



Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 85

DECEMBER 1980

No. 12

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

"Truth is one : sages call It by various names"

जातवेदसे सुनवाम सोमम-
रातीयतो नि दहाति वेदः ।
स नः पर्षदति दुर्गाणि विश्वा
नावेव सिन्धुं दुरितात्यग्निः ॥

1. Let us offer oblation to the omniscient Lord (Jātavedas). May He who knows all burn up our obstacles (*avātīyataḥ*). May Agni protect (*parṣati*) us by taking us beyond all difficulties, just as a boatman takes his boat across the sea.

Rg-Veda 1.99.1

तामग्निवर्णां तपसा ज्वलन्तीं
वैरोचनीं कर्मफलेषु जुष्टाम् ।
दुर्गां देवीं शरणमहं प्रपद्ये
सुतरसि तरसे नमः ॥

2. I take refuge in Her, the Goddess Durgā, of the colour of fire blazing with *tapas*, who when pleased bestows the fruits of karma. O Saviour, take us beyond all difficulties. Salutations to Thee.

Rg-Veda (Khila) 10.127.12

अग्ने त्वं पारया नव्यो अस्मान्
स्वस्तिभिरति दुर्गाणि विश्वा ।
पूषच पृथ्वी बहुला न उर्वी
भवा तोकाय तनयाय शं योः ॥

3. May Agni who is worthy of praise lead us by auspicious means beyond all dangers. May our home town (*pūh*) and the earth become prosperous. Bless our children and grand-children.

Rg-Veda 1.189.2

विश्वानि नो दुग्ंहा जातवेदः
सिन्धुं न नावा दुरिताति पर्षि ।
अग्ने अत्रिबन्मनसा गृणानो
अस्माकं बोध्यविता तनूनाम् ॥

4. May Jātavedas, the destroyer of all sins, ferry us like a boat across this sea of troubles. O Agni, be conscious (*bodhi*) of our bodies and protect them like the sage Atri who always repeated mentally. [‘May everyone be whole and happy’].¹

Rg-Veda 5.4.9

* These selections from *Rg-Veda* originally addressed to Fire, become in the *Taittirīyāranyaka* the famous *Durgā-sūktam* addressed to the Goddess Durgā.

1. This clause in parenthesis must be added to get complete meaning. Atri is a well-known sage of the Vedas and Purāṇas.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

This month's EDITORIAL discusses certain important conditions for the attainment of success in meditation.

Under the title A MESSAGE FOR NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION we are publishing the benedictory address given by Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, the President-General of the Ramakrishna Order and Mission, at the inauguration of the Vivekananda Centenary Auditorium of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, on 7 September 1980.

In the second instalment of SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: HIS HUMANISM Swami Ranganathanandaji, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, gives you a deep insight into the unique nature of Swami Vivekananda's humanism and the forces that had moulded it into shape.

A refreshingly original interpretation of the meaning of the Incarnation and some

of the teachings and actions of Jesus Christ in the light of Vedanta is to be found in JESUS, THE CHRIST by Swami Siddhinathananda of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trichur. The article is based on a talk given at a Catholic Seminary by the author who is a distinguished scholar and has several books in Malayalam and English to his credit.

Dr. Vinita Wanchoo, M.A., M.A., D.Phil., former professor in Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow, presents a brilliant study of Maya in the tenth instalment of her article IS VEDANTA A PHILOSOPHY OF ESCAPE?

After a lapse of time we are once again bringing out some of the unpublished LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, mostly addressed to Mrs. G. W. Hale, one of those noble-hearted people who helped Swamiji during his early days in America.

MEDITATION—ITS CONDITIONS AND FULFILMENT—I

(EDITORIAL)

If meditation is to become a direct means of God-experience, it must fulfil certain conditions. It is not necessary to devote long hours to meditation, but it is necessary to perfect the way we do it. If practised haphazardly or without proper preparation and training, meditation will not reveal the light that the aspirant is seeking and may even lead him astray. The Guru teaches a particular technique but the aspirant must create certain conditions in himself in order to make the teachings fruitful.

In other words, meditation must be linked to the general tenor of life, the basic attitudes and strivings of everyday life. Spiritual

life involves the total life of a person, and if meditation is to become central to spiritual life it must be supported by the whole life. Since the normal life of the average individual is full of defects and difficulties it must be set right first.

This is of course true of every endeavour. Our total life is influencing every activity of ours and if we fail to achieve success in life, the cause of failure can be traced to the way we live, think and react. Successful men are not necessarily the most brilliant or talented people. They are invariably those who have right attitudes and who put their whole life behind their work. In order

to succeed in any field one's total personality must accept it, support it and adapt itself to its needs.

If this is true of success in secular life, it is all the more true of success in spiritual life. For, unlike worldly success, spiritual success does not depend on external circumstances. A fall in stock exchange, glut in the market, or change in taxation policy could ruin a business. Spiritual life cannot be ruined that way. On the contrary, misfortunes provide a strong incentive to many people to turn to spiritual life. Success in spiritual life depends almost wholly on how we live and adapt ourselves to the demands of the spiritual ideal. It is not enough to read and know more about meditation. Nor is it enough to meditate more. These are helps, but will not take the aspirant far unless his total life changes.

There is no fear of competition in spiritual life. If a man has not attained success in worldly life, he can still attain success in spiritual life. Let him think, 'Well, I am a failure in worldly life. But let me not be a failure in spiritual life.' However, spiritual life is not easy. It does not offer any shortcuts to success. And so a large number of people bungle in it. Spiritual life too lays down its own conditions. What are the conditions that an aspirant must fulfil in order to attain success in the path of meditation?

Seeking

The first condition is that the meditator must have an attitude of seeking. Meditation is seeking the unseen God in the unknown depths of consciousness. When we pray, we wait for God to come to us. In the beginning of one's spiritual life this kind of waiting is necessary in order to prepare ourselves to approach God. But the time will come when we find we can no longer wait for God and want to seek Him. It is then

that we understand the true meaning of meditation as the movement of the soul towards God. Meditation is not just making the mind calm. Calmness is only a preparation for the interior seeking. This inner seeking is a movement not in time and space but in consciousness. It means the focusing of the mind at the centre of our consciousness. The door to the kingdom of God is hidden in the centre of our consciousness. By continually focusing the powers of the mind at this secret door it finally opens. Meditation is thus a knocking at the door of the inner shrine.

Spiritual seeking implies three things. One is intense aspiration. It is aspiration that relentlessly urges the aspirant to stop not until the goal is reached. The more intense the aspiration is, the more quickly the soul advances. Without this soul hunger meditation becomes just another ordinary ritual or mental exercises. Practising meditation simply because somebody says it is good or necessary is not likely to take the aspirant very far on the spiritual path.

Everyone who turns to spiritual life has some aspiration for higher life. Every spiritual aspirant thinks and says he wants to realize God. Who would not like to have spiritual joy, peace and light if he could get them? The real problem is intensity. It is not enough to have aspiration; it must be raised to a certain level (*kāṣṭhā*) of intensity. Otherwise meditation will only enable the aspirant to attain a certain balance and purity of mind. Only intense yearning for God can make meditation a means of getting higher spiritual experience. By intensifying our effort we can reduce the time and save energy.

What prevents us from intensifying our effort? One is our inability to rise above trifles, our inability to sacrifice immediate needs for the sake of the highest goal. Another reason is irrational fears. Some people think, for instance, that too much

meditation will lead to insanity. There are thousands of lunatics in mental hospitals and thousands more outside. How many of them have become mad because of meditation? On the contrary, Dr. Jung has written that during his practice of over sixty years he had never come across a person who had spiritual faith and strength and yet needed psychiatric treatment. Another reason for lack of intensity is the choice of a wrong ideal. Intense longing for God is possible only when He is regarded as the embodiment of our highest ideals, dreams and desires. Says Swami Vivekananda, 'Live for an ideal, and that one ideal alone. Let it be so great, so strong that there may be nothing else left in the mind, no place for anything else, no time for anything else.'¹

Seeking implies a second prerequisite, namely an awareness or understanding of one's higher self. We seek the company of only those with whom we have a deep personal relationship. A loving and satisfying relationship can be established between two people only when there exists an essential similarity or equality between them. A real and sincere search for God will begin only when the aspirant recognizes a little of the divine perfection, love, beauty and light in his own soul. That is why Swami Vivekananda has defined religion as the manifestation of the divinity already within. In Vedāntic books this seeking is illustrated by the story of the kidnapped prince who grew up in a forest. At last when he realized who he really was he went back to the king. Christ's parable of the prodigal son also refers to the same principle. Through purification the aspirant comes to be more and more aware of the higher dignity of the soul. Discrimination

and the company of holy men strengthen this awareness.

Looking upon oneself as a worthless sinner is a great obstacle on the path of meditation. Such an attitude may be of some help to some aspirants during the early stages of spiritual life when they practise prayer. It may help them in reducing their egoism and increasing dependence on God. As Sri Ramakrishna has said, tears of repentance wash off the mud of worldliness. But beyond a certain point the attitude of a sinner does not help and could become an obstacle to true seeking. Moreover it is possible to look upon oneself as the pure Ātman and at the same time cultivate total dependence on God. This is indeed what Śrī Rāmānuja teaches by his doctrine of *śeṣatva* (dependence). The soul must give up its masks of impurity before approaching the pure radiance of the Lord. The purer the soul becomes, the stronger grows the attraction for God.

Spiritual seeking implies a third prerequisite: freedom of the will. The soul must have a certain degree of freedom to seek God, which means freedom of the will. The will must be freed from the hold of not only bad but also good emotions. If meditation or meditative awareness is to become habitual, the will must be permanently detached from the hold of good and bad impulses. This cannot be done in a day. It is through long practice of selfless work, prayer and similar disciplines that the will gets gradually detached.

Integration

The quest for God becomes successful only when the whole personality supports it. Sometimes only the conscious mind accepts the spiritual ideal. The unconscious goes on in its old ways. When this happens the aspirant cannot give his whole mind to meditation. Meditation then affects only the

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1973), vol. 5, p. 251.

surface personality. Its effects are counteracted by the innumerable other promptings and conflicts of the unconscious.

In his teachings Sri Ramakrishna points out that a thread will not pass through the eye of a needle if even a single fibre sticks out. In the same way, in order to realize God the whole mind must be given to Him. Conscious faculties like reason, will and emotion can be coordinated without much difficulty. The real problem is controlling the desires which work in the unknown depths of the unconscious. The mind can be made one-pointed only when the unconscious is united with the conscious mind and made to cooperate with it. This is called integration of personality.

If the unconscious is the source of our troubles, it is also the storehouse of tremendous psychic power. It is only when the conscious mind is linked to this energy source that meditation becomes a powerful means. Meditation not supported by the unconscious lacks power and may take many years to produce tangible results.

Again, the unconscious holds the roots of culture—the symbols, myths, attitudes and archetypal experiences of the race. When you meditate on your *iṣṭa-devatā* (Chosen Deity) if you look upon him only as a picture, it will only be of some help in concentration. Such a meditation will not have any life-transforming effect. But the Image can transform your life if you connect it to the roots of your culture. Formerly it was customary in India for people to accept as *iṣṭa-devatā* the deity belonging to their own sect or community. But in modern times aspirants belonging to different sects and religions are often found to accept a common divine Image. For instance, many Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas, Śāktas, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Shintoists, and others have accepted Sri Ramakrishna as their meditation-image. An aspirant can establish a living and ever-

lasting relationship with his meditation-image more easily if it is integrated into his cultural framework. Since the roots of one's culture lie deep down in the unconscious, true acceptance of an *iṣṭa devatā* necessitates integration of personality. The advantage of Sri Ramakrishna's image is that it represents the converging point of the spiritual aspirations of the modern man, and its universal dimension makes it a highly flexible ideal capable of being easily integrated into any cultural framework.

Thus we see that the unconscious plays an important role in meditative life. The stones for building our spiritual life lie there; they are to be quarried and properly laid. The springs of our mental energy too are there, only the debris is to be cleared and the energy is to be properly channelled to the conscious mind. It is also the nursery of human faith. The faith that moves mountains has its origin in the unconscious. Unknown and unobserved, the forces of the unconscious are silently shaping our future. All creative men live close to the unconscious. The spiritual aspirant in whom the unconscious is actively supporting the conscious mind does not need the encouragement of others or favourable circumstances or a good mood for the practice of meditation. In him meditation is self-starting and self-supporting.

The spiritual aspirant in whom the unconscious is not supporting the conscious feels no energy or zest for meditation. He is constantly assailed by doubts in spite of reading books and listening to the advice of elders. Above all he has lost faith in himself. He is afraid of the images hiding in the dark chambers of the unconscious. He is afraid that he may at any time succumb to the dark forces of the unconscious. Of course, in the beginning of his spiritual life an aspirant cannot trust his own mind too much because he has not yet fully understood its workings or gained control

over the whole of it. But this condition should not be allowed to last long. He must solve his mental problems intelligently and gain the support of his unconscious. This necessarily involves a certain amount of struggle. And the more intensely we struggle, the more quickly we get out of it. When the unconscious becomes our friend, morality becomes natural to us. In order to make chastity, non-violence and other virtues spontaneous, the unconscious must be integrated into the conscious mind.

When Swami Vivekananda spoke about strength—a favourite theme of his—he was referring not only to the power and glory of the Ātman but also to the hidden powers of the unconscious. In one of his famous lectures on Jñāna-yoga he says, ‘All the strength and succour you want is within yourselves. Therefore, make your own future. “Let the dead past bury its dead.” The infinite future is before you. And you must always remember that each word, thought and deed lays up a store for you and that as bad thoughts and bad works are ready to spring upon you like tigers, so also there is the inspiring hope that the good thoughts and good deeds are ready with the power of a hundred thousand angels to defend you always and for ever.’² To purify the unconscious and then trust it—that is the secret of attaining success in meditative life. It is also the wisdom of sane living.

The question naturally arises as to how the unconscious can be changed and made to work in harmony with the conscious mind. This is indeed difficult as the working of the unconscious is mostly unknown and beyond the reach of the conscious mind. In some people the unconscious suddenly changes without any effort on their part. This phenomenon is called sudden conversion or metanoia. It is well known

in the lives of some of the great saints like St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, Tulsidas, Ekanath, Purandaradas and others, but occurs in the lives of ordinary people also on a smaller scale. When this kind of sudden conversion takes place, barriers within break down, old values and attitudes totally change, and a new life begins. The person gets detached from the world and it becomes impossible for him to go back to his old way of life. How this change takes place is a mystery. It may be the culmination of a process of transformation begun in a previous birth. Devotees, however, believe that this sudden change is a gift of God.

