उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Prabuddha Bharata

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

हंसः शुचिषद्वसुरंतरिक्षस-
द्धोता वेदिषदतिथिर्दुरोणसत् ।
नृषद्वरसदृतसद्व्योमसदब्जा
गोजा ऋतजा अद्रिजा ऋतं ।।

1. That which is known as the sun shining in the clear sky, as the air in the atmosphere, as the fire in the sacrificial altar and the domestic hearth, as the soul in men and gods, as the presiding deity of sacrifice, as the all-pervading ether, as that which pervades water and the earth, as the truth of cosmic order (*ṛta*)—that is the Truth.[1]

Ṛg-Veda 4.40.5

समुद्रादूर्मिर्मधुमाँ उदारदु-
पांशुना सममृतत्वमानट् ।
घृतस्य नाम गुह्यं यदस्ति
जिह्वा देवानाममृतस्य नाभिः ।।

2. From the ocean arose waves of bliss. By these luminous waves one attains immortality. The secret name of ghee is the tongue of the gods and the centre of immortality.[2]

Ṛg-Veda 4.58.1

धामन्ते विश्व भुवनमधि श्रितं
मंतः समुद्रे हृद्यं तरायुषि ।
अपामनीके समिथे य आभृत-
स्तमश्याम मधुमंतं त ऊर्मिं ।।

3. The whole universe rests upon the divine effulgence which shines everywhere in the ocean of life, in the hearts of all beings. May we attain that blissful wave rising out of the divine substratum.[3]

Ṛg-Veda 4.58.11

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* Three well-known Mantras attributed to Vāmadeva.

1. In the *Katha Upaniṣad* (5.2) where also this Mantra occurs, Śamkara concludes his interpretation as follows: 'The meaning of the verse is that the world has but one Self which is all-pervasive and that there is no plurality of selves.'

2. Sāyaṇa gives five meanings for the word 'ocean' : fire, celestial fire, sky, sun and cow's udder. Mahīdhara restricts the meanings to two : ghee and Agni. The Mantra also occurs in the *Taittirīyāraṇyaka* where Sāyaṇa tries to bring out its esoteric meaning. Based on this, the following interpretation is offered. The ocean may be regarded as the *sabda brahman* or Logos, and the waves as the Vedas. As ghee is the essence of (the ocean of) milk, so Om is the essence of Vedas. Ghee when poured into fire produces tongues of flame; likewise Om reveals the message of gods. And Om leads to immortality.

3. Interpretation based on Sāyaṇa.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

What is the nature of a true spiritual experience? Why is it so diverse?. What are its dimensions? An attempt is made to answer such questions in this month's EDITORIAL.

In MORAL EDUCATION Prof. S. S. Raghavachar, former Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Mysore, points out the futility of trying to hammer morality into young heads by the force of institutional authority. The best way is to awaken the moral sense inherent in the soul by 'harmonizing the entire potentiality of the individual to high purpose'. The professor then suggests several ways of integrating morality into education. This brilliant, thought-provoking essay which tersely packs the mature reflections of a lifetime devoted to education, originally appeared in a souvenir of Sri Ramakrishna Vidyashala, Mysore.

Though not very well-known, Suresh Chandra Datta was a householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and a close friend of Saint Nag Mahashay. His inspiring life and spiritual struggles are vividly narrated by Swami Prabhananda in FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

A brief but remarkably clear exposition of the HINDU DOCTRINE OF AVATARA is given by Swami Mukhyananda, Acharya at the Probationers' Training Centre, Belur Math.

In HUMANITY IN QUEST OF HAPPINESS Sri Sachchidanand Pandey, Lecturer in English at M. L. N. College, Delhi University, examine the views of great thinkers on the fundamental human problem of happiness, and concludes that the dream of universal happiness can be realized only when the ideal of universal brotherhood is realized.

