



VOL. LXXX

MAY 1975

# Prabuddha Bharata

*OR*

**AWAKENED INDIA**



**ADVAITA ASHRAMA, MAYAVATI  
HIMALAYAS**





### Editorial Office

P.O. Mayavati, Via Lohaghat  
Dt. Pithoragarh 262-524, U.P.

### Publication Office

5 Dehi Entally Road  
Calcutta 700-014  
Phone: 44-2898



### Annual Subscription

India, Nepal & Bangladesh	Rs. 10.00
Sri Lanka	Rs. 12.00
U. S. A.	\$ 5.00
Other Countries	£ 1.20

### Life Subscription

Rs. 180    \$ 120    £ 24

### Single Copy

Rs. 1    40 cents    12 P.

Information for subscribers,  
contributors and publishers  
overleaf.

# Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE  
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

MAY 1975

## CONTENTS

Sri Ramakrishna Reminisces	...	...	201
Onward For Ever!	...	...	203
Swami Vivekananda and the Buddha—I — <i>Editorial</i>	...	...	203
Letters of a Saint	...	...	209
Swami Rama Tirtha: Man of Self-reliance and Universal Love— <i>Swami Rasajnananda</i>	...	...	211
Freud's Psychology of Religion: An Indian Analysis— <i>Dr. R. Puligandla</i>	...	...	218
Practice of Detachment — <i>Swami Budhananda</i>	...	...	227
Notes and Comments:			
In This Number	...	...	235
Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Passes Away	...	...	236
Reviews and Notices	...	...	237
News and Reports	...	...	240

Cover :

Kanchenjanga from Sandakphu

Photo: Bimal Dey



# Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXX

MAY 1975

No. 5

---

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

---

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA REMINISCES

‘A few days after my first experience of the God-intoxicated state at Dakshineswar, a lady of a brahmin family arrived there. She had many good traits. No sooner was a garland put round her neck and incense burnt before her than she went into samadhi. A few moments later she experienced great bliss ; tears streamed from her eyes. I saluted her and said, “Mother, shall I succeed ?” “Yes”, she replied.’

\*

‘Those who used to come here at that time had the idea of God kindled very soon in the company of “here” (i.e., himself). Two youths used to come from Baranagar ; they were low by birth ; may be Kaivarta or Tamli ; they were very good ; they had great love and reverence for “here” and used to come very often. One day I was sitting with them under the Panchavati when a certain state came on one of them. I saw that his breast grew red, eyes deep red ; streams of tears were rolling down ; he could neither speak nor stand ; he was just like one who had drunk two bottles of wine. That mood of his was in no way coming to an end. I was then afraid and said to the Mother, “What have You done to him, Mother ? People will say I have done something and brought about that condition in him. He has his father and others, he will have to go home just now.” I passed my hand over his chest while I was saying so to the Mother. He then became somewhat calm and went home a little afterwards.’

\*

‘More than twenty years ago two young men used to come here from Baranagore. One was named Govinda Pal and the other Gopal Sen. They had been devoted to God since boyhood. The very mention of marriage would frighten them. Gopal used to have bhava samadhi. He would shrink from worldly people, as a mouse from a cat. One day he saw the boys of the Tagore family strolling in the garden. He shut himself in the kuthi lest he should have to talk with them.

‘Gopal went into samadhi in the Panchavati. In that state he said to me, touching my feet: “Let me go. I cannot live in this world any more. You have a long time to wait. Let me go.” I said to him, in an ecstatic mood,

"You must come again." "Very well, I will", he said. A few days later Govinda came to me. "Where is Gopal?" I asked him. He said, "He has passed away."

\*

'Oh, what a state of mind I passed through! When I first had that experience, I could not perceive the coming and going of day or night. People said I was insane. What else could they say? They made me marry. I was then in a state of God-intoxication. At first I felt worried about my wife. Then I thought she too would eat and drink and live like me.

'I visited my father-in-law's house. They arranged a kirtan. It was a great religious festival, and there was much singing of God's holy name. Now and then I would wonder about my future. I would say to the Divine Mother, "Mother, I shall take my spiritual experiences to be real if the land-lords of the country show me respect." They too came out of their own accord and talked with me.

'Oh, what an ecstatic state it was! Even the slightest suggestion would awaken my spiritual consciousness. I worshipped the "Beautiful" in a girl fourteen years old. I saw that she was the personification of the Divine Mother. At the end of the worship I bowed before her and offered a rupee at her feet. One day I witnessed a Ramlila performance. I saw the performers to be the actual Sita, Rama, Lakshmana, Hanuman, and Vibhishana. Then I worshipped the actors and actresses who played those parts.

'At that time I used to invite maidens here and worship them. I found them to be embodiments of the Divine Mother Herself.

'One day I saw a woman in blue standing near the bakul-tree. She was a prostitute. But she instantly kindled in me the vision of Sita. I forgot the woman. I saw that it was Sita herself on her way to meet Rama after her rescue from Ravana in Ceylon. For a long time I remained in samadhi, unconscious of the outer world.

'Another day I had gone to the Maidan in Calcutta for fresh air. A great crowd had assembled there to watch a balloon ascension. Suddenly I saw an English boy leaning against a tree. As he stood there his body was bent in three places. The vision of Krishna came before me in a flash. I went into samadhi.

'Once, at Sihore, I fed the cowherd boys. I put sweetmeats into their hands. I saw that these boys were actually the cowherd boys of Vrindavan, and I partook of the sweetmeats from their hands.'



## ONWARD FOR EVER!

*Religion is realization, and you must make the sharpest distinction between talk and realization. What you perceive in your soul is realization. Man has no idea of the Spirit, he has to think of it with the forms he has before him. He has to think of the blue skies, or the expansive fields, or the sea, or something huge. How else can you think of God? So what are you doing in reality? You are talking of omnipresence, and thinking of the sea. Is God the sea? A little more common sense is required. Nothing is so uncommon as common sense, the world is too full of talk. Truce to all this frothy argument of the world. We are by our present constitution limited and bound to see God as man. If the buffaloes want to worship God, they will see Him as a huge buffalo. If a fish wants to worship God, it will have to think of Him as a big fish. You and I, the buffalo, the fish, each represents so many different vessels. All these go to the sea to be filled with water according to the shape of each vessel. In each of these vessels is nothing but water. So with God. When men see Him, they see Him as man, and the animals as animal—each according to his ideal. That is the only way you can see Him; you have to worship Him as man, because there is no other way out of it.*



## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE BUDDHA—I

### EDITORIAL

### VIVEKANANDA'S REVERENCE FOR THE BUDDHA—ITS BASIS

More than twenty-four centuries separated Swami Vivekananda from Gautama Buddha. Yet, to the readers of Swamiji's biography and published works, the similarities between their lives and the impact and influence of the Buddha on Vivekananda cannot but be obvious. Even on the physical level there seemed to exist in Swamiji a most remarkable resemblance to the profile of the meditative Buddha. Many who saw him in the flesh, both in the East and West, noticed that his 'physiognomy bore the most striking resemblance to the classic face of the Buddha'. The Buddha was a monk and a great religious prophet; and so also was Swamiji. A broad compassionate heart that embraced all beings distinguished the Buddha from most other prophets; Swamiji too possessed a heart, broad as the sky, which bled in sympathy for the poor and miserable of all races and countries. Swamiji's veneration for the Buddha was almost as great as his veneration for Sri Ramakrishna, his illustrious Master, in whom he had witnessed a re-incarnation of the Buddha's spirit of renunciation, compassion, and super-conscious wisdom. Sister Nivedita records an incident which reflects to a great extent the deep reverence that Swamiji had for the Buddha:

"That was a great hour indeed, when he spoke of Buddha, for, catching a word that seemed to identify him with its anti-Brahminical spirit, an uncomprehending listener said, "Why, Swami, I did not know that you were a Buddhist!" "Madam," he said rounding on her, his whole face aglow with the inspiration of that name, "I am the servant of the servants of the servants of Buddha . . . . Who was there ever like Him—the Lord—who never performed



one action for Himself? With a heart that embraced the whole world ... so full of pity that He—prince and monk—would give his life to save a little goat? So loving that He sacrificed Himself to the hunger of a tigress? To the hospitality of a pariah? And blessed him?...<sup>1</sup>

Reading this, some people may wonder how it was ever possible for Swamiji, coming after nearly twenty-four centuries after the Buddha, to regard the latter with such an awe-inspiring devotion and reverence. For such people, the key to understanding this phenomenal devotion may lie in recognizing the fact that Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji were themselves such prophet-souls who come to this earth once in many hundreds of years. And such great ones embody the spirit and soul-power of the preceding prophets. Swamiji often said that the same Divine Being who came to this earth as Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, came in the form of the Buddha; and that very Being has once again manifested Itself in the present age in the form of Sri Ramakrishna. As readers of the lives of the Great Master and his Chief Disciple know, Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji were inseparable in spirit. In Sri Ramakrishna, all the previous great spiritual personalities became living, as it were, once again, and that prophetic spirit was transmitted to Swamiji. Thus for these spiritual giants time and space ceased to be barriers. And there is no wonder that Swamiji felt so much drawn, so much near to the great Buddha.

Undoubtedly, the Buddha-spirit manifest in Sri Ramakrishna's life had made the Enlightened One very living to Swamiji. Added to this there were his own visions and realizations concerning the Buddha, but of these only very little is known. As for

example, the vision of a serene-looking monk once in his student days. He later identified this monk as the Buddha. Sister Nivedita has described the vision thus:

'It was in the days of his discipleship at Dakshineswar, when he was quite young. As he sat meditating at home in the little room that formed his study, suddenly there appeared before him a man tall and largely built, in whose face was a calm so deep and so established that it seemed to the lad, looking up at him, as if both pain and pleasure had been forgotten during infinite time. The devotee, after rising from his seat and prostrating himself before his visitant, stood still, lost in awe-struck wonder. It seemed as if the form before him was about to speak, but a fit of terror overcame the boy, and without waiting to hear, he slipped quietly from the room, closing the door behind him! This was the vision to which he often referred when he said Buddha entered his room, in his youth. "And I fell at His feet, for I knew it was the Lord Himself."'

It is well known that Swamiji visited Bodh-Gaya, the place where the Buddha attained enlightenment, in April 1886 with two of his brother disciples and meditated for long hours under the sacred Bodhi-tree. Once during his meditation there he had a deep mystical experience which had so overwhelmed him that, weeping profusely, he had embraced one of the brother disciples seated near him. 'Explaining the incident, he said afterwards that during the meditation he keenly felt the presence of Buddha and saw vividly how the history of India had been changed by his noble teachings; pondering all this he could not control his emotion.'<sup>2</sup> It is indeed significant that the last journey he ever made out of the Belur Math took him to Bodh-Gaya. This journey also included a visit to Varanasi.

<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* (Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 5 Nivedita Lane, Calcutta 3, 1967), p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> Swami Nikhilananda: *Vivekananda: A Biography* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Dt. Pithoragarh, U.P., 1964), pp. 62-3.



Swamiji once described himself as 'I am condensed India'. No one can pretend to know the implications of this aphoristic declaration. It is no doubt true that the Indian racial unconscious had become vividly conscious in Swamiji. For him every bit of Indian history from its Vedic and pre-Vedic past had its own flesh-and-blood reality. This living sense of national history in him will be apparent to anyone who reads his writings on this theme. Since the rise and fall of Buddhism spanned many centuries and left an indelible impress on Indian history, the history of Buddhist India was a subject of endless interest for him. Historicity, Swamiji used to say, was denied to most of the ancient prophets except the Buddha and Mohammed.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the interest in Buddhism stirred in the whole country by the restoration of the holy shrine of Bodh-Gaya and the share taken in this work by Rajendra Lal Mitra, the Bengali scholar, during the formative years of Swamiji's life must have made a lasting impression on him. Also, his interest in the Buddha and his faith naturally took him through a course of intense study of original Buddhist writings. Besides it is reported that, at some time during his wandering days in India, he had the opportunity to touch the relics of the Buddha. 'And he was never afterwards able to refer to this, without some return of that passion of reverence and certitude which must then have overwhelmed him.'<sup>4</sup>

Over and above all these, let us remind ourselves, it was Sri Ramakrishna who made the Buddha a living, vibrant reality to Swamiji—Sri Ramakrishna who was the 'fulfilment of Indian sages', who had in himself 'the intellect of Sankara with the heart of the Buddha'. As Sister Nivedita

rightly observed, 'In Buddha, he saw Ramakrishna Paramahansa: in Ramakrishna, he saw Buddha.'<sup>5</sup>

#### SPIRITUAL CONQUEST OF THE BUDDHA AND VIVEKANANDA

From beginning to end, the Buddha's life is highly fascinating. There is in it a spiritual epic intensity which the lapse of nearly two and a half millenniums has not robbed. To Swamiji the entire life of the Buddha was an enduring fascination—his birth and royal upbringing, marriage and life in the palace, the great renunciation and supreme spiritual struggles, illumination and preaching, and finally the passing away. In his lectures and conversations, letters and other writings, the topic of the Buddha figured frequently. That he was oftentimes mistaken in the West for a Buddhist monk and preacher is thus not at all a matter for surprise.

After the Buddha's birth, the court astrologers had made a forecast that he might either conquer the whole land and become an emperor, or renounce everything and become a monk and a great religious leader. His father began to take steps to prevent the second possibility. Till the great renunciation, he had high hopes that his son would soon become a world-conqueror and an emperor. The Buddha's renunciation of wealth and luxury, his youthful wife and new-born son, and the future life of conquests and power for the sole purpose of finding a solution to the problem of worldly misery stirred Swamiji intensely. This great renunciation of the Buddha, the uncommon determination and struggles to achieve success in his quest, his resistance of Mara, the Tempter, remained Swamiji's ideals on the spiritual path. Warning spiritual aspirants against compromising with and yielding to sense-attractions and citing

<sup>3</sup> Nivedita, op. cit., p. 171.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>5</sup> *loc. cit.*



the Buddha's instance, Swamiji once said in the course of a lecture:

'He alone can be religious who dares say, as the mighty Buddha once said under the Bo-tree, when this idea of practicality appeared before him and he saw that it was nonsense, and yet could not find a way out. When the temptation came to him to give up his search after truth, to go back to the world and live the old life of fraud, calling things by wrong names, telling lies to oneself and to everybody, he, the giant, conquered it and said, "Death is better than a vegetating ignorant life; it is better to die on the battlefield than to live a life of defeat." This is the basis of religion. When a man takes this stand, he is on the way to find the truth, he is on the way to God. That determination must be the first impulse towards becoming religious. I will hew out a way for myself. I will know the truth or give up my life in the attempt.'<sup>6</sup>

Swamiji's life seems to parallel the Buddha's in many respects in the course it took towards renunciation and realization of truth. Swamiji too had open before him the two prospects, of worldly wealth, enjoyment, fame and success on the one hand, and renunciation, self-conquest, spiritual realization, bliss and independence on the other. Worldly temptations like wealthy matrimonial connections and studies in foreign universities tried to waylay him. But Swamiji's power of discrimination and strong determination to realize truth repulsed these onslaughts of the Tempter. Moreover he had before him the blazing example of dispassion and God-consciousness in his own Master, Sri Ramakrishna. Thus his onward march towards illumination became an inner battle-ground between the forces of temptations and spiritual discrimination and determination—as in the case of the

Buddha—in which the final victory belonged to the spiritual forces.

