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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'

रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव
तदस्य रूपं प्रतिचक्षणाय ।
इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते
युक्ता ह्यस्य हरयः शता दश ॥

1. Indra, the prototype, has assumed the forms of various deities [like Agni, Viṣṇu, Rudra]. That is his form in which he manifests himself. Assuming different forms by his power of illusion, Indra goes [to his many worshippers simultaneously], for the houses yoked to his car are a thousand.¹

Rg-Veda 6.47.18

महेचन त्वामद्रिवः परा शुल्काय देयाम्
न सहस्राय नायुताय बज्रिवो न शताय
शतामघ ॥

2. O Lord, I would not sell Thee for a great price—not for a thousand nor for ten thousand, O Mighty One! nor for a hundred, O Lord of countless wealth!²

Rg-Veda 8.1.5

अर्चत प्रार्चत प्रियमेधासो अर्चत ।
अर्चतु पुत्रका उत पुरं न घृण्वर्चत ॥

3. Sing, sing, sing ever more [the glories of God] O beloved ones! Let the children also sing! Sing the praise of Him who protects us like a castle!³

Rg-Veda 8.69.8

* Three verses on Indra, regarded as the supreme God.

1. This Mantra is quoted verbatim in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.5.19 and is used by Advaitins as the stock scriptural authority for the theory of Māyā. Śrī Śaṅkara's interpretation of the verse (which Sāyaṇa gives as an alternative meaning) is as follows. Indra stands for the Supreme Self and the horses stand for the sense-organs. 'The Supreme Lord has assumed the forms of different beings, each form serving to reveal Him. On account of Māyā, He is perceived as manifold through the hundreds of sense-organs of the beings attached to Him.'

2. Every time we run after sense-objects we sell away the great wealth we have in our hearts—God.

3. Devotional music has remained an invariable part of Hindu worship right from the Vedic period.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

The different stages on the path of meditation are discussed in this month's EDITORIAL.

GLIMPSES OF A SAINT'S LIFE is a short account of the saintly life of Swami Atulananda, a great Western monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

IN SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S SYNTHESIS OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION William A. Conrad, a biophysics consultant and devotee of the Vedanta Society of New York, shows how Swamiji's ideas and the theories of modern science converge on a common ground.

For more than a decade Swami Sakhyananda of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trichur, has been engaged in a novel type of research into the history and culture of

ancient India, and has published several books on the subject. THE GREAT SARASVATA CIVILIZATION is an exposition of one of the several themes on which he is working.

IN BUDDHISM AND THE MODERN WORLD Dr. Tapash Sankar Dutta, M.A., Ph.D., head of the department of philosophy, G. C. College, Silchar, discusses the salient aspects of Buddhism, its relevance to the modern world dominated by materialism and Marxism, and Swami Vivekananda's rejuvenation of some of the original Buddhist ideals. The article is based on a paper presented by the author in a symposium organized by the International Association of the History of Religions in Manitoba, Canada, in August 1980.

UPASANA AND TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS—I

(EDITORIAL)

Stages in upāsana

We have seen that *upāsana* or objective meditation practised in modern times is of three types: *pratīka*-or *pratimā-upāsana* (meditation on a divine Form), *nāma-upāsana* (meditation on a divine Name) and *aham-graha-upāsana* (meditation on the Self).¹ The most common practice is to combine all these three types into a single unified technique of meditation.

What happens when this combined meditation is practised for a few months or years? What are the stages through which *upāsana* proceeds? The aspirant finds that as concentration deepens, the object of meditation becomes steady and there is a continuous awareness of it. Intense concen-

tration is possible only on one object at a time. Therefore, even though the aspirant may begin by practising concentration on all the three types of objects mentioned above, he will find them merging into one. In the case of the majority of aspirants the Name merges in the Form which alone will then remain in the field of consciousness. In some others the Form merges in the Name which alone then remains in the field of consciousness as an unbroken sound-stream. In a few other aspirants both the Form and the Name merge into the Self which alone is then experienced as a steady inner Light.

Many aspirants experience only one of these changes. But there are people in whom all these three changes take place one after the other. The nature of human mind is so diverse and each mind is oriented to

1. See June editorial.

Reality in such a unique way that there are, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, as many spiritual paths as there are minds. Every spiritual aspirant has his own path, his own Yoga, and the first task in spiritual life is to find this out. Every aspirant must understand his mind's orientation to Reality and what course his meditation will take. An experienced guide can help him much in this task.

Stages in nāmopāsanā and their effects on consciousness

Practice of repetition of Mantra passes through three stages. In the first stage the Mantra has to be repeated with effort. The influence of mental automatisms makes it difficult to repeat the Mantra continuously. Japa appears to be mechanical. In the second stage the Mantra bubbles up spontaneously from the depths of the heart at all times and the aspirant finds a part of his mind constantly listening to it. He finds to his great surprise that the various obstacles that had stood in the way of his progress are being swept away by the current of Mantra and a new power is rising in him. In the third stage the Mantra gets united with the eternal, uncreated, cosmic sound rhythm known as *anāhata dhvani*, followed by the awakening of the Self. Patañjali says, 'The repetition of the Mantra leads to the destruction of obstacles and the attainment of the inner Self.'² (This topic will be discussed in greater detail in a future editorial.)

Stages in pratimopāsanā and their effects on consciousness

Practice of meditation on an anthropomorphic form (*pratimā*), usually that of a

god or a goddess regarded as one's Chosen Deity (*iṣṭa-devatā*), passes through three stages: *rūpadhyāna*, *guṇadhyāna* and *svarūpadhyāna*.

First comes *rūpadhyāna*, visualization of the form of the Chosen Deity and concentrating the mind upon it. Images and forms have a great power to change the human mind. A picture evokes no response in a cow or a monkey. But the human mind is highly susceptible to the influence of images and pictures. Hundreds of images crowd into a man's mind every day and, without his knowledge, shape his thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

The ordinary man's notion of forms and images is very crude. To understand the meaning of forms we must go to the great philosophers. In Greek thought, for instance, the early philosophers like Thales neglected form and paid attention only to matter. But Aristotle showed that every object in the universe is a union of two ultimate principles: matter (*hyle*) and form (structure, essence). He looked upon the whole universe as an ocean of matter on which float countless forms. Change is only change of form. From the primary 'bodies' like earth, water, air and fire to plants, animals and men, there is only one universal substance. All the differences among beings are solely due to the differences in form. That is why Aristotle says that the existence of every object is due to two causes: the material cause and the formal cause.³ Plato went one step further and gave primacy to form. According to him the objects we see around are impermanent and are only copies or shadows of eternal Forms or Ideas (archetypes). Some of the most eminent modern physicists like Heisenberg, Schrödinger, Eddington and

2. ततः प्रत्यक् चेतनाधिगमोऽप्यन्तरायाभावश्च

Patañjali, *Yoga-Sūtra* 1.29

3. He speaks of two other causes also: the efficient cause and the teleological cause (the end or purpose of an object).

Jeans are only echoing the views of Plato and Aristotle in a different idiom.

In Vedānta the universal matter of Aristotle is replaced by the universal spirit or Brahman. Every form has a spirit content. That is why when a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna criticized the worship of clay images (*māṭir pratimā*) the Master at once corrected him : 'But why clay? It is an image of Spirit (*cinmayī pratimā*).'⁴ The human form is only an expression of the divine consciousness within, the Ātman. In the same way, the forms of gods and goddesses are also manifestations of divine consciousness. The light of Ātman that shines within a god is the same light that shines within man. Only in man this light is hidden by impurities, while in gods it shines brilliantly. That is why they are called *devas*, the 'shining ones'. Aristotle and Plato regarded God as pure Form without any material content. This shows how much importance they attached to the reality of form.

Every form has a certain *raison d'être*—a definite place in reality, has some function to perform in the economy of cosmic existence, and conforms to an archetypal pattern. This archetypal pattern is called its *dharma*. A knife has its own (*sva*) *dharma*, a pen has its own *dharma*, for a knife cannot be used as a pen any more than a pen can be used as a walking stick. Similarly every man and every deity has his own *dharma*. All these individual *dharma*s are parts of one universal cosmic order which the Vedic sages called *ṛtam* and came to be known as *sanātana dharma* in the post-Vedic period. The Upaniṣads state, 'As from a blazing fire thousands of sparks fly off, so from the immutable Brahman originate different beings and into It they merge.'⁵

According to Vedānta every form, every being, is the locus of three universal powers :

asti (the power to exist), *bhāti* (the power to shine, that is, the power to reveal itself to consciousness) and *priyam* (the power to give happiness). Beings show great variation in manifesting these powers. There are certain extraordinary beings which manifest or help to manifest a high degree of knowledge and bliss. These are called the *vibhūti*s or glories of God. The various gods, goddesses and Avatars represent the highest of these *vibhūti*s. They are all special modes or aspects of the one supreme Godhead known variously as *Īśvara*, *Hiraṇyagarbha*, *Prajāpati*, etc. Their outer form corresponds to certain archetypal patterns in the divine Mind. These patterns are really centres of divine consciousness, each of which acts as a door to the infinite consciousness of Brahman. The image of Śiva corresponds to Śiva-consciousness. By meditating on Śiva you can contact this consciousness and through that get an ingress into the Infinite. Similarly, the image of Kṛṣṇa stands for Kṛṣṇa-consciousness, the image of Buddha stands for Buddha-consciousness, the image of Jesus stands for Christ-consciousness, and so on.

Great sages like Vyāsa, Śuka and Śaṁkarācārya who had direct vision of gods, goddesses and Avatars, have described the archetypal patterns supporting these divinities in the *dhyāna śloka*s or meditation hymns composed by them. These are not products of poetic fancy. Take for instance the well-known meditation verse on Viṣṇu. 'Nārāyaṇa is to be always meditated upon as a luminous Person wearing a pearl necklace, bracelets, fish-shaped ear-rings and a crown, holding in his hands the conch and the discus, and seated on a lotus in the centre of the solar orb.'⁶ That this is not a

4. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishnā* (Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), p. 4.

5. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1,

6. ह्येयः सदा सवितुमण्डलमध्यवर्ती

नारायणः सरसिजासन सन्निविष्टः ।

केयूरवान् मकरकुण्डलवान् किरीटी

हारी हिरण्यवपुर्धृतशंखचक्रः ॥

fantasy is attested by a strikingly similar description found in the Upaniṣads. A Rṣi with the ring of undeniable certitude points to a vision that is unfolding before his inner eyes and says, 'This luminous Person with golden hair and golden beard, and exceedingly effulgent up to his very fingertips is seen (here) within the sun.'⁷ The great Śaṅkarācārya commenting on this passage agrees that such a supersensuous perception is possible for those who have turned their eyes inward through the practice of *brahmacarya* and other disciplines.⁸

Spiritual aspirants should not lay much store upon popular notions regarding divine Forms. They belong to a level of understanding which Plato called *doxa*, opinion. To have the right understanding of the true meaning and ontological reality of divine Forms the aspirant should go inward and reach a higher level of consciousness which Plato called *nous*, reason. This is what *upāsanā* does for you. When you meditate on a god or a goddess, you are not indulging in a pious fantasy and wasting your time. On the contrary, you are orientating your mind to a certain archetypal pattern in the divine Mind and, through that, opening your heart to a special manifestation of divine knowledge and bliss.

All this may not be so obvious during the early stages of meditation when the divine image has to compete with thousands of worldly images which try to crowd it out. It takes time to get the divine image established in the mind. Repeated reflection on one or two meditation hymns (*dhyāna*

śloka) which give a description of the form of one's Chosen Deity is of great help during this period. It should, however, be remembered that meditation is not like hanging a picture in the room and looking at it. It means establishing a loving relationship with a living Image. It is not possible to establish a loving relationship with a picture. The picture must become a living reality. For this the soul must be able to have some contact with the Reality behind the mental picture. It is through prayer and worship that such a contact is established. Meditation becomes meaningful only when the aspirant succeeds in sensing a certain degree of reality in the image he is meditating on.

Once such a living image is established in the mind, it begins to produce great changes there. It becomes a constant source of inspiration, a pole-star in the mental sky, reminding the aspirant of his ultimate goal and guiding his mind towards it. It reminds him of his own divine nature, rouses the good tendencies in him and checks the rise of bad tendencies. The heart where such a divine image is established becomes an altar, a shrine, and whatever the aspirant does becomes an offering to the Divine.

After establishing the image within, the aspirant may proceed to the second stage of *upāsanā-guṇadhyāna*, meditation on the auspicious qualities of the Deity. This aspect of meditation is present even in the first stage, but it is only when the image is fully established that it becomes possible to concentrate the mind on the qualities associated with the image. *Guṇadhyāna* is not a discursive reflection or reasoning about the attributes of God. Rather, it is opening the chambers of the mind to the purity, love, compassion and other auspicious qualities of the Deity. The mind remains still, and just allows these qualities to penetrate into its nooks and crannies and flush out the impurities lying hidden there. The

7. य एषोऽन्तरादित्ये हिरण्मयः पुरुषो
दृश्यते, हिरण्मयश्मश्रुहिरण्यकेश आप्रणखात्
सर्वं एव सुवर्णः ।

Chāndogyopaniṣad 1.6.6

8. दृश्यते निवृत्तचक्षुभिः समाहितचेतोभिः
ब्रह्मचर्यादिसाधनापेक्षैः . . . ।

Śrī Śaṅkara on *ibid.*

purity of mind that a Karma-yogi attains through selfless work, the purity of mind that a Jñāna-yogi attains through discrimination, self-analysis and study of scriptures—the same purity a devotee attains by just opening his mind to the divine qualities of his *iṣṭa devatā*.

Take, for instance, the image of Sri Sarada Devi about whom Swami Abhedananda has written, 'Again and again I salute her whose deeds were holy, whose life was holy, who was the embodiment of holiness.'⁹ Think of the immaculate purity of that life. Think of the great Mother Power held in that Image serving as a source of refuge to thousands of weary souls without distinctions of race, sex, caste and creed. Instal that holy Image in your heart, banish all other thoughts, still the mind and open its doors to the purity, love and power radiating from that luminous Image. Your mind will become purified in a few days without any effort on your part.¹⁰ Any other divine image can be similarly used with the same effect. The images of Buddha, Christ, Śiva, Viṣṇu and other divine beings have great transforming power in them. Each of them embodies certain special attributes and, when the mind is irradiated by these, it absorbs them.

