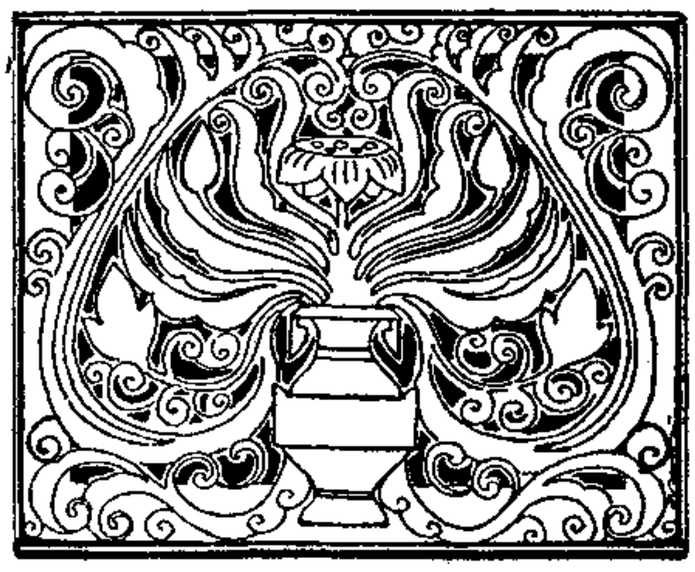
VOL. LXXVIII
MARCH 1973

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

ADVAITA ASHRAMA, MAYAVATI
HIMALAYAS



Editorial Office

P.O. Mayavati, Via Lohaghat
Dt. Pithoragarh, U.P.

Publication Office

5 Dehi Entally Road
Calcutta-14
Phone: 44-2898

Annual Subscription

India, Nepal, Bangladesh, & Ceylon	Rs. 8
U.S.A.	$ 4.00
Other Countries	£ 1.00

Life Subscription

Rs. 150 $ 100 £ 20

Single Copy

75 P. 35 cents. 10 P.

Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

MARCH 1973

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Cover:
Chauren Himal, Central Himalayas, Nepal.

Information for subscribers, contributors and publishers overleaf.

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXVIII MARCH 1973 No. 3

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (asked by a devotee): 'Sir, how does one receive God's grace ?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'God has the nature of a child. A child is sitting with gems in the skirt of his cloth. Many a person passes by him along the road. Many of them pray to him for gems. But he hides the gems with his hands and says, turning away his face, "No, I will not give any away."' But another man comes along. He doesn't ask for the gems, and yet the child runs after him and offers him the gems, begging him to accept them.

'One cannot realize God without renunciation. Who will accept my words ? I have been seeking a companion, a sympathetic soul who will understand my feelings. When I see a great devotee, I say to myself, "Perhaps he will accept my ideal."' But later on I find that he behaves in a different way.

'A ghost sought a companion. One becomes a ghost if one dies from an accident on a Saturday or a Tuesday. So whenever the ghost found someone who seemed to be dying from an accident on either of these days, he would run to him. He would say to himself that at last he had found his companion. But no sooner would he run to the man than he would see the man getting up. The man, perhaps, had fallen from a roof and after a few moments regained consciousness.

'Once Mathur Babu was in an ecstatic mood. He behaved like a drunkard and could not look after his work. At this all said: "Who will look after his estate if he behaves like that ? Certainly the young priest[1] has cast a spell upon him."

'During one of Narendra's early visits I touched his chest and he became unconscious. Regaining consciousness, he wept and said: "Oh, why did

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1 Sri Ramakrishna, who was at that time a priest in the Kali temple.

you do that to me? I have a father! I have a mother!" This "I" and "mine" spring from ignorance.

'A guru said to his disciple: "The world is illusory. Come away with me." "But, revered sir," said the disciple, "my people at home—my father, my mother, my wife—love me so much. How can I give them up?" The guru said: "No doubt you now have this feeling of 'I' and 'mine' and say that they love you; but this is all an illusion of your mind. I shall teach you a trick, and you will know whether they love truly or not." Saying this, the teacher gave the disciple a pill and said to him: "Swallow this at home. You will appear to be a corpse, but you will not lose consciousness. You will see everything and hear everything. Then I shall come to your house and gradually you will regain your normal state."

'The disciple followed the teacher's instructions and lay on his bed like a dead person. The house was filled with loud wailing. His mother, his wife, and the others lay on the ground weeping bitterly. Just then a brahmin entered the house and said to them, "What is the matter with you?" "This boy is dead," they replied. The brahmin felt his pulse and said: "How is that? No, he is not dead. I have a medicine for him that will cure him completely." The joy of the relatives was unbounded; it seemed to them that heaven itself had come down into their house. "But," said the brahmin, "I must tell you something else. Another person must take some of the medicine first, and then the boy must swallow the rest. But the other person will die. I see he has so many dear relatives here; one of them will certainly agree to take the medicine. I see his wife and mother crying bitterly. Surely they will not hesitate to take it."

'At once the weeping stopped and all sat quiet. The mother said: "Well, this is a big family. Suppose I die; then who will look after the family?" She fell into a reflective mood. The wife, who had been crying a minute before and bemoaning her ill luck, said: "Well, he has gone the way of mortals. I have these two or three young children. Who will look after them if I die?"

'The disciple saw everything and heard everything. He stood up at once and said to the teacher: "Let us go, revered sir. I will follow you."'

ONWARD FOR EVER!

Realisation is real religion, all the rest is only preparation—hearing lectures, or reading books, or reasoning is merely preparing the ground; it is not religion. Intellectual assent and intellectual dissent are not religion. The central idea of the Yogis is that just as we come in direct contact with objects of the senses, so religion even can be directly perceived in a far more intense sense. The truths of religion, as God and Soul, cannot be perceived by the external senses. I cannot see God with my eyes, nor can I touch Him with my hands, and we also know that neither can we reason beyond the senses. Reason leaves us at a point quite indecisive; we may reason all our lives, as the world has been doing for thousands of years, and the result is that we find we are incompetent to prove or disprove the facts of religion. What we perceive directly we take as the basis, and upon that basis we reason. So it is obvious that reasoning has to run within these bounds of perception. It can never go beyond. The whole scope of realisation, therefore, is beyond sense-perception. ... Man has in him the faculty, the power, of transcending his intellect even, a power which is in every being, every creature. By the practice of Yoga that power is aroused, and then man transcends the ordinary limits of reason, and directly perceives things which are beyond all reason.

Vivekananda

ENVIRONMENT AND VEDĀNTA

EDITORIAL

ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

By creating modes of fast communication, rapid transport, and wide diffusion of knowledge and culture, modern technology has served to knit various parts of the globe into one human family. The United Nations, ushered into existence at the termination of the Second World War, is a symbol of this one-human-family feeling. The beneficent functioning of the World Body with its multifarious limbs would have been inconceivable in any pre-technological age. But technology has not brought unmixed blessings. Despite all that its vociferous advocates say, thinking men and women can see that technology has created more problems than it has helped to solve. One such serious problem which has rudely shaken many conscientious scientists, thinkers, and public leaders all over the world, especially in the industrial and affluent West, is environmental pollution. As one writer pointed out, in our haste and greed to milk technology for immediate economic advantage, we have turned our environment into a physical and social tinderbox. The threat posed by pollution of rivers and reservoirs, atmosphere and oceans, is so serious that the whole world may be overtaken by severe floods, disease, and starvation within a century unless population and industrial proliferation, the main causes of environmental pollution, are quickly curbed.

Rightly has the U.N. bestirred itself to avert this looming environmental doom. In Stockholm last June, it convened the Conference On The Human Environment, in which some 1200 representatives from 112 countries participated. That the Conference venue happened to be the capital of Sweden was no mere coincidence. Sweden is one of the first few countries which, having successfully milked technology to create a super-affluent society, have at the same time

girded up their legal loins to clean up the environmental mess created by that 'milking'. Maurice Strong, the Canada-born Secretary-General of the Conference, had explained in late 1970 why the U.N. should be involved, by describing the global environment as 'the most intrinsically international of all the great issues which have confronted or are likely to confront the human race'. He had further asserted with the authority of an international ecologist, 'If the U.N. can't deal with the environment problem, it is finished.' As is seen by the events that followed, the U.N. rose to the occasion and roped in Maurice Strong himself—who once rode a bicycle to the Conference hall in true environmentalist fashion—to preside as the Secretary-General over what was called by some journalists the 'Whole Earth Conference'. He declared in this Conference that the environmental requirements of the world called for new international laws, new methods of managing the oceans and the atmosphere for the benefit of mankind.

None need be over-optimistic about the outcome of the Conference. For there were many gulfs to be bridged between the understandings of the representatives from different countries. If there were delegates who spoke with alarm in their voices about rising percentages of carbon monoxide and other chemical poisons in the atmosphere, and the ravages on marine life by pollutions, riverine and oceanic, there were others who wanted further industrialization because theirs were underdeveloped countries and economies, and they had 'a lot more to pollute'. As one witty observer summed up the Conference proceedings: 'Each delegation consists of an environmental minister, and behind him sits a scientist telling him what to say and a diplomat telling him not to say it.' Despite all this, some progress was made in appealing to all nations to severely minimize the release of toxic metals and chemicals into the environment, and to reduce the manufacture of synthetic materials, such as plastics, while increasing natural, non-polluting substitutes. It can be confidently said that the Stockholm Conference has stirred the conscience of the administrators and people of various countries to become aware of their responsibility in maintaining the environmental purity. As the Stockholm environmental bill of rights states: 'It is vital to add a new dimension to man's thinking. This is to see himself not as a separate, antagonistic exploiter of the earth, but as the steward and wise manager of the precious and limited resources.'

How India Can Plan Her Strategy

India was represented at the Stockholm Conference by a high-power delegation with the Prime Minister at its head. What the delegation said and did at the Conference will not be of as much significance as what it is going to do in this country for safeguarding the environmental purity. Anyone who has visited the huge sprawling cities such as Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, and Delhi, and tested the country's rivers and reservoirs for aqueous purity, will not be in any doubt about the necessity for introducing stringent anti-pollution measures throughout the country. Can this country, with its chronic poverty and labour unrest, educated unemployment and low G.N.P. figures, droughts, floods, and other such nature-made calamities, and wars, population-explosion, refugee influxes, and such other man-made catastrophes, think of imposing anti-pollution measures which will add to the cost of production and possibly result in the shutting down of some industries? How the leadership is going to tackle this challenging situation will be determined by its vision, maturity, courage, and farsightedness. The Stockholm conference, however, offered enormous insights and opportunities for countries like India to profit from the ex-

periences of both the developing and developed nations, so that the mistakes of others are not repeated and new designs for life and progress are thought out and evolved.

Technology can never become the Aladdin's lamp for India to remove all her economic ills. Even in the West, where people have the right temperament for technology and can work in an organized and efficient way, technology has failed to solve all the problems. In fact, its effects on man and environment are proving greatly harmful. If India persists in blindly imitating the West, she will end up by sinking irrevocably into the economic morass from which she wants to come out with the help of technology. Added to that misfortune will be the deterioration in her environment —earth, water, air, forests, wild and marine life—beyond any hope of restoration.

Indian leaders and planners should realize once for all that in any sound economic system the basic factor is 'man'. If technology has achieved prosperity and better living standards in the West, it is because the basic factor there is the 'practical' and hard-working Westerner. In India the national characteristics are somewhat different. We lack practical efficiency, we are easy-going, and are disorganized. That is why huge corporations and industrial complexes have not succeeded in producing the wealth they were intended to. With a population which is bursting at the seams, increase of technology will only aggravate the already acute unemployment problem. Knowledgeable economists say that a full-production economy is no longer a full-employment economy. As more technology will mean more unemployment and greater environmental contamination, India should turn her attention to small scale and cottage industries, arts and crafts, and a village-based economy. For quality goods produced without contaminating the environment, an export market can surely be found. With dwindling national resources and soaring population counts, many of the Asian countries would do well not to imitate the Western example. As to how an enormous population can become a nation's asset in making it strong and prosperous, modern China may teach a thing or two to other Asian countries. India has valuable blueprints about quitting poverty, but China—judging by the reports we get in the press—seems to have nearly achieved it.

Dr. Arnold Toynbee, one of the few really sane thinkers living today, gave some invaluable suggestions in a magazine article, and we hope they will be beneficial to developing countries in planning their strategy of increasing production while limiting environmental pollution and natural exploitation. It was a few months ago that he wrote in the magazine *PHP* published from Tokyo. Dr. Toynbee pointed out that the idea of material well-being which is the basis of all societies, capitalist or communist, results in the constant exploitation of nature, and that a time will come when nature has nothing more to give. Morally also, he pointed out, it is wrong to have greed as the main motivation in society, for inevitably greed must cause confrontation and clashes. Awe and wonder, not money, should be the criteria of the good life. Continuous industrial progress will inevitably lead to the despoliation of nature, environmental pollution, and possibly the end of the human race. The only way of preventing such a catastrophe, according to Toynbee, is to adopt the way of life recommended by the Buddha and St. Francis of Assisi, both of whom spurned money and the life of material ease. A voluntary limitation of wants is the only guarantee for the survival of the race as well as for having a satisfactory life.[1]

Dire poverty is bad and all efforts must

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1 *Vide*: *The Hindusthan Times,* New Delhi, dated Oct. 23, 1972.

be made to remedy it. But we should always make a clear distinction between poverty and poverty: poverty which is privation, and poverty so called because there is no parading of 'status symbols'. The second type of 'poverty' is a result of a great tradition and self-culture. If a large proportion of our citizens voluntarily takes to shedding luxury goods and 'status symbols' and shares its resources with the destitute brethren, the severity of their lot might become bearable. The spiritual happiness resulting from voluntary relinquishing of material possessions, let us remember, far outweighs the brutal joy of possession.

Lest the word poverty—even that which is voluntarily practised—become to us a synonym for humiliation and shame, we quote here a few lines from Swami Vivekananda :

> 'We want to have a little of asceticism. Renunciation conquered India in days of yore, it has still to conquer India. Still it stands as the greatest and highest of Indian ideals—this renunciation. The land of Buddha, the land of Ramanuja, of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the land of renunciation. the land where, from the days of yore, Karma Kanda was preached against, and even today there are hundreds who have given up everything and become Jivanmuktas—ay, will that land give up its ideals ? Certainly not. There may be people whose brains have become turned by the Western luxurious ideals ; there may be thousands and hundreds of thousands, who have drunk deep of enjoyment, this curse of the West—the senses—the curse of the world ; yet for all that, there will be other thousands in this motherland of mine to whom religion will ever be a reality, and who will be ever ready to give up without counting the cost, if need be.'[2]

Moral Pollution and Remedy

Environmentalists and the astronauts have made us aware that we live on a 'small, beautiful, fragile' planet which can be compared to a spaceship. The physical environment of this planet supporting the vast spectrum of life from microbes to man, belongs to the whole world. Any country which asserts that this is 'my atmosphere, my sea', and so 'I can do what I like with it' should be treated as a prattling ignorant child. 'The environment is indivisible,' said Maurice Strong, and he is dead right.

But is it the external physical environment, in which all living beings including man live, move, and have their being, alone that is indivisible ? Or the internal mental and moral environment that is also indivisible ?

As sure as man has a body and a physical environment that supports it, man has also a mind and a moral sense which are nourished by the psychological and moral environment. Just as it is necessary to keep the physical environment unpolluted for the health of the living beings, so is it necessary to keep the inner mental and moral environment uncontaminated. Disregard of this higher psychological law, and pollution of the mental and ethical environment—the 'noosphere' of Teilhard de Chardin—have given rise to the frightening sociological phenomena witnessed in contemporary societies, both in the West and the East.

Right-thinking people the world over, wonder at the all-round deterioration in human behaviour, though humanity has advanced in scientific knowledge, technological skill, and dominance over nature. Knowledge came but wisdom lingered. Skill with our tools has turned us into efficient devils. In dominating the forces of physical nature, we have failed to notice how we are dominated by the dark forces of the internal nature. Hatred, greed, violence, perverted sexual behaviour, delinquency, and drug addiction—to name only a few of the psychopathological symptoms of contemporary

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[2] *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas), Vol. III (1960) pp. 344-5.

society—have scarred the fair face of humanity. These subliminal emanations, similar to their physical counterparts of automobile exhausts and industrial effluents, are continuously pouring into the mental and moral environment, and creating the 'moral pollution' of the present day. Often they take the help of the mass-media of communication and the cinema, to travel from one part of the globe to the other. But thoughts, good and bad, travel freely in the 'mental space' from mind to mind, and hardly need the help of the mass-media. If durable pesticides like DDT finally get to the oceans and kill shoals of fish, we can safely conclude that 'moral pollution' has littered the beaches of human societies with the 'morally dead bodies' of millions of human beings. Environment is indivisible, and mental and moral environment is a hundred times more so.

When man fouls up the moral environment very badly, then God Himself has to body forth for cleansing it. Such an acute state of moral pollution is termed by the *Gītā* as *dharma-glāni*, decline in *dharma*. But man has his own role to play in the maintenance of the purity of the moral environment. This role has a positive and a negative aspect. The negative aspect consists: firstly, in refusing to receive the moral contagion through the mass-media and the cinema, through our eyes, ears, and mind; secondly, in not releasing morally debasing thoughts and vibrations into the 'mental atmosphere'. The positive aspect lies in sending out powerful thoughts and vibrations of purity, goodwill, love and sympathy to all human beings. In fact, to all living beings. As the Buddha commanded his followers to send out good thoughts daily, so we should send out thoughts of peace, goodwill, and love in all the four directions in this world, and to all those beings living wherever else in this vast limitless universe, every day of our lives and as frequently as we can.

And as the Hindu teachers exhort, let us pray:

> 'May all be freed from dangers. May all realize what is good. May all be actuated by noble thoughts. May all rejoice everywhere.'
>
> 'May all be happy. May all be free from disease. May all realize what is good. May none be subject to misery.'
>
> 'May the wicked become virtuous. May the virtuous attain tranquillity. May the tranquil be free from bonds. May the freed make others free.'

Vedantic Solution of the Problem

Whether modern man will be able to pull himself out of the self-created environmental and psychological mess is an open question. But there is no doubt that we who are inhabiting this planet earth in the closing decades of the twentieth century have the last chance to initiate the process of recovery. For that we must be prepared to undergo the painful re-education of a change of attitude towards ourselves, to technology, and to the whole world. Modern man must disabuse himself of the pampered self-conceit that he is the master of nature and creation. He should learn to be humble before that superior intelligence which peeps through every phenomenon of nature. Giving up greed and selfishness, he must learn to make technology his servant and use it for general human welfare. He should learn to look upon the whole world as one unit and realize that human life is possible only on the basis of his symbiosis with animate and inanimate nature. Man, he should know, is as much a part of the ecosystem as birds and beasts, bacteria and amoebae, plants and minerals.

Vedānta discovered this existential unity and solidarity thousands of years ago. Its cosmology and psychology have it as the basic postulate that man is physically and mentally a part and parcel of the cosmos.

His mind and intelligence are a part of *mahat,* or cosmic intelligence. Both the physical world and man's body and senses are derived from the same material as *mahat* is made of. But, then, the real source of both the material and mental universe is the Spirit or Brahman. Brahman is truth, consciousness, and infinity. The Universe of mind and matter is pervaded through and through by Brahman. Brahman is its origin, support, and ultimate destiny. As Swami Vivekananda, the paragon of Vedāntists, expressed it:

> 'The sum total of this whole universe is God Himself. Is God then matter? No, certainly not, for matter is that God perceived by the five senses; that God as perceived through the intellect is mind; and when the spirit sees, He is seen as Spirit. He is not matter, but whatever is real in matter is He.'[3]

Vedānta gives that spiritual vision in which one feels true kinship with all men and all living beings, and even with the so-called inanimate nature. The greatest benefit derived from Vedānta is this unique *Weltanschauung*. This world is not an end in itself, but an opportunity to regain one's infinite and perfect nature, which is obscured and forgotten in the melee of worldly existence. This Vedāntic world-view may well prove to be an antidote for the materialistic, greedy, and egotistic philosophy of life that modern man has learned to live by—the philosophy which has brought him to the brink of an ecological disaster. The revealing words of Swami Vivekananda beautifully summarize the truth of the unity and solidarity of this whole universe, visible and invisible:

> 'The whole of our lives is one; we are one, even in thought. Coming to a still higher generalization, the essence of matter and thought is their potentiality of spirit; this is the unity from which all have come, and that must essentially be one. We are absolutely one; we are physically one, we are mentally one, and as spirit, it goes without saying, that we are one, if we believe in spirit at all.... To proud man it is told: You are the same as that little worm there; think not that you are something enormously different from it; you are the same. You have been that in a previous incarnation, and the worm has crawled up to this man state of which you are so proud. This grand preaching, the oneness of things, making us one with everything that exists, is the great lesson to learn, for most of us are very glad to be made one with higher beings, but nobody wants to be made one with lower beings....But the scales are falling from our eyes, truth is beginning to manifest itself more and more, and that is a great gain to religion. That is exactly the teaching of the Advaita... The Self is the essence of this universe, the essence of all souls; He is the essence of your own life, nay, "Thou art That." You are one with this universe. He who says he is different from others, even by a hair's breadth, immediately becomes miserable. Happiness belongs to him who knows this oneness, who knows he is one with this universe.'[4]

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[3] ibid., Vol. I (1962) p. 375.

[4] ibid., pp. 372-3.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

The Lord My Refuge

Varanasi
7.3.1915

Dear—,

Swami Sivananda hasn't yet returned here from the [Belur] Math. Yesterday I received his letter. He has reached the Math after attending the [Sri Ramakrishna's birthday] celebrations at Ranchi. He may come here in about a week. He was extremely pleased to witness the celebration at Ranchi, especially the attitude of and service rendered by the local devotees.

Their good tendencies are gradually increasing and, through their example, many others are also becoming better. Why should it not be so? If one becomes devoted to God, it is bound to turn out that way. He, the Lord, has Himself said in the *Gītā*:

> 'For those who take refuge in Me, O Arjuna, though they be of sinful birth—women, *vaiśyas,* and *sūdras,*—even they attain the Supreme Goal.
>
> 'How much more, then, if they be holy *brāhmaṇas* or royal seers devoted to God! Having come into this transitory, joyless world, worship Me.'[1]

The reason [for worshipping God] is that there is no other means of obtaining release from this world than practice of devotion to 'Me' [that is, God].

I am not able to understand clearly what your conclusion is. You have written: 'I read in the *Gītā,* "The action that is performed with much effort—that is declared to be of the nature of *rajas.*"[2] Whatever action involves strenuous work is *rājasic* action and the result of *rājasic* action is misery.' Writing this much only, you have asked, 'Please write whether my conclusion is correct or not.' What it means, I understand thus: It is strenuous to pay a visit to Lord Viśwanātha. Therefore it is not necessary to go for the *darśan* [sight] of Viśwanātha. Because that action is *rājasic,* its fruit decidedly is misery. This is your conclusion, isn't it?

What you have quoted from the *Gītā* is said by the Lord to Arjuna in the eighteenth chapter to show that, depending on the *guṇa*s [qualities of *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas*], knowledge, action, and the doer are of three kinds. You have taken out only half the verse, and there came the difficulty in understanding its import. After instructing [Arjuna] about *sāttvic* action, the Lord, in order to point out what *rājasic* action is, said:

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः ।
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥[3]

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[1] मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥ *Bhagavad-gītā,* IX. 32-3.

[2] क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् । ibid., XVIII. 24.

[3] ibid.

That is to say, the work which is done with desire, or with the feeling of egoism, through great effort—that is *rājasic* work. 'Great effort" means preparation demanding a lot of endeavour and interest, and such action is *rājasic*. But then, if you have come to the conclusion, 'Practice of devotion is painful, hence it is *rājasic* and should not be undertaken', well, in that case what is left for me to say ?....

Further you have written, 'How much have I seen and heard all these days! And yet why doesn't the mind run towards the Reality ?—this is the grief.' How much after all have you 'seen and heard" ? King Yayāti borrowed the youth of his son, and after enjoying sense pleasures for ten thousand years was still unsatisfied. He said:

न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव[4] भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥[4]

That means, just like [the effect of] pouring clarified butter in the fire, the desires, instead of calming down through the enjoyment of desired objects, go on increasing. Thus, 'Desire must hence be given up.'[5] Meaning that there is welfare and happiness in renouncing desires. This verily is the conclusion according to the scriptures.

SRI TURIYANANDA

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[4] *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, IV. x. 9.

[5] तस्मात् तृष्णां परित्यजेत् ।

THE APPLICABILITY OF VEDĀNTA TO MODERN LIFE

SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

The appeal of Vedānta to the modern mind is due not only to its universality and rationality but also to its practicability. According to the Vedic teachers there is no inherent contradiction between the secular and the spiritual path, between the search for the temporal and the search for the Eternal; the worldly desires well regulated by ethical principles lead invariably to spiritual awakening.

As laid down in the Vedic social codes the one universal duty of all human beings, irrespective of their religious views, social rank, pecuniary situation, cultural standing, political status, and physical condition, is the observance of virtue (*dharma*). It consists in the cultivation of fellow-feeling, and the overcoming of ill-feeling, towards one's fellow-beings. Under no circumstances should one deviate from the path of virtue. 'Virtue protects him who protects her,' says the *Mahābhārata*. Further, 'From virtue arises happiness.' 'Virtue is the only friend that accompanies man beyond death.' 'To do good to others is a meritorious act, to hurt others is a sin.'

Virtue harmonizes individual and social interests. It is the stable basis of every as-

pect of the individual and the collective life. A man's physical, intellectual, aesthetic, as well as spiritual well-being rests on this. Unsupported by the inner goodness of individuals, social institutions, political organizations, economic systems, judiciary administration, scientific research, technological advancement, defence measures—howsoever well-devised and invulnerable—cannot establish peace, harmony, and welfare among men.

Moral conduct sustains man's inner nature. A seeker of secular good in whatever form, who keeps firm on the path of virtue, gets the utmost for his capacities and situation in life. By actual experience of power, position, learning, fame, health, wealth, beauty, pleasure, and so forth, he realizes their inherent shortcomings. He becomes convinced that there is no assurance of security in the temporal order, there is no prospect of unalloyed joy in the relative universe characterized by dualities. Yet in the depth of his heart there is a cry for life beyond death, for light beyond darkness, for joy beyond sorrow. Where else but in God can he find them? He becomes convinced that the Supreme Being alone is eternal, all-free, and perfect, while all else are short-lived, bound, and imperfect; none but He can be the Goal of life. Unless disillusioned of all the charms and glories of secular life, one cannot accept God as the sole Goal, as the sole Refuge. So we see it is not the bitterness of adversity that makes man a genuine seeker of God. It is the emptiness of affluence discerned by a virtuous man that turns his mind Godward in the true sense. This is the beginning of spiritual life.

Even then it is not easy to follow the spiritual path. Although the seeker of God tries to get rid of worldly desires, they cling to the subsoil of the mind persistently. It is through the practice of *karma-yoga*, the right performance of domestic and social duties with self-dedication to the Supreme Being, that he gains the competence for the path of devotion (*bhakti-yoga*) or the path of knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*), according to his inner aptitude. These are the two main ways of God-realization. Usually, it is through the development of ardent devotion to God that a *karma-yogī* becomes qualified for the practice of *bhakti-yoga*, the direct apprcach to *Saguṇa-brahman*, Personal God; and it is through the development of intense longing for liberation that he becomes qualified for the practice of *jñāna-yoga*, the direct approach to *Nirguṇa-brahman*, Impersonal Absolute Being.

The seeker of God who has gained competence for the practice of *bhakti-yoga* or the practice of *jñāna-yoga*, can devote himself wholly to spiritual disciplines; the performance of secular duties is not indispensable to his inner development as in the case of a *karma-yogī*; he can continue to perform his secular duties as before if his situation in life requires this. In that case his *karma* is usually regarded as a form of devotion or a form of knowledge and he is no longer considered a *karma-yogī*. However some Vedāntic teachers regard him as a *karma-yogī* and in their view *karma-yoga* associated with *bhakti-yoga* or *jñāna-yoga* can lead an aspirant to the realization of Brahman, *saguṇa* or *nirguṇa*.

Thus says Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* to his disciple Uddhava:

'He who thus worships Me constantly and exclusively, through the performance of his duties, knowing My presence in all beings, soon attains to steadfast devotion to Me.

'O Uddhava, through his undying devotion he comes to Me, the great Lord of all beings, the originator and reabsorber of all, their cause, the Brahman.

'Having his mind thus purified by the performance of his duties, and knowing My Divinity, he becomes endowed with

knowledge and realization and soon attains to Me.

'All his duties, consisting of specific rites, of those belonging to the castes and orders of life, if attended with devotion to Me, become supreme and conducive to liberation.'[1]

Vedānta holds before man the one Supreme Goal, but prescribes a gradation of ethical and spiritual disciplines suited to inner capacities and outer conditions of individuals, so that a person in any level of life can proceed towards the highest from where he is, by following the appropriate courses. This is the application of *adhikārivāda* or 'the doctrine of differentiation of

the capabilities of the aspirants'. Accordingly Swami Vivekananda remarks:

'...take man where he stands, from there give him a lift.'[2]

'Our duty is to encourage every one in his struggle to live up to his own highest ideal, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the truth.'[3]

'All the men and the women, in any society, are not of the same mind, capacity, or of the same power to do things; they must have different ideals, and we have no right to sneer at any ideal.'[4]

The Vedāntic teachers have shown how the highest truths can be applied to active life, how a person can live in the world according to the fundamental spiritual principles. The *Bhagavad-gītā* dwells particularly on the application of spiritual truths to man's everyday life. It teaches how a man can live in the world free from worldliness. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has indicated how intense activity and serenity of mind can go together, how a person can walk on the spiritual path in any field of life, be it a market-place or a battleground, a laboratory or a workshop, and how from the lowest level of life a man can reach the highest by rightly guiding his steps.

