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VOL. LXXIX

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No. 6

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (posed by himself): 'What is there in these powers (i.e., miraculous powers) ?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Entangled in them the mind travels far away from Existence-knowledge-bliss. Listen to a story. A man had two sons. Dispassion came upon the elder in his youth. He left home as a monk, while the younger got his education and became learned and virtuous. He then married and applied his mind to the performance of the duties of a householder. Now, there is a tradition among monks that if they like, they may go to see the place of their birth once after the expiry of twelve years. The said monk also came thus to see his birthplace. While seeing the land, the cultivation, the wealth and other possessions of his younger brother, he came to his gate, stood there, and called him by name. On hearing the call, the younger brother came out and saw his elder brother. As he met him after a long time, the younger brother was beside himself with joy. He saluted him, brought him in and sitting by his side, began to serve him in various ways. The two conversed on various topics, after taking their meal. The younger then asked the elder, "Brother, you gave up all these worldly pleasures and wandered off as a monk for so long a time. Please tell me what you have gained by it." As soon as the elder brother heard this, he said, "Would you see it? Then come with me." Saying so, he went with his younger brother to the bank of the river in the neighbourhood, and said, "Just see." And immediately he walked across the waters of the river to the other bank and called to his brother, "Did you see it?" The younger brother paid half a penny to the ferryman, also crossed the river, went up to his brother and said, "What have I seen?" The other said, "Why? Did you not see my crossing of the river on foot?" The younger then laughed, saying, "Brother, did you not also see that I crossed the river by paying a half-penny? But is this all you have got in return for putting up with so much suffering for twelve long years? You have got what I accom-

plish so easily for half a penny only." The elder brother was awakened by these words of the younger and applied his mind to the realization of God.'

Question (posed by himself): 'No one can say what Existence-knowledge-bliss Absolute is. This is why He at first became half-male and half-female. Why so?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Because He wanted to show that both Purusha and Prakriti were He. He then came down another step from there and became the separate Purusha and the separate Prakriti.'

'Until the mind is joined to the Existence-knowledge-bliss, both prayer to God and worldly duties continue. When, afterwards, the mind merges in Him, there is no necessity for attending to one's duties. Take, for example, the line of the song, "My Nitai is a mad elephant", sung in Kirtan [devotional singing]. When the song commences, the words are sung with correct enunciation, tone, time, measure, and rhythm. It is sung, as it should be, with attention to all these things. Afterwards, as the mind merges a little in the emotion produced by the song, the words "mad elephant", "mad elephant" only are sung. As the mind enters more deeply into the emotion, "elephant", "elephant" only is sung. Again, when it goes deeper still, the singer, in trying to utter the word "elephant" (*Hati*), can utter only the syllable 'Ha' (and remains with his mouth agape.)'

Question (posed by himself): 'Well, can you tell me why I feel so very anxious for all these [boys] and think about what one has realized and another has not, and so on? They are mere schoolboys; they are penniless....'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'The reason is this: these are all pure in heart. Lust and gold have not yet touched them. If they apply their minds to God, they will be able to realize Him. Mine is the nature of a hemp-smoker. A hemp-smoker does not find satisfaction in smoking hemp all alone; it is necessary for him to hand over the bowl to another when he enjoys the intoxication. So it is with me. Although it is so with regard to all the boys, I don't feel so much for anyone as I do for Naren. If he is late by two days, my heart feels the pain of being wrung like a wet towel. Thinking what others would say, I used to go aside under the tamarisk trees and weep loudly. Hazra once said, "What is this strange nature of yours? You are in the state of a Paramahansa; why do you worry yourself over why Narendra has not come, what will happen to Bhavanath, and so on, instead of remaining identified with the divine Lord by applying your mind to Him in samadhi?" Then I thought that he was right and that I must not do so again. When afterwards I was coming back from the tamarisk trees, I was shown (by Mother) a vivid picture of Calcutta, as if the city was present before me and all the people were night and day immersed in lust and gold and were suffering miserably. When I saw it, compassion welled up in my heart. I thought, "Were I to suffer a million times greater misery for the good of these people, most gladly will I do that." I returned and said to Hazra, "I choose to think of them; what is that to you, wretch?"'

ONWARD FOR EVER!

What is then worth having? Mukti, freedom. Even in the highest of heavens, says our scripture, you are a slave; what matters it if you are a king for twenty thousand years? So long as you have a body, so long as you are a slave to happiness, so long as time works on you, space works on you, you are a slave. The idea, therefore, is to be free of external and internal nature. Nature must fall at your feet, and you must trample on it, and be free and glorious, by going beyond....

The soul is also sexless; we cannot say of the Atman that it is a man or a woman. Sex belongs to the body alone. All such ideas, therefore, as man or woman, are a delusion when spoken of with regard to the Self, and are only proper when spoken of the body. So are the ideas of age. It never ages; the ancient One is always the same. How did It come down to earth? There is but one answer to that in our scriptures. Ignorance is the cause of all this bondage. It is through ignorance that we have become bound; knowledge will cure it, by taking us to the other side. How will that knowledge come? Through love, Bhakti; by the worship of God, by loving all beings as the temples of God. He resides within them. Thus, with that intense love will come knowledge, and ignorance will disappear, the bonds will break, and the soul will be free.

Srikananda

THE GURU AND HIS ROLE IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

EDITORIAL

I

Strictly in consonance with the Vedic tradition seekers of spiritual wisdom in India have been resorting to competent and enlightened teachers, down the millennia. Thus has been maintained an unbroken chain of masters and disciples which, as every student of Vedānta knows, is traced back to Brahmā, the creator, who was himself taught and enlightened by the Paramatman or Supreme Self.¹ Many of the Vedāntic treatises present their teachings in the framework of a dialogue between the earnest inquiring student and the enlightened teacher. Notable among these is the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, ascribed to Śaṅkarācārya. In it, the seeker, afflicted by the unquenchable fire of physical and mental sufferings, shaken violently by the winds of misfortune and terrified by the inevitable fate of death and rebirth, approaches the teacher who is calm, compassionate, and illumined. As it is the encounter of an ideal disciple with an ideal teacher, the ideal result follows. The disciple achieves enlightenment. Out of an overflowing feeling of gratitude and bliss, he salutes the teacher:

'This splendour of the sovereignty of Self-effulgence I have received by virtue of the supreme majesty of your grace. Salutations to you, O glorious, noble-minded Teacher, salutations again and again!

'O Guru, you have out of sheer grace awakened me from sleep and completely saved me, who was wandering in an interminable dream, in a forest of birth, old age and death created by illusion, being tormented day after day by countless afflictions, and sorely troubled by the tiger of egotism.'²

During every period of human history,

¹See *Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad*, I. i. 1; *Svetāśvatara-upaniṣad*, VI. 17-9.

² *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, 517-8.

men and women have longed for the super-sensuous truth and sought it with grim resolve. Such seekers have been undoubtedly relatively few, but they were never non-existent. Real and sincere spiritual seekers, again, have always encountered those even rarer souls who have realized the supersensuous truth and transcended all earthly bondage. The economic law of demand and supply has invariably had its counterpart in the spiritual world. The modern age has been frequently dubbed the age of scepticism and materialism. Yet, however dark may be the shadows cast by the dust clouds of scepticism, sensuality and godlessness, humanity is still throwing up sincere seekers of spiritual truth and competent, enlightened teachers to guide them. Such souls, we repeat, are indeed rare. Even during the less corrupt periods of history called the golden ages, their number was small. But the incontrovertible fact of their existence in contemporary society and the joy of meeting even a handful of them in one's own life, rouse enormous hopes for the spiritual future of humanity.

Because spiritual hankering, struggle, progress and illumination pertain largely to the inner personality of man, there is great scope for pretence and dissembling. An aspirant's hunger for God may be false or very mild, though he himself may be 'protesting too much'. Worldly tendencies and cravings are extremely subtle and formidable. On the other hand, the so-called guru or guide may be a hoax or an utterly incompetent person. Falling into the clutches of such a guru may prove greatly painful or traumatic. Certain vital questions—such as 'Why go to a guru?', 'How to recognize a good one?', 'Why should we surrender ourselves to him?'—do trouble a great many of us. The answers to these are found in the scriptures and in the lives of saints. Here we shall try to analyse and study some of these questions.

II

Real spiritual hankering is always characterized by a burning discontent with one's physical and mental environments, attainments, and prospects. The whole world with its so-called hard and solid sense-realities somehow appears insubstantial and hollow. To a person of deep spiritual aspiration, sensual happiness tastes bitter, and even his own body appears of minimal value. An imperious voice, deep within his soul, keeps urging him to seek that which is imperishable, infinite, and trans-sensual.

Spiritual life is generally compared to a journey whose destination is the immortal truth or God. It is perhaps more appropriately compared to pearl-diving or mountain-climbing. Whatever the comparison and howsoever expressive, we must never forget the fact that the adventurous expedition is *within* oneself: into the depths or onto the heights of one's own spiritual self. It is by controlling his senses and cravings, thoughts and mind, and by conquering the ego—in short, subjugating the 'lower self'—that an aspirant attains divine fulfilment. Dangers and pitfalls abound in the inner terrain. The greatest difficulty is that since these are psychological, they cannot be so readily detected and avoided as can pitfalls in the physical world. Even the instrument of inner vision is functioning little if at all: it is covered over and blinded by impurities. Adventurers in mountain-climbing or pearl-diving always feel the need of guides and trainers. And no one considers this a sign of weakness or cowardice: on the contrary it is looked upon as necessary and prudent. Sri Ramakrishna once instructed a spiritual seeker thus:

' . . . And dive deep. Can a man get pearls by floating or swimming on the surface? He must dive deep

'One must get instruction from a guru.

Once a man was looking for a stone image of Siva. Someone said to him: "Go to a certain river. There you will find a tree. Near it is a whirlpool. Dive into the water there, and you will find the image of Siva." So I say that one must get instruction from a teacher.³

Of the three indispensable qualifications that go to make a true guru, the first is that he must be a *śrotriya*, one who knows the spirit of the scriptures. Though *śrotriya* may literally mean 'one well-versed in the Vedas', if we took this to mean merely a scholar of the Vedas or Upaniṣads, we would be completely misled. In the broadest sense *śruti* includes all true scriptures and holy books of all religions. A *śrotriya* is not one who is an expert in comparative theology or hagiology, but one who has acquired special insight into the essential teachings of the scriptures. The essential teaching of all scriptures is that God alone is real and that man's duty is to love Him and strive to realize Him. It is in this sense that Sri Ramakrishna was a *śrotriya*, though he was nearly illiterate and completely innocent of all book learning. Great scholars who came and talked with him were amazed at his perfect grasp of recondite scriptural texts and statements. Swami Adbhutananda, a monastic disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, was another example of how an illiterate sage could acquire the status of *śrotriya* by developing his intuitive insight into scriptural teachings. Such instances are myriad in the religious history of humanity.

When an aspirant finds this qualification in a respected person, he can begin to feel that the guidance that will come from him will be authentic, time-tested, and sure-footed.

The second qualification—and one of even greater importance—is that the guru must

be *avṛjina*, sinless, and *akāmahata*, unsmitten by desires. These are not two separate virtues but two aspects of one and the same virtue, namely, perfect purity. Purity is impossible to attain as long as one is a slave of desires. Without purity spiritual perception is utterly impossible. Purity is born of perfect dispassion, sense-control, and loving contemplation of God. If there is no dispassion towards objects of the senses and consequently no sense-control, it is impossible to control one's mind and concentrate it on God. Without the power of concentration, the mind is unable to perceive the subtle truth of God. Nor will it be able to overcome the powerful drag of sense-attractions and the instinctive clinging to life. A person in such mental and sensual slavery, himself stands in need of help and guidance. No aspirant can entrust himself to the care of such a 'blind' teacher without serious spiritual risk. Spiritual life and experience are a sealed book to the impure soul.

