which an aspirant may suffer. Practice and dispassion are the only means of controlling the wayward mind. 'Practice' here means earnest and repeated attempts to make the mind steady in its unmodified state of pure intelligence, by means of constant meditation upon the chosen Ideal. In commenting on this verse (VI, 35) Śaṅkarācārya says:

'"Practice" consists in constantly repeating the same idea or thought regarding some one object of thought. "Dispassion" means freedom from desire for any pleasures seen or unseen, attained through a constant perception of evil in them.'

It is only by practice and dispassion that the distractions of the mind can be restrained.

How this has to be applied in life we find in the teachings of Swami Brahmananda. One day a disciple asked him—and every one of us who practises spiritual disciplines, would perhaps like to ask it: 'How may I check a distracting thought that persistently arises in the mind?' Swami Brahmananda replied:

'Think to yourself: "This thought is immensely harmful to me. It will be my ruin." Impress the idea again and again upon your mind. The mind is extremely susceptible to suggestions and will learn whatever you teach it. Therefore if through discrimination you can impress upon it the joy and fullness of spiritual life and the folly of worldly attachments, it will devote itself more to God, and you will find yourself freed from distracting thoughts.'³

In another context he said:

'The easiest way to purify and steady the mind is to retire into solitude, control all cravings, and engage yourself in contemplation and meditation. The more you occupy the mind with holy thoughts the greater will be your spiritual unfoldment. Just as a cow yields much milk when it is well fed, so when the mind is fed spiritual food it will yield greater tranquillity. Spiritual food consists of meditation, prayer, contemplation and *japam*.'⁴

Whatever may be our inner situation—it may be obnoxious, it may be very troublesome—we have to view it as a doctor does his patient and treat it through detachment and practice. If we get emotionally upset over the bad states of our mind, we cannot handle the mind. One has to be hard-headed in handling one's own mind, knowing fully well that the mind is not the ruler, but it is the Ātman which is the sovereign of body and mind.

A person who thinks that he will cross a

² *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, by E. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer (Faber & Faber, London, 1951), pp. 188-9.

³ Swami Prabhavananda :: *The Eternal Companion* (Vedanta Press, Hollywood, California, 1947), p. 116.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 121.

river after all the waters have flowed to the ocean is certainly not a sane man. Neither is he a sane man who thinks he will begin to practise spiritual disciplines only after the mind has become steady and tranquil.

We must understand that there is a mutuality between steadying the mind, and spiritual practice; the former leads to the latter, the latter to the former. Therefore Swami Brahmananda taught :

'Unless you meditate, the mind cannot be controlled, and unless the mind is controlled, you cannot meditate. But, if you think, "First let me control the mind and then I shall meditate", you will never enter the path of spiritual life. You must do both at the same time—steady your mind and meditate.'⁵

That is a very helpful precept for winning the grace of one's own mind and making spiritual progress.

If we are in inner struggle let us not pity ourselves, but take our case to the Lord and get Him involved in our battle in all possible ways. A Christian mystic teaches :

'... When you struggle with some passion, take care not to be dejected or faint-hearted if it resists your efforts, but arise and cast yourself down before God, saying from the bottom of your heart with the prophet : "Fight", O Lord, "against them that fight against me" (Ps. xxxv. 1), for I am powerless against them ! Then, seeing your humility, He will speedily send you His help.'⁶

God alone can help us if we have the humility to ask—in fighting not only evil forces from outside in the form of temptations, but also evil forces generated by our own lower nature. Eventually we shall come to learn that as we are, so is the world. In other words, temptations are seen to be there 'outside' because we are not yet pure 'inside'.

⁵ *The Eternal Companion* (Madras, 1945), p. 229.

⁶ *Philokalia*, pp. 408-9 ('The Narrative of Abba Philemon').

Now, what will sustain us in this struggle and practice, which will have to be carried on until the vision of God is attained, maybe in this life, maybe in a future one ? Only two things will sustain us through all our struggles, however bitter and seemingly interminable : (1) love for God, and (2) longing for liberation.

So when we are smitten by the world through our own mind, in every case we have to turn to God in love and tell Him in tears our story, though He knows everything before our telling. If we think that all the beatings are coming from God only, even then it is only to Him we have to turn. An Indian saint says in a hymn :

'O great Lord, though You may reject me, I have no inclination to relinquish Your lotus feet; even though pushed away by its angry mother, the suckling babe does not wish to leave its mother's feet.'⁷

When the child is beaten by the mother it rolls on the ground near the mother's feet and weeps saying, 'Mother, Mother' ! Then the mother takes the child in her arms.

In spiritual struggle, particularly at the initial stage, we cannot always understand what leads to defeat or to victory. Only through resignation to God in love, and for love alone, can we derive, directly from God, all the solace, inspiration and strength we require for carrying on our struggles. 'Betake yourself to no other refuge but God, in any situation of spiritual strivings.' That is very sound advice. Tear away all other refuges and protections and open yourself to the blasts of God. Let them come in all their fury and throw you face down on the ground. Bleed, but do not stop saying 'Mother ! Mother !' No other refuge is worth having, for every other refuge is in māyā, and so has to be rejected. 'Many are the afflictions of the

⁷ Yāmunācārya : *Stotraratnam*, verse 26.

righteous : but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.’⁸

How can we know that we have received the grace of our own minds? This can be known by certain signs. First, our doubts will no longer increase but decrease gradually. We shall have clarity of understanding and certitude of faith. An abiding sense of the essential, as distinguished from the non-essential, will enlighten our thought processes. One by one the divine qualities—*daivī sampat*—will be manifested in the mind. Power of discrimination between the real and the unreal will be quickened and the spirit of renunciation will be strengthened more and more. Remembrance of God will no longer be a halting hardship but a unique inner delight. Temptations will gradually lose relish and the miseries of life their sting. The ego which is the source of most of our inner and outer troubles, will shed its hood with fangs and poison, and become harmless. Dichotomy between the head and the heart will be a thing of the past. The *sattva* quality of the the mind will predominate over *rajas* and *tamas*. Practice of spiritual disciplines will no longer appear a hard task but delicious food. Pairs of opposites like heat and cold, happiness and sorrow, honour and insult will not be able to disturb our inner equanimity as before.

To sum up, the sign of the received grace of the mind is that its control no longer presents insuperable difficulty. And gradually the seeker develops a deeper insight into the meaning of self-control and discovers new dimensions of its meaning. An example may be given. Swami Turiyananda, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, taught:⁹

“A man who has controlled all other senses except the palate is not to be con-

sidered a master of his senses. When the hankering of the palate is controlled, everything else is controlled.”¹⁰

“When the palate is controlled the sex impulse is also controlled. Unless the senses are brought under control there cannot be any spiritual progress. Throughout the *Gītā* there is repeated mention of this: “Therefore, O best of the Bharatas, control thou the senses first, and thereby kill this sinful propensity of lust, which destroys one’s knowledge and realization.”¹¹

“Even if a single organ remains uncontrolled, all austerities, all efforts after spirituality become useless even as when there is a single hole in a pitcher, all the water escapes through that. You know that parable of Sri Ramakrishna, of the peasant irrigating his field. All the water escaped through a subterranean passage and not a drop of water reached the field!