'All the ingredients of an advanced type of ethical philosophy are present in Vedānta,' states Dr. Vinita Wanchoo in the twelfth instalment of IS VEDANTA A PHILOSOPHY OF ESCAPE? in which she marshals painstakingly researched evidence in support of her statement.

DIMENSIONS OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

(EDITORIAL)

Modern man's search for higher experience

The search for higher experience has become a conspicuous feature of modern man's life, especially in the West. What began in the middle of the last century as a weird interest in spiritualism and occultism, gaining strength at the turn of the century with the introduction of Vedānta, Yoga and Zen into the West, has now become the dominant concern of millions of people. Dissatisfied with traditional values and norms of life, countless people are experimenting with drugs, holistic life, yoga, Zen, meditation, counter-culture, community living and other 'new age' activities. Meditation centres, Ashramas, yoga classes and Gurus have become so numerous in the West that periodicals devoted to their activities are able to cover them only partly.

The basic drive behind all these bewilderingly diverse movements is the new quest for higher experience. It is of course not true that everyone connected with them

is seeking the authentic spiritual experience or following the desirable path to it. But what is important is the faith in the reality of supersensuous experience animating the minds of people in many advanced societies. It is a significant development in this age of science which accepts verifiable sense-experience alone as true.

Religion had for many long centuries been interpreted to mean a blind allegiance to a certain group and belief in a petrified dogma. But with the wind of change now blowing, people all over the world are beginning to understand that religion is a matter of direct personal experience and that the eternal truths of religion can be convincingly tested in one's life.

Classification of spiritual experience

Each person's experience, spiritual or secular, is unique. It is endowed with a special meaning in his own personal universe. Another person can understand it only in so far as he has had a similar experience. Reality is so vast and varied that there are infinite ways of experiencing it. This truth was expressed by Sri Ramakrishna in his famous maxim, 'As many minds so many paths', and by Swami Vivekananda in his statement, 'No man is born to any religion; every man has a religion in his soul.'

Nevertheless, spiritual experiences of mankind can be divided into certain groups, each with some common characteristics, and depending on these we can point to several dimensions of experience. The two well-known dimensions are the vertical and the horizontal. An example may make this idea clear. In a department store the ground floor may display vegetables, fruit and groceries, the next higher floor may display textile goods, the still higher floor may contain jewellery shops, and so on. Using the staircase or lift you may go to any floor: this represents the vertical dimension of your shopping experience. However, in each floor there are countless things to see and buy, and this represents the horizontal dimension of your shopping experience.

Similarly the self has, like the staircase, different levels and, as an aspirant progresses in spiritual life, he discovers higher and brighter aspects of his self until he finds it merging in the Supreme Self. This progress represents the veritcal dimension of spiritual experience. However, at each level of the self a new world unfolds itself before the aspirant, each with its own unending chain of experiences. This represents the horizontal dimension of spiritual experience. Various psychic experiences, aquisition of psychic powers, visions of deities, changes of character, etc. come under this category. Few aspirants can avoid the temptation of side attractions and maintain a steady upward progress.

Each religion may be regarded as a department store in itself, offering ingress into certain worlds of spiritual experience. The vast majority of mankind seek only the vegetables and groceries of religious life. All the different types of spiritual experience are not sought or attained by everyone. What is unique about Sri Ramakrishna's life is the extraordinary fervour and capacity that he displayed in attaining almost every type of spiritual experience known to mankind.

A detailed and comprehensive classification of the spiritual experiences of mankind is a desideratum. In India spiritual experiences have been studied and classified differently in different schools. In Christianity and Islam emphasis has always been on faith rather than on experience. St. Thomas Aquinas, however, made an attempt to classify spiritual experiences into certain broad groups in his celebrated work the *Summa Theologica*. According to him God can communicate truths to man in three ways: 'corporeal vision' which is the materialization of God in a visible form;

'intellectual vision' which is an immediate perception of divinity by the irradiation of divine light (*lumen sapientiae*) in the soul without being distorted by mental images (called 'phantasmata'); and 'imaginary-vision' in which one sees divine images or hears divine voice. To these if we add dream experiences, we get a fairly comprehensive picture of the full spectrum of spiritual experience.