Purity and absolute self-control are the unmistakable signs of spiritual elevation. The guru who is an embodiment of all moral and theological virtues gets a special power and authority to speak about God and spiritual life. The words which come from him come actually from God. Being uttered with the greatest unselfishness and love, they have a distinctive force and transforming effect. When such a guru instructs and initiates the disciple's spiritual potentialities are quickened and his soul turns lovingly towards God.

To illustrate the difference between the instruction and initiation given by a guru with authority and one without, we quote a story told by Sri Ramana Maharshi:

'A King visited his Premier at his residence. There he was told the Premier was engaged in *japa* [repetition of the *mantra*]. The King waited for him and on meeting him asked what the *japa*

³ 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 600004, 1947). p. 233.

was. The Premier replied that it was the repetition of the *Gāyatrī mantra*, one of the holiest of Vedic prayers. The King desired to be initiated by the Premier into the mystery of the *Gāyatrī*. But the Premier confessed his inability to do so. Thereupon the King went away and learned the *mantra*. On meeting the Premier later, he repeated the *Gāyatrī* and wanted to know if it was right. The Premier said that the *mantra* was repeated correctly, but it was not proper for him [the Premier] to teach it. When pressed for an explanation he called out to a page and ordered him to arrest the King! The order was not obeyed. The Minister repeated it but still it was not obeyed. The King flew into a rage and ordered the same man to arrest the Minister. And it was promptly done. The Minister laughed and said that the incident was the explanation required by the King. "How?" asked the King. The Minister replied: "The order was the same and the executor also, but the authority was different. When I ordered, the effect was *nil*, whereas when you ordered there was immediate effect. Similarly with *mantras*."⁴

The third important qualification for a guru is that he be a knower of Brahman. For only then is a man perfectly free from *māyā* and its subtle deceptions. He who is a knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. By that very fact, his knowledge, bliss, and love become limitless. The light of wisdom that manifests through the guru and destroys the ignorance of the disciple actually belongs to Brahman, the Teacher of even the creator. The human guru then is only the medium, the conveyor, of this light of knowledge. When all the three qualifications—knowledge of the spirit of the scriptures, sinlessness and desirelessness, and perfect knowledge of oneness with Brahman—become manifest in a guru, the disciple

can confidently take shelter in him. Such a guru, himself perfectly free, sets free those who sincerely and humbly seek refuge in him. But a guru whose bonds are not broken, how can he set free another? Swami Brahmananda, one of the foremost disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, illustrated the point with this story:

'Once a certain King developed a spirit of dispassion towards the world. He had heard that Parīkṣit had attained knowledge after listening to the *Bhāgavatam* for a week. So he invited a good pandit who lived near by and began to listen to his recitation of the *Bhāgavatam*. Though he heard the reading of the holy book daily for two months, still he did not get the least wisdom. So he said to the pandit: "Parīkṣit attained spiritual knowledge by hearing the *Bhāgavatam* for a week only, whereas I have heard it for two months: why has nothing happened to me? If you do not give me the proper reply by tomorrow, you will not get any money or reward." The pandit became apprehensive that the king might become terribly offended and so in a mood of utter dejection he returned home. Though he pondered deeply, still he could not come to any conclusion. Extremely worried, he became immersed in thought, with his head resting on his hand. He had a young daughter, very intelligent and greatly devoted to him. Seeing him thus grief-stricken, she asked him again and again the cause. Out of parental affection, he was constrained to tell her the cause. She burst into laughter and said, "Father, please don't worry about it any more. I shall give the reply to the King tomorrow." Next day the two arrived at the royal court, and the pandit said to the King, "My daughter, O King, will answer your question." The girl said, "If you want your question answered, you will have to do as I say." The King agreed. Then she asked the attendants, "Tie me up to one pillar and the King to the other." The King commanded accordingly and the attendants obeyed. Then the girl said to the King,

⁴ *Talks With Sri Ramana Maharshi* (Three volumes in one) (Pub. by Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State, 1968), pp. 2-3.

“O King, release me quickly from my bonds.” The King exclaimed: “What an absurd request! I am bound myself; how can I release you?” Then the girl laughed and said: “O King, this is the answer to your question. King Parīkṣit was a listener intent on freedom. And the teacher was none other than Sukadeva who was an all-renouncing sage absorbed in Brahman. Listening to the *Bhāgavatam* narrated by him, King Parīkṣit became enlightened. On the contrary my father is himself attached to the world: out of his desire for money he is expounding the holy book to you. Hearing such an exposition, how can you become enlightened?”⁵

Thus it is only a man of illumination who can, out of motiveless compassion, help others to freedom. Any lesser man cannot be utterly unselfish in his motivation; and his ulterior motives will surely bind the disciple as well as himself.

Seeking refuge at the feet of such a holy person and surrendering oneself unreservedly to him is a basic duty of a spiritual aspirant. ‘And when that divinely appointed teacher comes,’ says Swami Vivekananda, ‘serve him with child-like confidence and simplicity, freely open your heart to his influence, and see in him God manifested. Those who come to seek truth with such a spirit of love and veneration, to them the Lord of Truth reveals the most wonderful things regarding truth, goodness, and beauty.’⁶

This trustful surrender to the illumined guru, like that of a child to its parents, is diametrically opposed to mere subordination or submission in a worldly or social sense. Man is normally enslaved to his passions and ego. By surrendering his unregenerate

ego to the guru, the aspirant comes to feel the true sense of freedom—freedom from the imperious demands of the lower self. Then only will humility and reverence, which are foundational virtues in spiritual life, take root and grow in the disciple’s heart. Only then does the master’s teaching become effective. Students of the *Bhagavad-gītā* will have noted that Śrī Kṛṣṇa began to instruct Arjuna only after Arjuna surrendered himself unreservedly with those memorable words: ‘I am Your disciple. Instruct me who have taken refuge in You.’⁷ At the end of his supremely enlightening discourse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa significantly warns Arjuna against yielding to his ego.⁸ It is only selfish and worldly-minded persons, slaves to their own egos, that want to enslave others—not those who have destroyed their egoism and become one with truth, knowledge and infinity. Their sole concern is to make the disciples free like themselves. ‘One’s destiny’, says Swami Vivekananda, ‘is in one’s own hands—the Guru only makes this much understood.’⁹ According to Vedānta, self-realization or illumination is merely taking off the veils of ignorance that cover one’s perfection; the guru only helps the disciple in this ‘unveiling’ process. The subtlest and deepest-lying veils are those of egoism. Branding egoism as the ‘devil’, Swami Vivekananda called upon his disciples to root it out from their heart:

“The one thing necessary is to be stripped of our vanities—the sense that we possess any spiritual wisdom—and to surrender ourselves completely to the guidance of our Guru. . . . This sort of humility will open the door of our heart to spiritual truths. Truth will never come into our minds so long as there will remain the faintest shadow of

⁵ *Gurutattva O Gurugita* (Bengali) (compiled by Swami Raghuvananda, Pub. by Udbodhan Office, Calcutta-700003, 1973), pp. 33-4.

⁶ Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Pithoragarh, U.P.), Vol. III (1960) pp. 52-3.

⁷ शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ।

Bhagavad-gītā, II. 7.

⁸ *ibid.*, XVIII. 58-60.

⁹ *The Works*, Vol. VI (1963) p. 456.

Ahamkara (egoism). All of you should try to root out this devil from your heart. Complete self-surrender is the only way to spiritual illumination.'¹⁰

This does not mean that the guru will carry the disciples on his back to the shore of worldly existence, as the Christians say St. Christopher does with believing travellers. No, the guru will teach the disciple to depend on his own true self and walk for himself the razor-edge path. Śāṅkara expresses it beautifully with the simile of crossing a river or lake in a boat:

'The gurus as well as the scriptures, from the farther bank instruct (the disciple), while the awakened seeker crosses (the river of *avidyā* or ignorance) through purified understanding, blessed by the grace of God.'¹¹

III

Hindu scriptures and teachers emphatically say that the guru is none other than God and so should be revered, loved and worshipped as such. A true disciple's experiences in the advanced stages corroborate this declaration. 'The guru must not be looked upon as an ordinary human being,' says Swami Brahmananda. 'His physical body is the temple of God; if one can serve the guru with this idea always in mind, one acquires an intense love for him which later develops into an intense love for God.'¹²

Once in a dialogue with a devotee, Sri Ramana Maharshi said that God, guru, and Self are only different forms of the same Reality. On being requested to explain

this aphoristic statement, the Saint said: 'So long as you think that you are the individual, you believe in God. On worshipping God, He appears to you as the guru. On serving the guru, He manifests as the Self. This is the rationale.'¹³

To a question as to whether it was not possible to have the vision of God without the help of a guru, Sri Ramakrishna's penetrative answer was quite similar to Ramana Maharshi's:

'Satchidananda Himself is the Guru. At the end of the savasadhana, just when the vision of the Ishta [Chosen Deity] is about to take place, the guru appears before the aspirant and says to him, "Behold! There is your Ishta." Saying this the guru merges in the Ishta. He who is the guru is also the Ishta. . . .'¹⁴

In one of his finest California lectures, titled 'Discipleship', Swami Vivekananda speaks in the same vein as his Master:

'We must all wait till the guru comes, and the guru must be worshipped as God. He is God, he is nothing less than that. As you look at him, the guru gradually melts away and what is left? The guru picture gives place to God Himself. The guru is the bright mask which God wears in order to come to us. As we look steadily on, gradually the mask falls off and God is revealed.'¹⁵

A verse from the 'Gurugītā' which forms a part of the *Viśwasāra-tantra*, very aptly summarizes the above teachings about the identity of God, guru, and one's own Self:

'I bow to the true divine Guru. He, my Lord, is the Lord of the universe. He, my Guru, is the Guru of the universe. He, my Self, is the Self of the universe.'

¹⁰ *ibid.*, Vol. V (1959) p. 258.

¹¹ *Viveka-cūdāmani*, 476.

¹² *Precepts For Perfection* (Compiled by Sabina Thorne, Pub. by Ganesh & Co., Madras 600017, 1961), p. 67.

¹³ *Talks*, p. 226.

¹⁴ *The Gospel*, p. 117; also see p. 152.

¹⁵ *The Works*, Vol. VIII (1959) p. 117.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Almora
19.7.1916

Dear D—,

Yesterday I received your letter of 19th *Āṣāḍha*.¹ I am greatly pleased to know that you are well and that you are remembering and contemplating the Lord. All discriminations about what is to be eaten and what not etc., are for beginners in spiritual life. Those whose minds have become firmly fixed in the Lord are not affected by anything. The essential thing is to fix the mind in Him. I think you remember what Swamiji [Vivekananda] has said in one of his books. He says: 'Is God a nervous fool like you that the flow of His river of mercy would be dammed up by a piece of meat? If such be He, His value is not a pie!'² That is to say, eating and drinking is not a major issue [in spiritual life]. It is necessary to purify one's thoughts. If a man's mind thinks of God, though he is eating pork, then that pork is equal to *haviṣya* (pure food according to Hindu scriptures). On the contrary, if tendencies like violence, hatred, etc., rule over the mind while subsisting on *haviṣya*, then what use is eating such food? Simply this religious conceit, 'I am a *haviṣya*-eater!' will arise in the mind and degrade that person further.

This however does not mean that there is no need at all for discrimination as to what is to be eaten and what not. You are able to see the point—that one is not to give one's whole mind to this issue. This is what is meant here. Only to God should be given one's whole mind, and everything else comes afterwards. Let it not be as the proverb goes: 'Lose the gold and tie a knot in the hem.' Tying a knot in the hem of the cloth is surely done to keep the gold safe. If that gold is lost, then what use merely tying the knot? Similarly, all rules, spiritual practice, adoration and all else are for God-realization. If God is not realized nor any progress made in that direction, what is the use of rules, etc.? All such are useless. A song comes to my mind:

Tell me, by what treasure shall I live?
Of all treasures, You are the most priceless gem of the heart.
'Renouncing everything, to live in a thatched hut with You—what joy!--
When You, the Lord of the heart, illumine my heart.
All my miseries are left behind; I beseech You not to leave me.
Forsaking You, how shall I remain engrossed in worldly life?
(What shall I do with wealth and honour? These will not accompany
me to the other world.)