“Even if a single organ is allowed to run out, that alone destroys the aspirant’s illumination, like water from a cracked leathern jar.”¹²

“Even the craving for sense-objects leaves an aspirant when he realizes the Lord.”¹³ Control of the senses is not to be brought about by a violent effort. Only by realizing Him is it perfectly achieved. But at first one must struggle for this end. Afterwards it becomes quite natural. Still one should not be over-confident. Just as the intelligent hunter catches a deer and ties it up, so after succeeding in controlling the organs one should be alert, and continue to hold the mind and organs in check.’

The seeker who has not yet fully received the grace of his mind is apt to attach a superficial meaning to the word ‘self-control’. He thinks that control of the sex instinct is enough self-control, and so he does not hesitate to let loose his palate, feeling that there is nothing reprehensible in

⁸ Psalms, XXXIV. 19.

⁹ The First Disciples of Sri Ramakrishna : *Spiritual Talks* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, 1936), pp. 169-71.

¹⁰ *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, XI. 8. 21.

¹¹ *Bhagavad-gītā*, III. 41.

¹² *Manusmṛti*, II. 99.

¹³ *Gītā* II. 59.

doing so. But when he really receives the grace of his own mind he understands and accepts fully the import of the above teaching about self-control.

In order to get the best spiritual results one should, for a considerable period of time, hold one's strivings rigorously in the frame of a routine. Routine work is seldom attractive. But generally speaking, no progress is possible without some basic regular and sustained practice of spiritual disciplines. Such daily steady practice helps the seeker to stay on the track, and saves him from back-sliding and temptations.

The mind no doubt revolts. But one must not pamper it. By constant prayer and firm determination it must be guided to do the chores of the routine. When through practising these disciplines we develop some love for God, then it becomes painful to give up those daily devotions. This is a sign of the received grace of one's own mind. In spiritual striving it is not all perspiration. There is inspiration also. It is not all pain and agony, there is joy and fun also. But at the initial stage it is more agony than ecstasy.

The idea of following a routine rigorously is to form a permanent habit. When the permanent habit has been formed, then the good mind will have been moulded. Any resolution by this mind is unbelievably powerful.

Swami Brahmananda says:

'Behind this mind of ours, there is a subtle, spiritual mind existing in seed form. Through the practice of contemplation, prayer and *japam* [or repetition of the Lord's name] this mind is developed. And with that development a new vision opens up, and the aspirant realizes many spiritual truths.'¹⁴

How do we know that a man has developed such a mind? We know it from the steadfastness of his devotion. When the

aspirant has developed this subtle mind, the practice of spiritual disciplines will become easier for him; but he should not on that account slacken his efforts and lapse into complacency. If due to a little exaltation felt during meditation he thinks he has attained a high state of spiritual excellence, then he is deluded. When he is not thus deluded, this is another sure sign that he has received the grace of his own mind, that is, he has developed the spiritual mind which already was 'existing in seed form'.

In *The Eternal Companion* we have Swami Brahmananda's teachings on how to win the grace of our mind. We shall here quote his words *in extenso* on this very important requirement of spiritual life:

'To give ourselves wholly to God is difficult because of this doubt which arises in the mind: "Since I have not known or seen God, how can I love Him? How can I surrender myself to Him?"

'This doubt, however, is removed if a man finds the grace of an illumined Guru. The Guru removes all obstacles and shows the path to the Eternal.

'Have intense faith in the words of the Guru and follow his precepts. The impurities of the mind will be washed away and the light of knowledge will dawn.

'If a man longs for God, if he is earnest about practising spiritual disciplines, he is sure to find a Guru.

'The man who has the grace of a Guru knows the path. Let him follow it diligently.

'The Vaishnavas have a beautiful saying: "A man may have the grace of the Guru, the grace of God, and of His devotees; but without the grace of his own mind, he comes to ruin."

'My boys, you have the grace of the Guru; you have, by the grace of God, the desire for spiritual knowledge, you have the society of the holy. Now you must strive to win the grace of your own minds, by the practice of self-control.'¹⁵

¹⁴ *The Eternal Companion* (Hollywood, 1947), p. 112.

¹⁵ *The Eternal Companion* (Hollywood, 1944), pp. 159-60.

In these words, 'Now you must strive to win the grace of your own minds, by the practice of self-control', we are given the entire secret as to how the grace of our mind is to be attained. The answer is complete in those few words.

But if the compassionate teacher did not stop with that, it was because he knew that to the aspirant the full meaning of the word 'self-control' is revealed only slowly, unless he is taught by an illumined guru. His teachings which follow are all related to self-control as a working means for attaining the grace of our own minds, naturally leading to higher spiritual results.

Proceeding, Swami Brahmananda teaches: "God is your very own." Have this truth firmly fixed in your hearts. Then everything will be easy.' Then everything will be easy' means that self-control and getting the grace of our own minds will be easy.

Proceeding further, he teaches other disciplines which will help us to attain the same objective:

'Give this life entirely to Him. Reserve no will of your own. He is the only refuge.

'The same instructions for spiritual disciplines do not apply to everyone. The Guru studies the temperaments and tendencies of each individual and instructs him accordingly.

'Beyond a few general rules, no individual can be told in the presence of another what particular path he should follow. I have seen in the case of Sri Ramakrishna, my Master, how he would take each disciple alone and give him, in private, the special instructions necessary for him. If you want to ask your Guru anything regarding your spiritual practices, you must do so in private.

'I will give you a few instructions which can be followed by all.

'First, have faith in God. Be firmly convinced that to realize Him is the only purpose of life. By knowing Him alone a man reaches eternal life and infinite happiness.

'Next, practice continence. Without perfect chastity, no one can hold fast to high spiritual ideals. To nourish the body, mind and brain and to secure their fullest development, continence is essential. A special spiritual nerve develops in a chaste man. With its aid, his memory, his capacity for spiritual understanding and his faith in God increase. He is able to experience spiritual truths which lie beyond the reach of the senses. That is the reason religious teachers stress the ideal of chastity.

'Thirdly, control your appetite. Take nourishing food which is easily digested. Avoid food that excites or produces lethargy. The brain must be kept cool, in order that you may meditate. Eat to keep the body healthy. Health is essential in the practice of spiritual discipline. 'Eat very little after sunset. Then you can meditate during the night. Daytime has many distractions. At night, nature takes on a quiet aspect and so the night-time is best suited for practising contemplation. At dead of night, with a little effort, the mind becomes absorbed in God.

'Do not make a show of your spiritual practices. When you meditate, meditate in secret.'¹⁶

It has to be remembered that these instructions were given by Swami Brahmananda to his monastic disciples. If these teachings will not suit the householders, that in no way will disprove their efficacy. Sincere householder aspirants should note that other teachings¹⁷ in the matter are available to suit their situation in life.

Our mind is like a computer. A computer can function only with what you feed it. It can manipulate the feed in a baffling variety of ways, but it cannot of itself get the feed. So the grace of the mind depends very much on what we feed it with. Unless we feed it wholesome and holy thoughts, we cannot

¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 160-1.

¹⁷ *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* has perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of this subject.

expect it to dower us with spiritual grace. Rāmprasād, the great Indian mystic, adopted a unique method of his own to supply his mind with needed food, through his songs. We shall quote here two of these which were dear to Sri Ramakrishna's heart.

In the first, Rāmprasād takes his mind aside and sings in an intimate, persuasive and sportive way:

'O mind, you do not know how to farm !

Fallow lies the field of your life.
If you had only worked it well,
How rich a harvest you might reap !
Hedge it about with Kali's name
If you would keep your harvest safe ;
This is the stoutest hedge of all,
For Death himself cannot come near it.