The days of spiritual struggle lived by Swamiji and his brothers at the Baranagore monastery, after the passing of the Master, correspond to the Buddha's struggle for illumination at Uruvela and other places. There were occasions when a sort of spiritual despair would cast its shadow on some brothers and they would begin to wonder aloud if these struggles and self-denials were worth it all. At those times it was Swamiji who, Buddha-like, stoked their spiritual fires with words of flaming discrimination and determination:

'What! Even if we do not see God, shall we return to the life of the senses? Shall we degrade our higher natures?'

'.... I am dissatisfied with everything. Everything, even talking to devotees has become distasteful to me. It seems that there is no such thing as God. Let me starve to death if I cannot realize the Truth.'<sup>7</sup>

Rightly do his biographers remark that 'To the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda the word "Baranagore" is synonymous with "Spiritual-Sadhana"'. Thus the struggle of Swamiji which could not be thwarted by any worldly temptation went on unabated till it attained its culmination in the realization of Brahman.

#### BUDDHA-HEART OF VIVEKANANDA

Swamiji used often to praise the Buddha in the highest terms. 'The greatest soul-power that has ever manifested', 'the greatest soul that ever wore a human form', 'the greatest, the boldest preacher of morality that the world ever saw', 'the greatest preacher of equality', 'the greatest Hindu

<sup>6</sup> *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama), Vol. II (1963), p. 124.

<sup>7</sup> His Eastern and Western Disciples: *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Advaita Ashrama, 1949), p. 167.



ever born<sup>8</sup>—these are only a handful of the expressions that Swamiji has used in describing the Buddha. And the Enlightened One richly deserves them. To Swamiji, the extreme unselfishness and self-denying compassion of the Buddha seems to have appealed the most. The Buddha was entirely free from all motives. His renunciation, his intense struggles, his enlightenment and teaching—all were for bringing relief to miserable humanity. His compassion did not stop with humanity; it embraced the whole kingdom of living beings. He was born 'for the good of the many, as a blessing to the many'. Mara, the Tempter, had pursued the Buddha from the moment he had left his palace-gates and through all the stages of spiritual striving. He had made the heaviest assault on the Buddha before the final enlightenment. But the unsuccessful Mara had still held back what he thought was the ultimate, infallible missile. When the Buddha had attained the illumination of Nirvana, Mara hailed him as a victor, and told him that he should forthwith enter the infinite kingdom of joy and light. But before the mighty flood of the Buddha's compassion, Mara's last missile proved an utter failure. 'I shall not enter Nirvana, thou wicked one,' replied the Buddha serenely, 'until the life of holiness which I point out, has been successful, grown in favour, and extended among all mankind, and is in vogue and thoroughly known to all men.' Only the supreme compassion of the Buddha could have conquered so subtle a temptation. Swamiji admired most this quality in the Buddha as is evident from many of his utterances. Only two instances we give here. He once said in a lecture:

'I would like to see moral men like

Gautama Buddha, who did not believe in a Personal God or a personal soul, never asked about them, but was a perfect agnostic, and yet was ready to lay down his life for any one, and worked all his life for the good of all, and thought only of the good of all. ... He did not go to the forest to meditate for his own salvation; he felt that the world was burning, and that he must find a way out. "Why is there so much misery in the world?"—was the one question that dominated his whole life.'<sup>9</sup>

Once while talking to a small group of western disciples, Swamiji said:

'But Buddha! Buddha! Surely he was the greatest man who ever lived. He never drew a breath for himself. Above all, he never claimed worship. He said, "Buddha is not a man but a state. I have found the door. Enter, all of you"!

'He went to the feast of Ambapali, "the sinner". He dined with the pariah, though he knew it would kill him, and sent a message to his host on his death-bed, thanking him for the great deliverance. Full of love and pity for a little goat, even before he had attained the truth! You remember how he offered his own head, that of prince and monk, if only the king would spare the kid that he was about to sacrifice and how the king was struck by his compassion, that he saved its life? Such a mixture of rationalism and feeling was never seen! Surely, Surely, there was none like him!'<sup>10</sup>

It should be interesting to recall here one small but important detail of the ceremony in which Margaret Noble, Swamiji's Irish disciple, was initiated into the vows of *brahmacarya* and given the name of Nivedita, 'One who is dedicated'. She was taught the mode of Śiva-worship, and then at the end of the consecration ceremony was asked to offer flowers at the feet of the

<sup>8</sup> *The Works*: Vol. I (1962), p. 117; IV (1962), p. 326; III (1960), p. 262; VIII (1959), p. 98; VIII, p. 184.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 352.

<sup>10</sup> Nivedita, *op. cit.*, p. 339.



Buddha. 'Go thou,' he had said to her, 'and follow Him who was born and gave His life for others *five hundred times*, before he attained the vision of the Buddha!' Nivedita remarks that these words were spoken as if Swamiji was addressing 'in one person each separate soul that would ever come to him for guidance'.<sup>11</sup> Such indeed was the depth of Swamiji's reverential devotion to the Buddha who was an embodiment of unselfishness and all-giving compassion.

In his own great Master's life Swamiji had witnessed with unending amazement these Buddha-like qualities of extreme unselfishness and reckless compassion. Sri Ramakrishna was ever eager and ready to help all those who came to him sincerely seeking his guidance. Even during the terminal stages of his throat cancer, when he could hardly eat or speak, he did not turn away any earnest seekers. His intimate disciples, anxious to prolong their Master's earthly life, would expostulate with him. But Sri Ramakrishna would reply: 'I do not care. I will give up twenty thousand such bodies to help one man. It is glorious to help even one man.'<sup>12</sup>

Sri Ramakrishna in his turn had noticed from almost the first time he met Swamiji that the latter possessed a broad, soft heart, full of sympathy and mercy. He declared that Swamiji was born with the special mission of rescuing humanity from ignorance and misery. And to this end he began to guide and train Vivekananda. In him, Sri Ramakrishna would consider even the aspiration for *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, the highest state of spiritual communion, as petty-mindedness! For Swamiji there was a still higher goal: seeing God in all beings and ministering to them lovingly, unselfishly. Though Swamiji then strongly protested to

Sri Ramakrishna that his goal was uninterrupted absorption in the bliss of *samādhi*, yet in later life he confessed that Sri Ramakrishna knew better, and the ideal shown by him was the highest. 'For one's own salvation and for the good of the world'—the motto chosen by Swamiji for the Ramakrishna Mission he had founded seems to reveal the Vedāntic orientation that he gave to the Buddha's exhortation to his monks to go into the wide world 'for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many'. It was Swamiji's Buddha-like merciful heart that brought into being the 'service of God in man' programme of the Ramakrishna Mission. Of course, the inspiration and insight of his Master, which only Swamiji comprehended, gave the original impetus to this idea.

Numerous utterances of his and numberless incidents of his life reveal Swamiji's unbounded, self-sacrificing love and compassion for all beings, for his fellow-men especially. We will however cite here only a couple of examples.

In one of his fieriest of letters ever written to anyone, he declares:

'... and may I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls—and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.'<sup>13</sup>

Soon after his arrival in the U.S.A. and even before he appeared at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, he had written thus to a disciple in Madras:

'Feel for the miserable and look up for help—it *shall come*. I have travelled twelve years with this load in my heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from door to door of the so-called rich and great. With a bleeding heart I have crossed

<sup>11</sup> *The Life*, p. 559.

<sup>12</sup> *The Works*, Vol. IV, p. 185.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. V (1959), p. 136.



half the world to this strange land, seeking for help. The Lord is great. I know he will help me. I may perish of cold or hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.' <sup>14</sup>

A divinely touching incident—which somewhat parallels the Buddha-Ambapali episode—is narrated by Madame Emma Calvé, the great French operatic soprano, who had travelled with Swamiji in the Middle Eastern countries in the autumn of 1900. She writes in her reminiscences of Swamiji:

'One day we lost our way in Cairo. I suppose we had been talking too intently. At any rate, we found ourselves in a squalid, ill-smelling street, where half-clad women lolled from windows and sprawled on doorsteps.

'The Swami noticed nothing until a particularly noisy group of women on a bench in the shadow of a dilapidated building began laughing and calling to

him. One of the ladies of our party tried to hurry us along but the Swami detached himself gently from our group and approached the women on the bench.

'“Poor children!” he said. “Poor creatures! They have put their divinity in their beauty. Look at them now!”

'He began to weep. The women were silenced and abashed. One of them leaned forward and kissed the hem of the robe, murmuring brokenly in Spanish, “*Humbre de Dios, humbre de Dios!*” (Man of God!) Another with a sudden gesture of modesty and fear, threw her arm in front of her face as though she would screen her shrinking soul from those pure eyes.' <sup>15</sup>

That unfortunate woman, whose noble nature was awakened by the very sight of Swamiji, might as well have exclaimed, 'Here comes the Buddha, the Compassionate One!'

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda* (Advaita Ashrama, 1964), p. 267.

## LETTERS OF A SAINT

The Ramakrishna Cottage  
Almora  
7-10-16.

My dear Doctor,<sup>1</sup>

Just now your very kind letter of the 2nd inst. is to hand. I have been thinking so much about you these days. I am very sorry that you too fell ill and are suffering still. Inscrutable are the ways of Providence. But He is

<sup>1</sup> A medical doctor D'Mello, an Indian doctor who was later temporarily employed in Rangoon. He certainly met the Swami once at least, and as we shall see, also came later to Mayavati and spent seven or eight weeks in June and July of 1919. Obviously the Swami was fond of him because the Doctor seems to have possessed sincere spiritual aspiration. These two letters and some twenty others—not originals but legible copies—came into our possession years ago and have not been so far published. Though we are unable to trace the originals, it will be evident to anyone reading these that they are genuine—the power and spiritual contents are characteristically profound.  
—Ed.



good and kind to us we must have to admit that. May we not lose faith in His dispensation, no matter how we are situated. Let us not think selfishly, but be satisfied with His ordainings knowing full well that whatever He does, it is all for our good only. For in that thought we shall have peace of mind at least.

I feel very very sorry for your father. Of course you are doing everything to bring him round, and that is not a little consolation for him. May he recover from his malady soon. I shall wait anxiously to hear about your own well-being as early as possible....

I shall be very happy to see you at Almora when you come after seeing your father well. I am so thankful to Mother for giving you such nice faith in Her even at such hours of travail and trial as you are undergoing just now. Your present attitude of mind is very favourable for spiritual advancement indeed. You need not try to make yourself free by taking to means that is not fair. It is the will of the Mother you shall feel free even where you are now situated without having to stir a little for further efforts. Stick to your present resigned attitude tenaciously....

Hoping this will find you hale and hearty. With best wishes and love,

Yours affectionately

TURIYANANDA

---

The Ramakrishna Cottage  
Almora  
23-10-16

My dear Doctor,

I have been very glad to get your letter dated 18.10.16 and to learn therefrom that your father had been feeling better. May he recover soon his power of speech and his former health by the grace of the Mother.... I am really very sorry to understand that you are troubled again with the idea of possessing woman. I hope it has come to take leave of you for ever, never to return again. You have discrimination enough to guide you aright. Besides I feel sure Mother will take care of you, and not allow you to go astray. I have been very much pleased to read the soliloquy to Mother in your letter. That hinted to me that Mother is not unmindful about you. If you can talk this way to Mother within you with earnestness and sincerity She will not let go of you so easily, but will hold you in check. Who is this Sadhu Siddharudha<sup>1</sup> you mention in your letter? Is he a Buddhist monk or a Hindu Sannyasin? What he spoke to you in advice is very nice, full of reason and truth. But Mother will not allow you to take sannyas [monastic vows] to disgrace it. If once you could give up the idea of sex entirely, and could not find the trace of it in your heart of which you are quite conscious, be sure you will have that state of mind again if you try to bring it back in right earnest; anyhow never

---

<sup>1</sup> A renowned Hindu saint, who lived near Hubli, in Karnataka, South India.



yield but hold on to your ideal of sannyas. For once you give in there will be no chance for you again to take your stand.

*Khīr*<sup>2</sup> is one thing and woman is quite another. Don't believe in the theory of quenching lust by giving vent to it. Practise self-control as much as possible, and pray with all sincerity to Mother for further help. Take heart and the help is sure to come. May Mother give you full strength to conquer the beast in you completely.

I shall be very glad to learn that you have secured some position for yourself. Of course it would give me great pleasure to see you here. But you can come after securing a post, no doubt. I do not know yet for certain if I will go to the plains during the cold weather. I am doing pretty well.

Hoping you are hale and hearty, with my best wishes as ever,

Yours in the Lord,  
TURIYANANDA

---

<sup>2</sup> Condensed or thickened milk. Sometimes it also means milk pudding.