This kind of meditation should, however, be distinguished from autosuggestion and self-hypnosis. These latter are techniques of relaxing the body and mind and giving repeated suggestions to the unconscious psyche, like the one popularized by Emile Coué, 'Day by day in every way I am getting better and better.' Buddhists of the Southern School practise imageless meditation on the sorrows and impermanence of life or on virtues like *maitrī* (friendliness to

all), *karuṇā* (compassion), etc. The process of *guṇadhyāna* described above differs from all these in two respects. For one thing, it represents a much higher degree of concentration and self-awareness. It is practised only after a luminous image has been established within through long practice. Secondly, in *guṇadhyāna* the mind is only a passive recipient. There is no attempt to suggest or analyze anything. It is the living Image in the heart that acts as the dynamic centre from where divine qualities emanate like rays, irradiate the mind and remove the darkness of ignorance from it.

After attaining proficiency in this technique, the third stage of *upāsanā* comes as a matter of course. This is *svarūpadhyāna*, meditation on the real nature of the Chosen Deity as the Supreme Self. As the mind becomes more *sāttvik*, pure and still, and as the intensity of aspiration gradually awakens the Self, the heart or *buddhi* becomes filled with the light of Ātman. The Image now sinks deeper into the heart, becomes charged with its ethereal effulgence and appears to be living. It is at this stage that the aspirant begins to feel that there must be some vaster consciousness, a higher Reality, behind the Image and of which his own Self is a part. During the first two stages the Image he was meditating upon was only a protrusion of his own mind. But in the third stage the Image is, as it were, lifted out of the mind and floats on pure consciousness.

As there are *dhyāna ślokas* (meditation hymns) to help the aspirant during the first two stages, so there are such hymns for *svarūpadhyāna* also. An example of these is Swami Abhedananda's meditation hymn on Sri Ramakrishna widely used in the worship of the Master: 'I meditate on Sri Rāmakrishna, the embodiment of everlasting bliss, whose real nature is non-dual unity beyond existence and non-existence, beyond Prakṛti and its evolutes, and who shines in

9. पवित्रं चरितं यस्याः पवित्रं जीवनं तथा ।

पवित्रतास्वरूपिण्यै तस्यै कुर्मो नमो नमः ॥

10. The opening verse of *Prapañcasāra Tantra* (attributed to Śamkarācārya) says, 'May Śārada purify your mind.'

the lotus of the heart as the stainless Supreme Self (*paramahansa*).¹¹

Since during *svarūpadhyāna* the image of the Chosen Deity gets identified with one's own Self, this third stage of *upāsana* should be regarded as a kind of *ahamgrahopāsana*. Thus *pratimopāsana* culminates in *ahamgrahopāsana*. The aspirant now looks upon himself as the Ātman, the Self, and God as the Paramātmā, the Supreme Self. Ordinary *upāsana* terminates here. The majority of aspirants do not venture to go beyond this point. What lies beyond is the uncharted ocean of divine Consciousness.

All meditations finally lead to the awakening of the Self. Self-knowledge is the narrow gate through which all aspirants have to pass one day or other. Beyond this gate the path divides again. The Jñāna-yogi henceforth follows the trail of the Self into the impersonal Absolute. He had used the image only as an aid to concentration and the awakening of the Self. Once this is achieved, he has no more use for images, and seeks only the Impersonal. The true Bhakta too is no longer satisfied with images. Using the light of the Self, he goes in search of the true Personal God regarded as his eternal Father, Mother or Beloved. He wants to meet Him face to face.

Other aspects of meditative transformation

Before bringing our discussion on the three

stages (*rūpadhyāna*, *guṇadhyāna* and *svarūpadhyāna*) on the path of *pratikopāsana* to a close, we should mention two important points. One is that progress in meditation need not invariably pass through all the three stages we have mentioned. Nor is the vividness of the image meditated upon the only criterion to judge progress in meditation, though it generally serves as a good index. What is really important is that *upāsana* should result in a gradual transformation of the aspirant's consciousness into the awareness of a higher Reality. This necessarily means that his egoism must decrease, God must become at least as real as the world, the mind must become purer, and love for the Chosen Deity must increase. In other words, it means the progressive transformation of ego-centred life into God-centred life.

The second point is that we have so far discussed meditation from the standpoint of self-effort. But this is only half the story, perhaps much less. There is always the element of divine grace involved in meditation.¹² During the early stages when meditation appears to be waging a futile war with his mind, the aspirant may not be aware of the working of grace in him. But whether he knows it or not, divine grace is silently working in his soul removing the obstacles, preparing the way and shaping his spiritual destiny.

(to be concluded)

11. हृदयकमलमध्ये राजितं निर्विकल्पं
सदसदखिलभेदातीतमेकस्वरूपम् ।
प्रकृतिविकृतिशून्यं नित्यमानन्दमूर्ति
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥

12. Cf. तपः प्रभावाद्-देवप्रसादाच्च . . . ।

'By dint of self-effort and by the grace of God'
Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad 6.21

GLIMPSES OF A SAINT'S LIFE

A DEVOTEE

You have read and studied and listened to lectures and talked and talked. You have had enough of that sort of thing. Now is the time to keep quiet, to think, to meditate. Try to get close to Mother. Try to live a quiet, deep, holy life.

— *Swami Atulananda*

Sri Ramakrishna once said that he would have disciples speaking different languages and having different customs far away in the West. Swami Atulananda was one of the earliest of the Master's Western devotees who could successfully lead a monastic life in India for a long time.

Cornelius Heijblom, as Swami Atulananda was known in his premonastic life, was born on February 7, 1870 in Amsterdam, the capital of Holland. He came to America as an immigrant at the age of twenty-one, in search of peace and truth. New Thought, Christian Science, mental healing, Joy philosophy, and other such popular systems of the time could not satisfy him. His inherent tendencies were oriented in a different direction, and ultimately led him to the children of Sri Ramakrishna. Hearing about Sādhus who meditated on the banks of the Ganges and about the temples and pilgrimage centres of India, he thought, 'India is a holy land indeed. The people there must be better than our people in the West.'

With Swami Abhedananda

In 1898 he went in search of Swami Vivekananda in New York, but met Swami Abhedananda instead. Gradually he came in close contact with Swami Abhedananda, who told him that the secret of spiritual success lay in meditation, gave him very valuable advice, and blessed him in many other ways. So Cornelius specialized from

the beginning in meditation. Later he sometimes used to meditate even throughout the night as described by Mr. Rhodehamel. As to the depth of his meditation the same friend said further, 'I noticed that a few flies were on his [Gurudas Maharaj's] face, but apparently he knew nothing about it for there was not the slightest twitching of his face to indicate that anything disturbed him.'

Even during his last days whenever he sat on the chair and was left alone, we saw him absorbed in meditation even for two or three hours at a stretch. At those times even his usual breathing trouble would cease. Then there would be an atmosphere of serenity and holiness around him; automatically one's mind would become inward and peaceful. One could feel the presence of God with just a little effort.

Seeing the eagerness of this young man to lead a holy life, Swami Abhedananda initiated him on 1 April 1899 into the ancient vow of *brahmacharya*, making him a member of the line of Indian sages, and gave him the name Brahmachari Gurudas.

With Swami Vivekananda

He was fortunate to meet the great Swami Vivekananda in 1900 in New York, during the latter's second visit to the West. This meeting he describes in his small book *With the Swamis in America*. Elsewhere he said :

Those days [in New York] were very happy days. Swamiji stayed with us for a fortnight. He gave no public lectures but held classes and gave interviews at the Vedanta Home. Many people came to see him. I was placed in charge of the book-stall, so I could not have much talk with him. A formal reception was given to him on Sunday and when he stood for a few minutes on the stage, I was charmed to see his great personality.

On another occasion he told a devotee :

I saw Swamiji first in New York in 1900. He was a man of different moods, sometimes depressed and sometimes jolly. He had a stout appearance, beautiful features with majestic bearing. Swami Turiyananda came with him.

In his article entitled 'Swami Vivekananda's Mission to the West' he writes :

Swamiji was a man of many moods and to judge him by any one of these moods, or by one single saying, was not doing him justice. Only those who were with him much could get a glimpse of his many-sided nature. For example, one day he placed Christ after Buddha in regard to greatness as a man. Some Christians did not like it. But had they had a little patience they would have heard how on another occasion he said of Jesus that he was an Incarnation of God. 'And these great Incarnations', he added, 'are untouched by aught of earth. They assume our form and our limitations for a time, in order to teach us. But in reality they are never limited, they are free.'

I remember how one afternoon I came to the Vedanta Society in New York with a large picture of Jesus in my hand. The Swami asked me what I had there. I told him that it was a picture of Christ talking to the rich young man. 'Oh, let me see it,' he said eagerly. I handed him the picture. And never shall I forget the tenderness in his look when he held the picture and looked at it. At last he returned it to me, with the simple words : 'How great was Jesus !' And I could not help thinking that there was something in common between these two souls.

... Swamiji used to hold question classes in New York. And everyone was invited to ask any question he wished. So one evening an old church-lady asked him why he never spoke of sin. There came a look of surprise on Swamiji's face. 'But madam,' he said, 'blessed are my sins. Through sin I have learnt virtue. It is my sins as much as my virtues that have made me what I am today. And now I am the preacher of virtue. Why do you dwell on the weak side of man's nature? Don't you know that the greatest black-guard often has some virtue that is wanting in the saint? There is only one power and that power manifests both as good and as evil. God and the devil are the same river with the water flowing in opposite directions.'

The lady was horrified, but others understood. And then the Swami began to speak of the

divinity that resides in every man ... And he quoted from the *Gītā*: 'Him the sword cannot cut. Him the fire cannot burn. Him the water cannot wet, nor can the wind dry up the Atman. Eternal, all-pervading, immortal is the soul of man.' ...

Then came the strength-giving words of the Upaniṣads : 'Brahman alone is real; everything else is unreal, and the human soul is that Brahman, not different from it.' Here was hope; here was strength. Every man can become divine, by realizing his own divinity. Do you see what an immense consolation Swamiji's teaching was to those who had searched but had not yet found, to those who had knocked but unto whom it had not yet been opened? To them Swamiji came as a Saviour. He came to the door of their own hearts and knocked. And blessed are they who opened the door to receive the flow of benediction that came with his presence.

Swami Atulananda was one of those blessed ones who received this flow of benediction..

Shanti Ashrama and Swami Turiyananda

After his *brahmacarya*, Gurudas Maharaj could no longer be satisfied with living a life of comparative ease. He wanted to dedicate himself to the Vedantic life in the fullest sense. Though with all the educated Westerner's practical knowledge at his finger tips, he turned away from the life for which he had been trained, throwing all the energy of his mind into the work of knowing God. He gave himself without reserve to the Lord, and time came when it was absolutely necessary for him to be protected from the money-mad world in which he was living his intense life of devotion. But a wandering monk would be looked down upon in America; he would have been treated as a common vagrant. For this reason, perhaps, Swami Abhedananda and Swami Turiyananda advised him not to give up his office work; but he was determined to face whatever consequences his intense spirit of renunciation might lead to. He thought, 'What matters it even if I were to be sent

to jail for begging? I must renounce. I am the Ātman. The Ātman does not go to jail.'

The question of his renunciation was discussed at the Vedanta Home, and the discussion led to the foundation of a Vedanta retreat called Shanti Ashrama in the San Antonio Valley, Northern California, fifty miles away from the nearest railway station. It was established as a place where those who wished to renounce the world could stay and live a Vedantic life. Gurudas Maharaj went to Shanti Ashrama with Swami Turiyananda on August 2, 1900, and remained with him for one and a half years. About his life at Shanti Ashrama one can read in his little book *With the Swamis in America*. Once he said, 'Wonderful were the days in Shanti Ashrama,' and became lost in the memory of those days. It was there that he got his most valuable instructions and training from Swami Turiyananda, living a strict life under his watchful eyes. Swami Turiyananda once told him :

... from the highest standpoint body itself is the greatest disease. We want to go beyond the idea of body and to realize that we are the Ātman. It is the love for our body that stands in the way of our realization of the higher state where we can say, 'I am not this body, I am the Ātman, the body is an illusion.' As long as we love the body we cannot realize the Self and we shall be born again and again. But when we love the Ātman we become indifferent to the body and when all love for the body goes, liberation comes soon.

Gurudas Maharaj lived this truth throughout his life. Those who had been with him in his early days said that love for the body was absent in him even then. He always tried to keep his mind on a higher level. Many years later we ourselves saw the same during his last days, even in illness. How silently he used to sit for the dressing of the upper part of his nose and the left eye which were almost eaten up by a rodent ulcer! However severe his suffering, he

was always cheerful, with a wonderful smile brightening his face. And he never forgot to receive his visitors with a smile. When his doctor would come and inquire how he was, he would reply, 'I have nothing to report. I am almost the same. Whether I lie down or sit, it makes no difference.'

His life was an assurance of the existence of God, the presence of Saccidānanda in every event of our common life. Sufferings could not weaken him in mind. This shows he had something higher for his mind to rest upon. In fact, his mind was so identified with the Ātman that it had detached itself from the body and its sufferings. This is why we saw him laughing at his physical pain, saying, 'Such is life, what do you say?' Once when his handkerchief was completely wet with blood, oozing out from the paining ulcer, he smiled and showing the handkerchief to me said, 'See! what a wonderful colour!' In conditions that make a man frantic, he was calm and quiet and cheerful. Not only that, he used to inquire about *others'* welfare. During his last days, in addition to his other old-age troubles, he had uremia, which made his whole body swell and burn and itch. The pain in his bed sore did not allow him to sleep for three nights at a time. Even then he was peaceful. With an attractive smile and uttering 'Hari Om', he would console lovingly the worried attendants. He would adapt the lines of Rāmprasād often sung by Sri Ramakrishna :

Let the body feel the body's pain,
But you, O Mind! dwell in the
Bliss of Ātman.

Another moment, when he was made sit on the chair, I was amazed to find the Swami far away from all sufferings, sitting straight and deeply immersed in meditation for hours at a stretch.

It was a rare privilege to come into contact with such a soul completely oblivious

of his bodily sufferings and fully convinced that Brahman alone exists and that this world is a dream. One day he murmured, 'Never it was, never it is, never it will be.'

'What, Maharaj?' asked the attendant.

'Anything,' he replied.

'Then what is all this, Maharaj? This ulcer, pain, breathing trouble, cough and all this?' enquired the attendant in surprise.

'This is all dream. Sometimes bitter, sometimes sweet,' said he.