The popular notion of spiritual experience is the sudden appearance of God in bodily form before the devotees. In Hindu Purāṇas Dhruva, Prahlāda, Bhagīratha and innumerable other devotees and sages are said to have had such 'corporeal visions'. The Old Testament says that God appeared before Abraham in the form of a traveller, and according to the New Testament Christ appeared before his disciples three times soon after his death on the cross. Though similar experiences have been reported in recent times, it is clear these are extremely rare.

A more common and genuine type of experience—the only one authenticated by the Upaniṣads and books on Yoga—is the direct, immediate mystic experience which is the result of the blossoming of intuition. In the average person the faculty of intuition known as *buddhi* or *dhī* or the 'heart' (often symbolized as a lotns with eight petals) lies dormant or covered by the impurities of *Saṁskāras*. Through purification (*dhātuprasāda*) and concentration of mind this faculty awakens and reveals the true nature of the self and the Deity. Says the Upaniṣad, 'This Ātman is hidden in all beings, and hence does not shine as the real Self. But It is seen by the seers through subtle and sharp *buddhi*.'[1] Swami Brahmananda conveys the same idea in simpler language: 'Behind this mind of ours is a subtle spiritual mind, existing in seed-form. Through the practice of contemplation, prayer and Japa this mind is developed, and with this development a new vision opens up and the aspirant realizes many spiritual truths.'[2]

Human consciousness has three levels: the unconscious, the conscious and the super-conscious. *Buddhi* or the intuitive faculty acts as a door between the super-conscious and conscious. When this door opens, the light of the superconscious, the radiance of the Ātman, streams down and the conscious mind gets flooded by that mysterious light. This light of Ātman coming through *buddhi* reveals the true nature of every object presented to it. Hence the yogis calls it 'truth-bearing intuition' (*ṛtambharā prajñā*).[3] In ordinary perception or thinking the *buddhi* remains 'closed' or covered by impurities, and only very little of the light of Ātman falls on objects. Hence ordinary knowledge is vague, incomplete and indirect. But when the *buddhi* awakens—or speaking metaphorically, when the heart-lotus opens—a flood of light illumines the mind. Just as we use a torch or a lamp to see objects in darkness, so the yogi uses this inner light to discover inner worlds and spiritual truths. Hence it is called *prajñāloka* or 'intuition-light.'[4] The knowledge thus gained is new, extraordinary,

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1. एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽऽत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्र्यया बुद्धया सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥
Katha Upaniṣad, 3.12

2. Swami Prabhavananda, *The Eternal Companion* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1971), p. 242.

3. Patañjali, *Yoga-Sūtra*, 1.48. Cf.
ऋतं अविकल्पितं सत्यमिति यावत् ।
तद् विभर्ति प्रकाशयतीति ऋतम्भरा ।
कदाचिदपि तस्य
विपर्यासो नोपद्यत इति भावः ॥
Padabodhini-tika on *ibid.*

4. *Yoga-Sūtra*, 3.5 and 3.26. Also called *yoga-pradīpà*: see Vyāsa's commentary on *Yoga-Sūtra*, 3.54.

direct, self-evident and requires no other proof. Another name for it is *prātibha*.[5]

In Vedānta this kind of supersensuous knowledge is called 'yogic perception' (*yogi-pratyakṣa*). Yāmunācārya in his work *Siddhitraya* affirms that the proof of divine existence can be had only by a direct vision granted by God out of His infinite grace, and this is obtained through yoga. This is an accepted doctrine in the school of Qualified Monism.[6] The Advaitins accept yogic perception up to a point but hold that the self-revelation of Brahman, the infinite Reality, takes place only through the utterance of Vedic Mantras. In modern times Swami Vivekananda, himself a great yogi, has reestablished the authority of yogic perception as the only test and criterion of religion. His emphatically repeated assertion, 'Religion is realization', has profoundly influenced modern religious thought in the West.

