



Prabuddha Bharata

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

मा नस्तोके तनये मा न आयौ

मा नो गोषु मा नो अश्वेषु रीरिषः ।

वीरान्मा नो रुद्र भामितो वधी-

हृविष्मंतः सदमित्वा हवामहे ॥

आरे ते गोघ्नमुत्त पूरुषघ्नं

क्षयद्वीर सुम्नमस्मे ते अस्तु ।

मृडा च नो अधि च ब्रूहि देवाधा

च नः शर्म यच्छ द्विवर्हाः ॥

स्तुहि श्रुतं गर्तसदं युवानं

मृगं न भीममुपहत्नुमुग्रं ।

मृडा जरित्रे रुद्र स्तवानोऽ-

न्यं ते अस्मान्नि वपंतु सेनाः ॥

परि णो हेती रुद्रस्य वृज्याः

परि त्वेषस्य दुर्मतिर्मही गात् ।

अव स्थिरा मघवद्भ्यस्तनुष्व

मीढृस्तोकाय तनयाय मृड ॥

1. O Rudra, do not harm our children or grandchildren or other relatives. Harm not our cows and horses. Destroy not our heroes. We offer oblations to thee evermore.

Rg-Veda, 1.114.8

2. O Lord of the heroes (*kṣayadvīra*), keep thy lethal weapons away from our men and cattle, and be gracious unto us. O Shining One, O Lord of the two places¹ (*dvibarhāh*), be kind to us; bless us and grant us happiness.

Rg-Veda, 1.114.10

3. Praise Rudra who rides the chariot (*gartasadam*), who is eternally young, who is like an awesome lion, the fierce destroyer of enemies. O Rudra, be kind towards us who praise thee. Let thy armies spare us, let them strike down thy enemies.

Rg-Veda, 2.33.11

4. May Rudra's missiles (*hetī*) spare us (*pari vrjyāh*), and may the great wrath of the Flaming One avoid us. O Bounteous One (*mīdhva*), turn thy bow away from our kings, and be kind to our children and grandchildren.

Rg-Veda, 2.33.11

* The hymns to Rudra given here originally occur scattered in the *Rg-Veda* and have been brought together in the 'Rudra Prasna' of *Yajur-Veda*. By worshipping God as the terrible Destroyer man overcomes all fear of death.

¹. The two places, according to Sāyana, may mean the earth and the atmosphere or the southern and northern paths attained through Karma and Jñāna respectively.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

Prayer, worship and meditation form the three steps in the path of devotion. Prayer and worship were discussed in the three previous editorials. In this month's EDITORIAL an attempt is made to show how meditation differs from ordinary concentration.

Just as we wander from home to home until we establish our own home, so does the human soul move from one pursuit to another, from one experience to another, until it finds its own real and everlasting abode. That permanent home, the bosom of God, exists in the Ātman, the true self of man. This central idea of Vedanta is presented with great clarity, power and experiential luminosity in the article FROM HOMES TO THE HOME by Swami Shraddhananda, Head of the Vedanta Society of Sacramento, U.S.A.

In the third instalment of PILGRIMAGE TO

THE HOURS OF MEDITATION Swami Budhananda gives important practical hints on how to lead a meditative life in the midst of the duties of life.

Sri M. P. Pandit of Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry, explains the importance of aspiration in spiritual life in the second instalment of his essay on INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO.

In the fifth instalment of IS VEDANTA A PHILOSOPHY OF ESCAPE?, Dr. Vinita Wanchoo continues her brilliant, meticulously documented analysis of the well-known criticisms against Vedanta.

This month's FORUM FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING presents a study of Christian worship and how it differs from Hindu *Pūjā*.

The third instalment of Swami Atmarupananda's ST. TERESA, BRIDE OF THE SUN is an engaging account of the spiritual experience of the great Spanish mystic.

CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION—I

EDITORIAL

These days 'meditation' is enjoying unprecedented popularity in the East and the West alike. A form of spiritual practice once restricted to a small number of fairly qualified aspirants is now being followed by large numbers of people and applied to a wide variety of human situations. To satisfy the spiritual needs of different types of aspirants, ancient techniques of meditation are being modified and new techniques being evolved by spiritual directors. Indeed, so diverse has meditation become that it now stands for a generic term denoting several forms of concentration rather than a specific spiritual technique.

The various types of meditation now

prevalent all over the world may be divided into two broad groups: secular and religious. To the former group belong all forms of concentration practised for the sake of health. It has been scientifically proved that certain types of meditation relax the body, reduce blood pressure and mental tension, and cure psychosomatic disorders. They have thus become a boon to a large number of people living under conditions of stress, especially in the West. There is nothing wrong in practising meditation for its therapeutic effects, but one should not think this is all that meditation means or can do.

Here we are concerned only with the other

group of meditations, called *upāsanā* in Vedantic literature, which aim at spiritual illumination. This again is of two types: anthropomorphic (*sākāra*) and non-anthropomorphic (*nirākāra*). In the first type, followed in the path of devotion, meditation is done on a form of the Deity known as the aspirant's *Iṣṭa Devatā*. In the second type, followed in the path of knowledge, meditation is done on a non-anthropomorphic object like light or space or on some attribute of Qualified (*saguṇa*) Brahman.

This kind of spiritual meditation which requires a higher degree and quality of concentration, need not necessarily be a relaxing experience, especially for a beginner. The term used by Patañjali for meditation is *dhyāna*, and according to him it forms only the seventh step in a graded scheme of yoga. With the exception of a few fortunate people born with natural calmness and purity of mind, most people find that the higher types of spiritual meditation entail effort, struggle and strain. Sri Aurobindo points out: 'The road of yoga is long, every inch of ground has to be won against much resistance and no quality is more needed by the Sādhaka than patience and single-minded perseverance with a faith that remains firm through all difficulties, delays and apparent failures.'¹

There is at present a good deal of confusion about the true nature of meditation. This is mainly caused by the mistaken belief that meditation is nothing but a form of concentration. Every man has the capacity to concentrate his mind on something or other, and it is with this confidence that most people attempt to meditate. But when they find that they do not succeed, they ask in surprise, 'Why am I not able to meditate?' The truth is that meditation is not just an ordinary type of concentration.

Spiritual aspirants must understand this. They should know the difference between ordinary concentration and meditation.

Ordinary concentration and meditation

In ordinary concentration the mind is focussed on an external object or a mental idea. From childhood we have been practising concentration on external objects as a part of the natural process of perception. What is perception? According to Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Advaita-Vedanta schools, the mind goes out through the eyes and takes the form of the object, and this is how we see it. According to Rāmānuja and Madhva, it is the self that issues forth and directly perceives the object. Either way, concentration on external objects is a natural process. The Upaniṣad says that the Lord, as it were, struck the sense-organs and made them outgoing.² So we find no difficulty in concentrating on external objects.

Real meditation is a complete reversal of this process of perception. It means turning the mind or the self back upon its source. Sri Ramakrishna explains this by the parable of the police sergeant who goes his rounds in the dark with a lantern (which has dark glass on three sides) in his hands. With that light he can see others but they cannot see him, unless he turns the lantern towards himself.³ In the same way, with the light of the self we can see external objects and movements of thoughts, but if we want to see God, we must focus this light inward. And this is what meditation means. To turn the habitually outgoing

2. पराञ्चिखानि व्यतृणत् स्वयंभूस्तस्मात्

पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।

Katha Upaniṣad, 2.1.1.

1. Sri Aurobindo, *Bases of Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, 1973).

3. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), p. 107.

mind inward to its source is an admittedly difficult task.

This, then, is the first difference between meditation and ordinary concentration : meditation is the result of the focusing of consciousness on its true source or centre. The Tantras speak of different centres of consciousness but the Upaniṣads point to the spiritual heart as the true centre of one's consciousness. Though the beginner can to some extent hold his mind in the region of the physical heart, he has usually no idea of what the spiritual heart—his true centre of consciousness—means. In most people this higher centre remains dormant or veiled, but through continence and prayer it can be developed. Unless the aspirant discovers this spiritual centre, his mind will wander during meditation.

It should be understood that trying to drive the mind inward, as a shepherd drives sheep into the pen, is not meditation. True meditation is the result of the natural inwardness or interiority (*pratyak pravāṇatā*) of the mind caused by an inward pull. This inward 'pull' comes from one's higher centre of consciousness. And the higher centre will exert this pull only when it is open and active. Then the mind comes to rest in its own source, as a bird comes to roost in its own nest. This resting or fixing of the mind is called *dhāraṇā*, without which meditation is difficult.

Secondly, in most forms of ordinary concentration the sense-organs are active, and contact with the external world is not cut off. But during meditation, which needs a higher degree of concentration, the mind alone is active, and contact with the external world is cut off. The yogis call this state *ekendriya*—the state in which one *indriya* or sense-organ, namely, the *manas* or mind (which the yogis regard as the sixth sense-organ) alone is active. According to Patañjali, before one attempts *dhyāna* (meditation), one should gain proficiency in *dhāraṇā*

(already explained) and *pratyāhāra* (withdrawing the mind from external objects). This withdrawal is defined by Patañjali as a state in which the senses, detached from external objects, become one with *manas* or mind.⁴ When this is practised for a long time, the mind alone remains active—the *ekendriya* state. Only then is true meditation possible.

We now come to the third difference between ordinary concentration and meditation. What we call thought is only a wave-like movement of the mind called *vṛtti*. *Vṛttis* are produced either by external stimuli or by the sprouting of *Samskāras* (latent impressions of past experiences). When we are absorbed in a book or a job, several names and forms occupy the field of consciousness, and the mind moves in a circle. Whereas in meditation the mind is as it were fixed on a point, and there is only a single *vṛtti* in it. Then only a single name (*mantra*) and form (usually the form of the Chosen Deity) will occupy the field of consciousness. All other names and forms are consciously suppressed. This is, however, difficult as the *samskāras* are continuously sprouting into waves. Unless at least the major desires and impulses are eliminated, the practice of meditation will become an inner battle.

This takes us to the fourth difference. Ordinary concentration is the result of attachment to various external objects, whereas meditation is the result of detachment. To get absorbed in an undertaking which one likes because it satisfies one's desires is easy. But to get absorbed in something through detachment is difficult. This becomes possible only when detachment is supported by intense aspiration. Meditation is not an exercise in passive withdrawal, an escape from reality. It is an intense seeking of Truth in the only place where Truth

4. Patañjali, *Yoga-Sūtra*, 2.54.

ought to be sought. It is an eager search for God in the unknown Depths of the heart. Just as a man in darkness gropes about stretching out his hands, so does the meditator seek God within stretching his intuitive faculty, the pure *buddhi*. Though meditation is usually practised on an image, a true aspirant knows that the image he is meditating on is not the true Reality. His meditation is in fact a search for that Reality of which the image is only a symbol. To seek an intangible unknown Reality in the unknown depths of the soul becomes possible only if there is intense aspiration and faith.

Then there is the fifth difference. Human mind has two powers : to experience and to create. Most of our normal thinking is a creative process—we are always trying to create something : new objects, new relationships, new meanings, new ideas, etc. If we cannot create anything real, we create unreal things and try to live in a dream world. All the great achievements of science, technology and art are the result of stupendous efforts of men in creative concentration. But creation of this type gives rise to diversity and conflict.

Meditation is an attempt to make the mind stop creating by seeking the source of experience. Though experience is also a function of the mind, its real source (consciousness) is in the *Ātman* or the self. Meditation is an attempt to isolate the self and discover the Uncreated or the Absolute which is what man is trying to seek through his creative activity. Meditation is a movement towards unity and peace.

Another difference, related to the above, is that ordinary concentration is a movement in time. Meditation is an attempt to remain in timelessness. The more we think, the more we move with time and get caught in the ever-flowing stream of life.

There are two types of time. One is the

external time determined by the movements of the earth with reference to the sun. The second is the internal time determined by the movement of thoughts. In very small children these two times remain distinct ; as they grow up they learn to correlate the two. But this correlation is lost during deep sleep and dreaming when we live in an entirely different world of time. In normal waking state a certain co-ordination between inner time and outer time is maintained as a kind of ratio. This ratio varies from person to person : for some people time flies, for others time hangs heavy.

To live constantly in time, to be under the tyranny of time, to 'run with the hare and hunt with the hound' all the time, causes great strain on the nerves. Man wants to escape from this oppressive time awareness. So he takes a holiday and tries to forget himself by getting absorbed in a novel or cinema. But he finds that this does not work all right, for time like a ghost haunts him wherever he goes or whatever he does. Meditation is an attempt to free man from the tyranny of time by first slowing down the inner clock and then lifting the mind to a timeless dimension.

However, the most important difference between ordinary concentration and meditation is that the former is an unconscious process involving self-forgetfulness, while the latter is a conscious and self-directed process. What we generally call conscious activity is mostly unconscious or automatic. Freud discovered the unconscious and showed how it caused mental disorders. Jung showed that even the normal healthy thinking and activity were mostly controlled by the unconscious. We talk, eat, work, walk without being simultaneously aware that we are doing all these. As Jung has pointed out, there is a world of difference between the two statements : 'I am doing a work' and 'I am aware that I am doing a work'. We are rarely in touch with our own

self, and hence there is very little self-awareness in our normal day-to-day life.

This truth was discovered in India some three thousand years ago, Kapila, the founder of the Sāṅkhya school, showed that everything in the universe, including the mind, is unconscious and that Puruṣa (or Ātman, as the Vedantins call it) alone is truly conscious. The mind is continuously breaking into waves and this makes the reflection of the self discontinuous. As a result man loses contact with his own centre of consciousness. Meditation stops all the waves except one which makes the reflection of the self uniform and restores our contact with our true centre of consciousness. This is effected by exercising the will. Just as the cart driver controls the horses by holding the reins tight, so does a meditator control his mind through his will. This is what Buddha calls right mindfulness. Meditation is thus a fully self-directed process. It is a struggle against mental automatisms, it is an attempt to prevent mental waves from submerging the rock of self-awareness. This point distinguishes it from brooding, introversion and day-dreaming.

In ordinary concentration the mind is swayed by the object. If you are reading a book, it is the book that determines your concentration; if you are doing a work, it is the work that controls your mind. In meditation the object usually plays only a passive part, control of mind is effected by the self. Mind can be controlled, not by the mind, but by a faculty which is higher than it. This higher faculty is the *buddhi* or *dhī*, which is both a faculty of intuition and will. It is an impulse originating in the *buddhi* that controls the mental waves and directs the stream of consciousness towards the object during meditation. Unless this *buddhi* is to some extent developed and made active, meditation is difficult.

Yet another difference, eighth in order,

is that meditation is not just looking at an object but is an attempt to enter into a living relationship with it. This is especially true in the path of Bhakti where the devotee looks upon meditation only as a means of forging an intimate, everlasting relationship of love with his Chosen Deity. One of the chief reasons why many people do not succeed in meditation is that they forget this important point, and regard it as a passive act like looking at a picture or a flower.