Considering the need of the age Swami Vivekananda has taken the far-reaching view of *karma*, which is performed in association with devotion or knowledge. In the present active, busy, complex life of intellectual triumph and material achievements —a life which cannot be readily turned into primitive simplicity or meditative quietude— there is a dire necessity for some spiritualizing principle of *karma* which can serve as a pivot for its maddening course of activity. It is possible for the modern man to practise renunciation *in* work rather than renunciation *of* work.

Besides taking the extensive view of *karma-yoga*, Swami Vivekananda has emphasized a twofold application of Vedānta in practical life.

(a) Arousing man's faith in himself by making him aware of the true nature of the self, which is pure, free, immortal and luminous. According to him, the man who has no faith in himself cannot have faith in God. With what deep feeling he says:

'Aye, let every man and woman and child, without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and learn that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind every one, there is that Infinite Soul, ensuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good. Let us proclaim to every soul—"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached"....Teach yourselves, teach every one his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come, when the sleeping soul is

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1 XI. 18. 44-7.

2 *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati), Vol. II (1963) p. 384.

3 ibid., Vol. I (1962) p. 41.

4 ibid.

roused to self-conscious activity.'[5] 'Manifest the divinity within you, and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it.'[6]

The knowledge of his innate divinity is the secret of man's development both in the individual and the collective life, secular as well as spiritual. It finds expression in two distinct ways: 'I am divine' and 'Thou art divine'. As a man becomes aware of his own divinity he becomes aware at the same time of the divinity of his fellow-beings. Along with the development of his faith in himself, his regard for others develops. His potentialities grow as his self-faith is intensified. His capacity for serving his fellow-creatures necessarily increases.

(b) Besides arousing man's faith in himself by making him aware of his divine nature, Swami Vivekananda has emphasized a second method of carrying Vedāntic truth into practice. It is serving man in the spirit of serving God. Says he:

'Look upon every man, woman, and every one as God. You cannot help anyone, you can only serve: serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself, if you have the privilege.'[7]

'You may invent an image through which to worship God, but a better image already exists, the living man. You may build a temple in which to worship God, and that may be good, but a better one, a much higher one, already exists, the human body.'[8]

In Swami Vivekananda's view all domestic and social duties and humanitarian deeds as well can be performed in the spirit of worshipping God in man. His message is the logical conclusion of the teachings of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Truly speaking, it is not altogether a new message. But its practical application in every sphere of life has not been tried before. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* Śrī Kṛṣṇa urges Uddhava to see God in all beings and deal with them as such:

'With a pure mind one should observe in all beings as well as in one's self only Me, the Ātman, who am both inside and out, and all-pervading like space.'

'This looking upon all beings as Myself in thought, word, and deed, is to My mind, the best of all methods of worship.'[9]

This mode of seeing and worshipping God in all beings is natural with the seers and the lovers of God who attain illumination. It is the spontaneous expression of their inner experience. Rare individuals highly advanced in spiritual life have also carried this ideal into actual practice. But its application in the lives of spiritual aspirants in general has not been tried before. Such a course has been recommended by Sri Ramakrishna in the present age. Says he, 'No, not kindness to living beings, but service to God dwelling in them.' It was the genius of Swami Vivekananda to find new light in this precept of the Master, and seek its practical application in the modern age for the amelioration of man's condition in every sphere of life.[10]

Another way of spiritualizing everyday life has been recommended by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The seer who realizes his unity with the Supreme Being in the state of *samādhi* does not lose sight of Him any

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5 ibid., Vol. III (1960) p. 193.

6 ibid., Vol. IV (1962) p. 351.

7 ibid., Vol. III p. 246.

8 ibid., Vol. II p. 313; cf. 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?' St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, 3 : 16.

9 XI. 29. 12, 19.

10 *Vide* Swami Saradananda: *Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master* (Tr. by Swami Jagadananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1952), pp. 821-2. Also cf. Sri Ramakrishna's words in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras, 1947), p. 357: 'If God can be worshipped through a clay image, then why not through a man?'

more. In the state of normal experience he sees everything in God and God in everything. All things and beings appear to him as varied manifestations of the One Supreme Being. This vision is natural to him.

However, a seeker of God, although he does not see Him, is asked to think of His presence everywhere, to look upon all things and beings vast and small, high and low, as the manifestation of the Divinity. But most spiritual aspirants find this difficult to practise in the beginning. So they are advised to proceed by stages. They are told at first to look upon the objects of special beauty, sublimity, goodness, and greatness as manifestations of God's glory. In due course they become accustomed to think of every expression of beauty as His beauty, every expression of power as His power, every expression of greatness as His greatness, every expression of goodness as His goodness; they recognize Him as the one source of all beauty, all power, all greatness, all goodness. Eventually they succeed in contemplating God as the One source of all things and beings, as the One Being underlying them all.

Such gradual stages of meditation on Divine manifestations in the world around us have been indicated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the tenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Just as a spiritual aspirant is expected to meditate on God in the depth of his heart with the eyes closed, so he is also expected to contemplate Him in the world outside with the eyes open. Before delineating to Arjuna His various manifestations in the universe around us, Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks of Himself as the One Self existing in the hearts of all:

> 'I am, O Guḍākeśa (an epithet of Arjuna, meaning conqueror of sleep), the Self dwelling in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings.'[11]

[11] *Bhagavad-gītā*, X. 20.

Then He relates to Arjuna His special manifestation as the highest and best in every class of objects. To cite a few instances: 'Of the bodies of water, I am the Ocean.' 'Of the mountains I am the Himalayas.' 'Of the rivers I am the Gaṅgā.' 'Of the seasons I am the spring.' 'I am the goodness of the good.' 'I am the knowledge of the wise', and so on.

In conclusion He says:

> 'And further, whatsoever is the seed of all beings, that am I, O Arjuna. There is no being moving or unmoving that can exist without Me.'
>
> 'There is no end of My divine manifestations, O Queller of foes. This is but a brief statement of My endless glories.'
>
> 'Whatsoever being there is possessed of greatness, beauty, splendour, know that to be a product of a fragment of My glory.'
>
> 'Or what avails it thee to know all these details? I exist pervading this entire universe by a portion of Myself.'[12]

The ideal is to see God in everything. The *Īśā-upaniṣad* opens with this instruction: 'All this—whatsoever moves (changes) in this moving (changing) universe—should be covered by the Lord.' Each and every individual can proceed towards the Highest from where he is, by following the graded courses suited to his stage of development.

It is worthy of note that a remarkable trait of Vedānta is its comprehensiveness. It sees life as a whole, takes into consideration all the aspects of life—physical, intellectual, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual. Of these the moral is the basis and the spiritual is the ideal, the goal, as explained above. In Vedāntic thought and culture, mystical experience, philosophic reason, faith, religious rites and ceremonies, domestic and so-

[12] ibid, 39-42.

(*Continued on p.* 112)

THE MOTHER'S HEART

The *Mahābhārata* (literally, 'Great India') delineates persons and events in truly epic dimensions. The various characters and incidents are painted in bold lines and strong colours. Mighty characters—mighty in their words and deeds, mighty in their passions and purposes, mighty even in disaster and death—stride through its pages. And so when it is to be war, it is a mighty clash of giants.

Duryodhana, the Kaurava king, lusting for power and possessions, haughty and headstrong, went all out to get rid of his cousins, the Pāṇḍavas, whom he considered to be the thorns in his path to empire and enjoyment. By means most foul he tried to deprive them even of their own rightful share of the kingdom and to destroy them. Failing in his evil schemings and conscious of the repercussions, he began to prepare feverishly for war. The best efforts of all well-meaning people to prevent war failed; it was forced on the Pāṇḍavas, becoming the only means for their honourable survival and for upholding right.

Duryodhana and his henchmen counted on their military might and political cunning to achieve their evil ends. And they well might have succeeded too but for Śrī Kṛṣṇa who stood by the Pāṇḍavas as their unfailing source of strength and guidance. In politics or diplomacy, in the battle of arms or wits, he was more than a match for the Kauravas. He could certainly meet them and beat them on their own grounds; only his genius and energies were solely oriented towards the establishment and preservation of *dharma,* of true justice and righteousness.

Many factors contributed to the ferocity of the war and the near-total annihilation of the combatants; but certain episodes sharpened the bitterness. Foremost among such was the heinous outrage to which the proud and virtuous Pāṇḍava princess Draupadī, the future empress of India, was subjected. In open assembly where the leading dignitaries of the land were present, Duryodhana humiliated her, taking advantage of the Pāṇḍavas' helpless situation. He actually called out to her to come and sit on his lap. His brother forcibly caught hold of her, dragging her by the hair, and proceeded to disrobe her. And that sealed the fate of the Kauravas. Proud and humiliated womanhood cried out for retribution if not revenge. Fierce Bhīma, the second Pāṇḍava brother, then and there swore that he would not rest till that shameful act was amply avenged, till Draupadī's dishevelled hair was tied back after dipping it in the blood of Duḥśāsana; till the infamous thighs of lascivious Duryodhana had been smashed in

combat. Under Śrī Kṛṣṇa's vigilant and all-wise guidance the pledges were eventually redeemed and it seemed that the bloody chapter of the *Mahābhārata* war had come to an end.

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Not quite though, for unfortunately a postscript had yet to be written and that a most bloody one. As Duryodhana lay dying, thighs broken and grovelling in dust —a pitiable sight for a proud monarch that he had been—Aśwatthāma came to meet him. He was Duryodhana's youthful companion and admirer. His father Droṇa, the great archery teacher to both the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, while commanding the Kaurava side had fallen because of a Pāṇḍava stratagem. This naturally rankled in the mind of the son. When the latter saw his friend and master also fallen, when he heard that the Pāṇḍavas' victory was due to a technical breach of combat rules, fuel was added to the fire. With his heart full of rage and eyes overflowing with tears he swore to Duryodhana, 'It is impossible for me to reconcile myself to the Pāṇḍavas' victory and your defeat. I shall finish off these Pāṇḍavas—all that remains of them. I shall wipe out their very race and shall come back to you with the glad tidings, while there is life yet left in you. I give you my word; rest assured.' Intensely moved by these words, Duryodhana then and there proclaimed him as the next Generalissimo of the Kauravas and without any delay Aśwatthāma embarked upon his awful mission.

Burning with unquenchable desire for revenge, he could not make out as to how to accomplish it. Night came and in the vast lonely forest he lay down beneath a big banyan-tree to sleep; but sleep he could not. The brain was feverish. As he lay awake something happening on the branches of the tree attracted his attention. In the thick darkness of the night a big and fierce owl began to attack and kill a large family of crows, young ones and all. Because it was night, the crows could not see while the owl could see very well; they became easy prey and the entire group was finished. This gave Aśwatthāma a sinister inspiration. Taking his cue from the owl, he immediately planned a nocturnal raid on the unsuspecting Pāṇḍava camp. He struck at the dead of night when their warriors and kinsmen lay buried in deep sleep, relaxed and resting after what they thought was the victorious end of an utterly exhausting war. There lay Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the Generalissimo who had killed Droṇa, Aśwatthāma's own father; there lay other commanders; and there slept all the young sons of Draupadī. Surprising them in this state, he pounced on them like a ghoul run amuck, and slaughtered them all in the most ruthless way. Only the charioteer of Dhṛṣṭadyumna somehow survived and lived to carry the ghastly news to the Pāṇḍava brothers and Draupadī.

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Needless to say that the Pāṇḍavas were stunned at the news. In one fateful moment overwhelming tragedy had struck them, neutralizing their recent hard-won victory, turning it into disaster. A sense of sorrowful foreboding and fierce wrath filled their hearts. But amongst them all it was the tragic Draupadī who was naturally the hardest hit. It was her children—all of them— who had been slaughtered in cold blood. Bitter tears blinded her eyes and could be checked only by the solemn words of Arjuna, her husband and the greatest archer of the day. 'Lady!' he vowed, 'Your tears shall surely be wiped, not by common words of consolation and comfort but by appropriate action. The head of this despicable assassin shall be brought and offered at your feet. And only then you can have the post-cremation bath in regard to your dear sons!' And at once he started

in pursuit of the villain, with Śrī Kṛṣṇa as his charioteer—the inimitable Śrī Kṛṣṇa who was his unfailing guide, support and strength in and through all the crises of life.

Meanwhile Aśwatthāma had gone to report his devilish accomplishment to dying Duryodhana. But the intoxication of triumph could not last too long. The news of Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa bearing down upon him immediately sobered him. Simultaneously the magnitude of his crime and the prospects of inevitable retribution began to dawn on him. Unnerved he fled posthaste to escape from the hands of Arjuna. But that proved to be as impossible as escaping from the consequences of one's own *karma.* Before long his horses became utterly fatigued and could not proceed further. He was now cornered, with none else to stand by him. Like a deadly animal at bay, he resorted to his last desperate act. Intent on saving his own wretched life by any means, he threw all discretion to the winds and launched the *brahmāstra,* the ultimate weapon. This world-destroying missile, normally taught and entrusted only to persons of high character and self-control, had somehow been improperly secured by Aśwatthāma. The desperado that he was, he flouted the prohibition against its irresponsible use on the battlefield.

Not having anticipated this action on the part of Aśwatthāma, Arjuna was taken aback at the power emanating from the missile. But the all-knowing Śrī Kṛṣṇa quickly revealed to him the facts of the situation. Aśwatthāma, without the full mastery of the *brahmāstra* and not knowing how to withdraw it, had straightway launched it with the willed intention of wiping out the entire Pāṇḍava race even if it meant the destruction of all the world. Arjuna, on the other hand, had full mastery over the weapon and was besides a most responsible and sober person. So, at Kṛṣṇa's bidding, he launched his counter-*brahmāstra,* but with a mind willing and praying for the welfare of humanity, including that of Aśwatthāma too! And when the resultant clash generated an intolerable energy threatening to engulf the world, he adroitly withdrew them both.

With this, Aśwatthāma had nothing else to shield him from Arjuna's wrath, no strength left except that of frustrated hatred. Swooping on him, Arjuna seized Aśwatthāma and bound him with ropes, even as an animal to be led for sacrifice. As he was about to drag him on to their headquarters, Kṛṣṇa intervened to put Arjuna on the alert: 'Take care that this wretched criminal, who has murdered innocent children in sleep, is not spared. In fact putting an end to his life would be doing a real service to him too, as that would prevent him from perpetrating further crimes and save him from further degradation. What he has done is repugnant even to his friends. Forget not your solemn promise to the bereaved Draupadī, that you will take this felon's head to her!'

Arjuna's moral judgement was certainly being put to test. He could never match Aśwatthāma's vicious cruelty with his own. Even in his counter-launch of *brahmāstra,* he had prayed for the welfare of this hateful adversary as well. But, again, his promise to Draupadī had also to be redeemed by all means. What was the way out ? He decided to take the captive criminal to Draupadī and there leave it to her to dispose of him as she liked.

So there he was, the unpardonable assassin, bound like a sacrificial beast, in front of the proud Pāṇḍava queen—his head bent down in shame, shame of crime as well as captivity. That was the lady who had to bear the brunt of trials, tribulations and insults for long years. And at last, when the thick darkness seemed to be lifting, when better days and peace, emancipation and restitution just seemed to be in grasp,

it was she again who had been struck down by misfortune by the slaughter of all her sons. She, if any mortal, could rightfully demand the utmost vengeance and reparation; all the world would understand and sympathize with her.

But what exactly did she do at this critical moment? Did she jump upon him and tear him to pieces? Or, like the legendary virtuous women of old, did she reduce him to ashes by her psychic power? Neither. She did something altogether strange and unexpected—she actually bowed down to the captive Aśwatthāma. Why? Because Draupadī was not a mere sensitive woman, not just a proud queen. She was something greater; she was a shining representative of Aryan womanhood. It was the noblest aspect of her Aryan womanhood—namely, the Aryan mother in her—that asserted itself at this poignant juncture. Her mighty mother-heart came out in all its sublime glory. Those mother-eyes did not behold before her the assassin, but a son, the son of the great Ācārya Droṇa, the Pāṇḍavas' own revered teacher. That was why she bowed down to him. Not only that; she could no longer bear to see him in ignoble captivity. 'Free him, release him,' she said. 'After all he is a *brāhmaṇa* and, besides, the son of your worshipful Guru Droṇa, by whose grace you have mastered archery in all its dimensions. It is that worshipful Droṇa I see in the son, nay as the son. And above all I think of his mother who still lives, the virtuous spouse of the Guru. Let not *that mother* be condemned to endless tears, *like me*, by losing her only son. There can be no greater fire, all-consuming, than the angered grief of such a virtuous mother.'

Those who witnessed the scene were thrilled. They enthusiastically endorsed her noble sentiments—all but the impulsive Bhīma. He insisted that the criminal should pay the fullest price; if he went unpunished and justice was miscarried, good people and society would not survive. Śrī Kṛṣṇa now posed the challenge to Arjuna: 'Yes, you must redeem your pledge to Draupadī and her mother's heart must be propitiated as well. Do that which will secure both ends, reconciling justice with mercy.' What a dilemma! But Arjuna rose to the occasion. He pressed into service a time-honoured provision of law that in the case of a guilty *brāhmaṇa*, disgracing him, depriving him of his property and expulsion from society constitute the capital punishment. So Aśwatthāma, who was already sunk in shame, was further disgraced by shaving off his hair and depriving him of the unique gem adorning his head, his precious possession and glory. And forthwith he was banished from society. The gem, symbolic of Aśwatthāma's head, was offered to Draupadī as the token of reparation. That was enough to satisfy her sentiments. But, generous and noncoveting as she was, she offered that gem, in turn, to Yudhiṣṭhira, the Pāṇḍava King—a gem among righteous men. Thus did the noble lady bring to a close the entire heart-rending episode by her compassion and sacrifice.

Little wonder that in Hindu tradition, Draupadī is honoured as one of the great ideals of womanhood, worthy of holy and grateful remembrance.

—EXPLORER

SOURCE: Adapted from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and *Mahābhārata*.

EXCURSIONS INTO *UDDHAVA-GITĀ*

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

(Continued from the January issue)

CREATION AND DESTRUCTION OF THE UNIVERSE

If creation of the world is true, its destruction also must be true. Creation and destruction are inexorable cosmic phenomena. So in this last teaching imparted by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we find the Lord telling the gods, who had come to see Him, that He would destroy the Yādava race which, intoxicated with power, had overstepped its limits and threatened to overrun the world.[1]

Creation and destruction of the world should not be understood in the ordinary human way, as, for instance, a potter makes pots from clay and then breaks them to pieces. These are cosmic processes eternally going on in the Infinite Divine according to certain cosmic laws. But the Divine stands as the immutable witness in His transcendental glory. The Lord by His mere presence gets all these cosmic processes done, without Himself getting involved in it. God is both transcendent and immanent. Just as changes go on in the human body without affecting the individual self, so changes go on in the world, which is, so to speak, the body of God, without affecting His status as the Supreme Self.

We are caught because we like creation and preservation more than destruction. It is only when we become really dispassionate that we realize the fleeting and deceptive nature of the phenomenal world. Only when we take our stand outside this world of creation, preservation, and destruction, do we get the proper perspective to judge the whole phenomenal universe. Even regarding the events of our own life, this higher, detached view-point is necessary. Pleasure and pain are inseparable. We should not seek one or the other. This is an important point to remember. Similarly we should not be too optimistic or pessimistic. We should learn to see things as they are.

THE STORY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE YADAVA RACE

Though there is the divine will behind destruction, the immediate cause of it is man's folly. People court disaster through their own evil thoughts and deeds. This idea is brought out in the story of the destruction of the Yādava race narrated at the beginning of the eleventh canto of the *Bhāgavatam*.

One day, the Yādava youths dressed up one among themselves as a pregnant woman and approached some sages who had come to Dwāraka (the capital city built by Kṛṣṇa) on pilgrimage. With much pretended humility the impudent youngsters made obeisance to the sages and said to them pointing to their disguised companion: 'This girl who is in the family way is very shy and does not dare to ask you directly what she is going to bring forth, a boy or a girl!' The sages saw through their joke and answered angrily: 'O foolish ones, she is going to give birth to a pestle which will be the cause of the destruction of your entire race.' On hearing this the boys were much frightened, especially as they found an iron pestle in the dress of their fellow. They went to the court and narrated the whole incident to the king. The people of Dwāraka who heard the story were filled with fear and wonder. The king got the

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1 *The Last Message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, I. 28-31.

pestle reduced to powder and had it scattered in the sea. But there was a little piece that had not been completely pulverized and a fish swallowed it. The iron powder was deposited on the beach by the surf, and it grew into strong reeds. The fish which swallowed the metal piece was caught by a hunter who took it out of the fish and tipped one of his arrows with it. With this arrow Śrī Kṛṣṇa was later on shot. In the meantime the Yādava men had a drunken brawl in which they freely used the reeds as clubs and killed one another. That is how the whole race was exterminated with the approval of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

This is the fact. Even the Incarnation has to die and even He cannot eradicate evil from the world completely. He could not stop the Kurukṣetra-war which left terrible destruction in its wake. But the Lord never becomes caught in the meshes of creation, preservation or destruction. He is ever unattached and remains the witness of everything. When evil in the world increases and virtue subsides, God incarnates Himself to give a boost to virtue. The momentum continues for centuries.

The Teacher and the Disciple

In striking contrast to the above episode we find next the tender love and devotion of Uddhava to his teacher and master Kṛṣṇa. The devotees of the Lord do not care for the destructive aspect of the Divine. For them God is always the God of love.

It is interesting to compare Kṛṣṇa's advice given to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra with the present advice given to Uddhava. Arjuna was advised to fight out the battle and Uddhava is being asked to renounce everything and take to a life of contemplation. Why this difference? The fact is the divine Teacher instructed according to the nature of the disciple. Arjuna had the fighting spirit in him. He was too *rājasic* (active) to take to a life of renunciation. So Kṛṣṇa advised him to attain purity of mind through the proper discharge of his duties, which meant in his case fighting. The case of Uddhava was different. Through long service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa he had already purified his mind to a great extent and was ready for the total renunciation that was demanded of an exclusively contemplative life. The Lord surely loved both His disciples but He guided them according to their individual need and temperament. This is what every great teacher does.

This corresponds to the story of Martha and Mary in the New Testament. Martha was of active temperament but Mary was so happy in the presence of Christ that she forgot all her duties. Christ understood the nature of both and instructed them without condemning one or the other.

Need for Self-effort in Spiritual Life

Even in the devotional scriptures we find great stress laid on self-effort. By just sitting quietly and doing nothing, closing our eyes, we cannot have divine grace. Conscious and intelligent striving and strict ethical life always play a great part in spiritual life. That is why, when Uddhava fell at Kṛṣṇa's feet saying that he was attached to the world and had no way of getting out of this bondage other than the Lord's grace,[2] Śrī Kṛṣṇa tried to infuse into him the spirit of self-reliance. This is typical of all teachings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and reflects the wholesome virility and dynamism characteristic of His own exalted life. A man without tremendous inner grit cannot live the spiritual life which demands great personal sacrifices. Hence Śrī Kṛsṇa tells His disciple:

> 'Very often in the world men who have truly discerned the truth about the uni-

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[2] ibid., II. 14-18.

verse deliver themselves from evil inclinations through their own exertions.'[3]

There is one important point to note here. You yourself choose the higher path. The responsibility of taking up the challenges of your spiritual destiny is entirely yours. If in this life the struggle becomes too much you have none to blame but yourself. Of course, God is ever ready to help us, His grace is already there with us but we must be willing to pay the full price that spiritual life demands. God's grace should not be made an excuse for sliding back.

Touchstones of Religion

How are we to decide that we are proceeding along the right path? According to Vedānta there are three touchstones of spirituality. These are scripture (*śruti*), experience (*anubhava*), and reason (*yukti*). This idea is brought out in the famous passage in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad*: 'This Atman is to be heard about, meditated upon, sought after, and finally realized.' The first great help is the guidance we get from scriptures or an illumined teacher. It is not enough to read the scriptures as a form of duty. One should think deeply about the meaning they contain and try to get a firm conviction about the possibility of realizing the truth. There is truth in the assertion that the very moment the right teacher instructs a really qualified pupil, the latter realizes the Truth in a flash. But the aspirant must first become really qualified through strict ethical culture.

The most important point to note in spiritual life is that one should have a direct experience of Truth. The so-called blind faith cannot be the criterion of religious life. Subscribing to some dogma is not religion (as it is understood in the West). Religion is realization. Religious truths should be verified in one's life, not once, but again and again. A little glimpse or vision is not the end, though it is better than nothing at all. Moreover, our spiritual experiences should tally with the scriptures.

Finally, both scripture and experience should be subjected to reasoning. This not only clarifies the ideas we get from scriptures but also enlarges our knowledge of ourselves. The best kind of reasoning is self-analysis. Reasoning can also be undertaken to determine what is everlasting and what is fleeting in this world. But dry intellectualism without any scriptural or intuitive basis may finally lead to scepticism and ruin a man's spiritual future. A man wise in his own conceit is bound to end in a personal tragedy.

Thus scripture, experience, and reason form the threefold test of spiritual life and this test is to be applied at all stages by all aspirants.

The Perfected Ones

The really earnest and alert aspirant finds lessons in every object around him. Every moment of his life is a moment of choice between the true and the false. Every spiritual aspirant must be wide awake and keep the fire of discrimination always bright in his heart. No event, no thought, should escape his notice. To such a person the whole universe is a great book of knowledge. It is this idea that is brought out in the story of the Avadhūta and his twenty-four teachers.

An Avadhūta is a liberated soul who does not conform to any external rules or forms. After having led a life of rigorous disciplines, he has transcended them, and seeing the Self in all beings, roams about freely on the face of the earth fearless and free from all desires. In his case life is simplified to the extreme. Really speaking we

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[3] प्रायेण मनुजा लोके लोकतत्त्वविचक्षणाः ।
समुद्धरन्ति ह्यात्मानमात्मनैव-अशुभाशयात् ॥
ibid., II. 19.

need simplification of life. Life in the West has become very complex and the mind is made to be more and more outgoing. The first thing we have to do in spiritual life is to come back to ourselves and from there proceed to the Divine who is in ourselves.

The perfect man is untouched by merit and demerit. That does not mean he avoids all actions. Having attained the goal he has no more use for merit and he cannot be affected by demerit. He does his actions for the welfare of the world, perfectly unattached to the results.

He no longer leads an impulsive life as ordinary people do. Such souls are in tune with the Cosmic Being and all their apparently spontaneous acts fulfil the higher cosmic purpose. These people have transcended ordinary moral codes, and good and evil. This characteristic has been very much misunderstood by Christian writers. Actually, however, they are, as Sri Ramakrishna says, like the perfect dancer who never takes a false step. The spontaneity of these great men is the end product of years of rigorous discipline. Purity has become natural to them. They wear moral virtues, as *Vedānta-sāra* points out, like so many ornaments. The perfected saints never deviate from the moral path, not even in unconscious thought. Sri Ramakrishna said with reference to women: 'Not even in a dream have I ever thought of woman in any way other than as my mother.'

These perfected men are free from conflicts and struggles. All the conflicts have been resolved. Having reached the goal of all struggle, they have no more struggles. The Divine works through them making them the instruments of the spiritual welfare of humanity.

Our Response to Reality

The Avadhūta mentioned in the book did not have any formal guru or teacher. His own purified intellect (*buddhi*) acted as his guru. The external objects like the earth, the hill, etc., only served to rouse this knowledge that was always within him.

We must know what is that aspect of Reality to which our whole soul responds. Begin with that aspect. That is practical spiritual life. We must know where we stand, what our conception of Reality is. Whatever we take to be real draws our whole life—our whole mind, thoughts and energy. If we take the world to be of the first order of Reality we cannot turn our mind inward. It gets focused outward. If we identify ourselves with our bodies and minds, then these become very real and we are at the mercy of sense-objects. Anger and greed, lust and sensuality do not leave us. But if we identify ourselves with the Ātman, the eternal witnessing Self within us, the body and mind appear to be unreal and hence the sense-objects too can no longer cause us misery. It is this idea that is conveyed through the stanzas 37 to 49 of the Second Chapter of *The Last Message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.*

There must be control with reference to all the sense-organs. Lust of the eye, lust of the ear, lust of touch—all these must be overcome. The food we take through all the senses—this is what Śaṅkara means by the word *āhāra,* food—must be pure. Of all the senses the sense of taste is said to be the most difficult one to control and, as long as this remains uncontrolled, full control of the other sense-organs is out of the question. Really speaking, it is easier to control sex than the tongue. Control has its gross and subtle aspects. Most people do not realize the importance of the subtle aspects of control.

If we practise control there may be some reactions within and without. A great deal of the difficulty can be avoided by acting intelligently. Many of the problems solve themselves as we grow in knowledge. Ignorance of all forms, at all levels, is the single

greatest cause of all our difficulties. To the extent that is removed we become free from conflicts. There is of course the question of time and the aspirant has to persevere in his struggle for quite some time.

To Receive is to Give

It is important to note that spiritual aspirants should not receive unnecessary gifts. There are several subtle laws operating in the spiritual plane of which the West as yet knows very little. There are subtle vibrations which affect the aspirant's mind if not his body. He should be careful about the food he takes. We may not be sensitive enough to feel the subtle vibrations connected with food but nevertheless they affect us. This is not a mere myth.

The holy man, if he receives the things of the world, gives back whenever the opportunity comes and thereby maintains the free flow. If we receive from others we must be ready to give to others. This is a general law and whoever breaks it comes to grief. This law holds good equally well in the mental plane also. Just as we acquire knowledge, ideas from others, so also we must pass it on to others. All knowledge is stored in the collective cosmic mind or *mahat*. If we take anything from it, which is the common property of all mankind, we must learn to hand it over to others. Cosmic energy is flowing in and through all of us. We must keep up the flow, otherwise it will build up an oversized ego which will be a burden to ourselves. We must never keep anything for ourselves alone in any plane—physical, mental, or spiritual.