Sooner or later will dawn the day
When you must forfeit your precious field ;

Gather, O mind, what fruit you may.
Sow for your seed the holy name
Of God that your guru has given to you,
Faithfully watering it with love ;
And if you should find the task too hard,
Call upon Ramprasād for help.'¹⁸

If we analyse this song we shall find that Rāmprasād is training his own mind to behave spiritually. When our mind does so we get its grace.

The other song is even more illuminating. The mystic invites his mind to come along with him for a walk. Where? '... to Kali, the wishfulfilling tree.' He sings:

'Come, let us go for a walk, O mind, to
Kali, the Wish-fulfilling Tree,
And there beneath It gather the four
fruits of life.
Of your two wives, Dispassion and
Worldliness,
Bring along Dispassion only, on your
way to the Tree,

And ask her son Discrimination about
the Truth.

When will you learn to lie, O mind, in
the abode of Blessedness,
With Cleanliness and Defilement on
either side of you ?

Only when you have found the way
To keep these wives contentedly under
a single roof
Will you behold the matchless form of
Mother Syama.

Ego and Ignorance, your parents, in-
stantly banish from your sight ;
And should Delusion seek to drag you
to its hole,
Manfully cling to the pillar of Patience.
Tie to the post of Unconcern the goats
of Vice and Virtue,
Killing them with the sword of Know-
ledge if they rebel.

With the children of Worldliness, your
first wife, plead from a goodly distance,
And, if they will not listen, drown them
in Wisdom's sea.

Says Ramprasād: If you do as I say,
You can submit a good account, O mind,
to the King of Death,
And I shall be well pleased with you
and call you my darling.'¹⁹

An analysis of this song will show that the computer is being fed with selected spiritual ideas so that:

'You (mind) can submit a good account
to the King of Death,
And I shall be well pleased with you and
call you my darling.'

Our spiritual progress does indeed much depend on this 'my darling' which waits to be fashioned out of this imp which usually gives us unending troubles. And is not Rāmprasād's method a unique one for doing this ?

(To be continued)

¹⁸ *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1947), p. 189.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 67-8.

RICHARD ROLLE

THE SOLITARY SAINT OF HAMPOLE

BRAHMACHARI BHUMACHAITANYA

Who was Richard Rolle? History seems to have treated rather unkindly this fourteenth century English mystic, despite the survival of a large corpus of his writings, most of which prove inspiring literature. Rolle was a contemplative ('for by sitting I am most in rest, and my heart most upward'), and such men are, like the manner of life they have chosen, often isolated from our sympathy. Certainly Rolle's fiercely independent nature isolated him from a good many of the English clergy, and in his early years particularly he suffered much from their slanderous and abusive attacks. At the same time, his inner spiritual fire drew to him a large number of sincere seekers, to whom he appears to have remained bound by lasting and affectionate ties.

Richard Rolle was born in the small village of Thornton-le-Dale near Pickering in the county of Yorkshire about the year 1300. Today, Thornton-le-Dale is still a quiet and charming village lying amid a cluster of trees. A picturesque stream flows along the margins of a narrow roadway that winds through the hamlet. Occasionally, a footbridge supplies an entrance to a cottage. All in all, it is an idyllic setting, where life during the fourteenth century must have proceeded in much the same measured, pastoral simplicity.

Rolle lived until 1349, when he more than likely perished in the great plague which raged with particular violence that year in the north of England. In the city of York alone three-fourths of the population died. According to one of his biographers, 'It was most probably owing to the depletion of the monasteries by this terrible devastation that his name never appeared among

the roll of the canonized saints.'¹

But the nuns of the local convent to whom he acted as spiritual director—and he appears to have developed a number of pure relationships with women devotees—prepared this note to be inserted in the Breviary of the York Church:

'The Office of the Saint Richard, hermit, after he shall be canonized by the Church, because in the meantime it is not allowed to sing the canonical hours for him in public, nor to solemnize his feast. Nevertheless, having evidence of the extreme sanctity of his life, we may venerate him and in our private devotions seek his intercessions, and commend ourselves to his prayers.'²

Such was the faith of these good nuns in Richard's sanctity that they wrote their Office (meditations and devotions to be observed at regular daily intervals) with complete conviction that it would eventually be accepted by the Church. Although this did not come to pass, their work nonetheless remains, under the title *Legenda*, as a valuable historical document.

Richard's parents were quite likely poor, and we can be certain they were gratified when Master Thomas de Neville, a prosperous archdeacon of Durham, offered to support their son at Oxford University. The nuns of Hampole note in their *Legenda* that Richard was then 'of adult age', although he could not have been more than sixteen at the time. Adolescence, 'that glad season of life', was very brief indeed during the Middle Ages.

Oxford of the fourteenth century was considerably different from the city of Oxford

¹ Frances M. Comper: *The Life of Richard Rolle* (J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1929), p. 3.

² *ibid.*, p. 4.

of today. As one of the great medieval capitals of learning, it drew from a largely barbaric world a colourful and motley throng of scholars, sophists, lecturers, and students. Here one would find Jews in their yellow gabardines hurrying to places of business; men-at-arms from the nearby castle; friars dressed in habits of grey or black; the Black Benedictine and White Cistercian monks; and the students, many as young as fourteen or fifteen, outfitted in a fantastic array of colourful garments—some with a dagger at their sides, for this was not a gentle age.

The medieval university, since it accommodated a large influx of foreigners, was essentially cosmopolitan. It was representative of an age of contrasts, in which Christ's Gospel, which rejected mortal goodness and human perfectability, existed side by side with a Graeco-Roman culture that deified them. These two ways of life, the one humanistic, harmonizing and scholastic; the other ascetic, revelatory, and inspired by the zeal of renunciation, were in many ways unalterably opposed and would continue so until the Renaissance.

The Church, as well, found itself divided, and for many centuries medieval Christianity was to be torn by these two forces—the classic influences imposed upon it by such men as St. Ambrose, Jerome, and Gregory the Great; and the austere monastic communities and hermits, which provided the foundation for an often implacable and dogmatic Church. It was into this atmosphere of contradictions that Richard Rolle had been born.

In one of his later works, *The Fire of Love (Incendium Amoris)*, Rolle speaks of his youth in the following way: 'Lord God, pity me; my infancy was stupid, my boyhood vain, my adolescence unclean.'³

³ Richard Rolle: *The Fire of Love* (Translated by Clifton Wolters, Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1971), p. 81.

Whether such self-deprecation was mere expurgatory enthusiasm or the confession of a deeply repentant soul we have no way of knowing. But we do know that Rolle felt, at the age of nineteen, a sudden urge to change his way of life. From a number of passages in his works, we learn that he found the argumentative atmosphere of Oxford distasteful. Sophistry was characteristic of the age, but not of Rolle, whose spiritual temper rebelled against the academic constraints imposed upon the scholar. So he left his studies at Oxford and returned home. In his prologue to *The Fire of Love*, he tells us of this growing distaste for book learning:

'I offer my book for the attention, not of the philosophers and sages of the world, not of great theologians bogged down in their interminable questionings, but of the simple and the unlearned, who are seeking rather to love God than to amass knowledge. For He is not known by argument, but by what we do and how we love.'⁴

This is the sort of thinking—blunt, practical, unpretentious—that makes Rolle such a fascinating character. He was also a medieval anomaly. The scarcity of books during this period elevated their stature—and often beyond their real worth. As a result, academic knowledge earned a considerable reputation in the Middle Ages. Rolle, however, sensed the futility of such knowledge and remained singularly critical of scholasticism throughout his life.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 46.