A loving relationship can be established only when there is a certain degree of similarity of nature between the subject and the object. Vedanta holds that every human being is potentially divine, that is, his true self is a part of the Supreme Self. Spiritual life is the discovery of this eternal relationship. To discover this relationship the aspirant must first of all discover his true self, the true divine centre in him, where alone he can feel the touch of the Supreme Spirit. It is only when the mental waves are stilled that the light of the self reveals itself. That is why calmness of mind is so important. But meditation is not mere inner silence, it is the conversion of this silence into a means of uniting the individual self with the Supreme Self. That is why meditation of some kind or other is enjoined in all Hindu scriptures. The Bible also says: 'Be still and know that I am God.'⁵

Lastly, it should be remembered that ordinary concentration and meditation lead to quite different results. Proficiency in meditation makes it easy to do any work with concentration, but the reverse is not always true. Though doing secular work with concentration gives a good training to the mind—and is therefore better than idling about or working sloppily—it does not *ipso facto* enable him to do deep meditation. Ordinary activities, if not accompanied by discrimination, detachment, devotion and a certain

5. Psalms, 46.10.

degree of meditative awareness, will only take us more and more away from the divine centre in us. Such a concentration will only get us involved more and more in the unconscious stream of Prakṛti. Meditation, on the contrary, takes us towards Reality directly.

Prayer, worship, meditation

From the above discussion it is clear that true meditation is not as easy as it is popularly supposed to be. In the path of Bhakti meditation forms only the third step, for it should be preceded by prayer and worship. Those who have practised prayer and worship for some time find meditation easy and natural. How do prayer and worship help the aspirant in the practice of meditation?

In the first place, as we have shown, meditation is concentration of mind on a higher centre of consciousness and, unless that centre is to some extent awakened or made active, meditation is difficult. Prayer, when done with intensity, quickly awakens the heart-centre. Says Swami Vivekananda, 'By prayer one's subtle powers are easily roused, and if consciously done all desires may be fulfilled by it.'⁶ Concentration is not the main problem in spiritual life. What is really difficult is to give a higher direction to the concentrated energies. A beginner cannot do this through meditation alone. Prayer and worship open the higher centres and direct the mind upward.

Secondly, meditation being a conscious and self-directed process can be successfully practised only when it is supported by the will. Pure will and pure consciousness are the dynamic and static aspects of the higher self (*jīvātman*). Through self-analysis and introspection it is possible to understand the true nature of will and its workings.

⁶. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1964), vol. 5, p. 325.

But a wayward will enslaved by emotions and instincts cannot be brought under control by self-analysis alone. That is the reason why meditation very often depends on the aspirant's moods. If he wants to be independent of his moods, he must be able to direct his will Godward whenever he wants. Prayer and worship gradually bring the will under control.

Further, it is seen that in many aspirants meditation affects only a small—the conscious—part of the personality. The other parts of the personality, especially the unconscious part of the mind which is a magazine of psychic energy, go on in their old ways. This kind of meditation lacks power. Prayer and worship rouse the unconscious, energize every part of the personality and gear them all to meditative effort. It is only when meditation is charged with power will it act like a power drill and pierce the veil of Māyā.

We have also seen that meditation becomes meaningful only when there exists a living relationship between the soul and God. Some people are born with an inner sensitivity of the soul for the unseen, intangible Reality, and feel a spontaneous love for God. For the others the only way is to cultivate devotion through long practice of prayer and worship.

Prayer and worship are of help in yet another way. They provide support to the mind even when one does not or cannot meditate. It so happens that on certain days aspirants find it difficult to meditate. When this happens many of them think, 'Instead of wasting my time trying to meditate, let me do some work.' But a true devotee does not think that way: he just switches to intense prayer and worship. He is not discouraged by dryness of mind or other obstacles. In his case meditation is only an extension, a subtler expression, of prayer or worship.

There are, of course, other aids to

meditation, but here we are concerned mainly with the path of devotion where prayer and worship play an important role.

Meditation during the early stages

If meditation is so difficult, does it mean that we should take it up only after attaining proficiency in prayer and worship? Indeed, if the aspirant could devote a few months or even years exclusively to prayer and worship, he would quickly advance and would find meditation easy and spontaneous. But in modern times few people have the faith and patience to wait for such a long time. Nor is it necessary even for the beginner to abandon meditation. Practice of meditation along with prayer and worship could be taken up even in the beginning of spiritual life. For meditation, even when not perfectly done, helps the aspirant in several ways.

It helps the aspirant to understand the working of his own mind. Meditation in the early stages may appear like waging an inner battle but the time spent in it is not wasted. Through that the aspirant gains understanding about his subtle desires and tendencies. Meditation of this kind 'acts as a rudder in a boat', points out the Holy Mother. 'When a person sits in the evening for prayer, he can reflect on the good and bad things he did in the course of the day. Then he should compare the mental state of that day with that of the previous day.... Unless you practise meditation in the morning and evening side by side with your work, how can you know whether you

are doing the desirable or the undesirable thing.'⁷

Practice of meditation during the early stages is important for a second reason: it gives the mind a good training in inwardness (*pratyak pravāṇatā*) and introduces a sense of interiority into the life of the aspirant. These effects may not be immediately noticeable, but after a few months or years the aspirant finds that his mind is turning inward without much difficulty. Even if the mind wanders, sitting motionless in a particular posture itself disciplines the body and the nervous system. Later on, when he becomes an adept in meditation, the aspirant will find this early training a great asset.

Furthermore, practice of meditation helps the aspirant to integrate his personality. It provides a common inner focus for his will, intellect and emotions. Even when he does not succeed in having perfect meditation, the presence of a central focus within gives a sense of unity and integrity to his whole personality. And this helps him to remain unaffected by the changes and troubles of the external world.

These are the advantages of practising meditation during the early stages of one's spiritual life. However, when the aspirant gains proficiency in it, meditation becomes a direct means for spiritual experience. True meditation is a knocking at the door of the shrine within the heart. This higher meditation intensely and persistently practised will at last open the inner door to the world of divine light, knowledge and bliss. We shall next discuss this higher meditation—its different techniques and the various mental processes involved in it.

⁷ Swami Tapasyananda and Swami Nikhilananda, *Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1969), p. 408.

(to be continued)

FROM HOMES TO THE HOME

SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home
Tis summer, the people are gay
The corn-top's ripe and the meadow's in the bloom

While the birds make music all the day
Weep no more, my lady
Oh weep no more today!
We will sing one song
For the old Kentucky home,
Far away.

Every American is familiar with this old song, 'My Old Kentucky Home'. The feeling expressed in it gives us tangibly the sentiment that every person carries with him about home. It is a very familiar notion, a fundamental concept. Like the image of father or mother, the concept of home, the feeling about home, is very positive, rather inexpressible. Many sentiments are associated with it. We feel it, we may not express or elaborate on it but it is in our hearts, the concept of home. Even when we have grown old, even when we are thousands of miles away from our home, that memory of home is within our hearts. You find that in literature, you find that in religious books. Home.

What, in brief, is this idea of home? It is associated with freedom, and of security; it is a concept of identity and love. And probably many other things which we cannot really express in words but which we carry with us as a deep feeling. People who by circumstances have to live in rented houses or apartments cherish the desire to have someday a home of their own. In an apartment you cannot find the same freedom as in a home of your own. You cannot find all the conveniences you require. There is an atmosphere that keeps you rather strained. Even if you are living in an expensive apartment with all the con-

veniences, one thing will be lacking—the sense of identity which is so important in life. You cannot feel a natural identity with that place, with those rooms. You sigh, 'Oh, it is not mine, it is not mine.' So you dream of having a place where you can feel possession, 'This is my home,' and then you feel freedom.

Then there is the idea of security also. You are not sure when you may have to leave an apartment. One day the owner comes, 'Sir, I am sorry, but I have to raise your rent twenty-five percent next month.' This might happen when you don't have a home of your own. A person may be changing rented dwellings every year, from one house to another he moves. From one part of the city to another he shifts—from one town to another, wandering. But when that person has a home of his own and he feels a kind of security, then freedom, love, and joy come to his life.

Now this same concept of home can be projected to our spiritual life. Just as when we wander from home to home and are restless, so too a stage comes in our life—we call it spiritual awakening—when shifting from one pattern of living to another, pursuing one set of desires to another, facing one type of crisis to another, we feel baffled, dejected and confused. Is there a real stability in life? we ask. Is there a possession which we cannot lose? Then the heart craves for a level of stability, a level of freedom, a level of unchanging love, a level of real possession. That is the true, the spiritual goal of man. When a man is eager to find the true goal of life, to raise his life from the commonplace to a level of stability and equilibrium, this longing comes. He feels himself as a wanderer from home to

home, from point to point, from instability to instability. And he dreams of that level of life where there is unbroken peace. He seeks the Eternal which is God. Only in God can the sufferings of wandering be over.

In the idea of karma, and transmigration, man is pictured as a traveller from life to life. Transmigration or rebirth happens as a result of unfructified karma and unfulfilled desires. Whatever you do, good or bad, leaves a kind of resultant. That resultant is stored in your mind. Good karma gives you a permit for happiness, and bad karma the policeman's ticket, suffering. Nobody can escape karma. That is the idea at the back of this theory of karma: man is the builder of his own destiny. If there is an accumulation of bad karma he suffers in many ways. He experiences various sorts of mental and physical sufferings. They are not arbitrary, they do not come all of a sudden. They are the results of one's past deeds. And if a person is enjoying happiness in comfortable situations in contrast to others who are suffering in many ways, that also is not arbitrary. According to this law of karma, he earned that happiness by past good actions.

Besides this unfulfilled karma there is also desire. Every moment people are creating desires. 'I want this, I want that,' and none of their desires disappears unless it is fulfilled. They are stored in the subconscious mind. So in our minds both these things are stored: the results of our past actions and our unfulfilled desires. In Sanskrit these are called karma and *kāma*. Karma means the results of past actions and *kāma* means desire. All the karmas and all the desires cannot be fulfilled in one life. Even when a person is dying he will say, 'Oh, I wanted to do this, I wanted to have that. Unfortunately, now I am dying, I could not fulfil all those desires.' It is true, it is common knowledge. We cannot exhaust all the desires that we have, and all the time fresh desires are com-

ing. You have moved into a house, then after one year you feel, 'Oh, it is possible to move into a better house.' You do that, remain quiet for some time, but again you want something better. In this way man's desires are always multiplied. As a result, he has to be born again in order to finish his past karma and fulfil the desires which were not consummated in past lives. That is, briefly, the law of transmigration.

Now when a person becomes serious about himself he thinks of this bondage of *kāma* and karma—this vicious circle in which he is revolving. The memories of the past vaguely touch his consciousness. It doesn't matter whether he remembers his past or not—remembering is not even advisable because if you remember past lives many unpleasant memories might come; so better that we do not remember our past lives. But if he believes in this law of transmigration he begins to feel, 'Well, through many lives, how many lives I do not know, I have passed. I have done actions, good and bad, and I have created desires. Now I have been ushered into this present life. And now I am creating new desires. I am suffering, I am enjoying, both. Now what is this fun? What is this?' He seriously asks himself and the answer is given by sages. They say, 'Well, this is life, the life you are facing. But this is not all there is to life. You as an individual, a man or a woman, with a body, with a mind, with feelings, with emotions, with desires, you are a player on the stage of this world. You are facing sometimes good things, sometimes bad things, sometimes pleasant things, sometimes crises. You are sometimes crying, sometimes smiling. You are attached to certain things. You are disgusted with certain things. This is the play, this is the drama of life that is going on, and it will go on, over again, over again, over again.

'But this is not the entire story,' the sages continue. 'If you can find God, then you

will see that this will stop. This transmigration will stop. If you are really tired of this show, if you are really impatient of this play there is a way to end it, and that is realization of God, discovery of your true nature. Even now, even when you are suffering, there is another face of your personality that you have forgotten. You are functioning on what is called your practical personality, as an individual. But at the back of this individuality there is another truth of yours. That is your spiritual nature—your Soul which is not affected by this game of life. It is the pure, the free—the Divine in you. You have to be your soul.'

In man's Divine nature there is no karma. That Divine nature—the soul of man—shares the nature of God. It does not desire, it need not desire anything because it is ever fulfilled. Has God any desire? God is projecting endless phenomena on this universe, but has He any desire for anything? He is creating, supporting and also dissolving all these things, inconceivable wonders! Even a little of that keeps us spellbound. Look at a mountain, look at the ocean, look at a mighty river, look at a beautiful flower, look at the face of a sweet child, look at an avalanche, a storm. Everything is a wonder. And we say, 'Oh, who created this!' And if we are of a religious bent of mind, our hearts are at once filled with admiration and reverence for God the Creator. But God Himself is completely unattached. He is above all these manifestations of nature. God is eternally in His own majesty which is not bound by the laws of nature. He is not bound by time or space or causation. He does not want or need anything because everything is in Him. So when a person discovers himself, his spiritual nature, he shares the truth of God. He feels, 'I don't need anything. God is with me and in God everything is there. Love is there, security is there, freedom is there, joy is there, peace

is there. What else do I need?' That is the declaration of sages.

Who are the sages? A sage is a person who has discovered his spiritual nature, who has discovered the truth of this game of life—this travelling, this aimless wandering from life to life. He has withdrawn himself from this game and has found God. He has found his true Self. So for him this analogy of home becomes very relevant. Each life can be compared to a temporary home. Just as when a person finds his own home, there is a feeling of security, identity, freedom and love, so too, on the spiritual level when a person has discovered his spiritual nature, when he has discovered the presence of God within him, there is a similar experience. There is a feeling of possession: 'Now I have got something which is never going to leave me, an eternal treasure. Now I have found an object of love who can compensate for all emptiness, who includes all loves.' It is not that by loving God we are deprived of all other loves: God is the highest fulfilment of all our little loves. A person who has the experience of God feels that this great love which is God is touching all his objects of love. This earth on which he is walking becomes a heaven to him. This house where he is living becomes a hundred times sweeter to him. These relations and friends whom he is loving become a hundred times more beloved because the love in him is nothing but the light of God. All love, he feels, is coming from God. So that is when really he feels, 'This is my true Home. This is my true destination.' For that he need not die because God-experience can descend to him even when he is living.