Swami Premananda, a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, used to tell us: 'Keep your purse strings open at both sides.' This does not mean misuse of money and extravagance. One has to be alert about both receiving and giving of money. Moreover, this applies not only to money but also to knowledge and spirituality. He who does not follow this rule consciously, conscientiously and intelligently, becomes self-centred, shuts himself off from the cosmic stream and ultimately shrivels. This is the great lesson the Avadhūta learned from the sun.

> 'The Yogī accepts sense-objects through the sense-organs and returns them at the due season, without being attached to them, like the sun (giving back) the water (it sucked) through its rays.'[4]

A Lesson for Householders

The next lesson that the Avadhūta learnt was from the life of a pigeon. A pigeon built his nest on a certain tree in a forest and lived there for some years with his partner. They were so much attached to each other that they always moved together and forgot everything else in their mutual love. In course of time the female bird laid eggs from which, through the mysterious powers of nature, emerged the fledgelings. The happy parents spent their time bringing up the young ones and playing with them. One day when they went out for food the young ones flew about in play and were caught by a fowler in a snare. The mother bird, when she returned, saw the fate of her young ones. And, with her senses clouded by grief and frustration, she rushed headlong into the snare and was caught in its meshes like her young ones. Now the male pigeon returned and seeing what happened to his family could not control himself. He said to himself: 'Ruin has overtaken my family. There is no one left in this life for me to live for. Why should I continue in this lonely and miserable existence?' He could see his wife and children struggling for life and knew what fate awaited him if he went to them. Yet, owing to the power of delusion, he too fluttered his way into the deadly snare. The cruel fowler of course happily walked off with all the birds.

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4 ibid., II. 50.

The moral learned by the Avadhūta from this story was that one should not cherish too much affection or attachment for anyone. If one did, one would be smitten with affliction like the poor pigeon.[5]

Though full of pathos, the above story is a bitter portrayal of the householder's life. What is deprecated here is not marital fidelity or parental love. These are in themselves noble and uplifting. But in a larger perspective, in the wider context of human life, the story has a deep meaning conveyed in the final verse of the second chapter. 'He who attaining a human birth, which is like an open gateway to liberation, is attached like the bird only to family concerns, is to be considered as one who has fallen from his status.'[6] What the pigeon lacked was any higher concept of freedom. So also in human life, even if the husband and wife are good people, if they are too much attached to each other forgetting the goal of human life, the inevitable result is disillusionment for both. A thoroughly attached man may be virtuous in a worldly sense and may even lead a controlled sex-life. Nevertheless, if he has no higher ideal in life and does not consciously struggle for its attainment, he must one day or other face disappointment and frustration. No one has ever found complete satisfaction in the world of the senses. The joy in worldly life is dependent on three things: (1) outside objects, (2) sense organs, and (3) man's inner disposition. As is well known all these three are constantly changing. That is what the Buddha found out more than twentyfive centuries ago. To his discerning eye everything appeared to be filled with sorrow. And he wanted to find a way to lasting happiness. What, after all, did he finally discover after years of search ? It is *tanhā,* clinging to life, that is the sole cause of misery. As long as a man has desires he clings to life, and hence cannot avoid misery inevitable in life.

Unpleasant truth is far better than pleasant falsehood. We can manage to live in a fool's paradise for some time, but we can never cling to untruth for ever. Fleeting pleasures, even if they continually recur for many years, cannot be called real happiness. Sooner or later every man must wake up from his slumber and face the reality. Reality, whether we call it Truth or supreme happiness, demands a drastic change in our outlook on life. We should learn to view ourselves in a cosmic perspective. We should be able to see our present life as a link in a chain which is hidden in the darkness of our past life.

Should one remain for ever as a pleasure-seeking pigeon ? That is the real question. This human birth is a rare privilege, and if one does not make use of it to strive for emancipation, one wastes one's whole life just like the pigeon. One should try to follow the path that leads to the *summum bonum* of life and not care either for happiness or misery, which are inseparable from life and are the products of one's own *prārabdha-karma* (accumulated and active karma). Not only that, one should try to help the other members of the family also to do the same but with perfect dispassion. But if they do not cooperate, one should leave them to the care of the Divine, and go ahead with one's spiritual life with a lighter burden. There is no other way.

5 ibid., II. 52-73.

6 यः प्राप्य मानुषं लोकं मुक्तिद्वारमपावृतम् ।
गृहेषु खगवत्सक्तः तमारूढच्युतं विदुः ॥ ibid., II. 74.

(to be continued)

BLESSED SUFFERING

SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

A mother-to-be boldly bears the pain of child-birth because the necessary pain is to bring her the happiness of possessing her most precious treasure. A person tending a beloved friend or relation in the sick-bed may have to forget his own food and sleep. He does not mind these privations. The scientist who spends months in the Antarctic for research does not usually complain of the terrible austerities unavoidably involved in the project. Familiar examples like these can be drawn from many situations in human life. It is true that the natural instinct of man is to avoid pain, but often he has to court suffering for the sake of his own happiness. So 'blessed suffering' is not a contradiction in terms.

When we come to spiritual life, suffering has not merely to be endured but often loved. For many saints and seers great agony became the most important door to illumination. The Sāṅkhya philosopher, Īśvarakṛṣṇa, was neither dogmatic nor pessimistic when he formulated the precondition of spiritual search as suffering: 'Man turns to higher enquiry from the impact of the three sufferings of life.'[1] If we are always surrounded by pleasure and have no occasion to know what poverty, starvation, infirmity, or bereavement are, our mind will have little chance to seek the Eternal at the back of the transitory. So Prince Siddhārtha, a captive within the walls of royal luxury, had to wait for the spark of renunciation to be ignited till he saw with his own eyes the dark shadows of human misery. 'Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted,' said Jesus Christ. By comfort, Christ must have meant the blessedness of God-experience and the price for that experience is 'mourning'—that is to say, bereavement, dishonour, illness, frustration, and so on. Hunger and thirst are surely enemies to life. Yet they may be friends to the spiritual seeker who is aspiring after a truth which is above life. 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled'—declared Christ.

Sex through the path of *dharma* is a well-recognized value in our society. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā*: 'I am the desire in beings which is unopposed to *dharma*.'[2] Yet at a stage in our spiritual life uncompromising chastity, however difficult it may be, becomes the rule. We read in the *Gītā*, '... to gain which goal they live the life of continence'.[3] Complete continence though not necessary in the numerous vocations of life is a *must* in the higher mystical life. Said Jesus Christ:

> 'There are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.'[4]

The last sentence of this teaching is significant. Christ did not mean to force absolute continence on everybody. There are grades of religious life. The householder who cannot forego bodily relations with his or her spouse can, of course, practise religion and may progress to a

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[1] दुःखत्रयाभिघातात् जिज्ञासा । *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, 1.

[2] धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ।
Bhagavad-gītā, VII. 11.

[3] यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति । ibid., VIII. 11.

[4] St. Matthew: 19. 12.

considerable extent. But higher spiritual experiences which need an attenuation of body-consciousness are impossible without the nervous system being free from the impulses of sex. So Christ said, 'He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.' Yes, in the religious history of mankind, hundreds of men and women have voluntarily 'made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake'. They have been ridiculed and condemned by many but they themselves have cheerfully passed through the trials of their self-denial. In his teachings to the *bhikṣus* (monks), time and again Buddha depicts the blessings of the 'homeless state'. Home—which to a man of the world is the cornerstone of his happiness—has to be shunned by the seeker of the highest spiritual freedom. This reversal of values surely does not indicate a morbid state of mind. The person who seriously treads the path of renunciation does so with full knowledge of its implications—its uncertainties, dangers, and sufferings.

The ordinary man rarely does learn anything from suffering. Hit by affliction he moans and groans helplessly. When the period of agony is over he forgets all about it and tries to laugh and dance once again. He does nothing basically to prevent the recurrence of the suffering. The spiritual seeker, on the other hand, draws great lessons from sorrow which for him is a door to spiritual elevation. From bereavement and loss of fortune his conviction in the evanescence of things matures. Estrangement from friends leads him to see the inherent contradictions of life—a face of māyā. Failures and disease teach him humility. Insoluble crises guide him to resignation to God. Kuntī Devī, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, 'Give me suffering, Oh Lord, so that I shall not forget Thee.' Humiliation helps the spiritual aspirant to develop patience and forgiveness. 'O Tulasī,' wrote the Saint Tulasīdās in a couplet, 'go where people do not praise you. That will keep your ego low and remembrance of Rāma will be effective.' Frustration of hopes becomes an occasion for the spiritual man to practise indrawnness.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* prescribes contemplation of suffering as one of the spiritual disciplines for Self-knowledge—reflection on the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness, and pain'.[5] By such contemplation the mind of the spiritual aspirant learns to see a complete picture of life. Normally, we face the world with many prejudices, many false assumptions. Our experience is always selective. We tend to ignore what is frightening and unpleasant and hug that which is bright and pleasant. But is not life a mixture of opposites? Is there not death by the side of life, illness walking behind health, poverty lurking behind wealth, dishonour always ready to pounce upon fame, enmity waiting to defile friendship, and frustration challenging hope? This duality of things is in the very fabric of existence. To deny this is self-delusion, and self-delusion is never conducive to peace of mind. Yes, the spiritual seeker has to examine life in all its aspects without any prejudice or fear. Then the mind develops balance and becomes prepared to see that which is above the inherent contradictions of life. In the process of this unbiased examination of the world the spiritual seeker, of course, has to undergo a lot of mental suffering. Many presumptions have to be discarded, many false anticipations are shattered, many pleasant dreams are broken. Yet this suffering brings to him great strength, power of judgement, and calmness of temper. It gives him the ability to look

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[5] जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-व्याधि-दुःख-दोषानुदर्शनम्। XIII. 8.

through the superficial and touch that which is really stable.

Voluntary suffering in the religious context may sometimes lapse into a morbid self-esteem. In that case suffering as a *sādhanā* (spiritual striving) defeats its purpose. Fasting, vigils, continence, and similar self-denials are never ends in themselves. Austerity made into a fad often feeds one's ego and becomes a stumbling block to higher spiritual experiences. A sincere spiritual aspirant should be very cautious about this obstacle.

When a person faces suffering with the right attitude as a means to a higher end he cannot be called pessimistic. The sane attitude to life should neither be pessimistic nor unduly optimistic. Wisdom is not to cower when misery frowns nor to lose one's balance when pleasure is at the door. The eternal infinite Spiritual Reality which is at the back of the universe and also in the core of our personality, is above pain and pleasure, above all the dualities of experience. The spiritual man tries to keep his vision pointed to this Reality, living his life with as much detachment as possible.

A person who is seeking spiritual fulfilment develops the capacity to disregard suffering. This capacity grows from a tangible experience of inner joy and peace as a result of his prayers and meditations. God for him is not an empty concept. As he goes on with his spiritual practices God becomes more and more real to him. The experience of God compensates for all the physical and mental afflictions he has endured in his journey. 'The Lord is my strength and song', sang Moses.[6] St. Teresa wrote :

'Possessing God
Naught does one lack ;
Alone, God suffices.'

Rāmprasād, the great saint of Bengal, thus expresses this feeling of fullness in the last line of one of his songs : 'Pleasure and pain are now the same ; a sea of bliss is rising from the heart.'

Men and women, not necessarily religious, who dedicate their lives to the service of man in various ways without any selfish motives, have to pass through tremendous ordeals of suffering. Many of them bear these ordeals smilingly. Suffering for them is a part of their mission. It is blessed suffering. Great spiritual personalities, after passing through the trials of self-denial during their stage of *sādhanā,* have to face suffering again in a different manner. Impelled by a feeling of compassion for all beings which invariably follows God-realization these great men plunge into the service of humanity. Even though they, through their spiritual illumination, have risen above the dualities of the world of māyā, they choose to live and work in that world gladly facing all its impacts—cruelty, hate, animosities, persecution, and even death. Their suffering is often keen but to them it is blessed suffering.

Let us conclude by quoting a few lines from Swami Vivekananda's *Angels Unawares* :

'Then sorrow came—and wealth and
power went—
And made him kinship find with all
the human race
In groans and tears, and though
his friends would laugh,
His lips would speak in grateful accents—
"O Blessed Misery !" '[7]

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[6] Exodus : 15. 2.

[7] *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas), Vol. IV (1962) p. 386.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN A MODERN SECULAR STATE

SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

Has religion any role to play in a modern secular State ? The obvious answer seems to be that it has not. If the State is really secular and modern, how can religion have any place in it ? Either the State is altogether opposed to it or at least indifferent to it. China is an example of the former, Russia of the latter. China has banned religion outright, Russia has not banned it exactly but makes no bones about the fact that she is not going to encourage it. You may practise religion—there is no law that can prevent you from doing so, but you are left in no doubt that it is not liked.

But China and Russia are not the only offenders in this respect if of course opposing religion or being indifferent to it is an offence. All so-called modern States have more or less the same attitude about religion. They may or may not be secular but they either discourage religion or leave it strictly alone. Somehow or other there is a widespread belief that a modern State has to be stridently anti-religious. As if opposition to religion is an essential ingredient of modernism. If a concession has to be made, it must at least say that it is secular. India is an instance in point. Her leaders wanted to make India a modern State in the sense the States in the West are. They thought that to do this they had to eschew religion and declare that they were secular. Later, however, they have modified the stand by declaring that as secularists they are not against religion but they do not wish to identify themselves with any particular religion. In the Indian context, this is understandable, for there being many religions in India and there being much rivalry among them, it is a good policy for the State to declare that it is completely neutral in religious matters. It is possible to question if there was no alternative to it but one derives some comfort from the thought that behind this secularism there is no hostility to religion as such but simply an anxiety to maintain impartiality as between the various religious groups.

There is yet another argument which can be put forward in support of secularism: Unless a State is strictly secular in its approach to socio-economic problems—that is, if it allows its decisions on such problems to be influenced by religious beliefs and traditions or the kind of obscurantism which often goes in the name of religion —disastrous consequences will follow. Socio-economic problems are essentially problems of environment, of history, ethnics, traditions, systems, institutions and similar other factors. Religion has no relevance to these problems except in an indirect way. The knowledge needed to solve these problems has to be sought elsewhere. Do we go to an engineer when we have a health problem ? If the problem is one of food shortage, epidemic or environmental pollution, religion will not be able to solve the problem, only science can solve it.

The question then arises: What do we need religion for ? Do we need it at all ? There was a time when we did not know how to explain a solar eclipse, an earthquake or an epidemic. We thought that they happened because we had done something which gave offence to God. We, therefore, tried to appease Him as best we could. We know now why they happen and if we cannot control an earthquake or a solar eclipse, we certainly know how to control an epidemic. There are countries where epidemics are completely unknown. Birth or death is no longer a mystery. We know now how or why it happens and we no longer attribute it to the whims of a supernatural power.

Similarly, if a child is born deformed or a woman remains barren it is not due to the malevolence of any deity but to the malfunctioning of some organ or some virus or there is something gone wrong biologically. There is hardly any physiological problem which man does not understand or cannot tackle. There was a time when man worshipped the forces of nature from fear but now he is able to control them and is in fact using them for his own comfort. His power over nature is almost supreme. In the past man was very much dependent upon his environment but now he can, to a large extent, change the environment as he likes.

The progress that man has made over the past few decades is breathtaking. But what has made this progress possible ? Science and technology, and not religion. It is, therefore, argued that if man has to make further progress, he must depend more and more upon science and technology, and avoid religion altogether, for it is a hindrance, cannot stand the test of reason, is unscientific, encourages daydreaming, and makes man otherworldly. In any case, it is redundant in this age of science and technology. People point to the western countries and say, 'Look, how they are progressing. They are progressing because they do not make too much fuss over religion as the countries of Asia do.' In fact, critics of religion think India's progress has suffered because her people cannot get away from traditionalism, a weakness directly traceable to religion. There are inhibitions which religion imposes which make man cower before the challenges of life. A man free from religious superstitions is pragmatic, bold and self-confident ; a religious man is unsure of himself, suffers from wishful thinking and always hopes for a miracle which never happens. To these critics religion is synonymous with medievalism. It is doomed and is bound to fade out as man progresses in science and technology. A modern State has no use for it.

But can religion be dismissed so easily ? Can man do without religion ? Protagonists of religion think just as you cannot get out of your skin, similarly you cannot get away from religion. It is something deep within you, something that clings to you despite everything you do to shake it off. It is religion that keeps you dissatisfied with your present situation and drives you on and on till you reach a stage when you feel you have achieved what you wanted to achieve, till you have achieved the best and highest, and there is nothing further you want to achieve. It is dissatisfaction that is at the root of progress, that gives the motivation to strive for improvement. According to Swami Vivekananda, this dissatisfaction is universal. We are dissatisfied because there is a sense of inadequacy in us, a sense of something we want but which is now missing. We feel we are not what we ought to be or that what is our due has eluded us. There is a hunger within us, a hunger for more and more. At first, we begin by thinking that if we have more money or more power or more sense pleasure we will be happy. Some of us have these things to saturation point, yet we are not happy. The richest man is not necessarily the happiest man. Nor is the most powerful man or the man who has the whole world's sense pleasure at his command. Even the most scholarly man is not the happiest man. No man, in fact, is happy.

Because there is this unhappiness, man is never at rest but is always seeking what he thinks will give him a sense of fulfilment, a sense of having achieved what he regards as of supreme value. What he achieves may seem trash to others but so far as he is concerned, he wants nothing better. If you love paintings, you will think nothing of spending a million dollars on a Picasso, if of course you can afford it. Others may think you are crazy, but you think your

money is very well spent. To some, an idea is more real, more important, more vital than any material object. A noble idea is worth the whole world to them.

But what idea has the greatest appeal to man (or an animal)? Freedom. At first, we are troubled if there is any curb on our physical freedom, that is, if we cannot have as much sense pleasure as we want. But, as Swami Vivekananda says, ...out of this lower consciousness grows and broadens the higher conception of a mental or moral bondage and a longing for spiritual freedom'.[1] The real goal of life is freedom, freedom in its fullest sense. All religions promise this freedom though they describe it differently. It is the embodiment of this freedom which is called God. 'The goal of life is communion with the Supreme. It is a life of realization, a gnosis, an inner intuitive vision of God, when man achieves absolute freedom and escapes from the blind servitude to ordinary experience.'[2] God may be a mere postulate, an idea, a state of being, but consciously or unconsciously, all of us are striving for this goal called God. The fact of God may be disputed but the fact of man's hunger for freedom and ultimately for God cannot be disputed.

It is wrong to suppose that science and religion are implacable enemies. They are essentially one, one in the sense that both represent man's struggle against nature. Science is the key to man's struggle against external nature whereas religion is the key to his struggle against internal nature. Man has to conquer both external and internal nature: external nature to ensure his physical well-being and internal nature in order that he may be a better man morally, he may not suffer from inner conflicts and tensions, may have peace, joy and happiness. One without the other will leave him incomplete. Man is about to complete his conquest of external nature, but he has done little or nothing so far about conquering internal nature. Despite all his achievements in the field of science and technology, he remains a 'civilized savage'. Thanks to the gadgets we have invented, our physical existence today is easy and pleasant. But what about our minds? Have we been able to conquer our minds? Are we not still prey to our own elemental passions? Buddha used to say that a real hero was he who had conquered not a territory but his own mind. All of us are conscious today of the great peril which threatens humanity. The Big Powers have in their armoury such a vast array of atomic weapons that if one of them in a moment of frenzy unleashes war the whole mankind may be wiped out. The Big Powers themselves know this, but it is doubtful if this knowledge is enough of a deterrent. What is the way out then? Religion is the only way out. Not rituals, theology or faith but what may be regarded as the essence of religion—compassion, truthfulness, justice, fellowship, etc. Science has improved the conditions of life to an extent one never thought possible, but unless this is matched by an improvement in man's moral and spiritual level, man's future is bleak. There is too much hatred, suspicion, and greed among us. We are at constant war with ourselves and our fellow-men. We fight not only big wars, we also fight many small wars, wars which are no less deadly. We fight those wars silently, often imperceptibly, and continually. Though they cause no physical injury they maim the spirit and make us abnormal men and women. It is in the mind that war, small or big, really begins. We must rid the mind of the evil of selfishness, anger and hatred. How do

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1 *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas), Vol. I (1962) pp. 336-7.

2 Radhakrishnan: *Occasional Speeches and Writings* (Combined Editions—1952-59) (The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, March, 1960), p. 318.

we do it? It is only through religion that we can do it. Religion gives the motivation to fight this evil. All religions teach self-control. We must pledge ourselves to a life of self-control.

By a modern State we understand a State which says that it is going to see that everybody in the State is happy and thriving. In other words, it is a welfare State, a State which holds itself responsible for everything that happens to its citizens whether it is physical or moral. If something goes wrong with the psyche of its citizens, if large sections of them show signs of insanity, the State, that is, if it is a truly modern State, cannot afford to ignore it. The alienation of the younger generation from the older one, essentially a psychological problem, is threatening to disrupt society everywhere. Can a modern State say that the problem does not concern it?

There are similar other problems which man faces now which have their origin in his mind. The State must find solutions to those problems, otherwise it is not living up to its promise as a welfare State. Man is not yet man, he is still an animal. His struggle against nature, his evolution, is still going on. Physically he is not likely to change much, perhaps he has already reached the zenith of his development. His progress henceforth will be on the moral plane. There have been great sages and saints born in every age and every society who demonstrated man's great moral and spiritual potential. They are not myths but real. Buddha is a fact of history. If there has been one Buddha, there can be other Buddhas as well. Even if it is an impossible goal, it is well worth trying for. It is the effort we make that is important. Let it be understood that man has limitless possibilities. He is not just body but also spirit, not merely animal but also divine. Every soul is infinite. 'From the lowest worm that crawls under our feet to the noblest and greatest saints, all have this infinite power, infinite purity, and infinite everything. Only the difference is in the degree of manifestation.'[3]

What does religion do? It helps man manifest this infinite power, this infinite purity. It transforms him, makes a sinner a saint, a man a superman. It tells man, 'Look, there is your goal, follow that goal, go on and on till you get there.' It tells him that he must be himself, his true self, here and now. It gives a meaning to his life. Life is not mere existence, but an opportunity, a challenge. When Socrates died he told the citizens of Athens that nothing could deflect him from the pursuit of truth. He did not know what death was like but he did know that a life of ease and comfort, a life without a purpose, a life given to sense-enjoyment, was contemptible. It is religion that makes man spurn wealth, worldly power, social status, and instead seek truth, knowledge and moral excellence. What man *has* is not important, what he *is* is important. Religion is the science of 'being and becoming', as Swami Vivekananda defined it. It is growth from within, growth towards better archetypes of manhood. The modern State needs religion, because it wants to improve the quality of its men and women; it wants men and women who are moral, who feel for others, who can sacrifice everything for a truly noble cause, for the cause of truth and justice. Man's flights to the moon are a measure of his supremacy over external nature. He may win more such laurels in the future, but what does it avail if he loses his soul? He must conquer his internal nature also, otherwise the disquiet which haunts him will not go. Civilization will be at peril if his moral stature is not raised. Industrial development has given man afflu-

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3 Swami Vivekananda: *op. cit.*, Vol. III (1964), p. 407.

ence but it has robbed his peace. He is spiritually sick. He needs the care which only religion can offer. The picture of a technologically advanced modern State is an astonishing mixture of success and failure, success where physical welfare is concerned, failure in matters of spiritual care. The State stakes everything to give its citizens physical comfort but where the question is one of their moral and spiritual development, the State is unconcerned. Is this not a fatal mistake? Has this not cost mankind much already in blood, pain, and misery?

> 'We help the growth of trees, do we not? Left to nature they would have grown, only they would have taken a longer time; we help them to grow in a shorter time than they would otherwise have taken. We are doing all the time the same thing, hastening the growth of things by artificial means. Why cannot we hasten the growth of man?'[4]

The modern State cannot afford to be indifferent to the religious issue. In its own interest it should apply more and more religion, for otherwise it is going to be overwhelmed by anarchy and violence. The problem of the present age is that passions rule man: his conscience does not. Unless the animal in man is curbed he may annihilate himself. At this hour of crisis the State must play its part: it must make man conscious of the god in him by using the influence of religion. There is, therefore, no question of the State discarding religion; it should instead call it more and more to its aid to rehabilitate man in his divinity.

4 Swami Vivekananda: ibid., Vol. II (1963), p. 18.

(*Continued from p. 94*)

cial duties, humanitarian deeds, renunciation, meditation, devotional rapture, ethics, aesthetics, have their due places. In the Vedāntic view there is no inherent contradiction between worldly duties and spiritual disciplines, between divine law and divine grace, between science and religion, between poetry and philosophy, between the individual and the society; all have their respective places in human existence.

As envisioned by Vedānta, humanity must move as one body in an orderly procession, in which every individual, every nation, will have a distinctive role to play. Unity in variety, and not uniformity, is the pattern of world-culture. Physical, intellectual, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual development must continue hand in hand. Science and religion, arts and ethics, philosophy and mysticism will have their appropriate functions in human life. One expression of life does not contradict another as long as each contributes to the Highest Good that man has to achieve. For instance, heterogeneous building materials, varied manual and skilled labour can be used in conformity with an architect's plan to construct a masterpiece of architecture. The goal of civilization cannot be different from the goal of religion, the attainment of the Supreme Good. All human endeavours have to be directed to that end.

FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA: INTRODUCTION

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

[The laws governing the interaction of soul with soul, of a God-hungry soul with a God-filled soul, make interesting and inspiring study. Sri Ramakrishna, the God-mad Saint of Dakshineswar, captivated and captured many God-hungry souls, and those 'victims' rejoiced in that spiritual 'captivity', for life. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that when he met certain persons for the first time, it made him 'jump up with a start'. There were many reasons for that startled reaction, though only a few he revealed to the disciples. Similarly, many who met Sri Ramakrishna for the first time had soul-stirring reactions. In some cases, it was not apparent on the conscious level. Almost invariably, the first meeting led to subsequent meetings and to far-reaching results.

A study of these 'First Meetings with Sri Ramakrishna", based on authentic sources, is being offered to our readers in a serial. We hope it will be found interesting and rewarding. Swami Prabhananda, who has prepared the series for the *Prabuddha Bharata*, is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. —*Ed.*]

It was late one afternoon.[1] Sri Ramakrishna was seated in his room at 55 Shyampukur Street, where he had moved from Dakshineswar for systematic treatment of his throat cancer. Many devotees were present including Narendranath Dutta, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar, Dr. Dukari, Rakhal Chandra Ghosh, the younger Naren, Mahendranath Gupta, Sarat Chakravarty, and Shyam Basu. The visitors listened with rapt attention to whatever fell from Sri Ramakrishna's lips. Spoken with a slight but attractive stammer, the melodious flow of his words of wisdom, very often couched in parables and seasoned with humour, fell on his listeners, thrilling and purifying their souls. Occasionally he lost consciousness of the outer world, when he plunged into deep *samādhi*. His body became motionless, his eyes fixed, his tongue speechless. He sat like a statue cut in stone. He seemed an altogether different person. The visitors looked at his face in wonder. It did not show the slightest trace of the agonizing illness.

Full of fun as Sri Ramakrishna was, he allowed his visitors to speak out their minds. Their discussion on this occasion turned on the subject of the Master himself.

Dr. Sarkar to Girish: 'Whatever you may do, please do not worship him as God. You are turning the head of this good man.'

Girish: 'What else can I do? Oh, how else shall I regard a person who has taken me across this ocean of the world, and what is still more, the ocean of doubt?...'

Narendra (to Dr. Sarkar): 'We think of him (meaning Sri Ramakrishna) as a person who is like God....'

Dr. Sarkar: 'One should suppress one's feelings in such a matter.'

Narendra (to Dr. Sarkar): 'We offer worship to him bordering on divine worship.'

At these words Sri Ramakrishna laughed like a child.[2]

A few hours before Sri Ramakrishna had

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[1] October 27, 1885. See M.: *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1947), p. 884 ff.

[2] ibid., pp. 894-5.

shown the avid interest of a child when the nature of electricity was demonstrated to him by the younger Narendra with the help of an instrument. Soon after this he had entertained the barrister Atul Chandra Ghosh with his Munsiff friend, and also the noted painter, Annada Bagchi.

This day was much like many other days in Sri Ramakrishna's later life. Crowds of people, with friends and strangers, flocked to the house from early morning till night, and Sri Ramakrishna made himself available to them all. People came from all strata of society, irrespective of caste, creed, and affluence or lack of it. They came with various expectations. Some came led by open-minded curiosity, others with a desire to earn merit by his holy company, some others to learn what he had to teach, again others to find means of attaining peace of mind. Those who came to him in the hope of material gain or of witnessing miracles were disappointed to find that they had come to the wrong place, for Sri Ramakrishna not only performed no miracles but condemned them.

Some took him to be an ordinary man lacking in good manners; others looked upon him as a crackbrain; while still others thought him a highly unusual human being. Gifted persons like Keshab Chandra Sen discovered in him 'a man with the widest and most catholic spiritual outlook, a man who lived and moved with God, a saint whose thoughts and speech were profoundly original and arresting'.[3] Among his admirers, some thought him 'a child of nature',[4] 'a God-like man',[5] 'a man belonging to the class of Chaitanya, Buddha and Christ',[6] 'a God-man, an Avatāra'.[7] They could not explain how Sri Ramakrishna could transmit 'spirituality with a touch, with a wish, which makes even the lowest and the most degraded characters saints in one second'.[8]

Most of them, however, had no doubt that Sri Ramakrishna was a man of the highest integrity who, for the sake of realizing the Truth, had renounced everything. Even though many could not understand him properly, they noticed that his life was consistent with his words and that in their eyes gave this unlettered, unknown villager a position of authority in the field of religion. On seeing that he practised what he preached, they were prepared to listen to what he had to say. Any opinion on religion from him was regarded as authoritative.