'I can't believe that, Maharaj. How can a man having so many sufferings take this world to be a dream? Is it possible to realize this world to be a dream? Can this dream be broken while living?'

The Swami became grave, his face brightened, and he uttered these most inspiring words :

Yes, it is a dream and it can be broken. You can think like this. Brahman alone exists. All this is only appearance. Brahman has the power called *Māyā*. With Her help, He forms images which appear to be real but actually they are not. When we identify ourselves with these images, they appear to be real, but when we separate our identity from them we see them to be unreal. You can do this through discrimination, by thinking of the Real only.

The attendant was wondering how a realized soul takes this world as a dream. Is *Jivanmukti* possible? This became clear when Gurudas Maharaj said :

A man who is aware of the mirage and knows that there is no water, will still see the mirage but will not run after it to get water. Similarly, a man who has known the world as a dream will see the world and have pains and pleasures, but will not be affected by it. Pains and sufferings cannot disturb him.

Thus the advice Gurudas Maharaj received at Shanti Ashrama remained with him as a living force, as realization, until his end.

Human planning is all in vain

On another occasion during those early days Swami Turiyananda said, 'Why do you plan? Why do you look so far ahead? Let Mother plan. Her plan comes true. Human planning is all in vain, if She doesn't consent.'

Swami Atulananda put this advice into practice up to the last. One day when his condition was serious and we were all worried, the Swami was trying to endure his sufferings with stoic calmness. Suddenly I thought of praying to God, the All-Merciful, to be kind towards His dear child and cure him. But then the Swami looked at me and made a sign, asking me to go near him. He said; 'Don't! Don't pray for this!' pointing to his body. I was surprised to see him read my thought. But he continued: 'Never, never ask for this body. Nobody can escape suffering. Even Sri Ramakrishna had to suffer so much due to cancer in his throat. What a pain he had, but did he ask the Divine Mother for its cure? He could not. Man plans, but only that happens which He plans. Everything happens according to God's plan. Understand that and be at peace.'

I was silently hearing these inspiring words when he looked at me very affectionately and took my hand in his and said, 'Hari Maharaj [Swami Turiyananda] often used to repeat the following verse: "God's plans like lilies unfold,/We must not tear the leaves apart,/Time alone will reveal/The galaxy of gold."'

The Swami then closed his eyes. His face was shining with joy. Perhaps he was enjoying the bliss of resignation to the will of God.

In this way Gurudas Maharaj picked up many other valuable instructions from Swami Turiyananda and practised them throughout his life. Under the latter's spiritual guidance he could easily transform all natural tendencies and ambitions into one single ambi-

tion, namely, to realize the Truth. He once told me, 'Ah! Wonderful were the days at the Shanti Ashrama. We were trained to get out of Māyā and be free.'

In charge of Shanti Ashrama

After Swami Turiyananda's leaving for India, Brahmachari Gurudas was left in charge of the Shanti Ashrama. While leaving the Ashrama, Swami Turiyananda instructed him :

It is life that counts. Life creates life. Serve ! serve ! serve ! that is the greatest teaching. Be humble. Be the servant of all. Only he who knows how to serve is fit to rule.

Such was Gurudas Maharaj throughout his life. Swami Turiyananda used to love him very much and always took him into confidence more closely than anyone else.

In India as a Hindu monk

Now he became restless to experience the life of a sannyasin in India, though he had had a foretaste in Shanti Ashrama itself. Swami Turiyananda had initiated him into the deepest mystery of Vedanta, but now he wanted to lead this life in India itself. Thus he came to India first in 1906 and plunged into the life of a Hindu monk. He had to adjust himself to Indian customs and conditions of life. He used to carry a handkerchief with him to meals so that the others would not see the tears caused by chillies.

After staying for four or five months at Belur Math he went to Mayavati. He once said, 'I stayed at Belur Math only for four or five months. I went there in the month of June. Swami Brahmananda thought it would be too hot for me and advised me to go to Mayavati. At Mayavati I met Mrs. Sevier.'

He had to face many Christian missionaries who tried to persuade him to leave

Vedanta and return to Christianity. Very gently he argued with them. Let me quote an incident from his notebook :

Not long ago I met a Christian missionary who presented to me a curious argument. 'Krishna', he said, 'makes the statement in the Gita that to re-establish righteousness God comes to earth again and again whenever religion declines. Now as God is supposed to have incarnated at different times in the East alone, and especially in India, it follows that in India there has always been the greatest need for Him; that in India there has been through all ages, more unrighteousness than anywhere else in the world.'

My Christian friend, however, overlooked one fact, namely, that the Incarnation does not come to benefit only one particular geographical spot, but for the good of the world. The fact that God incarnates in India, only goes to show that here he finds the most favourable conditions by way of parents, surroundings, associates and social conditions. These not only make his birth here possible but also his mode of life.

The Incarnation being born in a land where he could grow into manhood and preach unmolested, his message was not confined to his immediate surroundings but travelled far and wide till it reached all the corners of the earth. This we see today when the messages of Sri Krishna, of Buddha, of Sri Ramakrishna are accepted even in the Western hemisphere.

Friends, it may sound like a hard indictment, but had Sri Ramakrishna been born in the West he would have hardly escaped being locked up in some asylum. It is therefore that he took birth in India, the only country today that would offer him the opportunity to express himself, to live his life unmolested by the people and the authorities of the land. But his birth did not prevent his world message from travelling to countries where perhaps it was most needed.

When he accompanied Swami Turiyananda to Kurukshetra during the solar eclipse of 1907, he experienced the life of a true sannyasin, living on *bhikṣa* and sleeping under the shade of a tree. He then remembered a stanza from that great poem, 'The Song of the Sannyasin' composed by Swami Vivekananda :

Have thou no home. What home can hold thee,
friend?

The sky thy roof, the grass thy bed; and food
What chance may bring, well cooked or ill,
judge not.

No food or drink can taint that noble Self
Which knows Itself. Like rolling river free
Thou ever be, Sannyasin bold! Say—

‘Om Tat Sat, Om!’

He had a great love for that life, so he could easily adjust to difficulties. We saw that even in his last days he used to be satisfied with what we would give. When he was asked for his suggestions for any kind of food he would say, ‘I don’t know. What you give I take; I take because you give it.’ Many interesting incidents happened at Kurukshetra, which can be found in the book *Swami Turiyananda* by Swami Ritajananda.

Second time in India

Due to his bad back, he had to return to America after two years. Again he came in February or March 1911 for the second time and stayed mostly at Benaras. It was during this second visit that he got his *mantra*-initiation at Calcutta from Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi. Regarding this he once said, ‘I was initiated by Holy Mother. One of the Brahmacharins interpreted the instructions to me.’

Again he got ill and went back to America after five years. But he was now full of love for India. Once he said, ‘When I came and went back to America, people blamed India. I could not tolerate it and I said so to them.’ On another occasion he told Swami Turiyananda, ‘You see, Swami, we love India and everyone and everything that comes from the holy land.’ This love for India made him eager to come back again.

Third time to India—forever

In 1922 he came to India for good, never to return. He was initiated into sannyasa by Swami Abhedananda in 1923 at Belur

Math. And he was given the name Swami Atulananda. After a short stay at Mayavati he went to Almora and remained there till 1939, when he went to Ranikhet and then to Barlowganj (near Mussourie), where he remained to the last. He used to come down from Barlowganj to the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama at Kankhal during winter, October to April.

Through love he attracted and conquered the hearts of everyone who came in contact with him. To serve him was to enjoy the greatest blessing. Anyone who came in close contact with him cherished it as a sacred memory giving strength in times of agony, bringing sweetness in moments of sorrow, power of tolerance in moments of oppression, and always empowering every new effort on the path of God-realization.

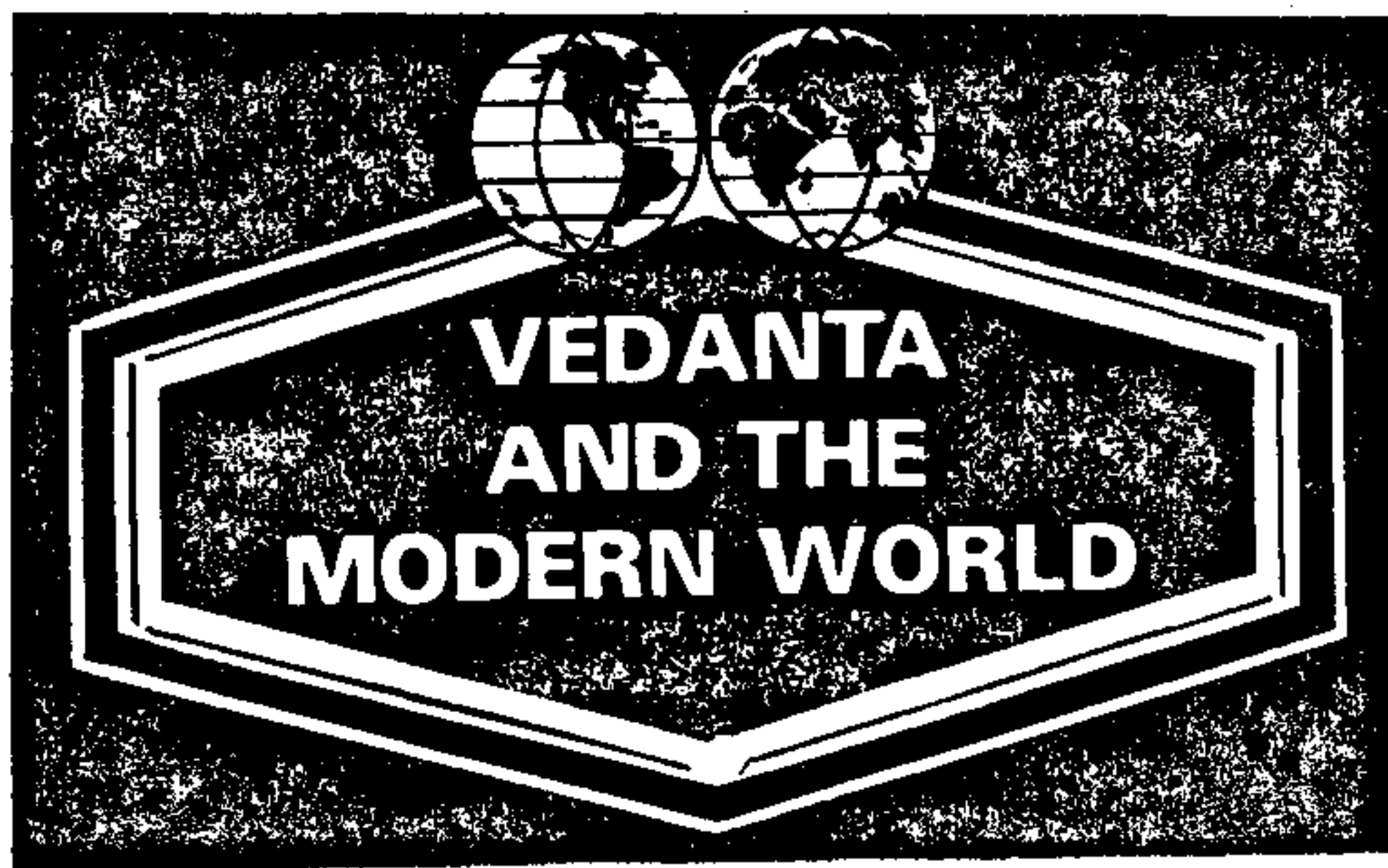
Truthfulness

Swami Atulananda was sorry even for a small, insignificant untruth told by him inadvertantly. One day he told something which was not correct. It was merely due to loss of memory, but when he found it was not correct he was very upset. He could not sleep, all the time thinking about it seriously. He repeatedly said, ‘But I told a lie.’ When we told him that it was not a lie, that he had said so only because he couldn’t remember, he was consoled and said, ‘Yes! it is not a lie.’ He began to smile, calm and satisfied.

We saw him in different moods, sometimes grave, sometimes jolly, sometimes healthier and sometimes weaker, sometimes a great Mahātmā and other times an innocent child.

Though he, during his last days, looked a little tired and weary, Swami Atulananda possessed that steadiness of mind which an enlightened soul alone has. In his company one could only realize that not scholarship

(Continued on page 344)



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S SYNTHESIS OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION

WILLIAM A. CONRAD

One hundred eighteen years ago Swami Vivekananda was born. He lived a short, intense life of thirty-nine years crowded with strenuous spiritual practices, powerful realizations and vigorous activity in the service of mankind. He had 'a message to the West as Buddha had to the East,'¹ and deliver it he did in the time allotted to him. That message was nothing less than to bring religion to the sceptical who had been estranged by a false reading of science. The scientific attitude, which gained its powerful modern form in the seventeenth century, now permeates and dominates the whole of Western culture. In order for any idea to strike roots into that culture it must satisfy the requirements of science. Even to be acceptable to non-scientists, ideas must be accepted by science or at least appear to have the scientific form. Whether Swami Vivekananda succeeded, time alone will tell; the indications, seventy-nine years after his death, are favourable.

Swami Vivekananda's synthesis of science and religion was based on his 'hands off' attitude toward all groups of mankind. Each group should develop according to its own law. He saw every man as he was and, neither praising nor blaming, gave him spiritual help in the direction of his ten-

dency. His goal was to show that every form of human activity can be made to serve man's spiritual aspirations. Nothing is purely secular, nothing purely religious; everything leads man ultimately to the realization of spiritual oneness behind all shifting appearance. In his challenge to 'Fanaticism, persecution and uncharitable feeling' delivered at Chicago he quoted the prayer, '...The different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'² In this spirit let us turn to his message on the synthesis of science and religion.

Vivekananda's qualifications to speak on science

Swami Vivekananda was not a professional scientist in the sense of the schools. Nowhere in his works is that hallmark of science, the mathematical equation with its cold symbols elegantly coordinated in stately abstract sentences. But mathematics is not the only mark of science. Devotion to truth, the willingness to follow it wherever it may lead is as sure a sign. In this respect Swami Vivekananda resembles more the ancient Greek philosophers than the complete scientist. He had that broadness of conception and depth of insight which White-

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama), vol. 5 (1973), p. 314.

2. *Complete Works*, vol. 1 (1977), p. 4.

head³ contends is in some ways better than the pure scientific view. He gave his message at the beginning of the greatest scientific revolution since Newton. But his views on the meaning and foundations of science retain their significance, and will retain it, because they are based on spiritual considerations, not particular theories.