You are mine, I am yours, You are mine forever.

This is the import: 'You are mine for all eternity.' And everything else is ephemeral—lasting for a couple of days; not everlasting. He and He alone is

¹ A Bengali month corresponding to June-July.

² *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Dt. Pithoragarh, U.P.), Vol. IV; (1962), p. 359.

for all time. Therefore, linked to God, in whatever condition one may remain there is no misery. Even in great misfortune, if you can see Him within your heart, there is endless joy. Therefore He is needed. If that [His vision] is accomplished, everything is accomplished. No need for anything else.

If you have only one wish—the supreme wish of attaining God—, all wishes will be fulfilled. If you have many wishes not one will be fulfilled. If you water the root of a tree, that watering will bring flowers and fruit. But if for that purpose you water the tree everywhere else, nothing will be gained. Therefore, they that have realized God through His grace say: ‘O Lord, what else but You shall we take?’ ‘Of all treasures, You are the most priceless gem of the heart.’ This has to be firmly grasped.

This place is salubrious always. But then in winter it is very good; in summer also good. The cold is excessive here; in summer it is extremely pleasant. Many then come here to stay. Undoubtedly the journey is very troublesome. But if you can reach here somehow, all troubles will be at an end—seeing the beauty of the hills and above all breathing the extremely pure air. I don’t think that this place has as much reputation in our ancient scriptures as Varanasi, Hardwar, etc. But this is the region of *Uttarākhandā* among the Himalayas, the place of Śiva and Pārvatī. Because also of its association with Swamiji’s memory, this place is undoubtedly very dear to us.

Accept my good wishes and love,

Ever your well-wisher,
SRI TURIYANANDA

AT THE FEET OF SWAMI AKHANDANANDA (IV)

BY ‘A DEVOTEE’

Second week of March, 1936

It was nearly a month since Swami Akhandananda came to Belur Math. Next week he was expected to leave for Sargachi. So devotees were coming to see him.

He was reclining in an easy chair in the room next to Swamiji’s [Vivekananda’s]. Some of the monks and devotees were standing and some sitting on the floor. Bābā¹ was talking about the Bihar Earthquake Relief work, of 1934:

I went to see the relief work; my heart

¹ The name by which Swami Akhandananda was called by most of his devotees.

was rent more by the imperfect measures of relief than by the sight of the misery of the people. Whatever inadequate relief was being given was by our boys. Others seemed to have come there to see the fun—none serious at all.

•

Bābā was going back to Sargachi in a day or two. So the Devotee had come to see him all alone. Tenderly Bābā told him, ‘Very soon you will come to Sargachi, won’t you? This time come prepared to stay longer. It is very crowded here. There it is quiet like your own home.’

24 April (The auspicious day of 'Akṣaya-tritīyā'.)

Having taken *prasād* (offered food) at the Holy Mother's house (Udbodhan) and with an elderly monk from there accompanying him, the Devotee reached Sargachi by the evening train. The elderly monk, who was a disciple of the Holy Mother, gave the Devotee a very valuable and timely bit of advice: 'Since you have come here, stay for as long as you can in the vicinity of Maharaj; that will be beneficial.'

Next morning Bābā said to the Devotee: 'Your stay here should be useful. Wherever you have to live, stay there with some useful and responsible work; then you will live in peace with others. Otherwise you will feel you are wasting your time, and others will think you are staying there for nothing. Now, take this key (of the cash box) and keep my accounts. Whenever I ask you to, you will make payments. So you get some work: aren't you happy? The cash box is in this room. Whenever I call you, come in; don't stay very far from me. You have come to me: be engaged in my work. Just at eight in the morning, come up here.'

Next morning, the Devotee was late by about twenty minutes. Bābā scolded him: 'Why so late? Upstairs in the shrine room? Repeating the name of the Lord?' Someone said, 'He was reading the *Gītā*.' At once Bābā replied: 'You were reading the *Gītā*? Do you know how to read the *Gītā*? One day I shall teach you; from then onward you will read it. In the *Gītā* also you'll find what I told you just now.'

Some time later, Bābā talked a little about 'common sense':

Swamiji conquered the mind of the West—not so much by Vedānta, but more by his common sense. Nowadays it is very rare. Far from being developed, it is destroyed in the universities. Really I have seen young M.A.'s and B.A.'s talk like fools; but you will find here the poor peasants of

the villages talking with common sense.

In the evening, with the upper part of his body bare, Bābā was singing loudly:

The Vedas are proclaiming His glory,
Śiva, Śuka, Nārada—all are proclaiming
His glory;
They are glorifying Him all through the
ages,

But never do they come to His end.

Bābā then said: The *sādhus* (monks) of Rishikesh would sing such songs. How sublime the idea and how grave the tune!

Regarding early rising, Bābā spoke thus:

The Maharaja of Khetri would rise late. One day I told him that those who eat too much and rise late can never attain prosperity. From that day the Maharaja began to rise early—even earlier than I. I would get up and find him standing and smiling at me. Some days he would be walking on the roof; some other days I would find him reading in the library with the help of a lamp.

Our Master and his disciples all used to rise early. One night I slept in the same room with Swami Saradananda. After the *maṅgalārati* (the morning service in the shrine) we got up quickly. I had thought, 'Our Master is up²—how can I be sleeping?' Just then the Swami had tried to awaken me by making a little noise with the window shutters; but I let him know that I was already awake.

Lest I should be late in rising, I used to address myself at bedtime, 'Akhandananda, you must get up at three o'clock.' Just at three, someone would call me, 'O Akhandananda, get up, it is three o'clock.' I do not know when the Master slept, or Swamiji. Whenever I called them during the night, the response was immediate. The higher

² The Swami was evidently referring to one of the monasteries of the Order, and years after the death of the Master. Because of their vivid sense of Sri Ramakrishna's continuing presence, his disciples would thus refer to his 'awaking' before the morning *ārati*.—Ed.

the life, the less the sleep. The body must be strong and stout. Rise early ; meditate a little, on the bed itself—for the mind then is naturally calm. Later roll up your bedding, cleanse the room, sprinkle some water. Do every bit of work with a purpose.

*

About doing purchases, Bābā was instructing someone :

You must bargain. He that is cheated here, is cheated there. He that has it here, has it there also. Why should you be cheated in order to practise religion ? Why should you be a fool in order to become a devotee ? The cheater and the cheated—both are equally bad.

It was just noon on a day in May. It was very hot. Bābā called the Devotee to pay off the cucumber-vendor. Bābā was higgling with him just for two pice. The man was standing outside and Bābā, just back from his bath, was standing on the threshold with a wet towel on his head. The Devotee felt a bit annoyed, thinking, 'Why is Bābā acting this way ? He himself is suffering and making that dealer also suffer.' At last they settled by yielding one pice on either side. Then Bābā turned to the Devotee : 'You are all city-bred people ; you cannot understand these things. You pay whatever the seller asks. That's not the way. The man is now homeward bound ; he won't like to carry his cucumbers back ; but as I found you impatient, counting the money, then I went one pice up.

'When I travelled in the mountains and forests, I did not touch money. But since the Master has settled me in these worldly activities, I must see that there is less expenditure and more income. Moreover, we are dealing with public money. The devotees have to earn it with the sweat of their brow. They are giving it in the name of the Master ; they are not giving it to you or to me personally. It is our duty to see how even one pice can be saved.'

At times the Devotee had to read out the daily mail to Bābā. A young man had sought guidance as to what he should do, now that he was feeling a great impulse for renunciation. After listening fully to the letter, Bābā said simply :

His impulse is but a passing phase. If it were real renunciation, nobody would write like that : the man would leave the home silently. You know the story of the farmer who left his hearth and home, with a towel on his shoulder, when his wife informed that her brother was renouncing the worldly life bit by bit. The farmer heard everything and then said, 'My good lady, that is not the way to renounce the world. Just see, this is the way !' And off he went, for good.

Another farmer dreamt in the night that he had seven sons. After he awoke, he found none. In the meantime news had come that his only real son had died. He could not decide for whom he should mourn : whether for this one or for those seven. The dream state seemed to him as real as the waking state. If the seven sons, of the dream, were unreal, this one of the waking life was also unreal. Thinking thus, he left the world in a spirit of dispassion.

Another young man had written asking whether or not he should marry. Bābā's response was :

As if I should tell him, 'Go and get married' ! His plea is : Mother has asked him to marry, brother is asking him to marry, but he himself has no such desire in the least. You will see, he will surely marry. Otherwise why should he write like that ?

Bābā was speaking about his dreams :

Generally I do not get any dreams about the Master ; but at times I see Swamiji and Maharaj in my dreams. Yet when I am very anxious about anything, I see the Master. Once I was thinking anxiously : 'Who will perform the early morning *arati*,

and how?' Later the Master appeared in a dream and said, 'Nothing elaborate need be done; only one incense-stick will do.'

At such times I used to clearly see the Master as in the days of Dakshineswar in that very room with those cots and beds.

He manages his own affairs. Just see, to-day there were no sweets. I was wondering how to manage. Unexpectedly a devotee has come with fine sweets. I have witnessed such things many a time.

SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE

DR. S. SUBHASH CHANDRA

One of the giants of modern philosophy as he is, Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) is no abstract thinker, no advocate of a dry system of idealism. He has developed a comprehensive philosophy of nature and he may be considered a forerunner of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and Henri Bergson (1859-1941).¹ He was undoubtedly one of the earliest to grasp the philosophical import of the remarkable results that the biological sciences had begun to attain towards the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed, we learn from his recently published manuscripts that already in 1809, that is, at the age of twentyone years, he assiduously followed courses on biological sciences at Göttingen and thereafter for two consecutive years (1811-13) at Berlin. Further, even a cursory reading of the catalogue of Schopenhauer's personal library would suffice to prove his living and unabated interest in the strides made by the biologists contemporaneous to him. He was avowedly

partial to the works of French savants like Buffon, Cuvier, Lamarck, Flourens, Milne-Edwards and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire. However, Bichat and Cabanis were his favourite authors.²

In 1813, Schopenhauer got his doctorate with a thesis on the principle of sufficient reason. The dissertation deals with a metaphysical problem and one would search in vain for any remark concerning natural sciences and their philosophical implications. However, his manuscripts of 1812 prove that he was already evolving his own philosophy of nature. Indeed, according to his own avowal, his philosophy at that time was growing within his soul like an embryo in the maternal womb. In other words, his thought represents an organic phenomenon, something as living as flesh and blood studied by the biologist.³ Six years of love

² Arthur Schopenhauer, *Der handschriftliche Nachlass* (edited by Arthur Huebscher, Frankfurt a.M.: W. Kramer, 1966-68), Vol. II, pp. 4, 222-36, is informative on studies in Göttingen and Berlin. Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 236-86 contains a selected catalogue of Schopenhauer's personal library. Max Brahn, *Arthur Schopenhauers Briefwechsel* (Insel Verlag, Leipzig, 1911), pp. 240-1 cites an important letter concerning studies in biological sciences.

³ *Der handschriftliche Nachlass*, Vol. I, pp. 22-3, 55. J. Volkelt, *Arthur Schopenhauer* (Frommanns Verlag, Stuttgart, 1923), p. 183 makes a short but cogent analysis of the absence of reflections on living sciences in the doctoral thesis.

¹ Illés Antal, 'Bergson und Schopenhauer', *Drittes Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer Gesellschaft*, 1914, was among the first to recognize all that the French philosopher seems to owe to his German predecessor. A. Baillot, *Influence de la philosophie de Schopenhauer en France* (Vrin, Paris, 1927) provides us the most detailed account of the controversy. More recently, F. Copleston, *Arthur Schopenhauer* (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, London, 1947) is rather sceptical about any direct impact of Schopenhauer on Bergson.

and labour enabled Schopenhauer to conceive his immortal child in 1819 and baptize it *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. As it is, Schopenhauer devotes the entire second part of his great work to his philosophy of nature. In 1836 appeared the short but illuminating book *Ueber den Willen in der Natur* embodying the most mature reflections of the philosopher on his comprehension of the living nature. For understandable reasons, *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*, a treatise on moral philosophy published in 1841, contains no new reflections on the philosophy of nature. However, just three years later, the elderly misanthrope, infuriated by the continued lack of success of his works, broke his 'indignant silence' and published the second edition of his *magnum opus* enhanced by a supplementary volume. It is interesting to find that this new volume contains numerous profound observations and at least two new chapters entirely devoted to the philosophy of nature. The two volumes of *Parerga und Paralipomena*, published in 1851, are replete with deep thoughts on the inner meaning of natural phenomena.