Lively and humorous, Sri Ramakrishna exhibited the simplicity of a child, the brilliance of an intellectual, the wisdom of a prophet, and the spontaneous love of a saint. He himself had vouchsafed to some the understanding that he was an *avatāra*, a God-man. He revealed God to weary travellers. To help man solve his problems of life he advised, 'Hold on to me.'[9] Even though he had scaled the highest peaks of spiritual experience he did not hesitate to come down and sympathize with the humblest endeavours of those around him. His love for others knew no bounds. His concern for them was amazing. Those who knew him intimately felt that love was his

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3 Nagendranath Gupta: *Ramakrishna-Vivekananda*, p. 6.

4 Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar described Sri Ramakrishna this way, *vide, The Gospel*, p. 909.

5 Narendranath held this view (*The Gospel*, p. 904). This was however not his final opinion. Later, as Swami Vivekananda, he described Sri Ramakrishna as *avatāra-variṣṭha*, 'the greatest among the *avatāras*', etc.

6 This was the view of 'M', the author of the *The Gospel*.

7 This view was held by the Bhairavi Brahmani, Padmalochan, Girishchandra Ghosh, Ramchandra Dutta and others during Sri Ramakrishna's lifetime.

8 *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas), Vol. IV (1962) p. 29.

9 Swami Nityatmananda: *Śrī-Ma Darśana* (in Bengali), Vol. I, p. 39.

very nature. He had directed his love to God for long years, and when he had attained complete oneness with Him, God turned that love towards the whole creation, towards men and women who sought him, and towards those who did not seek him. In this mission of 'reclaiming souls', he poured himself out with the same intensity and abandon with which he formerly sought to realize the Divine.

A master spiritual guide, he tracked down genuine aspirants with the tenacity of a 'bloodhound'. He moved about the streets of Calcutta to bestow love on people. He lamented that his fragile body did not permit him to walk the streets as much as he would like to do. He tearfully prayed to the Divine Mother to bring to him soon those who were to be placed under his immediate charge. He wept for them and sometimes very bitterly, and felt that his heart was being wrung like a wet towel. At the back of his mind, as he moved about or remained seated in his room, there were always missing faces to be watched for, the faces of those whom the Divine Mother had shown him as predestined to come to him for instruction, but who had not yet come. And he served them, in a spiritual sense, for many hours a day. Truly did Sarada Devi-the Holy Mother say, 'He (Sri Ramakrishna) did not come to eat *rosogolla* (sweets) alone.'

Thus there gathered around Sri Ramakrishna men and women who, becoming surcharged with divine love, danced a ballet, as it were, like water particles atop waves in an ocean of love, with Sri Ramakrishna in their midst. To each and everyone of them he was 'the embodiment of sweetness'.[10] He let the wind of joy and freedom blow on all around him. Above all he was their *suhṛd*, 'a friend who does good to one and all without expecting a return'.[11] He was their sincere and trusted friend, their all-time comrade and reliable guide. They found in him, too, the meeting-point of all contradictory forces. Above all, although always a phenomenon extraordinary and mysterious, Sri Ramakrishna was to them a living and lovable fact of experience.

Those who came into intimate contact with Sri Ramakrishna and were fortunate enough to receive his services as their *suhṛd*, may be conveniently divided into several groups:

A. HIS OWN TEACHERS: Bhairavi Brahmani, Jatadhari, Totapuri, etc.

B. FUTURE MONKS: Rakhal, Narendra, Jogindra, Baburam, Niranjan, Latu, Tarak, Sashi, Sarat, Gangadhar, Harinath, Subodh, Sarada, etc.

C. HOUSEHOLDER ASPIRANTS: Ramchandra Dutta, Manomohan Mitra, Balaram Bose, Mahendranath Gupta, Kedar Chatterjee, Durgacharan Nag, Viswanath Upadhyaya, Devendranath Majumdar, Purnachandra Ghosh, etc.

D. WOMAN-ASPIRANTS: Aghoremani (Gopaler Ma), Jogindramohini, Golapsundari, Lakshmidevi Gaurdasi, etc.

E. DISTINGUISHED MEN: Devendranath Tagore, Dayananda Saraswati, Keshab Chandra Sen, Bhagavandas Babaji, Vidyasagar, Bankimchandra, Michael Madhusudan, Sivanath Sastri, Sasadhar Tarkachudamani, Mahendralal Sarkar, etc.

F. 'SINNERS': Girishchandra Ghosh, Surendranath Mitra, Kalipada Ghosh, Binodini, etc.

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10 A letter of Swami Premananda to Swami Virajananda.

11 *Bhagavad-gītā*, V. 29.

G. 'CHANCE' COMERS: Akshaya Kumar Sen, Nilkantha Mukherji, Prof. Nityananda Goswami, Prabhudayal Mishra, Vaikunthanath Sanyal, etc.

We must remember, however, that all the activities of a God-man like Sri Ramakrishna are purposeful. His first meeting with each of those mentioned above was, therefore, attended by interesting and instructive circumstances which foreshadowed the distinct pattern of relationship that Sri Ramakrishna was to develop and maintain with the person concerned. He foresaw the coming of each of his inner circle and at the first meeting he, with his rare insight, could determine that person's nature and from then on work to build up a suitable relationship with him. In this respect he was like an 'expert dyer' who dyes clothes in different shades to meet the requirements of his customers. As love was the base of the dye he used, his first meetings in particular, present heart-warming instances of his love. First meetings with people are to some extent moments of heightened awareness and greater receptiveness and therefore more is likely to be revealed in them than in subsequent meetings. For the same reason, the first impressions that Sri Ramakrishna made on those whom he met have a value of their own, even though the understanding of those persons may have undergone development later on. Hence the serial, 'First Meetings with Sri Ramakrishna', will amount to a series of vivid snapshots of a world teacher and a unique personality. It is hoped that they will help the reader to a better understanding and appreciation of Sri Ramakrishna.

As many warm themselves in the fire kindled by someone else who has taken the trouble of collecting the firewood and other necessary things, similarly, many fix their mind on the Lord by associating with and following the instructions of holy men who have come to know the Lord after many a hard penance.

* * *

If a man sees a pleader, he naturally thinks of lawsuits and courts. In the same way, on seeing a pious devotee one is reminded of God and of the hereafter.

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

VIVEKANANDA IN SWITZERLAND, 1896

SWAMI VIDYATMANANDA

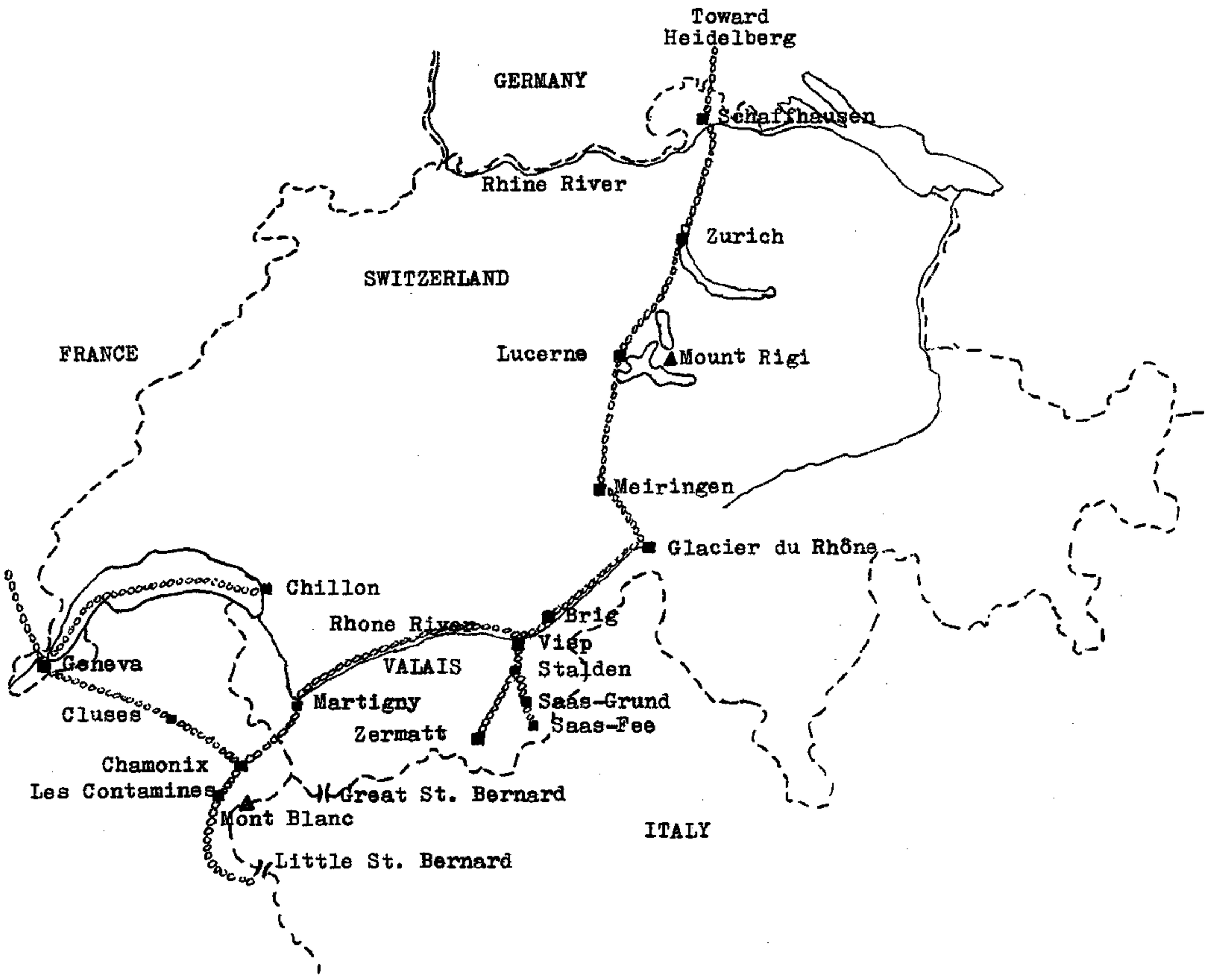
In the summer of 1896 Swami Vivekananda took a holiday in Europe. He had been in the West continuously for nearly three years, and in England since April. In mid-July he left London for the Continent on a vacation trip that lasted nearly nine weeks. He was accompanied by three English disciples: Captain J. H. Sevier, Mrs. Charlotte Sevier, and Miss Henrietta Müller. The party visited major tourist centres in Switzerland, saw the old cities of Germany, and returned to England by way of Amsterdam.

The itinerary that Swamiji followed was more or less the standard trip of the time. Alexandre Dumas had 'done' the Alps in 1832 and had written about them in his *Adventures in Switzerland.* The renowned American humorist, Mark Twain, had gone through Germany and Switzerland in 1878 and had described his experiences in an amusing manner in a book called *A Tramp Abroad.* Travelling in the Alps had been popularized in Paris as early as 1860. Commencing in that year and continuing even to the present day, the Comédie Française gave presentations of *Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon,* a comedy in which the principle events happen in Chamonix and the Mer-de-Glace. The English were particularly fond of Switzerland, and went there in large numbers, equipped with Baedeker guidebooks and sensible shoes. Since Swamiji's hosts were English, we may feel confident that the trip was done as the English were accustomed to do it.

I know, of course, that Chamonix and the Mer-de-Glace are not in Switzerland. The city of Chamonix and this famous glacier are in France near the Swiss border. So is Mont Blanc, or at least its highest peak of 15,781 feet. But in Swamiji's time, because the wonders of that region of France were so similar to the wonders of Switzerland, and one so often went to visit them from Geneva, the visit to Chamonix was considered a part of a trip to Switzerland. The Baedeker guidebook of 1895 on Switzerland treats Chamonix and environs in a chapter called 'Mont Blanc, Valais'. The Valais is a canton or political division in the southwestern part of Switzerland.

Today we think of Switzerland as a beautiful and interesting country, with good hotels and fine views. One can drive through it in a few hours, or slide past its marvels by train or tourist bus in a day or two. But in the 1800's Switzerland was considered a land of wonders which required time and a good deal of physical effort to see. Going there was a bit like making a safari into the interior of Africa today, or a trip up the Amazon. Careful preparations were required, as well as special equipment, and in many places the use of local guides was mandatory. The present train system had not yet been completed. There were of course no aerial cable-cars, and even cog railroads were novelties. A good deal of travel was by diligence (a public stagecoach, esp. as formerly used in France, drawn by four or six horses). Mules were a frequently used mode of transport. And in several places, armchairs carried by porters could be hired for going sightseeing. Winter sports were hardly known at that period. In Saas-Fee, for example, today an important ski station, winter sports were given some attention for the first time only in 1950. Most travel in Switzerland in Swamiji's day was during the fine period from mid-July to the end of September.

The important thing, when visiting Switzerland, was to do as much as possible on foot. Even today there are many people who go there to make hikes in the mountains, fitted out with climbing dress and a pack on the back. In earlier epochs it was the style to make these walking expeditions as a means of seeing the marvels of the country, and as a delightful form of recreation; also, afterwards, when seated by one's own fireside, one could relate interesting adventures. Mark Twain treats the topic humorously in *A Tramp Abroad*. Even the title is meant to amuse, since, in fact, he did so very little tramping. Reading in a guidebook of some recommended promenade, Twain often set out with good intentions to go to it in proper style on foot, but soon became tired and turned back or hired a vehicle or mule. It is no



easy job to walk over rugged trails and climb hills for hours at a time.

In Switzerland the locations of routes are very much governed by the terrain. Main highways follow the turnings of valleys and roads leading to more interior places often mount alongside of streams. There has of course been immense improvement in the Swiss transportation system, but we find that the rail lines and highways of today follow the diligence routes of old, while modern auto routes retrace more or less the trails where in other days one travelled on mule back. Except on the trip

to the Little St. Bernard, where the party went through a genuine wilderness area, the itinerary that Swamiji's party followed was quite typical of an itinerary one might follow at the present time in going to some of the principal places of Switzerland.

Except that the time needed to do it was very much greater in 1896. Although the railroad had arrived and was cutting down time required to go from place to place, people of eighty years ago were still accustomed to reckoning distances in terms of the speed that a horse could walk. The time required was even increased when the trail led uphill, as it frequently does in Switzerland. Twenty-five or thirty miles in a day was not considered excessively slow. What one was able to do in a certain number of days was adjusted accordingly. Remembering these facts, we may say that Swamiji's visit to Switzerland was a very substantial undertaking.

Of course he, Captain and Mrs. Sevier, and Miss Müller must have been good riders. Swamiji was surely an accomplished horseman. The members of Swamiji's party must have been good walkers also. Swamiji refers in several letters written from Switzerland to 'glacier crossing' and 'mountain climbing'.

All that we know about Swamiji's itinerary on his vacation trip of 1896 comes from two sources: the original official biography, and his letters. The biography, titled *The Life of the Swami Vivekananda*, by His Eastern and Western Disciples, is the four-volume work prepared at Mayavati a few years after Swamiji's death. It is very detailed, comprising some two thousand pages. Since some contemporaries of the Swami had a hand in its preparation—Swami Virajananda, Sister Nivedita, and Mrs. Sevier—we may have considerable confidence in what it reports. It seems obvious that Chapter XCI, 'A Tour of the Continent', must have been based on direct reports by a member of the party, since some details in this chapter could be known only to someone actually present—for example, that the English Channel was calm the day the party crossed it. An article on the day spent with Professor Deussen at Kiel, written for the young *Prabuddha Bharata* by Mrs. Sevier, is quoted in the chapter. Swamiji's letters, the second source, are helpful in determining places, dates, what he did, and how he felt.

Although I have worked on the present research for more than two years, written scores of letters asking for information, gone over the ground personally, and had the aid of numerous local investigators, I have not succeeded in uncovering much original material—hardly any actual trace of Swamiji or his party. Naturally, I thought to consult the newspapers of the period, since some local journals often mentioned the arrival of important visitors. I also anticipated finding Swamiji's name on the registers of hotels which flourished in 1896. In both regards I was disappointed. Newspaper archives of all the major cities Swamiji passed through were examined, without result. Archives in Germany, of course, are far from complete due to the bombings of World War II which in some cities destroyed up to 85 per cent of all structures in the old sections. Hotel registers have vanished, not only due to war, but also to fires, changes of ownership, disuse, storage problems.

We must remember that nearly eighty years have passed, and the trail is very cold. The party was not conspicuous. Swamiji was not only relatively unknown in Europe; he was also travelling as simply one of a party of English summer tourists, who flocked in large numbers to every beauty spot in Switzerland. We do not know what Swamiji wore, but a good guess is that he was fitted out with a tweed suit,

a felt hat, and solid shoes. We know that he carried an alpenstock.

Hence all I am able to do in this article is to amplify and confirm what the biography and the letters already reveal. I shall supply probable dates, correct the biographical account in one or two instances, and add background material helpful in understanding what probably took place and why. One result will be a comprehension of what an ambitious and expensive journey it was. I recognize that this is not historical research of the first order—but it is a task never done before and should be of real value to those having a serious interest in Swami Vivekananda. It is really a reconstitution of the trip in more detail and with far more background material than have been published in the sixteen pages making up Chapter XCI of the four-volume biography.

I have found the Baedeker guidebook on Switzerland of 1895 extremely useful for the details it gives about travel in Switzerland at that period.

On July 7, 1896, Swami Vivekananda wrote to the Hale Sisters from London: 'The season is closed. ... And on the 19th I go for a month or so for quiet and rest to the Swiss Mountains. ... I am going with three English friends to the Swiss Hills. Later on, towards the end of the winter, I expect to go to India with some English friends who are going to live in my monastery there which, by the way, is in the air yet. It is struggling to materialize somewhere in the Himalayas.' A week later, on July 14, Swamiji wrote to Dr. Nanjunda Rao of Madras: 'I am going to Switzerland next Sunday, and shall return to London in the autumn, and take up the work again. ... I want rest very badly, you know.'

From what the biography says, and what the letters reveal, Swamiji hoped in going to Switzerland to become spiritually refreshed after his arduous labours of the past three years. It was a fact that he was very tired, as he had done a great deal of travelling, lecturing, organizing, and considerable writing—*Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga,* and *Bhakti Yoga* were already finished. Probably he wanted to go back to the Source, after having given out enormously. The Alps thus attracted him as the nearest thing available to the Himalayas. There was always in Swamiji a nostalgia for the mountains, with the elevation of spirit they give, and the sense of solitude. Wandering on foot in wild Swiss uplands was the closest he could come to the *parivrājaka's* (wandering monk's) life he had been forced to abandon to live in cities and act like an 'Englishman'. Already what was to become Mayavati Advaita Ashrama was forming in his mind as ideal monastery and residence for his retirement years. To be for a few weeks in the Alps would serve as a substitute until he could get back to India.

The tour of the German cities, we may guess, did not interest him so much. These were included perhaps to please his hosts, for Heidelberg, the Rhine, and Cologne were on the prescribed itinerary of the day. However, he had to traverse Germany so as to meet Paul Deussen at Kiel. Perhaps he hoped for as warm and fruitful an association with this Sanskritist as he had already established with Max Müller of Oxford.

That Swamiji gained what he hoped for from the trip is apparent from the biography and his own letters. He managed to spend two weeks in the beautiful mountain village of Saas-Fee, Valais, from about the 5 to 19 of August. He seems here to have been quiet and alone, spending the time in looking at nature's grandeur, taking walks, and meditating. Says the biography: 'Two weeks of this quiet life completely restored the Swami.' Many times

the Seviers and Henrietta Müller must have found that it was the wandering *sādhu* of pre-Parliament-of-Religions days, not the celebrated Indian orator and teacher, that they had with them as travelling companion. 'Many times', says the biography, 'walking on the mountain paths, or standing on some great elevation, the longing and the freedom and the supreme insight of the monastic life were imprinted on his face.'

July 19, 1896, was a Sunday. From what Swamiji had written to the Hale sisters and to Dr. Rao, I think we may be sure that this is the day he began his continental holiday. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that on his return to England on September 17 Swamiji referred in a letter to Mary Hale to the trip of 'climbing and walking and glacier crossing' as having consumed two months.

According to the biography, several of his London friends formed a party to see him off, and those who could not come sent their best wishes through Mr. E. T. Sturdy, organizer of the Vedānta movement in London. The party left London in the afternoon, crossed from Dover to Calais, and went on to Paris where they spent the night. This is feasible, as the trip from London to Paris in that day consumed about the same time it does today by train and boat—some seven or eight hours.

Swamiji had been in Paris for two weeks during the previous September. He had seen something of the French capital. On that trip he had stayed at the Continental Hotel facing the Jardin des Tuileries.[1] Where he stayed on the night of July 19, 1896, has not been determined.

The next day the party went on by train to Geneva, Switzerland; trains left for Geneva from the Gare de Lyon. In Geneva they found accommodations in a hotel overlooking Lake Léman. Parks, shops, and wharfs for pleasure boats lined the lake, and in the distance loomed the Alps.

The Baedeker of 1895 lists seven hotels of better class overlooking Lake Léman. Of these, two are still in business, the Hotel Beau-Rivage and the Hotel des Bergues. Both replied to our inquiry that the guest registers of 1896 no longer exist. The director of the state archives at Geneva found nothing to help us in the local newspapers, but suggested that the police files of the epoch might contain some record of the passage of the party. However, after a search in those files, he wrote again, saying that he had found nothing there, because obviously Swami Vivekananda and his friends were visitors who had done nothing when in Geneva to attract the attention of the police! The director of the Museum of Old Geneva furnished us with photographs taken in Geneva in 1896, but had no further useful information.

It just happened that during the summer of 1896 a national exhibition of Swiss handicrafts and industrial products was being held in Geneva. This interested Swamiji intensely, so much so that he spent most of the first day at Geneva on the exhibition grounds.

But what attracted him most, according to the biography, was a large balloon based on the grounds, in which people could ascend for a view out over the city and the lake. In 1896 going up in the air was a great novelty, but Swamiji was as 'impatient as a boy' to go. Here is how the biography describes the event:

> Mr. Sevier was also anxious to enjoy the sensation, but Mrs. Sevier, foreseeing probable unpleasantness at being suddenly hoisted in the air, preferred

[1] *Vide*: Swami Vidyatmananda, 'Swami Vivekananda in France', *Prabuddha Bharata*, LXXII (1967), p. 127.

terra firma. But the Swami would hear nothing of her *objections*. ... She finally acquiesced, and thereupon the party entered the balloon. Up-up-up! ... The day was perfect, the sunset itself gorgeous. There was not the slightest sensation of unpleasantness, for the balloon sailed steadily and smoothly in the evening air.

They were even sorry when the balloon came down, and Swamiji wanted to go up a second time, 'but other interests intervened, and the party returned to the hotel after having satisfied, at a neighbouring restaurant, an appetite made vigorous by the rarefied air of the higher altitudes'. The biography ends the account by saying that the party had a photograph taken of themselves after the descent 'as a souvenir of their aerial experience. The Swami is seen therein with his smiling face.' One is sorry that this picture does not seem to have come down to us.

Among other things to do in Geneva were to bathe in one of the city's bathhouses, and to take a trip to the Castle of Chillon at the lake's end some forty miles away. Swamiji did both. The baths were really swimming pools formed by making protected areas in the lake or in the Rhone River which flows swiftly from Lake Léman at Geneva. The biography records the fact that Swamiji went two times to the baths and enjoyed 'the arrangement of the water flowing through'. As a Bengali, he would have liked this, and the situation must have reminded him a little of Hardwar.

Being a student of English literature, Swamiji would have been interested in the Castle of Chillon. In Swami Vivekananda's epoch, Lord Byron's poem *The Prisoner of Chillon,* about a Swiss patriot who was confined at the fortress, was known to every schoolboy. One could go from Geneva to Chillon either by train through Lausanne or by steamer, and return in a day. We may guess that the party went by boat, skirting the shore, making a whole day of it. The visit to the Castle of Chillon occupied the third and last day at Geneva.

The biography quotes Swamiji as having said, 'O, I long to see the snow and wander on the mountain paths! Above all, I must cross a glacier.'

The next stop, thus, was Chamonix, fifty-six miles from Geneva. They would have gone there, let us say, on Friday, July 24. Chamonix is one of the most remarkable sites anyone can hope to visit. The community lies in the centre of a long valley walled in by tall mountains, the highest of which is Mont Blanc. The views are extraordinary. It is the starting point for many expeditions into the mountains—*un vrai pays des excursions et monde de merveilles*,[2] as one French guidebook describes the area. Not far away is the celebrated Mer-de-Glace, a glacier that descends so far down that tourists without special equipment are able to go up to it and even, in Swamiji's day, to cross over it.

In 1896 the railroad went only half way from Geneva to Chamonix. One went by train to Cluses in one and a half hours and from there by diligence, this part of the trip requiring about five hours. The journey in the diligence must have been an event. Baedeker warns that no time should be wasted when getting off the train at Cluses in 'securing a seat in the omnibus (front seats preferable). A seat in one of the supplementary carriages, which are provided when the main vehicle is full, is preferable to an inside seat in the latter.'

Photos of the period show these diligences to have been very large vehicles, pulled by four to six horses. Many passengers sat on the top. One old guidebook, *La Suisse Circulaire,* published in Paris in about 1875, gives the advice that the route to

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2 'A true country of excursions and a world of marvels.'—*Ed.*

Chamonix is very dusty. 'Dress as simply as possible so as to have no regrets afterwards. Women who ride on outside seats, for the sake of their complexions, should provide themselves with parasols.'

The population of Chamonix at the time Swamiji went there was only about 2,500, but the village was visited by about 15,000 tourists a year, mostly English. Hotels were numerous, telescopes for observing the mountains were available, and alpine guides, looking for parties to conduct, were much in evidence.

As one enters the valley in which Chamonix is situated, the closeness and grandeur of Mont Blanc are overpowering. Swamiji was impressed. 'This is really wonderful,' he is reported to have cried out. 'Here we are actually in the midst of snows. In India the snows are so far distant. One walks for days and days ... to approach them. ... Come, let us make the ascent of Mont Blanc.'

This was not an impractical suggestion on Swamiji's part, as the ascent of Mont Blanc was made regularly in those days, as now. But the arrangements were difficult and costly. The guild of guides required two guides and a porter per person, and special equipment was necessary. Difficult ascents were made with the climbers roped together. It took two days to reach the summit, the nights being spent in shelters, and a day to come back down. It seems that Swamiji's hosts agreed to his proposal, but 'the guides told them that only skilled mountaineers could attempt such a feat. This was a disappointment to the Swami, but as he gazed through the telescopes and saw the appallingly steep ascents, he granted that it was impractical.'

Where the party stayed in Chamonix, I do not know. Baedeker lists some fifteen hotels existing at Chamonix at the period. A search was made by Mme. Mireille Simond, head of Les Amis du Vieux Chamonix, which operates the local museum. She attempted to find old hotel registers and newspaper references to the visit of Swamiji and party. An article, describing our research and need for documents, was published in the Chamonix daily. But nothing useful to us was uncovered.

In any case, the party succeeded in going to the Mer-de-Glace and crossing it. No guide was needed for this relatively easy excursion. Before leaving Chamonix the travellers probably bought alpenstocks, since these were *de rigueur* for trips into the mountains. Baedeker says, 'The mountaineer should have a well-tried *Alpenstock* of seasoned ash, five to six feet long, shod with a steel point, and strong enough, when placed horizontally, with the ends supported, to bear the whole weight of the body.' It was the custom in those days to have the alpenstock branded with the name of each excursion site that one visited. At the Mer-de-Glace itself special spiked soles to be fastened to the shoes could be rented for help against slipping when crossing the ice, or one could encase his shoes in woollen stockings.

The usual programme was to start from Chamonix about seven o'clock in the morning on muleback, reaching the Montevert station on the glacier's edge three thousand feet up after about three hours of climb. Here one rested for a while, and took a second breakfast, or ate lunch. Before noon, one was ready to cross the glacier, which meant a steep descent to the glacier's edge, then the trip across, leaning on one's alpenstock and trying not to slide into any of the crevasses, or if one did, to hang from the alpenstock till help arrived. The ice is very thick and extremely rough, like an angry ocean suddenly frozen solid. On the other side one scrambled up the moraine by a kind of staircase carved in the face of the precipice (called the *mauvais pas*) to

a shelter called the Chapeau. Crossing the Mer-de-Glace and reaching the Chapeau, the most interesting but most taxing part of the excursion, took about an hour and a half. After taking refreshments and a short rest at the Chapeau, one went down into Chamonix by mule or on foot, arriving at one's hotel by late afternoon.

The biography gives this account:

> The actual expedition was not so pleasant as the Swami had anticipated. He often found it difficult to keep his footing. Every now and then he would pause to gaze down into the deep crevasses, or to admire the beautiful tints of green. ... After the glacier proper is crossed, a very steep ascent must be climbed. ... Whilst making this ascent, the Swami suffered from vertigo. ... While in this state his foot slipped several times. He was, therefore, glad when without any untoward accident he reached the little chalet at the summit and was restored by a cup of refreshingly hot coffee.

Mark Twain described his encounter with the Mer-de-Glace in typically amusing fashion, and he too had a difficult time of it when climbing the *mauvais pas* (which simply means 'tight corner' or 'awkward situation'):

> By and by we came to the *Mauvais Pas,* or the villainous Road, to translate it feelingly. It was a breakneck path around the face of a precipice forty or fifty feet high, and nothing to hang on to but some iron railings.
>
> We reached the restaurant on the height called the Chapeau at four in the afternoon. It was a memento-factory, and the stock was large, cheap, and varied. I bought the usual paper-cutter to remember the place by, and had Mont Blanc, the Mauvais Pas, and the rest of the region branded on my alpenstock; then we descended to the valley and walked home without being tied together. This was not dangerous, for the valley was five miles wide [actually a half-mile wide] and quite level.

As they jogged along—the date must have been about Tuesday, July 28, since the biography places the excursion as having taken place 'several days' after the arrival at Chamonix—Swamiji spoke of how similar the Swiss peasants were to the hill people of his own country. The hard work on the sloping terrain, the leading of the animals to meagre npland pastures, the transport of manure for the fields, or forage for the beasts, in long baskets on the back—such scenes recall the Himalayan communities. Even the architecture is almost the same, the animals and their owners living under the same roof, and that roof often tiled of heavy flat stones. In both countries the use of carved wood on house façades is common.