So great spiritual teachers tell us that if you have seriously considered the ways of the world you will see that this world is not your true home. It is a temporary shelter. Your true home is God, where there is the ultimate security, the totality of all loves, the ultimate freedom and peace and content-

ment. So a spiritual seeker keeps this goal in his mind. Just as in our ordinary life we long for a home. We dream of this home, in the same way the spiritual seeker always dreams of his true home, namely God. And he carries on his life so that this home may be attained even in this life. In other words, as a spiritual seeker you always have to remember that in whatever situation you have been placed, whatever you are doing, that is not your ultimate purpose. Your ultimate purpose is God-realization. You have to install God within you. And the sages also say, 'Don't think that this true home of yours, God, this Divine nature of yours is far away from you. It is very close, closer, closer, closest to you if you only open your eyes, if with faith and determination you try to find that Truth. Lord Jesus Christ said, 'Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you.' The same proclamation we hear from the sages and saints of all religions. They say, God is within us. Our spiritual nature is within us. We have to knock, we have to knock at the closed door of our heart. Then we shall find that Divine. Whatever way you approach the Divine does not matter. That Divine is common to all religions. A Christian can find the Divine in the Christian way, a Buddhist can find the Divine in the Buddhist way, a Hindu can find the Divine in his own way. It doesn't matter in which way you are seeking. But it is a fact, that the Divine is there.

Vedanta tells us that you can approach the Divine through two different techniques. One is called the technique of knowledge, the technique of rational inquiry. And the other is the technique of emotion, the technique of feeling and love. With the technique of feeling and love we seek the Divine through prayer, through contemplation, through faith. We do not inquire much. We stand on the faith, 'There is God in my heart. God is love, God is beauty, God is power. He is

dearer, dearer to me than any other thing.' These ideas we borrow from the experience of saints and seers. When we read about the experiences of saints and seers we find them expressed in these ways. God is not a fiction, He is not a poetical fancy, He is real, real very real. It is He who is giving you the feeling of love, enabling you to love, enabling you to function in life. All the power, all the love, all the knowledge that you are craving, are coming from God.

So the seeker tries to develop love for God. And it is not difficult because to practise love is a very well known exercise in our life. We began practising love from our very childhood, as soon as we opened our eyes. As a little baby we opened our eyes and we fell in love with space, with light, we fell in love with the dear face of mother. We fell in love, later on, with toys, with this and that. Life is a process of continuous loving. Everyone knows that. So love is not a very difficult practice. As we grow in life we can love many things. Things that we did not love before we learn to love. In the same way we have to learn this new love, God. And what a wonderful object of love God is! That is the seeker's spiritual chore. Through love he tries to find out that God is in his heart. The love that he has directed to many things—to objects, to family, to children, to grandchildren, to sports, to hobbies, all through his life has been divided and scattered in hundreds of directions. Now a spiritual seeker tries to direct that love to God. He need not think, 'I am exhausted. All my stock of love has been exhausted by loving so many things.' That is not true because when a man begins to love God his love grows more and more. There is no lack of supply.

Prayer and contemplation are important factors in the path of love. The devotee constantly prays. He does not care to know where God is living, in which heaven. That faith is enough for him that God is

in his heart. He must respond. So he prays, 'O God, show me your dear face, be with me. Never leave me. You are really my true home, my ultimate home, so I want to be with you.' With all the sincerity of his heart he opens his heart to God. In the seclusion of his home he prays to God. Praying means opening your heart to God and asking God to fulfil your spiritual desire, the desire to touch Him, to see His face, to feel His presence as much as possible.

Even when we are busy we have to feel the presence of God. Even when we are working, even when our senses are experiencing sense objects, sight, sound, smell, touch etc. The sages tell us that it is possible to experience God. More and more the spiritual seeker comes to feel the presence of God. In all situations of life he says, 'My eternal companion is God. He is my father, He is my mother, He is my companion, He is my friend. It is He who is manifest as this vast universe. All the wonders of this universe, all this beauty, all the power that is manifest in it, He, it is He.' In this way his prayer and contemplation go on. Not for one day; every day.

By this practice of prayer and contemplation, slowly things open up. Slowly this crust of ignorance, this wall of ignorance breaks. And God begins to show His face. God begins to appear before him. Then this person feels, 'Now my wandering is over. Now I have come to my true home, my beloved God.' Nobody can argue with him now, because it is his experience. So long as your mind is on the theological level your faith is not grounded on a rock, your faith can be shattered. But if you have experience of God nobody can disprove your experience. If I have black hair, nobody can say my hair is gray. No, I know my hair is black. Who can disprove it? That is called experience. Some such experience has to come in our spiritual life.

If we are interested in religion, if we are interested in discovering God, in finding our true home, we have to carry on this prayer, this contemplation, this thinking earnestly. We have to reframe our mind. We have to readjust our life. Our life as it is, when it is estranged from God is an ignorant life. Its ways are ignorant ways. That is, we do something, we feel we are doing; we see something, at once we feel either attraction or repulsion. Our mind is swayed by passions, by likes and dislikes, by hate, by greed. A person who is seeking God has to change these ways. He has to feel that God is the doer. It is His glory that is manifest in this world. It is He that is peeping through all eyes. Just as He is in me, so He is in all beings. The outlook on life has to be changed. Merely sitting for half an hour in prayer is not enough. Changing the outlook on life, changing our old ignorant habits, that is necessary.

So that is the way of one who is called a Bhakta, a devotee of God, who is seeking God through emotion, through love, through faith. And it goes slowly. God-realization doesn't happen suddenly, in one morning. It is a process. It happens from day to day, day to day, day to day. More and more this person begins to feel that God is within him and he identifies himself with his spiritual nature. Never even in a dream does he think, 'I am so and so, I am so and so'. Whenever he thinks of 'I', at once he relates that 'I' to God. In his deep subconscious this transformation of his ego happens. His ego, his I, his individuality becomes connected always with God. As soon as he says, 'I' he feels, 'I am the child of God, I am the servant of God, I am the devotee of God.' In this way he grows, in this way he becomes more and more God-conscious.

He does not worry about the afterlife or death, because when he has found God as his eternal companion he knows that God will never leave him. 'In life that eternal com-

panion is with me and when this body goes I will be with Him.' So for him this travelling from home to home has ended. He does not worry any more. He knows that if there is an afterlife, if there is a heaven, well and good ; but this is a fact : God is there who will be with him. 'I am God's child, I am God's devotee, my relation with God is eternal.' So he does not care for afterlife or heaven, what will happen. His emphasis is on his relation with God. And that relation becomes stronger and stronger and stronger. This person, then, even in this life, has attained his true home. Even though he lives in this body, really he is living in God. He is living in his true home. And in that true home, God, there is freedom, there is peace, there is tranquillity and there is love. This man, by his God-experience, sees that he is surrounded by love. And he transmits his love to all directions. A man of God, a person who has experienced God, can never be cruel, can never be callous, because God's love is being manifested through him, through his actions. This is the way of finding our true home through the path of Bhakti-yoga, or devotion and faith.

But Vedanta says there is another technique, the technique of self-inquiry, rational inquiry. Here the Divine means, the true home means man's ultimate truth—his true Self. Man is really resting on the infinite nature of his true Self. So this man's path is the path of inquiry. He inquires into this world, he does not say this world is the glory of God. Instead he says that this world is full of contradictions, it is Māyā, There cannot be eternal truth in this flux of life. The eternal truth is at the back of this transient movement of life. So he tries to see contradictions everywhere. So much so that his mind becomes withdrawn from the ways of this world, at least temporarily. He has to negate all objective experiences and find himself as the eternal subject. So he dives deep to find the eternal within himself,

just as a diver goes to the bottom of the ocean. He dives deep into his pure consciousness.

He practises being an observer. He says, 'O body, my beautiful body, I am not you. You are giving me shelter, all right. But I am not going to identify myself with you.' To the mind he says, 'O mind, you are also a wonder but I am not going to identify myself with you because you are not eternal, you are changing from moment to moment. I want to find the eternal.' In this way he eliminates his body, his mind, his ego. His technique is not through faith and prayer and contemplation and singing, but through the rational approach, eliminating that which is not Self, going deeper and deeper until he is standing on his true nature. That nature is not in time, space and causality. The movement of life is outside that Self.

Eventually when he comes to his true home, his true Self, he knows that all he had been seeing all these days, this flux of life, this play, this Māyā, was projected by the true Self. He sees everything in himself, and then harmony comes. Then he no longer says, 'This is flux, I reject this.' The constructive process has begun. First there was a destructive process, 'This is Māyā, this is Māyā, I don't care for this, it is changing, it is changing.' That is the first part of his discipline. But when he has succeeded in touching his true Self, then integration comes. Then he sees that what he had rejected is nothing but the Self. Everything is consciousness. Everything is light. Matter, space, time, mind, thoughts, whatever experience was there is really unbroken infinite. That is called unity. That is called non-dualistic experience. No more any duality. Whatever he sees and feels, he knows in his heart that it is He. There is only one reality. That reality is his true Self. That infinite Ātman has projected everything. No longer is he disturbed by this world. In the beginning he had to be

very austere. He had to be very stern and uncompromising. But when Self-knowledge has come there is no more disturbance. Then he has found that everything is really the Self. This is called Jñāna-yoga : the yoga, the communion, through knowledge, through self-inquiry, through analysis.

We can find that, the sages of the Upaniṣads tell us : 'If you can find your true Self, your Ātman, you find everything.' You find your true home. Just as through the path of love the true home is the God of love,

in the same way in this case the true home is man's infinite Self. And in man's true Self the seeker finds the same experience. That freedom, that love, that tranquillity is also in his true Self. Only his technique is different. Our teachers say the goal is the same. When you are in your true home as the God of love, really speaking it is the same as your true home which you have attained through the path of knowledge, your true Self. In either way you have come to your true home. That is the end of your wandering from home to home.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOURS OF MEDITATION

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Fulfilment of obligations and duties at home and society is important because, in the case of it not being done, no one is going to leave you at peace. Besides, your conscience, the inner mentor itself will make you restless. Robbed peace and quiet from within and without, will make meditation impossible. Sri Ramakrishna teaches :

Do not let worldly thoughts and anxieties disturb your mind. Do everything that is necessary in proper time, and let your mind be always fixed on God.¹³

If everything that is needed to be done is not done in 'proper time', there will be cause for anxiety and it will be difficult to fix the mind on God.

When you are expected to go to the ration shop to collect your quota of sugar, go there

promptly to stand in the queue. Instead, do not sit for meditation right then, for in that case you may lose not only the quota of sugar, but peace at home and also meditation! The earnest pilgrim to the hour of meditation should not think that sugar is a paltry thing and peace at home can be ignored.

Householders desiring to practise meditation and other spiritual disciplines, should not allow themselves to be irked by the necessities of their situation in life. Rather, they should follow in a genial temper the strategy taught by Sri Ramakrishna of making spiritual life work in the worldly set up. No doubt he uses an unpleasant analogy; but all the same, he makes it impossible for you not to catch the meaning. He says :

You are talking about your leading a householder's life. Suppose you are a householder. It rather helps in the practice of spiritual discipline. It is like fighting from inside a fort. The Tāntriks sometimes use a corpse in their

13. *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1975), saying No. 451.

religious rites. Now and then the dead body frightens them by opening its mouth. That is why they keep fried rice and gram near them and from time to time they throw some of the grams into the corpse's mouth. Thus pacifying the corpse, they repeat the name of the Lord without any worry. Likewise, the householder should pacify his wife and other members of the family. He should provide them with food and other necessities. Thus he removes the obstacles to his practice of spiritual discipline.¹⁴

So it is important to have ready a supply of 'fried rice and gram'!

But we should not have an exaggerated notion of duty-consciousness. When it is not kept within proper bounds, it may very well prove itself to be the blazing 'midday summer sun' which scorches the innermost soul of mankind. Swami Vivekananda warns :

Look at those poor slaves to duty! Duty leaves them no time to say prayers, no time to bathe. Duty is ever on them. They go out and work. Duty is on them! It is living a slave's life, at last, dropping down in the street and dying in harness, like a horse. This is duty as it is understood. The only true duty is to be unattached and to work as free beings, to give all work unto God.¹⁵

One should know where one's duty begins and ends. It has also to be remembered that all duties have to be subservient to the highest duty, namely, meditation, or growing in spiritual consciousness.

5

If you would remain a devoted pilgrim to the hour of meditation, do not let your cat come between you and your God. What a

funny precept!, you might exclaim. But no, Sri Ramakrishna seriously warns :

There are people who are so situated in life that naturally they have nothing in the world to attract them, but would yet create for themselves some attachment and get themselves bound by it. They neither want nor like to be free. A man who has no family to care for, nor relatives to look after, generally takes a cat or a monkey, or a dog or a bird for a pet and fondles it, and thus 'slakes his thirst for milk with mere whey'. Such is the snare that Māyā's charm has set for humanity!¹⁶

Though the seemingly ubiquitous snares of Māyā would appear to make the pilgrimage a perilous journey, no matter how sincere we are, Sri Ramakrishna assures us :

There is little fear that a ship will drift or run into danger as long as its compass points due north. So the ship of life steers clear of every danger if the mind, its compass needle, is always turned towards God, without any oscillation.¹⁷

The earnest pilgrim to the hour of meditation should always practise this central teaching of Sri Ramakrishna : 'Never squander the energies of your mind.' This is essentially the same teaching as that given in the Upaniṣad : 'Give up all vain talks.' Positively speaking this means 'keeping the compass needle always turned towards God.'

How we do it is an important practical question. The imperative and necessity of constant remembrance of God may disturb many, for on checking it will be discovered that most of us do not remember Him constantly. We may perhaps remember Him only occasionally and accidentally. Some seem also to be apprehensive that in the developing technological age in which we are destined to live, constant remembrance of God is going to become increasingly difficult.

14. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1969), p. 182.

15. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1970), vol. 1, p. 103.

16. *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, No. 191.

17. *Ibid.*, No. 452.

Even if such apprehensions were not utterly groundless and highly imaginary, all those who for any reason do not and cannot constantly remember God, can derive consolation, inspiration and guidance from Sri Ramakrishna's parable, 'Nārada and the Cup of oil':

Once upon a time conceit entered into the heart of Nārada, and he thought there was no greater devotee than himself. Reading his heart, the Lord said, 'Nārada, go to such and such a place, a great devotee of mine is living there. Cultivate his acquaintance, for he is truly devoted to me.' Nārada went there and found a farmer who rose early in the morning, pronounced the name of Hari (God) only once, and taking his plough, went out and tilled the ground all day long. At night, he went to bed after pronouncing the name of Hari once more. Nārada said to himself, 'How can this rustic be a lover of God? I see him busily engaged in worldly duties and he has no signs of a pious man about him.' Then Nārada went back to the Lord and spoke what he thought of his new acquaintance. Thereupon the Lord said, 'Nārada, take this cup of oil and go round this city and come back with it. But take care that you do not spill even a single drop of it.' Nārada did as he was told, and on his return the Lord asked him, 'Well, Nārada, how many times did you remember Me in the course of your walk round the city?' 'Not once, my Lord,' said Nārada, 'and how could I, when I had to watch this cup brimming over with oil?' The Lord then said, 'This one cup of oil so diverted your attention that even you forgot Me altogether. But look at that rustic, who, though carrying the heavy burden of a family, still remembers me twice every day.'¹⁸

18. *Ibid.*, No. 1086.