Having thus concisely elucidated the background and the sources of Schopenhauer's philosophy of nature, let us now study its main aspects. Schopenhauer is a monist. For him, the ultimate reality is one and without a second, and he calls it the Will. The Will is eternal, infinite, and self-existent. It is the origin of everything but owes its existence to nothing beside itself. It is the primordial reality that is at the base of everything, the uncaused cause of all phenomena. The Will of Schopenhauer is no abstraction but a reality as concrete as the glowing stars, the speeding meteors, the geological spasms like earthquakes, the fury of typhoons, the climbing urge of the ivy, the despair of the fish out of water, the struggle for sheer survival in the animal world and, last but not least, the throb of

the human heart. The Will is a blind urge, a cosmic yearning, a striving without a goal. It is a restless longing that imparts its own blindness to all that emanates from it. The proverbial pessimism of Schopenhauer is finally rooted in this essential blindness of the Will. Bereft of all aim as it is, the Will infects all its offspring with this aimlessness and thereby condemns them to an existence devoid of sense, just an erring will to live doomed to a perpetual frustration.⁴

It is upon this notion of the Will as supreme reality that Schopenhauer has built up his philosophy of nature. It is easy to discern many affinities between Schopenhauer and Charles Darwin. Some scholars even consider the German philosopher as a precursor of the British biologist. A careful study of Schopenhauer, however, reveals that his appraisal of nature does not coincide with Darwin's theory of evolution. The great pessimist appears to have worked out a complex of 'revolution-evolution' theory. According to him, the nature has traversed in all four stages to unfold itself finally in human life as its culminating stage. Each of the first three stages, namely, matter, plant life, and animal life, is separated by an intervening natural catastrophe. Each of these three natural calamities initially serves the destructive role of putting an end to the preceding stage or stages. However, the initial destruction is instrumental in creating conditions that facilitate the new stage of evolution. Further, the intervening destruction seems to be only partial. For, the next stage represents no *tabula rasa*, no

⁴ Hass: *Schopenhauer* (E. Reinhardt, Munich, 1926), p. 241, provides a vivid description of the Will in the organic world. Frauenstädt: *Briefe ueber die Schopenhauersche Philosophie* (Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1854), p. 274, pinpoints 'identity, eternity and freedom' as three primary traits of the Will. Seillière: *Arthur Schopenhauer* (Bloud, Paris, 1911), p. 82, errs in interpreting the Will as a theistic God. Schopenhauer is a monist and any theistic interpretation is mistaken.

being issuing forth from a vacuum, but an enriched mode of existence that incorporates within itself the preceding stage or stages. It seems, therefore, that Schopenhauer ascribes a creative role to the intermediary phases of destruction.⁵

The first stage of the self-objectification of the Will upon our planet concerns the forces of the inorganic nature. It is a stage characterized by titanic struggles among primordial forms of matter, strifes that raged not merely on the surface of the earth but even in its innermost recesses. The earth in its entirety became the prey of the warring elements. According to Schopenhauer, this clash of geological forces culminated in a suicidal result, for it ended in the wholesale destruction of the primeval elements. It seems that only the granite survived this holocaust, for Schopenhauer describes it as the 'gravestone' that buried these chemical 'warriors'. The end of the first stage of the self-manifestation of the Will is followed by an interval marked by torrential rains that cooled the surface of the dead earth and prepared the conditions essential for the second stage. The Will now reveals itself in the form of plant life. The primordial forms of vegetation consisted of incredibly colossal trees and forests vast and dense. Soon there was a merciless struggle for survival among these elementary expressions of botanic reality. Parallel to their own yearning for life, these titanic modes of plant life served to gradually

decarbonize the air and thereby render it fit for the still non-existent animal life. It appears that these striving forms of vegetation finally attained some sort of *modus vivendi* and, for some time, there reigned almost a paradisiac peace upon the earth. However, a new natural catastrophe put an end to this blissful state of things. Now, however, the air was purified and the third stage of the objectification of the Will, namely, the animal life, began. It is interesting to note that this third stage in turn consisted of three outstanding phases and that each of them was broken by a natural calamity engendering the total destruction of the existent and the preceding forms of life. The first of these three intermediary phases consisted of aquatic life dominated by gigantic reptiles. The second phase was distinguished by the emergence of multiple non-aquatic forms of animal life. The third stage was marked by the appearance of higher forms of animal life. It seems that the apes represent the apogee of this final phase of the third stage of the self-expression of the Will. Once more a global catastrophe intervened to annihilate all forms of animal and plant life. However, this holocaust was only temporarily destructive, for it ended in the creation of conditions favourable for the emergence of human life. And it is with human life that the Will has attained its highest self-articulation.⁶ Indeed, the human life constitutes the final expression of the Will, for human

⁵ Josiah Royce: *Lectures on Modern Idealism* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1919), p. 249, underlines the affinities between Darwin's struggle for existence and Schopenhauer's will to live. William James: *Collected Essays and Reviews* (Longman, Green & Co., London, 1920), p. 14, is sceptical about similarities between Schopenhauer and Darwin. Ribot: *La Philosophie de Schopenhauer* (Alcan, Paris, 1885), p. 78, holds that our philosopher is in agreement with the theory of progressive evolution in spite of his belief in the immutability of the species.

⁶ Arthur Schopenhauer: *Sämtliche Werke* (editor: Wolfgang von Löhneysen, Cotta-Insel, Stuttgart/Frankfurt a.M., 1962), Vol. V, pp. 169-71. Kuno Fischer: *Arthur Schopenhauer* (Carl Winter, Heidelberg, 1893), p. 241, does not duly take into account the intervening phases of destruction when he likens the objectification of the Will to a pyramid. Cresson: *Schopenhauer* (Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1957), pp. 27-8, reminds us that the Will as such never evolves itself but he fails to deduce the inevitable conclusion herefrom that the Will is, therefore, transcendent *vis-a-vis* its im-

beings are endowed with the basic capacity of reversing the will to live. Offsprings of the Will though they are, human beings alone are capable of denying the will to live be it in the form of asceticism or in the mode of an intuition of eternal ideas.

We have already alluded to the constructive role of destruction in the scheme of nature of our philosopher. It is interesting to note that the creative trait of destruction is invoked by the German sage to explain the origin of new forms of existence. According to him, the reproductive force is so much the more enhanced as some obstacles seek to repress or destroy it. Thus, the diverse catastrophes of nature like floods, earthquakes, and epidemics at first do cause untold loss of life and are, therefore, phenomena hostile to will to live. However, after some time, by their very opposition to the forces of life, these calamities serve to enhance the reproductive forces, catapult them to new heights, render it possible for them to compensate themselves for the preceding destruction by the creation of new forms of life. Hence, the quantitative loss of the prevailing forms of life is compensated by the origin of new species. But Schopenhauer did not accept the theory of the gradual origin of new species. Not slow and progressive evolution but a qualitative leap engenders new forms of life. The new species does not emerge from a vacuum, but is begotten by an exceptional couple that, aided by unusual atmospheric and astronomical conditions and rendered exceptionally fecund by the creative cooperation of natural catastrophes, gives birth to a wholly new form of life instead of engendering just another member of their own species. It is also essential to note in this context that Schopenhauer was convinced that diverse species do not emerge one after another in a single line, but that multiple species emerge parallel to one another and multiply themselves as contemporaneous forms of life.

Indeed, even different racial forms of one and the same species do not have a common ancestor. Thus, the Asiatic elephant is not the ancestor of the African elephant, the American alligator is not derived from the Egyptian crocodile, and the Negro does not owe his origin to the Caucasian race. In other words, the existence of analogous forms of life is not due to common origin but due to analogous climatic, topographic and atmospheric conditions in different regions of the earth.⁷

The first impression that one gains from the preceding comprehension of nature is that it is marked by a balanced optimism. From the beginning to the end, there is an urge towards progress. There is a movement from the lower towards the higher and not *vice versa*. In spite of his avowed misanthropism, Schopenhauer accepts the human life as the pinnacle of the self-objectification of the Will. Further, even the intervening phases of destruction play a creative role: they help in creating conditions favourable to the next leap. It appears, furthermore, that Schopenhauer has basically anticipated the twofold Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. Indeed, unlike Darwin who restricts his appraisal to the animal and botanic reality, Schopenhauer extends the twin notions of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest to the geological world too. It is, therefore, reasonable to hold that the Schopenhauerian philosophy of nature is

manent expressions. Ruysen: *Schopenhauer* (Alcan, Paris, 1911), pp. 251-7 develops the thesis that there is only a difference of degree between the human life and the animal one.

⁷ *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. V, pp. 180-1, 182, 185. Patrick Gardiner: *Schopenhauer* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 302, refers to the living dynamic, unconscious processes of nature, but does not duly relate them to Schopenhauer's understanding of nature.

more comprehensive than the Darwinian theory of evolution.⁸

On the other hand, some ambiguity seems to infect the relationship between the intervening phases of destruction and the next stage of creation that ensues therefrom. Thus, Schopenhauer leaves us in doubt as to whether the intervening destruction is total or partial. If it were total, then the re-emergence, at the inception of the next stage, of all that has been previously decimated would become a manifold something emerging out of nothing. In other words, if the interval of destruction annihilates everything and we have nothing but an ontological *tabula rasa* left, then the renewed emergence of old forms of life, now enriched and augmented by new species of the latest stage, would mean something—indeed, many things!—coming out of nothing. Such a state of affairs naturally is unacceptable, for it would involve our philosopher in the fallacy of something coming out of nothing. However, if the intervening destruction is partial, then Schopenhauer ought to tell us what survives the holocaust. Do some selected members of diverse species of the preceding stage of evolution survive in some sort of a metaphysical Noah's Ark? If the answer were in affirmative, then Schopenhauer would owe to us a description of the Ark and its occupants.

⁸ Rzewuski: *L'optimisme de Schopenhauer* (Alcan, Paris, 1908), p. 155, errs when he finds only one point—he calls it 'a joyful tendency'—in favour of Schopenhauerian optimism. Gwinner: *Schopenhauers Leben*, (Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1878), pp. 28-9 tries to prove that the pessimism of our philosopher is rooted in his immediate acquaintance with sorrow and misery during a travel through France at the age of 15 years. Personally I am wary of attaching such sweeping and one-sided nomenclatures like 'pessimism' or 'optimism' to the thought of Schopenhauer. I plead for a due appreciation of the rich and varied nuances of his thought.

There are two other possibilities open to our philosopher. He can envisage a *deus ex machina* recreation of all that perished in the course of the total obliteration. In that case, however, he would have to abandon his monism and make out of his Will a theistic God. The second solution open to Schopenhauer would be to invoke the theory of resurrection. All preceding forms of life are dead and buried. But, lo! there is the resurrection: the graves open themselves and the dead walk out of them to proliferate themselves during the next stage of the self-manifestation of the Will. But it is inconceivable that Schopenhauer could have welcomed the theory of resurrection. Indeed, it is well known that he was inimical even to a spiritual immortality, that is, to the survival of personal psychological identity. I am sure that he would have been horrified at the slightest hint concerning the presence of resurrection in his thought. We are here confronted with a paradoxical situation. Schopenhauer is quite lucid in his account of facts that he derived from savants contemporaneous to him. However, surprisingly enough, great thinker though he is, he is rather ambiguous in his metaphysical interpretation of these scientific facts.