---

## SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA: MAN OF SELF-RELIANCE AND UNIVERSAL LOVE

SWAMI RASAJNANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

### PREACHING COMMENCES

The Self having been realized, Swami Rama Tirtha's heart was filled with overflowing joy and love. He now hankered for sharing the fruit of his spiritual striving with the world. Before actually undertaking his preaching work, he felt a keen desire to wander in the Himalayas. On 16 August 1901 he started on his Himalayan wanderings accompanied by two of his followers, Narayana and Lala Tula Ram. (Both of them later on took to monastic life.) They visited Jamnotri, Gangotri, Trijugi Narayan, Kedarnath, Badrinath, etc. For a month or so they lived at Jamnotri, and also climbed Sumeru—of which we find

brilliant descriptions in Swami Rama's 'Himalayan Letters'.<sup>22</sup>

'Filled with the Divine fire,' Rama Tirtha had written about the inner urge he had felt to share his wisdom with all, 'I have to preach—boldly, fearlessly, even in the face of all sorts of persecution and opposition—what I am realizing here (in the Himalayas)'.<sup>23</sup> His first descent into the plains below took place in December 1901 in response to an invitation to preside over a Dharma Mahotsava (religious celebrations) in Mathura. Holding the audience spellbound, his presidential address point-

---

<sup>22</sup> S. R. Sharma, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> Puran Singh, op. cit., n. 213

ed out that better days were ahead for the country and that religion ought to be studied scientifically. It proved to be the inauguration of his preaching activity in India and abroad. The essence of his teaching was: (1) renunciation of body-consciousness (or ego); (2) realization of self to be the Self of the universe; (3) doing good to the world; and (4) working for work's sake. It was a practical religion that he disseminated. He said:

'Rama brings to you a religion which is not only found in the Bible, and in the most ancient Scriptures but also in the latest works on Philosophy and Science. Rama brings to you a religion which is found in the streets, which is written upon the leaves, which is murmured by the brooks, which is whispered in the winds, which is throbbing in your own veins and arteries; a religion which concerns your business and bosom; a religion which you have not to practise by going into a particular church only; a religion which you have to live in your everyday life, in your hearth, in your dining room, everywhere you have to live that religion. The term Vedanta simply means the fundamental Truth. The Truth is your own. Vedanta is the fulfilment of all religions. It is not in contradiction with any religion in this world.'<sup>24</sup>

From Mathura he returned to the Himalayas and was living in the neighbourhood of Tehri Garhwal 'in the wild, unrestrained joys of Vedantic consciousness'. Many times people used to find him semi-conscious with joy, having laid himself down unnoticed in a neglected cave for days without food or drink.

In 1902, the Raja of Tehri, a devotee of his, brought the news that a Parliament of Religions—similar to the one held in 1893

in Chicago and addressed by Swami Vivekananda among others—was to be convened shortly in Tokyo and persuaded him to set out at once so that he could attend it on time. He got ready, letting no grass grow under his feet, and in a week's time was on board the steamer bound for Japan. Hindu merchants greeted him at the intervening ports. In Japan he stayed at Yokohama for a day and arrived at Tokyo the next day. When he found that the information obtained by the Raja had been incorrect and that there would be no such Parliament, he only heartily laughed and said: 'With what a beautiful trick, Nature has led Rama out into the world from his lonely Himalayan resort. How a false piece of news becomes so fertile!' He meant thereby that Nature's trick could hardly cause him disappointment; on the other hand, he turned the tables on her by waging war on her insidious ways of blinding man to his own spiritual majesty and by utilizing the voyage for the propagation of Vedānta beyond the shores of India after the manner of Swami Vivekananda.

#### IN JAPAN

In Japan, Swami Rama Tirtha's preaching work seems to have commenced with an address to a large audience of Buddhists and Theosophists at the Buddhist university in Tokyo in the year 1902. He 'spoke shedding, as it were, sparks of fire'. During his stay for about a fortnight in Tokyo, people gathered round him every evening and listened with rapt attention. In this connection, the opinion of Professor Takakutsu, the great Orientalist and the Sanskrit Professor of Tokyo Imperial University, who had a meeting with him, is worth quoting: 'I have met many Pandits and Philosophers at the house of Professor Max Müller in England and other places, but I have never seen a personality like

<sup>24</sup> 'Thus Spake Rama Tirtha', *Swami Rama Tirtha Centenary Celebrations Souvenir* (Swami Rama Tirtha Memorial Society, New Delhi, 1973), p. 87.



Swami Rama, who is so living and so significant an illustration of his whole philosophy. But in him Vedanta and Buddhism meet. He is true religion. He is a true poet and philosopher.<sup>25</sup> Swami Rama Tirtha's lecture on 'The Secret of Success' delivered in the Tokyo College of Commerce is an edifying one, 'which he was fond of repeating everywhere in his scheme of making good citizens in this world'.<sup>26</sup> Its content in his own words is:

- (1) Principle of Success: Work, work, incessant work is the first principle of success. 'From good to better daily self-surpassed'. If you work on this principle, you will see that it is as easy to be great as to be small.
- (2) Self-sacrifice: A seed in order that it may sprout forth into a tree must itself perish. Fruition is thus the final result of complete self-sacrifice.
- (3) Self-forgetfulness: Forget your little self in work and entirely throw yourself into it; you will succeed.
- (4) Universal Love: Be love and you are successful. A merchant who does not look upon his customer's interests as his own, cannot succeed. In order to prosper he must love his customers.
- (5) Cheerfulness: Work for work's sake. Work is its own reward. Without dejection for the past and without anxiety for the future—work, work, work in the living present. This spirit will keep you cheerful under all circumstances.
- (6) Fearlessness: Despair is weakness, avoid it. The whole of strength comes from fearlessness.
- (7) Self-reliance: If anybody asks me to give my philosophy in one word, I would say 'Self-reliance' the knowledge of self. Know thyself. True, literally true it is when you help yourself, God must help you. It can be proved, it can be realized that your very Self is God—the Infinite, the Omnipotent. Here is a reality, a truth, waiting to be verified by experiment.

Verily, verily, depend upon yourself and you can achieve anything. Nothing is impossible before you. Man is the master of his own destiny.<sup>27</sup>

#### IN AMERICA

Swami Rama Tirtha sailed for America from Japan. His itineracy was longer and more extensive in the former than in the latter. Portland, Denver, Chicago, Minneapolis, and St. Louis were among a large number of places he visited in about a couple of years. Living a simple, austere, and hard-working life and radiating peace and joy wherever he went, he spread Vedānta by his illuminating lectures and inspiring talks and by his own personal example. As evidence of keeping up the spirit of renunciation in America may be cited his flinging into the sea a local newspaper that published laudatory comments on his lectures. 'A soul that has completed its relation to the body' and 'the messenger full of joy' was how an American described him. While appreciating America's greatness and successes, he made no bones about his disapproval of her shortcomings. The malaise—the inner tension—of the Americans was discernible when an actress loaded with pearls and jewels and heavily perfumed, met him and 'fell on the floor weeping: "Swami, I am miserable! make me happy. Look not to my pearls, nor to my smiles—they are my outward habits of which, I, my me, my I, is sick."' Rama comforted her. Her confession appeared to Rama to be the confession of Western civilisation itself....<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, rich as India was in her possession of the priceless jewel, the Vedānta, she was deficient at the physical and socio-economic levels. Therefore what he aimed at was an exchange of India's philosophy

<sup>25</sup> Puran Singh, op. cit., p. 127.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 130-8.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 143.



and America's science and technological know-how, as also her social justice and freedom. This was in keeping with his philosophy. 'I see fractions of men,' he said, 'not men. I wish men were whole. Wholeness is holiness.'<sup>29</sup> He held that 'Vedanta is the whole Truth, it kills if the whole of it is not lived.'<sup>30</sup> If America was Vedāntic, it was on the physical plane; she needed to be equally so on the mental and spiritual planes also. Hence he set himself to the task of offering the nourishing and encouraging nectar of Vedānta.

A preacher *par excellence*, Swami Rama Tirtha would address the audience as 'My Own Self in the Form of Ladies and Gentlemen'. This was not just a rhetoric designed to impress or, far less, confuse others, but an outpouring of the heart. He meant it, he felt it, he had realized it. He saw all as his own Self. To him there was no high or low, neither animate nor inanimate, but one all-pervading Divinity. He was never tired of impressing upon the audience:

'Truth is with you already, it is your Self already. You are in it already, nay, you are Truth. You are that.... Your realization of God-consciousness, realization of Divinity is not a thing to be accomplished,... You are that already. You have simply to break through the cocoons of desires which imprison you, you have simply to undo what you have done.... Simply undo what you have done in the way of making your prison house, and there you are God already,...'<sup>31</sup>

It was 'not Hinduism, Mohammedanism, Christianity, Catholicism, or Protestantism' that he diffused but what he called 'The common Path' for men, women, and children without distinction of class, colour, or

creed. Here is an extract from a discourse of his, serving as a specimen:

'This is the highest truth: that you are divinity, you are the Lord of lords, feel that, realize that; and nothing can harm you, nothing can injure you, you are the Lord of lords. The world is my idea, I am the Lord of lords. There is the truth. If you are not accustomed to hear such things, be not afraid. What if your parents did not believe in that? Your parents did their best, you ought to do your best. Your salvation is not your parents' business. Your salvation is your own business. Do not consider this Vedanta as foreign to you. No, it is natural to you. Is your own Atman foreign to you? Vedanta simply tells you about your own Atman and Self. It would be foreign, if your own Self were foreign to you. All pain—bodily, mental, moral, and spiritual—is stopped immediately by realizing Vedanta, and realization is not a hard business.'<sup>32</sup>

In this simple but sublime vein of awakening the Divinity which is common to all did he talk and his philosophy was likened by *The Rocky Mountain News* of Denver to a great blanket large enough to cover every human creed and leave room for many more to creep beneath its warmth. That he dealt with manifold aspects of Vedānta is manifest from the following summary of his teachings in America: (1) Man is divine (2) The world is bound to co-work with one who feels himself one with the whole world. (3) Keeping the body in active struggle and the mind in rest and love, means salvation from sin and sorrow right here in this life. (4) Active realization of At-one-ment with the All allows us a life of 'balanced recklessness'. (5) The sacred scriptures of the world should be taken in the same spirit as we study chemistry, holding our own experience for

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. x.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>31</sup> *The Complete Works*, Vol. II, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, Part VI, pp. 288-9.



ultimate authority.<sup>33</sup> It was in America that he drew parallels between Vedānta and Socialism.

### AS A PATRIOT

The object of Swami Rama Tirtha's visit to America was not only to preach Vedānta, but also to interest Americans in the cause of India. Conscious of the backward condition of his country, he had the insight to realize that India had much to learn from 'The Young Giant of the West' that America was. It was his plan to bring Indian students to American colleges 'where they may imbibe not only learning, but American push, and independence and the spirit of American freedom that they in turn may return to their own land' and engage themselves in the work of social reform such as removal of inequality, caste distinctions and illiteracy. He made a strong 'Appeal to Americans' on behalf of India in the name of truth and justice, in the name of humanity and American freedom, not as a beggar for foreign aid but as a brother bringing home to them with clear evidence the world's debt to India—the country which had nourished the whole world in the past and by feeding on which, nation after nation had become prosperous. One way the Americans could serve India and consequently the world was 'by combining your (Americans') practical energies with the spiritual vigour of Vedānta and carrying this complete culture to India'. He suggested that they could bring Indian graduates to America and educate them so that these people on their return to India might start business, work—useful for themselves as well as for the poorest classes. There were ways open for all to work for India—some with pen, some with speech (talk to their friends and make speeches on the subject),

some with manual labour, and some others with money. The heroes among them should step forward as teachers to go to India and work among the people, among even the low caste pariahs. He ended his appeal thus:

'God comes to you hungry in the bodies of Indians, feed Him ; ... Those people are ... suffering in order that you may be blessed with the noble virtues of charity and love. They are fallen in order that you may be saved. Thank your stars that you have got an occasion for exercising your higher feelings and noble endeavours.... O America, here are the Hindus, your own flesh and blood, Aryans, most grateful, affectionate, faithful ; neglect them not.'<sup>34</sup>

The appeal was widely circulated: a copy was personally presented to President Roosevelt by the Swami.

### CALL TO THE INDIAN YOUTH

To the Indians—youths especially—themselves, then, what was his message? This is contained particularly in a paper he sent to the Young Men's Indian Association, Lahore. It may be summarized in his own words as follows:

Why has the spirit of union and harmony been so conspicuous by its singular absence in India so long? The main causes are: (a) Poverty of practical wisdom, and (b) Plenty of population. We shall discuss them in order. (a) Poverty of practical wisdom: Promising youths! India's future is your future and you are responsible for it. Strong and pure life is the lever of History. Work on, work on. Mould and adapt the past to the present and boldly launch your pure and strong present in the face of the future. All the future is yours, if only you do not swerve from the path of truth. Aspirers after National Unity, *you have first to free the nation*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. vi.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, Part VII, pp. 464-5.



of numerous inhuman errors. Lack of practical wisdom comprehends all the social evils like contempt of manual labour, unnatural divisions and sub-divisions on caste and creed lines, unhealthy social customs and usages, and the backwardness and neglect of women. A country is strengthened not by great men with small views, but small men with great views. (b) We come now to the population question. In the decline and fall of Rome, Greece, or any country, at bottom lay this population question. We have to solve the riddle of this sphinx or we die. Herbert Spencer, in his *Principles of Biology*, shows that fertility must diminish along with high mental development. According to our own Sāstras [scriptures] that are never tired of praising the virtues of *brahmacharya* [chastity], there is no strength, spiritual or physical, except in purity. You have to acquire control over the sex-impulses. The fool who cannot control the animal passion and trifles with the most serious relation in nature, the sex relation, knows not that he is *literally* spilling his own blood—his own white blood that constitutes his vitality. Purity! Purity! Let it be hard or easy, you have to acquire it for the sake of India, for your bodies' sake, for your brains' sake, for religion's sake. No heroism without purity, no union without purity, no peace without purity. Education: The vital energy which is now being recklessly wasted in degrading deeds and no-deeds, utilize it in endeavouring to elevate the women, to educate the masses, to uplift yourselves and to raise the nation. To educate women and the poor is a paramount duty. But forget not that there is also a more direct and even more imperative work for you, namely, to acquire agricultural arts and industries in more advanced countries and spread broadcast that useful knowledge in India. Religion: The spirit of all successful movement is living faith and flaming *jñānam*. 'Religious experiences are as convincing as any direct sensible experience can be, and they are as a rule

much more convincing than results established by logic ever are.'—Prof. James. To live at a deeper level of your nature than the loquacious level, to sound the depths of your being, to realize, feel and *be* the innate Reality in you which is also the innate Reality in nature, to be a living personification of *Tat-tvam-asi* [That thou art]—this is Life; this is Immortality; this is to live and move as Power, *Śakti*. This *jñānam*, the inexhaustible power of which is one aspect, has for the other aspect infinite, infinite peace.<sup>35</sup>

#### DYNAMIC CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM

To pick up the threads of his life, Swami Rama Tirtha left America in October 1904. While coming back, 'he threw the bundles of appreciative papers, noting the records of his work there, in the sea'.<sup>36</sup> *En route* to India, he delivered an impressive lecture in Persian at Cairo in a mosque. The papers reported that the Egyptian Moslems had found in him 'the greatest Hindu they had met'.<sup>37</sup> He reached Bombay on 8 December; lectures and engagements kept him busy for five days. Thence he proceeded to Mathura. Alwar, Pushkar, Darjeeling, and Hardwar were some of the places he visited. Wherever he was, people thronged to meet him and seek his blessings. Besides Vedānta, thoughts bearing on the motherland such as 'National Dharma', 'Yajña', and 'Patriotism' were the themes of his lectures during this period. A robust faith in the future when India would shine with redoubled splendour animated him with a patriotic fervour. His was a dynamic concept of nationalism in the sense that he urged upon every Indian not mere lukewarm approbation or toleration but active participation in the building up of the nation. For him, worship of the living Nārāyaṇa in

<sup>35</sup> *vide* *ibid.*, Part VII, pp. 344-62.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. xiii.