'Then', continues the biography, 'he went on with a beautiful discourse concerning the Himalayas. ... And on this Journey, those who were to be the founders of the Advaita Ashrama ... heard here in the Himalayas of Europe ... of the Swami's longing to establish a monastery in the heart of his beloved Himalayas.' The Seviers decided then and there to try to make such a monastery possible, which as we know, in less than three years, they actually did.

The next passage in the biographical account has caused me very great difficulty. It says that 'from Chamonix the travellers made an outing to the village of Little St. Bernard. High above rises the famous St. Bernard Pass, on the crest of which stands the celebrated hospice of the Augustinian monks, the highest inhabited spot in Europe.' The account refers to the travellers' having there admired the renowned St. Bernard dogs.

Although the passage uses the term 'Little St. Bernard' two times, the description of the place makes it sound so much like the Great St. Bernard that I believed an error had been made and that it was

the Great St. Bernard to which the party actually travelled. One could go fairly easily to the Great St. Bernard from Martigny, and a fair number of visitors did so in the late 1800's. But to go to the Little St. Bernard from Chamonix was a horseback and walking trip though rough back country, not very often attempted. It remains the same even today.

Consequently I contacted the abbot of the Great St. Bernard and went there on July 4, 1972, to examine the register. Although the names of several English people figured in the register for the period under study, neither Swamiji's signature, nor those of Miss Müller or the Seviers appeared. I therefore concluded that the account in the biography must be accurate in using the term Little St. Bernard, and that whoever had written the identifying matter had mistakenly drawn from descriptions of the Great St. Bernard.

In pursuing the matter, I found that the Little St. Bernard at one time had been run by Augustinian monks and indeed that St. Bernard dogs were raised there. But it is not the celebrated pass (Charlemagne's and Napoleon's famous crossings were by the Great St. Bernard); yet it is a pass known since Roman times. It is not the highest inhabited place in Europe, but perhaps a close second. The hospice at Great St. Bernard is at 8,120 feet and that at the Little St. Bernard is at 7,060 feet.

How did Swami Vivekananda happen to think about making an excursion to the Little St. Bernard? It was anything but an easy trip from Chamonix, consuming at least four days going and coming, and requiring hours of walking and riding on horseback or on mules. Was it a research trip? So far as I know, Swamiji had never previously visited a Christian monastery. Here was a monastery that may have interested him in two ways: the Little St. Bernard was in the mountains, as his projected Ashrama was to be; and the Little St. Bernard was a 'Sevashrama'; the monks had been ministering to the most fundamental needs of poor people for centuries: physical well-being, shelter, nourishment.

The Little St. Bernard is 'behind' the great massif of Mont Blanc, at the top of a pass which marks the French-Italian frontier. Baedeker mentions that one could go there and tells how, but in the fine print reserved for travellers wishing to do the unusual. Much of the trip was done by following bridle paths which edged mountain torrents. At least two passes of more than ten thousand feet had to be traversed. But there were inns along the route. In good weather it would have been a feasible and even exhilarating adventure. That Swamiji may have experienced winter weather even though the expedition was made in mid-summer is seen from another reference in the biography. When going up to Mayavati in a blizzard in early January, 1901, Swamiji is reported to have compared that trip to what happened in Switzerland. Mrs. Sevier and Miss Müller must have been women of considerable stamina, as well as good riders. That women went into this region there can be no doubt. I have seen photos taken on this route showing women dressed in long dresses, wearing big hats, following mountain trails on horseback.

I do not want to bore the reader with unnecessary geographical information about the mountain trails very likely used by Swamiji and party. Suffice it to say that, according to Mr. Claude Ancelet of Les Contamines, a specialist on the region, the probable route was as follows: from Chamonix to Les Contamines by carriage. From there over the Col de Bonhomme (9,169 feet) and the Col des Four (10,506 feet) to Les Mottets by mule. Here one could rest for the night in a simple inn. The next day a guide would be necessary

for the trip from Les Mottets to the hospice, since one went along the edge of glaciers. The trip took some four hours, over the Col des Chavannes (10,260 feet) and the Col des Eschelles des Chavannes (10,814 feet). That this was a feasible route was confirmed by the Guide Joanne, published by Hachette of Paris in 1905.

The visitor can go to the Little St. Bernard today by auto through Italy over a road that demands skilful driving and is open from July to November. On reaching the hospice one will find it difficult to believe that for centuries this was a thriving community. All is now abandoned and ruined. The site is naturally desolate, being above the timber line. Patches of snow still linger into July. The principal building still stands, but its broken windows and smashed façade recall the actions which took place here during World War II. Ruins of other buildings are visible, and a curious rocky pyramid with a statue of St. Bernard atop it has partly escaped the general devastation.

At a little distance there is a statue of the Abbé Pierre Chanoux, rector of the hospice from 1859 to 1909, and a little chapel where his body is buried. It is to be hoped that Swamiji made the acquaintance of this remarkable man, who was not only a selfless priest but was an enthusiastic friend of all who loved the mountains. His death was mourned by the simple people whom he served as pastor, as well as the specialists in Alpine studies who relied on him for help. Even the King of Italy sent a representative to the Abbot's memorial service.

When Swamiji visited the monastery in the last days of July or early August, 1896, it was full of activity. Although not as famous as the Great St. Bernard, the Little St. Bernard has a glorious history. It too was founded by Bernard de Menthon, 'apostle of the Alps', in the tenth century and has been serving as refuge for poor and lost travellers ever since. Although some efforts were made to charge more affluent travellers for their accommodations, in general the hospice existed on free-will offerings, and generally ran a deficit which had to be made up from the treasury of the Mauricien Order which has guided the hospice for the past two hundred years. Baedeker speaks of the hospice as 'affording good accommodations', so we may believe that our party was comfortable, once it got there.

The biography recounts the fact that Swamiji was attracted by the St. Bernard dogs bred and trained at the hospice, and wanted to buy a puppy to take back to India with him. But all the pups in the litter had already been sold; they are often all reserved even before birth. 'Fortunately' is the word that the biography uses. Such an alpine dog could hardly stand the climate of India. And although gentle and faithful, his size and food requirements make the St. Bernard rather a burden.

Since the disbanding of the hospice in the 1940's, everything having to do with the Little St. Bernard is handled at the headquarters of the Mauricien Order in Turin, Italy. I appealed to this source for help in finding some trace of Swamiji's visit. The General Administrative Director was generous in supplying information, including an old photo of some St. Bernard dogs standing before the hospice in deep snow, but explained that the registers of visitors had become 'unavailable due to the exigencies of war'.

(To be concluded)

SRI AUROBINDO'S INTERPRETATION OF THE VEDAS AND THE UPANIṢADS

DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

The term 'Veda' may be understood in a wider or in a narrower sense. In its wider sense, it consists of four parts : *mantra, brāhmaṇa, āraṇyaka,* and *upaniṣad.* In its narrow sense, it refers to *mantra* alone, or *mantra* and *brāhmaṇa.* Modern Vedic scholarship which is western in its original character takes the 'Veda' in the narrower sense. It understands by 'Veda' primarily the collections (*saṁhitā*) of hymns (*mantras*) ; and it considers the *Ṛg-veda-saṁhitā* to be the earliest and the best. Sri Aurobindo accepts this definition of 'Veda' ; but he differs from the western Vedic scholars in his approach to, and interpretation of the Vedic hymns.

The western Orientalists did a great service, it is true, to the cause of Indian culture by making the Vedic literature accessible to the modern mind. But they had their own obsessions and preconceived theories which vitiated their interpretation of the Vedic hymns. For them, the Vedas were 'the hymnal of an early, primitive and largely barbaric society crude in its moral and religious conceptions, rude in its social structure and entirely childlike in its outlook upon the world that environed it'.[1] These scholars considered the hymns to be the outpourings of a primitive people in adoration of natural powers personified as gods ; they sought to propitiate or appease the 'gods' so that they may receive largesses from them or ward off their fury. The scholars also see in the hymns an evolution of religious consciousness from naturalistic polytheism, through what Max Müller calls henotheism, to monotheism and monism. They even fix the relative chronology of the hymns on the basis of their evolutionary theory. According to them, the latest hymns to be composed are those which have some rudimentary philosophical ideas, and constitute the transition to the Upaniṣads.

Sri Aurobindo says that, before applying his mind to the original texts, he had passively accepted the conclusions of European scholarship, and had thought that, while the Vedic hymns were 'an important document of our national history', they were of but small value 'for the history of thought or for a living spiritual experience'.[2] In other words, he had agreed with the average educated Indian, whose model in this regard was the western Orientalist, that the Upaniṣads, rather than the Vedic hymns, constituted the most ancient source of Indian thought and religion, the first Book of Knowledge.[3]

A sense of dissatisfaction with the modern view came over Sri Aurobindo, while he was pursuing the path of yoga ; and this was confirmed when he started studying the Vedic hymns in the original. He came across terms which were symbolic and stood for certain psychological experiences ; when he found that these very terms occurred in the Vedic hymns, his surmise was that these terms had a symbolic meaning in the Vedic texts also. The deeper he got himself involved in the study of the *mantras* of the *Ṛg-veda* with the clues that he had gathered, the greater the realization dawned upon him. To quote Sri Aurobindo's own words :

'First, that the *mantras* of the Veda illu-

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1 Sri Aurobindo : *On The Veda* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1956), p. 29.

2 ibid., p. 42.

3 ibid.

> minated with a clear and exact light psychological-experiences of my own for which I had found no sufficient explanation either in European psychology or in the teachings of Yoga or of Vedanta, so far as I was acquainted with them, and, secondly, that they shed light on obscure passages and ideas of the Upaniṣads to which, previously, I could attach no exact meaning.'[4]

It is not that Sri Aurobindo rejects outright the naturalistic-ritualistic interpretation of the Veda. This interpretation is not quite modern after all. Even in the earlier days of classical erudition, says Sri Aurobindo, the ritualistic view of the Veda was already dominant.[5] The *brāhmaṇa,* the second section of the Veda in the wider sense, endeavours

> 'to fix and preserve the minutiae of the Vedic ceremony, the conditions of their material effectuality, the symbolic sense and purpose of their different parts, movements, implements, the significance of texts important in the ritual, the drift of obscure allusions, the memory of ancient myths and traditions.'[6]

Sāyaṇa, the well-known commentator on the Veda, interprets the hymns in the context of ritual. Sri Aurobindo is convinced that Sāyaṇa is obsessed by the naturalistic formula and seeks continually to force the sense of the Veda into that narrow mould.[7] Many of the gods are identified with natural powers such as the Sun, Fire, the Winds, the Dawn, the Day, the Night, etc. Thus, according to Sri Aurobindo, the seeds of that naturalistic theory of the Veda to which European learning has given so wide an extension are to be found in Sāyaṇa.[8]

The hymns—at least some of them—, it is true, do bear a ritualistic-naturalistic interpretation. But Sri Aurobindo feels that this is not the only or the most important mode of interpreting the Vedic hymns. The truer and the more pertinent approach is the psychological-mystical. The hypothesis which Sri Aurobindo proposes is that the Veda has a double aspect—the inner and the outer, the esoteric and the exoteric, the psychological and the physical. Of these, the obvious sense is the latter, and the hidden significance is the former. The poet-seers who composed the hymns deliberately put two meanings into the words—the psychological for the elect, and the physical for the profane: they

> 'favoured the existence of an outer worship, effective and imperfect, for the profane, an inner discipline for the initiate, and clothed their language in words and images which had, equally, a spiritual sense for the elect, a concrete sense for the mass of ordinary worshippers'.[9]

Thus, the hymns have a double meaning: the deities of which they speak are both internal psychological powers as well as powers of external nature. It is a system of parallelism that one finds in the hymns as regards their thought-content. This may also be described as a system of double values by which the same language served for the worship of the deities in both aspects. But, in Sri Aurobindo's view, it is the psychological that predominates and is more pervasive, close-knit and coherent than the physical. The Veda, according to him, is primarily intended to serve for spiritual enlightenment and self-culture.[10] The Vedic seers, it would seem, made the words deliberately ambiguous and capable of a double meaning. Sri Aurobindo's guess is that they concealed the spiritual and psychological knowledge 'in a veil of concrete and material figures and symbols which protected

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4 ibid., p. 46.
5 ibid., p. 22.
6 ibid., pp. 15-6.
7 ibid., p. 24.
8 ibid., p. 26.
9 ibid., p. 9.
10 ibid., p. 38.

the sense from the profane and revealed it to the initiated'.[11] Probably, they even thought that the inner meaning was 'unfit, perhaps even dangerous to the ordinary human mind or in any case liable to perversion and misuse and loss of virtue if revealed to vulgar and unpurified spirits'.[12]

Let us illustrate from the massive work of Sri Aurobindo on the Veda how he extracts the spiritual-psychological significance from the ritualistic-naturalistic garb of the hymns.

The Vedic sacrifice requires, apart from the god and the *mantra*, three factors: the person who performs the sacrifice, the offering that is made, and the fruits of the offering. So far as the outer sacrifice is concerned, what these are is clear. But what is the psychological significance of each of them? What are the factors that constitute the inner sacrifice? The master of the sacrifice, *yajamāna*, is, of course, the doer of the action, whether it is internal or external sacrifice. But there are also the officiating priests. What do they stand for in the psychological sense? Sri Aurobindo suggests that the priest, in the inner sense, is 'a non-human power or energy or an element of our personality' which is responsible for the execution of the inner sacrifice. The word *purohita*, for instance, means 'put in front'; and the god Agni who is described as *purohita* symbolizes the divine Will Or Force in humanity which is required for consecrated action.[13] Next come the offerings. What is their inward significance? The material offerings are *soma*-juice, clarified butter (*ghṛta*), etc. What, for instance, is the symbolic meaning of *ghṛta*? Sri Aurobindo takes the word to mean the intellect (*dhiṣaṇā*) which is to be offered to the gods.

The fruits of the external sacrifice are said to be such benefits as cows, horses, gold, offspring, etc. In the psychological sense, what do these fruits mean? Let us consider 'cow' and 'horse'. The Vedic cow, says Sri Aurobindo, was an exceedingly enigmatical animal and came from no earthly herd. The psychological meaning of the word *go* which is the Sanskrit for 'cow' is 'light'. The *aśva* which is 'horse' means 'energy'. 'It was apparent, therefore,' concludes Sri Aurobindo, 'that the two chief fruits of the Vedic sacrifice, wealth of cows and wealth of horses, were symbolic of richness of mental illumination and abundance of vital energy.'[14]

We turn, now, briefly to the Vedic gods. The reference to natural phenomena or powers is obvious, and has been mentioned already. We may begin with Agni. For the ordinary worshipper, Agni is the god of fire. The word may be taken to mean the principle of heat and light in physical nature. But, what is the psychological significance of 'Agni'? Let us hear Sri Aurobindo. 'Agni meant the Strong, it meant the Bright, or even Force, Brilliance. So it could easily recall to the initiated, wherever it occurred, the idea of the illumined Energy which exalts man to the Highest, the doer of the great work, the Purohit of the human sacrifice.'[15] Similar senses should be attached to the other gods. Indra, in the psychological interpretation of the hymns, represents Mind-Power. Vāyu is always associated with the Prāṇa or Life-Energy which contributes to the nervous activities that in man are the support of the mental energies governed by Indra.[16] Varuṇa, which stands for a power of wideness and purity, is what is present in man as conscious force of the Truth. Mitra, which is also a power like Varuṇa, represents Love, Joy, and Harmony.

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11 ibid., p. 8.
12 ibid., p. 9.
13 ibid., p. 50.
14 ibid., p. 52.
15 ibid., p. 65.
16 ibid., p. 84.

We have said enough to indicate how Sri Aurobindo would interpret the significance of the Vedic gods. From the external standpoint, the gods are universal powers of physical Nature personified; in the inner sense, they are universal powers of nature in her subjective activities, Will, Mind, etc. In the Veda, a distinction is made between the powers of the human mind and those of the divine; and the teaching is that man by the right use of the mental action of these powers in the inner sacrifice to the gods can convert them into their true or divine nature; that is, the mortal can become immortal.[17]

For his interpretation of the Vedic hymns, Sri Aurobindo claims a distinctive advantage over the classical interpretation of Sāyaṇa, on the one hand, and over the interpretation of the modern scholars, on the other. Because Sāyaṇa did not have the key to the inner sense, he was obliged to assign variable significance to the same word. For instance, *ṛtam*, which is almost the key word of any psychological or spiritual interpretation, is rendered by him sometimes as 'truth', more often 'sacrifice', occasionally in the sense of 'water'. The psychological interpretation gives to the word *ṛtam* the sense of Truth invariably. Similarly, the word *dhī* is assigned various meanings by Sāyaṇa: 'thought', 'prayer', 'action', 'food', etc. The psychological interpretation given to it by Sri Aurobindo is invariably the sense of thought or understanding. Thus, there is consistency in Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the key-terms.

According to the modern understanding of the hymns, there is no unity of thought or consistency in them. There are various strata of musings in the hymns. And, they mark the beginnings of speculation on the physical and the superphysical. Sri Aurobindo totally rejects this view. He is convinced that the hymns are 'not the work of rude, barbarous and primitive craftsmen, but the living breath of a supreme and conscious Art forming its creations in the puissant but well-governed movement of a self-observing inspiration'.[18] The hymns, taken as a whole, represent the inspired experience of the sages and seers—the cumulative and consistent legacy of the Age of Intuition. They mark rather the concluding phase of this age than the beginnings of a primitive endeavour to penetrate behind the phenomena of nature. Sri Aurobindo observes:

> 'We may therefore surmise that our actual Samhita represents the close of a period, not its commencement, nor even some of its successive stages. It is even possible that its most ancient hymns are a comparatively modern development or version of a more ancient lyric evangel couched in the free and more pliable forms of a still earlier human speech.'[19]

And again, the Veda is:

> 'a Scripture not confused in thought or primitive in its substance, but one, complete and self-conscious in its purpose and in its purport, veiled indeed by the cover, sometimes thick, sometimes transparent, of another and material sense, but never losing sight even for a single moment of its high spiritual aim and tendency'.[20]

While Sri Aurobindo's study of the Vedic hymns is fairly full and penetrating, it is a pity that he has not bestowed that much of attention on the Upaniṣads. This is probably because, according to him, the Upaniṣads mark a later phase which is in the nature of degeneration rather than improvement. The Age of Intuition had ended, and the Age of Reason had commenced. Even the early Upaniṣads, according to Sri Aurobindo, came long after the hymns. There is to be

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17 ibid., p. 77.

18 ibid., p. 13.

19 ibid., pp. 13-4.

20 ibid., p. 55.

seen in them a struggle to recover the true sense of the Vedic hymns. While the *brāhmaṇas*, the liturgical texts, aimed at preserving the Vedic ritual the Upaniṣads endeavoured to recapture the soul of Veda, 'to recover the lost or waning knowledge by meditation and spiritual experience'.[21]

The Upaniṣads fall into two periods, so Sri Aurobindo believes: those which belong to the earlier 'still kept close to the Vedic roots, reflected the old psychological system of the Vedic Rishi and preserved what may be called their spiritual pragmatism', and those Upaniṣads which constitute the later group manifest a marked deviation; in them 'the form and thought became more modern and independent of early symbols and origins, some of the principal elements of Vedic thought and psychology began to be omitted or to lose their previous connotation and the foundations of the later ascetic and anti-pragmatic Vedanta began to appear'.[22]

The *Chāndogya* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, Sri Aurobindo considers to be the earliest Upaniṣads. They are followed by the *Taittirīya* and the *Aitareya* and *Īśa*. Sri Aurobindo has rendered into English the first eight Upaniṣads in the list of the traditional one hundred and eight. These eight do not include, it will be noticed, the two long Upaniṣads, the *Chāndogya* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*.[23] Anything like a commentary he has added only to one of the Upaniṣads, the *Īśa*. The reason for selecting this short Upaniṣad for special treatment seems to be that, according to Sri Aurobindo, it is 'the sole Upanishad which offered almost insuperable difficulties to the extreme illusionism and anti-pragmatism of Shankaracharya'.[24] Without stopping to enquire into the meaning of the expressions 'extreme illusionism' and 'anti-pragmatism', we may note that the implication seems to be that the other Upaniṣads do not present to Śaṅkara 'insuperable difficulties'.

At the outset, let us remind ourselves of the conviction of the classical commentators. They do not make a distinction among the Upaniṣads as earlier and later; they believe that all the Upaniṣads teach the same truth. In fact, according to them, the entire Veda, in the wider sense of the term, bears a perfect harmony: there is no contradiction between any two of its parts. Each commentator finds a key for unlocking this harmony. The key that Śaṅkara discovers is the truth of non-duality (*advaita*). Even as Sri Aurobindo is convinced that all the Vedic hymns have a harmonious meaning, Śaṅkara feels certain that all the Upaniṣads have an identical purport.

Probably, Sri Aurobindo will not object to Śaṅkara's interpretation of the other Upaniṣads, although he does not see his way to accepting the latter's metaphysical intuition. But, he rejects Śaṅkara's account of the teaching of the *Īśa-upaniṣad*. According to him, the principle that this Upaniṣad follows is 'the uncompromising reconciliation of uncompromising extremes'.[25] The extremes are: God—the World; Renunciation—Enjoyment; Quietism—Action; the One—the Many; Cessation of Birth—Birth; the Knowledge—the Ignorance; etc. It is Sri Aurobindo's conviction that the *Īśa-upaniṣad* does not subordinate the latter in each of these pairs to the former, but that it 'tries instead to get hold of the extreme ends of the knots, disengage and place them alongside of each other in a release that will be at the same time a right placing and a right relation. It will

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21 ibid., p. 16.

22 Sri Aurobindo, *Isha Upanishad* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1951), pp. 152-3.

23 See *Eight Upanishads* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1960).

24 *Isha Upanishad*, p. 153.

25 ibid., p. 153.

not qualify or subordinate unduly any of the extremes, although it recognises a dependence of one on the other'.[26] Since for Śaṅkara, the former extreme in each of the pairs is *paramārtha*, he is not interpreting the *Īśa-upaniṣad* aright, in the judgement of Sri Aurobindo. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo goes to the extent of saying that one of the three occasions on which God laughed at Śaṅkara was when he commented on the *Īśa-upaniṣad*.[27]

Did God laugh at Śaṅkara ? And, for what ? The basic distinction that is important for understanding Śaṅkara is the one between the *pāramārthika* (the absolute) and the *vyāvahārika* (the empirical, relative). It is in the light of this distinction that Śaṅkara harmonizes the apparently discordant teachings of the Upaniṣads. It is not by employing the logic of the finite, as it is alleged, that Śaṅkara has discovered the truth of this harmony ; the dependence is on what Sri Aurobindo has termed the logic of the Infinite—the intuitions of the Upaniṣadic seers as well as Śaṅkara's own. Sri Aurobindo himself seems tacitly to confirm Śaṅkara's intuition when he says :

> 'Brahman, exceeding as well as dwelling in the plan of His *Māyā*, is *Īś*, lord of it and free. Man, dwelling in the play, is *Anīś*, not lord, not free, subject to *Avidyā*. But this subjection is itself a play of the Ignorance, unreal in essential fact (*paramārtha*), real only in practical relation (*vyavahāra*), in the working out of the actions of the divine Energy, the Chit-Shakti.' [28]

At a few other places also in his analysis of the *Īśa-upaniṣad*, Sri Aurobindo appears to accept the insights of Śaṅkara, as for instance, when he says that, of Brahman 'the unity and stability are the higher truth',[29] and that the 'chain of Karma only binds the movement of Nature and not the soul which, by knowing itself, ceases even to appear to be bound by the results of its works',[30] and that therefore, 'the way of freedom is not inaction, but to cease from identifying oneself with the movement and recover instead our true identity in the Self of things who is their Lord'.[31]

When Śaṅkara speaks of Brahman as the non-dual Reality, he is not advocating any numerical oneness or exclusive monism. His Absolute is not one of the extremes, or exclusive of anything. Only, It is not a One-in-the Many, as Sri Aurobindo would like to have it. Renunciation for Śaṅkara too is not a physical rejection ; it is, even as for Sri Aurobindo, 'renunciation of all in desire' which may be described as 'the condition of the free enjoyment of all'.[32] When Śaṅkara says that action is not the direct means to release, he does not mean by non-action inertia or inaction: it signifies knowledge which consists in the freedom from wrong identification of the Self with the movements of the body and the mind.

There are these two paths taught in the Veda: works and knowledge. The end that can be achieved by the way of works (*karma*) including the acts enjoined by the Veda is prosperity (*abhyudaya*) in this world and in the next. The final end which is liberation from bondage (*niḥśreyasa, mokṣa*) can be realized only by pursuing the path of knowledge (*jñāna*). He who is eligible only for the performance of *karma* is not competent to follow the path of *jñāna*. He

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26 ibid., p. 154.

27 See *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library—De Luxe—Edition,* Volume 17, p. 115. 'Three times God laughed at Shankara, first, when he returned to burn the corpse of his mother, again, when he commented on the Isha Upanishad, and the third time when he stormed about India preaching inaction.'

28 *Isha Upanishad,* p. 93.

29 ibid., p. 21.

30 ibid., p. 31.

31 ibid.

32 ibid., p. 28.

ILLUMINATING DIALOGUES FROM INDIAN LORE

KNOW THE IMMORTAL SELF AND BE HAPPY

Prajāpati, the Creator, said: 'The Self which is free from sin, free from old age, free from death, free from grief, free from hunger, free from thirst, whose desires come true, and whose thoughts come true—That it is which should be searched out, That it is which one should desire to understand. He who has known this Self (from the scriptures and a teacher) and understood It obtains all the worlds and all desires.'

The gods and demons both heard these words, and said: 'Well, let us search out this Self, by searching out which, one obtains all the worlds and all desires.'

Indra, among the gods, went forth, and Virocana, among the demons. Without communicating with each other, the two came into the presence of Prajāpati, fuel in hand as a mark of respect for the teacher. They dwelt there for thirty-two years, practising *brahmacarya* (self-restraint). Then Prajāpati said to them.

'For what purpose have you both been living here ?'

Indra and Virocana: A saying of yours is being repeated by learned people: The Self which is free from sin, old age, death, and so forth—That it is which should be searched out, and which one should desire to understand. He who has known this Self and understood It obtains all the worlds and all desires. Now, we both have dwelt here because we desire that Self.

Prajāpati: The person that is seen in the eye—this is the Self. This is immortal, fearless. This is Brahman.

Disciples: Venerable Sir, he who is perceived in the water and he who is perceived in a mirror—which of these is he ?

Prajāpati: The same one, indeed, is perceived in all these. Look at yourself in a pan of water and then what you do not understand of the Self, come and tell me.

The disciples looked in a pan of water.

Prajāpati: What do you see ?

Disciples: Venerable Sir, we see the entire self even to the very hairs and nails, a veritable picture.

Prajāpati: After you have well adorned yourselves with ornaments, put on your best clothes, and cleansed yourselves, look into the pan of water.

After having adorned themselves well, put on their best clothes, and cleansed themselves, they looked into the pan of water.

Prajāpati: What do you see ?

Disciples: Just as we ourselves are well adorned, well dressed and clean, so are these two reflections well adorned, well dressed and clean.

Prajāpati: This is the Self, this is immortal, fearless. This is Brahman.

They both went away satisfied in heart.

Prajāpati (*seeing them go*): They are both going away without having known and without having realized the Self. And whoever of these, whether gods or demons, follow this doctrine shall perish.

Virocana, satisfied in heart, went to the demons and preached this doctrine to them: the self (meaning the body) alone is to be worshipped here on earth, the body alone is to be served. It is only by worshipping the body here and by serving it that one gains both worlds—this and the next.

But Indra, even before he had reached the gods, thought over and saw some difficulty in the teaching and returned to the teacher.

Prajāpati: Well, Indra, you went away with Virocana, satisfied in heart; now for what purpose have you come back?

Indra: Venerable Sir, as this reflection in the water is well adorned when the body is well adorned, well dressed when the body is well dressed, clean when the body is clean, so this reflection in the water will be blind if the body is blind, one-eyed if the body is one-eyed, crippled if the body is crippled, and will perish if the body perishes. Therefore I do not see any good in this doctrine.

Prajāpati: So it is, India. I shall explain the Self to you further. Live with me another thirty-two years.

Indra lived with Prajāpati another thirty-two years.

Prajāpati: He who moves about, exalted, in dreams—this is the Self, this is immortal, fearless. This is Brahman.

Then Indra went away satisfied in heart. But even before he had reached the gods, he reflected and saw some difficulty in the teaching and returned to the teacher.

Prajāpati: Well, Indra, you went away satisfied in heart; now for what purpose have you come back?

Indra: Venerable Sir, although this dream self is not blind even if the body is blind, nor do its eyes and nose run when the eyes and nose of the body run; although this self is not affected by the defects of the body, nor killed when the body is killed, nor one-eyed when it is one-eyed—yet they kill the dream self, as it were; they chase it, as it were. It becomes conscious of pain, as it were; it weeps, as it were. I do not see any good in this.

Prajāpati: So it is, Indra. I shall explain the Self further to you. Live with me another thirty-two years.

He lived with Prajāpati another thirty-two years.

Prajāpati: When a man is asleep, with senses withdrawn and serene, and sees no dream—this is the Self. This is immortal, fearless. This is Brahman.

Then Indra went away satisfied in heart But even before he had reached the gods, he saw some difficulty in the teaching and returned to his preceptor.

Prajāpati: Well, Indra, you went away satisfied in heart; now for what purpose have you come back?

Indra: Venerable Sir, in truth the self in dreamless sleep does not know itself as 'I am it', nor these other creatures. It has therefore reached utter annihilation, as it were. I do not see any good in this.