The main reason why many aspirants find spiritual life difficult or uninteresting is that they have not undergone such a drastic conversion. In their case the transformation of the unconscious is a long-drawn-out process. They can hasten the process by practising intense prayer, constant discrimination and by driving down powerful suggestions into the unconscious. Solitude is a great help; it empties the mind. Sri Ramakrishna used to advise his householder disciples to retire into solitude now and then. He used to say, ‘The mind left to itself gradually dries up. Take a jar of water for instance. If the jar is set aside, the water dries up little by little. But that will not happen if the jar is kept immersed in the Ganges.’³ Constant repetition of a Mantra has a profound effect on the unconscious and can gradually bring about great changes in it.

However, the best way to change the unconscious and attain integration of personality is through Karma-yoga. Work directly affects the unconscious and, when properly done, can radically alter the whole of a man’s psyche. In fact, for the vast majority

² *The Complete Works*, (1976), vol. 2, p. 225.

³ *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), p. 1018.

of spiritual aspirants there is no better preparation for meditative life than work done with concentration, detachment and a spirit of service.

Harmony with life

Individual life is only a part of the stream of universal life and so, in order to attain stability, security and peace, the individual must live in harmony with the world around him. Meditation is a focusing of consciousness needing delicate manipulations of the mind, and this becomes difficult when the personality is out of harmony with life. All the beneficial forces necessary for our development—from physical health to mental perfection—are in the universal life, but to make use of them we must learn to live in tune with the infinite. In common parlance, this simply means to be at peace with one's neighbours.

Half the energies of the average man are spent in influencing people and fighting forces which are beyond his control. As a result very little energy is left in him to practise intense meditation. Instead of trying to reform the world, the spiritual aspirant should try to understand the mysterious workings of life and live according to its laws. Life consists of dualities like good and evil, happiness and sorrow, etc. It is impossible to live in harmony with life if we try to choose only one of the pair. If we wish to attain harmony with life, the only way is to accept the antinomical nature of life and remain unaffected by its polarities. To devotees of God this attitude of acceptance is known as self-surrender to God. True self-surrender is not an escapism but is based on a mature philosophy of life.

The secret of harmony lies within us, and not in the outside world. The external environment is continuously changing and it is difficult to control it. What is within our reach is the internal environment, that

is our own mind. And in meditative life this internal environment is far more important than the external one. Observes Geraldine Coster in her eminently readable book *Yoga and Western Psychology*: 'The man who is sufficiently discontented with his environment is likely in course of time to create a new environment while the man who is sufficiently discontented with himself is likely to create a new self.' It is by changing one's self that one attains harmony with life. Change means growth, maturity. Only a mature self can be in harmony with life.

The greatest obstacle to the attainment of harmony is egoism. According to Indian thought the ego is only a false self, a shadow of the true self or Ātman. Sri Ramakrishna calls it the 'unripe I'—the immature self. This false or immature self pretends to maintain the body, the senses, the mind, etc. But in reality all these are parts of universal *prāṇa* or stream of life which supplies them with energy and maintains them. Egoism, instead of helping us, only cuts us away from this common source of sustenance and leaves us impoverished. Hatred, jealousy, competition and similar wrong attitudes are created by the ego, and these keep spiritual growth stunted. Says Alexis Carrel in his famous book *Reflections on Life*: 'Of all bad habits those most harmful to spiritual progress are those of lying, intriguing, slandering and betraying one's neighbours and of turning everything to one's own immediate advantage. The spirit can never develop in an atmosphere of corruption and falsehood.'

There is no need to compete with one's neighbours. Life is so vast and each man is so unique that everyone can find his own particular niche in it without destroying that of others. It may take the majority of people a long time to understand this. But spiritual aspirants, who always form only a small minority, need not and should

not follow the majority blindly. They have chosen a different path. 'Why should we be in such a desperate haste to succeed and in such desperate enterprises?' asks Henry David Thoreau. 'If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.' One of the first things that a spiritual aspirant must do is to stop judging life by the standard of worldly success.

It is not necessary to be always successful and happy in a worldly sense. Sorrow and defeat are unavoidable in life, but these are neither permanent nor can they destroy us. If life is not bringing us happiness, it is consoling to know that it is bringing happiness to somebody else. Rejoicing in the happiness of others, trying to share the sorrow of others—that is how a wise man attains harmony with life. To such a person meditation itself will in due course reveal a higher harmony—the unity of Ātman dwelling in all beings.

We have mentioned a spirit of seeking, integration of personality and harmony with life as the three necessary conditions for attaining success in meditative life. These conditions are imposed by the limitations of man's self-effort. But those who are sincerely devoted to God and depend on Him alone do not worry about such conditions. For them the only means, the Alpha and Omega of spiritual life, is God's grace alone. Patañjali, the author of Yoga Aphorisms, himself states: 'The attainment of *samādhi* is possible through devotion to God.'⁴ For a devotee of God the fundamental problem of spiritual life is to acquire true devotion and make himself fit to receive the love and grace of God. When this problem is faced, all other conditions get fulfilled as a matter of course.

(to be concluded)

4. समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात् ।

Yoga-sūtra 2.45

(Continued from page 499)

Even when they speak to themselves, the Vivekanandas speak to humanity....

The work begun by the two Indian Masters will be carried on resolutely by other workmen of the spirit in other parts of the world. In whatever tunnel a man may be digging, he is never out of sound of the sap being dug on the other side of the mountain....

My European companions, I have made you listen through the Wall, to the blows of the coming one, Asia.... Go to meet her! She is

working for us. We are working for her. Europe and Asia are the two halves of the Soul. Man is not yet. He will be.

I am glad to have been given this opportunity and privilege to speak to you on this profound theme of Vivekananda, so contemporary in relevance.

(to be continued)

A MESSAGE FOR NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION*

SRIMAT SWAMI VIRESWARANANDAJI MAHARAJ

(President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission)

Today India is passing through a crisis—not only India, but the whole world. In our country in every field of our national life we find a chaotic condition, for example, in education. Though we are taught sophisticated subjects in different fields of human knowledge, education has no definite aim, which was not the case in our ancient system. The first aim of our education should be to make the future citizens of India imbibe the cultural ideals of the nation, which alone will make them true citizens of India. In this matter our present day educational system is a colossal failure. As a result, the students are losing their cultural moorings which hold the nation together. In the economic field also the same type of chaotic condition exists. In spite of our attempts to drive away poverty, the condition of the masses is becoming worse and worse. Sometimes we hear statements like, 'The national income has gone up by 4 per cent.' It may be a fact, but the poor people do not experience it because very little of this increase reaches them. Unless their economic, educational and cultural conditions are improved there is no hope for the country. It cannot be left only to the Government to effect this end, but the society as a whole must take up this work. The rich must come to help and raise the condition of the poor, not only for the good of the masses and the country, but indirectly for their own good also. They cannot expect to enjoy this exclusive privilege of social and other advantages for all times. The sooner they

come to their help, the better for them and for the country.

In ancient days the society was built on a socialistic basis and everyone was expected to serve the society and the nation in some way or the other; but at the same time it gave scope to the individual, some freedom to enjoy life, though within certain bounds so that the national life might not be jeopardized. Today, however, we find quite the reverse in our national life, causing serious problems which we are not able to solve. I need not point out to you specific instances. All of us are quite familiar with the conditions in the industrial, labour and business worlds. All these are polluted by extreme selfishness—claiming fundamental rights but losing sight of duties to the nation. It is worse in the political field.

Recently we had a tragedy in Calcutta after a football tournament. The supporters of the rival teams had a fight in which ten lost their lives and some fifty were wounded. It shocked the entire city. The next day there was a radio programme in which several people from different walks of life were interviewed for their opinions about what had happened on the previous day and particularly to know whether the tournament should be continued. Most of them were for closing the tournament. One person, however, reviewed the situation in a very rational way. He said, 'What is the fun in your closing the tournament? It is only one of the incidents that occur daily in other fields of our national life. These are mere symptoms of a disease which has polluted

* Benedictory address delivered at the inauguration of the Swami Vivekananda Centenary

Auditorium of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, on 7 September 1980.

our whole national life. So the remedy lies in bringing about a fundamental change in the national outlook.' That gentleman diagnosed the disease properly. The crisis is not in the outside world, but in the soul of man. A change can be brought about not by the Constitution or Acts of Parliament, but by religion. By religion I do not mean some superstitious beliefs, but direct realization of spiritual truths.

Swamiji on his return to India from America was asked by some young men in South India, 'Well, Swamiji, why don't you come to politics and bring freedom for the country?' Swamiji replied, 'I can get you freedom tomorrow, but will you be able to keep it? Where are the men? First create men, and freedom will come automatically.' And what can create men? Not acts of parliament, but religion as pointed out already.

This phenomenon which we see in India and the world today is nothing new. If you go through the history of the world, and particularly that of India, you will find it to be a common phenomenon from age to age. We had several periods of decadence when great spiritual personalities came amidst us and rebuilt the society with spiritual messages suitable and necessary for the age, which took centuries to unfold themselves. Swamiji says in *Christ the Messenger*.

A wave rises on the ocean, and then there is a hollow. Again another wave rises, perhaps bigger than the first, only to fall again; and again to rise driving onward. Similarly in the march of events, we may notice the same rise and fall; but we generally look towards the rise, forgetting the fall. Both are necessary and both are great. This is the nature of the universe. Whether in the world of our thoughts, or in the world of our relations in society, or in our spiritual affairs this same succession of movements, of rises and falls is going on. Hence great predominances in the march of events, the liberal ideals, are marshalled ahead, afterwards to sink down, to

assimilate, to ruminate, as it were, over the past—to adjust, to conserve, to gather strength once more for a new rise and a greater one. The history of nations also has ever been like this.¹

Also we find in the *Gītā*.

*Yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata,
Abhyutthanam adharmasya
tadātmānam sṛjāmyaham.*

*Paritrāṇāya sādhuṇām
vināsāya ca duṣkṛtām,
Dharma-samsthapanarthaya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge.—*

Whenever, O descendant of Bharata, righteousness declines and unrighteousness prevails, I manifest Myself.

For the protection of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of religion, I come into being from age to age.²

Thus we had Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Śrī Gaurāṅga, and now Sri Ramakrishna. The present age of decadence requires a new spiritual personality and a new message, not only for India but for the whole world. Today we have such a personality in Sri Ramakrishna. If we analyse the present condition and the message left by him, we find he is the man of this age for whom the whole world has been looking forward for a long time. Particularly for us in India his message is essential if we are to rebuild the nation and the society, and become once more a great nation, and share our spiritual message with other nations who are also waiting for it. We had shared this in ancient days and have to do it once more in this age also. Sri Kṛṣṇa's message had reached up to the Mediterranean coast from Mathura and

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1978), vol. 4, p. 138.

2. *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, 4.7-8.

Buddha's message all over the East. The modern message of Sri Ramakrishna is destined to spread all over the world. His message is received in every part of the world with great eagerness. What then is his message? I shall try to put it as briefly as I can, for I have already taken much of your time.

To a sceptic scientific world which depends on reason and direct perception of things, he, through his direct realization, proved the existence of God whom the scientific world denied, for there was no proof of His existence according to them. He not only proved the existence of God but also proved that all religions are true and lead to God realization through the same method: direct experience. This message has great significance for India in particular, where there are several religions fighting with one another leading to bloodshed. This message alone can integrate the followers of different religions into one great nation.

He also pointed out to us, who are socially divided into hundreds of groups fighting with one another often leading to bloodshed, that behind all these surface differences, the same Self or Ātman exists, and it is mere ignorance of this fact that creates all this trouble. He pointed out that *jīva* is Śiva; not only that, but also anyone who serves *jīva* from this angle of vision attains God-realization. This message has a great significance for us today. It wipes out all differences between the secular and the sacred, work and worship. It helps us to hold on to our national ideal, which is God-realization, and at the same time do any kind of work necessary to rebuild the nation—the work that normally externalizes our mind and becomes an obstacle to God-realization.

So I appeal to you all to hold on to this great ideal and work for the backward

people to raise them economically, educationally and culturally. Swamiji has pointed out to us that our neglect of the masses has been the main cause of our national downfall. For centuries we have neglected the masses and committed all kinds of atrocities on them to keep them down. The result has been national slavery. Anyone from outside India could easily come to this country and establish a kingdom or an empire, for the masses were not interested in the affairs of the State. It was the same thing for them whether the Indians ruled them or the foreigners ruled, as their fate was the same: poverty and suffering. So it was slavery for the whole nation because the upper classes could not hold against the foreign attack without the help of the masses. That is why I again remind you of Swamiji's message, not to neglect the masses. So the rich and the upper classes have to climb down from their false notion of superiority and pride of wealth and culture to work for the masses, not only to raise the conditions of the poor but also for their *own* survival. Today we are doing things in various fields of our national life, social, industrial and political, in a way which is like handling a boomerang which will react on us ultimately and wipe us out, for the masses are sure to rise one day, and in that upheaval not only we but all that is good in the nation will be wiped out. So, for our own survival we have to help the masses and raise them. Therefore, my friends, I appeal to everyone of you to take active interest in this work individually and also build up organizations to do this kind of work. Do not, my friends, expect much from the Government, for they cannot do much. All great plans and laws they have passed and may pass in future cannot be implemented unless we take to them. So what is the use of looking towards and blaming them, for they

are also a part of this society. Do it yourselves and that would set right any government which comes to power. Swamiji has interpreted Sri Ramakrishna to us in a way we can understand. He has reduced the high voltage of his Master's life to a lower voltage which can do many things for us

in our day-to-day life and activities. So let us follow Swamiji and we will surely reach the goal, that is, integrating this heterogeneous, selfish mass into a homogeneous, great nation, much greater than it has ever been before.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : HIS HUMANISM

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

10. *Vivekananda's estimate of India's failure to evolve a fully humanist society*

In spite of being the home of this profound vision of man, India itself, Vivekananda declared, had failed to apply this Vedāntic humanism energetically and extensively to solve her own human problems. She had failed to evolve a fully humanist social order upholding the glory of man, and his freedom, equality, and dignity as the Ātman. Through continuous exploitation and oppression by the higher classes, he found millions of the common people of India reduced to the status of 'next-door neighbours to brutes', in his own agony-filled language. Pouring out this agony, he writes in one of his letters from America (*Complete Works*, vol. 5, 1959 edition, pp. 15-17):

No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism. The Lord has shown me that religion is not at fault, but it is the Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism, hypocrites, who invent all sorts of engines of tyranny in the shape of

pāramārthika [highest truth] and *vyāvahārika* [what is practical]....

... I pity them.... Their sleep is never disturbed. Their nice little brown studies of lives never rudely shocked by the wail of woe, of misery, of degradation, and poverty, that has filled the Indian atmosphere—the result of centuries of oppression. They little dream of the ages of tyranny, mental, moral, and physical, that has reduced the image of God [that is man, according to Vedānta] to a mere beast of burden, the emblem of the Divine Mother [that is woman] to a slave to bear children, and life itself a curse. But there are others who see, feel, and shed tears of blood in their hearts, who think that there is a remedy for it, and who are ready to apply this remedy at any cost, even to the giving up of life....