<sup>37</sup> S. R. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 53.



the poor starving Indian by service and sacrifice was religion. Calling this 'the Dharma, Common Path, Practical Vedanta, or divine love', he recommended it with great zeal to his countrymen that they might benefit by 'this dynamic spirit of Nationality'. In view of the vital truth that nothing was acceptable to the people unless it accorded with the national ethos—in India it is centred in religion—he went to the extent of saying: 'A person can never realize his unity with God, the All, except when unity with the *whole nation* throbs in every fibre of his frame.'<sup>38</sup> In tune with the Indian life-theme, his nationalism or, for that matter, internationalism sprang from his love of God who is manifested in all.

#### UNIVERSAL LOVE

Through all these exhortations and activities the Vedānta was flowing perennially in him. The lure of the Himalayas became too strong to let him remain in the plains. He moved there. This time he was seen not only imbued with the spirit of Advaita but turned into a student, straining every nerve to study in depth Sanskrit literature on the Vedānta according to the orthodox system. This was in response to the challenge of some pandits. The result was remarkable. 'The Pandits who met him after his residence at Beas Ashram (a little above Rishikesh) saw the miraculous change; he was a scholar imbued with the orthodox spirit of traditional interpretations of Vedas, combined with his acquaintance with the methods of Western criticism and research.'<sup>39</sup> He intended to

write a book on the Vedas giving all the beautiful pieces with the traditional meanings and with his own interpretations. Alas! It was never to be: an accidental drowning while bathing in his beloved Gaṅgā on the Divali day in 1906 brought this glorious life to an untimely end. He was thirty-three only. No matter how premature his passing was, he had attained the goal of life. '*The Upanishads have accomplished their task. Divine bliss has at last been attained!* Have all my faculties put together the power to describe the infinite joy I feel? Oh, what a great satisfaction!'<sup>40</sup>—he had once written thus about his realization. He founded no society, sect, or organization. Rather he refused to have any when asked to form one. For he felt: 'Christians, Hindus, Parsis, Arya Samajists, Sikhs, Mohammedans, and all . . . are my brothers, nay, my very self . . . . I embrace all, I exclude none. I am Love. Love like light robes everything and all with splendours of Light. Verily, verily, I am nothing but flood and glory of Love. I love all equally.'<sup>41</sup> 'The wide world is my home and to do good my religion,'<sup>42</sup> said he while in America. He was indeed an embodiment of boundless love. This love flowed in channels of service to one and all.

Such is the story of Swami Rama Tirtha—a story of self-reliance, Self-realization, and universal love—whom Mahatma Gandhi described as 'one of the greatest souls not only of India but of the whole world'.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *The Complete Works*, Part VII, p. 338.

<sup>39</sup> Puran Singh, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>40</sup> S. R. Sharma, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>41</sup> *The Complete Works*, Vol. II, p. vii.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, Part VII, p. 463.

<sup>43</sup> Cited by S. R. Sharma, op. cit., p. 3.

# FREUD'S PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION: AN INDIAN ANALYSIS

DR. R. PULIGANDLA

Although there have appeared in the past thirty years a large number of books, monographs, and papers, both expository and critical, on Freud's thought, only a few of them dealt with his reflections on religion. And even these have examined and evaluated Freud's psychology of religion only from the western standpoint. To the best of my knowledge and belief, no attempts have been made to scrutinize Freud's pronouncements on religion from a non-western point of view. It is common knowledge that there is not one but many non-western traditions, each with more than one point of view; as such, it would be impossible in the span of a single paper such as the present to undertake an examination of Freud's psychology of religion from all the different viewpoints of the different non-western traditions. I shall therefore confine myself, for the purpose of this paper, to a single tradition, namely, the Indian, and two of its religious frameworks, Hinduism and Buddhism.

It should first be pointed out that any non-western examination of Freud's reflections on religion would be pointless and irrelevant if Freud did not intend them as generalizations applicable to all religions and not just to the religions of his own civilizations, namely, Judaism and Christianity. I shall therefore first document that Freud did regard his psychology of religion as one of universal scope.

'The religious ideas that have been summarized above have of course passed through a long process of development and have been adhered to in various phases by *various civilizations*.'<sup>1</sup>

'... These [religious ideas], which are given out as teachings, are not precipitates of experience or end-results of thinking: they are illusions, fulfilments of the oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of *mankind*.'<sup>2</sup>

'To assess the truth-value of *religious doctrines* does not lie within the scope of the present inquiry. It is enough for us that we have recognized them as being, in their psychological nature, illusions.'<sup>3</sup>

Notice that in the first of these quotes Freud refers to religious ideas in various civilizations, in the second to religious ideas of mankind and not of this or that group of men or of this or that civilization, and in the third to religious doctrines in general. It is clear, then, that Freud did consider his views as applicable to religion in general. Consequently, a non-western analysis of Freud's theses on religion is warranted and relevant.

Let us start our examination by asking whether all religions, at least the major ones, are theistic and if so whether they are all monotheistic. The answers to both these questions are clearly in the negative; for in the strictest sense only Judaism, Christianity, and Islam can be said to be monotheistic. On the other hand, Buddhism is neither theistic nor atheistic, although one has good grounds for regarding Theravada Buddhism as atheistic. As for Hinduism, it is at once compatible with polytheism, monotheism, and atheism.

---

(tr. by Robson-Scott, pub. by Anchor Books, Garden City, N. Y., 1964), pp. 27-8 (emphasis added).

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 47 (emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 52 (emphasis added).

---

<sup>1</sup> Sigmund Freud: *The Future of an Illusion*



Thus, for example, Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara is monism, pure and simple; whereas Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta of Rāmānuja and Dvaita Vedānta of Madhva are monotheistic. But for Freud, the term 'religion' only means monotheism and accordingly he implicitly dismisses non-monotheistic religions, theistic as well as atheistic, as not religions at all. Thus, formulating the psychological foundations of religion, he writes:

'... Fundamentally this was a return to the historical beginnings of the idea of God. Now that *God was a single person*, man's relations to him could recover the intimacy and intensity of the child's relation to his father.'<sup>4</sup>

Or again:

'In this function [of protection] the mother is soon replaced by the stronger father, who retains that position for the rest of childhood. But the child's attitude to its father is coloured by a peculiar ambivalence. The father himself constitutes a danger for the child, perhaps because of its earlier relation to its mother. Thus it fears him no less than it longs for him and admires him. The indications of this ambivalence in the attitude to the father are deeply imprinted in *every* religion, as was shown in *Totem and Taboo*. When the growing individual finds that he is destined to remain a child forever, that he can never do without protection against strange superior powers, he lends those powers the features belonging to his father; he creates for himself the gods whom he dreads, whom he seeks to propitiate, and whom he nevertheless entrusts with his own protection ... The defence against childish helplessness is what lends its characteristic features to the adult's reactions to the helplessness which he has to acknowledge—a reaction which is precisely *the formation of religion*.'<sup>5</sup>

Both these passages clearly show that for Freud 'religion' means monotheistic religion. In order to guard his own account of the psychological origins of religion against attacks, he *a priori* rules out as absurd and irrelevant any and every conception of religion which does not fit with monotheism:

'.... Where questions of religion are concerned, people are guilty of every possible sort of dishonesty and intellectual misdemeanour. Philosophers stretch the meaning of words until they retain scarcely anything of their *original sense*. They give the name of 'God' to some vague abstraction which they have created for themselves; having done so they can pose before all the world as deists, as believers in God, and they can even boast that they have recognized a higher, purer concept of God, notwithstanding that their God is now nothing more than an insubstantial shadow and no longer *the mighty personality of religious doctrines*.'<sup>6</sup>

According to Freud, then, there is an *original* sense of the word 'religion' and it is the sense according to which to be religious is to believe in a single, all-powerful Father God on whom man depends and to whom he submits himself in order to receive protection against the threatening forces of nature as well as his own weaknesses. But one would like to know how Freud can show that this is the original meaning of 'religion'. I submit that he has no way of showing this except dogmatically asserting that it is so, thereby *a priori* excluding all other meanings as psychologically irrelevant intellectual abstractions and shadows concocted by philosophers. Philip Rieff makes this same point when he observes:

'The genetic disparagements of the religious spirit are, I should say, the least viable part of Freud's psychology of religion. Resembling all too closely the "nothing but" argument by which animus is sanctified as science, *Freud's rea-*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27 (emphasis added).

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 34-5 (emphasis added).

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 51-2 (emphasis added).



soning is actually tautological: he will admit as religious only feelings of submission and dependence; others are dismissed as intellectual dilutions or displacements of the primary infantile sentiment.' <sup>7</sup>

It may be noted in passing that even Rieff's discussion of Freud's theory of religion is exclusively from the western standpoint. I have no wish to deny that there are religions, for example, Judaism and Christianity, which unmistakably exemplify Freud's conception of religion. Thus the fact that the concept of the Father-God on whom man depends and to whom he submits himself governs the religious consciousness of even present-day Jews and Christians lends support to Freud's theory of the psychological genesis of religion at least with respect to Judaism and Christianity. On the other hand, it should be equally clear that Freud's account fails to apply to Upaniṣadic Hinduism (simply 'Hinduism', hereafter) and Buddhism. A defence of Freud might now say that neither the Upaniṣadic sages nor the Buddha nor Śaṅkara are really religious geniuses but are philosophers who are guilty of reducing the true and original religion to shadowy abstractions. But how is this known to be the case? The ready answer is, 'Well, if they were not guilty of such distortions and replacements, they would have taught a religion in accord with Freud's conception.'

It should be noted, however, that Freud claims that his theory of the psychological foundations of religion finds support in the anthropological studies on totemism. Thus he rhetorically asks:

'....Can you, from any of the views known to you explain the fact that the

first shape in which the protecting deity revealed itself to men should have been that of an animal, that there was a prohibition against killing and eating this animal and that nevertheless the solemn custom was to kill and eat it communally once a year? This is precisely what happens in totemism... The totem animals become the sacred animals of the gods; and the earliest, but the most fundamental moral restrictions—the prohibitions against murder and incest—originate in totemism.' <sup>8</sup>

Here Freud is claiming that there is an inextricable connection between totemism and religion. In order to reject this claim it is enough to point out first that there is therefore no reason to believe that Freud's is the true and correct one. If anything, we have field-studies which clearly serve as counter-examples to Freud's interpretation. Thus, for example, Claude Levi-Strauss writes:

'Radcliffe-Brown maintains, to the contrary, that the ritualization of relations between man and animals supplies a wider and more general frame than totemism, and within which totemism must have developed. This ritual attitude is attested among people *without* totemism, such as the Eskimo, and there are other examples equally *independent of totemism*, since the Andaman Islanders observe a ritual conduct toward the turtles which occupy an important place in their means of subsistence, and so do the California Indians toward the salmon, and all the peoples of the Arctic toward the bear. These modes of behavior, in fact, are found universally in hunting societies.' <sup>9</sup>

It is clear, then, that Freud is simply

<sup>8</sup> Freud: *The Future of an Illusion*, pp. 32-3.

<sup>9</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss: *Totemism* (tr. by Rodney Needham, pub. by Beacon Press, Boston, 1963), p. 60 (emphasis added); also see W. Schmidt's *The Origin and Growth of Religion* (tr. by H. J. Rose, pub. by Methuen, London, 1935), pp. 112-5.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Rieff: *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Anchor Books, New York, 1961), pp. 283-4 (emphasis added).



mistaken in thinking that religion and totemism are inseparable. We may also note that Bronislaw Malinowski showed that in matrilineal societies, such as in the Trobriand Islands, the son shows no feelings of hatred and hostility toward the father, and the infant's feelings toward the mother are spontaneous and non-incestuous. However, the reader may bear in mind that the main purpose of this paper is to examine Freud's theory of religion from the perspective of comparative study of religions and not from anthropological data.

I come now to the central idea underlying Freud's theory of the psychological origins of religion. This is an idea which had so forcefully impressed itself upon Freud that it constantly recurs in his writings on religion. It is the theme of the murder of the primal father by a horde of brothers. According to Freud, at some distant time in the past, the lives of the members of a clan were governed by the power and will of one single man, the father. This man and only this man had the power and licence to satisfy all his instinctual needs and prevent the other members of the clan from seeking the full instinctual gratification. Only he commanded respect and power and had all his desires fulfilled, obviously at the expense of the other members. He could possess any woman in the clan, have any comfort and pleasure he desired, and reward and punish any member of the family according to his own will, whim, and fancy. In this manner, the sons of the man were forced to suppress their instincts and deprived of instinctual gratifications. In time, they became frustrated and grew bitter at their mighty father, whom they saw as the source of their frustration and unhappiness. They felt that as long as the father lives they are condemned to misery and unhappiness and live as victims of his arbitrary will and

authority. Soon they banded together in revolt against the father and murdered him. But while the sons hated their powerful father they nevertheless loved and admired him for the protection he offered them in his mighty personality. It is due to this ambivalency in their attitude toward their father that the sons were soon overcome with a profound sense of guilt and remorse at their unthinkable misdeed. The sons now discovered that without a central authority everyone will freely pursue his own instinctual gratification, the result being chaos, murder, disorder, and eventually the disintegration and disappearance of the clan itself. They therefore reinstated the laws of the father in the form of taboos against incest, murder, etc. Further, to expiate their guilt, they instituted the custom of periodic ritual in which they symbolically enact the murder of the father and remember the love and protection he provided them. Now, however, the power is not vested in a single individual but truly belongs to the community as a whole. Each person willingly sacrifices his instincts in order that law, order, justice, and fairness may prevail making it possible for each person to pursue pleasure and happiness within the limits provided by the community: 'the power of the community is then set up as right in opposition to the power of the individual, which is condemned as "brute force"'.<sup>10</sup> This, according to Freud, is the beginning of civilization itself.