Prajāpati: So it is, Indra. I shall explain the Self further to you and nothing else. Live with me another five years.

Indra lived with his teacher another five years.

Prajāpati: O Indra, this body is mortal, always held by death. It is the abode of the Self, which is immortal and incorporeal. The embodied self is the victim of pleasure and pain. So long as one is identified with the body, there is no cessation of pleasure and pain. But neither pleasure nor pain touches one who is not identified with the body. The wind is without body; the cloud, lightning and thunder are without body.

Now, as these, arising from yonder *ākāśa* (space) and reaching the highest light, appear in their own forms, so does this serene Being, arising from this body and reaching the Highest Light, appear in His own form. In that state He is the Highest Person. There He moves about, laughing, playing, rejoicing—be it with women, chariots, or relatives, never thinking of the body into which He was born. As an animal is attached to a cart, so is the conscious self attached to the body.

There are three kinds of body used by the Self as Its instruments in the phenomenal world. During the waking state It uses the gross body to experience gross physical objects. During the dream state It uses the dream body to experience subtle objects. During deep sleep it uses the causal body to experience the absence of subject-object relationship. In reality the Self is unattached. Thus the knower of the Self moves through the three states as the non-attached witness of their experiences. He is totally free from identification with any sort of body—gross, subtle, or causal. He remains as the seer of seeing, the hearer of hearing, the thinker of thinking.

The gods meditate on that Self. Therefore all worlds belong to them and all desires. He who knows that Self and understands It obtains all worlds and all desires.

Source: *Chāndogya-upaniṣad*, pt. VIII, ch. vii to xii (abridged).

(*Contd. from p.* 132)

who is qualified for the latter discipline has no need for *karma*. This does not mean, however, that *karma* has no place in the scheme of spiritual progress. When it is performed without any selfish motive, it helps one in acquiring the qualification for the higher path. *Karma*, thus, serves as the external means (*bahiraṅga-sādhanā*). To expect more from it is not proper. Through *niṣkāma-karma* (desireless action) the mind gets purified; through *jñāna* release is gained. Unless this truth is grasped, the Upaniṣadic teaching cannot be understood. Śaṅkara makes this clear in his introduction to the *Īśāvāsya-upaniṣad*, where he says that the Upaniṣad texts are not for use in the rituals, but teach the true nature of the Self as pure, sinless, one, eternal, bodiless, and all-pervading. The purport of the Upaniṣads is to reveal the nature of Reality, and not to enjoin works.

Śaṅkara's analysis of the *mantras* of the *Īśāvāsya-upaniṣad* is as follows: Of the two types of eligible persons, the first verse of the *Īśāvāsya* relates to those who are fit for *jñāna*, and the second to those who are eligible for *karma-yoga*. Verses 3-8 have in view those who long to pursue the path of knowledge; and so they expound the nature of the Self, and also describe the consequences of realizing or not realizing the Self. Verses 9-18 are addressed to the other type of eligibles; they recommend the joint-performance of *karma* and *upāsanā*, work and worship.[33]

There is nothing incongruous or absurd in Śaṅkara's interpretation of the Upaniṣads including the *Īśāvāsya*; and we are unable to agree with Sri Aurobindo in this judgement in this regard. But we have unstinted and unreserved admiration for his insights into the secret of the Vedic hymns. He has made the most valuable and marvellous contribution to the study of the Veda, the watershed from which the perennial river of Indian culture flows.

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[33] See the present writer's *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* (rendered into English with Introduction and Notes based on Śaṅkara's commentary), Upaniṣad Vihār, Madras-23, 1957.

INDO-IRANIAN INFLUENCE UPON THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION

DR. S. P. DUBEY

The question of the impact of one religious tradition upon another is complex as well as delicate. In the history of religions we find several occasions when such influences have been traced out. Scholars of a particular tradition find it fascinating to establish the influence of their own tradition upon others, and sometimes vice versa. It is maintained usually that the East has influenced the West; that the sun of wisdom rises in the east and travels towards the west. The myth of the Magi at the time of the birth of Jesus is cited in support of such views. At times it is emphasized that the case is just the reverse and that it is the West that has influenced the East. The evidence for such contentions is not wanting in the past, but it seems even more true in the modern era when technology (a by-product of the western tradition indeed) is changing the face of the earth rapidly. The cases of inter-influences within a hemisphere are also not less interesting. The Mosaic ideas influencing the Greek thinking, the concept of logos finding an honourable place in Judaism and Christianity, the Upaniṣadic thought being present in Buddhism, and the dialectic of Nāgārjuna echoing in the writings of Ācārya Śaṅkara are just a few examples of such inter-actions. But the traffic between the East and the West is more engaging for researchers in the history of religions. Thinkers like Max Weber feel that Christianity has influenced Indian theism. Others try to suggest that Jesus himself was influenced by the Indian tradition. Many unaccounted years (about sixteen years, between the age of thirteen and twenty-nine) in the life of Jesus are supposed to have been spent in India while learning ascetic lessons in the monasteries. Some legends maintain that the death of Jesus took place in Kashmir while escaping from crucifixion. The Ahmadiya movement in Islam believes that Jesus died a natural death at the age of 102 and was buried in Rozabal Khanyar in Srinagar, the tomb being known as the tomb of 'Yus Asaf' or Jesus, containing several Jewish marks. It is also held that Indian merchants and Buddhist monks carried their faiths to the West and implanted their culture in those lands in early days and that this finds direct and indirect expression in various ways even today. The opposite thesis is also difficult to ignore. Greek thought is supposed to have diffused into the Aryan land along with the invasion of Alexander the Great.

Our present paper is concerned with the Indo-Iranian influence upon Judaism and Christianity as primarily traced out by the Marburg theologian Rudolf Otto (1869-1937). His studies in the fields of the history of religions, comparative study of religions and Indology are important from several standpoints. As an objective religionist he was able to discover the common features of the religions of the world. These common features, Otto points out, sometimes are due to inter-influence and at other times are the results of independent growth. In *Mysticism East and West* he finds many similarities, though not without differences, between Śaṅkara (788-820) and the German mystic Meister Eckhart (1250-1327). In another book[1] he brings forward the common points as well as the divergences be-

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1 Otto, R.: *India's Religion of Grace and Christianity Compared and Contrasted* (London, 1930).

tween Christian theism and the Vaiṣṇava religion of Rāmānuja. Otto does not suggest the influence of one system on the other in these two works.[2] But, as stated earlier, there are scholars who attempt to show a definite impact of Christianity on Vaiṣṇavism, at least from the time of Madhvācārya (1199-1293) and onwards. They also refer to the missionary work of the Christian priests which goes back to the first century A.D. when St. Thomas arrived on the Malabar coast (in A.D. 52) from Jerusalem via Taxila. But the influence of one religion on the other has been usually mutual and not a one-way traffic. Apart from the early impacts, the nineteenth century commerce between the two parts of the world has been more significant and powerful. Having read the Latin translation of the Upaniṣads[3] Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) strongly felt that Christianity was influenced by the Indian religions. The thoughts of Schopenhauer were seminal to the German interest in Orientology and this leads to the beginning of Comparative Religion (better, Comparative Study of Religions). Otto himself was immensely influenced by his teacher Richard Garbe who had brought out a German translation of the *Gītā* and who inspired the disciple to dig deeper into that great Song of the Lord. Fascinated by the attraction of the East, Otto travelled thrice to the Orient and spent several months in different parts of India. Apart from his famous book the *Idea of the Holy*, he produced several significant works and translations which invite the attention of a wide circle of students of religion. In his work *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man,* with which book the present paper is concerned, he shows that the Judeo-Christian tradition has been influenced by the Indo-Iranian religion.[4] Concepts such as the Kingdom of God, the Son of Man, the Resurrection, and several other gnostic and eschatological elements are present from early days in the religions of India and Iran. Judaism and Christianity have been influenced by the Eastern religious traditions in so far as the origin and growth of these concepts are concerned.

In the Vedas, Otto points out, the most solemn title for Varuṇa is *rājā* (king), and this title is used for him alone. Being a king he is also the judge of the subjects (*prajā*) of his kingdom (*rājya*).[5] Varuṇa of the Vedas declined in India in due course and gained victory on the Iranian soil. Varuṇa, the ancient Asura (god) was called Ahura or Mazdah (the Great Creator) in the religion of Zoroaster. According to Albert Schweitzer, the Jews, while in exile, became acquainted with the Iranian concept of the Kingdom of God.[6]

In the Indian Varuṇa (Ahura) we do not find any reference to a real eschatology (the theology concerned with the last things—death and judgement, heaven and hell, the end of the world, and the future state in general). But in Mazdaism it is the essence of the message. The profound idea of God's warfare against his enemy Ahriman (*ahi,* serpent) gave rise to eschatology. At the end of the great battle the enemy would be definitely defeated. Then would come the resurrection of the dead, the final judgement, and lastly, the 'wondrous new

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2 For a detailed study of these works see the present author's book *Rudolf Otto and Hinduism* (Varanasi, 1969).

3 Anquetil Duperron translated the Upaniṣads into Latin in 1801-02 from a Persian one prepared under the patronage of prince Dara Shikoh in 1656-57.

4 See also Otto's *Göttheit und Göttheiten der Arier.*

5 Otto: *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man,* pp. 20-4.

6 Schweitzer, A.: *Christianity and the Religions of the World* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1923), pp. 24-5.

creation of the world'.[7] Though the concept of *śuddha-sattva* is found in the Indian soteriology (*mokṣa-śāstra*), there is no real resurrection. But Zoroaster teaches resurrection as a revivification of the bodies abandoned at death, and their reunion with the souls. Such corporeal eschatology, according to Otto, was completely foreign to the early West and specially to Israel.[8] The concept of 'Son of Man' points back in some way to the influence of the Aryan East.[9] The spiritual beings such as *Mitra* and *Mithra* are probably behind such a phrase.[10]

The Indo-Iranian influence is clearly visible in the apocalypse of Enoch which influences in turn the parent document (Stammschrift) of the Synoptic Gospels. Otto notes that the gnostic elements of the *Book of Enoch* are still witnessed in the religions of India and are traced back to the Vedic period. The *Atharva-veda* (II. 1) and the *Ṛg-veda* (X. 129. *Nāsadīya-sūkta*) describe the creation of the Primeval Being which gives glimpses of the genesis in Enoch's creation-story.[11] The atmosphere of the predicates that describe Enoch's primitive deity is quite Indian. The deity is unlimited and incomprehensible (*anantam* and *acintyam*). He walks alone in solitude and wishes, 'I will go forth, I will be many' (*tadaikṣata ekoham bahusyām*). And he created first of all the fire, just as Enoch's God first created the light.[12] Otto notes here that all the elements in Enoch's apocalyptic need not be influenced by the Indian concepts. Some of them are purely Zoroastrian ideas. But before the separation of the Indians and the Iranians there was a strong cultural and religious contact between them, as recorded in the *Zend-Avesta* and the *Ṛg-veda*, which is still present in the mythology and religion of Zarathustra.[13]

The ideas glimpsed in Enoch are found in fuller details in the Mandean Gnosis, according to Otto. He notes that the concepts presented by this gnosis re-echo the thinking of the Upaniṣads to such an extent that a 'direct importation from India' could be conjectured.[14] The Mandeans settled in Maisan, the gate of entry for Indian trade into Mesopotamia. Maisan's port had an Indian temple. Indian tribes had colonized Maisan. When Indian caravans came here or passed through it, the Indian merchants carried their ideas too to these places. There need not be any surprise, therefore, if direct impacts are found in the syncretistic medley of Mandean Gnosis.

Apart from Rudolf Otto, several other scholars have tried to trace out the impact of Hindu India upon the Christian tradition. Robertson found similarities between Kṛṣṇa and Christ. Unlike Weber he holds that the Christ-myth is merely a form of Kṛṣṇa-myth.[15] Simone Weil finds obvious relationship between Dionysius and Viṣṇu. She notes that Dionysius had gone on an expedition to India.[16] She also finds a reference to this effect in the *Iliad* of Homer.

The orthodox Vedic tradition is undoubtedly the dominant factor in the Indian

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7 Otto, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-9.

8 ibid., p. 195.

9 ibid., Book II, ch. IV.

10 Simone Weil also admits that the influence of Iranian *Mithra* on the Jewish thought is possible; she also notes that Daniel was a friend of Persian kings. See her *Waiting on God*, p. 164.

11 Enoch is one of the earliest Hebrew patriarchs, stated in the *Genesis* to have 'walked with God'. See Otto's *Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*, p. 397; also his *Göttheit und Göttheiten der Arier*, p. 133.

12 Otto: *KG & SM*, p. 398.

13 ibid., p. 20; pp. 397-8.

14 ibid, p. 397; also see his *West-Oestliche Mystik*, 2nd ed., pp. 440 ff.

15 Robertson, J. M.: *Christianity and Mythology*, (London, 1900).

16 Weil, S.: *Waiting on God*, p. 167.

culture, but this tradition is a non-aggressive one. It is in Buddhism where we find the missionary spirit and it was mainly because of this spirit that it was able to expand beyond its place of origin. There is a strong line of argument that Christianity has been influenced by Buddhism. Swami Vivekananda mentions that the missionary works started by King Ashoka exported Buddhist ideas to the Manichaean and Christian religions. He notes that in the doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation of God, as well as in the similarities between the services in the temples and the Catholic churches, from the mass to the chant and the benediction, the Buddhist influences upon Christianity are clearly visible.[17] Monsieur Nicolas Notowitsch puts Jesus to school under the Buddhist priests for six years. He claims to have found documents on the subject in a Buddhist monastery and has published an abstract of the same.[18] Schopenhauer identifies the pessimism of Jesus with the Indian speculative pessimism of the Buddha. On the other hand Dean Inge quotes Tauler as saying, 'Christ never arrived at the emptiness of which these men talk.'[19] Another tradition, as mentioned earlier, maintains that Jesus died in Kashmir. As a prototype for the parables of Jesus the Buddhist parables have been suggested by Reman and Havet.[20] Rudolf Seydel also shows the impact of Buddhism upon Christianity.[21]

The similarities between Buddhism and Christianity are fascinating. But no conclusive evidence of the former's influence over the latter has yet been provided. The two religions are so polar that historically it is almost an impossibility. Paul Tillich has aptly brought out the differences between the two great religions, though he does not rule out the possibility of a dialogue—if not held in the past, one could begin it now.[22] In the spirit of the historian of religion Prof. Max Müller makes a very bold statement relevant to this context. He states:

> 'That there are startling coincidences between Buddhism and Christianity cannot be denied; and it must likewise be admitted that Buddhism existed at least four hundred years before Christianity. I go even further and say that I should be extremely grateful if anybody would point out to me the historical channels through which Buddhism had influenced early Christianity I have been looking for such channels all my life, but hitherto I have found none. What I have found is that for some of the most startling coincidences there are historical antecedents on both sides; and if we once know these antecedents the coincidences become far less startling.'[23]

Schweitzer also shares the spirit of Max Müller when he says:

> 'That Buddhism may have had some kind of influence upon late Judaism and thus indirectly upon Jesus is not inherently impossible, if we are prepared to recognise Buddhist influence on the Babylonian and Persian civilizations. But it is unproved, unprovable and unthinkable that Jesus derived the suggestions of the new and creative ideas which emerge in his teachings from Buddhism.'[24]

Lamotte, while partially balancing the

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17 Vivekananda, *The Complete Works*, Vol. II (1963) p. 511.

18 Notowitsch, N.: *La vie Inconnue de Jesus-Christ* (Paris, 1894).

19 See *Christian Mysticism*, p. 114.

20 See, Julicher, *Gleichnisreden Jesu*, I, 1888, p. 172 ff.

21 Seydel, R.: *The Gospel of Jesus in its Relation to the Buddha Legend and the Teaching of Buddha, With Constant Reference to Other Religious Groups* (Leipzig, 1882), p. 337.

22 Tillich, Paul: *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (Columbia University Press, NY, 1964).

23 Max Müller, *India, What Can It Teach Us?* (London, 1883), p. 279.

24 Schweitzer, A.: *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 291.

situation, indicates that there has been some Iranian influence upon Buddhism. According to him the Iranian idea of sun-worship finds expression in the terms Amitābha, Virocana, Dīpaṅkara, Āditya-Bandhu and several other attributes of the Bodhisattva.[25]

It is not easy to conclude a discussion on a subject like the present one with any categorical statement. In fact such attempts are simply openings to further researches in areas which are largely obscured by thick coatings of history and lack of adequate documents. More space and time is required for even near-satisfactory treatment. What we can state here is that there are possibilities for fruitful results on both the sides. If certain conclusive results are reached and a particular tradition is found to have been influenced by another, there should not be a feeling of intimidation or inferiority in a votary's mind. There are impacts and interactions in the history of religions as well as in other fields. There are mutual borrowings which are by no means stealing of the ideas or terminologies. In the growth and development of religious traditions complete privacy or exclusiveness is impossible. The contact of one tradition with the other is often advantageous to both sides. And all this adds to the richness of the parliament of religions. If Prof. Otto is able to trace out the pathway from India to Christendom through Iran and Israel, he deserves our gratitude.

25 Lamotte, E.: *Histoire du Bouddisme Indien* (Louvain, Belgium, 1958), p. 550.

ŚAIVISM

(A Bird's-eye View of Its Development)

Swami Tapasyananda

The worship of Rudra-Śiva as also of Śakti, is the oldest form of Hinduism. Modern scholarship has discovered traces of it in the relics of the pre-Aryan civilization of Indus Valley (3000-1500 B.C.), unearthed at the site of Mohenjo-daro or the 'Mounds of the Dead'. Bnt it is only in the *Ṛg-vedic* literature (1500 B.C.) that we get definite ideas of this Deity for the first time. Rudra of the *Ṛg-veda* has a twofold character—one destructive and the other auspicious. He is the 'howler', who along with his children, the Maruts (Pounders), strikes terror into the hearts of men as the raging storms and other destructive forces of Nature. But just as the storm clears the air and becomes the fresh breezes bringing new energies, He (Rudra) also becomes the remover of *rut,* suffering or sin, as Sāyaṇa explains the etymology of the word. He then became Śiva—the auspicious, the benign. Therefore hymns are addressed to him, deprecating his wrath, entreating the 'malevolent and impetuous deity' not to use the celestial fire (that is, lightning) or attack the worshipper with fever, cough, and poison. Side by side he is depicted as showering blessings on man and beast, and from his hand come restoration and healing. In the Vedic hymn known as *Śatarudrīya,* he is addressed as the mountain dweller with many eyes and matted hair; he is the lord of trees and grass, and the ruler of animals; concerned with paths and roads;

to be seen in sunshine and cloud, in lightning, rain, and fair weather. His resorts are lovely places, and he is invested with skin-clothing. He is especially the patron deity of the *munis* or *keśins*—a type of deified men who had developed spiritual powers through faith, silent meditation, and yoga practices—, and of *vrātyas*—religious mendicants who did not perform Vedic rites but wandered about practising asceticism.

Thus in the Rudra of the *Ṛg-veda* were present in germinal form all elements of the later Rudra-Śiva—his twin aspect as the terrible and the auspicious, his special paraphernalia, and his connection with asceticism. The filling up of the details was done later by the *paurāṇic* literature, but the movement that raised him to the position of the Supreme Being was set on foot even in the Vedas. Already in the *Ṛg-veda*, he was described as 'lord of the world', and 'father of the universe' who by his sovereignty knows all things human and divine. So also in the *Atharva-veda*, under the name Bhava, he is the lord of the heavens and the earth, and has filled the wide atmosphere; all breathing things upon the earth are his—man, animals of the homestead, beasts of the forest, and the eagles of the air. As testified by the grammarian Patañjali, by the 2nd century B.C. the vague figures of *śaiva* devotees represented by the *munis* and *vrātyas* of the *Ṛg-veda* had developed into the well-defined sect of the *śiva-bhāgavatas*, a name very well indicative of the fact that the devotees of Śiva were attracted by the rising monotheistic movement in the name of *bhagavat* (known later as Vaiṣṇavism). Somewhere about this time must have been produced the *Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad*, a book that strikes the high-water mark of Śaiva theism, just as the *Gītā* does of Vaiṣṇavism. It was an attempt to combine the monotheistic philosophy of the Upaniṣads with devotion to the Deity as Śiva. It speaks of metaphysical enquiry; of yogic practice; of synthesis of knowledge, devotion, and work; of absorption in Brahman, the Supreme Being. This Brahman is identified with Rudra-Śiva. Matter is perishable, says this Upaniṣad, but Hara (a name of Śiva) is imperishable. He, the only God, rules over perishable matter and individual souls. By meditating on Him, by uniting and becoming one with Him, there is cessation of all illusion in the end.... 'He who protects and controls the worlds by His own powers, He—Rudra—is indeed one only. There is no one by His side to make Him the second. He is present in the hearts of all beings. He projects and sustains the worlds, and He withdraws them into Himself.'[1] Śiva, the divine Lord (Bhagavān Śiva), is the owner of the faces, heads and necks of all, is all-pervading and omnipresent. Reminiscent of His terrific aspect, there is a prayer beseeching Him to save the devotee from His shaft and from slaughter.[2] But side by side with it is addressed to Him prayer to bestow peace on the devotee by His calm, benign, sin-destroying and blissful form—above all to endow him with good thoughts.[3]

The development of Vedic theism into the Hinduism of modern times was achieved largely through the voluminous literature called the *purāṇas* (mythology) and *itihāsas* (the epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*). The great contribution of this literature, produced in the course of a long period ranging from 600 B.C. to A.D. 900, was to familiarize the Indian mind with the conception of *Trimūrti*—the Supreme Being conceived as performing the threefold function of creation, sustenance, and destruction as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, respectively. These three personalities are looked upon as one Being, performing the three cosmic

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1 *Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad*, III. 2.
2 ibid., III. 6.
3 ibid., III. 4-5.

functions which have ordinarily to be fulfilled every moment and, in a special sense, at the time of the beginning and end of a cycle of creation. But this is the case only in the more liberal of those books. Many of the others are clearly sectarian, written for exalting one or the other of the Gods. Brahmā, the creator, is however left out of account as being insufficient to form an independent personal God. No satisfactory reason has been given for this by any of these books, except by an unidentified Sanskrit verse which says in a witty tone: 'Men worship Śiva, the destroyer, because they fear Him; Viṣṇu, the preserver, because they hope something from Him. But who worships Brahmā, the creator? His work is done.' Probably the worship of Brahmā is included in that of Viṣṇu, as the former is pictured as coming out of the lotus emerging from Viṣṇu's navel. The creator and preserver may be conceived as forming a unity. In the sectarian books, therefore, Viṣṇu and Śiva appear in turn as the Supreme Being, subordinating the other two either as creatures or as devotees. Thus in the *śaiva* sections of the *paurāṇic* literature, Śiva, who is only the destroyer in the *Trimūrti* conception, is confirmed as the one God, a position to which He had been raised already at an earlier date by the *Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad*. And even from a liberal point of view this is perfectly understandable. For He who destroys everything is the only entity that ultimately remains, and the next cycle of creation and maintenance has only to begin from Him.

Another contribution of these scriptures to Indian theism is the bestowal of a more concrete and definite personality to the Deity. The period from the 6th century B.C. was an age of revolt in the field of religious thinking in India, and the most glorious products of it were the personalities of Gautama Buddha and Vardhamāna Mahāvīra who preached the highly ethical religions that came to be known as Buddhism and Jainism. Though highly ethical and rational in their teachings, they bore on them the very prominent imprint of the personalities of their founders. Under these influences the cults associated with the Vedas had also to develop on those lines and the shadowy gods of earlier days had to become more distinct personalities that could inspire the minds of men with passionate devotion. Hence there grew round Rudra-Śiva an elaborate mythology, recounting His exploits, His glorious attributes, His destruction of evil beings, His acts of grace to devotees, His revelation of the highest wisdom to truth seekers, His excellences over all other deities, and His various manifestations on different occasions. Through elaborate descriptions and narratives on such aspects of the Deity, the *purāṇas* make His personality more vivid and real to the votary than any so-called historical figures of the past. The *śiva-purāṇas*, unlike those of the parallel cult of Viṣṇu, are without accounts of the doings of the Deity in human births or Incarnations. For they do not recognize the theory of incarnation. The Deity is never born of woman and never lived the life of a man on earth. He manifests Himself in different spheres for special purposes, or works through the bodies of particular men on special occasions.

The founder of one of the earliest *śaiva* sects, a *brahmacārin* named Lakulin (2nd century B.C.), is described by the *purāṇas* to be one such epiphany, the Deity having descended into his dead body. Even prior to him, *śaiva* sects did exist. The *vrātyas* of the Vedas must have been such, and Patañjali speaks of *śiva-bhāgavatas* who went about with an iron lance in hand as the emblem of the Deity. But the systems of Lakulin and his pupils are the earliest organized sects of importance we have knowledge of. These sects, four in number, are known as *pāśupata, śaiva, kāpālika*, and

kalāmukha. All of them, except the one known as *śaiva*, are mere aberrations of religious life. They have no moral idealism and philosophic depth, and many of their rites and practices, because of their flagrant violation of social and moral norms, have been described by the Hindu thinkers of the past as *atimārgīya,* 'gone astray'. They might have contributed something to occult knowledge and attainment of psychic powers but not to the cause of true spiritual life. The sect known as the *śaiva*, however, kept up the pure tradition of Śaivism, and has exercised considerable influence on the sublime religious philosophies that rose within the Śiva-cult in later days.

Among these developments, the one that deserves to be mentioned first and foremost is the Śaivite faith of South India, generally known as *śaivasiddhānta.* Śaivism existed among the Dravidian population even before the Christian era, but it gained in strength and missionary zeal after the conflicts it had with Jainism and Buddhism in later days. There came a succession of inspired saintly and poetic singers, beginning with Tirugnānasambandha (seventh century A.D.), who left a rich legacy of devotional literature on the basis of which a well thought out system of religion and philosophy was built up. The fundamental motive behind the movement is well expressed by Tirumūlar in a verse: 'The ignorant say that Love and God are different; none knows that Love and God are the same. They who know this rest in God's Love;' and in a further lesson: 'They have no love for God, who have no love for all mankind.' The metaphysics underlying the system is one of *bhedābheda*—difference without distinction. For the creation of the universe is not an illusion or a mere play, but a purposive activity, the purpose being the liberation of souls that are enshrouded in beginningless nescience. It is thus an act of love, an expression of that love which God is by nature. Advaita in this system is not oneness, but inseparability. It signifies difference in substance without any possibility of separation, just like the relation between the body and the mind, or the consonants and the vowel 'a' (without which, in Sanskrit, the former cannot stand). God is not identical with the universe or the souls; He is not their substance but He dwells in them and they in Him. In liberation the soul does not become one with God. Like salt dissolved in water it loses all its impurities and unites with Him, becoming His servant. It attains His status or consciousness, but retains its individuality. Practice of devotion combined with Śiva's grace, as manifested through the true teacher, is the chief means of attaining salvation.

Another great school of Śaivism, namely that of Liṅgāyatas or Vīra-śaivas, developed in the Kannada-speaking area of South India. It is generally associated with the name of Basava (twelfth century A.D.). although there had been teachers of this school preceding him. The movement, however, owes its modern militant and reformist tendencies to Basava. Like most of the other devotional cults, its philosophy is a compromise between monism and pluralism. Śiva, the one highest, has in Him a real innate power (Śakti) by which He divides Himself into two aspects, *liṅga* (Deity), having in Him the aspect of Śakti called *kalā,* and *aṅga,* possessing the aspect of Śakti called *bhakti* (divine love). Śakti as *kalā* makes one the object of worship and as *bhakti* makes the other a worshipper. In liberation there is no complete identity between the soul and the Supreme as in the nondualistic system of Śaṅkara; for there is always in God the innate Śakti or Power leading to creation. Liberation only means *sāmarasya* or union in blissful experience with Śiva, and it is attained through devotion and a course of moral and spiritual disciplines.

In North India also the Śaiva cult produc-

ed a high religious philosophy in Kashmir Śaivism, otherwise known as the *trika* school because of its representing three types of monistic idealism. Founded by Viṣṇugupta in the eighth century A.D., it recognizes Śiva as the only principle of existence, denying in Him even a principle of illusion for the production of duality. Solely by His will He makes the world appear in Himself, as if it were distinct from Himself, though not really so. He is not affected by the creation, as the mirror is not by the images appearing in it. The soul is identical with Him; only it does not know it owing to impurity. When the impurity is dispelled by intense contemplation, the individual becomes the Supreme. According to a later development of this system in the writings of Abhinavagupta (eleventh century A.D.), the perception of this identity is of the nature of recognition. It dawns by the instruction of the guru. This recognition of identity through instruction is compared to the experience of a girl who has fallen in love with a young man merely by hearing about him. She is not moved in any way if she happens to meet him by chance without knowing his identity. But when this identity is communicated to her, she is filled with rapture.

PROVISIONAL DELUSIONS

A DIALOGUE

E. R. MAROZZI

Disciple : Swami Vivekananda has said :

> 'The senses cheat you day and night.... No two people see the same world. The highest knowledge will show you that there is no motion, no change in anything; that the very idea of it is all Maya.... Mind and body are not our real Self; both belong to nature, but eventually we can know the *ding an sich* (the thing-in-itself).'[1]

We live in an organism bounded by the senses and dependent upon them for its existence. Except in deep sleep, we live by using the senses all the time. If they are cheating us, how can we cope with that? It seems to be an unfair disposition of Providence.

Teacher: Yes, man is subject to the delusion of the senses, but not for nothing. In a number of scriptures we find reference to the fool—that is, the man who allows himself to be cheated by sense experience and the sense-oriented mind. The term used is *mūḍha* meaning deluded, confused or foolish. The fate of such a one is said to be continual rebirth:

> 'The wise man prefers the good to the pleasant, but the fool chooses the pleasant through avarice and attachment.... To the careless child, befooled by the delusion of wealth, never appears the path of the hereafter. "This is the world and there is no other"—he who thinks thus falls into the clutches of death again and again.'[2]

Here we can notice that the man who is called foolish is so in relation to the wise man and thus refers to two stages of evolutionary development. The fool is not a fool to himself but only to the wise man. So it

[1] *The Complete Works,* Vol. VII (1958) p. 74.