I venture to opine that this equivocal situation is due to Schopenhauer's early conditioning by Semitic beliefs. As is well known, all religions of Semitic origin, including the Christian religion in which our philosopher was born and educated, envisage the theory of creation to explain the origin of species and they also advocate the doctrine of the bodily resurrection of the dead. Schopenhauer, of course, soon came under the influence of the Indian thought and religions. His writings and recently published manuscripts are replete with remarks that point to a conscious and persistent effort to liberate himself from his

inherited Semitic beliefs. We also note everywhere in his works an endeavour to assimilate the Indian traditions. However, notwithstanding all his efforts, he could not fully free himself from the Semitic doctrines. I have a feeling that the implied and unclear presence of the twin notions of special creation and the resurrection of the dead in his philosophy of nature is due to the continued influence of the Semitic tradition upon his thought.

The will to live being the most intrinsic expression of the Will, Schopenhauer was convinced that the nature aims at the preservation of the species and not of individuals. The individual is but a mere tool, just a means for the realization of the paramount end of the survival of the species. Indeed, no sooner the individual ceases to be of use to his species than the nature becomes indifferent to his existence and sometimes even leads him towards his own destruction. This basic subordination of the individual to the species is particularly transparent among the insects. Thus, when a swarm of ants is impeded in its progress by a rivulet, the ants at the head do not hesitate to throw themselves in the water and make out of their floating corpses a bridge for the members of their species that follow them. Two queen bees in the same hive are required to fight for survival, for it is not in the interests of the collectivity that they co-exist. That the species represent the predominant concern of the nature and the individual is but a means to the end, this is proved in a convincing manner by the two outstanding instincts of life, namely, the sexual instinct and the maternal one.⁹

However, for a due understanding of these two instincts, it is essential to delineate the main traits of Schopenhauer's theory of instincts. The instinct seems to be the

basic instrument of nature and it is above all among insects that the instinct reveals itself in its pure form. The instinct is primarily an action or complex of actions that appears to realize a goal without knowing it. The insects work in such a manner as if they knew what they are trying to realize. But, as a matter of fact, they have no knowledge of their goal. Secondly, an instinct represents a highly specialized activity that is made to operate by a precise stimulus. Hence, an instinctive response is invariably identical to the same stimulus. It is also due to this trait that the instinctive activity is marked by a remarkable perfection: there is just no defect, no half-heartedness in the instinctive response. Thirdly, we have the aforementioned trait of the subordination of the individual to the species. Indeed, at the level of the insect life, it seems as if the species represented a single organism and the individuals just cells within it. Just as cells have no life without the organism, so too the individuals have no *raison d'être* apart from the species. Fourthly, among the insects, the ganglionic system being more developed than the cerebral one, it seems that the instinct thrives in association with the former and not with the latter. Fifthly, the instincts are guided not by the brain but by a nervous sympathy, something unconscious and somnambulistic. Sixthly, the instinct is characterized by a compulsiveness, a relentless necessity to attain its goal regardless of perils or sacrifices that it may entail. Finally, the instinct operates, quite unconsciously, to the advantage of the future life. Thus, a bird constructs nests for its unborn offspring, the ants and the bees amass provisions for the impending winter.¹⁰

¹⁰ *ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 445, 691, 443, 448, 444, 450, 712; Vol. V, pp. 664-5; Vol. I, p. 236. Deussen: *Die neuere Philosophie von Descartes bis Schopenhauer* (Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1917), p. 498, refers to the instinct as 'that marvellous institution of

⁹ *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. II, pp. 447, 454-5.

Schopenhauer advocates the primacy of the sexual instinct as the basic instrument of the Will to live. All his writings are replete with remarks concerning the role of the love of the sexes in the self-articulation of the will to live. Indeed, many scholars see in him a precursor of Freud. But, unlike Freud, who insisted upon the autonomy of the sexual love *vis-a-vis* the impulse of procreation, Schopenhauer asserts that sex is intimately related to procreation. As a matter of fact, he even affirms that procreation is the real goal of sex and that any romantic humbug associated with it is but a self-deception. An anti-rationalist as he was, Schopenhauer was convinced that it is intellect—a later and, therefore, artificial development in the scale of evolution—that smuggles in the delusion of the autonomy of the sexual love. And the nature, resolved to subordinate the individual to the species, not only tolerates but sometimes even slyly encourages such a make-believe romanticism.

The sexual instinct reveals its real nature at the level of the plant and animal lives. Since no intellect exists as yet to falsify the primeval traits of the sexual instinct, it is essential to understand this phenomenon at the stages of plant and animal lives. Unencumbered as they are by any inhibiting consciousness, the plants do not hide their genitals. In all innocence, they expose their sexual parts to the gaze of everybody. However, no sooner the consciousness emerges than the sex becomes inhibited and impure. Hence, already at the stage of animal life the genitals are semi-concealed between the

nature'. Schopenhauer was not unaware of the limits of the instinct and could not help finding fault with the nature for having so deficiently equipped some worms that they throw themselves in the flame. Huebscher, 'Arthur Schopenhauers Gespräche', *Zwanzigstes Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer Gesellschaft* (Carl Winter, Heidelberg, 1933), p. 87, quotes a remark in this sense.

thighs. No sooner we reach the level of human life than a host of inhibitions surround the sexual instinct and the original goal of this impulse becomes disguised. It is interesting to find that human beings make a special effort to conceal their genitals. Indeed, it seems that human beings are ashamed of their sexual constitution. No wonder that it is only among human beings that sex attains aberrant forms. No such vitiated expressions of sex are visible in the animal world, for here this instinct retains its purity of purpose. That the sexual copulation is meant for the preservation of the species and not for the pleasure of the individuals, this is convincingly proved by the fact that there is no choice of partners in the animal world. At the level of human life, however, the sexual instinct becomes complicated by the creation of an entire gamut of emotions known as 'love'. It is this network of self-deceiving emotions that engenders the illusion of personal choice and misleads one to believe as if the real goal of sex were personal happiness. All illusions avenge themselves sooner or later and it is but inevitable that love marriages come to a tragic end. Schopenhauer was convinced that only marriages that accept sex as a means and not as an end in itself are assured of success. For here the individuals voluntarily subordinate themselves to the interests of the species, eschew a fond illusion and thereby escape a cruel chastisement.¹¹

The maternal instinct is only next to the sexual one in importance as far as the self-articulation of the will to live is concerned. If the union of the sexes engenders life, it is the instinctive affection of the mother that protects it. The metaphysical basis of the maternal instinct is identical with the sexual

¹¹ *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. II, pp. 382, 723, 689, 690, 714, 688; Vol. I, p. 198. Schneider; *Schopenhauer* (Bermann-Fischer, Vienna, 1937), pp. 288-90 makes a short but illuminating study of the metaphysics of love.

one, namely, the individual is but the tool that exists to protect and promote the species. The maternal instinct is well developed at the stage of animal life and Schopenhauer cites many remarkable examples where the mother sacrifices herself to save the life of her progeny. However, no sooner we reach the stage of human life than intellect and reason meddle in the spontaneous and pure operation of this noble life-preserving instinct. Indeed, the human depravity sometimes assumes such revolting forms as to totally vitiate the maternal love, even transform it into criminal cruelties. It is beyond doubt that Schopenhauer's misanthropism has at least one of its roots in this falsification of the maternal love among human females. No animal female is capable of wilful cruelty towards its offspring; at the level of human life, however, mothers guilty of wanton cruelty towards their own children are not so rare as one would believe it.¹²

¹² *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. II, pp. 658-60. Schopen-

These are the outstanding facets of Schopenhauer's philosophy of nature, an aspect of his thought that has not yet received the attention that it merits. It is undoubtedly one of the earliest philosophical appraisals of nature, animate and inanimate. He has anticipated some doctrines of Darwin and is the unquestionable forerunner of Spencer and Bergson. All that Nietzsche, von Hartmann and Freud owe to him is too well known to be adumbrated here. It is, therefore, essential to focus the attention of all admirers of the German thinker to this neglected facet of his philosophy. And herein lies also the justification of the present article.

hauer was a great protector of animals, an active member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Nietzsche: *Werke* (Carl Hanser, Munich, 1954), Vol. I, p. 322, provides us a profound interpretation of Schopenhauer's sympathy for animal life.

FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA: MANOMOHAN MITRA AND RAMCHANDRA DUTTA

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

A great deluge had engulfed the earth, sweeping everything away with it. He was drifting in the current with a plank fastened to his breast. He rested for a while under the arches of a bridge. He was suddenly seized with fear. He blurted out: 'Is no one alive in this world?'

'None is alive,' came the answer.

'My wife, mother, daughters—are they all dead?' he shouted.

'All dead,' was the prompt reply.

'Are there none living?'

'None except those who believe in God.' He was about to be choked with grief.

Suddenly he screamed and screamed so loudly as to awake his wife and mother who inquired what the matter was. He could only utter, 'Who are you? Look, my mother and wife are dead.' They were struck dumb at this utterance.

He had been dreaming a strange dream, and so vivid was the dream that he not only took it for reality but was overwhelmed by

the strangeness and shock of it.¹ Though a dream, an inner voice told him that the whole thing had some meaning for him. It was the early hours of a Sunday morning. The person dreaming was Manomohan Mitra (1851-1903), son of Bhuban Mohan Mitra of Konnagar. A Referencer at the Bengal Secretariat, Manomohan kept himself abreast of contemporary criticism of the Hindu religion. He leaned towards the Brahmo Samaj; and more so when he was overwhelmed by the death of his seven-month-old daughter.² He tried to find consolation in the prayers then used by the Brahmos, but he could hardly cling to the Brahmo faith for long, as his cousin, Ramchandra Dutta (1851-99), medical practitioner and chemist, was openly an agnostic who refuted Manomohan's choicest arguments in support of his belief. As a result the latter was caught in the crosscurrents of faith and reason. However, the intellectual curiosity of both helped them get beyond the faithlessness from which they were suffering.

Ramchandra Dutta's father, Nrisimhaprasad Dutta was a devout Vaiṣṇava and worshipped Kṛṣṇa daily at home. He had married a second time when Ram was young. The father and the stepmother lived with Ram. But Ram was never happy with his stepmother, and this sometimes created

¹ This is the account given by Sri Manomohan Mitra at the Fourth Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission held on 16.5.1897.

² Later Manomohan narrated the transformation of his consciousness that was brought about under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna. He said: 'After my seven-month-old daughter died and was buried, I tried to locate the spot with the idea of disintering her body. Somehow I was seized with that idea that she may re-live if the body could be restored. Such delusion had covered up my mind. Now you can hardly recognize the then mental condition of mine.... It is through Sri Ramakrishna's blessings that the cloud of delusion has been dispelled.' *Tattwamañjari*, Vol. IX, No. 6, p. 134.

a misunderstanding between himself and his father. Ram was, as already mentioned, very sceptical about God and religion, and never had peace of mind.

About this time a mishap in the family which seemed to have knocked out the very bottom of Ramchandra's unorthodox and scientific outlook proved to be the turning point in his life. One of his beloved daughters died and the old question, 'Does the human soul outlive physical death?', haunted him. His materialistic reasoning did not take him far. When in the late afternoon of the following Kālī-pūjā day his mind was struggling with this baffling question, the grandeur of the autumn sky suddenly swept away, as it were, the mist of worries from his mind. He asked himself, 'What am I doing? Whither am I moving? What have I known about the vast universe? Is not human life comparable to a speck of cloud drifting in a vast unknown sky?' He began afresh his search for a worthwhile philosophy of life. Such quest brought him to the writings and speeches of Keshabchandra Sen, and from these, among other things, he came to know of Sri Ramakrishna, the Saint of Dakshineswar.

Subsequently one Sunday morning Ram was strolling on the road when he came across an old acquaintance who was practising yoga. Ram explained his problem to the yogī, who gravely remarked that he might be cured of his agony only if God should appear to him in the form of a 'physician'. Soon an idea crossed Ram's mind: 'Why should I not lay bare my heart to the Paramahansa of Dakshineswar?' This gave rise to a hope which warmed up his heart. He proceeded towards the house of his cousin, Manomohan.³

³ *Mahātmā Rāmcandrer Baktṛtābali* (Bengali), Pub. by Sri Sri Ramakrishna Samadhi Mahapith, Yogodyana, Kankurgachi, Calcutta-54, 3rd ed. Vol. I, pp. 36-8.