'....The memory of the father lived on during this time of the "brother horde". A strong animal, which perhaps at first was also dreaded, was found as a substitute....The relationship to the totem animal retained the original ambivalency

---

<sup>10</sup> Freud: *Civilization and Its Discontents* (tr. by James Strachey, pub. by Norton, N.Y., 1962), p. 42.



of feeling towards the father. The totem was on the one hand the corporeal ancestor and protecting spirit of the clan; he was to be revered and protected. On the other hand, a festival was instituted on which day the same fate was meted out to him as the primeval father had encountered. He was killed and eaten by all the brothers together.... This great day was in reality a feast of triumph to celebrate the victory of the united sons over the father.<sup>11</sup>

Freud then goes on to say that 'the next step forward from totemism is the humanizing of the worshipped being'.<sup>12</sup> In course of time, female deities arose and eventually male deities took the place of the totem animal. The final step is 'the return of the one and only father deity whose power is unlimited'.<sup>13</sup>

According to Freud, it is in this manner that religion arose. Its foundation is the killing of the primal father by the sons, their subsequent guilt and remorse, and the gradual institution of a single all-powerful deity, who is the Father of all men and who rewards and punishes men accordingly as they obey or disobey his commands. In order to buttress this theory, Freud attempts in his *Moses and Monotheism* to show that Moses was an Egyptian who freed the Jews from their bondage and taught them a purified version of Ikhnaton's monotheism. Moses also gave the Jews laws and commandments by which they were to live. But growing angry and bitter with Moses' uncompromising and exacting demands on their conduct and lives, Freud argues, the Jews rebelled against Moses and murdered him—a real life re-enactment of the drama of the killing of the primal father.

And, as in the primeval case, here too the memory of Moses as the mighty and wise saviour lingered and eventually his teachings prevailed and monotheism asserted itself in its purest form among the Jews.

Having traced the origins of Judaism to the murder of the primal father, Freud has little difficulty in appropriating Christianity to this theme:

'The restoration to the primeval father of his historical rights marked a great progress, but this could not be the end. The other parts of the prehistoric tragedy also clamored for recognition.... It seems that a growing feeling of guiltiness had seized the Jewish people—and perhaps the whole of civilization of that time—as a precursor of the return of the repressed material.... Paul, a Roman Jew from Tarsus, seized upon this feeling of guilt and correctly traced it back to its primeval source. This he called original sin; it was crime against God that could be expiated only through death. Death had come into the world through original sin. In reality this crime, deserving of death, had been the murder of the Father who later was deified. The murderous deed itself was not remembered; in its place stood the phantasy of expiation, and that is why this phantasy could be welcomed in the form of a gospel of salvation (evangel). A Son of God, innocent himself, had sacrificed himself, and had thereby taken over the guilt of the world...the Christian ceremony of Holy Communion, in which the believer incorporates the flesh and blood of the Redeemer, repeats the contents of the old totem feast.... The ambivalency dominating the father-son relationship shows clearly, however, in the final result of the religious innovation. Meant to propitiate the Father Deity, it ends by his being dethroned and set aside. The Mosaic religion had been a Father religion; Christianity became a Son religion. The old God, the Father, took second place; Christ, the Son stood in his stead, just

<sup>11</sup> Freud: *Moses and Monotheism* (tr. by Katherine Jones, pub. by Alfred Knopf, N.Y., 1949), p. 130.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 132.



as in those dark times every son longed to do.' <sup>14</sup>

I have quoted Freud at some length in order to ward off charges of misinterpretation. Let us first note that the views above are undoubtedly the work of a creative mind and are highly interesting. But one cannot help asking: Are they true? Are there any grounds which compel one to accept them as the correct account of the psychological foundations of religion in general? We can once again readily grant that with respect to Judaism and Christianity Freud's account seems plausible, insofar as it is undeniable that the concept of the Almighty Father-God is in fact central to these religions. No other religion affirms the fatherhood of God with as much zest and zeal as these. Moreover, the Christian Eucharist, observed even by twentieth-century Christians, lends further credence to Freud's theory. I wish to emphasize, however, that I am not saying that these things *prove* that Freud's theory as to the psychological genesis of religion is true, only that the doctrinal and ritualistic core of Judaism and Christianity lend some degree of support to Freud's views. Thus it is possible for a Christian or Jew to challenge Freud's theory. But it is not my purpose here to pursue what form such a challenge may take and how a Freudian would respond to it. I am content with noting that Freud's account of the psychological origins of religion definitely finds support in the central doctrines and rituals of Judaism and Christianity.

From the Indian point of view, the important question is: Is there anything in Hinduism or Buddhism by way of doctrine or practice that would bear out Freud's contentions concerning the psychological origins of religion? Before proceeding to answer this question, let us note that neither

Hinduism nor Buddhism lacks doctrines, scriptures, and liturgy. Further, polytheism, henotheism, and monotheism are present in early Vedic Hinduism which also contains rituals, including animal sacrifice. But the Vedas clearly declare that the purpose of rituals and sacrifices is to please the various gods, such as Agni, Varuṇa, Indra, etc., in order to receive from them blessings of health, wealth, power, and prosperity. Nowhere can we find anything which even vaguely suggests or hints at the murder of a primal father; nor can we find in the Vedas any theophagic rituals such as the Christian Eucharist. Further, neither theism nor monotheism is the dominant theme of the Upaniṣads, the most sacred of the Hindu scriptures; seldom do they refer to Brahman (Ātman), ultimate reality, as Father or God. Quite the contrary, we are told again and again that Brahman is the Impersonal It, neither a He nor a She, beyond all names and forms. In the face of these tireless and innumerable assertions of the Upaniṣads, it is difficult to see how Freud could claim that *all* religions arose from the murder of the primeval father and the subsequent attempts on the part of the sons to expiate their guilt. At this point, someone might object by saying that Hinduism certainly recognizes a personal God in the form of a Rāma, a Kṛṣṇa, a Śiva, etc., and therefore my assertion that Hinduism is free from the notion of a personal God is false. My reply is that my objector is guilty of special pleading. For the Upaniṣads, as the commentators point out, while explicitly acknowledging that men in their inability to comprehend Brahman as nameless and formless conceive of It as having certain attributes, such as creator, preserver, and destroyer, and offer prayers and worship, teach that Brahman so conceived is not ultimate reality but is an integral part of the phenomenal world, the world of our senses and intellect. Brahman

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 135-8.



thought of as having particular qualities and relations is known as *Saguna-brahman* (also called 'Īśvara') and Hinduism recognizes the role of *Saguna-brahman* under various names and forms in serving as a model for men to cultivate in themselves such qualities as compassion, lack of egoism, etc. Each person can choose a particular aspect of the *Saguna-brahman* suitable to his temperament, needs, and development—*Iṣṭadevatā*. This does not, however, mean that Freud's theory of religion is borne out by Hinduism. For the Upaniṣads unequivocally and emphatically declare that Brahman as ultimate reality is beyond words, thoughts, and perceptions and is not to be identified with any conception, no matter how exalted it may be:

'That which cannot be expressed by speech, but by which speech is expressed—That alone know as Brahman, and *not that which people here worship*.

That which cannot be apprehended by the mind, but by which, they say, the mind is apprehended—That alone know as Brahman, and *not that which people here worship*.

That which cannot be perceived by the eye, but by which the eye is perceived—That alone know as Brahman, and *not that which people here worship*.

That which cannot be heard by the ear, but by which the hearing is perceived—That alone know as Brahman, and *not that which people here worship*.

That which cannot be smelt by the breath, but by which the breath smells an object—That alone know as Brahman, and *not that which people here worship*.' <sup>15</sup>

It should be abundantly clear by now that according to the Upaniṣads Brahman, the ultimate reality, is not to be identified with any god or gods to whom men offer prayers and worship. It is true, however, that Hinduism does not object to the concept of

a personal god; instead of forcing everyone to accept some one conception of god, Hinduism allows each person to conceive of Brahman in a manner most conducive to his temperament, needs, and development. It is precisely for this reason that monotheistic zealotry is wholly absent in Hinduism. At the same time Hinduism untiringly emphasizes, as is evident from the above quote, that liberating knowledge and wisdom can only be had by transcending all conceptions of Brahman, no matter how lofty and comforting they may be. Accordingly, Hinduism teaches that piety and morality based on the notion of a powerful, punishing and rewarding Father-God are indeed worthy of only children and are to be overcome on one's way to higher wisdom and freedom, which are to be attained by realizing in direct, intuitive experience the nameless, formless ultimate reality (*Nirguna-brahman*). In the face of all this, it is hard to see how and where Freud's psychology of religion can apply to Hinduism. Freud uncritically claims universality to a theory of the psychological foundations of religion which is based on the main tenets of the religions of his own culture and civilization. I hope I have shown convincingly that there is nothing in the scriptures and rituals of Hinduism, in its ancient or modern form, which would vindicate Freud's theory. If anything, Hinduism is a radical refutation of Freud.

Buddhism provides an even stronger refutation of Freud's thesis. The Buddha is known for setting aside all questions concerning gods as wholly irrelevant to man's state of suffering as well as to attaining freedom from suffering. He exhorted men to rely on none but themselves in their quest for freedom and enlightenment. It is a central teaching of the Buddha that man can attain freedom by his own efforts—not even the Buddha can bring one Nirvāṇa.

<sup>15</sup> *Kena-upaniṣad*, I. 5-9 (emphasis added).



The Buddha can only point the way and each man must walk the way himself. Where, I ask, does one find here the idea of the mighty Father-God who protects, punishes, and rewards men? The answer is, nowhere. It would not do for a defender of Freud to reply that the Buddha is a philosopher who stretched the meanings of words until they lost their original sense and that therefore the Buddha's teachings do not represent the true origins of Buddhism. Nothing could be more absurd than this self-serving reply. The truth of the matter is that the concept of a personal God, mighty and powerful, is alien to the entire Indian tradition; as such, one can only try in vain to subsume that tradition under psychological foundations which apply only to Judaism and its two offspring, Christianity and Islam. Can Freud or any of his defenders cite a single passage in the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures which would even remotely suggest that Hindus and Buddhists worship a personal God who in His infinite wisdom had chosen them as His people? Can anyone point to a single instance of Hindu or Buddhist rituals which even dimly resembles the Christian Eucharist? The answers to both of these questions is a clear 'no'.

Any theory that pretends to be scientific becomes acceptable if its proponent can adduce some evidence in its favour. Thus for Freud's general theory of the psychological origins of religion to be considered true, he should be able to produce some evidence in support of it in either the scriptures or rituals of every religion—at least the major ones. We have already pointed out that one can find *some* evidence for Freud's theory in the scriptures and liturgies of Judaism and Christianity. On the other hand, there is nothing in Hinduism or Buddhism which can support Freud's theory. Freud, like every other dogmatic theorist,

fell victim to the temptation to universalize his own theory. He displayed an amazing lack of respect for scientific method in claiming universal scope to his theory of the psychological genesis of religion. For having constructed his theory in the light of the doctrines and practices of the religions of his own civilization, he went on to generalize it in an unrestricted manner. And when confronted with counter-examples, he resorted to *petitio principii* and argument by definition, wholly contrary to the spirit of scientific inquiry. He is like the man who, having observed that all the swans in the lake in his village are white, announces that all swans are white and later when someone presents him with a black swan denies that it is a swan at all.

Let us now turn to Freud's claim that religion and morality arose from a universal sense of sin and guilt which itself has its source in the primal event, namely, the murder of the father. He tells us that the aim of all the great religions is to provide a solution to the problem of guilt. They are all 'reactions aiming at the same great event [the murder of the primal father] with which culture began and which ever since has not let mankind come to rest'.<sup>16</sup> Tracing the feeling of guilt to the ambivalence of Father-Son relations, Freud writes:

'But if the human sense of guilt goes back to the killing of the primal father, that was after all a case of "remorse". Are we to assume that (at that time) a conscience and a sense of guilt were not, as we have presupposed, in existence before the deed? If not, where, in this case, did the remorse come from? There is no doubt that this case should explain the secret of the sense of guilt to us and put an end to our difficulties. And I believe it does. *The remorse was*

<sup>16</sup> Freud: *Totem and Taboo* (tr. by A. A. Brill, pub. by Vintage Books, N.Y., 1946), p. 187.



*the result of the primordial ambivalence of feeling towards the father. His sons hated him, but they loved him, too. After their hatred had been satisfied by their act of aggression, their love came to the fore in their remorse for their deed.'*<sup>17</sup>

Further,

'....Religions, at any rate, have never overlooked the part played in civilization by a sense of guilt. Furthermore—a point which I failed to appreciate elsewhere—they claim to redeem mankind from the sense of guilt, which they call sin. From the manner in which, in Christianity, this redemption is achieved—by the sacrificial death of a single person, who in this manner takes upon himself a guilt that is common to everyone—we have been able to infer what the first occasion may have been on which this primal guilt, which was also the beginning of civilization, was acquired.'<sup>18</sup>

nce again, Freud's assertion of the centrality of the concepts of sin, guilt, and redemption finds support in Judaism and Christianity. But there is no favourable evidence whatever in Hinduism and Buddhism. It is one of the distinguishing tenets of Hinduism and Buddhism, notwithstanding any differences, that it is not original sin but original ignorance (*avidyā*) that is the source of man's suffering and bondage. In Hinduism this ignorance consists of one's mistakenly identifying the Brahman (*Ātman* or one's inmost Self) with this or that object or aspect of the world of senses and intellect. Having thus identified, one goes through rounds of births and deaths. It is only by knowing the *Ātman* as the immortal and imperishable Brahman that one frees oneself from ignorance and its attendant pain and suffering. Nowhere in Hinduism can one point to a doctrine of original

sin or original guilt, much less to its supposed source, murder of the primal father. In Buddhism, too, there is neither original sin nor original guilt but only original ignorance, which may be described as follows:

'And what is ignorance? Whatever is the unknowing in regard to suffering, its arising, its stopping and the course leading to its stopping—this is called ignorance.'<sup>19</sup>

In short, original ignorance in Buddhism is the ignorance as to the cause of man's suffering and the way to put an end to it. I wish to emphasize that I am not denying that the concept of guilt is present in Hindu and Buddhist psychologies. What I am denying is that there is in Hinduism and Buddhism anything like the original sense of sin and guilt Freud talks about. Only religions such as Judaism and Christianity which centre around the concept of the Almighty Father-God, who issues commandments and punishes those who transgress them, can there be the concept of *original* sense of sin and guilt as well as that of redemption. In other words, guilt presupposes the breaking of laws and commands, which in turn presuppose an authority from whom they flow. But since in neither Hinduism nor Buddhism can one find the idea of the Father-God, it follows that the concept of *original* sin or guilt cannot be found in them either. The inescapable conclusion then is that Freud's assertion that religion is inextricably bound up with original sin and guilt, which arise out of the killing of the primal father, can only apply to Judaism and Christianity and not to Hinduism and Buddhism. Thus Hinduism and Buddhism are counter-examples to Freud's general claim that religion arises in and sustains itself through an original sense of guilt and its redemption.