One of the ways of frequent remembrance of God is to somehow involve Him in what we think and do in our daily life. The most effective way of doing this is taught by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*:

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give away, and whatever you practise in the form of austerities, O son of Kunti, do it as an offering to me.¹⁹

This method of consecrated living not only manages to channelize all psycho-physical energies towards God, but also delivers us from the binding effects of karma, good or bad, which are not helpful to meditation. In the next verse Śrī Kṛṣṇa specifically assures the devotee:

Thus shall you be freed from the bondage of action, which bears good and evil results. With your mind firmly set in the yoga of renunciation, you shall become free and come to me.²⁰

When we continue to undertake our daily pilgrimage to the hour of meditation with this attitude and preparation, every day little by little, we succeed in overcoming the inner or outer obstacles on the way and daily come closer to the Lord in our heart.

(to be continued)

19. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 9.27.

20. *Ibid.*, 9.28.

A CORRECTION

Please disregard the word 'brahmin' on page 217 of the May 1980 number of *Prabuddha Bharata*, 2nd column, 2nd paragraph, 10th line.

INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO—II

SRI M. P. PANDIT

Process : Aspiration

Before one takes seriously to any path of Yoga one must be sure that he has a call for it. Very often the turn to spiritual life is a result of some disappointment or shock or failure in material life. It is a kind of *vairāgya*, revulsion to things of the world, caused by a happening or a series of happenings. One takes to the interests of the Spirit at a rebound. But pretty soon the effects of the worldly set-back wear out, the *vairāgya* loses its edge, and the old nature asserts itself with the result that enthusiasm for yoga, for spiritual life, peters away. There are cases, however, where the inner call is real and the outer circumstances are merely an occasion for the turn of life. One must make certain that there is an imperative to change the pattern of one's life and reorient it towards God. A superficial interest in the higher things of life or its deeper values is not enough. There must be an intense seeking for the Divine, a want that will not be denied. It is said that one who has the true call feels like a fish out of water unless he changes the direction of his life and enters a path that assures a contact, a communion and eventually a union with the Divine.

This *aspiration* for the Divine is the first step. It is a constant seeking in the being for a change of consciousness, for a leap from the ordinary human into a deeper or higher dimension of the Divine Consciousness. This aspiration may be active in the awakened mind or in the purified heart. It is a flame that is lit as a result of the pressure of the soul within or by an act of Grace. The Grace may act through an apparently chance meeting with a great Soul or through the incubating effect of some *satsang*, holy company, or through an impact of a potent

Word or through a sudden metamorphosis in a moment of crisis. Or it may be that in the course of its evolutionary development the soul has arrived at the point of turning to the parent divine and its urge from within lights up the flame of aspiration.

In the very nature of things, this aspiration at the beginning is not constant. It soars and it flags. The flame must be fed with appropriate fuel. The right contacts, right feelings, right thoughts, right actions that conduce to the growth of the Godward aspiration must be cultivated. All the movements of the being, day and night, must be offered into the purifying flame of this aspiration and the whole of life converted into a veritable sacrifice. Thus alone can the tiny flame grow into a consuming Fire. This is the journey of Agni repeatedly hymned in the Veda. Agni is the central flame of aspiration lit on the alter of the heart, *vedi*, fed and increased by the sacred offering of the oblations of one's deepest experiences of head and heart, and speeded on its voyage to the Home of the Gods from where it calls them down to take birth in the body of man.

At the outset this aspiration is confined to the region where it has taken birth : in the mind where the seeking has commenced or in the heart where it has shot up from the concealed depths. But there are other parts of the being which may or may not share in this central aspiration. They throw their own shadow, their several dampening breaths and serve to weaken the aspiration. It is indispensable to extend the aspiration to these other regions. There is bound to be resistance and non-cooperation from some of these parts or layers of being. The *sādhaka* has to patiently coax them and get them to collaborate in the effort. This is

an uphill task. Again and again invasions from the subconscious regions or the unconscious raise up dust and cover the growing godhead. They try to smother the infant child. The effort needs to be renewed again and again. Patience and sincerity help immeasurably at this stage.

The danger is not only from within oneself. It is also from outside. There are plenty of persons whose nature is inimical to faith, to aspiration. Their very presence in the atmosphere serves to undermine one's foundations. Doubt, scepticism, denial and the like are surreptitiously let loose in the air and they corrode slowly but surely. Any kind of talk or discussion with them—even with the laudable object of convincing them and doing good to them—is harmful. Their vibrations settle like smoke and endanger the flame.

Doubt, says the Mother, is not a sport that can be played with impunity. Doubt is the enemy of faith and of aspiration based upon faith. Doubt has to be rejected at its first appearance. It is not possible to convince doubt for the very nature of doubt is to go on doubting. Doubt is poison and as poison it should be refused admission.

Man is a mental being and as he grows, his mental pabulum too increases. The seeker is selective in his reading. He avoids if possible all that may weaken his aspiration, distract his attention. He chooses that reading which helps and strengthens his seeking, gives a direction to it and in all ways supports his effort. Even in fiction, there

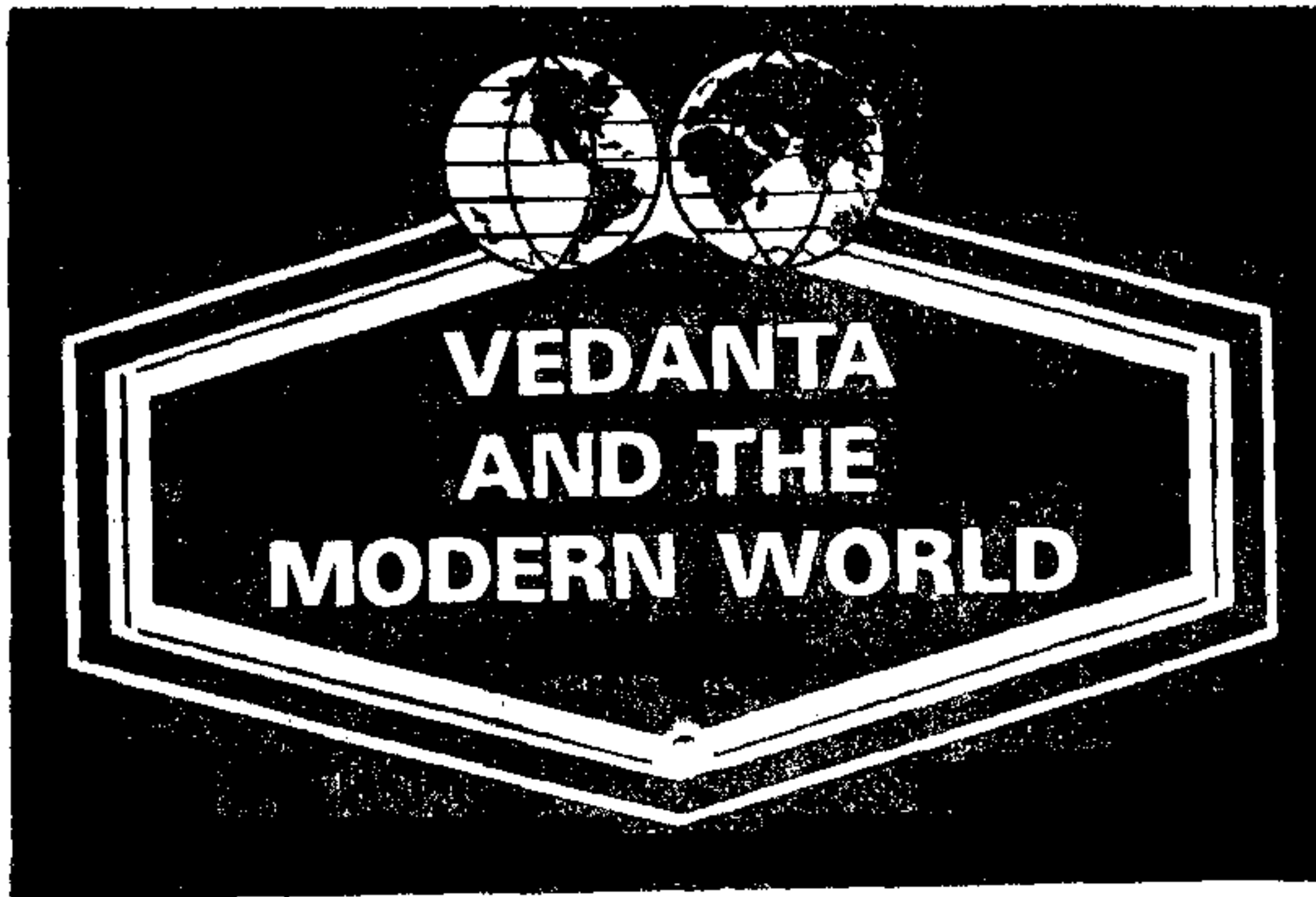
is a creative type and the non-creative. The modern trend is towards meaningful writing—fiction or non-fiction—and the aspirant draws sustenance from all directions.

Aspiration is to be distinguished from desire. Desire proceeds from the vital, the *prāṇamaya kośa*, whether it has a physical form or a mental colouring. Desire involves, binds. Aspiration originates from the soul. It may formulate itself in the mind as aspiration for knowledge, in the heart as seeking for devotion, in the will as a push for dedication, consecration, in the physical as a movement for healthy growth. It is an inner drive towards Truth, the Reality, on whichever level. The many formulations of this central aspiration are legitimate in their own spheres. They are to be fulfilled consistent with the demand of the central movement towards the Divine. All aspiration enlarges, liberates from limitations.

Thus one aspires for the Divine and for all that leads to the Divine. Aspiration spreads its wings over the entire life expanse and picks up everything that can contribute to the onward flight, illumining every corner with its glow. To this Flame of aspiration, the seer-will in the heart, we commend ourselves :

To thee, O Flame! we day by day, in the night and in the light, come, carrying by our thought the obeisance. To thee, who reignest over our pilgrim sacrifices, luminous guardian of the Truth, increasing in thy own home. (Rg-Veda 1.1.7.8).

(to be continued)



IS VEDANTA A PHILOSOPHY OF ESCAPE ?—V

DR. VINITA WANCHOO

(Continued from the previous issue)

CAUSES OF ESCAPISM (continued)*

Mokṣa

There is nothing of which we hear more in Indian thought than immortality or final beatitude, the end of human aspiration. It is the burden of precept, philosophy and prayer,¹ indicated by many terms—*mokṣa*, *mukti*, *rakṣaṇa*, *śreya*, *niḥśreyasam*—which the critic finds non-identical with redemption, rescue, welfare or salvation. The Vedantic teaching on Ātman-Brahman gives rise to effort for freedom from the bondage of visible and temporal existence. This pessimism owes much to speculation about the theory of being.² The infinite is bliss; and knowledge of this alone leads to salvation. In *Mokṣa* Ātman is revealed, but Its revelation is silence.³ Though positively realized as *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*, that being (*sat*) is non-being in any sense within the reach of human understanding; that consciousness (*cit*) is not knowledge of the real, for it remains

unknowable; nor is that bliss (*ānanda*) the same bliss which is known to us, but that which holds sway in sleep.⁴ So vague and detached from our experience is the ultimate that, instead of being above consciousness, it falls below the level of consciousness; and unity with it is reached by way of unconsciousness.⁵ Vedanta offers rest in an eternal which is too much like the sleep of death, complete annihilation.⁶ This eschatology renders man's condition even more miserable and hopeless.

The critic explains that the world being a meaningless 'wheel' rolling on eternally, with finite souls caught in its spokes of suffering and imperfection, the prospect of an indefinite number of lives and deaths fills the mind with horror; consequently, man struggles to divest himself from time, change and the evils supposed to be inherent in temporal life. The extreme radicalism of 'world denial' was due to the world-image of

* The supposed causes of escapism adduced by critics of Vedanta which have already been discussed are intellectualism, pantheism, and mysticism.

1. Rudolf Otto, *India's Religion of Grace and Christianity Compared and Contrasted*, p. 16.

2. Sydney Cave, *Redemption*, p. 65.

3. Rudolf Otto, *India's Religion of Grace and Christianity Compared and Contrasted*, p. 75.

4. Cf. Archibald Edward Gough, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p. 267; Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p. 156; Henry Haigh, *Some Leading Ideas of Hinduism*, pp. 74, 36; N. N. S. Gore, *A Rational Refutation of Hindu Philosophical Systems*, p. 274.

5. W. S. Urquhart, *Vedanta and Modern Thought*, p. 120.

6. Cf. E. D. Soper, *The Inevitable Choice*, pp. 136-37.

Vedanta which left no other choice possible.⁷ This pathetically sombre representation of a transitory death-consecrated nature needed to be counteracted by the concept of a bliss all the more positive. But the goal of Vedanta does not attract man so much by its winningness and beauty, as that man is driven to it by weariness and dislike of life's sorrow and bleak prospects.⁸ Indifference to the world and evasion of its problems is associated with Mokṣa. The bondage to be escaped is more important than the liberty that is gained.⁹

The idea of self-conscious individuality did not stand out in the mind of Vedantins. *Amṛtatvam* is a qualitative dimension not equated with hope of continued existence beyond physical dissolution. Mokṣa is not 'atonement' of sins or propitiation of God, but passing beyond objectivity, duality, merit and demerit, and the fruit of karma, by release from the fetters (*granthi, bandhana*) of desire. The path to Mokṣa is the technique of apathetic ecstasy or contemplation, in which the effort is to silence all human elements—*anxiety, passions, drives and strivings*—and consciousness is emptied of all content to make room for the Divine.¹⁰ All power of thought and experience is blurred and confused by Mokṣa. In the analogy of the rivers and ocean or of salt and water, the self that remains in Mokṣa can hardly be called self, in any human sense. Selfhood in the spatial and temporal order, with its distinctions and histories and even its values, is lost, as at the highest evolution the migrating self is 'refunded' into the impersonal self.

7. Max Weber *et al.*, *The Religions of India*, p. 167.

8. Nicol Macnicol, *The Making of Modern India*, p. 130.

9. Cf. Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p. 140.

10. Cf. Archibald Edward Gough, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p. 235.

Mokṣa has no value in terms of morality. In later Vedanta the distinction between *jīvan-mukti* and *videha-mukti* (liberation in life, and liberation after death) is clear, but even the former liberation—based on the attainment of intuitive knowledge during this life itself—has no reference to moral change. Since the good is connected with desire and desire is imperfection, Mokṣa is above goodness. In the transcendental state such a conclusion may not matter; but in the empirical state this provides no counterpoise to the reality of evil. The total failure of will and reason in Mokṣa is bound to have the baneful consequence of moral emptiness. No noble life of justice and righteousness follows from Mokṣa; there is no rebirth or re-creation of man at a higher level; so this characterless state does not help to keep spirituality at a high level of purity.¹¹

Critics take strong exception to the individualistic character of Mokṣa. There is no conception in Vedanta of the redemption of society. The relation of society to the individual, with reference to Mokṣa, is one of means to end. The value of social virtues lies not in themselves but in their being conducive to the goal of Mokṣa for the individual. In *videha-mukti* there is a complete break from society and life. Even in *jīvan-mukti*, deliverance does not issue in any social results, for there is no scope for moral action by a perfected personality, uniting love and purposeful exertion.¹² Mokṣa is only for the recluse, the monk, the devotee; but the majority, failing the final knowledge, are debarred from the goal and have to submit to ordinary practices of dharma. Since

11. Cf. Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, pp. 361-62; Sydney Cave, *Redemption*, pp. 74-75; A. E. Gough, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p. 267.