Rolle's passage brings to mind two others from Indian scriptures: 'The Self is not known through study of the scriptures, nor through subtlety of the intellect, nor through much learning; but by him who longs for Him is He known.' *Kaṭha-upaniṣad*, I. ii. 23.

'Erudition, well-articulated speech, a wealth of words, and the skill in expounding the scriptures—these things give pleasure to the learned, but they do not bring liberation.' Saṅkara: *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, 38.

In their *Legenda*, the faithful nuns of Hampole have set down the circumstances of Rolle's abrupt departure from Oxford. They record that after his return to his father's house, Rolle asked his sister: 'My beloved sister, thou hast two tunics which I greatly covet, one white and the other grey. Therefore I ask thee if thou wilt kindly give them to me, and bring them tomorrow to the wood nearby, together with my father's rain-hood.'⁵

Although we may assume this odd request of Richard's created no small amount of wonder in his sister, she obeyed willingly and met him in the wood as agreed. Thereupon Richard divested himself of his old clothes (accomplished, we learn, behind the nearest bush), and donned the tunics, after having cut them here and there to roughly resemble the garb of a hermit. The rain hat completed the likeness. His sister, astonished at the transformation, began to cry: 'My brother is mad! My brother is mad!' Fearing that he would be restrained in his purpose, he drove her from him with threats and immediately fled to a nearby church to pray.

Unwittingly, he chose the very place usually occupied by the lady of the local manor (this was a pious age, when rich as well as poor regularly attended church), and became so rapt in prayer that he failed to notice the arrival of the woman and her sons for Vespers. The lady, who was the wife of John Dalton, friend of the Rolle family, apparently respected his devotion and refused to permit her servants to disturb him.

The next morning at Mass Rolle was again seen in the church where, we are told, he preached a sermon of 'virtue and power'. Richard was kindly invited to stay with the Daltons, presumably on the strength of his father's friendship with them. We do know that John Dalton was unusually understand-

ing of Richard's yearning for the solitary life; in fact, he insisted that Richard remain in his home, and went so far as to outfit him with more suitable clothes, and offer him food and an isolated room during his experiment in the hermit's life. In time, however, the two were to suffer a number of disagreements. One gets a strong hint of it in Chapter 15 of *Fire*, where Rolle writes that 'as adolescence dawned in my unhappy youth . . . I was still living amongst those who flourished in the world, and it was their food I used to eat. And I used to listen to that kind of flattery which all too often can drag down the most doughty warriors . . .'⁶ But, he says, he resisted these temptations and apparently left the Dalton household. For he states in a later sentence: 'From then on I continually sought quiet, and that although I went from one place to another. For to desert one's cell for reasonable cause does a hermit no harm any more than does its recovery if that seems right.'⁷

For the next few years, Rolle appears to have proceeded along an uneven path, searching diligently within himself for the voice of God. Then, one day while at prayer, he had an experience that was to transform his life. He describes it in detail:

'I was sitting in a certain chapel, delighting in the sweetness of prayer or meditation, when suddenly I felt within myself an unusually pleasant heat . . . It was, I found, more fervent and pleasant than I had ever known.' And he records that nine months later, while sitting in this same chapel, 'I knew the infusion and understanding of heavenly spiritual sounds, . . . sounds which cannot be known or heard save [by] him who has received it [them] and who himself must be clean and separate from the things of the earth.'⁸

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 92.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 92.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 93.

⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

As we might suspect, the experience influenced nearly all of his later writing. In a typical passage, he notes:

'A man overflows with inner joy, and his very thought sings as he rejoices in the warmth of his love....Once a man has known some such experience, he is never thereafter wholly without [it], for there always remains a sort of glow, some song or sweetness, even if these are not all present together in equal strength.'⁹

Note Rolle's reference to *heat*, *song*, and *sweetness*. They are terms he uses with great consistency in his writings to describe, though necessarily imperfectly, his inner spiritual joy.

Unlike the writings of St. Teresa or of St. John of the Cross, who have become two of the classic Christian guides along the mystical path, those of Richard Rolle noticeably lack the orderliness and categorical thinking so characteristic of the two great Spanish mystics. When reading Rolle, one has the distinct feeling he is communicating to us his most intimate and spontaneous thoughts, immune to public appraisal. But it is this spontaneity of expression and very often outspoken self-criticism that makes him so utterly credible. As Miss Comper notes in her study of Rolle:

'His absence of method produces a certain sense of freshness and truthfulness, for a too clearly defined exposition of mystical experience is to some minds a deterrent; since what in reality could be more labyrinthine and devious than the mystic's progress, or, to regard it from another aspect, the lover's chase after his Beloved?'¹⁰

Why did Rolle choose to live a solitary life? It deserves an answer, and Rolle provides it in *The Fire of Love*:

'I myself fled to the wilderness when it proved no longer possible to live harmoniously with men, who, admittedly,

were a frequent obstacle to my inner joy. Because I did not do the kind of things they did, they attributed waywardness and bad temper to me. But when I found trouble and heaviness, I called on the name of the Lord.'¹¹

Rolle was the product of an age which, to speak kindly of it, was unequivocal in its view of man's relation to God and to the world. For this reason, we find in Rolle's writings frequent use of 'sinner', 'damnation', 'hell fire', and so forth. These were terms reflecting the medievalist's view of a world sharply divided by good and evil; they bespoke a constant fear of eternal damnation. Rolle's experience of God did not fully divorce him from medieval theology; in many respects he thought and felt like any other man of the fourteenth century. However, what we must do is look beyond these external influences into the nature of his inner thought, which was never bound by such temporal prejudices and fears.

One thing is certain about Rolle: on nearly every page of his works there is an emphasis on loving God and longing for him. He writes:

'To love and be loved is the delightful purpose of all human life; the delight of angels and of God, and the reward of blessedness. If then you want to be loved, love! Love gets love in return. No one has ever lost through loving good, if he has persisted to the end.'¹² How does one persist? '... A man who gives up this world completely, and attends closely to reading, prayer, meditation, watchings, and fastings, will gain purity of mind and conscience, to such an extent that he would like to die through supernal joy, for he longs to depart and to be with Christ.'¹³

Death, of course, meant life to Rolle. Inflamed with love for Christ, he felt the

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 77. See also note 17 below.

¹⁰ Comper, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

¹¹ *Fire*, p. 128.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 121.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 121.

intense pain of separation from his Beloved, whom he found unable to identify with this world. To Rolle the world was a fearsome and treacherous place, which constantly threatened his contemplations. Death itself, therefore, becomes identified with the spiritual goal. The following statement expresses the intensity of this strongly medieval attitude:

'Death, why do you delay? Why are you so slow in coming to me, a man alive but mortal? Why do you not catch hold of him who is longing for you? Who can possibly assess that sweetness which brings an end to all sighing, a beginning of all blessedness, the gate to a desired, unfailing joy? You are the end of my grief, you are the goal of my toil, you are the cause of my fruitfulness, you are the entrance to my joys. Yes, I burn, I pant for you. If you come I will be safe. Ravished though I be with love, yet I still cannot enjoy fully what I so desperately want; not until I taste that joy you are going to give me. For if I must, or rather because I must, like all my forebears, pass your gate, I beg you do not delay too long, do not be too far off. You can see how I am pining because of love, how I am longing to die, how I am aflame for you.'¹⁴

We have mentioned Richard's influence over a number of women aspirants. One of these was a recluse of Richmondshire, Margaret of Kirkby. It was to Margaret that he dedicated *The Form of Living*, an essay composed of brief chapters on the spiritual life. It is in this work that he develops his three stages or degrees of divine love, known as Insuperable, Inseparable, and Singular. Of the first degree, Rolle states that love is Insuperable 'when nothing that is contrary to God's love overcomes it, but it is stalwart against all temptations and stable whether thou be in ease

or anguish, in health or sickness'.¹⁵ It is the sustaining and encouraging power of love, not reason, that has given men strength in their days of darkness. Rolle certainly must have been aware that it was, in fact, this force of love that caused him to leave Oxford to live the uncertain and insecure life of a hermit.