(to be concluded)

<sup>17</sup> Freud: *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 79 (emphasis added).

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>19</sup> *Majjhima-nikāya*, I. 49-54.



## PRACTICE OF DETACHMENT

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

### I

Blessed is the person who somehow comes to know early in life, what the life's commendable purposes are and how to attain them. Any time, this knowledge is most helpful.

Indian wisdom places before men two commendable aspirations for life:

(a) Aspiration for purposive, prosperous well-being;

(b) Aspiration for attaining spiritual illumination.<sup>1</sup>

Often enough we may cherish these ideals together, and strive for both. Desiring well-being, we work hard in the work-a-day world for prosperous living. Desiring illumination we practise spiritual disciplines. Sometimes we experience a conflict between the two aspirations. From the wisdom of the sages of the ancient and modern India we learn that the only way of resolving this conflict is to make the aspiration for well-being subserve the aspiration for spiritual illumination, illumination being the supreme well-being.

Even if we can resolve this conflict to a certain extent in the light of the wisdom of the sages, one common problem stays for every one of us to face. The problem is this: we find that we have perforce to function under certain given conditions, psycho-physical, environmental, and relational. And we feel that unless these given conditions change, we cannot have the well-being of our concept, much less illumina-

tion. From our experiences, we however learn that though everything is constantly changing in this phenomenal world, there is a general frame of conditions for every one of us, which we cannot easily change. We cannot easily change our physical features or our mental make-up. We cannot have a whole set of new people to live with. Very often we have to continue in the same profession all our life. Even when we may succeed in changing the general frame of conditions—say by migrating from one country to another—, to our utter dismay we may find they do not always fulfil our expectations. On the contrary, they bring in unfamiliar problems, to face which we are neither prepared nor equipped.

We then realize an important truth of life: that out of these very given conditions, a new life will have to emerge, if it is to come at all; out of our continuing circumstances we shall have to derive greater values; without adding to what we have as endowments, we shall have to experience well-being; with this given body and mind, while living among our own people, we shall have to attain illumination, in this very world.

Can this be done?

Yes, it can be done, for the simple reason that it has been done. The supreme secret of this is the practice of detachment. Incalculable benefit can accrue to every one of us from this practice. One has not even to be necessarily a believer in God, in order to practise this discipline, and derive its benefits. There is this wise saying: 'Sow a thought, and you reap an act. Sow an act, and you reap a habit. Sow a habit, and

<sup>1</sup> *vide*: Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's own introduction to his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*.



you reap a character. Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.' Our destiny therefore depends on our own thoughts.

(1) Without detachment, right thinking is impossible. Without right thinking, right action is not possible. And wrong actions cannot surely bring desirable results, whatever may be the field of our activity or the type of our aspiration.

(2) For securing success in any worthy undertaking of life, what we most need is will power.

Now, what is the secret of will power? Will power depends on bringing about a unison between our thinking, feeling, and willing. Without practice of detachment we cannot bring about this unison. If a person's head is sold to one thing and heart is given away to another, his will for doing a third thing is bound to be weak.

(3) Life brings us in a whimsical fashion joy and sorrow, profit and loss, honour and ignominy, love and hatred, appreciation and jealousy. We can hold our own through these varying situations of life and progressively move toward the fulfilment of our destiny only through the practice of detachment.

(4) Many of us have heard the common cry, 'Oh, I am going to pieces!' What is at the root of this agonizing cry? Nothing but non-practice of detachment. Detachment has great therapeutic value. If in the homes we would teach children how to practise detachment, at least half of the mental institutions of the world could be closed down.

(5) Benjamin Franklin has a witty saying, 'The honey is sweet but the bee has a sting.' We all want the honey but not the sting. But somehow it turns out that we get more stings than honey! How does it happen to be so? The reason has to be seen in our attachments. Attachment is the sting of the bee.

(6) In the *Yoga-vāsistha*, a Vedāntic

scripture, it is said; 'Pain of the world touches only the mind that is attached.' It is a very important truth to know. Remove the attachments; pains and sufferings of the world will not touch you at all. Behind every feeling of pain, physical or mental, is the story of an attachment. Cultivate attachment—then all the pain-killing pills of the world will not be able to remove your suffering. Cultivate detachment—then all the misfortunes of the world will not be able to disturb your tranquillity.

(7) Some people hold the view that to be happy and make others happy, we should first remove all the evils of the world. The Vedāntin, however, does not think that it is a practical approach to the problem. For argument's sake: suppose we could remove all the evils—which of course is not possible—, along with that we should be removing all the good also; for in the scheme of God's creation as we know it, good and evil exist as the obverse and reverse of the same coin. They always go together. You cannot have the day without the night; death goes with life, pain with pleasure, worry with money, fear with prosperity, and so on.

So, the Vedāntin thinks the practical proposition is not the vain attempt at total eradication of evil, but the practice of detachment.

The question may be asked, 'Should we then become passive spectators of all the evils of the world and not try to root them out?' At a certain stage of inner development one no longer asks the question, for he has known the answer. But in respect of those who will ask this question—their very nature will force them to *struggle* against the evils they see. But if this struggle is not carried on in a detached manner, in all probability they will only add to the evil they wish to fight. If, however, the struggle is carried on in a detached manner, evils, so-called that are not inherent in



nature but are man-made, can be removed or considerably reduced.

(8) Nothing impedes a man's healthy inner growth like fear and suspicion. Without detachment we can never get rid of fear. We are always afraid of losing the thing to which we are attached, whether it is our body or beloved, dog or dogma, fad or leadership. And from fear arises the whole brood of wrong emotions and defects like suspicion, jealousy, envy, hatred, and hypocrisy. And the root of all these harmful weaknesses is attachment.

(9) There is one movement of human emotion which is totally destructive. It has no good side at all. This pernicious emotion is anger. In anger, only one thing is done, and that is harm to oneself and others. Some of us become victims to fits of anger in spite of our knowledge of its evil effects. We just cannot help it. This disease of anger can be cured only through the patient practice of detachment.

(10) All of us want to be masters of ourselves. The very idea of slavery is abhorrent to us. But if we analyse our inner situations dispassionately, we shall see that with most of us self-mastery is unknown. Even most of those who are called normal people are often toys of situations and servants of their uncontrolled emotions. The secret of self-mastery is detachment.

(11) You may be fond of a particular drink. But suppose you were forced to enter into the bottle and stay there to enjoy it. how would you feel? Yet the strange thing is that in every case of our dominating attachments, we are doing nothing better with ourselves. Attachments to objects of our experiences, to actions, and to our own or others' bodies, imprison our minds in finitude and particularity. What is it like but entering into a bottle to enjoy our favourite drink?

(12) In cases and times when we are not practising detachment, we cannot help pur-

suing certain illusions in life. For, without detachment we can never understand things as they are. When we do not understand things as they are, we are simply pursuing illusions. That is not the way leading to the realization of things spiritual.

Truth has no camp. It has no party. To the extent we have gone beyond the dualities of life, to that extent alone we can get a truth. And no one has ever known any other way of going beyond the dualities of life except through detachment.

(13) This holds good not only in our spiritual life. This is equally true in case of scientific investigation, too. Without practising detachment, no scientist can ever discover anything new.

(14) There is a story of a group of drunkards who vigorously rowed a boat for the whole night. In the morning they found that they had not moved an inch from where they had started rowing. How could this happen? They had forgotten to weigh the anchor. We may practise spiritual disciplines vigorously, but without lifting the anchor of our attachments to the things of the world, we can never make any spiritual progress.

## II

What we call bondage and liberation of the soul, express themselves as hardened attachments and attained detachments. If one dons the garb of a monk, goes out in the forest, but carries in his mind attachment for things, he will see no better things in the forest than in the world. He will create a new *samsāra* (worldly environment) in the forest. If one lives in the world, wears the habit of common people of the world, does the usual round of duties of life, and yet is perfectly detached to all things of the world—here is a case of one who has attained illumination.

*Ajñāna*, or ignorance, or maya, manifests itself in a person's life as so many attach-



ments. *Jnana* or knowledge manifests itself as attained detachment. To practise detachment to perfection is indeed attainment of illumination. In the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches:

‘Therefore always do without attachment the work you have to do; for a man who does his work without attachment attains the Supreme.’<sup>2</sup>

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, a devotional scripture of the Hindus, we have such teachings on detachment:

‘Mind alone is the cause of the bondage and freedom of the soul. By the attachment of the mind to the world we become bound; by the devotion of the mind to God we become free.

‘Give up all ideas of “me” and “mine”, for thus alone is the heart purified, and so freed from lust, greed, and delusion. In a pure heart are manifested knowledge and love; and the true Self, which is divine, self-luminous, pure and free is realized.’<sup>3</sup>

Patañjali, in his *Yoga-sūtras*, defines ‘yoga’ as ‘restraining the mind from taking various modifications’.<sup>4</sup> And he teaches that the mind can be restrained from taking various modifications by ‘practice and non-attachment’.<sup>5</sup>

In the well-known fourfold Vedāntic *sādhana*, or strivings for the higher life, one discipline is: an utter disregard for the enjoyment of the fruits of one’s actions, here or hereafter.<sup>6</sup> The emphasis is on complete detachment.

In another discipline popularly translated as ‘six treasures’,<sup>7</sup> one treasure is called *uparati*, ‘withdrawal of the self’ from all sense-objects. Such withdrawal is impossible without detachment.

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavad-gītā*, III. 19

<sup>3</sup> *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, III. 25. 15-16

<sup>4</sup> *Yoga-sūtras*, I. 2

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, I. 12

<sup>6</sup> इदमुत्तरार्थफलभोगविरागः ।

Sadananda : *Vedāntasāra*, 15

<sup>7</sup> *loc. cit.*; also *ibid.*, 21

In all forms of authentic spiritual discipline, the emphasis is inevitably on non-attachment.

Gautama the Buddha became the ‘rebel child of Hinduism’, yet in his teachings he had to lay as great emphasis on detachment as Hinduism. In fact whenever there is emphasis on attainment of illumination, all authentic religions are by reason and necessity bound to lay emphasis on detachment. In the *Dhammapada*, there is this teaching of the Buddha:

‘Those whose minds are well-grounded in the elements of enlightenment, who without clinging to anything rejoice in freedom from attachment, whose appetites have been conquered, who are full of light, attain Nirvana in this world.’<sup>8</sup>

Christ’s whole life is a blazing example of utter renunciation and detachment. More by the way of living than by words, he powerfully taught the concept of detached living for the attainment of the kingdom of heaven. Before Christ, in that area of the world, concepts of detachment and renunciation would not appear to have been dominant ideas at all.

It was a new and powerful wave of spirituality that went forth when Christ said, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth.’<sup>9</sup> In a parable he brought home the utter futility of a mere earth-bound existence.

‘The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself saying, “What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?” And he said: “I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones; and then I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years: take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.’” But God said to him, “Fool! This night your soul is required of you;

<sup>8</sup> *Dhammapada*, 89

<sup>9</sup> St. Luke, 12, 15



and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'<sup>10</sup>

Christ concludes the parable with the remark:

'So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'<sup>11</sup>

Without practice of detachment, there is no way of being rich toward God. Christ did not say that we should not have treasures. In fact, he did say that we should have our treasures, but not in the foolish way of the rich man in the parable. He wants us to have imperishable treasures and have them in a place 'where no thief approaches and no moth destroys',—that is, in the kingdom of God.<sup>12</sup>

Christ does not want to impoverish us in any way. Indeed, he wants to enrich us in every possible way. Does he not repeatedly speak of making us the inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven? But Christ wants to enrich in a way which makes sense when you take the totality of things into consideration. Therefore he speaks of being 'rich toward God'. That alone makes sense in life and death and beyond. Nothing else does.

How do we become rich toward God? The only way of becoming rich toward God is to think constantly that God is the richest of all treasures. And you have not to be irrational to think thus. For does not all treasure issue from God? If you accept God, what other logical conclusion can you arrive at? The only way of remembering God constantly is to be convinced in an absolute manner, that God is the richest treasure one can ever possess. 'For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'<sup>13</sup>

In the subsequent Christian spiritual tradition there has been constant emphasis

on the supreme importance of practising detachment. And it could not be otherwise in any genuinely spiritual tradition anywhere else in the world. For, spirituality without detachment is as inconceivable, as fire without its burning power.

The author of the *Imitation of Christ* says:

'Unless a man be disengaged from all things created, he cannot freely attend to things divine. ... And unless a man be elevated in spirit and freed from attachment to all creatures, and wholly united to God, whatever he knows and whatever he has, is of no great importance.'<sup>14</sup>

Elsewhere he gives an all-important clue for spiritual living, as far as detachment is concerned:

'Thou oughtest diligently to aim at this, that in every place, and in every action, or external occupation, thou be inwardly free, and master of thyself; and that all things be under thee, and not thou under them. ... That thou mayest be lord and ruler of thine actions, and not a slave or mercenary.'<sup>15</sup>

We may go through all the sacraments, bathe in all the holy rivers, visit all the places of pilgrimage in the world, but despite all that, salvation will be a distant illusion unless we cultivate the habit of what the author of the *Imitation* calls staying 'inwardly free'.