12. Cf. Henry Haigh, *Some Leading Ideas of Hinduism*, p. 135.

Mokṣa is not the fulfilment but the negation of dharma, it is merely the negation of the social morality followed by common humanity.

Māyā

Of all the doctrines of Vedānta, the one that is found to be the primary cause of its escapist attitude is the doctrine of illusion or Māyā. The theists have objected strongly to the reduction of the world to unreality, while the monists have just as strenuously tried to maintain the positiveness of world appearance, while denying its eternalness. The modern critic finds the central doctrine of Māyā in the monistic worldview the most objectionable because of its effects on the philosophical and popular outlooks of the Indian mind. The effects are so pernicious that even where the doctrine of world-reality is advanced, it produces the idea of the undesirability of the world. The representative temper of Vedānta is that of Māyā, in which all schools admit the inadequacy of human means, thought and language to transcend the names and forms which constitute the world.

Classical Vedānta and its modern scholars are divided about the exact meaning of Māyā, the philosophical and psychological motives for its adoption, its vagueness of nature (inexplicability), and its exact point of origin in the evolution of Vedānta. The critic, while willing to grant that Māyā may not be taken as an out-and-out principle of illusion, argues that that is the effect of the doctrine on many minds. Śaṅkara does not guard sufficiently against the illusory interpretation.¹³ As for the realistic standpoint adopted by Śaṅkara in refuting his Buddhist opponents, that is either judged as an outright contradiction of his theoretical

stand of mystic intuition of the world's non-finality or as a methodological device by which the provisional concession of the reality of the external world is made a step in the final refutation of it.¹⁴ Hence Advaitic realism is but a further support of Māyāvāda.

Māyāvāda completes the negation of the world. The first degree of independent and substantial existence is alone real, philosophically. The third degree of existence in dreams and illusions is called illusion both by philosophy and common sense, but Vedānta degrades the second degree also to the level of the third. The latter two are *avastu* (unsubstantial, worthless) in comparison with the first which is 'vastu' (substantial). As Māyā implies that the unseen is more real than the seen, the defect of materialism is avoided; but from the proclamation of unreality of the seen a disesteem of facts follows, a distrust of the natural world, which merely hides the real and is not a revelation of it. The *vyāvahārika* level of common-sense realism or even scientific investigation is so divorced from the highest spiritual level that the Vedantist cannot escape the temptation to leave behind all the difficulties of the lower level. Knowledge of the secular level is unreliable while that of the divine is impossible for the many, or reserved for the few. The mind of man becomes oppressed by the general distrust of facts, lack of faith in the possibility of mastering inconsistencies by reason. Hopelessness ensues and the only possible attitude seems to be one of stoic indifference. The doctrine of Māyā necessarily has a devitalizing effect on life since no theoretical or practical conquest of the world is possible. The very admission of Māyā as a mystery becomes an excuse for not attempting to penetrate it.

¹³. Cf. W. S. Urquhart, *The Vedānta and Modern Thought*, p. 57.

¹⁴. *Ibid.*, p. 98; cf. Henry Haigh, *Some Leading Ideas of Hinduism*, p. 97: realism is but a psychological position adopted by Śaṅkara and not a real position. Hence mere 'opportunism in argument'.

Not only does this become the basis of transfer of all interest from normal ends and means of the world, but the Vedantic spiritual quest becomes a journey through unreal objects and experiences; all varied and rich content of the world being dropped out, the journey itself is unreal. The world of becoming in time and space, without any purpose or direction, creation, history, progress, loses its meaning for man. Facts of life are real enough to the common man, but they cannot be related to any purpose of the world-creator, so 'the doctrine of Māyā is just an attitude towards life of baffled mistrust, undependability, magic.'¹⁵ The world is a magic-show of the Great Magician (Māyin) and the implication of Māyāloka is of something blinding the eye of knowledge; and spiritual development means being uninfluenced by the powerful attraction of its magic charm; that is, the religious man negates life and the world by mortifying the will to live, renouncing all activity for world improvement, not taking any interest in it. Pessimism in regard to the world is the persistent trait of the Indian mind.

The implications of Māyāvāda in the sphere of religion are found to be as destructive as in the sphere of the phenomenal. Īśvara, the theistic God, in contrast to the highest reality of Brahman, is empirical only, the first product of Māyā, though still above it; hence monism offers a false God to a false world to the bitter chagrin of theistic Vedanta, which opposes this conclusion with all its might. Nor can the common man find any hope or consolation in this theism which makes God hold only in the world of appearance, not in reality; for he is destined to remain in the sphere of religion, which, he is told, is false, while the philosopher, from his transcendental level of reality,

looks down condescendingly on the state of unreality of the majority without making the effort to disturb them. The religious perspective is in error which mistakes God for Brahman and has to be transcended by yoga.

Such conclusions are accentuated by the negation of human personality, which follows upon Māyā. The standpoint of reality postulates that each soul is the whole, undivided Brahman, but the standpoint of Māyā postulates a multiplicity of limited, finite souls in Saṁsāra. In reality there is no individual, separative self, for the illusive psychic Jīva is no more in it. Such is the destructive zeal of Vedanta that it seeks to suppress altogether the finite and its experiences in favour of the infinite. All that is value to the individual—personal freedom, personality, selfhood—is suppressed as fictitious and empty.¹⁶

With the denial of the reality of the empirical self, moral obligations also cease. Morality exists only in view of the soul as distinct from a real body, but Māyāvāda denies the soul's connection with body, mind and senses. Since it explains away all evils along with the world, there can be no incentive for moral improvement in the individual or in society. As the evils and sufferings of an illusory world are also illusory, what need is there for effort on the part of the individual to overcome illusory evils?¹⁷ There is no need for man to distinguish good from bad, higher from lower value, and to labour for promotion of the good or higher value. Such a depreciation of moral sense makes expediency the highest virtue. All being equally unreal, either man is free to choose as prudence dictates, or

¹⁶. Cf. Henry Haigh, *Some Leading Ideas of Hinduism*, p. 103.

¹⁷. Cf. A. C. Bouquet, *Comparative Religions*, p. 103.

¹⁵. Devanandan, *The Concept of Maya*, p. 184.

might becomes the standard of what is morally right.¹⁸

Karma and Punarjanma

In the region of conduct, karma and *punarjanma* (rebirth) are the two most powerful influences. The difference in the attitudes and tone of life between the *Rg-Veda* and the *Upaniṣads* is explained as being due to the rise of belief in transmigration, with which was combined the idea of justice in the shape of karma. This is indicative of social crisis in the Upaniṣadic age, in which there was intellectual unrest and growing weariness with the sense-world. Only the assumption of a constantly changing continuum of life connected with the doctrine of the power of the deed could satisfy the moral consciousness of the Vedantic seers. Later Vedantins were all imbued with these traditional beliefs, but karma and *punarjanma* are relative truths, because they only explain Saṃsāra and have some connection with the idea of salvation; but all are agreed that with the grasping of the highest truth both must vanish.¹⁹

According to the critics, these doctrines greatly accentuate the spirit of escapism. Transmigration, carrying with it the idea of repeated death, is viewed as a curse to be escaped only by destruction of the individuality which is undergoing this curse.²⁰ In the endless succession of lives the importance of a single life is minimized, men are relieved of responsibility in regard to the justice of their fates and actions. Nor has the conception of rebirth any significance for spiritual awakening to truth, but only a straightforward empirical sense of continuity from life to life. Since future life is not consciously connected with the present, there is no per-

¹⁸. Cf. Henry Haigh, *Some Leading Ideas of Hinduism*, p. 106.

¹⁹. Cf. F. M. Müller, *Vedanta Philosophy*, p. 53.

sonal immortality for the ordinary man; it is weary work to plod through hundreds of reincarnations without attaining to any continuous thread of memory. Therefore the view of life as decay and replacement is unrelieved by any theory of instinctive faith in general advancement of the race or betterment of all, but the utmost that is possible for each is to see to his own uplift and freedom from this worthless world. The misery and vanity of life overcome joy and hope, and profound pessimism is the ruling factor.

Karma determines all that happens to man and the world. Things are what they are because they cannot be otherwise; karma operates through latent impressions (*saṃskāras*) which preordain certain kinds of actions. Objectively, they determine social and external conditions of life and subjectively, the mind's attitudes and temperament, its pleasurable and painful experiences. The exact process by which *saṃskāras* produce their effects is not worked out, but the pattern of desires, thoughts and actions of the ego which constitute bondage are consequences of karma. Thus fatalism sets in, in the form of belief that karmic destiny uninfluenced by man controls his whole life and what happens to him; this is expressed in the form of *daiva* or fate, *vidhi* or arranged lot.²¹ Concentration on the inexorable and heavy weight of past deeds on the present plight of man becomes fatalism.²²

Since the working out of karma produces new karma, the actual effect is that no hope of immortality illumines the future.²³ The

²⁰. Cf. Monier Williams, *Brahminism and Hinduism*, p. 41; Maurice Bloomfield, *Religion of the Vedas*, p. 258.

²¹. Cf. Louis de la Vallé Poussin, *The Way to Nirvana*, p. 94; Henry Haigh, *Some Leading Ideas of Hinduism*, p. 31.

²². Cf. Devanandan, *The Concept of Maya*, p. 182.

²³. Cf. L. D. Barnett, *Brahma Knowledge*, p. 7.

conviction arises in the minds of men that good deeds no more than evil can set them free from the wheel of life. This is dualistic pessimism in which good and evil are both made to emphasize evil—evil, because it is evil; and good, because its existence suggests the existence of evil.²⁴ This is bound to have a depressing effect on individual and society. There is no incentive to moral effort. Man can but quiescently submit to fate and cannot hope to ascend gradually through moral reformation to freedom from sin and evil. History teaches that the effect of karma is to compel men, in revolt from the tyranny of the past, to seek to sever completely the effects of their deeds; as a reaction to an excessive emphasis on karma, Mokṣa takes the shape of entire separation from karma.²⁵ The cheerlessness of the doctrine of Mokṣa as annihilation in pure identity, and belief in karma and transmigration, act and react on each other. Though the identity doctrine is older historically, yet once the belief in these doctrines arose, the sense of human misery deepened and escape from Samsāra became the great goal of Vedanta.

The relation of body and soul and the postulate of good and evil deeds following from these doctrines imply the reality of the world. But in the summum bonum both are transcended and the soul is untouched by bodily conditions, so there is no validity of ethics there and it is relegated to the lower unreal sphere. Thus karma has both ethical and non-ethical implications. As determining both physical environment and man's life it is ethical; but with reference to the liberated and God, who are unaffected by it, it is supra-ethical. Though even the gods are subject to the karmic law, the highest Brahman is exempt, since He refrains from all activity. The hope of even theistic

Vedanta for a personal, righteous God is frustrated by the conviction that God, if free from the operation of karma, must be inactive in regard to the world; but if He is active and concerned with the world, He will be bound by the law of karma. This increases the sense of misery and futility, because existence is not regulated by a supreme and righteous judge but by spontaneous operation of the soul's experience. Either God or karma must yield, one to the other. But since karma cannot be changed by one iota and law works automatically, nothing but inertia, supine submission and acceptance can result from the feeling of being caught up in a soulless machine, moral but godless.

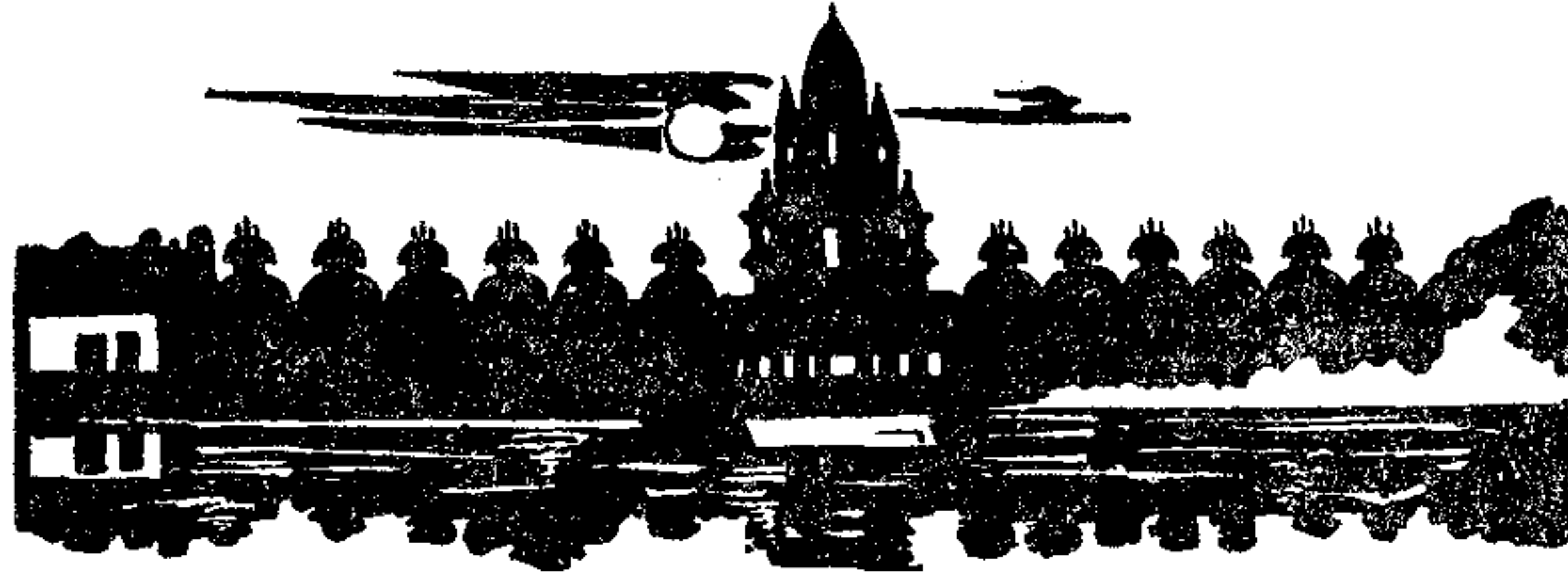
Nor is there any scope in the karma doctrine for consolation in suffering or any motive to relieve the suffering of others. Even if it is believed that human will is strong enough to overcome karmic difficulties, karma in this life remains unchanged. The legalistic idea of justice involves the conception of suffering and evil as fruits of or punishment for sins; hence they are deserved. Kindness and mercy are interference with the just law of retribution, hence unjust.²⁶ Karma has been hostile to the idea of the good life for the individual and society, undermining personal responsibility, as the individual begins to think of life as a penance laid on him by an irresistible fate for things done in another existence. Under such fatal individualism the sense of social responsibility cannot grow, the individual can but submit passively under evil. Since karma operates individually, the egoistic consequence follows that each seeks a solitary salvation and not the redemption of humanity, which alone can make the doctrine satisfactory. Each man working out his own karma can do little for his fellow

(Continued on page 316)

24. Bloomfield, *Religion of the Vedas*, p. 267.

25. Sydney Cave, *Redemption*, p. 189.

26. Cf. J. N. Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*, p. 142.



WORSHIP IN CHRISTIANITY

Worship in Christianity evolved out of the Jewish idea of sacrifice. However, the Pauline doctrine of original sin so radically modified the Jewish idea of sacrifice that at present there is practically no similarity between worship in Judaism and Christian worship.