Of the second degree, Inseparable love, Rolle states quite beautifully that 'Inseparable is thy love when all thine heart and thy thought and thy might is so wholly, so entirely and so perfectly fastened, set and established in Jesus Christ that thy thought . . . never departs from him, sleeping excepted; and as soon as thou awakest thine heart is on Him . . .'¹⁶ Although Rolle does not use the term, he is, of course, referring to the discipline of constant *recollectedness*, of which teachers in both Eastern and Western traditions make mention. Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the eighth chapter of the *Gītā* tells Arjuna: 'Engaged in the yoga of constant practice and not allowing the mind to wander away to anything else, he who meditates on the supreme, resplendent Lord reaches Him, O Arjuna.'

The final and culminating stage, Singular love, occurs, Rolle states:

'...When all comfort and solace is closed out of thy heart, but of Jesus Christ alone. It seeks no other joy. For the sweetness of him who is in this degree, is so comforting and lasting in his love, so burning and gladdening, that he or she that is in this degree may feel the fire of love burning in their souls, as well as thou mayest feel thy finger burn if thou dost put it in the fire. But that fire, though it be hot, is so delectable and wonderful that I cannot describe it.'¹⁷

¹⁵ G. C. Heseltine: *Selected Works of Richard Rolle, Hermit* (Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1930), p. 36.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 36-7. Note Rolle's frequent references here and elsewhere to 'sweetness', 'heat', and 'burn-

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 96.

Rolle's mystical experiences had one very definite characteristic; they frequently presented themselves to his (as Evelyn Underhill notes) 'exalted consciousness' in the form of music, as other mystics have received such experiences in the form of visions or words. As we know, the inspirational and ecstatic nature of song has been and still is one of the great communicative devices between the soul and God. 'O let me sit alone', wrote Dame Gertrude More, 'silent to all the world and to me, that I may learn the song of Love'.¹⁸ We have already quoted Rolle's own description of the 'heavenly, spiritual sounds' which came to him during his initial spiritual experience. Throughout his life he attempted to imitate this joyful inner harmony by writing song after song to his Lord, which he sang in his solitary retreats. The medieval mystic gave to music the cosmic stature which later theologians have perhaps less wisely attributed to Law. Rolle, in particular, saw a correspondence between the music of his own soul and that of the measured harmonies of the universe. 'I call it song', writes Rolle, 'when there is in the soul, overflowing and ardent, a sweet feeling of heavenly praise; when thought turns into song; when the mind is in thrall to sweetest harmony.'¹⁹ And the intensity of Rolle's spiritual passion is certainly reflected in his songs. In the same chapter of *Fire*, Rolle includes one of them :

ing'. They express his own peculiar psycho-physical reaction to spiritual emotion. The reference to sweetness, in particular, must be seen in its contemporary setting. In Rolle's day, sweetness was highly valued because of its comparative rarity. Since sugar was unavailable, honey was the only known sweetening.

¹⁸ *The Spiritual Exercises of the Most Virtuous and Religious Dame Gertrude More*, quoted in Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (E. P. Dutton, New York, 1961), p. 78.

¹⁹ *Fire*, p. 89.

So, Jesus, I want to be praising you
always, such is my joy.

When I was down and out you stooped
to me, and associated me with those
sweet ministers who through the
Spirit give out those lovely and
heavenly melodies.

I will express my joy and gratitude be-
cause you have made me like one of
those whose superb song springs from
a clear conscience.

Their soul burns with their unending
love.

And your servant too, when he sits in
prayer, glows and loves in his fervour.
His mind is transformed : he burns with
fire ; indeed, he expands in the vehe-
mence of his longing.

And virtue, beautiful, true, lovely and
faultless, flourishes before the face of
his Creator.

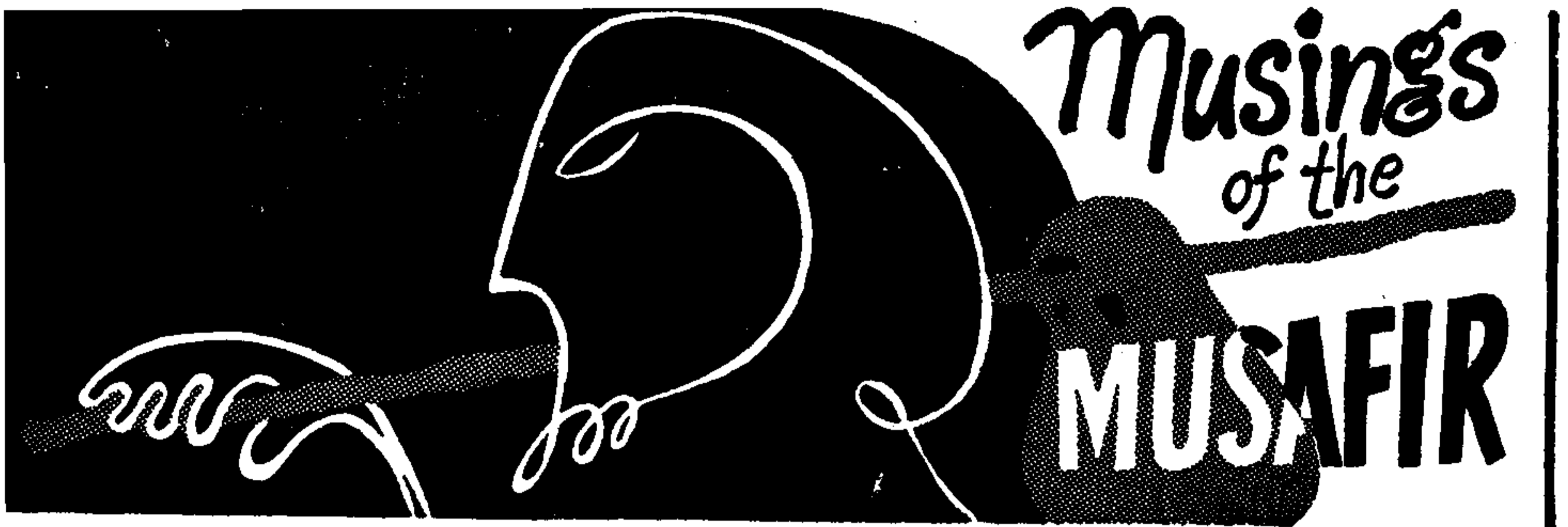
His song suffuses his whole being,
and with its glad melody
lightens his burden,
and brightens his labour.²⁰

Rolle's final years were spent in ministering to the needs of the remarkably large number of recluses and nuns in Yorkshire who frequently sought his spiritual counsel. Although the passing years contributed to his mellowing, he continued to remain at odds with the clergy. True, he was not quite the same fiery critic of his earlier years, when he could write : 'Behold, a youth, animated with righteous zeal, rises up against an elder, a hermit against a Bishop ; and against all, however great soever, who affirm that the heights of sanctity consist in exterior acts.'²¹ (In fact, one scholar [Horstman] believes the entire work, from which the above is quoted, is directed by Rolle against the local Bishop.) But as a hermit—and hermits were never really accepted into the fold by the English clergy—he occupied an unfavourable posi-

²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 94-5.