We now come to the third group of spiritual experiences which are concerned chiefly with faith. In the second type of spiritual experience described above, the superconscious opens directly to the conscious mind. The aspirant not only sees his heart (the *buddhi*) illumined by the new light but clearly understands how this happens. There are however many aspirants in whom the *buddhi* does not awaken and the direct path from the conscious to the superconscious remains closed. Do such people get spiritual experiences? They may get spiritual experiences in an indirect way.

A shaft of power from the superconscious may by-pass the conscious mind, penetrate deep into the unconscious and produce tremendous changes there. Since the conscious mind is not illumined, the aspirant does not see the mystic light nor can he know or explain the cause of the changes taking place in his mind. In a secret and mysterious way many of the problems and conflicts that had tortured the aspirant for a long time suddenly get resolved, doubts vanish and the aspirant gains a deep certitude of the presence of God in his soul and of His love and benevolence. Such experiences may be called 'faith experiences'.

In so far as these inner changes are good and permanent, faith experiences may be regarded as genuine and even more important than fleeting glimpses of mystic light. It is these experiences that give rise to 'inspiration' and 'prophecy' in certain charismatic individuals. If mystic or yogic experience is regarded as light, faith experience may be regarded as fire. A genuine faith experience introduces a tremendous dynamism into the individual's life, and such a person may also acquire the power to kindle religious fervour in many others.

However, this kind of faith experience can easily be confused with normal or abnormal imagination, and very often it is difficult to judge whether the source of such experiences is in the superconscious or in some repressed desires lurking in the unconscious. Moreover, unlike genuine mystic or yogic experiences which an aspirant can acquire only after prolonged struggle, discipline and purification, faith experiences may suddenly come as a gift of the gods, and if the person is unprepared or his mind is rigidly controlled by a religious dogma, the effects of these experiences may not be salutary. The fire that kindles religious emotions can also forge fanaticism and bigotry. The preaching of St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena against the so-called heretics led to the slaughter of thousands of innocent men, women and children. In Indian tradition faith experi-

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5. *Yoga-Sūtra*, 3.33, and the commentaries of Vyāsa and Bhoja on it. Some of these terms seem to have been borrowed from Buddhist sources.

6. भगवत्प्रसादलब्ध योगिप्रत्यक्षं दिव्यम् ।
Viṣṇucitta, quoted by Vedānta Desika in *Nyāya-parisuddhi*.

ences have never been given a high value. But in the Christian tradition of the West faith experiences have been regarded as the chief sign and test of religion and spirituality. In fact, for centuries Western churches overemphasized faith and looked with suspicion upon mystics and their genuine experiences of God. It is this lopsided view that has now received a severe jolt from the invasion of Indian thought.

Dream experiences constitute the fourth group. Since dreams are expressions of the unconscious mind, this type of experience has close resemblance to the third type. In the waking state the concious mind in most people is offering resistance to spiritual influence constantly. Ever entangled in attachments, fears and aversions and rushing head long towards an unknown future, most of us ignore or brush aside the luminous messages that are constantly being broadcast from the unseen worlds of the spirit. But in the dream state the conscious mind becomes quiescent and the unconscious remains receptive. In that state some people at some rare moments may receive wonderful spiritual truths through a *mantra* or a verbal communication. Or a Deity may choose to leave the signet if His or Her presence in the soul, and then one sees the shining form of that Deity in dream.

Dreams, however, are of different types. Most dreams are mere reproductions of waking-state experiences and are the result of the sprouting of *saṁskāras*. Some dreams are symbolic and are to be 'interpreted'. If, for instance, you see a lotus or fire, it may refer to the higher intuition or spiritual aspiration seeking expression within you. Out of a hundred thousand dreams, perhaps one may be a genuine spiritual experience. And if it does not bring about any lasting change in the person, its only value is that it may strengthen his faith.