Sacrifice in Judaism

The principal medium of worship in the ancient Hebrew religion was the sacrifice. By sacrifice was meant the offering of food or other gifts to the Deity. The principles and rules of this sacrifice are formulated in detail in the Old Testament books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Ancient Israelite sacrifices fell into two broad groups : the covenant-sacrifice and the taboo-sacrifice.

The covenant-sacrifice was a sacred meal at which the Deity was regarded as the host and the sacrificer and his family and friends as guests. Choice portions of the meal were set apart for the Deity and the remaining major part was consumed by the others. Thus through this practice of eating together, a covenant or bond of relationship was established between the Deity and the worshippers.

The taboo-sacrifice was based on the belief that all the products of nature such as grain, fruits, domestic animals, etc. were created by God and so belonged to Him.

This meant that these were tabooed to man. It was further believed that by offering to the Deity a part of the produce (grain, fruit, etc.), the taboo was removed and the remainder could be used for secular purposes. It was the Jewish custom to offer the first and best products of the field or domestic animals at the Temple in Jerusalem, and nowhere else. The part offered to the Deity was never used by the sacrificer ; it was either completely burnt upon the altar (holocaust, as this burning was called), or a portion of it was burnt and the remaining part given to the priests or the poor, who were regarded as clients of God.

The Babylonian captivity created a ferment in Jewish mind, and the concept of sacrifice underwent many changes in the post-exilic period. The ancient covenant-sacrifice was now designated as 'peace-offering'. The taboo-sacrifice was divided into different groups like 'burnt offering', 'meal offering' and 'sin offering'. The destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem by Romans in 70 A.D. brought the entire Jewish sacrificial system to a sudden and permanent end. The Rabbis (Jewish priests) of that period taught that prayer and service in the synagogues substituted for sacrifice. Since then, private prayer and service in the synagogues have remained the principal medium of worship in Judaism up to the present day.

Influence of St. Paul on Christian worship

The Christian practice of worshipping in the church is a continuation of the Jewish service in synagogues. But regarding the real nature of worship, early Christianity marked a total departure from the Jewish tradition. Though Christian theologians quote profusely from the Old Testament in support of the new theory of worship, it was essentially the creation of St. Paul.

The foundation of Christian worship consists of three doctrines introduced by St. Paul. One is the doctrine of original sin (*peccatum originis*). According to this doctrine, Adam by disobeying God committed a sin which was transmitted from generation to generation till all mankind became born sinners. How far this original sin has tainted the human soul is a matter of dispute between Catholic and Protestant theologians. The more moderate Catholic doctrine holds that Adam's fall did not destroy the spiritual faculty and freedom of man; it only tainted the soul. But the Protestants, following St. Augustine, hold that the soul and will are so completely enslaved by sin that man left to himself is incapable of accomplishing anything good. Another idea connected to original sin is that God was angry with not only Adam but all humanity.

The second doctrine of Paul, implicit in his teachings, is that all forms of sacrifice done by man are incapable of eradicating original sin, and also reconciling man with God. This belief made all the devotional exercises including sacrifice practised by the Jews inadequate for man's salvation.

The third doctrine of Paul is that Jesus Christ through his death on the cross atoned for the sins of man, pacified divine wrath, and redeemed mankind from hell. This is the famous Pauline doctrine of 'Justification'. He says in one of his letters, 'For if, when we (i.e. man and God) were enemies, we

were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.'¹

These three doctrines led to the logical conclusion that any person who accepts Jesus Christ as the saviour, is not only pardoned by God but also freed from the taint of original sin. This is the Protestant view. The Catholic Church holds a slightly modified view. According to it, the original sin is removed by the administration of baptism, which is essentially the work of Holy Spirit. This means that the main purpose of Christ's sacrifice was to atone for mankind's sins and effect a reconciliation between man and God.

Both Protestants and Catholics are agreed about one point: since all forms of human worship are inadequate, and since Christ's self-immolation alone pleased and satisfied God, the only true worship is Christ's self-sacrifice. It is this idea of God sacrificing Himself for mankind that makes Christian worship totally different from worship in all other religions. Real worship is offered to God not by man but Christ. Therefore the Catholics regard Christ as the real Priest, the true head of the Church.

The Lord's Supper

The Crucifixion as Christ's self-oblation is only one aspect of Christian worship. The other aspect is connected with another event in Christ's life—the Last Supper. The Gospels narrate how on the night before he was crucified, Jesus while having his supper with his disciples, said that the bread he broke was his body and the wine he passed around was his blood. The early Christians used to meet in groups and commemorate the last supper of Christ as a simple ceremony of consecrating and sharing bread and wine. Gradually it came to be associated

¹. Epistles to Romans, 5.10.

with the death and resurrection of Christ.

The identification of the Lord's Supper with the Crucifixion gave final shape and meaning to Christian worship which is now known under various names such as the Eucharist (from the Greek for 'thanksgiving'), Mass (from the Latin word *Missa* meaning conclusion of the celebration), Blessed Sacrament, Divine Liturgy, Korbana, etc. The Protestants regard it primarily as a memorial ceremony commemorating the Lord's Supper. The Roman Catholics identify it more with the Crucifixion, though about the exact nature of this identification theologians have not yet come to any definite conclusion. The official view is that the Mass or the Eucharist is a repetition of Christ's original sacrifice on the Cross. This is, however, not symbolical; it is a real sacrifice—every time the Mass is conducted, Christ is offering himself anew to God. So there is a real presence of Christ in the bread and wine that are offered. Moreover, the worship is offered by Christ himself through the sacerdotal body of the Church. The Protestants give a symbolic interpretation to the whole rite and some theologians, who hold what is called the theory of receptionism, go to the extent of stating that the presence of Christ exists not in the bread and wine but in the soul of the worshipper.

In the East, the Divine Liturgy was regarded as a celebration of the resurrection of Christ. The mood of joyous celebration is to this day maintained by the Syrian Christians of Kerala who call this worship *korbana*.

Importance of the Eucharist

According to the faith of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, when baptism is administered the original sin in man is removed by the 'sanctifying grace' (*gratia gratum faciens*) of God (the Father). Where, then, is the necessity of the Euchar-

ist? The Eucharist is essentially a ceremony of receiving Christ in the depths of one's soul ('holy communion') and, through that, purifying oneself further by becoming a member of the Mystical Body of Christ. The Grace that is received through baptism could be lost through sin. Holy communion restores this Grace. Since man misuses his freedom and constantly commits sin, frequent communion is necessary to keep oneself pure. This belief has led in modern times to what is called the liturgical revival in the Catholic Church, which insists upon the necessity of frequent communion for the faithful.

The holy communion is only a particular, though important, ritual of the Eucharist through which the faithful receive the living Christ in the offered bread. For this the communicant should have previously prepared himself through 'penance' which includes confession to a priest. For the rest of the congregation, who attend the Mass but do not receive holy communion, the Mass serves as an expression of their love for Christ, an act of thanksgiving and participation in the redemptive work of the Church. To make the Mass more meaningful to people the idea of participation of the congregation in worship is now being given more stress.

Rituals of the Mass

The Mass is the only official form of worship in the Catholic Church. It is conducted by a priest or a bishop who wears special vestments for the service. In the Catholic Church the priests are expected to say Mass daily, and the lay people are expected to attend the Mass at least every Sunday. The Mass has two parts or stages: The Liturgy of the Word (the Mass of the Catechumens) and the Liturgy of the Eucharist (the Mass of the Faithful). Most of the texts used are the same for all occasions and are called 'ordinary', but certain parts called

'proper' change with the occasion or day. Many of the hymns are sung in choir and the rest of the readings, chants and pronouncements are made by the celebrant (the priest) with the congregation responding now and then.

The first part of the Mass called the Liturgy of the Word, or the Fore-Mass, consists mostly of readings. But before the reading begins there are several preliminary ceremonies like censuring (i.e. burning of incense) of the altar, bringing of the bread and wine to the altar (often in a procession), consecration of the altar, and some prayers. Then select portions of the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul are read out by the priest without explaining them. The Fore-Mass ends with a prayer.

The second stage of the Mass called the Liturgy of the Eucharist is the worship proper. This begins with a censuring of the altar, the washing of the celebrant's hands, more prayers, and the Sanctus which is a ritual sanctification of bread and wine by the chanting of an Old Testament prayer beginning with 'Holy, holy, holy'. Then starts the Canon which is the Eucharist proper, the core of the Mass. In Eastern Churches this part consists of three successive acts. First comes the Institution in which the story of Christ's last supper is re-enacted. Then comes the Epiclesis which is a solemn invocation (corresponding to the *āvāhana* of Hindu Pūjā) of the Holy Ghost on the bread and wine. [The Roman Catholics do not have this ritual. According to the belief of Eastern Churches the miraculous change in the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ occurs during the Epiclesis. The Roman Catholic belief is that this miraculous change takes place during the recitation of the Institution.] The Epiclesis is followed by the consecration. The Host (the bread or wafer which stands for the body of Christ) and the

chalice (containing the wine which stands for the blood of Christ) are raised by the priest above his head for all to see and adore. The elevation of the Host, which represents Christ's self-offering on the Cross to God the Father, is the solemn climax of the Eucharist. The Canon ends with prayers for the dead and the singing of hymns.

After the Canon there are a few more rituals connected with holy communion. The Lord's Prayer (taught by Christ himself in the Gospels) is recited as a preparation. The priest then breaks the offered wafer (Host) into small pieces (and in some rites these are mixed with the sacramental wine) and puts them into the mouths of those among the congregation who had earlier prepared themselves for it. This receiving of Christ through the sacramental bread is called Holy Communion. After this the altar vessels are ceremoniously washed (Ablution). More prayers and hymns follow before the Mass is concluded with a valedictory blessing of the faithful by the priest. On special days the priest delivers a sermon after the worship is over.

The Eucharist and Hindu Pūjā

Though the Eucharist and the Pūjā are acts of worship and have some common features like priesthood, the use of incense, light and the ringing of bell, they are based on entirely different pre-suppositions.

In the first place, the Eucharist is an act of God's sacrificing Himself for man. It is a mystical immolation, which is at the same time a real pragmatic oblation, of the body and blood of Christ to the Father, as a Victim for the world's sin. The Pūjā, on the contrary, is a simple rite of adoration and service (*upacāra* or *kaimkarya*) to God involving a certain amount of personal self-sacrifice.

Secondly, the Eucharist is a commemorative rite, though a real repetition of the orig-

inal event. It is a memorial of the paschal mystery of Christ—his passion, death and resurrection. It is a sacrament instituted by Christ, and so is bound up with history. It is a rite of thanksgiving. The Pūjā is an expression of the timeless aspiration of the human soul. It is essentially a mystical rite. The idea of thanksgiving is totally alien to the Hindu attitude towards God.

Thirdly, the Eucharist is a rite of communion. Through it the direct infusion of Grace takes place in the depths of the soul. The Pūjā is a purificatory rite. A true communion between the soul and God may take place during Pūjā if it is performed by a spiritually advanced person. But in the case of average persons, this communion is only imaginary. The main purpose of Pūjā is to purify the worshipper and prepare him for higher mystical life. In the Eucharist, the invocation (the 'Epiclesis' according to the Eastern liturgy) is made on the elements of the Eucharist, namely bread and wine. And communion takes place by the consumption of these elements. In Pūjā there is double invocation of divine Presence—first in the heart of the worshipper and then on the external symbol. Prasāda, the offered food material, does not effect communion; it only clarifies and purifies the mind and body. According to Hindu belief direct communion is possible only through mystical experience.

Fourthly, the Mass is central to the spiritual life of Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians. In Christian monastic life it serves as the main spiritual force. But Pūjā is only peripheral to a Hindu's life. Meditation done with a view to gaining direct mystical experience occupies the centre of Hindu spirituality. Performance of Pūjā is not obligatory to sannyāsins and is in fact regarded as a practice meant for those who are at the lowest stage of spiritual life.

Fifthly, the Roman Catholic Mass is a cor-

porate worship offered by the sacerdotal body of the Church through an ordained priest. But though there is a certain degree of collective participation in Pūjā when done as a public worship in temples, the Pūjā is essentially an individual act of the worshipper who does not share any well-defined fellowship with the faithful.

These differences in the theory and practice of worship in Hinduism and Christianity have their roots in the different views of man in the two religions. According to the Christian concept of man, personality is dichotomous; that is, it consists of the body and mind (the mind itself being called soul or spirit). And this soul or mind is regarded as tainted by the Original Sin. Sin is the breaking of the moral commandments of God and is thus an act of disobedience to God. The 'original sin' which man has inherited can never be eradicated by human effort. Christ's sacrifice alone redeemed man from sin. Worship is a repetition of the redemptive act of God.

In Hindu view personality is trichotomous, consisting of the body, the mind and the Ātman (spirit). Sin is not a disobedience or revolt against God. Sin (*pāpa*) is the evil propensity in man produced by the *samskāras* (latent impressions of past deeds) acquired by each man by his own actions. Moreover, sin stains only the mind, not the Ātman. In its real nature, the Ātman is ever pure, self-luminous, blissful, and a part of God. But in the state of *samsāra* (bondage) this real Ātman remains veiled by ignorance (according to Śaṅkara) or remains contracted (according to Rāmānuja). The function of God's grace is to remove this veil or limitation and restore the real Self to man. According to Christian belief God (as Christ) sacrifices Himself in order to remove the original sin. According to Hindu belief, God removes the 'original ignorance' (*mulāvidyā*) in the soul of man

by His grace. As the *Gītā* says, 'Out of mere compassion for them, God abiding in their Ātman destroys the darkness born of ignorance, by the light of the lamp of

wisdom.'² Worship is a means of preparing oneself to receive this grace.

². The *Bhagavad-Gita*, 10.11.