[2] *Kaṭha-upaniṣad,* I. ii. 2, 6.

is a stage of evolutionary progresssion and as such it is a temporary condition or provisional delusion. When man awakes to the awareness that the senses are delusive, that is a later stage of maturity and unfoldment.

Disciple: How is it that the senses have that characteristic of delusion ?

Teacher: It is because of their limitations and shortcomings. The senses together with the mind can have only partial knowledge of Reality, and even that is distorted and provisional. Reason comes to the aid of the senses and makes corrections, but that, being based on the laws of logic, is also limited and provisional and cannot give us ultimate answers. For instance, the earth is seen by the eyes to be flat and unmoving and the sun is seen to rise and set, but this knowledge is contradicted by reason and its calculations. Finally that knowledge is contradicted by the intuition which finds that all outer phenomena are but manifestations of an inner Reality which is spiritual and One-without-a-second. Matter is proven by scientists to consist of atomic motion and nuclear energy which is without colour and form, yet our senses experience manifold objects having various colours, forms, textures, and having size and dimension in a space-time continuum. Thus the sense-mind world is a particular viewpoint perceived by limited instruments and is a provisional stage of awareness. Add to that the distorting effect of subconscious and unconscious impressions in the mind caused by previous experiences, and the result is a world quite other than the underlying Reality, the *svarūpa*, the *ding an sich* (thing-in-itself). It is called *vyāvahārika*, the empirical aspect of Reality, and is considered valid as long as one remains in that stage of awareness. Therefore it is a provisional delusion, but only when viewed from the standpoint of the next stage. Vasiṣṭha says:

> 'Form and substance are not the characteristics of objects; they are the defects of the organs of sense. Hence objects appear differently from what they really are: The seer and the objects seen are both *Cit* (Brahman or Pure Consciousness) but because of the intervention of the defective organs of sense, we get wrong perceptions of the objects with which we come into contact in the act of seeing. This body and its organs are both unreal and perishable and so are not competent to know the powers of the *Cit* which is the Reality and is Imperishable.'[3]

Disciple: Why is it that we all experience an outer world in common ? We feel heat and cold, hunger and thirst and react to a world of objects in common.

Teacher: There are some common elements such as the nature of our sense organs, but taken as a whole our individual worlds in which we live are rather different. This is due, firstly, to the differing abilities and sensitivities of the sense organs to perceive and the mind to respond to stimuli from particular objects, and, secondly, there are obvious differences in the individual reaction to a given object or situation due to the accumulated impressions of past experiences in the mind. What exists absolutely is Brahman and we experience it according to our ignorance. We people our world-drama with our own figures, some good, some bad, some fearful, some benign, coloured by our past experiences and conditioned by our own karma. It is partly because of language and its conventions which gloss over our differences that make it seem that we have private worlds in common because words derive their meanings by common consent and usage.

Disciple: What is it that experiences diversity ? It cannot be the Self which is One-without-a-second and alone is consciousness.

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[3] *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* 'Nirvāṇa-prakraṇa', (Tr. by S. V. Ganapati), pp. 183-4.

Teacher: It is the embodied self—he who thinks of himself as a body-mind mechanism. It is egoism which is defined by Patañjali as 'the identification of the seer with the instrument of seeing'[4] and is based on ignorance—the identification of the Self with the non-self. As long as there is such identification with the body-mind, so long sense experiences will lure man to seek pleasure, which, like the will-o'-the-wisp constantly evades his grasp. The true joy he seeks disappears as long as he pursues it with the senses and mind. The excitation of the senses and nerves is mistaken for joy and when it palls it brings pain and disease as its natural opposite. There follows habituation to the excitement which is not joy but only a promise of joy, and there is the illusion that the next experience will bring the thing he seeks. However, this again is a stage and is provisional; for the wise man sees that the promise of joy in the senses is empty and is in reality but disguised pain, and so he turns his mind to the Divine Self which alone is Joy.

As the different stages of human evolution are determined by the particular body of karma and knowledge of each individual, the conditions and forces at work at each stage are temporary and provisional. The *Bhagavad-gītā* indicates in one stanza (XIII, 22) how the *Puruṣa* manifests itself in four ways in the human body, and these are understood by some teachers as representing different stages in the evolution of spiritual awareness. When man is identified with his body, his interest in life is only to appease the appetites of the sense organs—hunger, thirst, lust, sleep—, and the Self is unknown and exists in him as merely the onlooker or spectator, and is called *upadraṣṭṛ*. His awareness of the Self is concealed by ignorance and sense experiences are necessary here for him to develop to the next stage. When awareness has developed further he begins to move away from the totally self-centred life and other people gain in importance for him. He finds that he must control his selfish reactions according to the ideals of moral and ethical behaviour and the Self takes on the role of permitter or assenter, *anumantṛ*. He can now judge, analyse, approve or disapprove of what he does. Next, by continually practising this kind of discipline in behaviour, his mind is purified and he begins to become aware of his soul, the Self as being the foundation of all his psychic processes and the supporter of his senses, mind and intellect. This stage is called *bhartṛ*, the bearer or supporter. Finally, he becomes aware that his soul is his true Self, that he is the Ātman—the Divine Reality—and the ego merges in It and disappears. Then he realizes that he is the eternal subject and that he alone is the enjoyer and experiencer, *bhoktṛ*, and is the detached witness of all phenomena. These stages can also be read as different steps in the growth, attenuation and dissolution of the ego which is the king of all our provisional delusions.

Discipline: Will you please explain that further?

Teacher: Egoism is the first product of ignorance and has been called the knot of the conscious with the unconscious. In the evolutionary process it appears first at the human level; for the consciousness of the animal is at the instinctive level and is totally identified with the body and its environment, acting according to conditioned behaviour. It is not aware of itself as a subject in contrast to an object. But man is aware of himself as an individual, an ego-mind complex relating to an objective world to which he reacts with like, dislike or indifference. As discussed above, the ego appears in different stages which we may think of as being related to the *guṇas* (qualities) and which is expressed poetically by Śaṅkara:

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[4] Patañjali: *Yoga-sūtras*, II. 6.

> 'The treasure of the bliss of Brahman is coiled round by the mighty deadly serpent of egoism, and guarded for its own use by means of its three fierce hoods consisting of the three *guṇas*.' [5]

At the first stage the ego is immersed in a world of sense experience and sense objects, the reaction to which may be either *tāmasic*—lethargic, confused, and ignorant—, or *rājasic*—restless, greedy, and attached. Here the values of life are self-centred and there is little or no awareness of the soul, but only of the empirical world as it relates to the ego. When the opposing forces of the mind are balanced the *guṇa* of *sattva* arises which has for its characteristics balance, serenity, control, illumination, purity, and leads to a spiritual state of awareness. These two stages of the ego are called unripe and ripe by Sri Ramakrishna. By the *sāttvic* or ripe ego the mind becomes purified with the practice of spiritual disciplines and merges in the Divine Self. It is a state free from all *guṇas*, beyond the play of opposites and free from all connection or relationship with nature and its products. Each of these stages of development is valid in its own right and necessary in its own time. Sri Ramakrishna says:

> 'Ignorance lasts as long as one has ego.' [6] 'If God keeps the ego in a man, then He keeps in him the sense of differentiation and also the sense of virtue and sin. But in a rare few He completely effaces the ego, and these go beyond virtue and sin, good and bad.' [7] 'The ego is like a stick that seems to divide the water in two. It makes you feel that you are one and I am another. When the ego disappears in samadhi, then one knows Brahman to be one's own inner consciousness.' [8] 'A man attains Brahmajnana as soon as his mind is annihilated. With the annihilation of the mind dies the ego...' [9] 'It is God alone who has planted in man's mind what the "Englishman" calls free will...Sin would have increased if God had not made the sinner feel that he alone was responsible for his sin. Those who have realized God are aware that free will is a mere appearance. In reality man is the machine and God its Operator, man is the carriage and God its Driver.' [10]

Disciple: What does merging mean? You said that the ego merges in the Self, and we find the term used in the Upaniṣads and other scriptures.

Teacher: The word for 'merging' used in the *Kaṭha-upaniṣad* is from the Sanskrit root *yam* which means literally to subdue or control. The meaning 'sublime' could also be applied here. What is meant is that by discrimination one discovers the unreal and unsubstantial nature of a thing and then proceeds to reject that unsubstantial part. It is merging in the same sense that the illusory snake disappears and merges in the rope when knowledge dawns. When the speech is merged in the mind, the mind in the intellect and the intellect in the Divine Self, they disappear and the Self alone remains. In the sense of sublimate, it means redirecting the lower and gross energies so as to function as the higher and subtle ones, thus merging and losing their original character in the higher and spiritual ones. It is the result of purification where the mind becomes integrated and loses its opposite, becoming one with the Self.

Disciple: Now I have another question, Sir. Swami Vivekananda said that the highest knowledge will show us that there is no motion, no change in anything. How is that, since all the life that we know is entirely motion and change?

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5 *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, 302.

6 M.: *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4, 1947), p. 139.

7 ibid., p. 272.

8 ibid., p. 335.

9 ibid., p. 756.

10 ibid., p. 327.

Teacher: Well, as Swamiji referred to the highest knowledge, then the experience of motion and change is a provisional one and takes place when Reality is perceived through the sense organs and the sense-oriented mind. Motion and change take place in, and depend upon space and time. But if we analyse these we find that they are not independently existing entities but depend upon the mind for their existence in our experience. It is by being aware of the succession of events that we cognize time and motion—by noticing the previous condition and position of a thing and then the succeeding one, time and motion are experienced. When the mind is absent, as in deep sleep or *samādhi,* neither of them exist for us. Thus time, as well as space, is called a mode or category of our understanding—it is the way in which we see things when looking through the senses and mind as instruments. From the standpoint of the highest knowledge only the Ultimate Reality is experienced and It is nondual and has no change or differentiation in It. The act of perception is possible only because differentiation exists for the senses and mind. Vasiṣṭha says :

> 'All these appearances exist only in our perceptions, although in fact nothing transpires. When percepts arise, we designate them as the active state of the *citta* (mind).... The differences that we perceive in these illusory appearances arise only in our minds and the diverse words that we use to indicate the states of our minds. But if words be set aside and if the mind is one-pointed, how can differences be perceived? In that state only the all-embracing Truth will be left.' [11]

Disciple: Sir, I would like to be free from all delusions, however provisional or necessary they may be!

Teacher: Yes, man cannot be satisfied until he reaches his Infinite dimension. True joy or happiness can be found only in the Infinite (*bhūman*), the Upaniṣads tell us, not in the finite, the trivial, the limited (*alpam*).

Disciple: Then how are we to cope with the problems of the finite?

Teacher: It is said that the problems of life are not solved but outgrown. Man conquers his environment at each stage by evolving out of it to a higher state of being. The problems are simply abandoned together with that stage of evolution, and they do not exist on the next higher level.

Disciple: How is the mind able to outgrow human problems at this level?

Teacher: Patañjali says, 'Coloured by the seer and the seen, the mind is able to understand everything.' [12] On one side it looks out and is aware of the world of manifold objects, governed by the forces of nature and is limited and confined by that. On the other side it looks within and is aware of the Divine Self as it is reflected in the mind. In the former condition the mind can know only finite and changing things of the world and not the Self. In reaching outwardly for fulfilment it is repeatedly frustrated and so eventually turns its attention within. As by seeking outwardly for the values and meaning of life there is delusion and confusion, so by seeking inwardly that undesirable condition is averted. The mind with its concentration turned within is able to witness the light of the Divine Self, and this causes the attenuation of desires and aversions related to the ego. When the mind becomes pure the Real Self is known together with unchanging bliss, peace, joy, and fulfilment.

Disciple: What is the pure mind like? It seems to me that without desires and aversions the mind would not be able to function.

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[11] *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha, 'Nirvāṇa-prakaraṇa'*, p. 51.

[12] Patañjali, *op. cit.*, IV. 22.

Teacher: Yes, it is true. The mind in its pure state is really no mind, for then it has merged with the Ātman. So Sri Ramakrishna says that pure mind and Pure Ātman are one and the same. It is true that the mind can function only by means of polarities—good-evil, love-hate, existence-nonexistence, etc.—and that it is operative only in the waking and dream states where the opposing forces exist. According to Vasiṣṭha:

> 'Mind has no existence apart from restlessness or vibration. The mind which has been stilled is dead; this state of the mind has been described as the liberation of the mind.... Mind is the state where existence and non-existence pass one into the other and consciousness and materiality meet and mix. So it happens that the mind is attached to either side. Between the two, when the mind attends to materiality it assumes the nature of matter, and by the practice of discrimination it becomes all consciousness. The mind by practice, will attain to that very state to which you will conduct it by manly exertion. Therefore attack your material mind with the mind that has been rested on the conscious mind: thereby get settled in the supreme state.' [13]

Disciple: When that happens it must be the end of all delusions, provisional or otherwise.

Teacher: Yes, that is so. Speaking of *samādhi* Patañjali says:

> 'Then knowledge bereft of covering and impurities, becoming Infinite, the knowable becomes small (*alpam*—finite, trivial). The *guṇas* having fulfilled their objective, the process of change comes to an end. From that comes the cessation of pain and works.' [14]

The sage Kapila says:

> 'As a dancer desists from dancing, having exhibited herself to the audience, so does Primal Nature desist, having exhibited herself to the spirit.... Thereby does the pure spirit, resting like a spectator, perceive Primal Nature, which has ceased to be productive: Thus from the repeated study of Truth, there results that wisdom, "The ego does not exist, naught is mine..." which leaves no residue to be known, is pure, free from ignorance and is absolute.' [15]

As long as the body is retained, it is the state of *jīvanmukti*—liberation-in-life—about which Śaṅkara says:

> 'With the disappearance of the ego, and with the realization of the Supreme Self, to whatever object the mind is directed one experiences *samādhi*.' [16]

It is called *vijñāna* by Sri Ramakrishna. Then, although the senses and mind operate, they no longer delude, for now one sees the underlying Reality (*svarūpa*) in all things and beings—the *ding an sich*.

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13 *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha*, 'Utpatti-prakaraṇa', (Tr. by D. N. Bose), pp. 186-7.

14 Patañjali, *op. cit.*, IV. 30, 29.

15 *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, LIX, LXIV, LXV.

16 *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*, 30.

HUMAN TRENDS

HOLLOW HEROES

Elizabeth Tudor, ruler of England and its empire by grace of God, was dying. It was 1603, and at 70 years of age she would have only weeks remaining.

Terrified that death would take her away while she slept in her bed, the aged queen dozed fitfully on the floor or in a chair. Delusion and desperation, however, would soon prove no obstacle to the inevitable. Her vanity, legendary among even self-centred royalty, was stronger than her weakened body. She refused to look at her face, now gouged by time. Obeying her still sharp commands, her servants removed all mirrors from her palaces as they whispered about the white clownish make-up she wore in a one-inch thickness over her entire face. More delusion for the dying monarch. For the make-up failed to make her appear youthful. It did, sadly, make her look grotesque.

'Oh, my hollow heroes', she would cry aloud. Older servants nodded their heads in some small degree of awareness. They heard the pain in her voice, pain caused by those she had chosen to idolize. Shrewdly these young men, passionate with ambition, had stroked her ego and called her the brightest sun in the universe. Her vanity encouraged them and they in turn encouraged her self-delusion. They gave her sonnets and soft words. She gave them titles, lands, castles, honours, jewels, commissions.

They dipped into her bounty. Later they would spit in her face. They used her, then betrayed her. In *The Eternal Companion,* Swami Brahmananda says: 'Man seeks happiness in the world, but does he find it? In his mad pursuit he toils hard and runs hither and thither after many objects, only to find shadows after all. His life ebbs; he dies in vain.'

Elizabeth felt the pain of her 'Hollow Heroes' up until the very end. The treachery of worldly attachments—'these paltry prizes' in the words of Swami Vivekananda—is more laden with agony than with ecstasy. A prime example was her affection for Lord Essex, a handsome young man, more ambitious than able and better suited for wearing well-tailored clothes and sitting on a horse than for the higher political aspirations he so greedily sought. Elizabeth's vanity demanded the narcotic of constant flattery, an awareness Essex used to his own advantage.

As Elizabeth yielded more and more to her attachment for the incompetent Essex, he yielded more and more to his own ego. It soon became an open secret that he felt himself more qualified to rule England

than a mere woman could. And the cruelty of his words—that Elizabeth's mind was as crooked as her carcass—soon reached her ears. She was deeply hurt by this remark; it tortured her for a long time. Meanwhile, Essex rushed to his doom. For in a bold attempt to seize the throne by force, he was totally unsuccessful, as he had been in most things his entire life. He was arrested, sentenced to death in a death warrant signed by Elizabeth herself, and beheaded. Her attachment to her throne, apparently surpassed her attachment to Essex. His death, however, did not erase the pain of his treason nor of his harsh words.

Today, 'Hollow Heroes' are everywhere in the West. The chaos and violence of our time have given rise to the most pathetic choice of idols. For we are bowing down before men more worthy of censure than of praise. Psychiatrists tell us we live in the age of anti-heroes. For once it appears as though they are correct. Novels, films, plays, newspapers, as well as other forms of pop culture, all offer us men and women whose deeds are not heroic, whose vices obliterate their virtues if any, whose desires are animalistic rather than angelic, and whose purpose in life is self-gratification as opposed to service.

What man accepts as true today he rejects as false tomorrow, said Swami Brahmananda. Which may explain the unending parade of these 'Hollow Heroes'.

Cinemas give us heroes as sadistic as any force they oppose. By any means necessary, appears to be the only standard adhered to. A constant stream of pornographic films reveals a lewdness that is as appalling as it is monotonous. And the stars, so-called, of these films are trumpeted in the press as being special, free souls, nnbound by any chains society in its alleged ignorance would apply. Worse, these participants in pornography would have you envy them.

Hardly. For a slave remains a slave regardless of the size and shape of his cage. That he has selected his own set of chains makes him no less a slave. These heroes come and they go. Yet we replace them with others, equally as false, equally as hollow and in the end, equally as disappointing. As to why it is being done. ...

Said a famed American actor: 'What interests me most about outlaws is the liberating aspect of it. That's the romantic notion of the outlaw, and I've always been intrigued by it. So many of the hoods (hoodlums) on the screen are good-bad guys. They are romanticized. I love that. It's like the devil is more interesting than the saint. But I never think about an outlaw type I portray as a criminal. I just look at the positive things in him.' Was it Milton who wrote—better to serve in hell than to reign in heaven?

In the West, the trend of romanticizing hoodlums began perhaps with Robin Hood, said to have robbed the rich to give to the poor. There is no historical basis for this fantasy. The traditional reason for robbing the rich is that they have most of the money. As for dispersing these ill-gotten gains to the poor, it should be noted that the morality of thieves is usually consistent. Meaning the poor received nothing and may well have been robbed themselves. Altruism has yet to reach epidemic proportions.

The folklore of the West is permeated with outlaw/hero types, who upon closer examination turn out to be more outlaw than hero. These fairy tales for adults are usually wishful thinking, a chance to fantasize and make life what you wish it to be.

Currently throughout the West, it is fashionable to sneer at policemen and others who favour law, discipline and a sense of order in society. With films and literature leading the way, western art-forms portray law enforcement as corrupt, brutal,

ignorant and at best, pathetically comical. What is worse, it does not stop with this. The ones who endanger society—the criminals—are applauded, lauded and held up as admirable.

A foremost example of this trend is the film *The Godfather,* now on the way to being the largest money-maker in all of movie history. In less than one year of being in release, it will gross over $100 million. *The Godfather's* success in America is understandable. America, after all, enjoys a tradition of prizing its gangsters over its educators and saints. Even its politicians inspire less homage on the whole. This last observation may not cause the tears to flow since it was recently noted by a caustic onlooker that whenever a politician moves his lips, he is lying.

The international success of *The Godfather,* however, is a surprise to many. Audiences East and West cheer onscreen portrayal of crimes and applaud the killing of policemen. A few critics have questioned the film's morality, particularly after watching audience reaction which seems to be favourable both artistically and morally. These critical voices, however, have been totally ignored in the excitement generated by the awesome statistics of audience attendance and money in the coffers. It appears that the world more and more regards the worst crime of all as being without money. So therefore the eradication of this crime by any means must be a virtue. This also means that the world sees arrogance as strength and kindness as weakness.

It is not enough to say that this is only a film. For art mirrors life and is often so intertwined with life that no dividing line can be found. A society as well as an age can be judged by the men it considers worthy of praise. Accepting this for the moment, then it would appear that western society's heroes are among the most frightening in its brief history. It also says a great deal about our limitations and our ignorance.

The three hours of gangster glorification found in *The Godfather,* can influence untold numbers of people at least in small ways. The lack of morality and restraint is shown as lucrative, as attractive and as a means to power and success. For some minds, the next step is to walk out of the cinema and begin putting theory into practice. Success at any cost represents the pull of the world at its strongest. The ironic and unfortunate thing is that such success is fantasy, rarely ever achieved.

Those who are drawn to such 'Hollow Heroes' also admit to envying them and wishing to be like them. Why? Because these alleged heroes appear strong, decisive, and the rewards they gain are also accompanied by fear and respect in others. Perhaps the more restricted modern man's life becomes, the more bizarre become his fantasies. Technology's triumphs have made man feel small. Add to this a reaction against overcrowding as well as against the unending limitations in a life ruled by causation. All of this is compounded by a lack of understanding and no true knowledge about any of this. So man in desperation will grab at any opportunity promising to lift him above his empty existence. It does seem true, as someone wrote, that a drowning man will clutch at a razor blade.

The elevation of 'Hollow Heroes' to a place of prominence does not indicate that we believe in nothing. On the contrary, it shows that we believe in anything. The witch doctor mentality is loose amongst us with horrendous results. It was not long ago that in California, Charles Manson and members of his cult, were convicted of the barbarous murders of several people. This cult was on a bestial level even by today's standards. Promiscuity, drugs,

filth, thievery, and an actual semi-slavery state of living were all a daily part of life with the 'Manson Family', as it was called.

Manson was Jesus Christ. So said his followers. He encouraged this belief. Those followers who did not see Manson as a Messiah settled for believing he had powers beyond those of mortal man. With the acceptance of Manson on this level, it followed that his cult members one day carried out his will to a gory extreme. Some of the most heinous crimes in years were committed by the 'Manson Family', resulting in the gruesome murders of at least seven people.

Manson ended up in a California prison serving a life sentence. 'Family members' followed him in this too, albeit involuntarily. Hot in the wake of Manson's exposure came attempts by segments of the hippie press to paint him as victim rather than victimizer. He had an unfortunate upbringing, cried these journals. He has psychic powers and an undefinable charm, went another claim. In the matter of his charm, undefinable seems as good a word as any.

Incredible is as good a word to describe what happened next. Someone issued a record containing songs written and sung by Manson. There may or may not have been philosophic insights by him on the record as well. What is definite, however, is public reaction to this offering: total rejection. For by now the full extent of his grisly crimes was also before the public, which to its credit rejected wholeheartedly any more contact with Manson and his so-called family.

As for his family, they turned out to be young men and women of monumental mental and moral deficiency, indicating that 'Hollow Heroes' exist when those worshipping them abandon independence, intelligence, and integrity.

Hijackers and Assassins

If the actions of 'Hollow Heroes' sometimes seem over our heads, the same can occasionally be said for their actual presence. For the current series of airplane hijackings is being committed by men and women claiming to be patriots, heroes, or heaven forbid, Robin Hoods. Most horrifying of all are the terrorist groups, primarily from the Middle East. With gun and grenade in hand they seize control of planes in flight, holding passengers in fear of their lives. Claiming to be freedom fighters, they justify their actions, reaping worldwide headlines in the process.

Such ruthless acts have found no support in public opinion. A small number of nations, not surprisingly in the Middle East, have championed these cowardly acts. Most people, however, see no virtue in threats to kill women, children, and other unarmed travellers.

Is there such a thing as a typical assassin? Is it possible, should there be such a person, to look into his mind and heart? These questions were taken quite seriously in America recently, and rightly so. A study was made to determine the profile of potential assassins, based on more than enough data from the recent assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, his brother Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and the Rev. Martin Luther King, among others.

The study showed that men who do this type of killing are weak, incompetent and neurotic. They have failed at almost everything in life. Their personal relationships are all disastrous, be it with their own families or with friends and acquaintances. They are small men, small in mind and in spirit. They are also lonely and disturbed. Desperately they seek a way to become important, to be recognized, to stand out, to rise above all around them.

Their fantasy of achievement needs only the gentle pressure of a finger against the

trigger of a gun, they feel. So they choose a man of importance, believing in their delusion that his death by their hand will be an accomplishment recognized by the world. Such is the mind of the 'Hollow Hero'.

It was not too long ago that one Arthur Bremer attempted to assassinate George Wallace, an American politician campaigning for the Presidency of the United States. When arrested shortly after the shooting, which left Wallace paralyzed from the waist down for life, Bremer was heard to say, 'How much (money) will I get for my autobiography?' No remorse, no apparent fear. Merely a desire to find out how important he had suddenly become. What followed shows that at times people will rise up, shake their fists and cry, 'No more!' Bremer's father attempted to start a defence fund for his son, appealing to the public for money needed to pay attorneys. This appeal yielded $ 1.80, minuscule yet reassuring from one point of view, namely, that the world has an occasional second of sanity.

Instant Gurus

Not too long ago in New York City, newspapers discovered another in what seems to be an unending series of instant gurus. This one sits outside of a large public park for as long as 18 hours a day, living on vegetarian handouts from passers-by. He refuses to speak, communicating in a crude sign language. An interpreter translates for the curious as well as for his tiny band of followers numbering twelve, a figure of either coincidence or significance depending upon how interpretative one feels.

Police consider him harmless, refusing to molest him. New Yorkers, experts at living with the bizarre, smile at him and keep walking.

Still, this guru managed to collect twelve followers, without once revealing his name.

'He doesn't go by any,' replied his interpreter when asked, though he himself admitted that he referred to the guru as 'This one.'

And the interpreter's name?

'That one.'

'Hollow Heroes,' it seems, do not need names any more.

Our Western world has always had too much and with this has always come too little. There has been too much wanting, too much desiring. The other side of this particular coin has been not enough restraint and discrimination. Desire has made Western life pathetic and disappointing. No restraint has made it exhausting and destructive. It is not surprising that from the credo 'Anything goes' should emerge the heroes we now have.

Marc Olden

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Question and answer are from: 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1947, pp. 749-50.

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever !' are from *The Complete Works,* Vol. I (1962) pp. 232-3.

'The change from wilderness to dump-heap', observed Dr. René Dubos, the internationally known bacteriologist, 'symbolizes at present the course of technological civilization.' That sounds really ominous. Today's man has the tremendous responsibility of preventing a technological civilization from snuffing itself out. If one notices how some of the world governments and the U.N. are swinging into action to clean up the environment, one is filled with some optimism for the future of our civilization. The *Editorial* of the month has some thoughts to offer on the deeper aspects of the environmental problem in the light of Vedāntic ideas.

At no time in modern or ultra-modern life will man himself become an anachronism. As Vedānta deals with the very essence of man, it also never ceases to be applicable and relevant. Freedom, for instance, is a value very dear to the human heart at all times. Vedānta promises to secure absolute freedom for man. It not only promises absolute freedom, it provides many ways and means, suitable to different types and temperaments, to achieve it. 'The Applicability of Vedānta to Modern Life' is based on the teachings of Vedāntic scriptures and on the modern orientation given to them by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Satprakashananda is a very senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and is the Founder-head of the Vedānta Society, St. Louis (Missouri), U.S.A.

Some time ago we happened to read in a leading New Delhi newspaper that a slogan on a wall in one of Delhi University College's Girls' hostels, said, 'Today's ideal woman is not Sītā but Draupadī'. With winds of changing sexual mores blowing in from the West, we can very well understand the preference of some of our avant-garde sisters for the polygamous Draupadī. Yes, she has been one of the ideals of our womanhood for centuries, though the avant-garde sisterhood seems to have discovered her just the other day. Only they seem to know her superficially. She rose out of the sacrificial fire, was tempered in the furnace of fiery suffering as the faithful companion of the Pāṇḍava heroes, was a great devotee of the Lord, and was heroic, noble, and motherly almost beyond compare. 'The Mother's Heart' by 'Explorer' is an inspiring profile of this immortal epic-heroine whose object-lesson in mother-like love and mercy is as much needed today as in olden days.

This is the second instalment of the newly-started serial 'Excursions Into *Uddhava-Gītā*' by Swami Yatiswarananda. In this 'Excursion', the reader will particularly notice the Swami's penetrative observations regardng the virtue of *aparigraha* (non-receiving of gifts) and the fate of the deluded householder.

Swami Yatiswarananda is well known through some of his books, especially *Adventures in Religious Life.* He was a disciple of Swami Brahmananda and rose to be the Vice-president of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. (We refer the reader to the Editorial note at the beginning of the first instalment published in our January

1973 number for more details about the 'Excursions'.)

If human life can be compared to a fabric, its warp and weft will be happiness and misery. Persons eagerly grabbing at life's fabric generally suffer fom the strange puerilism of wailing over its misery. But life is also a hard school where the puerilism is slowly cured. Misery itself becomes the teacher and puts steel in the soul of man which makes it worthy of God's grace. When he receives the grace of God, man becomes filled with joy and exclaims, 'Blessed Suffering !'

'Blessed Suffering' from the pen of Swami Shraddhananda, Head of the Vedanta Centre at Sacramento, California, U.S.A., gives many valuable hints about making misery one's ally in life's bitter struggle.