Finally, it must be stated that true Bhakti, true devotion, true love of God, is in itself a spiritual experience. True Bhakti is an ever-fresh, ever-increasing experience which gives the highest satisfaction and fulfilment to the devotee.[7] Indeed, the devotional schools do not recognize any other experience as genuinely spiritual.

Cause of diversity

What causes diversity in spiritual experience? There are two main causes. One is the difference in the level of consciousness at which the experience occurs. Human consciousness consists of a number of levels which form an ascending series. A person's awareness, thinking, emotions, behaviour and outlook depend on the level of consciousness at which his mind remains. Corresponding to these individual levels within, there are levels outside also—the cosmic levels. Just as planets move round the sun or electrons move round the atomic nucleus, so do all beings move along certain levels or orbits of consciousness around the Divine Centre, impelled by the inexhaustible cosmic energy known as *prāṇa*. This is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa means when he says : 'O Arjuna, seated in the hearts of all beings, the Lord by His power makes all beings revolve as if they were mounted on a machine.'[8] It is while revolving round the Centre that we meet different objects and gain different experiences. When we are at a particular level of consciousness within, we open ourselves to the corresponding cosmic level outside. When our inner level changes new worlds of experience open before us. This is one cause for the diversity of spiritual experience, for human beings exist at different levels of consciousness.

The second cause is symbolization. We do not see the world as it is. We see it through the screen of our minds. And human mind is not just an inert filter. It

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7. See *Nārada Bhakti Sūtra*, 4, 5 and 54,
8. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 18.61,

actively participates in experience. It creates names and forms and gives a specific value to each. All our normal waking-state and dream experiences are clothed in symbols. This is true of spiritual experiences also. Every religion has its own set of symbols and these influence the spiritual experiences of their followers. This is the reason why the experiences of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists vary. Sri Ramakrishna's parable of the water of a pond being called by different names such as 'aqua', 'pāni', 'jal,' etc. conveys the same idea.

It should, however, be understood that true religious symbols are not the creations of some pious people. Many symbols, if not all, have a cosmic origin and are the vehicles of some eternal and universal truths. Nor should we think that Hindu gods and goddesses are only symbols. These divine forms correspond to certain aspects of transcendent Reality. Symbols point to a reality beyond them. The roads to Reality are paved with different symbols.

Tests of spiritual experience

A major problem in spiritual life is to decide whether a spiritual experience is genuine or not. Very often the workings of the unconscious are mistaken to be spiritual experiences: And for some highly emotional people and those with a psychic temperament every strong emotion and vivid imagination is an 'experience'.

The tree is known by its fruit. The genuineness of a spiritual experience is to be judged by the effects it produces in the aspirant. An experience can be called spiritual only if it brings about a transformation of consciousness. Normally we are aware of only external objects and internal images, ideas and feelings. A true spiritual experience gives us awareness of a transcendent existence, not as an inference but as an immediate and direct Presence. It radically alters our understanding of Reality. God, the higher self and the spiritual realm become more and more real to us. There are, however, some tests to distinguish genuine experiences from delusions, hallucinations and normal good moods.

The first test is that a true spiritual experience gives the aspirant higher self-knowledge. It awakens his self from immemorial slumber. Then the aspirant begins to regard himself as the spirit, the Ātman, as an immortal entity different from his body and mind. This kind of higher self-knowledge is necessary not only in the path of Jñāna but in all paths. Śrī Rāmānuja, the chief exponent of Bhakti schools, regards self-knowledge (which he calls *ātmāvalokana*) as the first step towards God-realization. The sign of an awakened self, the test of higher self-knowledge, is selflessness, freedom from egoism. It however endows him with a rare spiritual beauty and higher dignity which distinguish true egolessness from false humility.