How They Walked on the Razor's Edge

ST. TERESA, BRIDE OF THE SUN

SWAMI ATMARUPANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

The twelve years after her father's death were years of terrible conflict, confusion and waste for Teresa. But though she had been grossly misguided by her spiritual directors, it was not that she had received no warnings to mend her life. Even before the death of Don Alonso she was once talking to a visitor when Christ appeared before her in an attitude of great sternness, showing her that this friendship was very harmful. Because she couldn't understand how the vision had happened, however, and also because it displeased her, she hesitantly convinced herself that it had been imagination, and ignored the warning, though deep within she knew that the vision had been real. On another occasion when she was with this same person, they both saw a huge toad-like reptile crawling towards them. It was such a bizarre sight that Teresa felt intuitively that it was a warning sent by God. Though this experience also made a deep impression on her, like the other it went unheeded. One of the nuns, too, warned Teresa occasionally about her friendships. 'Oh, you take scandal over nothing, Sister,' Teresa would reply curtly. For Teresa's intentions were innocent; and seeing so many other nuns receiving visitors,

she didn't realize it caused as much distraction as in fact it did.

Besides the warnings from Christ and the nun, Teresa's own conscience constantly urged her to give up all that distracted her from the love of God. All these factors caused the inner conflict to intensify.

Then, one day in 1553 as she was passing through the oratory, she noticed a bust, an *Ecce Homo*¹ which had just been installed for a festival. It showed the wounds of Christ so vividly that Teresa's eyes remained fixed on it. It seemed to her that the wounds had been caused by her own unfaithfulness: so many times she had failed Christ, still He continued to shower her with blessings; she had ignored His warnings, still He protected her from the dangers of her own carelessness. Then the tremendous tension which had been building up for years within her burst, and she fell on her knees before the image, weeping. She implored Christ's blessings that she might mend her life and remain true to Him. 'I won't rise from this spot until you grant me this, O my Lord and God,' she cried.

¹. An image depicting Christ as He was presented, crowned with thorns, to His accusers by Pilate. Lit. 'Behold the man!' John 19.5.

And from that moment onward the thirty-eight-year-old nun began to record spiritual progress. Once again she was the little child, *la niña*, who had sought so eagerly that which lasts 'for ever'. No more was there to be any backsliding, no more satisfaction with mediocrity, no more sacrificing the spiritual ideal to the desire to please others.

Until this time, prayer had usually been for her an effort of the will, something limited to certain set periods of the day. As a rule, since joining the convent she had had to take the help of a book for recollection when praying. She had also discovered that looking at beautiful natural objects—flowers, water, a field—helped remind her of the Creator.

Now after her second conversion, however, prayer was no longer a struggle, no longer a practice limited to set times of the day; it no longer needed so much external stimulation. Prayer became part of her very being, and even if she wanted to think of outward things she couldn't. 'The more I tried to think of other things, the more completely the Lord enveloped me in that sweetness and glory until I felt so completely surrounded by it that I couldn't flee from it in any direction.' She began to experience the prayer of quiet frequently, and often the prayer of union or spiritual betrothal (so called because in it the soul gets acquainted with her Lover in a brief tryst).

But there was agony associated with this ecstasy: 'So great were the delights and sweetness which I experienced in spite of my resistance, that I was scared.' She thought that perhaps she was suffering from illusions. While at prayer, the experience of God's presence was undeniably real. But at other times of the day, when only the memory remained, she wondered: God or illusion?

Whom could she talk to? Her spiritual

directors had never understood her; and the other nuns were quite ignorant of mystical experience. First she approached two very respected and pious men of Avila—one a layman trained in theology and the other a priest. After listening to a detailed account of her spiritual experiences, they gave her their diagnosis: 'the working of the devil', and their prescription: 'Be careful!' Teresa had been frightened by her experiences before; now she was terrified.

She was advised to consult the Society of Jesus, the order recently founded by St. Ignatius Loyola. They had a new foundation in Avila, and were famed for their spirituality and ability to guide souls. Surely they could help her escape these diabolical illusions. But the young Jesuit who reviewed her case gave the diagnosis: 'God', and his prescription: not to give up mental prayer for any reason, for God was giving her many graces through it; she must work hard, for she would be much to blame if she ignored His call; and perhaps He would use her to help others someday. 'He directed me so well that it seems I am no longer the same,' she exclaimed afterwards.

This contact with the Society of Jesus opened a whole new life for her, and for the rest of her life she held the Jesuits in very high esteem. Though all of them were not men of spiritual experience, they were learned; and through their learning they had gained a breadth of insight which allowed them to understand and appreciate Teresa's spiritual condition, even if they themselves had not experienced the same. For the rest of her life Teresa warned nuns against timid and easily frightened spiritual directors who, though pious and holy, are only half-learned and hence narrow-minded.

One day Teresa's director asked her to cut off certain friendships which, though not evil, were not helpful to her. At this request she was afraid, for she always dis-

liked offending anyone. When she voiced her doubt, her director advised her to ask God in prayer. After praying for the greater part of a day, she began reciting a hymn, when 'there came to me a transport so sudden that it almost carried me away; I could make no mistake about this, so clear was it. This was the first time that the Lord had granted me the favour of any kind of rapture. I heard these words: "I will have thee converse now, not with men, but with angels."' And, she says, 'the words have come true: never since then have I been able to maintain firm friendship save with people who I believe love God and try to serve Him.'

After this experience, Teresa had to pass through another difficult period at the hands of stupid confessors. There were five or six such men who were still convinced that her experiences came from the devil. They told her to stop mental prayer, to shun solitude, to communicate (partake of the Eucharist) less frequently, to cultivate distractions. Even the Jesuit who was her spiritual director joined hands with them for a time, though later she discovered that he did it just to test her. She herself no longer doubted the reality and divine source of her experiences, but she was greatly unsettled by these superstitious men; so upset, in fact, that for two long years she avoided solitude and prayed that God lead her by some other, safer path than contemplation. (Yet the deep transformation which had taken place in her is evident from the fact that she *prayed to God* to lead her by some other path: she didn't shun Him together with prayer as she had done so often before. And God in turn rewarded her faithful love: during these two years, though she avoided solitary prayer, she remained recollected even in the midst of conversation.)

One day during this period she had spent four or five hours in terrible agitation: there was none she could speak with, nor

could she relax enough to read or pray. Suddenly, through the midst of her affliction she heard the words born in on her consciousness: 'Be not afraid, daughter, for it is I, and I will not forsake thee: fear not.' Just the moment before, her mind had been so agitated that no one could have calmed her, even after hours of trying. 'Yet here I was,' she wrote, 'calmed by nothing but these words, and given fortitude and courage and conviction and tranquillity and light, so that in a moment I found my soul transformed ... Oh, what a good God! Oh, what a good Lord! What a powerful Lord!'

Such assurances became more and more frequent. She would be given an order by her spiritual director which was beyond her strength; in prayer the Lord would tell her to obey the director, and immediately she would feel the requisite courage. Her director would forbid her to read certain books which she was very fond of; God would assure her: 'Be not distressed, for I will give you a living book'—the book of mystical experience. She would be afraid of some situation, and God would ask her, 'What do you fear?'—thus filling her with courage.

Then at the end of this two-year period, she had her first intellectual vision.² When she met her spiritual director again she had to tell him of this latest experience. So often had she suffered from misunderstandings with advisors that she went to him with great trepidation. 'I had a vision of Christ,'

2. According to St. Teresa, there are three types of vision, in ascending order of perfection: (a) corporeal, i.e. seen by the physical eye; (b) imaginary, i.e. represented to the mind ('imagination') alone, without the intervention of the eye; (c) intellectual, i.e. perception by the understanding alone, without the production of any sensible form. Locutions are similarly classified. (St. Teresa never had a corporeal vision.)

she told him. 'Or rather, I'm continually seeing Him at my side; even now.'

'In what form do you see Him?' he asked.

'I don't see Him at all.' Somehow she got the words out before breaking into tears of apprehension.

Her advisor started, cleared his throat and asked, "Uh, how do you know it is Christ?"

'I don't know how, Father, but I can't help realizing He is beside me. I see and feel this clearly....'

'Well, who told you it is Jesus Christ?'

'He often tells me so Himself,' she replied with greater confidence as the vision's reality impressed itself on her. 'But before ever He told me so, the fact was impressed upon my understanding....' She went on to give analogies, the only way she could begin to describe this inexpressible experience. 'He presents Himself to the soul by a knowledge brighter than the sun. I don't mean that any sun is seen, or any brightness is perceived, but that there is a light which, though not seen, illumines the understanding....'

Needless to say, this episode didn't help her credibility with the director. But God was ever leading His bride on through His spiritual mansions, showing her His riches on the way to the bridal chamber. He left Teresa's earthly advisors to try to follow them as well as they could, for what were their approval to Him? 'Those with whom the soul has to do', said Teresa, 'keep thinking it has reached its summit, but soon afterwards they find it higher still, for God is always giving it new favours.' Her spiritual director had to read volumes and volumes of mystical and ascetic theology to understand the simple Carmelite nun. Still he couldn't keep up with her progress.

Another day Teresa had a vision of Christ in His resurrection body, which

even in its whiteness and radiance alone ... exceeds all that we can imagine.... It is not a

radiance which dazzles, but a soft whiteness and an infused radiance which, without wearying the eyes, causes them the greatest delight ... So different from any earthly light is the brightness and light now revealed to the eyes that, by comparison with it, the brightness of our sun seems dim.... It is of such a kind, indeed, that no one, however powerful his intellect, could, in the whole course of his life, imagine it as it is.

Such visions of Christ in His glorified body became frequent. Only rarely did she have visions of Christ crucified: she found them unbearably painful. But the beauty of the glorified Christ was so enchanting that, once having seen it, she could never again be attracted by earthly beauty.

Once when she was holding the wooden cross of her rosary, Christ took it in His own hand and

when He gave it back to me, it had become four large stones, much more precious than diamonds.... On the cross, with exquisite workmanship, were portrayed the five wounds. He told me that henceforward it would always look to me like that, and so it did: I could never see the wood of which it was made, but only these stones. To nobody, however, did it look like this except to myself.

Now her love for God became so intense that even sleep was passed in continual prayer. And during the day she was moved by such vehement impulses of love that she seemed to be dying with the desire to see God. Then she began to receive the most well-known of her visions, known as the transverberation of her heart. She would see to her left an angel, short in stature and very beautiful, 'his face so aflame that he appeared to be one of the highest types of angel who seem to be all afire'. In his hands he held a long golden spear with an iron tip, on the end of which was a point of fire.

With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he drew it out, I thought he was drawing them out with it, and he left me completely afire with

a great love for God. The pain was so sharp that it made me utter several moans; and so excessive was the sweetness caused me by this intense pain that one can never wish to lose it, nor will one's soul be content with anything less than God.

This vision was repeated several times over a period of days. During the whole of this time she walked about as though in a stupor, not wishing to see or speak with anyone, 'but only to hug my pain, which caused me greater bliss than any that can come from the whole of creation.'

The terrible trials she had undergone for so long with ignorant advisors, together with the spiritual experiences she had been receiving, worked to bring out a new virility, a new strength and fortitude and determination which have been seen in very few women throughout history. Her sufferings had served as the fire which tests the gold, and now she shone with an untarnished brilliance. But perhaps it was not a completely new virility. It was actually the same which had been seen in *la niña*, the little girl who had persuaded Rodrigo to seek martyrdom with her in the land of the moors. It was the re-emergence of her native Castilian temperament of determination and heroic fortitude which years of self-doubt, false humility, and confusion had drained away from her.

The woman who just a short time before had been terrified when told that her experiences were diabolical illusions, was now able to say when faced with temptations:

'Well, now,' I said to myself, 'if this Lord is so powerful, as I see He is, and know He is, and if the devils are His slaves . . . , what harm can they do me, who am a servant of this Lord and King? How can I fail to have fortitude enough to fight against all hell?' So I took a cross in my hand and it really seemed that God was giving me courage: in a short time I found I was another person and I should not have been afraid to wrestle with devils, for with the aid of that cross I believed I could easily vanquish them all

. . . 'Come on, now, all of you,' I said. 'I am a servant of the Lord and I want to see what you can do to me!'

It certainly seemed as if I had frightened all these devils, for I became quite calm and had no more fear of them. . . . They are no more trouble to me now than flies. They seem to me such cowards—as soon as they see that anyone despises them they have no strength left. . . .

. . . Not a fig shall I care for all the devils in hell: it is they who will fear me. . . . 'Oh, the devil, the devil,' we say when we might be saying 'God! God!' . . .

And, she went on to say, 'I am more afraid of men who themselves fear the devil than I am of the devil himself!'

In the process of this transformation, however, Teresa never lost the wonderful charm which had always characterized her. She had ever been too anxious to please others, a fault which had caused many of her problems; but now that vice was converted into the corresponding virtue. She sought now only to please God; yet she retained an attractiveness of character which won over all hearts. A man who knew her some years later said that he spent

all day long with her without noticing the time, and all night long in the hope of seeing her again next day, for her way of speaking was delightful . . . : she was so much on fire with the love of God! The warmth radiating from her words was so gently persuasive, that it melted the hearts of all who came in contact with her without causing them pain . . . It might have been said that she held in her hand the helm that steers all hearts,

Around 1559 Teresa met St. Pedro de Alcantara, an elderly Franciscan friar who at the age of sixteen had joined his order's Discalced Reform ('discalced' means that the members wore no shoes, as a mark of renunciation). For forty years he had slept for only an hour and a half nightly, and that while sitting up. In the hot sun, pouring rain or chilling snow he never wore shoes or a covering for his head; his body

was covered only by sack cloth. And it was common for him to eat a little food but once in three days. Extreme austerity, however, was not his sole qualification for sanctity: he was also a contemplative with deep mystical experience. He gave Teresa great encouragement in her life of prayer. And such was the respect he commanded in Castile among both religious and laity, that his strong approval of Teresa's mystical experiences silenced the increasingly vocal criticism directed towards her in Avila (for word of her 'diabolical illusions' had got around).

St. Pedro never lost the original zeal for poverty, simplicity and contemplation which

had led him in his youth to join the Discalced Franciscans. Teresa was fired with his enthusiasm and opened her heart to him, telling of the terrible trials through which she had passed at the lax Convent of the Incarnation. She told him how, had she been a man, she too would have liked to attempt a reform of the Carmelite Order. But in the course of their talks, her womanhood seemed less and less sufficient an excuse for resignation to the evils prevailing in her Order. Thus was conceived the inspiration which was soon to bear fruit in the Discalced Carmelite Reform.

(to be continued)

(Continued from page 305)

sufferers, so that there is no scope for sympathy and helpfulness. It carries individualism to an extreme extent and obstructs all motives or incentives or responsibility for the fighting of social wrongs or selfless ser-

vice of God and man. This examination of Indian thought brings out the fact that exaggerated individualistic impulse is a reaction from the fatalism of karma.