A secular state need not be anti-religious. It is right for a State to conduct its affairs uninfluenced by dogmas and beliefs of this or that religion. But it would be very thoughtless and even suicidal for it to ignore true religion, which in essence takes man from animality to divinity. The core values of true religion are compassion, truthfulness, unselfishness, justice, fellowship, etc. No human institution can neglect them and hope to survive. A Secular State is no exception to this law. 'The State stakes everything to give its citizens physical comfort', remarks Swami Lokeswarananda, 'but where the question is one of their moral and spiritual development, the State is unconcerned. Is this not a fatal mistake ? Has this not cost mankind much already in blood, pain, and misery ?' 'The Role of Religion in a Modern Secular State' by Swami Lokeswarananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, discusses a very important theme and sheds valuable light on it.

In the summer of 1896, Swami Vivekananda vacationed in Europe for about nine weeks of which the first six were spent in Switzerland. The four-volume biography and Swamiji's published letters give all the information about that Swiss visit. 'Swami Vivekananda in Switzerland, 1896' hardly adds any new material to the already available fund. But it does one invaluable service : that is, it traces Swamiji almost day by day from the time he left London on the 19th July to his crossing over into Germany about August 27, against the physical background of snowpeaks, lakes glaciers, mountain-resorts, etc. And that makes Swamiji's holidaying in Switzerland come alive before our mind's eye. Thus a rather obscure near-six weeks of Swamiji's life have been opened up. Through this exposé of how it *must have been,* we gain an understanding for the first time of what a big and physically demanding project this Swiss adventure was.

Swami Vidyatmananda, who is Assistant-minister in the Centre Vedantique Ramakrichna, Gretz, France, has brought to this task of 'rediscovery' the same zeal and thoroughgoingness he had shown in his earlier such efforts. As he wrote to us in one of his letters last November, 'I have retraced nearly every inch of the likely routes myself, having made four trips to Switzerland in the past year'. The second instalment of the article will be published in our next number.

On the author's behalf, we express our gratitude to Miss Elva Nelson, M. Henri Weiss, and M. Jacques Gaudicheau for their editorial aid. The photo credits are due to : Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva ; Les Amis du Vieux Chamonix ; Swiss National Tourist Office ; Rigibahn Gesellschaft.

Sri Aurobindo has made a many-sided contribution to the religious thought of

India and the world. One aspect of it is his insightful interpretation of the Vedic hymns. While paying handsome tribute to Aurobindo's revealing studies of the Vedic mantras, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan does not hesitate to point out the deficiencies in Aurobindo's elucidation of the Upaniṣads and Śaṅkara's logical and luminous interpretations of them.

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D., is the Director of the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras. This article was originally presented as a paper at the National Seminar in New Delhi during August last year. It is being published here by courtesy of Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi.

The *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* has many stories with profound philosophical teachings. And the story of Prajāpati and his two disciples, Indra and Virocana, is one such. Self-knowledge is the key to bliss and immortality—this teaching comes out very impressively from this story. 'Know the Immortal Self and Be Happy' is a dialogue made out of this story.

Dr. S. P. Dubey, M.A. (Phil.), M.A. (Rel. Sc.), Ph.D., Dept. of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Philosophy, University of Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, has been contributing scholarly and thought-provoking articles to our columns. His 'Indo-Iranian Influence Upon the Judeo-Christian Tradition' was originally presented as a paper at the Poona session of the Indian Philosophical Congress in December 1970. He has discussed a very old subject—quoting profusely from Rudolf Otto and many other scholars—which surely will continue to fascinate students of comparative religion and religious history.

Śaivism is an important stream which contributes its distinctive waters to the vast river of Hinduism. Its source can be traced far back in the *Ṛg-veda*. In the heyday of Mohenjo-daro civilization, Śiva, the meditative God, was very popular. That popularity gradually spread to the whole of India. 'Śaivism', by Swami Tapasyananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, brings to our readers a bird's-eye view of the development with the main philosophical schools and their teachings.

Mr. Eli R. Marozzi, M.A., a teacher of Art and a student of Philosophy, is from Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A. In the course of a hypothetical dialogue between a teacher and his disciple, he ranges over the essentials of Vedānta and its practical details as found in Yoga books. His grasp of the scriptural teaching is sound, and his presentation subtle and rational.

Contemporary human society, especially in the West, is breeding 'hollow heroes' by scores. Though they and their admirers are generally psycho-pathological, there is every danger of a 'hollow-hero-worship' becoming a widespread cult. In the 'Human Trends' this month, Marc Olden gives a timely and stern warning about them: 'The chaos and violence of our time have given rise to the most pathetic choice of idols. For we are bowing down before men more worthy of censure than of praise.... Novels, films, plays, newspapers, as well as other forms of pop culture, all offer us men and women whose deeds are not heroic, whose vices obliterate their virtues if any, whose desires are animalistic rather than angelic, and whose purpose in life is self-gratification as opposed to service.'

Marc Olden, who is well known to our readers, is associated with the Vedanta Society of New York.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

EGO: By Mohendra Nath Dutt, published by Mohendra Publishing Committee, 3 Gour Mohan Mukherjee Street, Calcutta 6, 1970, pp. 117, Rs. 2.75.

The subject of these disconrses delivered in 1916 is the 'Ego' in the sense of the self. How to know the self of oneself? There are two ways, says the author. One is by self-introspection and dispossession; the other is by self-expansion which is preferred. This latter way sees the blossoming of the bud of love in the heart and one comes to be assumed into the Self of the Cosmos. There is, *inter alia,* discussion on a number of relevant topics like *karma,* grace, aura, peace, the energy or *sakti* aspect of the material world.

The thought and the style are somewhat difficult but the main conclusions are convincing.

Sri M. P. Pandit

A PHILOSOPHY OF MAN AND SOCIETY: By Forrest H. Peterson, published by Philosophical Library, New York, 1970, pp. 224, $ 8.50.

This is a remarkable and stimulating book on the philosophy of man and his values—social and cultural. Starting with *existence* as a central concept in modern philosophical thinking and equating existence with the *good* (ch. I), passing on to *value* in its concretized forms (ch. II), thence to a consideration of *virtue* in its Socratic and Platonic senses (ch. III), the author enters into an exposition of his own views on man and society. Chapters IV and V highlight such widely used modern concepts as 'consciousness, mind, being, existence, intuition, freedom, will, culture, and ideology'. It is noteworthy that the author comments on the futility of the empiricists' approach to man, and significantly emphasizes the value of a spiritual approach in all attempts to describe man and his nature (p. 45). In fact the entire book has a spiritual orientation which is the main source of its value to the contemporary age.

We get an edifying treatment of the social philosophies of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Comte, Hegel, and Marx, with their merits and their limitations treated in an objective manner (chs. VII, VIII and IX). Throughout the exposition of his thesis, the author gives hints of the continuing presence of a subtle vein of thought which seems to suggest the dynamic power of the human will being the real cause of social revolutions towards true human progress. It looks as though man, as an individual if he is a gigantic personality or in the groups if he is of the average kind, could mould his environment and bring about the birth of supermen. It is the collective desire of human goals that threw up Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin and it is also the collective desire after spiritual goals that made God incarnate as an avatar in all ages. If this collective desire and collective will is to bring into being only avatars and not Ravanas and Kamsas, then man's mind has to be properly moulded by the right type of education. So it is that the book in its concluding chapters deals with a scheme of education for the contemporary age, wherein the teacher receives his rightful place.

An outstanding work of great merit, this volume should find a place on the shelves of all libraries, individual as well as institutional.

Prof. P. S. Naidu

CĀTURMĀSYA SACRIFICES RESEARCHED: By Ganesh Umakant Thite, published by Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit, University of Poona, Ganeshkhind, Poona 7, 1969, pp. 22.

The *Caturmasya* sacrifices have the *parvans* called *Vaisvadeva, Varunapraghasa, Sakamedha,* and *Sunasiriya.* These are taken by the author to be connected with healing, for they are called *bhaishajyayajnas.* One cannot agree with the author that these were originally magic rites performed by the masses. Mr. Thite, however, points out the elevated position given to these sacrifices in the Vedic texts. A good deal of Vedic research is unfortunately oriented towards the anthropological and primitivistic prejudices. It is time we started viewing the Vedic texts as human documents.

Dr. P. S. Sastri

ON THE MODAL FORMS OF THE SIMPLE FUTURE IN THE VEDA: By Mr. H. C. Patyal, published by Centre of Advanced Stndy in Sanskrit, University of Poona, Ganeshkhind, Poona 7, 1969, pp. 5.

Mr. Patyal examines in this paper the modal forms of the future stems, viz. *karishyah, notsyavahai, kalayishyadhvam, upaishyamahai, tamsyamahai* and *abhyutthasyamahai.* An attempt is made to interpret these forms, though the author does not mind amending the text of the *Gopatha.* This is questionable because *-mahai* cannot be made into *-vahai* on the basis of a dubious analogy.

Dr, P. S. Sastri

BENGALI

BRAHMAVID BALARAM : By Sri Vijnankinkar Sureshdas, published by Sri Balaram Dharmasopan, Khardah, West Bengal, Bengali Era 1378 (i.e. 1971-72 A.D.), pp. 112, Rs. 2/-.

Deriving its material mostly from the source book *Gurubar Balaram,* the author presents in a lucid language—and does it efficiently—the life and teachings of Sri Balaram Swamiji, the founder of 'Balaram Dharmasopan', which has sponsored the publication of twentyfive books on interesting aspects of Hindu religion and culture to commemorate the silver jubilee of its foundation day.

Born in Dhambar in the district of Arrah, Bihar, Sri Bishnudev followed a suggestion he received in dream and left home, at the age of eleven only, for ever in quest of God. After long travel he was able to find his Master under whose able guidance he was finally crowned with the realization of the mission of his life. A true Vaishnavite, the Swami illustrated through his personal life the significance of rigorous discipline in building up spiritual life and maintaining its high standard. Words and deeds happily blended in the life of the Swami which explains perhaps the deep regard he commanded of a large number of devotees, particularly in the eastern part of India.

Barring the author's undue emphasis on miracles in the life of the Swami, and the unguarded use of words like *Jibon Mukta* (page 20) or *Brahmavid* in the title of the book, which are rather jarring on the ears, the book should earn the admiration of all to whom religion is the main concern of life.

Swami Prabhananda

HINDI

NIDRA YA SUSHUPTI : By Dr. Ramshankar Bhattacharya, published by The Astrological Research Hall, Varanasi, 1969, pp. 69, Re. 1/-.

The concept of *sushupti* or deep sleep, in Indian philosophy is very important from psychological and spiritual points of view. In Vedanta the *Turiya* (the fourth or superconscious) experience is explained with the help of different states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. An analysis of the last is useful for all philosophies which try to explain the experience of identity between the subject and the object. The learned author has discussed in detail all the views regarding deep sleep, and its relation to other mental states such as waking and dream. He has taken account of modern psychological theories also and has come to the conclusion that Indian philosophy is consistent with modern scientific theories. The language is somewhat difficult, but this is unavoidable as such subjects cannot be discussed in simple language. The author is to be congratulated for such a deep analysis of one of the most important aspects of Indian philosophy.

Priti Adaval

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE : By Dr. V. Raghavan, Rs. 2/- ; STUDENTS' UNREST IN INDIA : By T. K. Tukol, Re. 1/- : both published by The Indian Institute of World Culture, Basavangudi, Bangalore 4.

ADIVASIS—Their Problems and Remedies : Ed. by Prafulla Ch. Mahapatro and Daityari Panda, published by D. A. V. College, Koraput, Orissa, Rs. 2.50.

THE POLICY ORIENTATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE : By Harold D. Lasswell, published by Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Hospital Road, Agra 3, 1971, pp. 129, Rs. 20/-.

MAHIMA DHARMA DARSHAN : Ed. by Daityari Panda, published by Shamkar Philosophy Association D. A. V. College, Koraput, Orissa, Rs. 10.50.

THE GEETA WAY OF LIFE : By K. G. Warty, Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 7, Rs. 3/-.

SHIVA PARVATI and VIKRAMADITYA : Both Ed. by Anant Pai, Published by IBH Education Trust, 249 D. N. Road, Bombay 1, Rs. 1.50 each.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION TUBERCULOSIS SANATORIUM, RANCHI

REPORT FOR APRIL 1971—MARCH 1972

From its beginning in 1951, this institution developed rapidly to become one of the best known of its kind in this area. It now has 280 beds, and all modern facilities needed for diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis, including major surgery. An After-care Colony helps rehabilitate the patients. With a 112.91 hectare plot of land, 640.08 metres above mean sea level, conditions are salubrious. 255 of the beds are in general wards; the rest in cabins or cottages.

Specialized *facilities* include: Air-conditioned operation-theatre and Recovery Room, equipped for lobectomy, pneumonectomy, and lesser surgery; four X-ray machines, one with tomography set-up; Pathological Laboratory, doing bacterial sensitivity tests, etc; and Medical Library. And for the *patients*: recreation hall and auditorium (including motion-picture films) with radio relays to wards, etc.; Library; indoor-game equipments, etc.

During the year under review, 617 patients were treated, of whom 261 were already in-patients at the start. Of the 403 patients discharged in the year, 170 had the disease 'arrested' (cautious term for 'cure') and only 6 were 'worse'; 29 died during the year. Of the 57 surgical operations three were pneumonectomies; three lobectomies, and 45 thoracoplasties—all very extensive procedures. In the *Out-patient Department*, 916 tuberculosis patients and 2,827 with other diseases were treated.

Free patients: 84 in-patients were treated without charge and 8 others given concession on rates. Most of the out-patients, and all who were admitted to Emergency Ward, received free help.

After-care Colony and Rehabilitation Centre: 30 ex-patients were accommodated in After-care Colony, most of whom did useful work in various branches of the Hospital, while developing skills as part of their Rehabilitation.

Free Homoeopathic Dispensary for treating general ailments of local people: treated 5,952 new, and 8,678 old cases during the year.

Agriculture and Dairy: During the last few years, the institution has moved towards self-support in foodstuffs. During the year under review nearly two-thirds of the cereals as well as of the milk needed for the entire institution, were produced by the Farm and Dairy respectively.

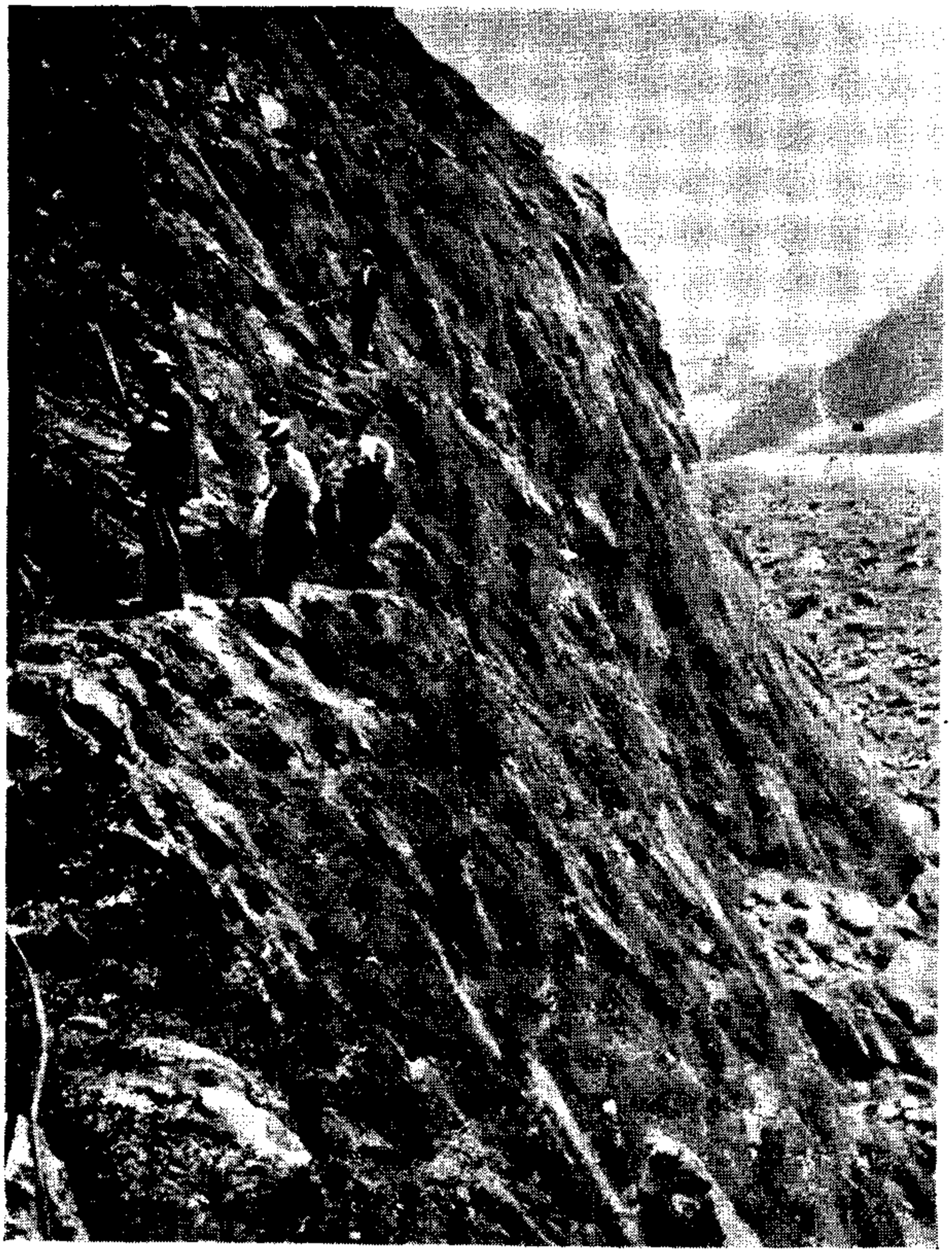
Finances: In the year under review, income was Rs. 9,03,669.89 and expenditure Rs. 9,32,085.67.

Needs: Free beds: As indicated above, less than 1/7 of total patients could be treated free this year; and costs of medical care are constantly rising. Obviously much help is needed here. *After-care*: As seen above, less than 1/13 of patients discharged this year could receive this sort of help, urgently needed by many more before they become 'employable'. *Office Buildings*: Office work is still done wholly in a temporary building, which cannot be efficient. *Dairy*: For patients and staff, the Sanatorium requires about 6 maunds of milk daily; the present Dairy yields only about 4½; it can easily be developed to fill the whole demand, if funds become available.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

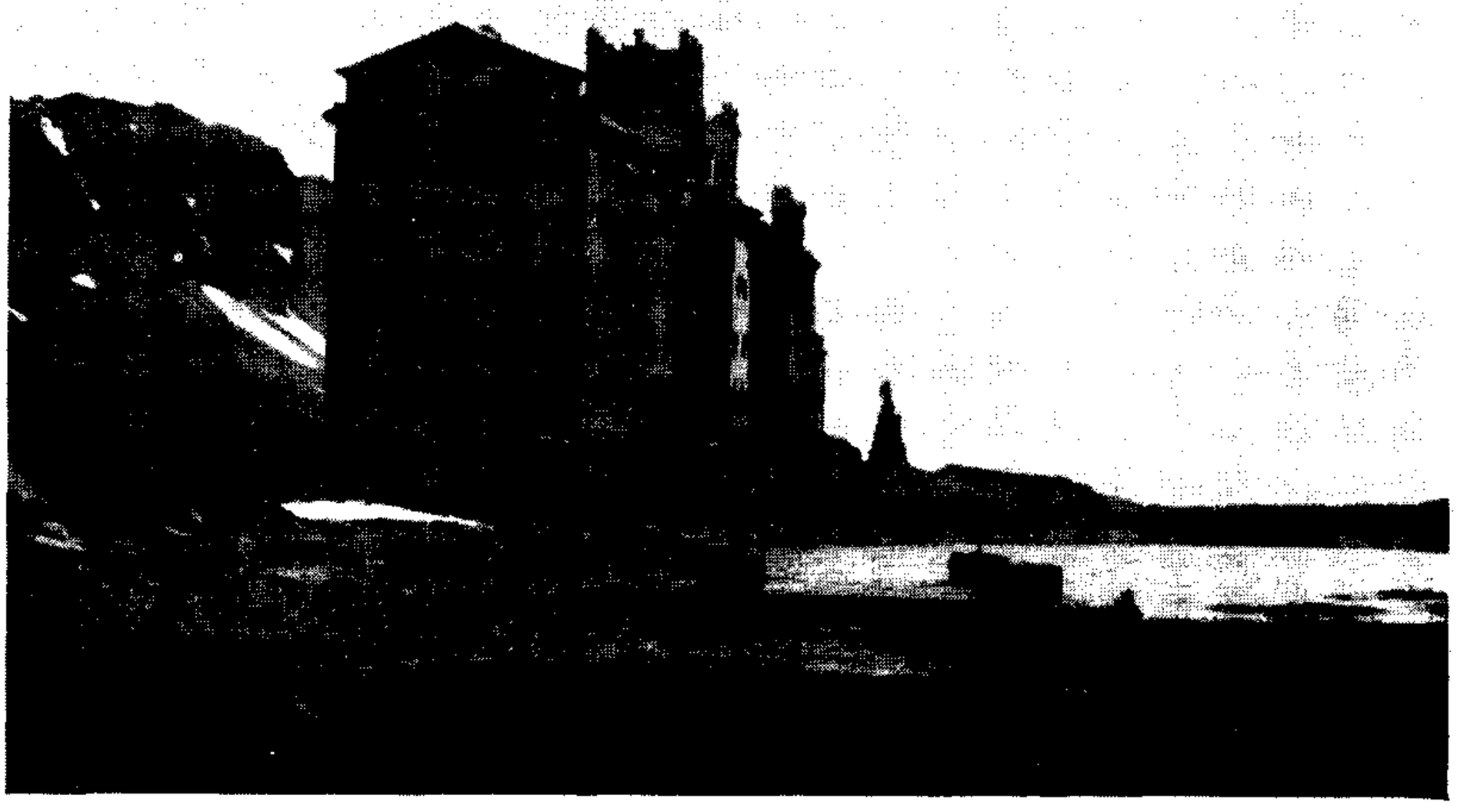
(An unpublished picture)

Courtesy : Mrs. Frances Legett

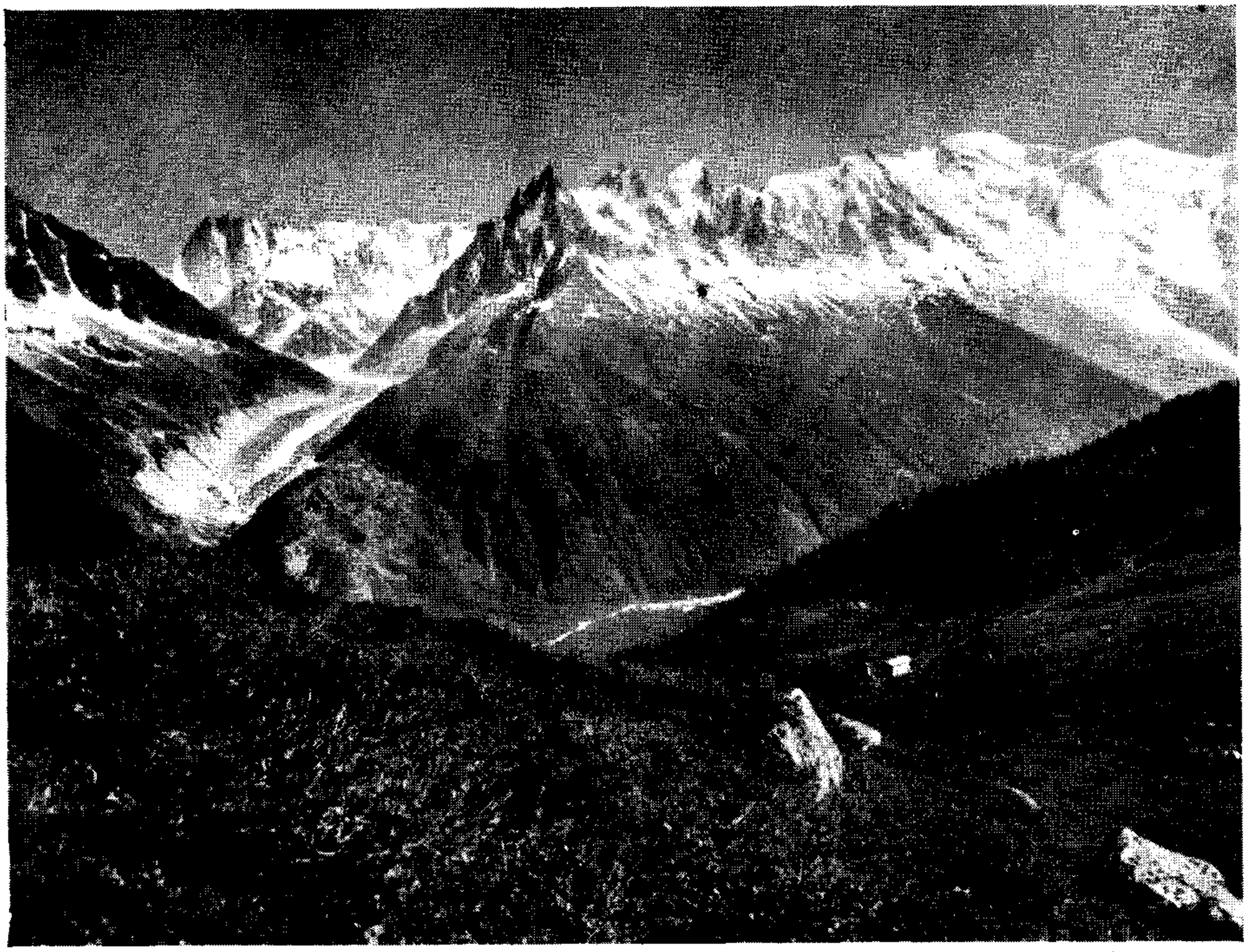


Mauvais Pas,

Mer-de-Glace

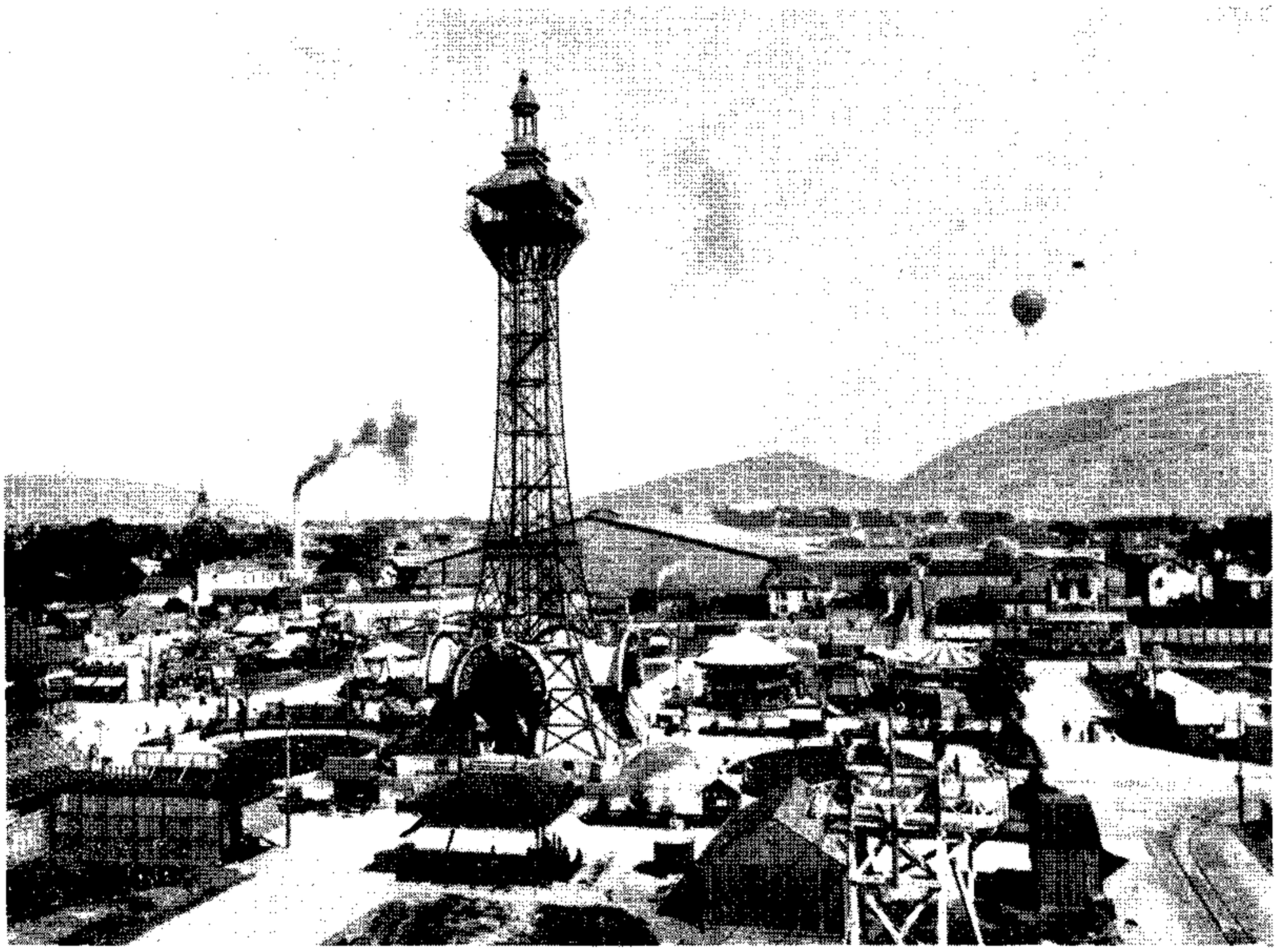


Little St. Bernard today. Statue of St. Bernard in the distance



Looking down into the Chamonix Valley :
Left : Mer-de-Glace *Right* : Mont Blanc

Diligence in the Chamonix Valley



Above :

Exposition of 1896, Geneva

Below :

Balloon, Exposition of 1896, Geneva

Castle of Chillon, about 1900