²¹ From the *Melum*, ii, p. xxii, quoted in Comper, p. 165.

(Contd. on p. 475)



PERSPECTIVE MAXIMS FOR TROUBLED INDIA

To be is to do: you cannot do better without being better. None could ever do so. You could not help doing better if you were really better. So the basic problem every morning for everybody everywhere is: how to be better. That is India's, nay mankind's greatest problem today. And the solution is simple: *Be better!*

*

If you are trying to do through politics what needs to be done through character, neither the name of Marx nor that of Mahatma can help you. Politics is no substitute for character. Indians in general will need to go a long way within, to accept this truth. This truth will pay no homage to any party or leader. Everyone will have to pay homage to it.

*

Attempts at building prosperity with borrowed money (to pay the interest on which you have to keep on borrowing, borrowing and again borrowing) are like laying the foundation of a house in sand. That this house will surely fall is not the real tragedy. The real tragedy will be that you will be under it.

*

True we live in an inter-dependent world. But whether you like it or not, the question will yet remain: Who is *more dependent?*

*

You need not feel high and mighty if there is a terrible crisis of character in America today. If you look around keenly, honestly, what encouraging thing do you see in this country? Only that India has no moral forum which can command you to stand before the people and speak the truth?

*

Students who feel it is all right to adopt any and all means for passing examinations, should know that their own Destiny will feel it all right that they reap what they sow—the counterfeit coins and clay-model fruits of life.

*

Elders may find fault with youth. To be sure, youngsters are not flawless. Youth

may find fault with elders. If the elders were flawless, whence came all the mess in this world? But does not mutual fault-finding double the faults? What is needed is to learn to see one's own faults. Then there will hardly be time to see those of others! What is more, others' virtues will begin to shine. That indeed is the true economics which may provide a golden harvest for the country.

*

The economics that concerns itself only with *artha* and *kāma*, and has no concern for *dharma* and *mokṣa*, is like a false denture in an old tiger's mouth. You need not fear it will bite any problem very deep.

*

If the green revolution fails, the Revolution may like to have a change of shirt to another colour.

*

If you cannot stop food adulteration, do not expect the youth to think and behave properly. The Upaniṣad in effect teaches that pure thought issues from pure food.

*

Be not surprised if you find on investigation that those who run big-money businesses in food adulteration and those who cause the high-jumps in price levels are the same persons or close cousins.

*

Those women who do not practise modesty or sartorial decency should not criticize the police for their failure to protect them from the roughs' lib.

*

Children more promptly do what their parents do than what they say. So parents should beware and behave. Juvenile delinquency has its root upwards (*ūrdhva-mūlam*) in adult delinquency. If there were no need of law-courts for adults, juvenile courts would be unnecessary.

*

If you seek a handsome job and wait for it, you may or may not get it. But if you refuse to sit idle and start doing something, the nearest job, the smallest job—maybe selling peanuts, waiting at tables, cleaning cars, tilling land—you have a job already. If you are honest, hard-working, with none of that demoralizing 'babu'-mentality, never accepting defeat at life's hands, buoyant and optimistic, you will eventually shine even though you be a shoe-shine. Man makes a job by using his hands and feet, energy and perseverance, intelligence and imagination rightly. Jobs do not make men.

*

Make money if you like. But watch out. When you find that money has started making you, stop, for soon it will start un-making you.

*

India is being destroyed from within by a virulent epidemic called selfishness. It is the devil incarnate in human beings. If it cannot be destroyed, India cannot prosper, no matter who rules the country. You need not go to New Delhi to fight this epidemic. It has to be fought in every mind and in every home.

If youth leadership manifests all the frailties of elders' leadership, how can we have the bonanza we all have looked forward to? And yet who can say the promise was not good? The truth is, without being quality-men you cannot lead. Every revolution which instead of making men breaks them will fail. Only man-making revolutions succeed.

When a nation is confused what can help it out? Education. When education is confused what can help the nation? Believe me, please: a very ancient, simple thing—prayer. India today is in dire need of sincere prayer without ceasing:

Lead us from the unreal to the Real.
Lead us from darkness to Light.
Lead us from death to Immortality.

(Contd. from p. 472)

tion in both the theological and social structure of medieval England. We know too, that loneliness, an increasing companion as the zeal of youth begins to diminish, must have come to Rolle in his later years. For in one of his touching essays addressed to Margaret of Kirkby, he writes, 'If thou canst not live without friendship, lift thy thoughts to heaven, that thou mayst find comfort with angels and saints, the which will help thee to God, and not hinder thee as thy earthly friends do.'²² We see a man gradually but firmly withdrawing from the external world, and his letter to Margaret seems to read like a self-revelation:

'When thou art by thyself, be ever, until sleep come, either in prayer or in good meditation. And ordain thy waking and thy praying and thy fasting, that it be in discretion; not over-mickle [over-much] nor over-little; but think ay [always] that of all things God most desires the love of man's heart....And therefore seek more to love Him than to do any penance; for unskilful penance is little worth or nought, but love is ever

the best, whether thou doest much or little penance.'²³

Rolle was now thoroughly convinced of the essential futility of merely speaking of God. But he appears to have constrained himself to remain in his cell, held there by his greater love. For he advises Margaret further:

'If ye list [desire] to speak, forbear it at the beginning for the love of God; for when thy heart feeleth delight in Christ, ye will not list to speak or jangle [wrangle] but of Christ. If thou thinkest it weary to sit by thy lone, exercise thyself stalwartly in His love; and He shall so stably set [restore] thee that all the solace of this world shall not move thee hence, for ye shall have no lust thereof.'²⁴

These words, which come to us from across the span of more than six centuries, still attract our attention. Why? Because Truth knows no boundaries; Spirit cannot be diminished by time. So long as men still seek that Spirit, saints like Richard Rolle will not be lost to their memory.

²² 'The Commandment of Love to God', quoted in Comper, p. 190.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 190.

²³ *ibid.*, p. 191.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Questions and answers are from: 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, translated by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1957. References: Question 1, p. 547; Question 2, p. 549; Question 3, p. 548.

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' are from *The Complete Works*, Vol. IV (1962), pp. 20-21.

Saints, whether active or contemplative, have a distinct and invaluable role in the human drama. Utilitarian considerations and arguments against them hold no water, as the level of their being and thinking has a cosmic perspective and relevance. While speaking of his God-intoxicated Master to a group of American disciples, Swami Vivekananda said: 'Such men are the makers of Christs and Buddhas, ever living, fully identified with God, ideal existences, asking nothing and not consciously doing anything. They are the real movers, the *jīvanmuktas* (literally, free even while living), absolutely selfless, the little personality entirely blown away, ambition non-existent. They are all principle, no personality.'

A few words reported from their mouths, a description of how they lived, talked and moved, contact with persons blessed by them, the very ground they trod—these can inspire and transform other souls, even after centuries. That is the true usefulness of saints. The Editorial of the month discusses this topic in a brief compass.