St. John of the Cross emphasizes the importance of detachment with a telling analogy. He says:

'Any one of these imperfections, if the soul has become attached and habituated to it, is of as great harm to its growth and progress in virtue as though it were to fall daily into many other imperfections and casual venial sins which proceed not from a habitual indulgence in

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, 12, 16-20

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, 12, 21

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 12, 33

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, 12, 34

<sup>14</sup> *The Following of Christ* (usually known as *The Imitation of Christ*) (The Catholic Book Crusade, Patna, 1951), p. 280 (Bk. III, ch. xxxi)

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p. 303 (Bk. III, ch. xxxviii)



any habitual and harmful attachment, and will not hinder it so much as when it has attachment to anything. For as long as it has this there is no possibility that it will make progress in perfection, even though the imperfection be extremely slight. For it comes to the same thing whether a bird be held by a slender cord or by a stout one; since, even if it be slender, the bird will be well held as though it were stout, for so long as it breaks it not and flies not away. It is true that the slender one is the easier to break; still, easy though it be, the bird will not fly away if it be not broken. And thus the soul that has attachment to anything, however much virtue it possess, will not attain to the liberty of Divine union.<sup>16</sup>

In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, maybe about seventy-five per cent of the teachings are meant for householders. One of Sri Ramakrishna's significant departures from traditional Vedāntic teachings was that he did not by direct precept or by implication teach people to despise the world. He taught people, especially the householders, how to live in the world in a way which does not hurt the world, and at the same time makes spiritual progress possible.

Is not that exactly the requirement of a sincere householder aspirant? Sri Ramakrishna has fully answered all relevant questions in this regard. A careful reading of the *Gospel* will show this. The main point as to how the householder should live in the world is detachment. Detachment will help the unfoldment of devotion, and devotion will help confirmation in detachment. When detachment and devotion are practised rightly, a householder can rest assured that the discharge of duties in the world, when they are done conscientiously and righteously, will only be helpful to his spiritual progress.

As to the renouncers of the world, Sri Ramakrishna teaches that the more blazing their spirit of renunciation, the quicker will be their spiritual progress. In a telling parable, 'A monk and his loin-cloth', Sri Ramakrishna warns the renouncer to beware how his entanglement in the world which he has once renounced, may again grow and involve him:

'There was a sannyasi whose only possession was two pairs of loin-cloths. One day a mouse nibbled at one piece. So the holy man kept a cat to protect his loin-cloths from the mouse. Then he had to keep a cow to supply milk for the cat. Later he had to engage a servant to look after the cow. Gradually the number of his cows multiplied. He acquired pastures and farm land. He had to engage a number of servants. Thus he became, in course of time, a sort of landlord. And, last of all, he had to take a wife to look after his big household. One day, one of his friends, another monk, happened to visit him and was surprised to see his altered circumstances. When he asked the reason, the holy man said, "It is all for the sake of a piece of loin-cloth!"'<sup>17</sup>

Swami Vivekananda is categorical in saying:

'No breathing, no physical training of yoga, nothing is of any avail until we reach the idea, "I am the witness", that is to say, until we practise detachment.'

In the life of Swami Vivekananda we find how one can love this world, can be a patriot, a socially-conscious modern man, doing everything needful and possible, but yet practise perfect detachment. What is more, Swami Vivekananda has also demonstrated that our love for the world can never be true and helpful to ourselves and others, unless it is couched in detachment. Our work for society cannot really do good to others, much less to ourselves, unless it

<sup>16</sup> *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (tr. and ed. by E. Allison Peers, Image Books, Garden City, New York, 1958), Book I, ch. xi

<sup>17</sup> M.: *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1947), p. 387



is unselfish. And you are never unselfish unless you are detached, and vice versa.

### III

In many minds there are these doubts and questions: If attachment is given up, what will hold our families together? What will be the incentive for work? What will be the basis for the enjoyment of life? What will make for cohesion in society?

It is absolutely true that without attachment—or, may we say, a kind of disciplined attachment—society will disintegrate, the family system will break down, institutions will crumble; in one word, no creative work will be done. Behind the tremendous amount of work that is done in the world every minute, there is the powerful incentive of attachment. Nobody can deny that.

Moreover, all the pleasures and joys of life, on the physical and mental planes, are also entirely dependent on cultivated attachments. And we cannot say that these pleasures and joys of life are not the most coveted things in life, except in the case of a handful of renouncers of the world.

What is called *abhyudaya*, or prosperous well-being, is impossible without cultivated attachments. At the same time it is also absolutely true that all our sufferings and bondages of life have their source in our attachments. Further we have seen that as far as true spiritual life is concerned, attachment is the direst enemy.

How then, can we work for our prosperous well-being and at the same time make spiritual progress? How can we get the best out of life without being enslaved, degraded, and turned into pitiable lumps of squeaking creatures, fearing everything including ourselves, and kicked about everywhere?

Swami Vivekananda has fully considered this problem and has left for us a perfect solution. It may not be easy to find elsewhere such completeness in the answer as

Swami Vivekananda provides. His realism, both in terms of *brahmajñāna* (Knowledge of Brahman) and of the empirical world, coupled with infinite compassion, makes him our best friend. This is how Swami Vivekananda views this specific problem:

'We came here to sip the honey, and we find our hands and feet sticking to it. We are caught, though we came to catch. We came to enjoy; we are being enjoyed. We came to rule; we are being ruled. We came to work; we are being worked. All the time we find that. And this comes into every detail of our life. We are being worked upon by other minds, and we are always struggling to work on other minds. We want to enjoy the pleasures of life; and they eat into our vitals. We want to get everything from nature, but we find in the long run that nature takes everything from us—depletes us, and casts us aside. 'Had it not been for this, life would have been all sunshine. Never mind! With all its failures and successes, with all its joys and sorrows, it can be one succession of sunshine, if only we are not caught.

'That is the one cause of misery: we are attached, we are being caught. Therefore; says the *Gita*: Work constantly; work, but be not attached, be not caught. Reserve unto yourself the power of detaching yourself from everything, however beloved, however much the soul might yearn for it, however great the pangs of misery you feel if you were going to leave it; still reserve the power of leaving it whenever you want.'<sup>18</sup>

The solution Swami Vivekananda gives is in these teachings:

'We put all our energies to concentrate and get attached to one thing; but the other part, though equally difficult, we seldom pay any attention to—the faculty of detaching ourselves at a moment's notice from anything.

<sup>18</sup> *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Dt. Pithoragarh, U.P.), Vol. II (1963), p. 2



'Both attachment and detachment perfectly developed make a man great and happy.'<sup>19</sup>

'That man alone will be able to get the best of nature, who, having the power of attaching himself to a thing with all his energy, has also the power to detach himself when he should do so.'<sup>20</sup>

'It is the power of concentration and attachment as well as the power of detachment [that we must develop]. [If] the man [is] equally powerful in both—that man has attained manhood. You cannot make him miserable even if the whole universe tumbles about his ears.'<sup>21</sup>

That this power can be attained has been amply proved in Swami Vivekananda's life itself.

It should however be clearly understood that while Swami Vivekananda speaks of the need of developing the powers of attachment and detachment, he is only referring to two aspects of self-mastery, and not putting a premium on attachments which bind the soul. 'Attachment' here in Swami Vivekananda's teaching, would mean a person's perfectly concentrated self-involvement in a situation, who even while involved, reserves the capacity for instantaneous self-withdrawal at will. Swami Vivekananda does not mean by attachment' here any kind of self-implication which has unqualified ignorance as its basis.

What actually happens to us when we become attached to things in a worldly

way? When we become attached to anything in this relative world, we become the prisoners of the temporal. And whatever delight we may take in that, it is self-subversion of our own unlimitedness or our own infinitude. And all our miseries, in the ultimate analysis, issue from an imposition of artificial limitation on what in truth is unlimited.

The *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* says: 'There is no happiness in the limited. In the unlimited alone is happiness.'<sup>22</sup>

In the essence of our true being, as the Ātman, we are unlimited. There is no truer fact than this. But the moment we cultivate attachment, we self-impose limitations on our unlimitedness, so much so that we find it hard even to believe in this fact of our being. The hope however is in the fact that the artificial limitations imposed by attachment cannot in any way alter the true nature of the Ātman or the Self of man. For the time being, like a man dreaming a bad dream, we suffer agonies which are no truer than dreams.

Through the practice of detachment alone can we regain the awareness of the true nature of the Self. Then the distinction between the temporal and the eternal vanishes, and we attain what the *Taittirīya-upaniṣad* calls *swārājyam* or self-sovereignty. That is the experience of *Satcidānanda* or Existence-knowledge-bliss absolute. That is the attainment of illumination and immortality.

(To be concluded)

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. VI (1963), p. 430

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 3

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. I (1962), p. 510

<sup>22</sup> *Ch.-up.*, VII. 24.1



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

Reminiscences are taken from: Swami Saradananda: *Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 600004, 1956), and 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras, 1947). References: *Great Master*: No. 2, p. 432. *Gospel*: No. 1, p. 779; No. 3, p. 550; No. 4, pp. 168-9.

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' are from *The Complete Works*, Vol. IV (1962), p. 30.

Students of the lives and deeds of both Swami Vivekananda and the Buddha are sure to notice many similarities between them, though a vast temporal gulf of nearly two thousand and four hundred years separates them. This subject is vast and some writers like Sister Nivedita have discussed it in short or long compass. Yet the theme permits fresh approaches, further thinking and reflexion. The *Editorial* of the month is an attempt at a comparative study of these two great prophets. We hope our readers will welcome this discussion all the more this month when millions of devotees of the Buddha will be celebrating his holy birthday all over the world. We shall be discussing further this theme in our next editorial essay.

A dynamic monk and preacher of Vedānta, Swami Rama Tirtha has become one of the immortals of India's cultural and religious history. We in India especially need to remind ourselves of his life and message, and his centenary year is the occasion for it. 'Swami Rama Tirtha: Man of Self-reliance and Universal Love', by Swami Rasajnananda, the previous Joint Editor of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, is the

second and concluding part of a learned article whose first part appeared in our April issue.

In 'Freud's Psychology of Religion: An Indian Analysis', Dr. R. Puligandla exposes the shallowness and illogicality of Sigmund Freud's opinions on the psychological origins of the religions of the world. The author, arguing from the Indian standpoint with learning and insight, asserts that while Freud's opinion may have elements of truth with respect to the origins of Semitic religions, with regard to Hinduism and Buddhism Freud is utterly misguided. Even in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, we have to point out, the true origins are to be traced to the mystical elements deeply imbedded in them. Dr. Puligandla is Professor of Philosophy, University of Toledo, Ohio, U.S.A. The second and concluding part of this paper will be published in our next number.

If religion is understood in its core meaning of Self-realization or God-realization, then it implies perception of the spiritual reality without any of the physical or psychological superimpositions. In the state of bondage, the spiritual essence in man is involved with physical and psychological attractions and relations. But this involvement is only apparent and not real. For as the Upaniṣad declares, 'This Self (Puruṣa) is indeed unattached.' All true religious teaching aims at isolating the Self from material and psychological attachments and involvements. This means that practice of detachment is the *sine qua non* of all spiritual striving, from beginning to end.



In 'Practice of Detachment', Swami Budhananda discusses this theme in the light of scriptural teachings and the precepts of saints, and the discussion, we hope, will

be found helpful in practical spiritual life. The second and concluding instalment of this 'Essay on Applied Religion' will be published in our next number.

### DR. SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN PASSES AWAY

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the distinguished philosopher-statesman, has passed away, on 17 April at Madras at the ripe old age of eighty-six, leaving behind him a lasting fame as a profound scholar, a great humanist, and a farsighted statesman. His was a well-rounded life in which rare talents were cultivated and honed to brilliance by self-effort, and the whole crowned with success through the blessings of the Almighty.

An old Sanskrit adage says that while a king is honoured in his own country, a scholar is honoured everywhere. As a philosopher of immense learning and deep insight, Dr. Radhakrishnan was honoured within and outside India. To this was added the honour—both national and international—due to the head of one of the greatest democracies in the world, when he became the second President of the Indian Republic in 1962. He held this highest office of the land with great dignity and clear-sightedness until his retirement in 1967.

For over five decades Dr. Radhakrishnan strode the scholarly world, both in the East and the West, as an intellectual colossus. Books, tracts, papers and articles flowed from his pen at regular intervals. And what scintillating brilliance and amazing profundity these exhibited! His *Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, *The Hindu View of Life*, *An Idealist View of Life* (The Hibbert Lectures for 1929), *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, and *Indian Philosophy* (in two volumes) are some of the most outstanding which entitle him to enduring fame. His English translations of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the principal

Upaniṣads, and the *Brahma-sūtras*—known as the three *prasthānas* technically of Vedāntic Hinduism—with insightful annotations and masterly introductions, have been extremely popular, both in India and abroad. All these reveal a wisdom which harmonized East-West traditions in philosophy with the original insights of a master-mind. A feast to the intellect, these books satisfy the mental hunger without cloying it. He wielded the English language with rare felicity and literary craftsmanship. His oratorical powers were no less brilliant than his literary abilities. Universities in East and West vied with one another in conferring on him honorary degrees and professorships. He was professor of Philosophy in at least three leading Indian Universities—Madras, Mysore, and Calcutta where he was appointed for life. His services were made available by the latter to the newly-formed Andhra University from 1931 to 1937. He was Vice-Chancellor of Benares Hindu University from 1939 to 1948; and in 1953 he became Chancellor of Delhi University. He was Upton Lecturer in Comparative Religion, Manchester College, Oxford; then later, Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics, Oxford, from 1936 to 1952.

As an interpreter of the East to the West, Dr. Radhakrishnan has very few rivals. This special ability he owed mainly to his knack of absorbing and synthesizing Eastern and Western philosophical and cultural traditions. Western students find his works valuable for gaining an insight into the Indian philosophical perspective. The Editors of the Volume of Comparative



Studies in Philosophy, presented to Dr. Radhakrishnan in honour of his sixtieth birthday, observe rightly in the Introduction: 'As a result of the synthesis of attitudes and cultural approaches, the books which he [Dr. Radhakrishnan] has written have a value all their own to the Western enquirer into Indian thought. They open wide the door to an appreciation of the general orientation in which the Indian philosophical distinctions arise and have meaning. They enable the Occidental thinker to catch the inner Spirit of Indian Philosophy.' As a cultural ambassador he built bridges of understanding between India and other countries through his goodwill tours. It was in recognition of his services in the fields of religion, philosophy, and East-West understanding that, a few weeks before his passing, he was awarded the Templeton Foundation Prize for 1975.