The second test of spiritual experience is transformation of character. A true spiritual experience brings about great changes in his outlook, behaviour, feelings and actions. It purifies his mind and gives him unselfish love for others. It is of course possible to lead a virtuous life without spiritual experience, but any experience which does not give purity and unselfishness cannot be regarded as spiritual, whatever else it may be. There is, however, one fundamental difference between character built by ordinary effort and character transformed by spiritual experiences. Ordinary character is ego-centred. It is based on the reality of the world and is built upon its values. But spiritual character is God-centred. It is based on the reality of the Spirit and is illumined by that inner light.

It is good to remember that true spiritual experiences are attained only after years of struggle and purification. However, a few

people do rarely 'stumble upon' spiritual experiences even before attaining purity and maturity of character. Usually the experience itself rectifies the inherent defects. But in some people it does not, and they reveal a certain degree of imabalance in character. About such people the Holy Mother says : 'God-realization can be had at any time by the grace of God, but there is a difference between it and what comes in the fulness of time, as there is a difference between mangoes that ripen in the proper season and those that ripen in the month of Āśvin (autumn). The latter are not very sweet.'[9]

Finally it should also be stated that though every person's spiritual experience is in a way unique, scriptures have laid certain frames of reference for the identification and classification of experiences. Individual experiences can have validity only in so far as they fall within the perimeter of one of these frames.

Mystic experience of light and sound

The chief concern of an aspirant who follows the path of meditation is yogic or mystic illumination. We now turn to a very brief study of the different aspects of this experience.

Analysis of human experience reveals an interesting fact. Some minds are more sensitive to light, form and colour, while some others are more sensitive to sound. The former tend to think in terms of pictures and images, while the latter tend to think verbally in terms of abstract ideas. This difference is produced by the difference in the preponderance of elements (*dhātus*) that make up our minds. It naturally influences the nature of spiritual experience also. Some aspirants 'see' supersensuous light, while others 'hear' supersensuous sounds. [Supersensuous truths are known not through the gross *indriyas* or sense-organs.] In Vedānta books the first type of experience is called *dṛśyānuviddha* ('connected to sight') and the second one *śabdānuviddha* ('connected to sound').[10] These two types of experience are not, however, mutually exclusive and many aspirants get both.

When a beginner sits down to meditate and closes his eyes, he normally sees the object of meditation only indistinctly and finds his interior dark. But after some practice when concentration deepens, he begins to see that the image has become clear and somewhat bright—like a diamond sparkling in the dark. This inner glow or scintillation is technically called *sphuraṇa*. What causes this? It was earlier pointed out that every time we think or imagine, a little *prāṇa* flows along the *iḍā* and the *piṅgalā*.[11]. When the mind is restless, these two side channels do not work in harmony and only a small quantity of *prāṇa* flows in them. Consquently the image produced in the mind is dim and indistinct. But when the mind is concentrated, the channels work harmoniously and more *prāṇa* flows along them. This makes the mental image bright. However, this is not a spiritual experience. It only indicates that your path of meditation is clear.

A true spiritual experience is the result of at least a partial awakening of the central channel, the *suṣumnā*. Says Swami Vivekananda : 'When a minute portion of energy travels along a nerve fibre and causes reaction from centres, the perception is either dream or imagination. But when by the power of long internal meditation the vast mass of energy stored up travels along the *suṣumnā* and strikes the centres, the reac-

9. Swami Tapasyananda and Swami Nikhilananda, *Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1969), pp. 210, 336.

10. Cf. दृश्यशब्दानुभेदेन सविकल्पः पुनर्द्विधा . . . । *Sarasvatīrahasyopaniṣad*, 26-28.

11. See November Editorial.

tion is tremendous, immensely superior to the reaction of dream or imagination, immensely more intense than the reaction of sense-perception. It is supersensuous perception. And when it reaches the metropolis of all sensations, the brain, the whole brain as it were reacts and the result is the full blaze of illumination, the perception of the Self.'[12]

From the point of view of Vedānta it is the light of Ātman that illumines the image. The more the screen of ignorance is removed, the more one sees the light of the Ātman.