Trust not to the so-called rich, they are more dead than alive. The hope lies in you—in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful.... I may perish of cold and hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle, for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.... Vow, then, to devote your whole lives to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions, going down and down every day.

The establishment of the British Empire in India in the last century, preceded by a century of British commercial rapacity, saw the human situation in India at its lowest

ebb. But the shock of foreign conquest, and contact with the virile culture of the West through the British connection, instead of destroying India as had happened in the case of many other cultures under similar circumstances, only helped to ignite the ever-present fires at the depth of India's soul, and make them flame forth in a great national renaissance which produced great personalities, among whom the greatest, the most authentic, and the most representative of Indian culture as a whole, were Sri Ramakrishna, the teacher, and Swami Vivekananda, the disciple.

11. *Vivekananda: the formative influences on his life*

It is interesting and rewarding to study the formative influences on Vivekananda's life that made him the unique meeting point of the Orient and the Occident, of the ancient and the modern. These influences were four: first, his assimilation of the rich spiritual elements of Indian culture in his early life through the informal education received from his mother and from his own studies; second, his assimilation of the energy and spirit of Western culture through his formal modern education in school and college as a youth; third, his silent spiritual training under his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna, whom Romain Rolland presents to his Western readers in his *Life of Ramakrishna* as 'the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people. Although he has been dead forty years, his soul animates Modern India.' And fourth, his intimate acquaintance, through his extensive travels across the length and breadth of his vast country as a *parivrājaka* or wandering monk, just prior to his historic journey to the West, with the living, pulsating India of peoples and their problems, as much economic as social, political, and spiritual.

This fourth formative influence contributed substantially to the shaping of Vivekananda's humanism. Sri Ramakrishna had foretold, according to Swami Saradananda, one of the brother-disciples of Vivekananda, that when Narendra (the premonastic name of Vivekananda) would come into intimate contact with human suffering, his energy of pride would melt into the energy of human compassion (*Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master*, fourth edition, p. 753).

Ordinary people, contented with walking along the beaten track, happened very often to regard Narendra as arrogant and insolent and of improper conduct, when they saw his external behaviour; but the Master never fell into that error. From the very start of their acquaintance, he could understand that Narendra's 'arrogance and insolence' arose from his self-confidence, which was the result of the extraordinary mental power hidden within him, that his absolutely free behaviour indicated nothing but the self-control natural to him, and that his indifference to the respect shown by people arose from self-satisfaction due to his pure character. He had the conviction that, later on, the extraordinary nature of Narendra would fully blossom like a lotus of a thousand petals and would be established in its own incomparable glory and greatness. *Coming then into collision with the world scorched by miseries, that arrogance and insolence of his would melt into infinite compassion, his extraordinary self-confidence would re-instil hopes in the broken hearts, and his free behaviour, remaining within the bounds of control in all respects, would point out to others that self-control alone was the path to real freedom.* [Italics not in the original.]

This remark of his Master finds its complement in Vivekananda's own admission to his brother monk, Swami Turiyananda, when he met him at Abu Road Station on the eve of his departure for the West (*Life of Swami Vivekananda*, by His Eastern and Western Disciples, fourth edition, p. 285):

Of his meeting with the Swami at Abu station, Swami Turiyananda said later on:

'I vividly remember some remarks made by Swamiji at that time. The exact words and accents, and the deep pathos with which they were uttered, still ring in my ears. He said:

"Haribhai [brother Hari], I am still unable to understand anything of your so-called religion."

'Then with an expression with deep sorrow on his countenance and intense emotion shaking his body, he placed his hands on his heart and added:

"But my heart has expanded very much and I have learnt to feel [the suffering of others]. Believe me, I feel intensely indeed."

'His voice was choked with feeling; he could say no more. For a time profound silence reigned, and tears rolled down his cheeks.'

In telling of this incident, Swami Turiyananda was also overcome. He sat silent for a while, his eye-lids heavy with tears. With a deep sigh he said:

'Can you imagine what passed through my mind on hearing the Swami speak thus? "Are not these", I thought, "the very words and feelings of Buddha?" ... I could clearly perceive that the sufferings of humanity were pulsating in the heart of Swamiji; his heart was a huge cauldron in which the sufferings of mankind were being made into a healing balm.'

Sri Ramakrishna lived from 1836 to 1886. His deep spirituality and wide catholicity and intense humanism drew to him a wide spectrum of humanity—believers and agnostics, intellectuals, and common people, old people and youths. His gentle education of young Narendra in a universal humanism based on the profound Vedāntic vision of the divine spark in man, and as the messenger of strength and fearlessness and hope to all humanity, constitutes an inspiring and impressive episode in modern human history. I have tried to expound this training of his, in some detail, in my small book entitled *The Meeting of East and West in Swami Vivekananda*.

Swami Saradananda refers also to Sri Ramakrishna's intense humanistic orientation after his years of high spiritual ecstasies (ibid., p. 360):

The Master himself said to us on many occasions:

'The natural tendency of this mind is upwards towards the Nirvikalpa plane. Once in Samādhi, it does not feel inclined to come down. It has forcibly to be brought down for your sake. This force is, moreover, not sufficient for bringing me down, so I catch hold of some trifling desires of the lower plane as, "I will smoke tobacco", "I will drink water", "I will take this", "I will see so and so", "I will talk"; these also have to be retained in the mind by effective repetition. It is only then that the mind gradually comes down to the state of body-consciousness. Again, when coming down, it flies off in that [upward] direction. It has to be brought down again by means of such desires.'

What a wonderful phenomenon!

12. *Vivekananda: 'the harmony of all human energy'*

The Vivekananda who emerged out of these fourfold influences, and who burst upon the modern world with his Vedāntic lion-roar proclaiming the innate divinity of man and the glory of the human spirit at the Chicago World's Parliament of Religions in 1893, was a unique personality, not only from the point of view of the history of religion, but also of the history of man and his development. Referring to him as 'Napoleonic in the spiritual realm', Romain Rolland describes the universal sweep of his vision in these words (*Life of Vivekananda*, 1947 edition, p. 310):

In the two words, equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four Yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action, from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all. As in a quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth, and travelled towards Unity along them all simultaneously. He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.

13. *Vivekananda: the awakener of souls*

After his four years of strenuous spiritual and cultural work in the West, where he gave a spiritual orientation to Western humanism and raised it above racial and sectarian limitations, Swami Vivekananda returned to India in 1897 and received a rousing welcome from his awakened countrymen—a welcome, the type of which, in intensity, spontaneity, loftiness and pervasiveness, no military conquerors or other heroes in history have received. And, in response to that tumultuous national welcome, he gave to his people his stirring Vedāntic message to awake from their centuries-long sleep and build up their country on humanist lines. In East or West, he was always the awakener of souls. The central theme of his inspiring Indian speeches was man—his growth, development, and fulfilment. As remarked by Mahatma Gandhi (Foreword to *Education* by Swami Vivekananda):

Surely, Vivekananda's writings need no introduction from anybody. They make their own irresistible appeal.

And as observed by Jawaharlal Nehru (*Discovery of India*, p. 400):

Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems, and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.

Vivekananda's lectures from Colombo in Sri Lanka in the far south, to Almora in the Himalayas in the far north, created a great national awakening. For his main theme was the awakening of the Indian humanity and strengthening it to meet the modern challenges, and utilize the vast opportunities of the modern age to evolve a truly humanist social order. We catch this theme in the very opening sentence of his first

speech on the Indian soil, in Ramnad, near the ancient sacred pilgrim town of Rameshwaram in the far south, in 1897, delivered just fifty years before India achieved her political independence in 1947 (*Complete Works*, vol. 3, 1960 edition, pp. 145-46):

The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awaking, and a voice is coming to us—away back where history and even tradition fails to peep into the gloom of the past, coming down from there, reflected, as it were, from peak to peak of the infinite Himalaya of knowledge, and of love, and of work, India, this motherland of ours—a voice is coming unto us, gentle, firm, and yet unmistakable in its utterances, and is gaining volume as days pass by, and behold, the sleeper is awakening! Like a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away, and only the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep.

None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet!

'Imagine the thunderous reverberations of these words,' remarks Romain Rolland, and adds (*Life of Vivekananda*, pp. 124-25):

From that day, the awakening of the torpid colossus began. If the generation that followed saw, three years after Vivekananda's death, the revolt of Bengal, the prelude to the great movement of Tilak and Gandhi, if India today has definitely taken part in the collective action of organized masses, it is due to the initial shock, to the mighty 'Lazarus, come forth!' of the message from Madras.

This awakening led, within less than a decade, to political awakening and the initiation of the peoples' struggle for political freedom. It started with the Swadeshi agitation in Bengal in 1905, passed through the violent anarchist revolutionary movement thereafter, and culminated in the non-

violent mass Gandhian Satyagraha and 'Quit India' movements from 1920 to 1947. Says Romain Rolland on the impact of Vivekananda on the Indian nation (ibid., pp. 314-16):

He had a genius for arresting words and burning phrases hammered out white-hot in the forge of his soul, so that they transpierced thousands. The one that made the deepest impression was the famous phrase: *Daridra-Nārāyaṇa* (the beggar-god). . . .

So India was hauled out of the shifting sands of barren speculation, wherein she had been engulfed for centuries, by the hand of one of her own sannyāsins; and the result was that the whole reservoir of mysticism, sleeping beneath, broke its bounds, and spread by a series of great ripples into action. The West ought to be aware of the tremendous energies liberated by these means. . . .

Whatever the part played in this re-awakening by the three generations of trumpeters during the previous century—(the greatest of whom we salute, the genial Precursor: Ram Mohun Roy), the decisive call was that trumpet blast of the lectures delivered at Colombo and Madras.

Since I am scheduled to speak on 'Vivekananda's Impact on Modern India' tomorrow at the Institute of Oriental Studies, I do not wish to elaborate on this theme further today.

The intensity of Vivekananda's humanistic impulse is particularly revealed in the course of the following letter written to Miss Mary Hale of Chicago on 9 July 1897 (*Complete Works*, vol. 5, pp. 135-36):

I have lost all wish for my salvation. I never wanted earthly enjoyments. I must see my machine in strong working order, and then knowing sure that I have put in a lever for the good of humanity, in India at least, which no power can drive back, I will sleep, without caring what will be next. 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.

14. *Vivekananda's humanism: its uniqueness*

The humanism expounded by Vivekananda is intensely human and universal. But it is also something more than human; for it derives its strength and sanction, as I said earlier, from the ever-present and inalienable divine spark in all men and women. And that constitutes its uniqueness. Man's strength and knowledge can be either destructive or constructive: they can give him and his fellow human beings life and love, and joy and peace, or death and hatred, sorrow and unfulfilment. Which of these two a man will choose will primarily depend on the spiritual development, the consciousness level, that he has attained, and only secondarily on his economic and social environment. It is obvious today that economically highly developed societies can foster, cannot escape from, alienation, loneliness, and crime; but the other truth is not so obvious, yet India's experience demonstrates it, that poverty and crime need not go together, that poverty of the pocket need not always mean poverty of heart. If the human consciousness functions at the sense level, and at the level of the ego presiding over man's organic system, man can scatter only tension and peacelessness around him. But if it functions from the deeper level of his divine dimension, or from layers close to it, he will become, naturally and spontaneously, a focus of love and peace and fearlessness around him. A humanism that is strengthened and sustained by the ignition of the divine spark in man is far different from the current humanism of the West, including its scientific humanism. There is a universality and dynamism in the former, and its energies are entirely positive and never negative.

That is the strength and range and relevance of Vivekananda's Vedāntic humanism. He accepts the human situation,

man as we find him in society. He also accepts the need for the manipulation of his socio-political conditions, up to a point, to ensure his growth and development. But he will insist that man must develop and grow further, that he must evolve and steadily unfold also the higher divine possibilities hidden within him. This is echoed in modern biology in the concept of *psycho-social evolution*, of evolution rising from the organic level to the ethical and moral levels. Vivekananda would appreciate the remark of the Western thinker, it may be Victor Hugo, that we are not men yet, but only candidates to humanity. If man's inside is tense and tumultuous, it means that he has not overcome fear; it means further that he cannot be a guarantee for the peace and fearlessness of the rest of the world.

Just on the eve of the Second World War, an English intellectual, Dr. Josiah Oldfield, in the course of a speech on 'War and Internationalism', said, apparently referring to the Treaty of Versailles:

More wars are caused by bad-tempered people seeking to discuss peace measures than by good-tempered people seeking to discuss war measures!

The UNESCO Preamble embodies this very sentiment:

Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed.

Vivekananda's humanism fully endorses this sentiment. The world knows that the Treaty of Versailles was drawn up by people who were full of tempers compounded of nationalistic violence and colonialistic exploitation. How could such minds bring peace? On the contrary, as later events proved, they were sowing seeds of a more devastating war in the name of peace, along with the seeds of much tension and fear in

the inter-war years. Beasts of prey cannot ensure peace and fearlessness in the forest-world around them, in spite of long discussions and solemn decisions in their peace conferences! What is needed for the establishment of world peace and the functioning of a universal and dynamic humanism is the overcoming of this beastliness in man, through his education being carried beyond the intellectual to the spiritual dimensions of his being. This is what Vivekananda calls true religion, which he defines as 'the manifestation of the divinity already in man'. The Ātman, the one divine and immortal Self in all, is the only rational sanction, says Vivekananda, for all ethical and moral life and action, for all humanistic impulses and behaviour. When man manifests the Ātman in his life and behaviour even a little, he becomes fearless and at peace with himself and at peace with the world, for he then realizes his spiritual oneness with all.

The Upaniṣads, therefore, describe the Ātman as all peace—*śānto'yaṁ ātmā*. All the tensions of man's physical life, all the complexes of his mental dimension, become gently resolved in this higher dimension of the human personality. This is humanism with the deepest spiritual import and, therefore, with the widest social relevance, most stable and steady and, therefore, beyond the reach of the pressures, narrow and violent, of all political, racial, and religious prejudices, frenzies, and passions.

15. *Indian history: its impressive international humanist record*

This is the uniqueness of the Indian outlook, and of the Indian approach to inter-human and international relations, as interpreted by Vivekananda. We may consider India's history from two points of view: firstly, its successes; secondly, its failures.

It has failed in certain fields, but it has registered success in certain other fields. It has so far failed to evolve a truly egalitarian social order, as pointed out by Vivekananda in his letter referred to earlier ; and it is treating this as its supreme national objective in this modern period of her long history. But it has succeeded in developing and maintaining a uniformly peaceful attitude and policy in its international and-inter-religious relations. It is impressive that, during her long history of about five thousand years, India has never gone outside her boundaries to conquer and enslave and exploit other nations, even when she had the political and military power to do so. This is the sweet fruit of her philosophy of man in depth, of her vision of the One Self in all, which made her evaluate man as man, and not as conditioned by his external variable factors such as race, creed, or political nationality. Universal peace and toleration derives only from a universal vision.