(to be continued)

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

PEIRCE'S COSMOLOGY : BY PETER T. TURLEY. Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016. 1977. Pp. 126. \$ 7.50.

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), one of the founders of American pragmatism, produced a highly original cosmology which was the fruit of his speculation on nature, based on a lifetime of scientific activity and an encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of philosophy and physical sciences.

Peter T. Turley's study of C. S. Peirce's cosmology, copiously documented from Peirce's writings, focusses on his conception of the law of nature, a conception which commanded a high

position not only in his cosmology but in his philosophical thought as a whole. Seen in relation to this central concern are Peirce's scholastic realism, an evolutionary cosmogony, and the doctrine of tychism as well as other important topics. Described by Paul Weiss as 'the most radical modern cosmology', Peirce's conception of nature anticipated views which have become current only in the twentieth century.

In his constructive thought Peirce contributed to the foundations of symbolic logic, constructed the outlines of a cosmic metaphysics and ethics, analysed the problems of meaning and signification, and advanced a symbolic theory of the mind. His philosophy promises to stand for a

long time as the chief ornament of New-World originality.

Peirce at times inclined towards idealism, but his philosophy was not entirely systematic, and it combines idealistic with realistic and pragmatic factors. He was an intellectualist, but a militant advocate of experimentalism in opposition to intuitionism and a priorism; he sometimes argued as a positivist, yet enjoyed the pleasures of speculative metaphysics. At a time when philosophy in America was still largely the enterprise of the clergy, he championed empirical science as its necessary foundation. Peirce wanted less 'seminary' and more 'laboratory' philosophy.

Like most thinkers of his time, Peirce was greatly influenced by Darwinism and was responsible in part for the large and permanent impact of biological theory upon American thought. He was attracted to the spontaneity, life, and variety of the world, which prompted a cosmic evolutionism that made chance, or 'tychism', central in all process. 'Tychism' has three elements: (1) a metaphysics according to which the world is evolving, *a la* Spencer, from 'a chaos of unpersonalized feeling' to 'a rational and symmetrical system'; (2) a philosophy of science, according to which natural laws are statistical regularities, no more; (3) a theory of explanation, according to which 'law is par excellence the thing that wants a reason', as opposed to the ordinary view that 'explaining' means 'referring to law'.

Peirce's thought represented change not only in the conception of nature but also in the conception of man's knowledge of nature' (p. 107). Like everything else, the human mind adapts itself to the environment by sporting (mutation). The kind of sporting which Peirce calls 'abduction' is excellently dealt with in this book.

Overall, this book adds much new knowledge to research in the field of cosmology, and the general reader will find it stimulating and thought-provoking.

PROF. K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO
Head, Dept. of Philosophy
Government College for Women
Mandya, Karnataka

COMPARATIVE ETHICS IN HINDU AND BUDDHIST TRADITIONS: BY DR. RODERICK HINDERY. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-7. 1978. Pp. xvi+308. Rs. 65/-.

Ethical and moral questions have been haunting the mind of man from prehistoric times to

the sky-lab age. Some scholars think that man can live without entering the complex realm of morality and remain satisfied with the fulfilment of his basic psycho-physical needs. To a certain extent the physical needs are basic. But they remain basic throughout, and do not become the ultimate end. Once these basic needs are satisfied, the mind immediately takes off to enter the social realm. And this throws man into the complexities of ethico-moral problems. These problems are virtually the same to the traditionalist and to the modern mind. But with regard to the solution, the traditionalist has certain advantages over the latter. He can draw from the history of his own culture or from that of others as well. But the modern (or, to some extent, secular) mind has to struggle for the answer without support from his cultural heritage.

The book under review is a descriptive analysis of Hindu texts from the ethical viewpoint. The study, in order to justify the given title perhaps, includes two other chapters: one at the beginning on 'Method in Comparative Ethics' and one at the end on 'An Introduction to Ethical Thought in Mahayana Buddhist Texts'. The primary study of Hindu texts includes discussions of ethical ideas in the *Rg-Veda*, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Manusmṛti*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, some popular classics, poetry and drama (e.g. the *Kural*, the *Kāma-Sūtras*, the *Artha-Śāstra*, the *Gīta-Govinda*, etc.), the Advaita of Śankara and the writings of modern reformers. The author rightly holds that Hindu ethics is both diachronically and synchronically (past and present) pluralistic. The activism of the Vedas, the moral quietism of the *Upaniṣads*, the provisionalism of Śankara, the benevolism of the Mahāyāna Buddhism and the erotic realism of the *Kāma-Sūtras* amply come forward to his support. And within this pluralistic morality, or ethical pluralism of the Hindu tradition the author finds sufficient grounds to refute the theories of Albert Schweitzer and Max Weber. The charge of Schweitzer (in his *Indian Thought and Its Development*) that Indian thought is mostly life-and-world-negating is refuted by the author even without drawing from Aurobindo or Radhakrishnan. Since the world is taken to be real and life is treated with full grandeur in these texts, ethical questions become highly relevant. While discussing Vedic Hinduism, the author refutes the charge of Max Weber (cf. Weber's *Religion of India*, pp. 261, 337) that the Vedas 'do not contain a rational ethic'. He points out that the Vedic man's love for the world,

life, children, spouses and friends steered clear of hedonism, eudaemonism and egoism. The Vedic respect for the ideals of *dāna* (giving), *satya* (truth) and *ṛta* (cosmic harmony) cannot be called amoralism. He finds a city intensely moral at several levels in the Vedic ruins. The Upaniṣadic presentation of Prajāpati (cf. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.7-12) as moral preceptor also goes against the popularly propagated moral quietism of the Upaniṣads. Even in Śankara's Advaita ethical deeds serve a preparatory function. In modern times Gandhi and Tagore represent, respectively, the populist and the aesthetical moral aspirations.

The author discusses at length the bold affirmative and this-worldly moral values in the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, sometimes called the 'National Manual of Ethics'. The epic brings to the forefront the triad of *artha* (prosperity), *dharma* (righteousness) and *kāma* (pleasure), never nullified by *mokṣa* (liberation). Vālmīki, the author of the epic and the father of Hindu moral thought, clearly establishes Sītā as a moral heroine and suggests that Rāma is not faultless or a moral saint. Sītā stands for the principle of good; she holds that one should never harm anyone, because the superior being does not render evil for evil (cf. *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.115). The epic treats good as a principle that can be intuited; it is supreme and the substance of all things (*ibid.* 2.21). The author of the epic refuses to take refuge in the principle of self-denial or the *thanatos* (self-destruction) and confirms the spirit of self-affirmation (*eros* of Greek tradition). He also protests against the subordination of individuals in general and of women in particular. The over-all survey of the epic forces the reader to conclude that it possesses all the philosophical bones of an ethical body of thought.

In the first chapter, on the method in comparative ethics, the author discusses in brief the types of readers, the priority of descriptive ethics, the criteria of textual selection, and Hindu ethics as a paradigm for cross-cultural

descriptions. He takes Sītā to be the most likely Hindu candidate for a model of altruism. In the West, Sisyphus (as recalled by Camus) is a mythic symbol of blind courage for others. In Asian models, Sisyphus can be replaced by the *bodhisattvas*, the warm personifications of loving compassion. The last chapter of the book is devoted to the Buddhist texts, and the author shows that the understanding of Buddhism by some Western readers as amoralism is completely mistaken. The normative texts evince Mahāyāna-moral functions. The *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* (the 'Diamond Sutra') and the *Saddharmapundarīka* (the 'Lotus Sutra') are not implicitly normative but explicit action guides. The ten *sīlas* (correct behaviour of the laity and monks), the virtues of the compassionate *bodhisattvas*, and the unjudging Amida's will for universal salvation force us to admit a Buddhist worldview which justifies universal moral action.

What the reader seems to be missing is perhaps a more lively concluding discussion of the three models of the three traditions. This could have been taken up, in the concluding chapter, by the author after going through the type-script of the main body of the book. He also could have avoided certain editing mistakes. For instance, the repetition of the words 'henceforth MB' on page 223 (earlier on page 221) could have been easily checked. The abstracts heading the chapters and the notes at the end of the chapters are printed in small type which strains the eyes of readers. A large type could be used in the next edition.

The author of the book deserves our thanks for pursuing a very delicate set of academically and socially important values and presenting us the fruit of his labour with immense care, understanding and clarity.

DR. S. P. DUBEY, M.A., M.A., PH.D.
Dept. of Postgraduate Studies
and Research in Philosophy
University of Jabalpur

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

REPORT FOR APRIL 1979 TO MARCH 1980

The Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, was started on 19 March 1899 by Swami Vivekananda. Situated in the Kumaon Hills of the Himalayas, it was primarily intended to be a place for contemplation and the practice of Advaita Vedanta. But true to the spirit of practical Vedanta as

taught by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, it has never been out of touch with the life-current of society. In 1903 a small dispensary was started in response to the dire need of the local villagers in sickness. Since that time the dispensary has developed into a fairly well-equipped, small rural hospital. Now quite a large number of patients come daily from far and near, crossing the moun-

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MAHASAMADHI OF SWAMI DAYANANDA

Swami Dayananda, a senior Trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and Member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission, passed away at 1.00 p.m. on the 5th June, 1980, at the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratisthan, Calcutta, of which he was the founder.

The Swami, known as Bimal Chandra Basu in his pre-monastic life, was born in the village Baganra near Shantipur, Nadia, on the 19th September, 1892. An initiated disciple of the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, the Swami joined the Ramakrishna Order in 1915, leaving his studies for the M.Sc. degree in Physics at the University of Calcutta. Shortly after joining, inducted into the entourage of Swami Premananda, he visited the erstwhile East Bengal. On his return he joined the Mother's House at Bagh Bazar and worked as a joint-editor of the Bengali journal *Udbodhan* for four years. He received his Sannyasa in 1921 from Swami Brahmananda. The Swami joined the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati towards the end of 1921 and from 1923 worked at the Advaita Ashrama Calcutta Branch as the City Editor of the former Hindi journal *Samanvaya*.

In 1926 the Swami was sent to San Francisco Vedanta Society as a Teacher of Vedanta and he

became the Head of that Society in 1929. He returned to India in 1931. Inspired by what he had seen of the maternity and infant care work in the USA and the Soviet Russia he started the Ramakrishna Mission Sishumangal Pratisthan, a maternity and child welfare clinic in a rented house in Calcutta in 1932, which however shifted to its own premises in 1939. In 1957 he renamed the Sishumangal Pratisthan as the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratisthan, since the former had outgrown its size and scope and was already catering to all the needs of all sections of society. In 1947 he was elected a Trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and a Member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission. In 1963 he relinquished charge of the Pratisthan to his successor and remained, till the last, a Vice-President of its Managing Committee.

The Swami was best known and loved for his simplicity, sagacity, and affectionate disposition. He had a keen and versatile mind which kept him posted with the up-to-date researches in the fields of science and medicine, as did his sensitive heart which monitored the slightest pain around him. He was essentially of a very quiet meditative temperament, an ideal sadhu, and a perfect exemplar of the twin ideals of renunciation and service.

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tains on foot, horseback, or in dandy, sometimes travelling a distance of fifty or sixty miles in four or five days.

The hospital stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is under the charge of a monastic member. A resident allopathic doctor treats the patients with the help of his assistants. Service is rendered irrespective of the suffering person's caste and creed, and earnest efforts are made to maintain a high standard of efficiency in service. Moreover, all patients receive prompt and sympathetic treatment completely free of charge.

The hospital has 23 beds in the indoor department, but sometimes arrangements have to be made for more. There is also a small operation theatre. The total number of patients treated in the indoor department during the year was 432, of which 297 were cured and discharged, 95 were relieved, 36 were discharged otherwise or left, and 4 died. In the outdoor department the total number of patients treated was 25,100, of which 10,542 were new and 14,558 were repeated cases. Surgical operations (minor) numbered 945, and 7,117 injections were given.

Urgent Requirements : (1) Utensils for the

use of patients: Rs. 5,000. (2) Equipment for the operation theatre: Rs. 5,000. (3) Construction of a dormitory for the patients' attendants: Rs. 30,000. (4) Endowment for the purchase of medicines: Rs. 1,00,000. (5) Repayment of a Rs. 32,000 loan, which is mounting up year by year. Our appeal to charitably disposed individuals and institutions is to lend us their helping hand in a big way, so that the accumulated loan can be wiped out soon, and we shall have sufficient funds at our disposal to meet the future requirements, particularly for the purchase of medicines which we wish to improve both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Some of the hospital beds in the indoor department are already endowed; it will greatly help if the remaining beds are also endowed by the generous public in memory of their loved ones; cost of endowment per bed: Rs. 5,000. Memorial plaques will be put up near the bed endowed.

Cheques and drafts may be drawn in favour of *Mayavati Charitable Hospital* and sent to the President, Mayavati Charitable Hospital, P.O. Mayavati, via Lohaghat, Dist. Pithoragarh (U.P.) 262 524, India.

LAST PAGE : COMMENTS

Women and Literacy

Though literacy in India is said to be about 40%, the majority of women, especially in rural areas, continue to be illiterate. Over 80% of India's 284 million women live in rural areas where the literacy rate is 13%. According to the 1971 census, the literacy rate for women was as low as 5% in 83 rural districts and between 5% and 10% in another 113 that were surveyed. The situation has not changed much in the past ten years.

The problem of women's literacy was the main subject of discussion in a four-day national seminar on new trends in adult education for women conducted in New Delhi in April. The main purpose of the seminar was to find out what could be done to motivate more women towards literacy and to understand what women were looking for from adult education programmes. The consensus of opinion among the participants was that adult education of women to be effective must be non-formal and should give them an economic incentive to learn. If women could improve their living standard through literacy, they would come forward of their own accord to learn, otherwise not.

One of the few organizations that has had remarkable success in motivating women to learning and development is SEWA, the Self-Employed Women's Association, in Ahmedabad. Originally started for textile workers by Mrs. Ela Bhatt, this association has now over 10,000 members who have managed to organize their own health and maternity insurance schemes. They have managed to persuade banks to lend them money and the municipality to start housing schemes for them. Speaking about the work of this institution, one of the participants said that during the first four years seventeen attempts were made at literacy classes, and all of them failed. They found out that the main reason for failure was that the women had to go out to work, and the young daughters had to look after younger children and cook. After much trial and experimentation SEWA found that the only way to persuade women to learn reading and writing was to make that a means of improving their standard of living.

Opening the seminar, the Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University made the significant observation that the literacy rate in India would rise to 80% if adult education programmes would concentrate on reaching women. Men, especially in weaker sections of society, are usually busy with work and children are left to the care of their mothers. If the mothers are made literate, education will reach a far larger number of children than could be done through schools. According to a study done in Trivandrum, literate women even from the lowest income groups tend to give their children a more nutritious diet than their illiterate sisters. It is therefore obvious that in the interest of the nation's progress an all out effort must be made to make education reach women through functional literacy programmes.