Because of his deep reverence for Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and because of the spiritual, intellectual and social activities of the Ramakrishna Mission, Dr. Radhakrishnan's association with our Organization was very intimate. From his books it is evident that he was well ac-

quainted with Swami Vivekananda's *Works*. His understanding of and reverence for Swamiji are very well reflected in the brief but devoted and scholarly Foreword he wrote to the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume published in 1963. He was for many years an Editorial Adviser to our bi-monthly magazine published by the London Centre, and President of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta. He loved the *Prabuddha Bharata*, and once recorded his appreciation thus, 'I have been a regular reader of *Prabuddha Bharata* and can say that its sanity in dealing with religious doctrine and discipline has been its most impressive characteristic.' The Journal published some of his valuable contributions during at least three of the decades beginning with the 'twenties.

In Dr. Radhakrishnan's death, India has lost a brilliant and worthy son, and humanity a great friend, philosopher, teacher, and world-citizen. No doubt, in his death he has shed the worn-out physical body, but through his timeless fame and by the great ideals he taught and aspired for, he continues to live and inspire humanity. May his soul rest in peace!

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY: BY ST. ELMO NAUMAN JR., Published by Philosophical Library, 15 E. 40th St., New York 10016, 1973, pp. 273, Price \$ 10.00.

This book is a kind of directory of American philosophers giving brief biographical details along with very brief mention of the leading idea or ideas of their philosophy. The word 'philosopher' is used here in a wide sense: the Preface states that they include 'thinkers who are significant for the progress of human thought... To be included ... it is not necessary ... to be a systematic thinker. It is enough to be significant.' So the volume includes primarily political figures such as William Penn, Benjamin Franklin, Ethan

Allen,<sup>1</sup> and literary figures like Walt Whitman and so on. Even the British philosopher Bertrand Russell is included in the list but nothing of importance concerning his philosophy is mentioned. He is included simply because he lived in America for some time holding some teaching posts.

The list of 'philosophers' included in this volume is indeed quite exhaustive and representative of all schools of philosophy, but the gist of philosophies given is very brief, sometimes nominal and sometimes altogether omitted. I

<sup>1</sup> Careful search reveals no trace of an article about Ethan Allen, although the Preface mentions his inclusion as does our Reviewer.—Ed.



give instances. In the accounts of J. B. Pratt and Roy Wood Sellars, two of the noted philosophers of the American school of Critical Realism (p. 217 and p. 240), not even one-line accounts of their philosophies are given. Simply their works are named. A student or teacher of philosophy will not look into a dictionary of 'philosophy' simply for the bio-data of 'philosophers'.

The printing and get-up of the book are reasonably good.

DR. S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA  
Retired Professor of Philosophy  
Vikram University, Ujjain, M.P.

**FACETS OF HINDUISM:** BY DIWAN BAHADUR N. D. MEHTA, Published by Uttara-patha Ashrama Trust, 38 Noble Chambers, Parsi Bazar St., Bombay-1, 1972?, pp. xxxix + 144, Price Rs. 18/-.

Hinduism has been explained and interpreted by scholars both Indian and foreign, variously according to the background and leanings of the interpreter. But it has undoubtedly been the faith of many millions of people for millenniums, and it still holds the minds of even the most enlightened Hindus. One such—a *karma-yogin* in the *Gita*-style—is Dewan Bahadur Narmada-shankar Devshankar Mehta (1871-1939), whose various writings have been collected as *Facets of Hinduism*. This is a worthy tribute to the author of the 'History of Indian Philosophy' in Gujarati (under the title, *Hind Tathvajnanno Itihas*, 1924) at the time of his birth centenary. The late Sri Mehta deserves such tributes, the more inasmuch as he did his pioneering studies while deep in administrative activities and public life. Though his works were in a way *svantah sukhaya* (for his own joy), still from academic standpoints his studies also rate very high and are thus useful both to laymen and experts.

The collection has been divided into four parts by the editor. The first is a treatment of Hindu sociology, most of which is devoted to Hindu eugenics, on the basis of careful study of religio-philosophical texts of the Brahmanical tradition. Biological, psychological, philosophical and aesthetic facets of eugenics are examined; dos and don'ts of Hindu eugenics are explained, for forming a better society by the generation responsible. The advantages and disadvantages of endogamy and exogamy prevailing in different parts of India are also explained.

The second part studies certain occult aspects of Hinduism. The origin and development of *pranava* (the syllable *aum*) in the light of *panci-karana* (the permutation and combination of five

principal elements) is traced out through the Sanskrit texts. The identity between macrocosm and microcosm—Brahman and Atman—is here discussed in relation to *pranava*, the most creative symbol of the Hindu mind. The identity proposition, *so'ham* (I am He) is reduced here to the minimum, yet with great mystic and spiritual significance. In order to reach this highest spiritual point, Hinduism has developed various physical and mental techniques popularly known as yoga. The awakening of the *Kundalini-sakti* (power coiled in everyone) is a fascinating area for yogis of the Tantrika persuasion. The author sheds light on such aspects as well.

The third part attempts to show that *puranic* Hinduism is a product of action and reaction between Vedic Brahmanism and protestant Buddhism. Inclusion of Buddha in the chain of Hindu avatars, and his divinization in the Mahayana Buddhism, seems an outcome of honourable social compromise by our ancients. The author's discussion of this delicate portion of our religious-cultural history is admirable.

The fourth part is mainly an assembly of reviews done by the author, centring around the system of Vedanta and especially that of Sankara.

The collection has been introduced at length and helpfully by Prof. G. C. V. Subba Rao. An index would be helpful; but this will be possible in the next edition, along with correction of the many printing errors (beyond those noted in the errata).

DR. S. P. DUBEY  
Department of Post-Graduate Studies  
and Research in Philosophy  
University of Jabalpur, M.P.

**ESSENTIALS OF VEDANTA:** BY DR. G. SRINIVASAN, Published by The Bangalore Printing and Publishing Co., Ltd., Mysore Road, Bangalore 560018, 1974, Pages 68, Price Rs. 6/-.

The author of this book has made an attempt to present the thoughts of the leading Vedantic thinkers in brief and has amply served the need of post-graduate students of philosophy in the Indian universities. His treatment of the schools of Sankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva is lucid and authentic. This trinity of Vedanta is by and large the most important phase of this system.

The book begins with an introductory chapter wherein the author briefly traces the philosophical background of the Vedanta system. The Brahminical and the Buddhist currents together were able to produce the richness of the Vedanta philosophy. The Upanishadic concept of Brahman and the Buddhist notion of the ever-changing



phenomenon gave rise to the absolutism of Sankara. But the seeming identification of Buddhism with nihilism by the author is not justified. The experts in the Madhyamika philosophy too will dare not say that Sunyavada is one with nihilism. The idealistic school of Buddhism too has been ignored by the author. It is true that Sankara criticized the Yogachara school, but his system could easily be characterized as *sthira-vijnanavada* as against *kshana-vijnanavada* of Buddhism.

The chapter on Sankara is a readable account of the Advaita philosophy. What is strikingly missing here is the mention of Gaudapada, the grand-teacher of Sankara. In fact it is Gaudapada who is the real teacher of Sankara, Govindapada being merely his *diksha-guru*. And the *Mandukya-karika* of Gaudapada is the real connecting link between Buddhism and Vedanta. Apart from this act of omission, there is an act of commission as well which immediately draws the attention of the reader. The date of Sankara is now pretty well established (A.D. 788-820). The author is of the opinion that Sankara 'lived probably during the 8th Cent. A.D.' This sense of uncertainty could have been avoided either by accepting the above date or by examining the various views presented in this connection.

The chapter on Ramanuja gives a brief account of the Visishtadvaita philosophy. Ramanuja developed his system in the background of the teachings of the Alvars, and as a reaction against Sankara's Advaita. But the impact of the Bhagavata school on Ramanuja has not been traced by the author. The next chapter on Madhva presents the antithesis of Advaita, and the Dvaita school holds a formidable dualistic approach towards the world and reality.

The concluding chapter tries to record the presuppositions of Vedanta as well as compare some western thinkers with the Vedantins very briefly. Sankara and Bradley, Ramanuja and Lotze, Madhva and Bowne have been found closer to each other. The system of Aurobindo is the attempt at synthesizing the polar views of the Vedanta. It is undoubtedly the synthesis of Sankara and Madhva. Had the author given some more space to this part of his book, it would have been extremely advantageous both to the students of Indian philosophy and to the common readers. The next edition of the book, we are sure, would be able to fulfil this lacuna. How-

ever, the author deserves our commendation for presenting this book to the English-knowing readers.

DR. S. P. DUBEY

PERSPECTIVISM IN ART: BY JERRY I. JACOBSON, Published by Philosophical Library, New York 10016, Pages 177, Price \$ 8.75.

Perspectivism is concerned with man's relation 'to the infinite extensions of actuality'. It holds that there are many unrealized possibilities in the universe and these are to be actualized. A supreme possibility is the existence of a Supreme Spirit. Mr. Jacobson presents the philosophy of perspectivism with some illustrations from art. First he examines the establishment of a rational telos by taking us through the foundations of knowledge and teleological dynamism. Then he speaks of the foundations of the ethical perspective. This book does not present a systematic philosophical argument nor does it free itself from self-contradictions. A kind of drifting with some scientific theories is so great that it makes the book a difficult one for the common reader.

The author believes in 'free will, of a sort' (p. 17). He interprets reincarnation as 'the passing on of neuronal memory engrams as channeled impulses' (p. 20). Evidently he has not heard of the part played by the subtle astral body involved in reincarnation. In painting, the author is a painter and the book reproduces some of his paintings which he annotates (!); in painting he appears to accept representational painting (p. 30). Is not all art a representation? Matter, he says, is 'that stuff out there' (p. 40). Does it include the sentient organisms other than those of the percipient? When he speaks of a structured cosmos, he accepts what he rejected earlier in the book. He explains the concept of the soul in purely physiological or biological terms, and he would prefer not to use it (p. 73). As in most medieval and modern western philosophical writings the author equates the mind with the soul. When he argues for a subjective telos in the first part, he speaks as a solipsist. The discussion of the ethical problems is the only interesting part of the book.

DR. P. S. SASTRI, M.A., PH.D.

Prof. and Head of the Dept. of English  
Nagpur University.



## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SHRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA— RAJKOT

APRIL 1971 THROUGH MARCH 1974 WITH SOME  
LATER INFORMATION

Founded in 1927, following a request of leading citizens to Swami Madhavananda who was visiting there, and with substantial help from the Maharaja of Morvi, this Ashrama continues to be the only one of the Ramakrishna Order in the state of Gujarat, which Swami Vivekananda blessed by his prolonged visits in 1890-92. The present activities of the Ashrama may be indicated as follows:

(1) *Religious*: Regular *Temple services*—*puja*, *path*, *arati*, prayer; and occasional special *pujas* and *havans*, etc. Regular religious *discourses*; also special *celebrations*, notable for learned discussions of the relevant topics, by distinguished speakers. *Preaching*-trips by monks of the Ashrama, even to distant villages—stressing the nation's cultural and spiritual ideals.

(2) *Educational-Cultural*: *Publication Department* has so far brought out some 75 books, for the Gujarati-reading public. In the present period, five new books and eight reprinted editions were produced. The sales section stocks appropriate books in Gujarati, Hindi, and English as well as pictures, etc. It took part in local book fairs and also in a larger one at Ahmedabad. The *Vidyarthi Mandir*, a boys' hostel on the Gurukula system, accommodates nearly 80 boys, mostly from villages. Stress is on all-round character-building: training in self-help and discipline are essential features. Only a few free or part-free students can yet be maintained, since no endowments for this are at hand; many applications from deserving students have to be turned down. *Free Library and Reading Room* for the local public, is growing steadily. At the end of the present period, 20,799 books were available, and 18,600 books were loaned during the last of the three years. There were 1,115 members. 111 periodicals and nine dailies were available. The Children's Section is very popular, and a valuable Reference Section completes the picture. *Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Essay and Recitations Competitions* have been regularly held—Essays, since 1967, open to all Gujarat students, in categories from schools through Universities; Recitations,

since 1970 for the student community of Rajkot. Suitable prizes are awarded. For college students, Debates have also been added to the Recitations contests.

(3) *Medical*: Free outdoor *Homoeopathic and Ayurvedic Dispensaries* within the Ashrama compound in the heart of the city, are serving the area, especially its poorer section. During the period under review, an average of over 6,000 new cases was treated annually; revisits averaged over 63,000 annually.

(4) *Relief Work*: Always responsive to urgent calls for help in disaster, the Ashrama has been overloaded almost constantly since 1968 with successive appeals. First the Surat Flood Relief and Rehabilitation programme; then Drought Relief in Kutch; then relief and rehabilitation for rain and flood-victims in Rajkot and Surendranagar districts. Next another drought in Rajkot and nearby areas, in which the Ashrama began a free kitchen in Bhadla feeding 1,000 starving people a day. Before this was ended, devastating floods (Sept. 1973) in Banaskantha and Panchmahal districts demanded immediate help. Besides the latter, the Ashrama undertook Rehabilitation of a village of Banaskantha District, encouraged by outside financial help: a model village for 200 families was built up. Further, *bajra* (a kind of millet) was distributed free to the destitute; and for refugees from Nagarpakar 600 wool blankets were distributed.

(5) *Response* from the community: Stemming doubtless from Swamiji's influence, enthusiastic support for the work of the Order keeps appearing over most of Gujarat. Requests for speakers exceeds the Ashram's capacity to fulfil; and organized groups, many eager for affiliation with the Order, are active in Limbdi (with a permanent *mandir*), Bhavnagar, Baroda, Ahmedabad, Anand, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Surat, Kutch etc. The lack of monastic members to take charge of such, is acutely felt.

(6) *Financial Needs*: for Completion of *Temple*, under construction now: Rs. 500,000/- For endowment or contributions for *maintenance* of *students* in *Vidyarthi Mandir*: Rs. 1,200/- per boy per year. For *Study Hall* (Students' Home): Rs. 100,000/-. For *Hobby Centre* (Students' Home): Rs. 100,000/-. For *Monks' Quarters* (including repairs). Funds for subsidized Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature: Rs. 100,000/-.