In the meantime, Manomohan Mitra had also come to know of Ramakrishna Paramahansa from reports that appeared in Keshab's newspaper *Sulabh Samācār*. He heard more about the Paramahansa from his friend Prankrishna Dutta, who had visited the latter several times.

Now, Ramchandra, on hearing the story of Manomohan's dream remarked, 'All that you have seen is but true. In fact all men are laid under the spell of *māyā*. None is alive in the true sense. Everyone is living unconsciously.' Manomohan suggested, 'We have been hearing about the Paramahansa of Dakshineswar for quite a long time. But, alas, we have not found time to see him !'

'Then let's go today itself', replied Ramchandra. 'Today is a holiday. We can go.' Manomohan agreed.

The day was Sunday, the 13th November, 1879. The cousins decided to go to Dakshineswar and to see for themselves what the Paramahansa was like. They went in a hired boat in the company of their mutual friend, Gopal Mitra of Antpur, Hooghly. On reaching the Dakshineswar temple, they walked about the garden expecting to see a *sādhu* (holy man) with matted locks, besmeared with ashes, etc. They found none. Finally they were directed to a room, but they found the door closed and a few policemen sitting on the veranda. As the door was closed and it was against etiquette to open a closed door, they returned to the embankment of the Gaṅgā. However, they were told to knock at the door. They followed the advice and tapped on the door. It opened and an ordinary-looking man bowed low and greeted them with the words 'Nārāyana'.⁴ They responded by nodding their heads. Welcoming them to the room, he asked them to sit on the bed he was

occupying. He inquired, 'Where do you come from?' They introduced themselves. A guileless serene-looking man, he was wearing a dhoti, clumsily tied, one end of which was resting on his shoulders. They found another man, tall and hefty, lying on some bedding on the floor. Sri Ramakrishna, the man who had received them, said to the man lying down, 'You see, Hriday, how calm and quiet they are. They are not members of the Brahma Samaj.' Manomohan protested, declaring that he had been visiting the Brahma Samaj since his young days and that he hated idolatry. Mild came the reply, 'But you do not belong to any party or group—that is what I was pointing out.' Sri Ramakrishna further said, 'As a custard apple made of pith inspires the thought of a true custard apple, similarly the images of gods and goddesses stimulate thought of the real sports of God. God is omnipotent, everything is possible for Him.'

Ramchandra, nonetheless, at the sight of Sri Ramakrishna instinctively felt that the latter was his very own. He looked intently at Sri Ramakrishna and the longer he watched him the greater joy he found in his heart. Sri Ramakrishna, too, with his power of infallible judgment took no time to recognize in the visitors two of his chosen devotees.

Looking at Ramchandra he suddenly remarked, 'Are you not a doctor? (Pointing to Hriday) Will you please examine him? He is suffering from fever.' Ramchandra was astounded by this disclosure about himself, for he had not told Sri Ramakrishna that he was a physician. However, Ramchandra examined the patient and declared that Hriday's temperature was normal. Sri Ramakrishna then inquired of Ramchandra, 'Well whatever I partake of, where does it go?' Ramchandra pointed to the stomach. Sri Ramakrishna, pointing to the right lower part of his abdomen, said, 'But in my case, the foodstuff comes down here.' They were

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 39: *Bhakta Manomohan* (Bengali), Udbodhan, 1 Udbodhan Lane, Calcutta-3, p. 27.

amazed to hear this, but could not appreciate the truth of it. However, later on, Ramchandra assured himself, by physical examination, that Sri Ramakrishna was correct: food and drink come down straight to the right lower region of the abdomen.⁵

After a while one of them asked, 'Does God really exist? If so, can He be perceived? Again, if He is perceivable, can he be perceived in this life?'

There came forth a flow of sweet words:

'God really exists. You don't see the stars in the daytime, but that does not mean that they do not exist. Look, there is butter in milk; but can anybody find it by merely looking at the milk? To get butter you must churn the milk in a quiet and cool place before the sun rises. If you want to catch fish in a tank, you should find out from those who have already caught fish in that tank, what variety of fish is available and what kind of bait should be used. Similarly you have to inquire about God. A man angling in a pond has to wait patiently for a long time till he finds the float moving. This shows him that there are fish in the pond. Gradually the float sinks under water and with one pull of the rod he lands the fish. Similarly you cannot realize God by mere wish; you must go through some mental disciplines. Believing the words of a *sādhu*, you have to hold the mind as the angler holds his rod. Hang from it the hook of *prāṇa*. Fasten on this devotion to the Lord's name as bait, and then wait patiently till you find thoughts of God stirring on the surface of the mind-lake. Subsequently you will be blessed by the vision of Him.'⁶

Ramchandra was a rank agnostic. Manomohan, for his part, firmly held that if there was a God, he could not have a form. Such arguments he had heard from the Brahmo

leaders. Intuiting what was in their minds, Sri Ramakrishna said: 'Who really wants God—who wants to realize Him? Everyone is moving about with the idea that God cannot be comprehended. If a man who sincerely craves for God, cries with the prayer, "Please bless me with Your vision", God will surely appear before him. God can be realized. Can God, whose glory is so beautiful, be unperceivable? Let anyone verify whether this is true or not. If God is not perceivable; then the scriptures lose their worth. Would you say that the words of the scriptures are all fantasies—that they have been composed like fictions and dramas to mesmerize men of the *Kali-yuga*?'⁷ Manomohan suggested, 'Admitting all that you say to be true, can one realize God in this life?' Sri Ramakrishna replied, 'As is a man's feeling of love, so is his gain; And faith is the root of all.' Saying these words he began singing in his melodious voice:

As is a man's meditation, so is his
feeling of love;
As is a man's feeling of love, so is his
gain;
And faith is the root of all.
If in the Nectar Lake of Mother Kali's
feet,
My mind remains immersed,
Of little use are worship, oblations or
sacrifice.

Sri Ramakrishna continued: 'The further one advances in one direction, the more the opposite recedes. That is to say, as soon as you walk ten feet towards the east, you leave behind your past position by the same distance.'

They, however, persisted in their argument: 'Till we find some direct proof of the existence of God, our faithless minds can hardly put trust in God.'

Sri Ramakrishna smilingly said:

'A man ailing from typhoid fever desires

⁵ *Bhakta Manomohan*, p. 29.

⁶ Ramchandra Dutta: *Śrī-Śrī-Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahamsadever Jīvanbr̥tānta* (Bengali), Sri Ramakrishna Yogodyana. Calcutta-54, 7th ed. p. 120.

⁷ *Bakṛtābali*, pp. 39-40.

to drink a pouful of water and to eat a pouful of rice but does the physician pay heed to his words? Does the physician prescribe quinine as soon as a patient runs a high temperature? He observes the patient and prescribes quinine at the proper moment, when the temperature becomes somewhat stable. He does not listen to the patient's pleadings.'⁸

Sri Ramakrishna's simple but convincing words touched their hearts. His melodious voice sank deep into their spirit. In fact his words began to be echoed in their hearts. Sri Ramakrishna had given voice and form to the intangible flashes of thought that till then had eluded their grasp. Never before had they heard such a convincing discourse on religious topics. He accepted them so cordially that they felt they were known to him for long, that they were his own, as it were. Spending the whole day in his company the three friends left Dakshineswar before dusk.

The visit opened a new chapter in the lives of Ramchandra and Manomohan. Sri Ramakrishna's spirit flowed through and through their lives and, in flowing through, swept away all the bitter past. Ramchandra has told in his book *Śrī-Śrī-Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahamsadever Jivanbrttānta*, and Manomohan in his unfinished book *Āmār Jivan Kathā*, what a great revolution gradually took place in their lives as a result of coming in contact with Sri Ramakrishna.

Describing the striking change in their life, Ram has written: 'While we had been moving hither and thither in search of God, occasionally visiting the Brahma temple, Christian churches, temples of Hindu gods and goddesses, none cared to look at us, none came to our help. Rather we were drowning day by day in the swamp of despair, as it were. However, we did not have to suffer long. The day we met Sri Rama-

krishna we received a new lease of life. The moment we saw him, the burning of our heart, the despair of the past disappeared... Atheists, as we were, we were transformed into staunch believers in God through his grace... We sincerely believe that Sri Ramakrishna was our saviour; that is why we are convinced that he is verily the all-powerful God.'⁹ Regarding Sri Ramakrishna at first as his Guru, and later as his Chosen Ideal, Ramchandra invited him and his devotees again and again to his house at Simla and spent money lavishly. Commenting on this change in his disciple Sri Ramakrishna observed: 'You now see Ram so splendidly generous. But his miserliness when he first came beggars description. I asked him to bring some cardamom, and one day he brought a pice worth of it, and placed it before me and bowed down. Guess from it what a great change has come over Ram's nature.'¹⁰

Sri Ramakrishna's divine grace kindled in Ram the flame of devotion, which burnt all the dross; and the gold in him shone forth. The entering of the Master's spirit into his life and its working were imperceptible, but the result was notable. It altered his whole existence as well as the words he spoke and the influence he exerted on others. So great was the change, that the devotees were not much surprised to hear the Master say one day, 'I was saying to the Mother today, "Give a little power to these few—Vijay, Girish, Kedar, Ram, and Master (Mahendranath Gupta) so that the new people may come here after their angularities have been somewhat rounded by them."¹¹ Ram was chosen a vehicle for

⁹ *Tattwamañjari*, Vol. II, pp. 84-5.

¹⁰ Swami Saradananda: *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master* (Tr. by Swami Jagadananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 2nd ed.), p. 710

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 833.

⁸ *Jivanbrttānta*, p. 121.

the dissemination of the Master's message. While he himself dived deeply into spiritual practices in the newly purchased garden house, named Sri Ramakrishna Yogodyan, he began to spread the Master's message through the Bengali monthly journal *Tattwamañjari*, through books like *Tattwāsāra* (1885), *Tattwaprakāśikā* (in three volumes, June 1886 to July 1887), *Saṅkīrtana*, and lectures and discourses. He was one of those who held that Sri Ramakrishna was an incarnation of God. One day he told Girishchandra Ghosh : 'Do you realize that this time Gaurāṅga, Nityānanda, and Advaita have reappeared in the form of Paramahamsadeva ? He is the synthesis of *prema* (ecstatic love), *bhakti* (devotion), and *jñāna* (knowledge). When God incarnated as Gaurāṅga these qualities had manifested themselves in three persons.'¹²

Similar changes were noticed in Manomohan too. Although in the beginning his egotism stood as a channel-blocker, Sri Ramakrishna's divine grace broke it down gradually and Manomohan became a notable conduit of devotion. Referring to this, Sri Ramakrishna remarked, when he visited

Manomohan's house on the 19th November, 1882:

'God very much relishes the bhakti of the poor and the lowly, just as the cow relishes fodder mixed with oil-cake. King Duryodhana showed Krishna the splendour of his wealth and riches, but Krishna accepted the hospitality of the poor Vidura. God is fond of His devotees. He runs after the devotee as the cow after the calf.'¹³

Such a loyal and steadfast devotee was Manomohan that people would often hear him say, 'I do not want to hear that which is not included in the "Ramakrishna Grammar".'¹⁴

Manomohan's wholehearted acceptance of Sri Ramakrishna as his Guru resulted in a complete transformation in him. For him life was not immunity from difficulties but peace and tranquillity in all situations however difficult. His life like a sprouting seed sent a root down so that it might be firmly grounded, while at the same time it sent a shoot up to become the plant with its flowers to gladden the devotees.

¹³ 'M' : *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1947), pp. 86-7.

¹⁴ Bijoy Nath Majumdar, 'Mahātmā Manomohan Mitra', *Tattwamañjari*, Vol. IX. No. 6, p. 134.