Science according to scientists

Swami Vivekananda's synthesis of science and religion will be more comprehensible if we consider some of the characteristics of science. Science is an attempt to grasp reality in concept and, as both Einstein⁴ and Newton⁵ insist, independently of any act of observation.⁶ It is an attempt to comprehend and to order the enumerable detailed occurrences of nature. Scientific theories are created in the mind of the scientist, it is true, but they must lead to experimentally testable propositions to be accepted as scientific. Whatever is not accessible to the senses or their extensions⁷ is outside of the domain of science. The contemplation of hard fact and the formulation of a coordinated conceptual structure accounting for how facts evolve is the essence of the scientific view. Measurement is its means, mathematics its language, comprehension in concept its goal.

3. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Mentor), p. 7.

4. P. A. Schlipp, ed., 'Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist', *Library of Living Philosophers* (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 81, 667.

5. *Principia Mathematica*, trans. A. Mott, revised by F. Cajori (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1934), pp. 6ff.

6. [The majority of modern scientists differ with the latter part of this opinion. They contend that there is no point in discussing unobservable things. The difference is one of degree since no theory can be expressed in terms of observable quantities alone.]

7. A detector which converts ultraviolet radiation into visible light, for example, can be considered as extending the senses into the ultraviolet.

Religion according to Swami Vivekananda

The religion which Swami Vivekananda preached was one which he claimed to be compatible with modern science. According to him there are three principles which any scientific theory must incorporate:

First, generalization: 'The particular is explained by the general, the general by the more general, until we come to the universal.... Existence is the most universal concept.'⁸ A single effect is related to a general mass of occurrence by what is called law. 'Knowledge is more or less classification.'⁹

Second, self-consistency: 'The explanation of things are in [terms of] their own nature and... no external beings or existences are required to explain what is going on in the universe.'¹⁰

Third, evolution (a manifestation of the principle of self-consistency): 'The whole meaning of evolution is simply that the nature of a thing is reproduced, that the effect is nothing but the cause in another form ... changed only by circumstances ... we need not go outside of the universe to seek the causes of these changes; they are within.'¹¹

The Brahman of Vedanta satisfies the principles of generalization and evolution:

It has no attributes but is Existence, Knowledge and Bliss-Absolute [Saccidānanda]. Existence ... is the ... ultimate generalization.... Knowledge [which] does not mean the knowledge we have, but the essence ... which is expressing itself in the course of evolution in human beings or other animals, as knowledge ... what we see in the universe as the essential unity of things.¹²

This religion without an anthropomorphic God, yet which explains the Personal

8. *Complete Works*, vol. 1, p. 370.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., p. 371.

11. Ibid., p. 372.

12. Ibid., pp. 372-73.

God as a human reading of the Absolute, is the religion preached by Swami Vivekananda. It satisfies the rational demands of the intellect, yet makes sense of all the Gods which hearts desire. It makes no demands of belief; it stands on its merits ready to be verified by one and all who will make the necessary effort.

Analysis of mind

Swami Vivekananda's synthesis of science and religion depends upon an analysis of our thoughts about nature. 'There are two subjects of study for man, external and internal nature.'¹³ External nature includes all phenomena about which information is obtained through the senses. It does not stop at the skin horizon but includes the physical body and its functions. Internal nature consists of the 'world of thought', that is everything which makes us mentally aware of ourselves. Information about internal nature can be reliably obtained by systematic effort following known techniques. Theories of internal as well as external nature are validated by experience; there is no other criterion for a scientific theory.

We have assumed that a difference exists between external and internal nature. Swami Vivekananda next analyses¹⁴ that difference. He says :

There is some external world, X.... When I look at it, it is X plus mind.... The internal world is Y plus mind.... All differentiation in either the external or internal world is created by the mind, and that which exists is unknown and unknowable. It is beyond the range of knowledge, and that which is beyond the range of knowledge can have no differentiation.

¹³. *Complete Works*, vol. 6 (1978), p. 4.

¹⁴. The form of the analysis is similar to one employed by William James. See William James, 'The Sentiment of Rationality', *Princeton Review*, 1882, reprinted in *The Will to Believe* (New York; Longmans, Green and Co., 1927, p. 101.

Therefore this X outside is the same as Y inside, and therefore the real is one.¹⁵

The proof depends upon the assumption that the thoughts stimulated in the mind by the external and internal worlds are not really different but the 'same thing'. It would seem that perceptions of things are qualitatively different from thoughts. It is true, they are not thoughts, but what they are cannot be said. Their representation in the mind, on the other hand, are thoughts on a par with all other thoughts. Therefore, as far as representing things to ourselves goes, the original postulated difference between external and internal worlds cannot be true, and therefore 'the real is one.'

Swami Vivekananda illustrates this concept of mind fashioning the universe from its raw materials by a story.

You know how pearls are made. A parasite gets inside the shell and causes irritation and the oyster throws a sort of enamelling around it. The universe of experience is our own enamel, so to say, and the real universe is the parasite serving as nucleus.¹⁶

Einstein uses practically the same simile to illustrate his conception of how the universe of ideas, which is in a sense created by human mind, is formed around experience. He says, '... the universe of ideas is just as little independent of the nature of our [sense] experience as clothes are of the form of the human body.'¹⁷

This conclusion about the relation between mind and the world was known to the Vedic seers, and to Western thinkers at least since the work of Kant. It is startling, if not contrary to ordinary common sense. Kant himself considered it a revolution to be compared to the victory of the

¹⁵. *Complete Works*, vol. 5, p. 273.

¹⁶. *Complete Works*, vol 1, p. 201.

¹⁷. Albert Einstein, 'The Meaning of Relativity' (Princeton, 1923), p. 2.

Copernican over the Ptolemaic conception of the universe. Its meaning is even yet not fully appreciated by many thinkers in the West or elsewhere. Science, in order to continue to make progress, requires a more intensive study of the mind. There are some scientists who feel that an explanation of the world in terms of mind uses a greater unknown to clarify a lesser. Actually, the magnitudes of the unknowns are, if anything, reversed, and Swami Vivekananda contends that the world is not only 'unknown, but unknowable' (to the mind). The ultimate conclusion seems to be that there is nothing to be studied but the mind and its reactions. However, it is too much to ask of science that it abandon its characteristic direction unless forced to by circumstances. The problem of philosophical meaning in quantum theory should provide a strong stimulus towards the inward direction.

Physical science is already a contributor to the study of mind. For example, the categories of space and time have undergone profound modification in the work of Einstein. Minkowski has said in a famous remark that 'space in itself and time in itself dissolve into shadows and only a kind of union of the two retains its individuality.' Perhaps Einstein's greatest contribution to the study of mind is the realization that concepts must be modified to suit the needs of physical explanation. The finality of the pronouncements of science, philosophy and theology must be shattered in order to gain new and deeper knowledge about the material universe. Religion, in its aspect which transcends the categories of mind, is unaffected by this advance.

Comparison of internal and external nature

Let us suppose, for the sake of discussion that there is a distinction between the external and internal worlds. The question is : does a distinction exist between the truths

of these two worlds ? Swami Vivekananda says, 'A perfect truth should be in harmony with experiences in both these worlds. ... physical truth must have its counterpart in the internal world, and the internal world must have its verification outside.'¹⁸ It seems reasonable that he does not mean term by term verification, but rather verification in the heuristic sense, the sense of plausible connection. Since modern science is a rapidly evolving entity with its concepts in an almost constant state of flux, it is useless, if not pernicious, to expect an absolute correlation. Seeking harmony between the two kinds of truth is a work programme which will stimulate the sincere seeker after truth to his most intense and fruitful efforts.

Among the concepts of the internal world which Swami Vivekananda thought should be correlated with science are Prāṇa and Ākāśa of Sāṃkhya philosophy. Prāṇa is all that is active in the universe—force, motion, vibration, thought. Ākāśa is all that is passive—matter, resistance, mind. 'Prāṇa cannot live alone or act without a medium [Ākāśa]. ... when it changes into forces of Nature, say gravitation or centrifugal force, it must have matter.'¹⁹ This is a thoroughly dualistic analysis which, like all dualism, has something animistic in the nature of its concepts. It is because of this animism that science is trying to, and has partially succeeded in, eliminating the concept of force. For the same reason Indian philosophy sought and found a more satisfying non-dualistic analysis transcending the material.

Prāṇa and Ākāśa have a more subtle dynamic relationship which Swami Vivekananda brings out :

... the whole universe is simply an ocean of matter [Akāśa] of which you and I are like little

18. *Complete Works*, vol. 2 (1976), p. 432.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 436.

whirlpools. Masses of matter are coming into each whirlpool, taking the whirlpool form, and coming out as matter again. The matter that is in my body may have been in yours a few years ago ... or in the sun ... and so on, in a continuous state of flux. It is the oneness of the body [Akāśa]. So with thought [Prāṇa]. It is an ocean of thought ... in which your mind and my mind [Akāśa] are like whirlpools. ... my thoughts are entering into yours and yours into mine. ... we are one even in thought [Prāṇa]²⁰

This quotation, in which we are reminded of Descartes' vortices, shows that Prāṇa and Ākāśa have something of the nature of the field concept. The ocean—field—has local stable entities—whirlpools, vortices—which interact with and merge into each other. There are no sharply defined singular entities in either force or matter. Forces and thoughts seem to be still different in kind from particles, bodies and minds, but not in as sharp a sense as in the earlier definition. They have an indefiniteness in the ocean or field which was not previously apparent. This dynamic formulation of the theory of Prāṇa and Ākāśa has a greater chance of remaining compatible with modern science through many of its coming changes.

The duality of matter and motion seems to have been compromised by Einstein's proof of the equivalence of mass and energy. (The concept of energy is intimately connected with motion and the forces which produce that motion.) The truth of the equivalence between mass and energy is only too clearly demonstrated by the nuclear bombs. The correlation which should be assumed between the physicist's present concept of energy-mass and Prāṇa and Ākāśa is not clear. Perhaps an underlying, though more subtle dualism will be found which will more easily conform to Swami Vivekananda's analysis.

Unity

Now, therefore, since the inquiry of science into nature can go no further, Swami Vivekananda raises the question, 'There is the unity of force, Prāṇa ; there is the unity of matter called Ākāśa. Is there any unity to be found among them again?'²¹ In this question is the beginning of the full spiritual inquiry. Mind and its categories limit all that is known. 'Law is the method, the manner in which the mind grasps a series of phenomena.'²² The unity that is sought is beyond mind, beyond law. The inquiry into physics ultimately leads to metaphysics. The study of the mind leads beyond mind to the One, the Unity out of which the many comes. This is Brahman, the Saccidānanda which Swami Vivekananda preached. With the realization of Saccidānanda all questioning and craving are ended in the silence of fulfillment. Science united with religion has served its purpose in bringing the seeker to his goal.

Swami Vivekananda's synthesis of science and religion is no imposition of one on the other. Scientists are left to work in their own way investigating the details of phenomena, generalizing from concept to concept. They are urged to push their studies to the limit, to reach the point where they can make the leap from physics to metaphysics and thence to the experience of the ultimate unity. Alongside of the scientist's unquestioned belief in the comprehensibility and order of nature, Swami Vivekananda calls for belief in an absolute unity of all things. Not merely a logical unity in the theoretical basis but as the Gītā says, an organic unity 'like pearls strung on a thread'. And he who experiences that unity will have Ānanda—bliss, of the Saccidānanda of the scientific religion.

20. *Complete Works*, vol. 1, p. 373.

21. *Complete Works*, vol. 3 (1973), p. 432.

22. *Complete Works*, vol. 1, p. 95.

THE GREAT SARASVATA CIVILIZATION OF ANCIENT INDIA

SWAMI SAKHYANANDA

Swami Vivekananda, the great seer of our age, reminds us in his edifying address to the youth of modern India :

It is out of the past that the future has to be moulded; it is the past that becomes the future. Therefore the more the Hindus study their past, the more glorious will be their future, and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of everyone, is a benefactor to his nation.¹

It is for Indians to write Indian history. Therefore set yourselves to the task of rescuing our lost and hidden treasures from oblivion.... That will be true national education, and with its advancement, a true national spirit will be awakened.²

It is this national spirit that modern India very much needs at present. Therefore, in order to awaken and cultivate this spirit in us, Swamiji has bequeathed to the nation a new Indian-oriented method of education and research for the benefit of those devoted to the nation's progress and welfare. Our readers can have a glimpse of that method from the article, 'Indian History in the Right Perspective', published serially in the August, September and October 1979 issues of *Prabuddha Bharata* (vol. 84). The present discussion on the Sārasvata Civilization of ancient India is based on the line of study delineated in that article.

The Sārasvata Civilization, as its very name suggests, refers to the ancient civilization that flourished on the banks of the river Sarasvatī which flows no more on the surface of the earth in the present age (Kaliyuga). Modern geo-morphological and archaeological investigations carried out in Western India have thrown much light on

this 'lost' river Sarasvatī and the magnificent civilization that flourished on its banks in bygone ages. We now know that this civilization was as old as, and in some respects much greater than, the Indus-Valley Civilization well known to modern students of history. It behoves us, therefore, to look into these investigations and get a glimpse of the ancient river Sarasvatī and the civilization bearing its name.

Modern discoveries

The Vedic R̥sis have sung the glory of Sarasvatī in the river-hymns of *R̥g-Veda*. Āgamas and Sm̥rtis pay homage to the holy waters of Sarasvatī and enjoin us to adore the river in our daily worship and prayer. Tradition says that Mahār̥ṣi Vaivasvata Manu, the first king of humanity, had his seat on the banks of Sarasvatī. The great Rājār̥ṣis and Brahmar̥ṣis of yore who built up the Aryan civilization, flourished on the banks of this sacred river. Sarasvatī is a hallowed name for all cultured men and women of Bhārata. *Manu-Sm̥rti* tells us that this sacred river disappeared at a place called Vināśanam which is identified with the present desert of Rajasthan.

With all this traditional and literary evidence before us, our modern historians, tutored in the Western school of Indological studies, call it a 'mythical' river, as if it had no historical reality. They are not prepared to admit that India had a civilization before the period of Alexander's so-called invasion in 326 B. C. In their view, Aryan civilization had its cradle somewhere outside India, in the Russian steppes or the Mediterranean coastal area. All historical speculations relating to ancient India were, and are even now, carried on on the basis of this pseudo-historical theory advanced in

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1978), vol. 4, p. 324.