Vivekananda's humanism is based on this universal Vedāntic vision of man as the Ātman. This vision of India's sages and philosophers did not remain as a vision, but was given unique political expressions by several Indian political states at the all-India as well as provincial levels, among whom the most outstanding example was the policy and programme of the Mauryan Emperor Aśoka of the third century before Christ. Experiencing remorse after his successful but bloody war with his neighbouring Kalinga state, Aśoka renounced all wars as the instrument of state policy and, as proclaimed through his numerous rock and pillar edicts, many of which still exist, he silenced all war drums, *yuddha-bheri*, and struck the kettle-drums of truth and justice, *dharma-bheri*; and this not only in the political and international fields, but also in the fields of inter-religious relations. This wise policy of nonviolence,

active toleration, and international understanding was taken up by his successors also at the all-India and provincial levels, who extended welcome and hospitality to successive foreign racial and religious groups, and refugees fleeing from persecution from their own countries, like the Jews and the early Christians from West Asia and the Zoroastrians from Iran.

In several of his speeches, Vivekananda has referred to this peaceful character of India's international relations. Said he in his 'First Public Lecture in the East', delivered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in January 1897 (*Complete Works*, vol. 3, pp. 103-04):

The debt which the world owes to our motherland is immense. . . . 'The mild Hindu' sometimes is used as an expression of reproach ; but if ever a reproach concealed a wonderful truth, it is in the term, 'the mild Hindu', who has always been the blessed child of God.

Civilizations have arisen in other parts of the world . . . In ancient and in modern times, seeds of great truth and power have been cast abroad by the advancing tides of national life. But mark you, my friends, it has been always with the blast of war trumpets, and with the march of embattled cohorts. Each idea had to be soaked in a deluge of blood. . . . Each word of power had to be followed by the groans of millions, by the wails of orphans, by the tears of widows. This, in the main, other nations have taught. But India has for thousands of years peacefully existed. Here activity prevailed when even Greece did not exist, when Rome was not thought of . . . ; even from then until now, ideas after ideas have marched out from her, *but every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it, and peace before it*. We, of all nations of the world, have never been a conquering race, and that blessing is on our head, and therefore we live.

Again (*ibid.*, p. 222):

Gifts of political knowledge can be made with the blast of trumpets and the march of cohorts. Gifts of secular knowledge and social knowledge can be made with fire and sword. But spiritual knowledge can be given only in silence, like the

dew that falls unseen and unheard, yet bringing into bloom masses of roses. This has been the gift of India to the world again and again.

Vivekananda pointed this out as one of the sweetest fruits of India's humanism. It is also illustrated by the spread of Buddhism throughout Asia in a uniformly peaceful manner. Humanism cannot coexist with any predatory attitude or behaviour; it cannot coexist also with any intolerant attitude and behaviour. India's failure in upholding her humanism has been, as I said earlier, in her own national society. And Vivekananda's contribution to correct this failure and evolve a humane social order in India in this modern age is immense. And he took India out of her isolation of centuries into the main stream of modern international life, in order to achieve this very objective. He was, as I have said earlier, deeply imbued with the humanistic and intellectual riches of modern Western thought, with its theoretical and practical contributions in the fields of science, and political and economic contributions in the fields of society. He was fully aware of the international character of human relationships in the modern context. His was not to be the role of a reactionary narrow patriot who would take his country away from the contamination of other peoples, or ride his chariot of a jingoistic nationalism roughly over the freedom and dignity of other nations. He loved India deeply; but he loved humanity at large also with an equal passion.

16. *Vivekananda: a teacher of internationalism*

Vivekananda's programme of human development in his own country was thus designed to be achieved, not in an isolated exclusive national context, but in the broadest context of international cooper-

ation. He advocated internationalism and international cooperation long before that concept became an international reality. In his lecture on 'Vedānta and Its Application to Indian Life', delivered in Madras in 1897, he upheld this vision of human solidarity as taught in Vedānta (*Complete Works*, vol. 3, pp. 240-41):

The second great idea which the world is waiting to receive from our Upaniṣads is the solidarity of this universe. The old lines of demarcation and differentiation are vanishing rapidly.... Our Upaniṣads say that the cause of all misery is ignorance; and that is perfectly true when applied to every state of life, either social, or spiritual. It is ignorance that makes us hate each other, it is through ignorance that we do not know and do not love each other. As soon as we come to know each other, love comes, must come, for are we not one?

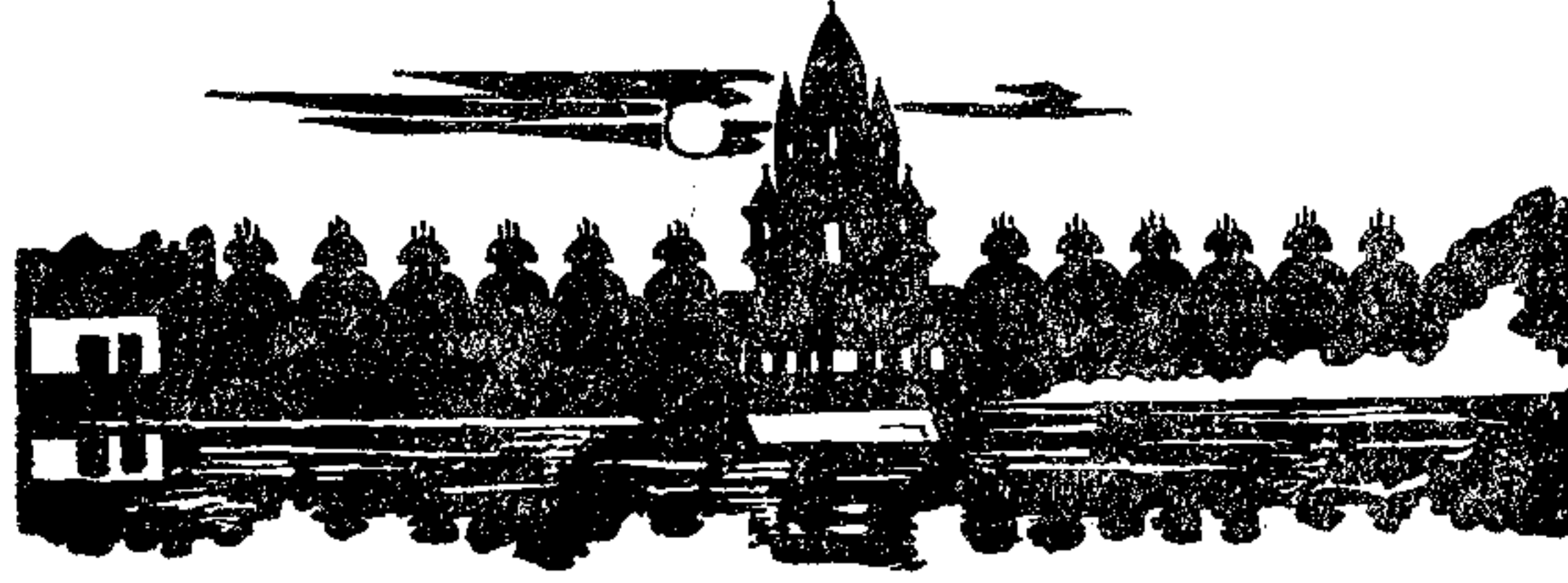
Thus we find solidarity coming in spite of itself. Even in politics and sociology, problems that were only national twenty years ago, can no more be solved on national grounds only. They are assuming huge proportions, gigantic shapes. They can only be solved when looked at in the broader light of international grounds. International organizations, international combinations, international laws are the cry of the day. That shows the solidarity.

In science, every day we are coming to a similar broad view of matter. You speak of matter, the whole universe as one mass, one ocean of matter, in which you and I, the sun and the moon, and everything else are but the names of different little whirlpools and nothing more. Mentally speaking, it is one universal ocean of thought, in which you and I are similar little whirlpools; and, as spirit, it moveth not, it changeth not. It is the one unchangeable, unbroken, homogeneous Atman.

The cry for morality is coming also, and that is to be found in our books. The explanation of morality, the fountain of ethics, that also the world wants; and that it will get here.

Romain Rolland concludes his *Life of Vivekananda* with an invitation to the West to respond to the work of human unity initiated by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda (pp. 344-48):

(Continued on page 488)



JESUS, THE CHRIST

SWAMI SIDDHINATHANANDA

Man is man because he can think, and think logically. Otherwise he is no better, if not worse, than quadrupeds. Though his logic is limited, its very limitation leads him to something beyond, for the finite presupposes the infinite. Intuition of the infinite is the unique privilege of homo sapiens. It makes man religious and spiritual, for in his inmost dimension he is infinite and hence is destined to return to his infinite source. This returning of the soul to its source is what constitutes religion. Howsoever far the prodigal might stray, he is pre-ordained to go back to his Father. So man cannot escape being religious.

When it is said, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' (Genesis 1.1) it is taken for granted that before creation God alone was. 'Well, my boy, in the beginning there was only *Sat* [Being] alone, without a second,' says the Upaniṣad. That Being or God transformed Himself into the manifold world. Questions like 'Why did He become many?' and 'Why did He create the world?' cannot be conclusively answered. Man, subject to time, space and causation, is putting this question to God who by definition is beyond these. The limited cannot comprehend the unlimited. God is not bound to answer man's childish questions. Yet, we must put the question and try to find some sort

of an answer, for the very constitution of the mind makes it question everything, including the infinite. Intellectual giants among philosophers deny the very creation itself. Can the sun ever accept the existence of darkness? But this is the viewpoint of the Sun or God. This is the condition of spiritual absorption. How are we to know if this experiential explanation is the ultimate truth?—From the intimations of the illumined.

How to know that their vision is valid?
Was there any world when you were fast asleep?

No, there was none.

Were you not existing during sleep?
Yes, I must have been there, though I knew nothing.

So there is an experience within the ken of everyone of us wherein there is no duality, and yet it is not non-being. This experience gives us a glimpse of the non-dual self-realization that the *Rṣis* speak of. So we may conclude that those who deny creation may be right from their standpoint.

In the opinion of some others, the world is only an appearance, the same substance being designated by different names and forms. Denuded of names and forms, the substance remains the same and undivided. With the same gold one may make an armlet or a bracelet, a necklace or a nose-

ring. To the customer they are different, but to the smith they are only different forms of the same yellow metal. Likewise, man in his ignorance sees the myriad names and forms, underlying each of which is the same truth. In dream we create a world of our own; but the tigers and serpents and the forest are only the projections of our own mental modifications.

But in the view of some others, the world is not so unsubstantial as the stuff dreams are made of. We find a cause for every effect in the world. The world-effect must also have a cause. The phenomenal world is not the creation of any of us. It is the creation of God. God is the first cause. He created the world and entered into it. It is His wish, His sweet will; it is His sport. So God's will is the cause of creation. He can do, undo, or otherwise do; He is free to do what it pleases Him to do. His creation of the world is a sport and at the same time an act of mercy.

Granting that God created the world, the question arises whether the Creator has any care or concern for His creation. Apparently the world seems to be a plaything in the hands of a cruel tyrant. It is hard to believe that the Creator has any consideration or mercy for the beings He has created.

The evidence of God's mercy towards creation is His embodiment. He assumes some suitable form and comes down for the redemption of man. The form of man, because other beings have not evolved enough mentally and physically to crave for redemption. Such manifestations of God are called 'Avatāras', incarnations. But for such Divine Descents, there is no other proof of God's having any concern for the world. Christ's words, 'Ye cannot know the Father except through the Son,' assume added significance in this context.

The major religions of the world can be classified into two groups: those that believe in divine incarnation and those that do not.

Hinduism and Christianity accept the appearance of incarnations; Buddhism and Islam do not. Whereas Christianity contends that God came down as man only once, never before, nor will He ever again in the future, Hinduism is more liberal in its position. It finds no reason to impose parsimony on the divine economy. There have been many incarnations in the past and there will be many more in the future as and when circumstances demand divine intervention. To put a limit to God's descent is to deny His omnipotence, which is tantamount to denying Him. What has happened once may and can happen again under similar circumstances.

Divine incarnations are not all of the same calibre. The manifestations vary according to the need of the times. To fulfill some particular purpose, God may possess some holy man, and once the purpose is over, the afflatus vanishes. Such divine manifestations may be termed inspired incarnations. Then there are partial and also full manifestations. These divisions are according to the degree of divinity manifested.

Usually God deigns to descend when there is a total breakdown of moral values. Preservation of the moral order and protection of the virtuous are the end and aim of every one of God's embodiment. Herein we are concerned with one such, namely, Jesus the Christ. The divinity of Christ is the topic for study.

All beings partake of divinity; but most of them are unaware of the fact, being immersed in ignorance. A few fortunate souls, by spiritual strivings and with divine grace, become aware of their divine dimension. But there are some who from their very birth are aware of their divinity. Such are called incarnations of God. They are ever aware of their spiritual Self and divine destiny. They are the special manifestations of God. Mortal man can never hope to

attain to their stature. He can at best secure his own redemption. But the incarnations are never bound by worldly fetters; they come to bestow salvation on ailing humanity.

The word 'Christ' is derived from the Greek root *khrio* meaning to anoint. So Christ is the anointed of God; He is the Messiah of God, the deliverer of mankind. The Jews were looking forward in expectation of a deliverer which their prophets had prophesied. At the time, the Jews were political vassals of Rome, and so they were expecting the deliverer to be a political redeemer. Religion among them had degenerated into mere rituals and ceremonials. The pharisees and sadducees had reduced religion to sanctimonious hypocrisy. Religion had lost its spiritual content; virtue had vanished and vice flourished. The time was ripe for the advent of one capable of setting right the moral imbalance.

There are two aspects in an incarnation, the human and the divine. The human aspect is individual, temporary and conditioned by circumstances; the divine is eternal and universal. Jesus is the Son of Man; Christ is the Son of God. Jesus is the prophet that came to redeem the Jews; Christ is the Messenger of God come to lead mankind to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is a product of history; Christ is God eternal. Of these two, when the human aspect is over-emphasized, religion becomes narrow and fanatical; when the divine aspect is upheld, universal spirituality will shine forth. Priests purveying benefices predominate in the former; prophets preside over the distribution of the waters of life in the latter.

Only God and Godmen can reveal the divine mysteries. None can know the Father except through the Son. Angels of God had given advance intimation to Joseph of the coming of the Holy Spirit in the

form of his son. That was divine revelation of Christ's divinity. When Joseph and Mary discovered their missing son in the Temple of Jerusalem and asked him why he left them like that, he said to them: 'How is it that you sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' (Luke 2.49). Herein Christ himself gives us an indication of his divine destiny.