¹² Girishchandra Ghosh, 'Rāmdādā', *Tattwamañjari*, Vol. VIII, No. 9, p. 203.



HUMAN TRENDS

MUSIC OF INDIA IN THE U.S.A. TODAY

People who follow the arts in the U.S.A. have been aware of Indian music for a long time, certainly throughout this century, but in varying degrees of ignorance. One tends to hear a particular concert featuring a particular style, or to see a particular dance group, and think: 'Ah, now I know what Indian music is.' I suspect that until the past decade it was not even known generally that there is in India a difference between the music of the south and that of the north. My own experience has been to have it revealed over and over that to become familiar with some particular style (e.g., the sitar style of Ravi Shankar, or the music that accompanies a Kathakali performance, or that which goes with a Bharata-Nāṭyam dance, or a vina recital, or a recital of Carnatic vocal music) always gives the illusion that *it* is Indian music—and then one keeps discovering that there is an endless supply of other styles. For example, I had never before this year heard a performance of 'Nādaswaram', though I know it is common in India. Until last year I had never heard extensive recordings of Indian folk music, but I now realize that there is an incredible variety of that—often very complicated material. Years ago, Professor Robert Brown, the man who started our Wesleyan programme of Indian

music, said to me: 'Whatever you *expect* to find in India, that you will find.' He was not referring specifically to music, but I deduce it applies to music.

Indian music is professed in the academic world here, widely under the guise of ethnomusicology. That is, numerous universities include it in musicological surveys of 'Non-Western' music, in which it is discussed along with recorded instances of whatever the instructor considers salient. I suppose most discussions would deal with art music rather than folk-music. I suppose all instructors attempt to convey the idea of *rāga* (very difficult for us really to grasp, even as it is difficult for us to grasp the true idea of 'Mode' in our own early music) and of *tāla*. (Did you know that there is a Greek word 'talea', used in our own medieval music, denoting a repeating or rhythmic unit?)

In a few of our universities Indian music is professed in greater detail than that outlined above. At Wesleyan we have had for the past twelve years resident Indian musicians who teach performance (sitar, tabla, vina, voice, violin, mridangam). The presence of live musicians, who of course also give frequent concerts, produces a sense of reality and develops in certain students a lifelong love-affair with the music they

learn. In the Wesleyan community an audience for a concert is always sufficiently knowledgeable to sense whether a performance is solid or flimsy. But I believe we succeed only superficially in conveying anything about the totality of Indian music.

Indian musicians are also in residence at the California Institute of the Arts and at York University in Toronto. Colgate University (in upper New York State) quite occasionally has short-term visiting musicians. Brown University in Rhode Island, and Rutgers and Princeton Universities in New Jersey, all have programmes of study taught by Americans who have taken degrees in the subject and have invariably themselves studied in India. One should also mention the University of California at Los Angeles which has had resident Indian musicians—in fact which pioneered in the area—though I am not certain about the status of its programme now.

It should be understood, then, that in the U.S.A. Indian music is widely taught at the general musicological level, and taught in a few places at the performance level or an intense musicological level.

Indian music is also taught privately in, I am sure, all major cities of this country. I would guess that there are twenty musical gurus in New York City, for instance: one keeps hearing about yet another sitarist giving lessons, or a flute player or a tabla-walla, etc. Occasionally one hears of a really substantial private school of Indian music, such as the Ali Akbar Khan School in California. I have known some very good students who have studied at the latter, though I am also aware of severe financial problems. I think it reasonable to assume that except in such cases as, e.g., Ali Akbar, the quality of private teaching would be erratic.

Indian music is also taught, and increasingly, by Americans who have become proficient players or singers. Some of these

people, like Jon Higgins at York University, are superb. Some are good. Some are terrible. Like all teachers.

Let us discuss a little, Indian music as FAD: we've been through a fad stage, particularly in the sixties when Ravi Shankar made such a big impact (thanks, I believe, in part to the interest of Yehudi Menuhin, who made recordings and films with Ravi Shankar, out of his own fascination and out of a desire to help bridge the two cultures) and most particularly when the Beatles incorporated the sound of sitar and tabla in their wildly popular hit records. Kids by the millions were fascinated and thought that by this superficial exposure, they had finally found the ANSWER. This of course has interesting parallels to the experience with certain foreign religions. During the fad period, big-name musicians such as Ravi Shankar could command huge fees and fill huge halls. The cognoscenti were quite sure that, in such circumstances, audiences were somewhat 'played down to'—that is, were given rich diets of flashy virtuosity and precious little of slowly unfolding, deeply felt material.

We experienced the fad phenomenon at Wesleyan, in which students mindlessly adopted such music. We are now past that, both here and in the country generally. I would say that audiences are smaller, more sober, solidier, impatient with mere display, capable of being truly engrossed on those occasions when something engrossing is available.

Meanwhile the recording industry has turned out an ever-increasing variety of discs available at your neighbourhood record store. Last summer, for instance, we bought a couple of beautiful recordings of Carnatic vocal music at a store in Keene, New Hampshire. Sales of records may be modest, except in the case of big-name performers, but it is now possible to market records inexpensively—so that, say, a music

department is able to own a surprising collection of relevant performances.

Lastly I should mention the field of concert management. There are several agencies which bring Indian concert artists to this country, notably the Asia Society in New York City, and the American Society of Eastern Arts, in California. These managements contract individual artists or groups (such as a Kathakali troupe) for tours in the U.S.A. The buyers of such concerts are prevailing Universities. I

think such managements are predicted to seek out not only styles which have become known in the U.S. but also styles which would be novel in the U.S. I think they will find a continuing market in the U.S., based not on fad, but on two things:

- (1) Indian music has huge musical and spiritual resources; and
- (2) The U.S.A. is on a long-range quest in the realms of music and the spirit.

—PROF. RICHARD K. WINSLOW

NOTES AND COMMENTS IN THIS NUMBER

Questions and answers are from: Swami Saradananda: *Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1956. References: Question 1, p. 470; Question 2, p. 588; Question 3, p. 630; Question 4, p. 616.

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' are from *The Complete Works*, Vol. III (1960), pp. 127-8.

If there is any field where mistaking the counterfeit for the genuine will cause the greatest harm, it is that of religion. And again, it is in this field that there prevails the greatest variety and amount of counterfeiting. Genuine seekers not unoften become victims of spurious gurus. With a view to helping sincere aspirants to clarify their ideas about spirituality, the guide, and the sublime goal they seek, we have discussed the role of the guru in spiritual life in this month's *Editorial*.

Students of philosophy are fairly well aware of Schopenhauer's theory of Will as the ultimate Reality and the world of phenomena as the Will's irrepressible expression. But his philosophy of nature is not so well known. Dr. S. Subhash Chandra, M.A.

(Osmania), Dr. Phil. (Köln), Dr. Phil. (Paris), contributes to our columns a scholarly essay on 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Nature'. We hope our readers remember his erudite essays on Henri Bergson and his philosophy in preceding volumes.

Manomohan Mitra and Ramchandra Dutta were very intimate devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and played an important role in spreading the Master's message. An interesting account of their first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna is contributed to our columns by Swami Prabhananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

In recent decades Indian music, vocal and instrumental, and other departments of the performing arts have become very popular in the United States of America and are winning enthusiastic converts. Teachers of Indian music and dances have joined some American University faculties and have opened their own schools, to teach interested American students. A discerning write-up on this subject—'Music of India in the U.S.A. Today'—comes to our columns from the pen of Prof. Richard K. Winslow, Head of the Music Department, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, U.S.A.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SAINT YOGASWAMI AND THE TESTAMENT OF TRUTH: BY RATNA CHELLIAH NAVARATNAM, St. Yogaswami Centenary release, Columbuturai, Yalpanam, Sri Lanka, 1972, Pages 449, Price Sri Lanka Rs. 20.00, India Rs. 30.00, U.K. 3.50; U.S.A., \$ 12.00,

Saint Yogaswami of Sri Lanka is a great saint who preached universal love. He was a 'Siddha' who realized oneness with the Supreme Reality. This man of God showered peace and joy on everyone who came to him. With his walking-tours (*pada-yatras*) he brought about the spiritual awakening of love. He saw no evil and he was the embodiment of the Light of Truth. His songs of wisdom and truth are called *Natchintanai*. His closest disciples are Thiru Navaratnam and Ratna Ma, known as Thiru and Ma respectively. In the present work Ratna Ma presents an English rendering of the songs of Saint Yogaswami along with an illuminating commentary. The songs are divided into twenty sections covering Faith, Siva, Grace, Jnana, Guru, Atman, Divine Mother, and the Land. The author had the unique privilege of sitting devotedly at the feet of the Guru, and she therefore presents successfully the teachings of the Saint with great lucidity and humility. These songs impress on us the value of dedicated service. As Swami Prematmananda says, 'a real study of Yogaswami is first-hand experience of God'. In the present times when man is tossed between conflicting values, texts like the one under review show a way out. We are deeply indebted to Ratna Ma. One rises from a reading of the book with a purer mind.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

INDIA'S EMPIRE OF MIND: BY SUDHANSU BIMAL MOOKHERJI, Published by Lakshmi Narain Agarwala, Agra-3, 1973, Pages xii+167, Price Rs. 15.00.

'The present volume is not intended for specialists'—so writes the author in the Preface (p. ix), and in compressing the history of ancient India into this handy volume, written in a lucid, matter-of-fact style, he has remained true to his declaration, although the title of the book raises expectations that remain unfulfilled. The book does not present any new or original view of India's intellectual and spiritual heritage, nor does it make that heritage even the focal point of the study. However, the beginner in ancient Indian history will find the book to be a handy companion, with a

bird's-eye view of external history and brief summaries of the philosophies, religions, and literature of ancient India. The summaries, indeed, are too brief and colourless, unaccompanied by any critical evaluation. For example, the chapter entitled 'Philosophy' (pp. 77-87) is rather skimpy, with only superficial accounts of the various schools of Indian philosophy. (The Jaina and Buddhist philosophies have been disposed of in one very short paragraph.) The same skimpy and uncritical treatment is given to ancient Indian literature, which certainly calls for enthusiastic appreciation and perceptive remarks. And it is through philosophy and literature, creations of the soul as they are, that the road to India's empire of the mind must lead. Certainly, the book can be made more useful by revision and rewriting.

The author's intention to compress the maximum basic information into a topic-wise discussion is laudable, and the matter-of-fact style adds to the straightforwardness of the narrative. The Index is very well done, but the Select Bibliography is almost totally devoid of the great names in Indology, Indian and Western. Desirably, the book should have included some leads and suggestions for further studies in the subject.

The book needs some editing. The first person singular could be eliminated from the main narrative, so could the repetition of a wise saying from Brittany to announce authorial humility. Again, the style of documentation of the footnotes and bibliography, is an eyesore and should be brought up to the standard.

DR. K. K. CHATTERJEE

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SANKARA: BY SWAMI SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI, Published by Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Holenarsipur, Karnataka State, 1973, Pages 16+130, Price Rs. 3.00.

Swami Satchidanandendra Saraswati believes in the Advaita Vedanta, and he holds that Sankara is the best interpreter of himself. This is a laudable conviction. But he does not admit that his own ideas actually come from Nagesa when he attacks the great Advaitic philosophers who came after Sankara. He calls Padmapada, Prakasatman, Vachaspati and others subcommentators. It is true that they came before the public as subcommentators out of a genuine humility. But they tried to develop the system of Advaita in the light of their own knowledge and experience.

In this great endeavour they offered valuable insights. One cannot dismiss them as faulty exponents—for philosophy developed in India through these great so-called subcommentators.