2. Eastern and Western Discipline, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974), pp. 213-14.

the nineteenth century. It has no relevance to India's age-old traditions and culture.

In the wake of this modern theory advanced by the historians, teams of archaeologists stepped in with their newly developed scientific methods of speculation. They made excavations in the Indus Valley and the arid regions of Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat, and unearthed the ruins of more than forty cities buried underground. Some seals and tablets containing inscriptions in an unknown script were also found among the ruins. In their estimate, the ruins have an antiquity of 4,500 to 5,000 years. But the experts have not been able to tell us who built this magnificent civilization and how it was destroyed. The script remains an enigma even today. It is because these modern archaeologists, tutored in Western methods of speculation, are completely blind to India's age-old national traditions and culture. According to some of them the Indus civilization was Dravidian and was destroyed by the invading Aryans. There is not an iota of evidence for this queer theory in the whole of ancient literature including the Vedas. Regarding the history of Sarasvatī, the archaeologists have nothing to say, for it is beyond their scope of investigation. Under these circumstances it is gratifying to note that the surveyors of the Central Arid Zone Research Institute (ICAR) have come forward to offer some solution, at least with regard to the river Sarasvatī lost in the desert. They have discovered its diverse courses under the sand-heaps of Rajasthan desert.³

The excavated sites are not very far from the courses of the river so far discovered in the desert. In this context, the School of National Studies, Trichur (where the author has done his research work), desires to offer a solution to the problems by placing before

the readers some historical facts, gathered from Indian traditional and literary sources, relating to the ancient river Sarasvatī and the magnificent civilization that once grew on its banks.

Traditional accounts

From the hymns of *R̥g-Veda* (10.6.75; 7.95.2; 3.33.1) we learn that in ancient days the two rivers Sarasvatī and Dr̥śadvatī along with the system of five tributaries of the Sindhu (Indus), used to flow separately into the sea (in Sanskrit, Sindhu) which then extended far into the interior like the present Gulf of Cambay at the mouth of the Narmadā, or the Persian Gulf in the West. The mouth of this Gulf of Sindhu, or Sindhu-Sāgar as it was called, was then known as Kaccha (modern Cutch). There were some islands at this mouth and in the middle of this gulf. They were known under the Purāṇic names of Śāntimatī, Dvārakā, Pāñcajanya (present Mandvi-kutch), and Ramanakam (now Sind-Hyderabad in Pakistan). The eastern region of this gulf which comprises the present western Rajasthan and the vast plains round about Mathura and Kurukshetra were then known as Vrajabhumi, meaning pastureland. It was highly fertile in olden days due to the flow of Sarasvatī and the canal system leading from it. The coastal areas on either side of Sindhu-Sāgar were very low and hence those regions came to be known as Pātālabhumi, or the nether world. We have no means of ascertaining exactly at what time these geomorphological conditions prevailed. Still, from the available sources it may be inferred that this was the condition before 3100 B.C., that is, the beginning of Kaliyuga.

The people who inhabited this region and the coastal areas on either side of Sindhu-Sāgar and the islands during this remote period were known as Somārya Pāñcajanas, meaning thereby the five different races of people descended from the five sons of Yayāti. The sons are known under the

3. See Bimal Ghose, 'Lost Courses of the Saraswati River in the Great Indian Desert', *Geographical Journal*, London, vol. 145(3), 1979.

Purāṇic names of Yadu, Turvasu, Druhyu, Anu-Druhyu and Puru. Their descendants, the Pañcajanas, are often referred to in the Purāṇas as Somāryas or Asuras, that is, the original or major stock of Ārya-Kṣatriyas (*purva-devah*). In course of time they came to be divided into hundreds of clans and tribes, the most famous of them being Yādavas, Haihayas, Kurus, Saindhavas, Yāvanas, Dasarnas, and Bhṛgus. The term Pañcajana is applicable to each and everyone of these Somāryan clans and tribes. They were all highly industrious and adventurous. Some of them, especially the Bhṛgus, were great navigators carrying on trade with foreign lands. Ancient Phrygia (Brigia) of Asia Minor and the west coast of South India, then known as Bhārgava-Kṣetra (modern kerala), were in ancient days their colonies.

The Pañcajanas, in early days, that is before 8000 B. C., were leading a pastoral life, rearing cattle, sheep and horses. In course of time they came to settle down in these regions, developing agriculture and trade. Canals were dug out in Vrajabhumi, leading water from Sarasvatī to the cultivated fields. There is mention in *Mahābhārata* about a long canal built by King Kuru to water the fields of Kurukshetra, the place named after him. (The dried up river Ghaggar may be a remnant of that canal). There was a network of canals in western Rajasthan also, dug out to water that region. When the canals became too numerous and the flow of water became scanty, fresh supply was effected by diverting the course of Yamunā and Śatadru (modern Sutlej). The different courses of Sarasvatī in the Rajasthan desert area, now discovered, might be the traces of these ancient canals dug by the Pañcajanas who inhabited this region in bygone ages.

When agriculture and trade flourished, cities arose in these regions on the banks of canals and the coastal areas. They were all independent city-states governed by

different sub-clans of Yadus, Haihayas, Saindhavas and others, on a democratic basis. There was no overlord among them except their great God, Mahādeva-Pasupati and Mother Durgā. These deities were worshipped in temples according to Āgamic and Tantric forms of ritual. The language of the people was different dialects of Paisāci, which became obsolete with the dawn of Kaliyuga, 3100 B. C. It had its own script, the form of which may be found on the seals and plates now unearthed by archaeological excavations in these regions. Paisāci is a Prakrit form of Vedic Sanskrit and the script may be of that language current at that period in those regions on the banks of the Sindhu and the Sarasvatī.

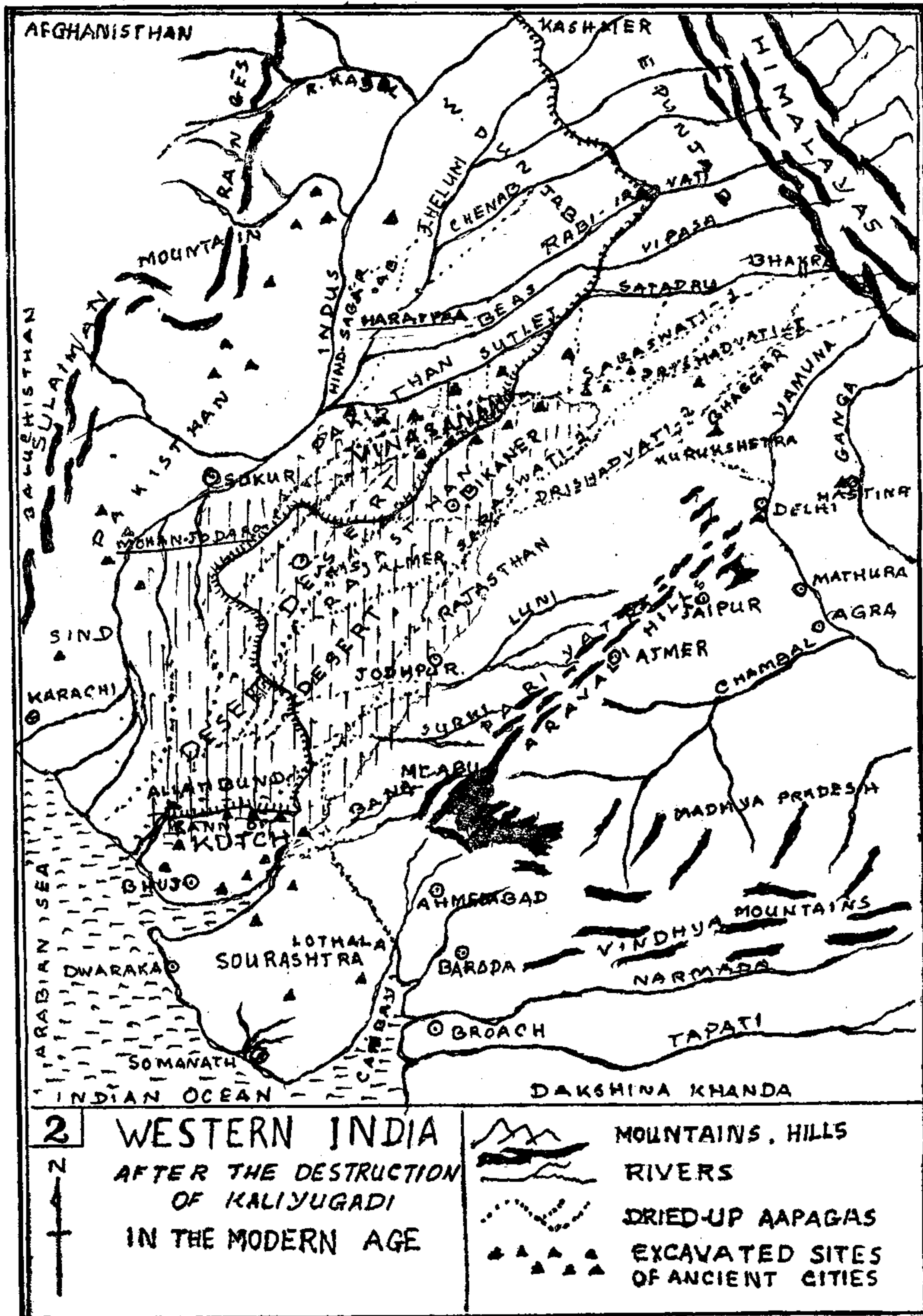
Causes of destruction

The beginning of Kaliyuga marks the age of destruction of all the ancient civilizations built up by the virile races of Somārya-Pañcajanas who were none but Somakula Kṣatriyas of the Aryan stock. The first stage in the process of destruction was the Mahābhārata War of 3067 B. C., in which all the militant races were completely annihilated. What survived of the ancient civilization were different communities of agriculturists and traders in the cities of Western India. They were destroyed in the second stage by cataclysms which followed the departure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in 3031 B. C. Seismic upheavals brought about the rising of the level of Vrajabhumi and the sea-bed by a few feet. The flow of water through Sarasvatī southwards was thereby arrested and the river became dry thereafter. Huge tidal waves from the South (Arabian) Sea swept over the low regions of Western India, and turned the place into a desert. It is called Vināśanam ('Place of Destruction') in *Manusmṛti* and the Purāṇas. These books give us valuable information about the disappearance of Sarasvatī at the northern part of Vināśanam. Sandstorms buried the ancient cities underground. More than forty

Some other memorable changes

Many more noteworthy environmental changes came over the land of Western India during this memorable epoch of the Kaliyugādi (beginning of the Dark Age).

(1) Due to the rising of the earth's surface in the southern regions, the perennial flow of water through Sarasvatī and Dr̥śadvatī took diverse courses to join Śatadru (Sutlej) and Yamunā on either side respectively.



(2) The islands of Dwāraka and Śāntimatī at the mouth of Sindhu-Sāgar, with many other islands of the Indian Ocean and vast areas on the western coastal strip of South India, were submerged for ever without leaving any trace behind.

(3) The narrow straits between the islands of Ramaṇakam and Pāñcajanya came to be filled up with sand and mud thrown up by the seismic upheavals and tidal waves surging from the ocean, so much so that they became part of the mainland.

(4) When the outlet of Sapta-Sindhu (the seven rivers) waters at Kaccha came to be blocked by sand and mud deposits, the Punjab rivers changed their original courses, and joining together in a single stream, took a new southward course through the canal on the western side of Sindhu-Sāgar to join the sea near the present Karachi. (Note the changes in maps 1 and 2 attached.)

(5) With the submersion of islands and formation of the desert the climate of Western India changed very much; it became extremely dry thereafter. Purāṇas tell us of a severe drought and famine that lasted for twelve years during the reign of Aśvamedhaja, the fifth ruler in the line of Parīkṣit, sometime about 2900 B. C. Life became impossible in the Sapta-Sindhu regions of east and west Punjab. The people, leaving their villages and cities, migrated to different parts—to central India, South India, eastern India, to Kashmir and Himalayas.

In some of these places, we find nowadays a race of people called Sārasvatas and Gauḍasārasvatas. Local tradition is that they are descendants of the ancient Somāryan settlers on the banks of the river Sarasvatī, who were forced to leave their original home during the days of drought and famine of Kaliyugādi.

Many more of our ancient historical facts will be revealed if students take up the study of the subject along the national line of investigation envisaged by Swami Vivekananda.

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(Continued from page 333)

or oratory but steadfastness of mind is the great factor in spiritual achievement.

We lost the physical presence of this great soul on August 9, 1966, at 2.05 a.m. when the whole world was sleeping and we were chanting the name of the Lord, sitting by the side of the departing soul.

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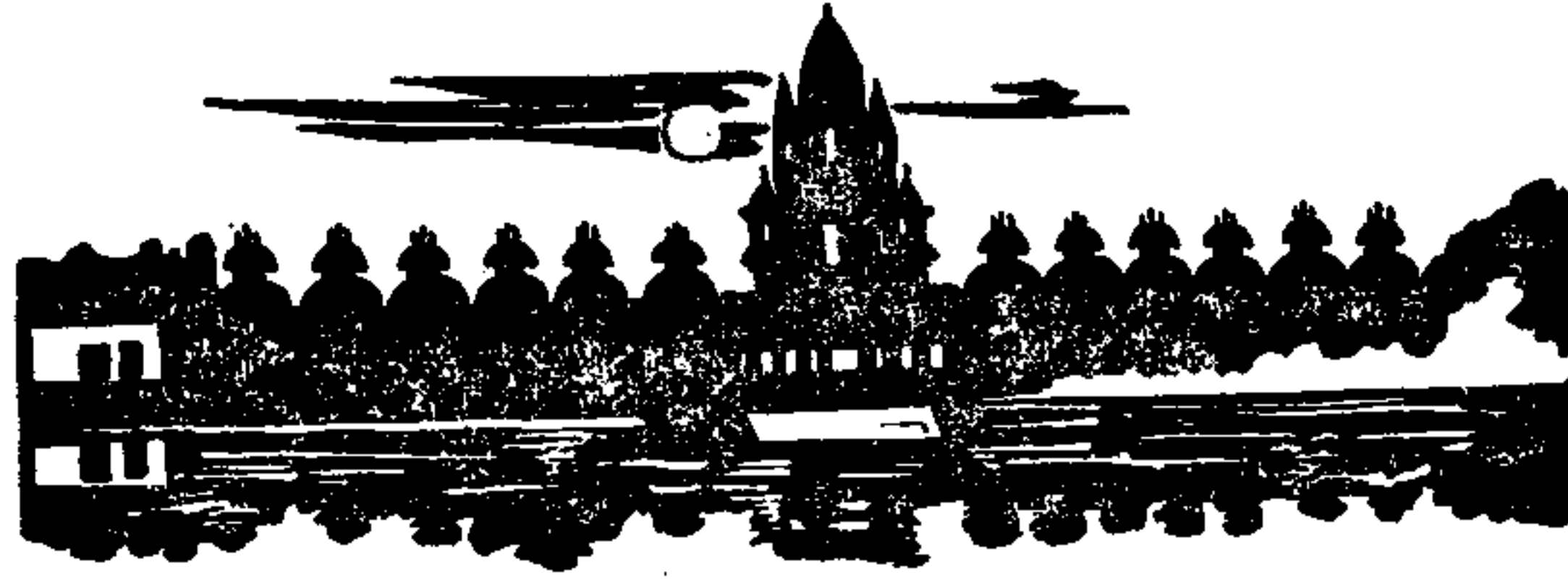
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BUDDHISM AND THE MODERN WORLD

DR. TAPASH SANKAR DUTTA

Buddhism has left a permanent mark on the culture of India. Its influence is visible on all sides. The faith of the country has absorbed the best of its ethics. Respect for life, kindness to animals, a sense of moral responsibility and an endeavour after higher life are elements which have been reinforced in the Indian mind by it. Thanks to Buddhist influences, Brahmanical powers have shed those aspects of their religion which were irreconcilable with humanity and reason.