Twentieth-century developments in the various branches of science, especially those of physics and biology, relentlessly impel man to look for a spiritual basis of exist-

ence for himself, his fellowmen, and the environing cosmos. Once this truth is accepted, cultivation of ethical and spiritual values for its practical realization becomes inevitable for him. In 'Spiritual and Ethical Values', Swami Ranganathananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, points out how man's highest possibilities need to be developed by the cultivation of these superior values, and how modern science and Vedānta speak on this theme in almost identical phrases.

The article is the edited version of the public lecture delivered by the Swami at the Kabul University on 25 March 1973. Incidentally we should like to mention that the Swami visited Afghanistan at the invitation of the Afghan Government through the Kabul University, and the India Government through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, from 19 to 29 March, 1973.

In this instalment of the 'Excursions Into *Uddhava-Gītā*', Swami Yatiswarananda gives many hints about fortifying our inner life. Of them, those about developing the spirit of renunciation and regaining the faculty of 'direct vision' are especially worth nothing.

Though Richard Rolle is not canonized and thus is not officially dubbed a saint, he is a saint, a man of God, for all that. We may not see the performance of 'miracles' in his life, which are generally required for canonization. But miracles or no, he lived for the love of God and drew his every breath for Him. His life and words exude divine love which inspires earnest God-seekers even today as it did during his lifetime. An informative and enlightening sketch of Rolle, 'the father of English mysticism', is brought to our columns by

Brahmachari Bhumachaitanya who, we believe, is already familiar to our readers. His study of St. Philip Neri appeared in our June issue

Contemporary trends and events in India demand from our countrymen the qualities of character, courage, unity, and determina-

tion. Unless these qualities are cultivated and promptly manifested, the challenges of the present will not be met and mastered. Musafir's 'Musings' this month have taken the form of 'Maxims' which, if grasped and brought dynamically into the national life, may aid us in tiding over the troubled times.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE BRAHMA SUTRAS AND THEIR PRINCIPAL COMMENTARIES (A Critical Exposition) Volume I: BY DR. B. N. K. SHARMA, Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, 1971, pp. 428, Rs. 35.00.

Dr. B. N. K. Sharma is one of the best exponents of the Dvaita Vedanta which was systematically propounded by Sri Madhvacarya. In the present text which, is the first volume, he examines and explains the first chapter and the first quarter of the second chapter of the *Brahma Sutras*. The author starts with the assumption that the tradition sponsored by Madhva and his commentators enters 'much more incisively and in greater detail than others, upon a critical and comparative examination of its own and other traditions of interpretation of the Sutras, while endeavouring to establish the consonance of its position with that of the Sutrakara'. This is an assumption which cannot be the monopoly of Dvaita Vedanta. Every Acarya tried to do exactly this.

Eleven chapters covering 51 pages form the general introduction. Here instead of offering a comparative study Dr. Sharma has only explained the Dvaita position. Thus on the Sutra III. iii. 1 the word 'Vedanta' is made to mean 'the purport (*anta*) of the teachings of all the Vedas (*sarva vedanta*)' (p. 4). The support he derives from the great Dvaita authorities runs counter to what Sri Sankara says on III. iii. 4. Likewise the distinction between *paravidya* and *apara-vidya*, made by Sankara and others is rejected on very unconvincing grounds (p. 7). All the Acaryas before Sri Madhva are agreed that the fifth 'adhikarana' refers to the Sankhya view. But Dr. Sharma is with Sri Madhva (p. 12). Naturally such an approach does not make this study an impartial examination of the positions of the three Acaryas. The Sankhya position attacked in II. ii is a part of the epistemological enquiry.

At other places other aspects of the Sankhya view are examined.

Dr. Sharma takes the Vrittikara, Brahmanandi, Bhartriprapanca and others to be realists (p. 15). The late Sri P. Sriramasastri in his work *Dravidatreya Darsanam* has conclusively shown that these were Advaiting. Relying on Bhaskara, he takes Brahmanandi to be opposed to 'Vivartavada'. But relying on Sarvajnatman and on Anandagiri we have to reject Bhaskara's statements as untrue. Throughout Dr. Sharma is determined to argue that the 'Sutakara' was not in favour of a monistic philosophy (p. 35). One can sympathize with such a position; but one cannot easily accept the belittling of the earlier Acaryas.

Dr. Sharma offers an exposition of the text sutra by sutra. Here he does try to compare one interpretation with another, though the general bias is present everywhere. It would have been more illuminating if Dr. Sharma also considered the attacks on the Dvaita system found in Madhusudana's *Advaita Siddhi* and in Gauda Brahmanandi.

The present volume is a very good statement of Dvaita Vedanta.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

IN GOD'S IMAGE, BY JACOB ROSIN, Published by Philosophical Library, New York City, 1969, pp. 81, price \$ 4.00.

This book consists of eight chapters. After a brief introduction, the author sets forth the rules that govern the formation of predictions so far as future events are concerned. The lessons of history, he says, have less and less relevance as time goes on since the present age is wholly different from the past, thanks to the breath-taking discoveries in science and technology. We have therefore to fall back on scientific methods to form some idea of the shape of things to come. These predictions,

which the author calls prophecies, are governed by rules and these are set forth in the first and second chapters. In the third chapter the author makes the statement that research in the chemistry of proteins and nucleic acids will unravel the mystery of life, and holds out the possibility of man's rising to the level of God. A few extracts will give a clear idea of the author's claim on behalf of proteins and nucleic acids:

'What follows ... these consequences are more important for the ... destiny of mankind than anything else that may ever happen to it.' (p. 24)

'By unraveling the mystery of proteins we have found the key to the house of the secret of life.' (p. 27)

'Proteins are only part of the secret of life. In the living cell proteins combine and work along with another class of chemical compounds called nucleic acids.' (p. 28)

In the light of recent researches, he continues, 'It is becoming more difficult to gainsay that everything we include in the notion of "life" is nothing but nucleo-protein chemistry.' (p. 33) What can we not do, once we have mastered nucleo-protein chemistry? Starting from *homo sapiens*' as raw material—the author indicates—proceeding not by trial and error but systematically and methodically, purposively and consciously, we can set a goal and reach it. The goal will be nothing short of attaining of the status of God. This means that man can resemble God in respect of 'immortality, perfection, omniscience, and omnipotence'. (p. 60) 'Homo Sapiens will be superseded by a new species, homo sempervirens, a creature immortal, endowed with omniscience and omnipotence, without moral flaw, sexless and perfect, living in a world of abundance like Paradise before the Fall or Heaven after the Final Judgment.' (p. 73)

In this scheme there is no place for God or Religion. There will be no need to go through rigid moral, religious and spiritual discipline to attain perfection. *Jivan-mukti* (liberation-in-life) can be attained by mastering nucleo-protein chemistry. Matter is the only reality and chemistry the only saviour of mankind. Comment is needless.

SRI M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA—THE APOSTLE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA TO THE SOUTH: BY SWAMI TAPASYANANDA, Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1972, pp. 270, Rs. 4.50.

This book represents the current status of data on the life of the great soul, familiar to many through *The Story of a Dedicated Life*, published in 1948 from the same Centre. Easily the most not-

able additions to that fine book are the Reminiscences by three distinguished monks, at the end of the new book—all having appeared in the August 1948 *Vedanta Kesari*, shortly after publication of the *Dedicated Life*. As noted in the Preface, the other reminiscences in the current volume were available and extensively quoted in the original book; yet since none of them except Sister Devamata's was written by a monastic, the three added accounts are of unusual value.