It was John the Baptist that first made public the divine mission of Christ. He was the herald of the Son of God. John saw that the time had arrived for a fresh revelation. He had attained the highest eminence a mortal could aspire to. 'Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he,' said Jesus (Matthew 11.11). John was a great teacher who could speak about God and advise people to repent and thereby make themselves worthy to inherit the Kingdom of God. But he was human, Christ was divine. John could baptize only with water, but could not reveal the Father to man. Christ could baptize with the Holy Spirit, that is to say, by opening people's spiritual eyes, thereby enabling them to behold the Father. Christ made man to be reborn in Spirit. It is a prerogative of the Son of God and not of the Son of Man.

No man of the world would have dared to do what Jesus did to the money-changers and dove-dealers. He drove them out of the temple saying that the temple should be a place of worship and not of merchandise.

Walking by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, casting nets into the sea. He said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men' (Matthew 4.19). And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. What made them give heed to this stranger's words and

go with him, forsaking everything? Would they go after any common vagrant? No. Surely they must have seen their Saviour in Christ and the call they heard was the word of God.

At Jacob's well in Samaria, Jesus told the Samaritan woman: 'He who drinks of this water becomes thirsty again. But he who drinks of the water that I will give will never thirst again.' Continuing the conversation the woman said: 'Yes, I know that will happen when the Messiah comes, the anointed of God. When he is come he will proclaim everything to us.' Jesus said to her: 'I who speak to you am he.' Here Jesus proclaimed his being the Messiah. It is not easy to recognize Godmen unless they themselves reveal their true identity. What the Messiah gives is the water of life, the divine manna, tasting which man becomes full and fulfilled.

Christ wrought a number of miracles. Yet the proud priests and pharisees remained blind to the new revelation. To innocent babes and humble women is revealed what is hidden to the proud puritan. Verily pride is the blind that obscures the divine. Rightly has it been said that sin is the middle letter of SIN. Faith and humility are the eyes that see God.

It was written in the Law of the Jews that one should love the Lord with all one's heart and soul and that one should love one's neighbour as oneself (Deut. 6.4 and Lev. 19.18). But according to them, neighbour meant neighbour in faith and not one living close by—a Jew of Cochin is neighbour to a Jew of Mexico. A certain Jewish lawyer, in order to tempt Jesus, asked, 'And who is my neighbour?' (Luke 20.27). It was in answer to this query that Jesus narrated the parable of the good Samaritan. Through this parable, Christ proved that it is not common faith or country that constitutes neighbourliness, but sympathy and selfless service. In all ages and in all places

all good men are neighbours to one another and are worthy of serving and being served. Thus did Jesus make universal a clannish law of the Jews. Godmen are not the spokesmen of any particular period or people, but are perennial voices of the Eternal.

At the last supper, when Christ hinted at his imminent departure, 'Thomas saith unto him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"' Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him"' (John 14.5-7). Then Philip requested that they be shown the Father. 'Jesus saith unto him, "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, "Show us the Father?"'" (John 14.9). Continuing, Jesus said that all his works and words were not his but his Father's. Herein Jesus was explicit in his admission that he was the Christ, the anointed Son of God.

Words of illumined Masters have a power to carry conviction in the hearers, for such men speak with authority of things they have seen and experienced. They are not repeating others' prate. Those who heard Jesus were astonished and spoke among themselves that he was talking with authority, unlike the scribes. He derived his authority from his Father, and that was the secret of his words being for all people and for all time.

Reviving the dead, healing the sick and other similar miracles, we read of Jesus performing. Such supernatural acts may be natural for divine persons. But they do not constitute the measure of the spiritual eminence of Messiahs. Saints and scriptures have denounced such show of miracles.

Christ himself chided the crowd that clamoured for miraculous signs. Miracles may convert those that are ready to believe and confirm the already converted; but they are of no use in converting the unbelievers. At the most they may be of some use to influence the contemporary society, but to succeeding generations miracles are of no use. Performance of miracles does not form part of the permanent contributions of incarnations. God-centredness, self-denial, charity and sympathy are the abiding manifestations of divinity.

When a young man asked Jesus what he should do so that he might inherit eternal life, 'Jesus said unto him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me"' (Matthew 19-21). Who but the son of God would dare advise man to sell all his possessions, and who else could assure treasure in heaven?

In the teachings of incarnations there are two categories: the general and the particular. The general are for all people of all places for all time. The particular are for the particular time, place and people where they were uttered. The general are Śruti, eternally valid; and the particular are Smṛti, valid in the particular context in which they are given. Among the teachings of Christ the Sermon on the Mount constitutes the Śruti. That is the soul of Christianity. Jesus is revealed as the Christ through the Sermon on the Mount.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 5.3) is the very first pronouncement of the Sermon on the Mount. What does 'poor in spirit' mean? The poor in spirit are assured of heaven. So here spirit must stand for that principle in man which is the foremost hindrance to entry into heaven. The ego is the stumbling block to spiritual progress.

Those that lack the ego are the poor in spirit. Ego is the villain that bars the soul's path to heaven. That must be its primary meaning. It has also a secondary sense that points out the way to achieve the eradication of the ego. What is it that makes the ego swell? Possessions. In order to be rid of the ego, one must be really poor, without any burden; poor, not simply in letter but in spirit as well. It may be relevant to remember that this was the teaching that Christ gave to the young man who sought the way to eternal life. Perfect poverty leads to true humility which is the open door to the kingdom of God.

Those who mourn, that is, those who are really repentant, shall receive spiritual comfort. Those who mourn will be meek and their life on earth will be smooth. Genuine thirst for righteousness is the *sine-qua-non* of ethical perfection and spiritual fulfilment. Divine mercy will shine through the seeker of God. The pure heart is the parlour of the heavenly Father. Ego and its progeny such as lust, anger, etc. are the impurities of the heart. When the heart is cleansed of them through humility and hunger for righteousness, God takes possession of the devotee's heart. In similar strain the spiritual stream flows on through Christ's Sermon. It contains the ultimate promise of spiritual perfection and the ethical excellence essential for attaining to perfection. Verily, the Sermon on the Mount is the spiritual manna of the soul that hungers after heaven.

Christ declared that he came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them. He took up the ordinances of the Old Testament one by one and gave them deeper meaning and wider scope. He used the old terms, for that was the language which the people were familiar with. The interpretation that he gave to them made them universal and spiritually more significant.

He showed the way how to pray to God: 'Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6.9-10). Constant remembrance and self-surrender are the essence of prayer and not vain repetitions of petty needs. The high and the low have to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' for bread is His. We should remember that it is God's gift that we are partaking of while eating. That is why even those who do not lack food have to make this supplication. Everything is His; nothing is ours. So what is man's duty? 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Matthew 6.33).

The Son of God admonished man to seek the Kingdom of God without worrying about what one would wear or eat. All Messiahs have assured us that God will take care of His devotees.

How to begin the search for Truth? 'Ask and it shall be given you' (Matthew 7.7). The first step in spiritual life is the thirst for it. When one becomes aware that everything worldly is 'vanity of vanities', one begins to ask oneself, 'What is the meaning of all this?' Then the question is directed to God. But how to submit the question to Him? 'Seek and ye shall find' (Matthew 7.7). He sets out in search of God. Who can show him the way? The Guru, the spiritual teacher. The teacher advises the disciple to knock at the door of heaven. If the aspirant is honest and earnest in his search and keeps knocking, Christ assures us, 'it shall be opened unto you' (ibid.). To knock and continue knock-

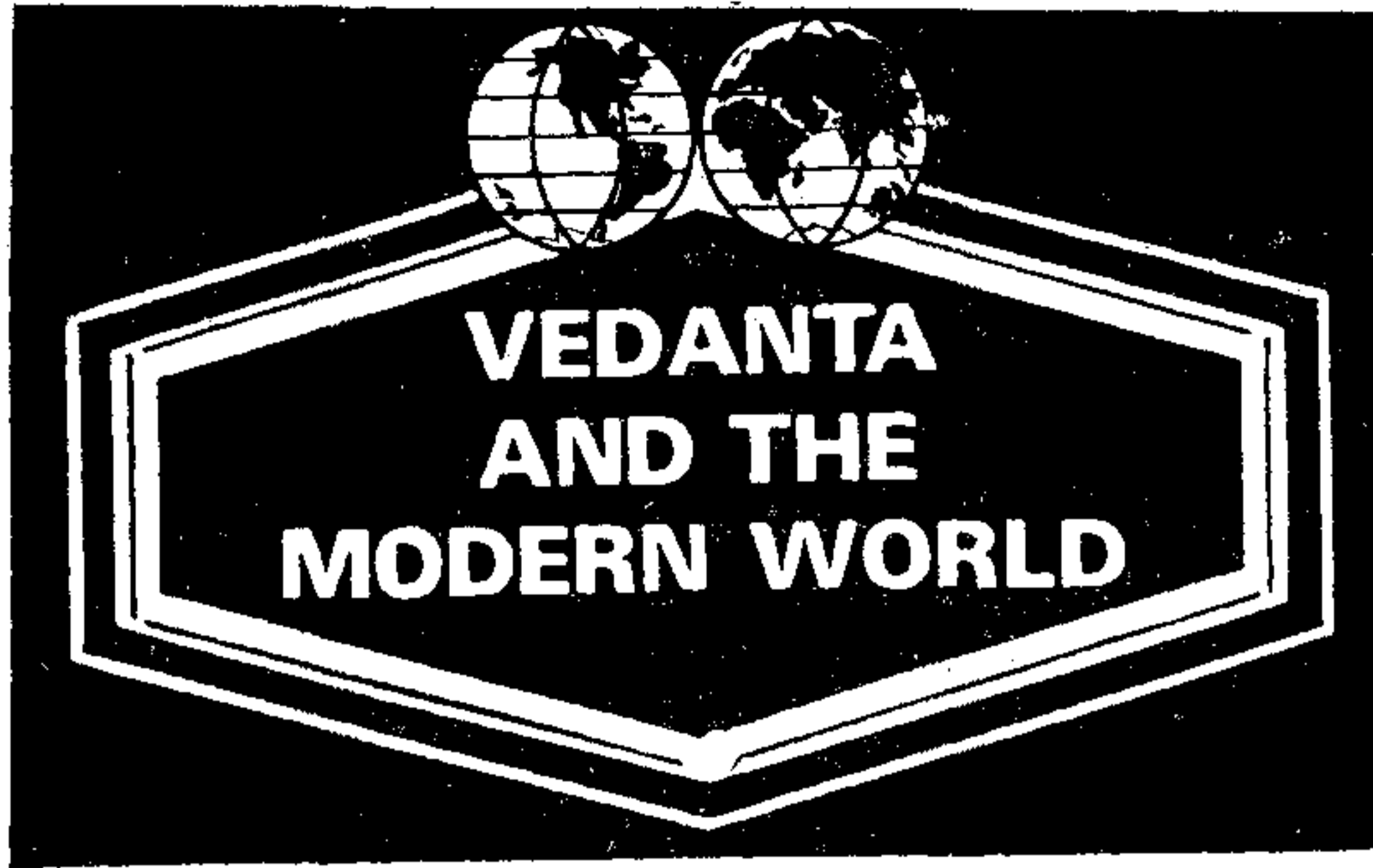
ing is ours; to open the door is His. The human soul surrenders herself; the Lord welcomes the soul as His own. Man can only appeal and not demand. To bestow the blessing is His. Human effort is essential to receive grace; but effort cannot force divine mercy. It befalls only those who have surrendered themselves. So the end of effort is surrender. And His mercy flows to the soul that is emptied of self.

Spiritual teachers impart instruction according to the need and capacity of the pupils. One and the same lesson will not suit all, for each man is differently constituted and hence the need for difference in teaching. Only those who hunger and thirst and are competent deserve to be instructed. To one endowed with dispassion for the world and eager for the Kingdom of God, the teacher says, 'Ask.' To whom? To God. Where is God? The teacher points out to him 'The Father which is in heaven.' When the teacher finds that the disciple is sincere and will persist in his efforts, Christ says, 'The kingdom of heaven is within you.' To one who has seen the divine light within, Christ declares, 'I and my Father are one.' These are the different grades in spiritual progress.

To the weary of the world, Christ calls out: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give ye rest' (Matthew 11.28). A soothing call to the sick of soul. 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' (Matthew 16.26). Let those who have eyes, see, and those who have ears, hear. *Amen.*

HOLY MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

The birthday of Sri Sarada Devi the Holy Mother, falls on Sunday, 28 December 1980.



IS VEDANTA A PHILOSOPHY OF ESCAPE ?—X

DR. VINITA WANCHOO

(Continued from the previous issue)

WORLD AND LIFE DENIAL AND ITS CAUSES
(continued)*

Denial and Māyā

Critics consider the Advaita doctrine of Māyā to be the chief cause of world and life negation. At the outset, it may be remarked that the 'illusion' doctrine coexists in Advaita with a practical and even theoretical realism. Nowhere does Advaita try to establish the nonexistence of the world or negate its conditioning cause or its practical utility. Though Śaṅkara calls the non-illusory mundane object (*vyavahāra*) neither real nor unreal, while the theists call it real, both are agreed that phenomena are distinct from the noumenon. In any case, the phenomenal reality consists in the pragmatic standard of *arthakriyākāritva* (workability). *Vyavahāra* means conduct and action. The world is, therefore, a world of action and is to be known in its being and structure through action. Thus, the phenomenal is to be admitted in so far as its empirical and moral values are means to the spiritual end.¹ 'For all practi-

cal purposes the Vedāntin holds the phenomenal to be real and leaves a wide sphere of real usefulness' for it.²

There are not wanting Advaitins³ who take the extreme stand of pure illusionism but, by and large, they hold that things are as they are perceived, because Brahman is not perceived empirically but underlies all that is perceived, known or remembered.⁴ Vedānta accepts the reality of both physical and psychological objects, though it rejects the popular notion of their ultimate independence. An examination of its definition of *pratyakṣa* (sense perception) proves that physical objects and even mental states are objective and known through *vṛttis* (mental modifications) reflecting the pure intelligence.⁵ Illusory objects exist as perceived, and all contradictions are real, so long as we take them at their own level.

The Vedānta carefully distinguishes between the real, phenomenal and false. The three orders do not make the world an 'illusion' in the common acceptance of that term, and the Vedānta has a standard for separating them, namely *bādha* or 'contradiction of the lower in a higher level of

* Under this heading in the previous instalment intellectualism, pantheistic mysticism, and *mokṣa* were discussed in relation to the critics' charge against Vedānta of world denial.

1. Cf. F. M. Müller, *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. 183.

2. F. M. Müller, *The Vedanta Philosophy*, p. 85.

3. E.g., Prakāśānanda in *Siddhānta Mukṭāvali*.

4. Cf. *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*, 2.12, 33.

5. *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, 2.17-22.

experience.' Advaita holds all things perceived, conceived and named as phenomenal. Māyā is just this distinction of the phenomenal and the real, and the former can only exist as the appearance of some real.