Indian philosophy is vitally connected with life. Indian philosophers in general and Buddha in particular refuse to preach anything without first realizing the truth of what they preach. Their realization of ethical truth is given expression to in their philosophical systems, and their philosophic beliefs and creeds have been translated into practical life, so that theory and practice are harmonized and mutually supportive. As a result of this practicality, the entire Indian society has been moulded in the pattern of the country's philosophical thought. Compared to Western philosophy which is more theoretical and abstract in essence, Indian philosophy is a living philosophy which is not detached from life but paves the way for the solution of the existential problems of life facing the entire human race. This is particularly true of Buddhism.

The three most important events in the

life of Buddha—his birth, enlightenment and Parinirvāṇa—took place on the *pūrṇimā* or full-moon day of the month of Vaiśākha, considered to be the most auspicious day in the Buddhist calendar. It is probable that Buddha left home when he was twenty-nine, attained enlightenment when he was thirty-five, and passed away at the age of eighty. From Edwin Arnold's poem, *The Light of Asia*, we know how Buddha was born a prince; how, although brought up and living in the lap of luxury, he could not find comfort in his personal happiness and security; how the misery of the world struck him deeply; how he renounced the world, leaving his beautiful wife and new-born son behind like a broken pot, in search of that eternal truth which would save people from misery; and how he wandered in search of truth from teacher to teacher. But though he sought light from many religious teachers, he remained dissatisfied and was finally thrown back on his own resources. Immersing himself in intense meditation for discovery of the mystery of the world's miseries, at last his ambition was crowned with success and Siddhārtha became the Buddha, the 'Enlightened'. In other words, he achieved true freedom, emancipation of heart. The attainment of this state had been described earlier by the Upaniṣads in the following verse :

The knot of the heart is cut asunder, all doubts are destroyed, and all his actions [i.e. bondage-

producing seeds of action] are eliminated, when the supreme Truth is realized.¹

What is Buddhism, then ? In reply we may say that, in one sense, it is man's understanding of the teachings of Buddha ; in another it is the religion-philosophy which has grown up about that teaching. Buddha himself wrote nothing, he only preached to his disciples. All his teachings have come through later writers who lived four hundred years after the Master's demise. Our knowledge about Buddha's teaching is gathered from the three great scriptures known as Tripitakas (Vinaya Piṭaka, Sutta Piṭaka and Abhidhamma Piṭaka), the 'three baskets' of teachings which are claimed to contain his views as reported by his most intimate disciples. The Tripitakas contain the philosophy of early Buddhism. In the course of several centuries the followers of Buddha became divided into Hīnayāna (small vehicle) and Mahāyāna (large vehicle). These divisions among his followers made the simple creed of Buddhism complex and abstruse. Without entering into controversy, let us discuss the essence of Buddhism along with its importance for the modern world.

From his teachings we know that Buddha did not bother himself about metaphysical questions but sought to enlighten men on the most important question of sorrow, its origin, its cessation and the path leading to its cessation. To quote Lord Buddha : 'This does profit, has to do with the fundamentals of religion, and tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom and nirvāṇa.'² Again :

1. भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ॥

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.2.9

2. *Majjhima Nikāya Sutta*, 63, in *Buddhism in Translations*, trans. Henry C. Warren (Cam-

bridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1922), p. 122.

It is through lack of understanding and of comprehension of the four noble truths, O monks, that you and I have passed for long in this road of rebirth. When the noble truths of suffering, of the origin of suffering, of the cessation of suffering, and of the way to the cessation of suffering are completely understood, the craving for the process of life will be destroyed, and there will be no more recurring of the present state.

To Buddha, every walk of life is fraught with misery. Unlike the Cārvākas, he holds that worldly pleasures appear as such only to shortsighted people. Their transitoriness, the pains felt on their loss, the fears felt lest they should be lost, and the evil consequences arising from them make pleasures lose their charm and turn them into positive sources of fear and anxiety. Says Dr. Radhakrishnan :

Insistence on suffering is not peculiar to Buddhism, though Buddha emphasized it overmuch. In the whole history of thought no one has painted the misery of human existence in blacker colours and with more feeling than Buddha. The melancholy foreshadowed in the Upaniṣads occupies the central place here.... Tormented by thought, cheated by chance, defeated by the forces of nature, oppressed by the massive weight of duty, the horror of death, the dread consciousness of coming lives where the tragedy of existence will be repeated, the individual cannot help crying: 'Let me escape, let me die.'³

But this is only one aspect of Buddhistic thought. The other aspect is far more impressive and illuminating. Though Buddha over-emphasized the distress inherent in life, he did not thereby ask humanity to give way to despair. Dr. Radhakrishnan rightly observes :

Buddha does not preach the mere worthlessness of life or resignation to an inevitable doom. His

bridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1922), p. 122.

3. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin), vol. 1, pp. 362-63.

is not a doctrine of despair. He asks us to revolt against evil and attain a life of a fairer quality, an arhat state.⁴

Buddha not only suggested but paved the way for liberation or attainment of Arhat-hood through his doctrine of causation. Through this specific chain of causation one not only is bound to the wheel of misery, but one can also do away with the evils of life, ameliorate the conditions of others, and attain liberation. So we find that Buddhism does not really run away from life but accepts life with all its imperfections and evils with a view to excelling them in order to attain supreme blessedness. But life has many temptations, diversions, and illusions which are the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of fulfilment. And suffering follows in consequence. Buddha opines that ignorance in the last analysis is the root cause of all our suffering. The various cravings arise, according to him, because of our ignorance (*avidyā*) of the four noble truths: (1) the existence of suffering, (2) the cause of suffering, (3) the cessation of suffering, and (4) the path leading to cessation—the noble eightfold path. This *avidyā* leads us to desire that which is pleasant and avoid that which is painful. But under its deluding influence we mistake unsatisfactoriness for satisfactoriness, evil for good and vice versa. Due to the thirst for lust and lucre we move from birth to death and from death to birth again, always plagued by sufferings and sorrows. One can put a stop to suffering only by a complete destruction of the thirst, craving or will to live. The cessation of suffering consists in utter detachment from the world, which is shorn of the colouring of attractiveness and repulsiveness and which can therefore no longer arouse craving in any form. But Buddha is always opposed to quietism or the tendency to inaction. He has emphatically stated :

4. Ibid., p. 365..

I proclaim the non-doing of evil conduct by body, speech and thought. I proclaim the non-doing of various kinds of wicked and evil things. I proclaim the good conduct of the body, speech and thought. I proclaim the doing of various kinds of good things.⁵

Lord Buddha occupies an important place in Indian ethics. His teachings have a universal appeal, because they deal with problems which have been puzzling the entire human race since the beginning of time. Today, Buddha's teaching has received more attention than ever before because of the unprecedented hatred, jealousy, lust, greed, misery and suffering which characterize the modern age. Mahatma Gandhi received inspiration from the life and teaching of Lord Buddha. To quote Gandhiji :

So far as I have been able to understand, the central fact of Buddha's life, *nirvāṇa*, is utter extinction of all that is base in us, all that is vicious in us, all that is corrupt and corruptible in us. *Nirvāṇa* is not like the black, dead peace of the grave, but the living peace, the living happiness of a soul which is conscious of itself, and conscious of having found its own abode in the heart of the Eternal.⁶

Lord Buddha did not remain content with his personal illumination but decided to teach the way to it to others also. To quote Swami Vivekananda, 'He experienced certain truths, saw them, came in contact with them, and preached them to the world.'⁷ 'Go unto all lands', said Buddha to his disciples, 'and preach this gospel. Tell them that the poor and the lowly, the rich and the high, are all one, and that all castes unite in this religion as do the rivers in the sea.' Buddha wanted to teach all the way of life. 'Never in this world', he said, 'does hatred cease by hatred ; hatred ceases by love.' 'Let a man

5. Rhys-Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha* p. 35.

6. Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India*, p. 4.

7. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977), vol. 1, p. 126.

overcome anger by kindness, evil by good.’⁸

Buddhism was the child, the product, of that formative period in India out of which what we now know as Hinduism afterwards arose. In fact, he probably deemed himself a genuine exponent of the spirit, as distinct from the letter, of the ancient faith. And it can only be claimed for him that he was the greatest and wisest and best of that long line of illustrious reformers who have endeavoured, through the centuries, to infuse new strength and new truth into the religious life of India.

Buddha was an ethical teacher rather than metaphysician.

His appeal was to logic, reason and experience; his emphasis was on ethics, and his method was one of psychological analysis, a psychology without a soul. His whole approach comes like the breath of the fresh wind from the mountains after the stale air of metaphysical speculation.⁹

Buddha did not teach metaphysics as such. He was averse to all theoretic curiosity. But though there is no explicit metaphysics in his teachings, there is a good deal of it in an implicit form.

Buddhistic philosophy has its foundation in the doctrine of dependent origination or *pratītyasamutpāda* which avoids the question of eternalism (*śāśvatadr̥ṣṭi*, the belief in an eternal soul) and nihilism (*ucchedadr̥ṣṭi*, the belief that something existing can cease to be without leaving any mark behind). In between eternalism and nihilism Buddha offers a middle course, namely, that everything which we perceive possesses an existence but is dependent on something else for that existence, and that it in turn does not perish without leaving some effect. (But the question remains to be answered, if every fact is dependent on some cause for its existence, what is the ultimate cause of ignor-

ance then? We do not find any explicit answer to this question from Buddha).

The belief in the law of karma is one important aspect of the doctrine of dependent origination. Our present life is the result of the deeds done in our previous life and our future life will be determined by the actions of this life. Because of their karmas men are not similar, but some are long-lived, some short-lived, some healthy, some unhealthy, etc. Buddha refuses to accept the doctrine of karma as something mechanical. According to him, though the present life is determined by the past, the future life is dependent on our will. The doctrine of karma does not mean determinism. If that were so, there would be hardly any place for religion and ethics in human life. The doctrine of karma implies order or system in the field of spiritual development as well as in ordinary life. It does not lessen the importance of effort and responsibility. The philosophy of Buddha is against absolute determinism as well as absolute free will. According to Buddhist philosophy karma ceases to have any effect after one attains liberation. In that state the seeds of karma remain but they bear no fruits, as the burnt seeds do not sprout in the plant.

From the doctrine of dependent origination, later followers of Buddha developed the theory of momentariness; applying it to all objects, material and spiritual. In this connection we bear in mind the excellent words of Shelley :

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever,
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river,
Sparkling, bursting, borne away.¹⁰

Consistent with his doctrine of universal change, Buddha refuses to accept the existence of an unchanging and abiding soul which is independent of the changing mental states. Though not believing in the

8. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, p. 138.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

10. Shelley, ‘Hellas’.

existence of a permanent soul, Buddha does not deny the continuity of the stream of ideas composing the human self. When a particular idea constituting the self of a particular moment disappears, it does so after leaving its marks behind, and the self of the next moment is conditioned by it through and through. Rebirth is not transmigration, that is, migration of the same unchanging soul. It is the causation of a future life by the present one.

Thus we find that though Buddha is primarily an ethical teacher, his teachings contain a good deal of implicit metaphysics.

We are now ready to determine the importance of Buddhism in the modern world which is involved in hatred, jealousy, conflict and distrust. Can Buddha help the modern world to get rid of its problems which are driving it to destruction? In this connection we bear in mind Rabindranath Tagore's prayer for the re-appearance of Buddha along with Buddhism, expressed by him in the following beautiful lines :

Mad with passion and fury, the world is ever torn by cruel conflicts. Conditioned by intricacies of greed, notoriously crooked are its ways. The helpless creatures pining for thy rebirth long to be delivered of agony. Bring thy message of immortality, O Noble Soul, and let the lotus of love bloom and bless with ever-flowing nectar. O freedom, peace, mercy and infinite virtue incarnate, render thy world sinless.¹¹

We have not an element of doubt that the spirit of Buddha appeared again in Swami Vivekananda to save the world from destruction. But unlike Rabindranath, Vivekananda did not accept Buddha along with his divine message without reservation. Swamiji realized the fact that Buddhism as it stands must have a foundation in the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara before it can properly mould the world with new light and vision.

How far the message of Buddha can be practised by the modern material and industrial civilization is a great question. It prevails in Japan and Southeast Asian countries. It also prevailed in China before the Red Flood. But did the creed of love and *ahimsā* embodied in Buddhism persuade Japan to stop its war activities against China during the 1930's? Just as Christianity failed to stop so-called Christians from their war-mongering, love of power and domination, love of wealth, lust, luxury, and unrestrained enjoyment of life, so also Buddhism failed to turn the tide of materialism and materialistic thought back to the spiritual and ethical ideals laid down by Lord Buddha. Could there exist disparity between man and man if Buddhism, or for that matter Christianity, held its sway over the minds of the people?