The author has done a commendable job of condensing a great deal of material into a relatively brief biographical sketch, comprising the first one-third or so of the volume, and has tried to minimize overlapping with the Reminiscences, which had been interwoven into the first *Life*. Still, we are afraid, in the pruning process some valuable portions have been dropped. As for instance: reminiscences of Swamis Virajananda and Bodhananda. Again, a rewritten, possibly shorter, version of the older book's 'A Peep Into His Works' would have enhanced the value and the beautiful lay-out of the present work.

For the next edition, other hopeful additions obviously include an Index, especially in view of the necessary difficulty in combining Reminiscences with Biography. Glossary and bibliography would also help.

The general get-up is attractive and dignified. With four art-paper pictures, quality paper, and a hard binding, the book is modestly priced. Unfortunately there are quite a few typographical errors—chiefly mis-spellings, which can be readily remedied in the next edition. The book is a welcome addition to the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature.

INTUITION OF REALITY: BY SWAMI SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI, Published by Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Holenarsipur, 1973, pp. 116, Price Rs. 2.50.

This book gives the gist in English of the lectures delivered by the author in Kannada language at Bangalore during the week-long celebration of Sri Sankara's birthday (18.4.72 to 24.4.72). This is given in seven chapters, followed by a succinct summing up at the end.

The first six chapters give a faithful and lucid account of the fundamentals of Advaita as they were developed by Sri Sankara. The exposition is based on deep insight and very clear understanding. The topics are arranged in a most cogent and coherent manner. No gap is felt anywhere by the reader,

One follows the other in a logical manner. Every important position of Sri Sankara is substantiated by an apt extract from his writings, specially from his great commentary on the *Vedanta-sutras*. Passages from the Upanishads are also quoted. A very faithful and readable rendering in English of the citations is also given.

The author has several books to his credit. All of them bear on what is known as Sankara's Vedanta. Students whose knowledge of Sanskrit is not sufficiently deep to enable them to read Sri Sankara's writings in the original, cannot do better than read the works written by the Swami. A careful study of the present book will prove to be amply rewarding. We heartily welcome this publication.

SRI M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

PATANJALI'S VYAKARANA MAHABHASHYA, KARMADHARAYAHNIKA (2.1.51 to 2.1.72), Edited with translation and explanatory notes by S. D. JOSHI AND J. A. F. ROODBERGEN, published by the University of Poona, Poona, 1971, Pages 333+xxviii, Price not stated.

The Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit, University of Poona, has been doing valuable work, particularly in the sphere of grammar. The present work deals with that part of the *Mahabhashya* which is concerned with the compounds known as 'karmadharaya'. In the Introduction (pp. i-xxviii) the authors have given a lucid account of the topics discussed in this section by Patanjali. At the same time they attempt to relate Patanjali to Kasakritsna and others. At places they question Patanjali's statements (p. ix).

The text of the *Mahabhashya* is given along with the text of the 'Pradipa'. These two texts are rendered in a very lucid manner. Portions of the 'Uddyota' too are translated to explain some intricate problems. The arguments of Nagesa and others are taken into consideration while explaining the text.

This is a very useful text and it is indispensable to all students of the Sanskrit language.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

SRI VISHNU SAHASRANAMA, A STUDY, BY DR. H. J. ACHAR, Karur, Tamil Nadu, 1972, Pages 287, Price Rs. 12.00.

The great Bhishma taught the thousand names of

Vishnu to Yudhishtira and the text is found in the 'Anusasanika Parvan' of the *Mahabharata*. Sri Sankara commented on this text. One of the troubles in this text is the repetition of the same names. Every exponent has to explain this convincingly. Dr. Achar has divided his text into five parts: Approach, The Study in Detail, A Few Flashes, Six Initial Questions and their Answers, and Some Experiences and Anecdotes. Then he gives the thousand names with their English meanings. Finally the original text is presented.

The present text is not a mere rendering into English. It is a kind of spiritual autobiography of the author. It offers illuminating insights into the efficacy of the *Sahasranama*. One closes the present book with a firm conviction that a daily recital of the *Sahasranama* of Vishnu will bring great mental and spiritual peace and satisfaction. The analytical approach of the author is commendable. The book is written in an eminently readable style.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

BOOKS RECEIVED

ADORATION OF THE DIVINE MOTHER: BY M. P. PANDIT, Published by Ganesh and Co., Madras, 17, 1973, pp. 103, Price Rs. 6/-.

THE BANASTHALI PATRIKA—Special Number on Sri 'Aurobindo's Poetics: ED. BY RAMESHWAR GUPTA, Published by Banasthali Vidyapith, Jul. '71—Jan. '72, pp. 163, Rs. 3/-.

BHARATIYA VIDYA' (Quarterly)—Vol. XXX, Nos. 1 to 4: ED. BY PROF. J. H. DAVE, DR. A. K. MAJUMDAR, PROF. S. A. UPADHYAYA, Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Apr. 1973, pp. 167, price not given.

OUTLINES OF JAINISM: BY DR. S. GOPALAN, Published by Wiley Eastern, Pvt. Ltd., 1973, pp. 205, Price Rs. 12/-.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

MEMORIAL SERVICE HELD IN HONOUR OF SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA CENTER OF NEW YORK

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center held a Memorial Service in honour of Swami Nikhilananda in its Chapel on Sunday, September 2, 1973, at 11-00 a.m. before a gathering which filled the Chapel to its capacity. There were various speakers who participated in this service and they included the following Swamis from the various Centers of the Ramakrishna Order in the United States: Swami Satprakashananda of St. Louis, Swami Asehananda of Portland, Swami Shraddhananda of Sacramento, Swami Swahananda of Berkeley, Swami Sarvagatananda of Boston, Swami Prabuddhananda of San Francisco, Swami Asaktananda of Hollywood, and also the well-known scholar and author, Mr. Joseph Campbell. The presence of these distinguished guests and the beautiful floral decoration of the altar added to the dignity and solemnity of the occasion. Swami Adiswarananda opened the service with a prayer and read the messages of condolence received from Revered Swami Vireswarananda and Revered Swami Gambhirananda, the President and the General Secretary respectively of the Ramakrishna Order, and the messages from other revered Swamis, and then cordially welcomed the guest speakers on behalf of the Center. The speakers in their addresses paid tribute to Swami Nikhilananda

by recalling their loving memories of his life, his association with Holy Mother, and the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, his contribution to the dissemination of the message of Sri Ramakrishna to the seekers of God all over the world, his powerful writings, and his contact with the various noted personalities of his time. The service lasted for more than two hours, and in the end, Swami Adiswarananda thanked the speakers for their participation in the service, and concluded the service with a prayer.

As part of this Memorial Service there were two informal meetings on the evenings of Sunday, September 2, and Monday, September 3, in the Chapel, at 8-00 p.m. during which the visiting Swamis spoke on, 'The Holy Personalities I Met and Know of'. Their reminiscences of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and the singing of devotional songs, sometimes by the Swamis themselves and sometimes by the choir of the Center, left a deep impression on the minds of all present.

The Memorial Service was concluded with a special talk in the Chapel, open to the public, by the visiting Swamis, on Tuesday, September 4, 1973, at 8-00 p.m. The subject of the talk was, 'Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda: Their Unique Characteristics.' The talks lasted for more than two hours and were deeply appreciated by the congregation which was again quite large. The service was opened and concluded by the singing of appropriate hymns by the choir of the Center.