The critic objects that since, according to Advaita, to seek to know Māyā or Avidyā is a self-contradictory position (ignorance being by its nature unknowable), it is a non-philosophic doctrine in origin and nature.⁶ And only by giving up the attempt to understand the nature of Māyā does Advaita come to a position of realism. It is true that theoretically it is objectionable for philosophy to account for any difficulty by holding it to be an illusion to be destroyed when truth dawns, but Advaita finds support in experience itself. There do exist illusions which disappear with the arising of knowledge, and our standard of reality is formed by the latter experience of knowledge which remains uncontradicted.⁷ In the light of the Absolute or ideal the imperfect world is bound to be discovered as less than real (*mithyā*), or as disappearing (*bādhita*) at the level of the ideal.⁸ In effect the theistic Vedāntins, in spite of their criticism, end in the same position: to try to refute *mithyātva* and to explain illusion as a real manifestation of the real, as does Rāmānuja through his *satkhyātivāda*, brings the empirical world and the illusory objects

to the same level with reference to reality.⁹ Advaitins admit that since the Absolute is perfection itself, it cannot explain the experience of that which is defective or imperfect; yet it is none the less real, and its nature is shadowed forth in the world.¹⁰

The critic indicts the theory of levels as a weak rationalization forced upon the Advaitin because of the unavoidable nature of the world reality pressing upon him and refusing to disappear simply because he has called it 'unreal'. But the objector, who considers the psychological and practical effects of the Māyā doctrine to be depressing and deadening to all powers of human life, cannot refuse to take account of the distinction of levels because, apart from its theoretical support, practically also Advaita has been able to remain the leading champion of traditional social life only on the strength of that doctrine. Far from making it a lame excuse, Vedānta has made it the foundation of human responsibility in society.

The dialectical debate with the dualists and others led to the formulation of five principal definitions of Māyā by older Vedāntins. Studying the different significations in which the term 'Māyā' is used in Advaita philosophy¹¹ it appears that, in general, Vedānta uses 'Māyā' as a mysterious principle of creation and seldom as absolute unreality, even in Advaita.

There are not wanting critics (Farquhar and Winternitz) who declare that the main motive for the adoption of Māyāvāda in Advaita was the scholastic one; that is, systematization of Upaniṣadic philosophy

6. Cf. W. S. Urquhart, *The Vedanta and Modern Thought*, p. 140.

7. Cf. P. T. Raju, *Idealistic Thought of India*, p. 62. The very process of philosophizing begins because the world contains unreality, contradictions between actual and ideal, matter and spirit, practice and theory. Those aspects of experience which show comparative absence of contradiction become the criteria of reality which, unlike the world objects, must be totally free from the possibility of contradiction. Hence Advaita sets the metaphysical standard as changelessness or noncontradiction in all three times.

8. Cf. K. S. Murty, *Reason and Revelation in Advaita*, p. 156.

9. Raju, *Idealistic Thought of India*, p. 131 ff.

10. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 90. The duty of man is to know the higher and to try to realize it. In vain does he long for explanation of 'why' and 'how' the lower has appeared.

11. Cf. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2, pp. 573-74.

being Śaṅkara's aim, he found that Māyā and the doctrine of levels of thought and being, alone could overcome the contradictions of Upaniṣadic thought.¹² But in view of the actual influence of Māyā on the thought and practice of Vedānta it seems that mere scholasticism hardly touches the essence of the matter. The philosophic or mystic consciousness of the contradiction between the reality to which man aspires and the actuality of imperfections from which he suffers, the problem of moral choice between the higher and lower ends of life, leads to Māyāvāda in which the position is adopted that things are not really as they seem but that their meaning can be known only in the unity of reality.¹³ It is a common feeling that the world is not the best possible place, and so man conceives the idea of a perfect reality. However much our knowledge of the social and material world may increase, the contrast between the actual and the ideal always troubles us. The Vedāntin treats present knowledge or experience as partial and imperfect—that is, as 'illusion'—in contrast with a future, permanent, superior truth, and this develops in him the motive power of spiritual progress.

Māyāvāda is specially disliked because of its supposed harmful effects on the spirit of religion.¹⁴ Critics do not pay enough attention to Śaṅkara's insistence on the usefulness of the world for religion and for spiritual enlightenment.¹⁵ The critics' contention that Māyāvāda contradicts religion is rebutted by Deussen¹⁶ who, adopting Kant's three

postulates of faith, argues that religion is possible only if the world is Māyā or appearance, and that the assumption of its final reality will destroy religion: the metaphysical reality of space will destroy the idea of God, of time that of immortality, of causality that of freedom. An empirical theism which makes the world real and different from God has harmful moral implications, as responsibility for evil falls on God. Vedāntic theists avoid this by referring the world order and operation to the immanent principle of karma, by which God is guided. But Advaitins seek to avoid the difficulty of this solution by also adopting the other solution, namely that the world's good and evil are not ultimate but produced by nondiscrimination. Without necessarily subscribing to the Kantian position it can still be seen that the Advaitin's intuition of the impersonal reality is connected integrally with his theistic conception of the personal. He does not confuse the higher and lower, but neither is it logical inconsistency which makes Śaṅkara adopt the personalistic definition of God¹⁷ and give strong defence for the Saguna against the atheists. The knowledge of Īśvara (*apara*) may have to be transcended in Advaitic experience (*para*), but still it is not a false doctrine (*bhrama*). This is only understandable if Śaṅkara's Brahman is not altogether different and separate from Īśvara and can claim all the dignity and value of the theistic conception.¹⁸

Vaiṣṇava Vedāntins make their protest against Māyāvāda largely on the score of its making God only empirical, thus making true *bhakti* impossible. But the belief that *bhakti* and Māyā are irreconcilable is refuted by the history of Vedānta. Not only

12. George Thibaut, trans., *The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary by Śaṅkarācārya*, 'Introduction', pp. cxii-cxiii.

13. Cf. Suresh Chandra Chakravarty, *Philosophy of the Upanisads*, p. 206.

14. Cf. F. M. Müller, *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. 189.

15. E.g., the *jīvanmukta* does not lose the sense of individuality or world-order, though having a correct evaluation of it.

16. *The Philosophy of the Upanisads*, p. 44.

17. Śaṅkara *Bhāṣya* on *Brahma Sūtra*, 1.1.2.

18. Cf. Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism East and West*, pp. 112, 115.

were Advaitins ardent worshippers of the personal deity, but the medieval mystic saints harmoniously and fruitfully combined *bhakti* with Advaita and *Māyā*. Hence it is that Advaita holds great sway in spite of attacks by theists. The special merit of Vedāntic mysticism is its more or less rational reconciliation of the philosophical Absolute with passionate devotionism through the device of the two standpoints, which is not a linguistic rationalization but a principle actually operating in the mystics' lives.

The Advaitins may not be charged with the fault of a double standard—of applying the *vyavahāra* standard to others and the *paramārtha* standard to themselves. Such a criticism is the product of mere prejudice, ignoring the fact that Advaitins did not exempt themselves from the *vyavahāra* standard, either in theory or in practice. All teachers of *Māyā* lived on the basis of the reality of the world.¹⁹ Unless we declare in a wholesale way that they were all hypocritical or weak or unable to live up to their beliefs, an impartial study of their lives proves that they considered the world and karma to be real enough; a metaphysical conviction of *Māyā* did not prevent an equally strong conviction that the world is governed by an eternally unchangeable law, nor were they encouraged by *Māyāvāda* to act as they pleased or to ignore an 'unreal' world. On the contrary, they were impelled to discharge their duties to the world of men by bringing them the message of *Ātman*.

As for the unphilosophic public, the doctrine of *Māyā* never wholly or exclusively shaped the popular thinking. The religious and devotional ideal of a real world as God's *līlā* was an equally powerful

influence.²⁰ As pointed out before, the strain of positivism and realism originating in the Vedas, continuing among the common men, expressed in the Purāṇas, Epics and Dharma-Śāstras, and philosophically supported by the *Gītā*, was always present to counteract extravagances in the development of *Māyāvāda*. Common sense accepted the *bhāvarūpa* nature of *Māyā* and the mysteriousness of the relation between God and the world, which did not interfere with any empirical activity and value. The popular mind might have been unable to grasp the full philosophical significance of the denial of world reality, but did not miss the implication of the distinction of the transcendental and the empirical, nor did it misconstrue it as an invitation to treat the world and life as non-existent. Above all, the common man did not miss the psychological implications of *Māyāvāda*—that *Māyā* means separation and limitation of individuality, and the consequent attachment and aversion (*rāgadveṣa*) which result in karma. Though *Ātman* is one (Advaita) or the inner animating Soul of all souls (*Antaryāmī*), each lives as a separate self (*Jīva*), due to nondiscrimination (*aviveka*) on the individual's part—this has been the meaning of *Māyā* to the ordinary man.

The conclusion of unreality is not irreconcilable with ordinary experience. The idea that the super-temporal, super-spatial and super-causal becomes through *Avidyā* the ground of the opposite type of effect (*saṁsāra*), far from appearing contradictory to many people, affords a satisfactory explanation of world contradictions.²¹ The critic argues that the nearer *Māyā* approaches

20. Cf. Thibaut, *The Vedānta Sūtras with the Commentary by Sankarācārya*, 'Introduction', p. cxxvii.

21. Cf. Samuel Johnson, *Oriental Religions*, p. 352; also F. M. Müller, *Vedānta Philosophy*, p. 85.

19. In fact, the critic has admitted this in charging Advaitins with inconsistency of theory and practice.

the meaning of illusion the more depressing and devitalizing is its effect upon life and activity. He misses the truth that 'realism' in the sense of the belief in the ultimacy of the world and its evil—the belief that its meaning is exactly as it appears—can be an equally hopeless conclusion, because it removes from man the hope of making evils and wrongs anything other than what they are, from a higher standpoint. Illusion, which means that all below God is *Māyā*, is an idea which can help man to master suffering and loss and to turn hin-

drance into help.²² Śaṅkara's teaching that creation is ultimately unreal but has its substance in the divine, or that of Rāmānuja and nimbārka that the world is a mode of the real, or even that of Madhva insisting on the separate existence of creation but only in a *paratantra* (dependent) way, does not separate world and God in practical life. For the common man as well as for the philosopher, such a conviction is motivated by faith and not by 'escapism'. And this becomes the basis of religious optimism.

(To be continued)

²². Johnson, *Oriental Religions*, p. 352.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

To Mrs. G. W. Hale

24

Gloucester, Massachusetts
4 September 1894

Dear Mother,

The bundle was the report of the meeting. Hope you will succeed in publishing some in the Chicago papers.

Here is a letter from Dewanji⁵² to you which will explain his sending a pamphlet to Mr. Hale. The rugs are coming. When they come, take them in, even paying the duty if any. I will pay it to you afterwards. I have plenty of money, more than \$150 in pocket. Will get more tonight. Here are some newspaper clippings, and an *Indian Mirror* I will send later on. Some have been sent to Mr. Barrows;⁵³ don't hope he will give them publicity. Now for your Mrs. Bartlett.

I am in haste. Write more with the clippings. Write to me always, kind Mother—I become very anxious when I do not hear from you. Write, whether I reply sharp or not.

Your son,
VIVEKANANDA

* © The President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math.

⁵². Sri Haridas Viharidas Desai, or Haridasbhai, the Dewan of Junagarh.

⁵³. Dr. John Henry Barrows, who had served as Chairman of the General Committee for the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, 1893,

25

Annisquam
5 September 1894

Dear Mother,

The news of the arrival of the phonograph from Khetri has not come yet. But I am not anxious, because I just now got another letter from India wherein there is no mention of the photographs I sent, showing that parcels reach later than letters.

Herewith I send you an autograph letter of H.H. the Maharaja of Mysore, the chief Hindu king in India. You may see in the map, his territory occupies a very large portion of southern India.

I am very glad that he is slowly being gained over to my side. If he wills, he can set all my plans in work in five days. He has an income of \$ 150 million dollars ; think of that.

May Jagadamba [the Divine Mother] turn his mind towards the good work. He says he quite appreciates my good words—they were about my plans for educating the poor. Hope he will soon show it in material shape.

My love to all. Why the babies⁵⁴ do not prattle?

Your son,
VIVEKANANDA

26

Hotel Bellevue, European Plan
Beacon Street, Boston
12 September 1894

Dear Mother,

I hope you will immediately send me over the little scrap from the *Indian Mirror* about my Detroit lectures which I sent you.

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA

27

Hotel Bellevue
Beacon Street, Boston
13 September 1894

Dear Mother,

Your very kind note came just now. I was suffering for the last few days from cold and fever. I am all right now. I am glad all the papers reached you safe. The newspaper clippings are with Mrs. Bagley;⁵⁵ only a copy has been sent over to you. By the by, Mrs. Bagley becomes jealous if I send away everything to you. That is between you and me. The *Indian Mirror* is with Prof.

⁵⁴. Mrs. Hale's two daughters, Mary and Harriet; and possibly including their cousins, Isabelle and Harriet McKindley.

⁵⁵. Mrs. John J. Bagley, the widow of the ex-Governor of Michigan; she had been the Swami's hostess both in Detroit and in Annisquam, Massachusetts.

Wright,⁵⁶ and he will send it over to you. There is yet no news of the phonograph. Wait one week more and then we will enquire. If you see a letter with the Khetri stamp, then sure the news is coming. I do not smoke one third as much as I used to when Father Pope's⁵⁷ eternal box was ready open day and night. Haridasbhai is to be addressed as Sri only. On the envelope, Dewan Bahadoor ought to be written, as that is a title. Perhaps the note from the Maharaja of Mysore has reached you by this time. I will remain a few days yet in Boston and the vicinity. The bank book is in the bank. We did not take it out, but the cheque book is with me. I am going to write out my thoughts on religion; in that, no missionaries have any place. I am going to lecture in New York in autumn, but I like teaching small circles better, and there will be enough of that in Boston.

The rugs I wanted to be sent from India; and they will come from Punjab, where the best rugs are made.

I had a beautiful letter from Sister Mary.⁵⁸

Narasimha must have got money or passage by this time, and his people have taken care to send him Thomas Cook's passage from place to place. I think he is gone now.

I do not think the Lord will allow his servant to be inflated with vanity at the appreciation of his countrymen. I am glad that they appreciate me; not for my sake, but that I am firmly persuaded that a man is never improved by praise, and so with nations. Think how much of abuse has been quite unnecessarily hurled at the head of my devoted poor country, and for what? They never injured the Christians or their religion or their preachers. They have always been friendly to all. So you see, Mother, every *good word* a foreign nation says to them has such an amount of power for good in India. The American appreciation of my humble work here has really done a good deal of benefit to them. Send a good word, a good thought at least to the down-trodden, villified poor millions of India instead of abusing them day and night. That is what I beg of every nation. Help them if you can; if you cannot, at least cease from abusing them.

I did not see any impropriety in the bathing places at the seashore, but only *vanity* in some: in those that went into water with their corsets on, that was all.

I have not got any copy of the *Inter-Ocean* yet.