The author has listed 69 misconceptions. By these he means the views of the great Acharyas which are not acceptable to himself. The author on page 9 makes Sankara accept *sruti* and intuition, while Sankara refers to *sruti* and *anubhava*. This last word means 'experience'. Then what is wrong with the experiences of Padmapada and Vachaspati? When Padmapada interprets *mithyajnana* as *mithya* and *ajnana*, we do not find that he deviates from the master's teaching. The author denies the value of *nididhyasana* (p. 21). Then, how can one realize Brahman? On page 23 he denies the identity of *jiva* and *Isvara* and posits their unity, contrary to the meaning of the text he quotes. He also has misunderstood the views of Padmapada and Vachaspati regarding *avidya* and *Maya*. On page 37, he shows misunderstanding of the opening sentence of the commentary. As the *Ratnaprabha* points out, before *yushmad* we have to presume the words *yadi api*. *Mithyajnana* is not the same as *adhyasa* (p.39), for Sankara explicitly calls it the *nimitta* or cause of *adhyasa*. It is not possible to enumerate all the misunderstandings in which this text abounds, in a short review. We only say that a true Advaitin should not be engaged to finding faults in the writings of the great Acharyas of his own faith. He should rather explain and clarify.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

THE GEETA WAY OF LIFE: BY K. G. WARTY, Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Bombay, 1971, pp. 241, Price Rs. 3/-.

This book has a Foreword and eleven chapters. In these chapters the author has systematically arranged the main theme and teachings of the *Geeta*, and as he himself points out, it is done for the common man who is in need of the practical teaching of the *Geeta* and not of 'its philosophical flights'. This fact has added to the utility of the book to the lay public.

The *Geeta* is the first systematic treatise on Hinduism. It places before humanity the essence of all the Upanishads and at the same time indicates for the common man a very useful philosophy of action. That man should work not for any reward but for the sake of work and duty, free from all hopes and fears about the outcome of work, is the best philosophy of action and can lead the world to real fulfilment.

The author has done a very useful work in presenting this high and yet practical philosophy to the layman. We recommend the book to the general public and the scholarly world alike.

DR. PARESH NATH MUKHERJEE

AESTHETIC: BY BENEDETTO CROCE, Translated by Douglas Ainslie, Indian Edition published by Rupa & Co., 15 Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta-700012, 1973, Pages xxx+503, Price Rs. 45.00.

The Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce claimed the origins of his thought in Vico, though he was more profoundly influenced by Hegel. According to Croce, history reveals the operation of a unique Spirit. This Spirit is manifested in a graduated scale of aesthetics, logic, economics, and ethics. In the present volume Croce offers his theory and history of aesthetic. The theory defines the work of art as a lyrical intuition which is identified with expression. The intellectual, however, is inseparable from intuitive knowledge. Though he complains that the aestheticians in Anglo-Saxon lands were obsessed by Form-Content Unity, Croce himself argues on those very lines. Expression is indivisible, says Croce, into modes or degrees. Then an epic cannot differ from a lyric.

The theory is given in 152 pages. The rest is a historical survey. This survey is sketchy. It does not do justice to the aestheticians, as Bosanquet's *History* does. Yet it is full of brilliant insights. Ainslie's translation has many errors, and this edition has not corrected them. It is just a reproduction of the original English version. Yet it is a valuable addition to the books available in India particularly because too many of our critics swear by Croce without knowing his text. The UNESCO deserves our gratitude for including this text in the European Series of Representative Texts. The price is too heavy when one remembers that the copy of the British edition has cost less than half this amount only.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

DIALOGUE WITH DEATH: BY ROHIT MEHTA, Published by 'Ram Home' Gulbai Tekra, Ahmedabad-6, distributed by Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pages 374, Price Rs. 15.00.

Sri Aurobindo's great epic *Savitri* is a poem dealing with the perennial philosophy of India. It is based on the story of Savitri and Satyavan, given in the *Mahabharata*. Here we have the great penance of Asvapati, the birth of Savitri, her marriage with Satyavan, and her encounter with the deity presiding over Death. Nachiketas in the

Aranyaka and Upanishad met Death. Yudhishtira met Death in the 'Yaksha-prasnas' and in the 'Mahaprasthan-Parvan'. Savitri too met Death. Sri Aurobindo takes up this problem in his poem. The devotees of Sri Aurobindo may take it as a great or even as the greatest poem. But to a true student of literature and philosophy, it is a philosophical work. Then again interpretations differ. We take it to be a poem dealing with the nature, value, and meaning of true spiritual love. The author of the present text takes it to be a poem dealing with death. This is extremely debatable.

Originally Sri Rohit Mehta delivered a series of lectures. These are expanded into 25 chapters.

These chapters proceed from canto to canto, and from book to book. They provide an illuminating commentary on the text. The last eight chapters are very good. In a book of this size it is not possible to do full justice to the text. But the author has done his job very well. Yet there are some repetitions, and there are statements dogmatically asserting that this is the greatest poem. One should always remember the valid distinction between a mystical text and a poem. This is not to belittle the value of the present text.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

THE BANASTHALI PATRIKA, SPECIAL NUMBER ON SRI AUROBINDO'S POETICS (No : 17-18, combined), July, 1971 & January, 1972, EDITED BY RAMESHWAR GUPTA, Published by Prahladnarain Purohit on behalf of Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, Pages 163, Price Rs. 3.00.

Considered even merely by the number of Indian poets writing in English and by the bulk of publications, 'Indo-Anglian' poetry is going to stay with us in spite of what the Anglicists may say to the contrary. Indo-Anglian—or rather Indo-English (which sounds better)—poetry with such early practitioners as Derozio and Michael Madhusudan Dutta goes as far back as modern vernacular literatures in India. Although the main problem of Indo-English poetry is linguistic and cultural in nature (how does one produce creative literature in an alien tongue?), it does not have any problem of finding an audience since English is invariably the cherished second language of all educated Indians. Add to it the desire of the Indian intellectual to have an international audience in order to transcend the narrow confines of the Indian society.

Aurobindo's poetry and other writings in English is Indo-English with a difference. Here we have an Indian who was sent to England in childhood

and who when he returned to India after completing his education hardly spoke any Indian language. So in him we have at least one Indo-English poet who had native-like command of English. Even then, however, one is apt to find his poetry strangely vague, and his early poetry definitely giving the impression of imitative exercises. As for the charge of vagueness, his followers would respond by requiring initiation into Aurobindonian theology as a pre-requisite for appreciating the master's poetry. Without such a pre-requisite it is difficult to explain the general lack of enthusiasm about his poetic output which 'including his poetic plays is as large as Shakespeare's—about one-hundred thousand lines, including about 50,000 blank verse lines' (Rameshwar Gupta).

The special number of the *Banasthali Patrika* with its fourteen articles is an impressive demonstration of the deepening interest in Aurobindo's poetry in the academic world. The articles cover a varied field. Some like Dilip Roy's are in the nature of personal memoirs with valuable biographical material. The introductory article attempts many things including an 'abstract' of Aurobindo's poetics. This article has some problems of style and coherence. Two articles, 'Sri Aurobindo on the Function of Poetry' by Sri Swatantra and 'Sri Aurobindo on the Process of Poetic Creation' by Dr. S. K. Prasad, are essentially 'abstracts' and will be of interest to students of Aurobindo's poetics.

One feels however that these two articles would read better with the addition of some critical perspective. Prof. Sisir Ghosh's article 'A Passage from Sri Aurobindo's Savitri' is an *explication de texte* and is a very welcome inclusion. Much of Prof. Ghosh's enjoyment, however, is couched in the language of faith and personal impression. Such romantic impressionism is not always convincing to an obstinate reader: 'If this is not poetry, where is poetry to be found? *Savitri's* poet seems to be light years ahead of other practitioners of the art. To read this poetry as it should be read is to be re-born, level after level, through cycles of ecstatic exploration, the inner oceans without bourne. It is the nearest we can hope to come to illumination and Immortality and all on the slender bark of a single symbol or metaphor!'

Dr. D. C. Agarwala's comparative study of Aurobindo's and Richards' poetics is well written with a scholarly discipline that one does not always find in Indo-English criticism. Dr. Mokashi Punekar, who is avowedly 'not an Aurobindonian' presents a combative and interesting article seeking to give a contemporary significance of Aurobindo as a

thinker. Dr. Rameshwar Gupta's 'Sri Aurobindo's Poetic Idiom' is a storehouse of information on the subject. The article does not stick to the developing pattern of a particular argument; rather it telescopes various facets of Aurobindo's poetry including an analysis of the metre of his poetry.

The *Patrika's* present issue is a valiant attempt to disseminate Aurobindo's poetics and betokens the latter's triumphant entry into the Indian academic world.

—DR. K. K. CHATTERJEE

BOOKS RECEIVED

WHITEHEAD'S FOUR PRINCIPLES ... : BY ANIL K. SARKAR, Published by Bharati Bhawan,

Patna 800004, 1974, pp. 166, Price Rs. 22/-.

BHAJA GOVINDAM OF SRI SANKARACHARYA : BY SWAMI GURUDASANANDA, Published by Sri Janaky Matha Ashrama, 15 Ganapathy Nagar, Thanjavur-1, 1974, pp. 107, Price Rs. 3/-.

THE LITERARY CRITICISM OF SRI AUROBINDO : BY S. K. PRASAD, Published by Bharati Bhawan, Patna 800004, 1974, pp. 487, Price Rs. 65/-.

(1) TARABAI, (2) RANJIT SINGH, (2) RAM SHASTRI, (4) RANI OF JHANSI, (5) ULOOPI, (6) BAJIRAO-I, (7) CHAND BIBI,—Published by India Book House, Bombay, 26, (Date ?) pp. 32, Price, Rs. 2/- each.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME SERVICE—

VARANASI

REPORT FOR APRIL 1972 TO MARCH 1973

Started in 1900 by Swami Shubhananda, as the 'Poor Men's Relief Association' with a capital of four annas, given its present name by Swami Vivekananda and also blessed by the Holy Mother, the Home of Service has steadily grown with generous public support, till this year its expenditures for service to the poor approximated to Rs. 6,20,000. This service may be described under the following heads :

1. *Indoor General Hospital*: with 186 beds, treated 3049 cases in 1972.
2. *Outpatients' Department*: treated during 1972, 58,568 new patients, and there were 1,55,125 repeated cases (or re-visits). Average daily attendance was 674. These data include Homoeopathic section of the Home of Service plus a branch at Shivala. 6 Homoeopaths served the latter patients.

The Medical Staff (of Indoor and Outpatients combined) included twelve Honorary and/or Visiting Surgeons (two being Dental), one Resident Surgeon; eight Honorary and/or Visiting Physicians, two Resident Physicians; one Anesthetist; one Pathologist. A total of 13,524 surgical operations was done in 1972; the Laboratory and X-ray work was proportionately substantial.

3. *Invalids' Homes*: (a) For men (21 this year) mostly comprising retired monks of the Ramakrishna Order, who have served the Math and Mission for long years and wish to spend their last days in holy Varanasi. (b) For women: helpless poor widows, a total of 24 this year.

4. *Outdoor Relief to the Poor*: Monthly pecuniary help was given to 55 poor invalids and helpless ladies; occasional pecuniary help to 23 more. Total expenditure thus was Rs. 2,031.25. Besides, 57 cotton blankets, and old blankets and garments were given to 191 persons, though the limited funds made this seem inadequate.

5. *Library*: had 2,745 books and its reading room kept three dailies and 25 periodicals.

6. *Goshala (Dairy)*: Though an important asset to the Home, it is still relatively small; lack of funds prevented its being able to supply even half the requirements of the Hospital.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS :

- (a) To meet the accumulated overall Deficit of Rs 1,82,222/- which has mounted steeply in recent years, with rising prices in all fields.
- (b) Notable in the Deficit: that for the Invalids' Homes is Rs. 8,415.95: and here where every bit goes for the most sorely-needed services, the situation is critical.
- (c) Similarly Outdoor Relief to the Poor was, as mentioned, greatly restricted by small supply of funds.
- (d) The Dairy needs, if only to provide sufficient milk for the patients, at least 50,000 rupees, for purchase of cows and erecting of sheds.
- (e) Residential quarters for the growing Staff of Doctors, Nurses and assistants, will require Rs. 5,00,000/-.
- (f) Endowments: of the 186 Hospital beds, only a few have been endowed. The cost of each is Rs. 30,000; but permanent memorials may also be established by partial endowments of Rs. 10,000/- or 5,000/-.