This points to some lacunae and flaws inherent in the basic structure of the Buddhist creed. Yet Buddhism was a historical necessity, and it played its glorious part in the history of mankind—both in individual and in collective life. But then, the wolves of man's baser instincts were lurking in the collective unconscious. Eventually the hydra-headed monster of materialism was brought to the surface by the scientific and industrial revolutions. Pitted against this monster of materialism and technological civilization which stood for glorification and enjoyment of this life, which stood for exploitation of the world and other men through scientific knowledge for the fulfilment of man's mundane desires, Buddhism began to lose ground and eventually to cower in the face of the non-spiritual, unethical social upheaval which was ever growing in momentum. Thus Buddhism failed to offer mankind any permanent solution to the modern world's manifold problems, though it did offer a cementing force to slow the erosion of society's basic moral structure. It subsists now more as an ideal than as a reality. On the other hand, Marxism is a

¹¹ *Rabindra Racanāvalī*, vol. 11, p. 494.

great challenge to all that is spiritual and it is held to be the soundest materialistic ideal so far evolved. It has stood firm not merely against Buddhism but against all religions.

Marxism also is a challenge to all that has gone before as a social philosophy of life. The Buddha's principle of 'be good and do good' is too idealistic and impractical in the eyes of Marxists. Of course, Marxism does not discard the question of ethics in social life, but ethics has another connotation in Marxian thought. Since in Marxism people are asked to make their individual life subservient to the corporate life, ethics for it does not stand for the dissolution of selfish instinct; it is rather the process through which the needs of the individual self can be satisfied through collective living. So collective life has received more emphasis than individual or private life in Marxism. To serve self one must be selfless. It is a reversed process. So there is ethics even in the Marxist philosophy of life.

But the ethics involved in Buddhism is as wide as the vast firmament of the sky; it has no colour or shade of selfishness. It is universal good that in Buddhism serves as the motive force of action. It is entirely selfless. 'Lose thyself to find thyself' is at the core of Buddhistic thought.

Marxists find in this concept the seed of bourgeois society. It is really this sort of call for selfless action that provides scope for social injustice, for exploitation and oppression of the weak by the strong in social and national life, as also in colonialism. It is in this sense that religion has been called an opium of the people. So Marxism calls on all exploited peoples to break down the bondage of traditional moral and spiritual teachings. While Marxism stands for life and material enjoyment of life in a corporate social order, Buddhism uses life as a stepping-stone towards annihilation of life. In this respect they are poles

asunder. But in another sphere Marxism and Buddhism meet on the same platform. For both of them preach the equality and equal rights of men, the annihilation of all sorts of disparity, of social or caste barriers, throwing open the door of knowledge to all and sundry.

In this context Buddhism can offer man the foundation for a classless society incorporating the basic principle of humanitarianism and the creed of action. Marxism also stands for all this, though for a different purpose, to be accomplished through different means.

What is the importance of Buddhism in the so-called free world, a world based on competition and aiming at individual prosperity and license in disregard of the welfare of other persons? This competition naturally is self-motivated and does not scruple to adopt any means fair or foul to achieve its end. Such free competition unshackled by strict surveillance from the state machinery leads to oppressive capitalism in which the masses are sacrificed on the altar of the wealthy handful who live at the upper crust of society. This does not create a society where all can find bliss and peace. The elite are virtually gods who decide the destiny of men. Yet this infinite craving for more and more wealth finds no satiety. It causes rather a sort of restlessness and a new type of distemper grows which will not allow people peace of mind, rest, or sleep, but an unceasing breathless movement. They cannot cry halt to this onward march. This race of men to go faster, to get ahead to reach an undefined goal, leads to bitter rivalry and war, bloodshed and the destruction of human lives and accumulated priceless treasures of civilization.

There are scattered revolts against this capitalist society. But often such revolts throw society back to a more primitive way of life. So people look for some light which can deliver them from the bondage and crises of civilization. Marxism offers an

allurement for such dismayed and disintegrated persons. But the stuffy atmosphere of Marxist ideas often repulses them, and some turn instead to 'the light of Asia'.

How far can Buddhism come to their rescue? Can Western civilization trek back to oriental society? Can they roll back time and space to the society in which Buddha preached and asked men to live a mendicant life? This is obviously utopian and reactionary. Modern science has totally changed the horizons of mind and the face of the world. The image of Buddha scarcely fits in with this framework of modern civilization. It can at best uphold a moral ideal and hoist the banner of respect for life, *ahimsā* and charity, and preach renunciation of the world as Christ also did. As such the Buddha-ideal will act as a reminder to humanity of its real task which has long been forgotten in the din and bustle of the modern world. But Buddhism as a religion has already served its purpose and, in fact, exhausted itself and fallen out of tune with the modern world. However much we may invoke the spirit of Buddhism, it will never be reinstated in the framework of modern society. If the poet in desperation and dismay cries out for such a revival, it will be a vain cry in the wilderness, showing only that humanity has lost faith in itself. Human civilization is dynamic and ever-changing. It may go astray for a time, but only for a time; eventually it must recoup its strength and regain its proper orientation.

Swami Vivekananda was confronted by the challenge of Western materialism. He had the farsight to see the tidal wave of Marxism curling over the horizon and rolling on over the citadel of religion. But he also saw the way to resuscitate religion and make it aggressive, all-conquering. He stood on the bedrock of Indian religion and philosophy, with his mind firmly centred in the Advaita Vedanta, yet not denying the basic truth of Buddhism. Herein lies the historical role of Vivekananda. It is not by

decrying the entire society, not by repudiating science and all human endeavour that humanity can find peace. It is by accepting these and many more things and spiritualizing them with the eternal light of Advaita Vedanta that a fresh and godlike image of man can be formed. Vivekananda laid the foundation for that new and heavenly civilization, carved out of the chaos of modern times.

Undoubtedly Vivekananda found in Buddha the greatest man ever born, a man who dedicated his every thought and action to the motiveless service of mankind. There can be no other proper motive for living than Buddha's motto—'Do good and be good.' This supreme motive of life inspired Vivekananda also, who worked, like Buddha, for the regeneration of humanity. He rejected all the accumulated excrescences of decadent Buddhism.

Several centuries after the Mahāparinirvāṇa of Buddha, his followers lost their moral anchorage. Denying the soul, they could not stick to the great ethical principles of their Master and became involved in obscurantism, magic and necromancy as a result of tantric developments. The entire society was hurled into the vortex of degradation.

Then came Śaṅkarācārya. He could see the illness that was plaguing society and to remedy it he wanted to turn back the mind of India to the spiritual principles of Vedanta. The soul was reinstated in its pristine glory, and divinity was restored to its rightful position in the scheme of life. Society started to breathe freely again as the asphyxiating fumes that had been poisoning its spirit were blown off by the doctrine of Vedanta. Men once again felt glory in their existence. They felt that the Divine was in them and that they had a divine role to play in life. As Vivekananda said, this process of resuscitation is still going on. The whole of society is to be rejuvenated with the inspiring voice of the Upaniṣads. Herein lies the historical role of Vivekananda. For

Vivekananda found in these two towering pillars of mankind—Buddha and Śaṅkara—the foundation for the future edifice of human society, while he himself like a colossus stood astride the two—the world of Buddha and the world of Śaṅkara.

In Vivekananda the ethics of selfless service epitomized in Buddha's words 'be good and do good' electrified and thrilled his entire being. He found in his great Guru Sri Ramakrishna the heart of Buddha reincarnated. So it was but natural for him to accept and adore Buddha, whom he called the greatest man of the world.

Yet without the concepts of soul and God, Swamiji could not be satisfied. For Sri Ramakrishna taught him to see the

world as a manifestation of the goddess Kālī. And the vision was shown to him, so how could he deny it, though it went at first against his rational, scientific grain? Thus he was delighted to find sufficient justification for such visions in Śaṅkara's highly rational Advaita Vedanta, and his soul found contentment in his Guru's message. Thus one half of the soul of Vivekananda, the great sannyasin, found peaceful mooring in Advaita Vedanta and the other half of his soul which was dedicated to and vowed for the good of the people found in Buddhism a great sustaining power in the motto 'be good and do good'. Thus the world found a new colossus whose one leg was planted in Advaita Vedanta and the other leg was firmly rooted in the heart of Buddhism.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

To Mrs. G. W. Hale

35

New York
18 November 1894

Dear Mother,

I have been very late this time in writing you as Sister Mary⁶⁵ has already written to you no doubt about me.

The clothes have all reached safe, only I will send over some of the summer and other clothes as it will be impossible to carry the burden all along with me.

The certainty about going to Europe this December has gone, so I am uncertain when I go.

Sister Mary has improved a great deal from what I saw her last. She lives with a member of fox hunting squires and is quite happy. I hope she will marry one of those fellows with long pockets. I am going again to see her tomorrow at Mrs. Spalding's—I was there last afternoon. I will be in New York this month, then I go to Boston and perhaps will be there all through December. When I was sick in Boston last spring I went over to Chicago and not to Detroit as Mrs. Bagley⁶⁶ expected. So this time I am going to Detroit first and then

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

⁶⁵. Mary Hale, the daughter of Mrs. G. W. Hale.

⁶⁶. Mrs. John J. Bagley, the widow of the ex-Governor of Michigan; she had been the Swami's hostess both in Detroit and in Annisquam, Massachusetts.

to Chicago, if possible. Else I give up the plan of going to the West soon altogether. There is more chance of working my plans out in the East than in the West as it now appears.

I have got news of the phonograph—it has reached safe and the Raja⁶⁷ wrote to me a very nice letter on that. I have a lot of addresses and other nonsense from India. I have written home to them not to send any more newspapers. My love to the babies at home and I am going to visit the baby⁶⁸ abroad.

Mrs. Guernsey⁶⁹ has been at death's door. She is now recovering slowly. I have not seen her yet. She is not strong enough to see anybody. Hope she will soon be strong.

My love to Father Pope⁷⁰ and everyone.

Your ever affectionate son,
VIVEKANANDA

36

c/o Mrs. Ole Bull
168 Brattle Street
Cambridge, Mass.
6 December 1894

Dear Mother,

I have not heard long from you. What is the matter with you? I am here in Cambridge and will be here during three weeks to come and will have to lecture and hold classes. Here is a Chicago lady, Mrs. Adams, who lectures on tone building etc. Today we had a lecture from Lady Henry Somerset on woman suffrage. Miss Willard⁷¹ of Chicago was here and Julia Ward Howe. Col. Higginson, Dr. Carpenter of England and many other friends were present; altogether it was a grand affair.

I have received letter from India informing me that the phonograph was duly received. I have sent part of my money to India and intend sending the whole of it nearly very soon. Only I will keep enough for the passage back. Saw Mother Temple several times in New York. She was kind as usual. So was Mrs. Spalding.

Sister Mary wrote me a letter from Brookline [Mass.]. I am sure she would have enjoyed Lady Somerset's lecture so much. I wrote to her about it but I have not heard from her yet. I will go to see her the first day I get some time. I am very busy. Hope the sisters at home are enjoying themselves. I will try to run in to Chicago for a few days if I can. Please write me all about the holy family as soon as you get time.

⁶⁷. The Raja of Khetri, a very devoted disciple of the Swami.

⁶⁸. The 'babies at home' refers to Mrs. Hale's daughter and two nieces: Harriet Hale, and Isabel and Harriet McKindley. The 'baby abroad' refers to Mary Hale.

⁶⁹. Mrs. Guernsey and her husband were friends of the Swami's from New York City who had hosted him both in New York and at their summer home in Fishkill-on-the-Hudson, N.Y.

⁷⁰. The Swami's nickname for Mrs. Hale's husband, Mr. George W. Hale.

⁷¹. Emma Willard, a leader in the movement for women's rights.

Mrs. Guernsey was very ill and still so weak that she cannot get out of her room. Miss Helen Bagley⁷² was seized with diphtheria in New York and suffered a good deal. She has recovered however and the Bagleys have gone home to Detroit.

With all my Love to you all I remain,

Ever yours affly,
VIVEKANANDA

P.S.—Kindly send my India mail c/o Mrs. Sara Ole Bull, 168 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Mass.

V.

37.

Cambridge, Mass.
21 December 1894

Dear Mother,

I am glad that Haridas Viharidas⁷³ has sent the rugs. I am afraid they will take a long time to reach here. The Raja was very much pleased with the phonograph as he writes and has heard my voice several times. Hope he will bring it into life.

I have not seen Sister Mary yet and hope to see her in this week as I am going away to New York next Tuesday. Cannot come by any means to Chicago now, for I expect to go to Washington from New York and hope to be pretty busy in New York. If I can snatch up a few days between the lecture in Brooklyn on the 30th and the next series in New York I will fly to Chicago for a few days. If I had time just now it would have been better for me, for the half-fare ticket will expire after this month.

I have been kept very busy here this month so could not go to Boston even for a day. Now I have time and hope to see Sister Mary.

How are the babies at home? Mrs. M. Adams of Chicago who lectures on voice building and walking etc. has been lecturing here all this time. She is a very great lady in every respect and so intelligent. She knows all of you and likes the 'Hale girls' very much. Sister Isabel knows her especially, I think.

Do not you see, Mother—I am determined to work my project out. I *must see the light*. India can cheer alone, but no money. In the East and South I am getting slowly friends who will help me in my work I am sure, as they have done already. They all like me more and more.

I have made friends of Lady Somerset and Miss Willard, you will be glad to know. So you see, Mother, you are the only attraction in Chicago, and so long I am in this country wherever you live is my home. As soon as I have

⁷². The daughter of Mrs. John J. Bagley.

⁷³. The Dewan of Junagadh.

time I will run in to see you and the sisters. But I have no other hopes in the West nor will you advise me to destroy the *only* hope I have of success in these parts of the country by giving it up and going to Chicago to be idle as the day long.

Mrs. Bull and a few other ladies here who are helping me on are not only sincere and love me but they have the *power* to do as leaders of society. Would that you had millions.

With my love to you all,

Your ever affectionate Son,
VIVEKANANDA

38

Ridgely Manor
5 October 1899

My dear Mother Church,⁷⁴

Many many thanks for your kind words.

I am so glad you are working on as ever. I am glad because the wave of optimism has not caught you yet. It is all very nice to say everything is right, but that is apt to degenerate into a sort of *laissez-faire*. I believe with you that the world is evil : made more hideous with a few dashes of good.

All our works have only this value, that they awaken some to the reality of this horror—and flee for refuge to some place beyond, which is called God, or 'Christ or Brahma or Buddha etc. Names do not make much difference.