With my love to Father Pope, babies, and to you, I remain

Your obedient son,
VIVEKANANDA

⁵⁶. Dr. John Henry Wright, a professor of Greek classics at Harvard University, who had given the Swami a letter of introduction to the chairman of the Committee for Selection of Delegates for the Chicago Parliament of Religions.

⁵⁷. The nickname given by the Swami to Mr. Hale.

⁵⁸. Mary Hale.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE PERSPECTIVES OF THEISM AND ABSOLUTISM IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: EDITED BY DR. T. N. GANAPATHI. Published by the Department of Philosophy. Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College, Madras-600 004. 1978. Pp. ix+69. Rs. 5/-.

The brief but fine book under review is promised to be the first of a series of monographs to be published by the Department of Philosophy of the Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College, and it is such that we should earnestly wish for the rapid fulfilment of the promise. The general editor, Dr. T. N. Ganapathi, is to be heartily congratulated on his splendid beginning. The title of the book raises expectations that the book embodies studies of all schools of Indian theism and absolutism. But Swami Amritananda, the Secretary and Correspondent of the College, restricts the expectation to systems that originated in the connected part of the country and have a high 'local relevance'. His Introduction explains the project well and summaries perceptively the three contributions included in the book.

The monograph contains three sections dealing with Viśiṣṭādvaita, Śaiva Siddhānta and Advaita, written by the noted authorities Dr. M. Narasimhachari, Dr. V. A. Devasenapathi and Dr. R. Balasubramanian, respectively. All the three sections are substantial statements of the related schools, and in spite of marked variations of style and temper, there is a common pattern. We have the listing of the basic texts to start with, followed by accounts of the related epistemology, metaphysics, the conception of the supreme value in life and the pathway towards that consummation. Each section is followed by a table of references and essential bibliography. The overall plan is of great benefit to students and the general reading public interested in the field of study. The reviewer is amazed at the measure of accurate information packed into such brief units.

A few words concerning each contribution may not be out of place. Dr. Narasimhachari is a Sanskrit scholar and has done basic research on Yamunācārya. No wonder his manner of writing has the merits of a Sanskrit style. His English terminology should have had the benefit of a little reconsideration. Rāmānuja does not propound a 'refutation of sevenfold inconsistencies' but propounds a 'sevenfold refutation' (p. 2). Mahāpūrṇa does not seem to have been called Parānkusa also. (p. 3). *Satkhyātivāda* does not

mean that 'all knowledge is real' but that all knowledge is of the real or that it is true or valid (p. 6). Alexander Pope in the verse quoted (p. 9) does not include the finite self in the body of God. The mode may be vitally related to the substance but thereby does not share its substantiality (p. 9). The *prakāra* remains a *prakāra* and does not share the substantiality of the *prakārin*. The *lakṣaṇa* that the Advaitin reads into *tattvamasi* is not *jahallakṣaṇa* or *ajahallakṣaṇa* but *jahadajahallakṣaṇa* (p. 9). The word 'transfiguration' is a queer one in connection with both Rāmānuja's idea of creation and the Advaitic concept of *vivarta*; it means a change bringing about qualitative elevation unsuited to both the intended imports. It is a wonder how it could be put to use in either of the two contexts (pages 10 and 60). Dr. Narasimhachari takes liberties in elucidating Rāmānuja's formula of *parabhakti*, *parajñāna*, *paramabhakti* not allowed by either Perivachchan Pillai or Sudarśanaśūri or Vedānta Desika, and does not justify his innovations (p. 16). There are minor oversights, and a slight revision would have set things right in an otherwise competent presentation of Viśiṣṭādvaita.

Dr. Devasenapathi calls his section an 'Invitation to Śaiva Siddhānta'. The word 'invitation' is currently employed in recent writings for brief accounts of systems of thought, and in the present case it is most appropriately used. It is truly inviting. He sets up the right mood in the reader by a few exalted verses of the devotional outpourings of the Śaiva saints and then fashions out his presentation of the tenets of Śaiva Siddhānta. His great scholarship is kept in the background unobtrusively but manifestly conditions his excellent exposition, throwing out many suggestions on the way for intensive research as he progressively covers his theme. He succeeds marvellously in setting forth the fundamentals in a logically methodical sequence with effortless grace and felicity of expression. The authenticity of matter and fineness of style could only emanate from a spirit of devotion such as his. He sets up a model, and that a difficult one, for the exposition of the theistic doctrine animated by the principle of Bhakti. His 'invitation' is also appetizing, for one would wish for a fuller idea of evolution, *suddha*, *suddhasuddha* and *asuddha*, briefly introduced (p. 38), for this idea of a three-level evolution is characteristic of Śaiva cosmology in all its types. The reviewer ventures to supplement the

author's interpretations of the Vedic designation of the Supreme as 'Rudra' with yet another, as 'one who draws tears of ecstasy from devotees' (Parāśara Bhatta).

Dr. Balasubramanian has distinguished himself by his contributions to Advaitic study, by his presentation of Maṇḍana Misra's version of Advaita and his translation and exposition of an important *vārtika* of Suresvara. In addition, he engages himself periodically in defensive polemics in support of Advaita. There is an existentialist fervour in his writings. He describes his unit in the present publication as 'Advaita: An Overview'. By 'overview' perhaps he understands a contemplative survey of Advaita from the air, as it were, and takes distinctive note of the conceptual landmarks or major doctrinal positions. The title promises no humdrum summary but observation from a height. He fairly fulfils the promise. His survey of Advaitic literature is rather limited. His statement of what he calls the 'perspective' of Advaita is brilliantly done. The account of the epistemology of Advaita is dominated by two points of insistence: (a) the supreme status of Śruti as revelatory of the nondual Absolute, and (b) the determination of the content of error as *anirvacanīya*. Much else in Advaitic epistemology is passed over, perhaps for want of space. After epistemology we have the exposition of the essentials of the metaphysics of Advaita and its doctrine of the way and the goal. Four brief comments are called for.

(1) Dr. Balasubramanian succumbs to the indefensible translation of *vivarta* as 'transfiguration' (p. 60).

(2) The figure of a triple stream is unsuited to represent *avasthā-traya*. The streams may flow side by side but the three states are phases of a single stream (p. 62).

(3) If 'a *jīvanmukta*, though tenanted by a body from the standpoint of others, is indeed free from the body,' how does it come about that he still bears *prārabdha-karma* or its *samskāras* or *avidyā-lesa*? (p. 65)? Are these lingering defilements also matters falling only within the view of others or do they belong intrinsically to his Self in the disembodied state? Surely further clarification is called for here.

(4) The critic of Advaita asks why should we first superimpose (*adhyāropa*) qualities, relations and distinctions on Brahman and then negate them? Dr. Subramanian answers, 'we do not deliberately superimpose them. Our empirical existence is due to *avidyā*. Conditioned by

avidyā, as we are, in our view of things, this superimposition is connate to us. It is through Śruti that we come to know of it and it is Śruti that helps us to remove it' (p. 59). The point of the criticism is slightly missed. There is a natural (*naisargika*) superimposition connate to us. But the Śruti itself heaps up further superimpositions, and it is said to negate all superimpositions eventually. The body-soul superimposition is connate to us. But the postulation of Īsvara as creator and as transcendent of the Jīva is perpetrated by Śruti itself, though this Śruti-engineered superimposition is also said to be sublated finally (cf. Śaṅkara's *Sūtra Bhāṣya*, 2.1.33). The critic's point stands. The *adhyāropa*, in the technical term *adhyāropa-apavāda*, contains both our natural superimposition and also that caused by Śruti itself. The point of the criticism is: why does the Vedāntic revelation itself set up a superimposition such as the myth of creation for it to negate later? The objection demands a more substantial answer than we are given here. It is an objection to the Advaitic interpretation of Śruti, the admittedly paramount *pramāṇa*.

These minor comments on all the three sections in the very fine and useful publication are hazarded for purposes of bearing evidence to the reviewer's honest study. Incidentally if they give occasion to the learned authors to reconsider and perfect the statement of their synoptic expositions, so much the better. It remains only to repeat that the Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College and the Department of Philosophy in it are to be thanked for their new line of service to philosophical enlightenment, and the reviewer and the reading public look forward with eager hope for the next issues of the series.

S. S. RAGHAVACHAR
Retd. Professor of Philosophy
University of Mysore

EMERSION OF VIVEKANANDA: BY A PILGRIM (P.M.). Published by Mihir Ranjan Mukherjee, 106/C Raja Dinendra Street, Calcutta-700 004. 1978. Pp. xii+130. Rs. 10.00.

What the writer actually means is 'emergence of Vivekananda—from the clouds of hearsay and the storms of eclat'. In thirty-three chapters he has described the life of Swami Vivekananda in his own way and tried to interpret different phases of the Swami's life. It is a good attempt but one should follow or evolve a certain methodology

in doing so. Romain Rolland, Dr. B. N. Datta, Swami Gambhirananda, Marie Louise Burke, Shankari Prasad Basu, and in some respects Swami Ashokananda undertook a similar task when they wrote on Swamiji. Yet all of them had their methodoolgy, which is somewhat lacking in the book under review. The writer has tried to give a mystic interpretation to the incidents in Swamiji's life. But mysticism too has its own methodology and treatment which could better be followed by the writer.

What strikes us about the book is the simple and lucid treatment of the topics. Swamiji's birth, initiation, spiritual life, wandering years, life in the West, and then his return to India are told in a lucid manner. There are however some controversial statements. When Sri Ramakrishna had the first vision of the Goddess, did he actually remain without outer consciousness for

two days as mentioned on page 24? 'Vividish-ananda' was Swamiji's original sannyasa-name; he did not assume that name to conceal his identity as written on page 53. Tota Puri initiated Sri Ramakrishna into sannyasa with the *mahavakya*, not the Rama *mantra* as suggested by the writer on page 117.

One point we would like to make clear here. Mysticism and Mythology are not the same thing. Whereas mythology represents spiritual truth in symbols, mysticism is spiritual progress in itself. It would have been better if the writer had shown how Swamiji's concept and realization of spirituality evolved from childhood days till the meeting with Sri Ramakrishna, and then how he developed further in his later life.

SWAMI SOMESWARANANDA
Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE GENERAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

FOR APRIL 1978 TO MARCH 1979

[We are presenting here a brief summary of the latest report of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission, which will give our readers some information about the activities of these twin organizations. The report was issued by the General Secretary in June 1980 from the Headquarters at Belur Math, Dist. Howrah, West Bengal 711-202, India.—*Ed.*]

Though the Ramakrishna Mission and the Ramakrishna Math, with their respective branches, are distinct legal entities, they are closely related, inasmuch as the Governing Body of the Mission is made up of the Trustees of the Math; the administrative work of the Mission is mostly in the hands of the monks of the Ramakrishna Math; and both have their Headquarters at Belur Math. The Math organization is constituted under a Trust with well-defined rules of procedure. The Mission is a registered society. Though both the organizations take up charitable and philanthropic activities, the former lays emphasis on religion and preaching, while the latter is wedded mainly to welfare service of various kinds. This distinction should be borne in mind, though 'Ramakrishna Mission' is loosely asso-

ciated by people with Math activities also. It is necessary, moreover, to point out that the appropriation of the name of Sri Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda by any institution does not necessarily imply that it is affiliated either to the Ramakrishna Math or to the Ramakrishna Mission.

The Math and the Mission own separate funds and keep separate accounts of them. Though both the Math and the Mission receive grants from the Central and State Governments and public bodies for their social welfare activities, the other activities of the Math are financed from offerings, publications, etc., and the Mission is supported by fees from students, public donations, etc. Both the Math and the Mission funds are annually audited by qualified auditors.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

In spite of some obstacles, hindrances, and intimidations faced by the Mission, the following notable developments took place during the year under report:

A Mobile Dispensary at Barisha, a newly constructed 12-bed Intensive Care Unit at Seva Pratishthan, a second Mobile Dispensary at Kankhal, and a newly built 'Show Room' of Saradapitha were inaugurated. A four-storeyed Hostel 'Vivekananda Illam' for polytechnic students at Coimbatore Vidyalaya; an English Medium School and 1st floor of a new Primary School of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Thyagarayanagar, Madras; addition of a H. S. section to the School at Narottam Nagar with a new building; addition of a floor to the girls' Hostel at Sohbarpunji; and a new Primary School at Umdiengpoh at Cherrapunji were inaugurated. A new Temple of Sri Ramakrishna at Taki, and the new Shrine at Cherrapunji were dedicated.

Besides, in the other wing of the Organization, the Ramakrishna Math, the following new developments took place:

A new Temple of Sri Ramakrishna at Nattarampalli, the renovated Shrine of Allahabad and the renovated Prayer Hall of Trivandrum were dedicated; newly constructed 'Murali-Manohar Sant Nivas'—Monastic Quarters—at Vrindaban, as also the newly constructed annexe of the Charitable Dispensary of Dinajpur, Bangladesh—were declared open.

The foundation was laid for a Library building at Tiruvalla.

CENTRES

Excluding the Headquarters at Belur, there were in March, 1979, 117 branch centres in all, of which 53 were Mission centres, 21 combined Math and Mission centres, and 43 Math centres. These were regionally distributed as follows: two Mission centres, five combined Math and Mission centres and three Math centres in Bangladesh; one Mission centre each in Sri Lanka, Singapore, Fiji, Mauritius and France; one Math centre each in Switzerland, England and Argentina; 12 Math centres in the United States of America; and the remaining 46 Mission centres, 16 combined Math and Mission centres and 25 Math centres (87 in all) in India. The Indian centres were distributed as follows: 28 in West Bengal, 11 in Uttar Pradesh, 12 in Tamil Nadu, seven in Bihar, five in Kerala, four in Karnataka, three each in Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Assam, two each in

Maharashtra, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh, and one each in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Chandigarh. Moreover, attached to the branch centres there were over twenty sub-centres where monastic workers resided more or less permanently.

TYPES OF WORK

Medical Service: The Math and the Mission institutions under this head served the public in general, irrespective of creed, colour or nationality. Prominent among these are the indoor hospitals in Calcutta, Varanasi, Vrindaban, Lucknow, Kankhal, Trivandrum and Ranchi. In 1978-79 there were altogether 13 Indoor Hospitals with 1,633 beds which accommodated 44,992 patients, and 77 Outdoor Dispensaries which treated 40,04,713 cases including the old ones. Besides, some centres had provision for emergency or observation indoor wards attached to their dispensaries. The Veterinary section of the Shyamala Tal Sevashrama treated 454 cases. The Sanatorium at Ranchi and the Clinic at New Delhi treated T.B. cases alone, while large sections of Seva Pratishthan, Calcutta, and the hospital at Trivandrum were devoted to maternity and child-welfare work. At Trivandrum there was also a department of Psychiatry. Research on different branches of Medical Science as also Postgraduate training in degree and diploma courses were conducted at Seva Pratishthan, Calcutta.