Again we must always remember ours is only to work—we never attain results. How can we? Good can never be done without doing evil. We cannot breathe a breath without killing thousands of poor little animals. National prosperity is another name for death and degradation to millions of other races. So is individual prosperity the beggaring of many. The world is evil—and will ever remain so. It is its nature, and cannot be changed—'Which one of you by taking thought,' etc.⁷⁵

Such is truth. The wisdom is therefore in renunciation, that is, to make the Lord our all in all. Be a true Christian, Mother—like Christ renounce everything and let the heart and soul and body belong to Him and Him alone. All this nonsense which people have built round Christ's name is not His teaching. He taught to renounce, He never says the earth is an enjoyable place. And your time has come to get rid of all vanities, even the love of children and husband and think of the Lord and Him alone.

Ever your Son,
VIVEKANANDA

⁷⁴. The Swami's nickname for Mrs. Hale. As will be noticed from the date, this and the following letters were written during the Swami's second visit to the West

⁷⁵. Matthew 6.27.

New York, N. Y.
23 October 1899

My dear Mother,

I was taking a few days complete rest and so am late in replying to your very kind note. Accept my congratulations on the anniversary of your marriage. I pray many many such returns may come to you.

I am sure my business letter was coloured by the state of my body, as indeed is the whole of existence to us. Yet Mother, there is more pain than pleasure in life. If not, why do I remember you and your children almost every day of my life, and not many others? Happiness is liked so much because it is so rare, is it not? Fifty percent of our life is mere lethargy, ennui; of the rest, forty percent is pain, only ten happiness—and this for the exceptionally fortunate. We are oftentimes mixing up this state of ennui with pleasure. It is rather a negative state whilst both pleasure and pain are nearer positive, though not positive.

Pleasure and pain are both *feeling*, not *willing*. They are only processes which convey to the mind excitements or motives of action. The real positive action is the willing or impulse to work of the mind—begun upon [when] the sensation has been taken in (pleasure and pain); thus the real is neither pleasure nor pain. It has no connection with either. Quite different from either. The barking of the dog awakens his master to guard against a thief, or receive his dearest friend. It does not follow, therefore, that the dog and his master are of the same nature or have any degree of kinship. The feelings of pleasure or pain similarly awaken the soul to activity, without any kinship at all.

The soul is beyond pain, beyond pleasure, sufficient in its own nature. And no hell can punish it nor any heaven can please it. So far philosophy.

I am coming soon to Chicago, and hope to say Lord bless you to you and your children. All love as usual to my Christian relatives, scientific or quacks.

VIVEKANANDA

The California Limited
Santa Fe Route
1 December 1899

My dear Mother,

Excuse this scrawl as the train is dancing.

I passed a good night and hope to have good time all through. With all love for the sisters and Mr. Woolley⁷⁶ and Budd and Father Pope.

With love,
VIVEKANANDA

⁷⁶. Mr. Clarence Woolley, husband of Mrs. Hale's daughter Harriet.

Los Angeles
6 December 1899

My dear Mother,

A few lines to say my safe arrival and am going to resume my usual work of lecturing here. I am much better than I was in Chicago, and hope soon to become well again.

I cannot tell you how I enjoyed once more the little visit with my American Mother and Sisters. Harriet has scored a triumph really—I am charmed with Mr. Woolley; only hope Mary will be equally fortunate. It gives me a new lease of life to see people happy. May they all be happy.

Ever with love, your son,
VIVEKANANDA

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

I AM THAT : CONVERSATIONS WITH SRI NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ, PARTS I AND II : TRANSLATED BY MAURICE FRYDMAN. Published by Chetana, 34 Kampart Road, Bombay 400 023. Part I, pp. 313; Part II, pp. 325. 1980. Rs. 50 each volume.

This is a remarkable book containing 101 pieces of conversation with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, a living saint in the back lane of Girgaon in Central Bombay. He is not an ordinary saint, nor is the disciple ordinary who recorded these conversations. The two have together worked out for humanity an eternal message of truth, love and peace. The disciple is no more, but the sage is still alive, continuing his teaching on the true nature of the Self and helping hundreds of people to find the true path to blessedness.

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj (b. 1897) had an uneventful life till the age of thirty-six, when he came in contact with Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj of the Navanāth Sampradāya. After receiving initiation from Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj made steady progress in meditation and soon reached the dizzy heights of spiritual realization. After the passing away of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj, he abandoned his family and business and took to the life of a wandering monk. On his way to the Himalayas, he met a brother-disciple who prevailed upon him to return to his people and

lead a life of greater spiritual fruitfulness by ministering to the needs of spiritual seekers without abandoning his normal social life. Today men and women from even distant lands gather around Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, either to seek solutions to their spiritual problems or to listen to his illuminating talks. The answers he gives come direct from his own exalted life and experience and reflect the ancient Upanishadic wisdom.

The questions and answers contained in the present book are based on almost verbatim records and cover a span of about two years—from 7 May 1970 to 29 April 1972. They were translated into English and edited by Maurice Frydman—a friend of India who came here some sixty years ago and led a life of renunciation and service dedicated to rebuilding rural India. He worked in villages in southern Maharashtra. He studied Indian philosophy and culture and deeply absorbed them without joining the fold of any sect or cult. He detested hypocrisy and condemned compulsion—even the religious compulsion that goes under the name of spiritual discipline. He came in contact with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj towards the end of his life and attained the state of knowledge and bliss.

The first of these two volumes contains about fifty-five divisions arranged chronologically. The talks recorded here bear no headings, but the contents given in the beginning of the book indicate the main topics of discussion. This is

helpful in fixing the conversations in the readers' minds.

Maharaj's illuminating answers set the reader thinking about his real self, about the true nature of the physical world, about discrimination, detachment and about developing the witness-attitude and the awareness of man's true Being. The path that Maharaj teaches in Jñāna Mārga, though in outer life he does worship with ecstatic fervour. The following selection may give the reader an idea of the main trend of the conversations.

Question : Activity is the essence of reality. There is no virtue in not working. Along with thinking, something must be done.

Maharaj : To work in the world is hard, to refrain from all unnecessary work is even harder.

Q : For the person I am, all this seems impossible.

M : What do you know about yourself? You can only be what you are in reality, you can only appear what you are not. You have never moved away from perfection. (Part I pp. 233-34.)

Q : The perceiver is independent.

M : How do you know? Speak from your own experience. You are not the body nor the mind. You say so. How do you know?

Q : I really do not know. I guess so.

M : Truth is permanent. The real is changeless. What changes is not real, what is real does not change. (Part I, p. 240.)

Q : Are we permitted to request you to tell us the manner of your realization?

M : Somehow it was very simple and easy in my case. My Guru before he died told me : 'Believe me, you are the Supreme Reality. Don't doubt my words, don't disbelieve me. I am telling you the truth, act on it.' I could not forget his words and by not forgetting I have realized. (Part II, pp. 147-48.)

Both these volumes contain such telling pieces of conversation, and the reader is charmed by the simplicity and the depth of this revered personality. The volumes have a touching foreword by Sri Apa B. Pant who was a close associate of Maurice Frydman. These volumes are the second reprint of the second edition and I believe

they will be in greater demand in future. They are beautifully printed and got up. All spiritual aspirants will find in these volumes the highest truth told in the simplest language, and the testimony of one of the most enlightened lives lived in the humblest surroundings.

NARENDRANATH B. PATIL, M.A. LL.B., PH.D.
Joint Director of Languages, Bombay

THE CHILD—A SYMPOSIUM: Published by Swami Vedantananda, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Patna 800 004. 1980. Pp. iv+116. Rs. 5.

This publication has been brought out to commemorate the International Year of the Child, 1979. It contains twenty-one articles written by well-known educationists and social workers. These are divided into four sections. A lecture by Swami Vivekananda and a poem by Sister Nivedita serve as a Prelude. The first section contains articles on the childhood days of six World Teachers: Buddha, Christ, Śamkara, Caitanya, Ramakrishna, and Vivekananda. The concluding section, devoted to God's play as a child, contains three charming anecdotes from Sri Ramakrishna's life which illustrate different facets of the *vātsalya bhāva*.

Sections II and III contain excellent articles on the education of children in ancient India, and on some problems of children in modern days. Dr. Haripada Chakravarti deals with the Vedic, Buddhist and Paurāṇic traditions in bringing up a child, and explains the use of *jāta-karma*, *cūḍākarma* and other rituals along with the methods of teaching. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas' 'Use of Rewards, Reinforcements, Punishment and Restraint in the Education of the Child', Dr. Anima Sen's 'Mental Retardation and Its Multifarious Aspects', Dr. K. Kulandaivel's 'The Children of the Slums', Dr. B. De's 'Creative Ability in Children', Smt. Kokila Kalastri's 'The Child of a Broken Home' and Sri Jagadindra Mandal's 'Love, Deprivation and Delinquency' are very valuable as these are based on the private research done by the authors. On the whole, the souvenir deserves the attention of experts and common readers interested in child welfare.

SWAMI SOMESWARANANDA
Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI SRI MATRI MANDIR AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SARADA SEVASHRAMA

REPORT FOR APRIL 1979 TO MARCH 1980

Sri Sri Matri Mandir

The small village of Jayrambati in West Bengal needs no introduction to devotees of the Ramakrishna Movement, for here the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi was born on December 22, 1853. Though still a tiny village, much as it was during the Holy Mother's lifetime, it has now become an international centre of pilgrimage. On the spot where the Holy Mother was born, there is a temple containing an image of the Mother, where daily Puja, evening Arati, etc. are performed. The old house of the Mother is preserved, where she lived from around 1863 to 1915, as is her 'new house' constructed by Swami Saradanandaji, where she lived from 1916 to 1920. All year round thousands of devotees come from different parts of India and the world to pay homage to the Holy Mother, and about fifty thousand devotees get cooked prasada each year.

The Centre has arranged to train a few young men of Jayrambati in agriculture, poultry and animal husbandry. Everyday 24-30 poor children are supplied with free milk. And various other forms of assistance are given to the poor and backward villagers.

There is a subcentre at Koalpara—Ramakrishna Yogashrama—8 km. from Jayrambati where Mother stayed on several occasions; and nearby is Jagadamba Ashrama where she also lived occasionally.

Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Sevashrama

The Centre runs a Charitable Dispensary, which was started at the instance of the Holy Mother. During the year about 33,665 cases were treated. The Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Vidyapitha—begun as a night school during the lifetime of the Mother—is now a large complex consisting of a junior high school, two junior basic schools and two pre-basic nursery schools. There are 600 students, including girls, and 28 members on the teaching and non-teaching staff. Very little aid is received from the State Government, but with the assistance of the sympathetic

public the Mission has been trying to make these schools worthy of Holy Mother's name.

Immediate needs : (1) Construction of monks' quarters (20 rooms), Rs. 4,00,000 ; (2) permanent fund for the Charitable Dispensary, Rs. 1,00,000 ; (3) construction of a boundary wall, Rs. 3,00,000 ; (4) school welfare fund, Rs. 1,00,000. Cheques may be drawn in favour of either Sri Sri Matri Mandir or Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Sevashrama; all donations may be sent to either institution at P.O. Jayrambati, Dt. Bankura, W.B. 722 141.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, PATNA

REPORT FOR APRIL 1979 TO MARCH 1980

Religious and cultural : In the shrine, there were regular morning and evening religious services, as well as the performance of Durga Puja, Kali Puja and Saraswati Puja. Other holy days were also celebrated, including the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Sarada Devi. Regular religious classes were given by monastic inmates of the Ashrama. In addition, a number of discourses on various subjects were given by visiting sadhus and scholars. The Swami-in-charge spoke on various occasions both at the Ashrama and outside on invitation. Since 1977 a yearly magazine has been published which is devoted to one particular theme each year. The issue published in February 1980 was entitled *The Child*, containing articles by a number of educationists and social workers concerning the educational and social problems faced by children.

Educational : The free Students' Home for poor students had 21 students, who were provided free board, lodging and medical care; a few who were very needy were supplied free textbooks and school fees. The Ashrama's free Reading Room had 9 dailies and 62 periodicals; and the library contained 10,940 books, with a membership of 412.

Medical : In the allopathic section of the Charitable Dispensary 74,042 patients were treated. The homoeopathic section had 2,48,691 patients.

Donations may be sent to The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ramakrishna Avenue, Patna 800 004, Bihar.

LAST PAGE : COMMENTS

Gandhian Economics

The basis of economic life in all free countries is the freedom to compete. However, this competition is seldom equal, for the starting point is not the same for all people. Those born with greater economic, social and other advantages soon outstrip others, very often through group effort, and accumulate more wealth which means more power. From time immemorial this inequality has hurt the human conscience. All the great religions have tried to solve this problem by asking men and women, on the authority of divine law, to jettison their superfluous wealth voluntarily in the form of charity (Christianity), *dāna* (Hinduism and Buddhism) or *zakat* (Islam). But the number of people who responded to this call has always been small.

This gave rise to the belief that without the compulsion of political authority economic equality could never be achieved. This is the practical aspect of Marxism. Its theoretical basis is the belief that economic equality is a natural law of materialism. These beliefs clash with individual freedom and religious life and lead to undesirable consequences.

The only great leader of modern times to experiment with a new economic order at the national level, which steers clear of religious dogmatism and political authoritarianism, was Mahatma Gandhi. His method was to appeal to the human conscience directly for, like the ancient Chinese philosopher Mencius, he believed in the innate goodness of the human soul. He also believed in the power of the soul—the soul force or *satyāgraha* as he called it—to change the minds of others. Soul force, with its natural corollary *ahimsā* (non-violence), forms the first basic principle of Gandhian economics.

The second basic principle is equality of wages for all types of work. This is a fundamental principle of communism. But Gandhiji got it from John Ruskin's book *Unto This Last*, and Ruskin himself had got it from a famous parable of Jesus in the New Testament (Matthew 20 : 1-14). The third principle is bread labour—'the law of life' that every man should earn his bread by his own manual labour. The fourth principle is *sarvodaya*, 'welfare of all'—and not merely the welfare of the greatest number. Gandhiji's views on rural development, Swadeshi, cottage industries and other socio-economic issues were all based on these four principles.

India has lost the initiative, which it had immediately after Independence, to adopt Gandhian economy at the national level. One reason for this is that such an idealistic system to be successful needs a stupendous, nationwide moral education programme and, to implement it, a tremendous moral drive in the political leaders which they lacked. The second reason is that the life of each nation is now so heavily dependent on world economic order and political situation that it is difficult for a non-communist country to develop any economic system in isolation.