Educational Work: The twin organizations ran, during the period, five Degree Colleges of general education at Madras, Rahara (24 Parganas), Coimbatore, Belur (Howrah) and Narendrapur (24 Parganas) with 4,483 students on their rolls. The last two were wholly residential, and the Colleges at Madras and Coimbatore had attached hostels for residing students. In addition, there were three B.Ed. Colleges at Belur, Coimbatore and Mysore with 335 students, one Basic Training School at Coimbatore with 22 students; one Postgraduate Basic Training College at Rahara with 100 students; four Junior Basic Training Institutes at Rahara, Sarisha and Sargachhi with 310 students; a College for Physical Education, an Institute of Commerce and a School of Agriculture with 168, 12 and 92 students respectively at Coimbatore; four Polytechnics at Belur, Belgharia, Madras and Coimbatore with 1,439 students; 8 Junior Technical and Industrial Schools with 724 boys; 11 Vocational Training Centres with 1,150 students; 93 students' Homes or Hostels, including some orphanages, with

10,145 boys and 950 girls; 42 Higher Secondary, Secondary and High Schools with 19,788 boys and 4,093 girls; 41 Junior Basic, U.P., and Elementary Schools with 6,353 boys and 4,181 girls; and 230 L.P. and other grades of Schools with 10,073 boys and 4,788 girls. Besides conducting an Institute of Medical Sciences with 35 students, the Seva Pratishtan of Calcutta and also the Math Hospital at Trivandrum trained nurses and midwives, the total number of trainees being 270. The Institute of Culture in Calcutta conducted a School of Languages for teaching different Indian and foreign languages with 2,182 students, and a School of World Religions. The Ashrama at Narendrapur conducted a Blind Boys' Academy, an Institute of Commerce and a Village-Level Workers' Training Centre with 137, 86 and 50 students respectively. The centre at Ranchi (Morabadi) ran a training centre in farming (Divyayan) with 212 students. The centre at Rahara conducted a Rural Librarianship Training Centre (residential) with 23 students. Thus there were altogether 61,046 boys and 24,622 girls in all the educational institutions run by the Math and the Mission in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Fiji and Mauritius.

Recreational activities: Some of the Math and the Mission centres have been providing scope for recreational, cultural and spiritual activities for youngsters at stated periods outside their school hours. The *Vivekananda Balaka Sangha* of the Bangalore Ashrama has a fine building of its own. At the Mysore Ashrama also a number of boys take advantage of the various kinds of facilities provided for them, and the youth section of the *Janashiksha Mandir*, Belur, is engaged in similar activities.

Work for Women: The organization has ever been conscious of its duties to the women of India. Typical of the work done for them are the Maternity Sections of the Seva Pratishtan, Calcutta and the Hospital at Trivandrum; the Domiciliary and Maternity Clinics at Jalpaiguri and Khetri; the women's sections of the Hospitals at Varanasi and Vrindaban; the attached Invalid Women's Home at Varanasi; the Sarada Vidyalaya at Madras; the Girls' High Schools at Jamshedpur; the Sarada Mandir at Sarisha and the two Training Schools for nurses in Trivandrum and Calcutta. Moreover, there are separate arrangements for women in other hospitals, dispensaries and schools; and some institutions are conducted only for them. The Madras Math also conducts a High School and a Primary School for girls.

Rural Uplift and Work among the Labouring and Backward Classes: The twin organizations have all along tried their best to serve the unfortunate countrymen who have fallen back culturally or otherwise. In addition to the more prominent village Ashramas like those at Cherrapunji, Sarisha, Ramharipur, Manasadwip, Jayrambati, Kamarpukur, Sargachhi, Along, Narottam Nagar, Coimbatore, Kalady, Trichur and Nattarampalli, a number of rural sub-centres—both permanent and semi-permanent—are run under the branch centres at Belur, Rahara, Sarisha, Tiruvalla, Kankurgachhi (Calcutta), Malda, Ranchi, Narendrapur and Cherrapunji. Of these, special mention may be made of the numerous village sub-centres started for educating the hill tribes in Meghalaya and a farming centre at Ranchi, specially meant for Adivasis and Scheduled Castes. Welfare work of various kinds was done among the Nagas, Kukis and Mizos by the Silchar Ashrama. Our educational and cultural activities in Arunachal Pradesh are also proving very useful and popular. During the year, the organizations ran in the rural and backward areas 15 Secondary or High Schools, 49 Senior Basic, Junior Basic, M.E. and U.P. Schools, 48 Primary Schools, 73 night Schools for adults, 10 Vocational Training Centres, 73 night Schools for adults, 10 Vocational Training Centres, a Rural Librarianship Training Centre, a Village-Level Workers' Training Centre, a School of Agriculture, and an Institute for training village youths in farming—with a total of 18,566 students. The organizations also conducted 23 Outdoor Dispensaries treating 4,30,809 patients and 8 Mobile Dispensaries serving 2,20,627 patients, besides running 54 Milk-distribution centres and a number of libraries with three mobile units—all located in the rural and backward areas. In addition to such varied activities, preaching and educative tours, screening movie-films and slides, and such other efforts were also undertaken frequently. For the labouring classes in the industrial areas, the Mission conducted several night schools, community centres, etc.

Mass Contact: From the foregoing account it will be evident that the activities of the organizations are not confined or concentrated in urban areas alone; they are spread over other fields as well. The message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda is steadily spreading in all parts of India, which is evident from the participation of innumerable people during the annual celebrations. The Ashramas and temples also draw thousands of people throughout the year. Over and above

these, there are a number of medical institutions where lakhs of people get free medicines and thousands are treated in the indoor departments. In the educational institutions also a considerable number of poor students get free education, board, or lodging. The organizations are also running a good number of free libraries in the rural areas. The publication centres sometimes sell booklets at nominal price to suit the pocket of the masses.

Spiritual and Cultural Work : Both the Math and the Mission centres laid emphasis on the dissemination of the spiritual and cultural ideals of India, and through various types of activity tried to give a practical shape to the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna that all religions are true. The centres established real points of contact among people of different faiths through public celebrations, meetings, classes, publications, etc. More than 115 Libraries containing a vast number of books and journals were conducted by them. Attached to the Libraries, Reading Rooms were maintained in many places. One Sanskrit Chatuspathi too was run. At least ten centres published books on religious subjects and 12 journals in different languages. Special mention should be made of the Institute of Culture, Calcutta, which has published *The Cultural Heritage of India* (5 Volumes so far) and which has been trying to bring together eminent men and women of India and other lands in cultural fellowship. The Math centres at Mayavati, Baghbazar (Calcutta), Madras, Nagpur, Mysore, Rajkot, Trichur and Bhubaneswar, in particular, have to their credit a considerable number of useful publications. Some of our foreign centres too are publishing valuable books. It may not be out of place to tell here of the continuous preaching of Vedanta through classes and lectures for quite a few years now, being carried on by Swami Nihshreyasananda in Africa, (Zimbabwe-Rhodesia) with Salisbury (35 Rhodes Avenue) as his centre.

Relief and Rehabilitation Work : As usual the Mission undertook relief and rehabilitation work either directly through the Headquarters or in conjunction with some branch centres. Some works were also conducted by the branch centres themselves.

The following relief works were conducted in India :

A. Flood Relief was conducted by the Headquarters in collaboration with the Branch Centres at: Malipanchghara, Amta, Uluberia, Domjur, Bagnan, Panchla, Purnal, Agunshi, Dadpur Bridge, Haturia, Nawapara, Khalisani, Andhermanik,

Sahapur, Beldubi, Balichak, Chandmari, Belur and Nischinda, Kolaghat, Nabagram (Burdwan) and Billesyar (Katwa), Bali-Dewanganj, Kashmoli, Belgharia, Narendrapur, Khardah, Bandipur, Manpur, Bilkanda, Patulia, Titagarh, Arambagh, Nawpukur, Gopalpur, Harindanga, Saharanhat, Sarisha, Taki, Debipur, Gopinathpur, Hatihalka, Jalchak, Daspur, Kaktia, Moyna, Seikhpara, Nabagram, Teghari, Arjunpur, Sargachhi, Calcutta (in different areas), Bankura, Ramharipur, Jayrambati, Kota (Goghat) in West Bengal; Allahabad in U.P.; Hayaghat, Naogachhia and Katihar in Bihar; Roop Nagar and Buddha Jayanti Park in Delhi.

B. Cyclone Relief: at Puranabandh Goda (Keonjhar) through the Puri Mission.

C. Dandakaranya Deserters' Relief: at Kharagpur and Howrah Railway Station by the Headquarters.

D. Fire Relief: in Tirap District through the Narottam Nagar Centre.

E. Medical Relief: at Sagar Mela through the Manasadwip and Seva Pratishtan; at Daspur through Tamluk Ashrama; at Purnal, Agunshi and Bagnan by the Headquarters.

F. Rehabilitation Work: (i) By the Headquarters: The construction of 684 pucca houses and one Community-cum-Shelter house in Divi Taluk of Krishna District in Andhra Pradesh was completed and the construction work of 320 houses and 2 Community-cum-Shelter houses was in progress during the period under report. Since then the whole project has been completed by constructing 1,004 cyclone-proof houses including 3 Community-cum-Shelter houses. (ii) The work of constructing 96 houses and one Community-cum-Shelter house at Bapatla was taken up by Hyderabad Math. (iii) By the Madras Relief Centre: the construction of 57 pucca houses and two Community-cum-Shelter houses was completed.

G. Bangladesh Relief: The usual work of milk distribution, clothings, food-stuff, medical assistance, etc. was continued through the Centres in Dacca, Narayanganj, Bagerhat, and Dinajpur.

Annual Celebrations: Most of the Math and the Mission centres appropriately observe the days sanctified by the advent of great saints and prophets. The general features of the celebrations of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi (the Holy Mother) and Swami Vivekananda are: Special worship, *Homa* (making offerings in the sacred fire), chanting of scriptural texts, *Bhajan* and *Sankirtan* (often in chorus), distribution of

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OBITUARY

SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing away of the Revered Swami Vividishananda in Seattle, Washington (USA), at 12.15 a.m. on 25 September 1980. For a long time he had been in a state of deep coma, the immediate cause of death being a stroke. He was eighty-seven years old.

A distinguished scholar in his youth, he received his Master's degree in philosophy from the Calcutta University, and then joined the Ramakrishna Order at its Bhubaneswar Ashrama in 1919. He was an initiated disciple of Swami Brahmananda, and received sannyasa from Swami Shivananda (Mahapurush Maharaj) in 1923.

Besides his joining centre, the Swami was for several years at the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, and served as the sixth editor of this journal for two years, 1925-26. During this period he made the adventurous pilgrimage to Mt. Kailas in Tibet. Afterwards he became the first president of the Ramakrishna Math, Rajkot.

After being sent to the USA by Swami Shivananda, Swami Vividishananda spread the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda through lectures, classes and personal contact in Portland, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and Denver. In 1938 he went to Seattle, Washington, where in 1942 he established the Vedanta Society of Western Washington. There he remained as its Head until the end. He also visited Honolulu, Hawaii, and laid the foundation for the group of Sri Ramakrishna's devotees presently active there.

Referred to in the *Seattle Times* (4 Oct. 1980) as 'one of Seattle's most low-keyed but effective religious leaders' Swami Vividishananda's method of work was never mass conversion but close personal contact, through which he successfully endeavoured to mould the lives of a few sincere spiritual aspirants. As such, the results of his subdued life of forty-two years in Seattle were never spectacular, but deep, pervasive, and long-lasting.

He was the author of the popular English life of Mahapurush Swami Shivananda, *A Man of God*. He also translated into English Part One of the well-known book *For Seekers of God*. Recently a new book, *Spiritual Ideals for Modern Man*, containing thirteen talks given by the Swami in the USA over the years, was published in India.

After the Swami's demise, a special worship service was held at the Seattle temple on October 11, as well as a symposium on 'The Relationship between the Guru and the Disciple', in which several visiting Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order residing in the USA participated. On October 12, a memorial service was held in the Lemieux Library Auditorium at Seattle University; the speakers included a Jewish Rabbi, a Christian Father, and several Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order.

One of the pioneering giants of the Order in the West, his memory will ever be cherished by the devotees of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. May his soul rest in peace!

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Prasad (sacramental food) to the devotees, feeding of the poor in large numbers, and lectures by eminent speakers, including the Swamis of the Order. Thus the message of Sri Ramakrishna and his direct associates is steadily spreading, and many young and ardent souls are coming into closer touch with the ideals of the Math and the Mission. In co-operation with the local public, a few centres celebrate some of the more popular Hindu festivals, accounts for these being maintained separately.

Donations : It is hoped that the generous

public all over India and abroad will continue to help the Math and the Mission to respond to the cry of distress, from wherever it may come. All donations to the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission are exempt from Income-tax. Remittances may be addressed to: The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math, P.O. Belur Math, Dist. Howrah, West Bengal 711 202, India; and cheques may be drawn in favour of either 'Ramakrishna Math' or 'Ramakrishna Mission', Belur.

LAST PAGE : COMMENTS

A Time for Self-Renewal

The vitality and longevity of an organization or movement depends upon its capacity to renew itself periodically. A great religious movement is set in motion by a great spiritual personality who realigns the spiritual energies of mankind along certain social channels according to the needs of the age. However, as society evolves and expands, there arises the need to reinforce the earlier channels and open new ones. Given this perspective, the Convention of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission scheduled to be held at Belur Math in the last week of December 1980 may be looked upon as a part of the process of self-renewal of one of the most significant religious movements of the modern world.

This will be the second convention in the history of the Ramakrishna Movement. The first one was held in 1926 when several of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were still alive. During the five decades that have elapsed after the first convention great changes have taken place in the socio-cultural environment, and the Ramakrishna Math and Mission have grown into gigantic institutions with 138 branch centres in India and abroad. The executive committee organizing the convention has spelled out its main objectives and has drawn up a list of themes for discussion. The immediate tasks before the Ramakrishna Movement are four. 1. To reinterpret the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda message in the idiom of modern world thought. 2. To adapt service activities to meet the spiritual and socio-economic needs of the rapidly changing Indian society. 3. To integrate the diverse streams of the Movement. 4. Rethinking on global commitments.

At the foundation of the Ramakrishna Movement lies the twofold vision of Swami Vivekananda. One is about the spiritual regeneration of India and the other about India's contribution to the spiritual welfare of the world. Swamiji believed that these two were equally important and interdependent. The time has now come to evaluate how far these two visions have been realized in actual life.

Though the world including India is now passing through a critical period in history the option before the Ramakrishna Movement is only one: spirituality. It cannot identify itself with political ideologies, much less take part in political or social agitations and conflicts as Christian churches are doing. It works on the fundamental principle that there is only a spiritual solution to the problems of life—individual and collective. History teaches us that a great religious movement does not merely affect the lives of a few people but lays the foundation for a new culture. Obstacles are unavoidable but Toynbee has shown that material obstacles are overcome by releasing the spiritual energies of the society and that only those civilizations have survived which had enough spiritual reserves. This is true of religious movements too.