In some aspirants spiritual experience comes not in the form of light but as sound. Their minds become sensitive, in the course of practice, to the vibrations of *prāṇa*. 'The whole universe vibrates in *prāṇa*.' says the Upaniṣad.[13] In the human mind these vibrations are experienced as sound, as words. Behind all movements, all creation and change, there is the basic universal rhythm—the primordial vibration which is known by different names like *nāda-brahman, sphoṭa*, Logos, the Word. When the aspirant's intuition develops and becomes sensitive to this cosmic rhythm, he 'hears' it as the 'uncreated sound' (*anāhata dhvani*).

Light and darkness.

A discussion on the experience of light cannot be complete without at least briefly mentioning the experience of darkness—the so-called dark night of the soul—when the aspirant loses contact with the *known* aspects of the Divine and finds himself plunging into the unknown. According to St. John of the Cross, the acknowledged authority on the subject, there are two such nights. The lower one, called the Dark Night of the Senses, comes during the early stages when, owing to the restlessness of the senses and the attack of desires, the aspirant is unable to think of God. This is not a spiritual experience but only an obstacle. However, the mental agony that this darkness or dryness produces has a purifying effect on the soul. Many people who are immersed in worldliness wake up only through suffering. The second one called the Dark Night of the Spirit is the removal of all sensible images and ideas ('phantasmata') from the mind, the last stage in the purification of the soul. The second Night is also known as the 'Cloud of Unknowing.' Like a cup which has been emptied, the mind now becomes ready to receive the pure light of God. This must be regarded as a higher type of spiritual experience.

In the Yoga of Patañjali a similar higher stage occurs when the yogi willfully suppresses all *vṛttis* (thought-waves) and makes the mind 'closed' (*niruddha*). Such a type of concentration of mind is called *asaṁprajñāta* (without light). The yogi does this to avoid getting attached to an earlier experience and to move on to the next higher experience.

It may also be mentioned here that sometimes while meditating the mind becomes a blank and the aspirant is unable to visualize. This is nothing but an obstacle caused by overtaxing the brain, fatigue, weakness of mind or lack of continence, and should not be mistaken for spiritual experience.

The individual and the cosmic

We now come to another dimension of mystic experience. According to all schools of Vedānta the individual self (Jīvātman) is a part of the Supreme Self (Paramātman) though there is a difference of opinion among them regarding the precise nature of this relationship. Spiritual experience

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12. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977), vol. 1, p. 164

13. यदिदं किंच जगत्सर्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम् ।
Katha Upaniṣd, 6.2

begins with the individual spirit and ends in the Supreme Spirit.

The spiritual heart may be regarded as a chamber with two doors. The first door lets you into the chamber. There you find the individual spirit as the mysterious inner light about which the Upaniṣads speak again and again. The second door leads you beyond the chamber into the boundless realm of the Supreme Spirit described variously as infinite Light, infinite Space (*cidākāśa*), etc. It is in that space that the devotee seeks his eternal Beloved, the seeker of knowledge extinguishes the ego, and the mystic starts the 'flight of the alone to the alone.'

MORAL EDUCATION

PROF. S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

That the shaping of a civilized society involves a recognized and well-formed educational process can be taken for granted. Plato, dreaming of the creation of an ideal society in his *Republic*, projected a scheme of lifelong education, so much so the Dialogue is a focal classic on education. In the system advanced, the entire life of the citizen—inclusive of his intellectual and moral development in particular—is envisaged. We may almost say the problem of moral education is faced in all seriousness for the first time by Plato. This is intelligible in view of the issue raised by the Socrates of the Dialogues whether virtue can be taught. Though the problem is modern, and has a contemporary importance, it is heartening to see great minds wrestling with it from times immemorial.

A preliminary clarification of the basic concepts of education and morality is necessary. Education may be thought of as a preparation of the new generation to face the tasks of life in the inherited mould of thought and conduct. That would be a conservative understanding of education. Modern thought as standardized by thinkers like Dewey has given up that view. It is now generally admitted that education is the shaping of creative individuals, who, no doubt, assimilate the past and present, but who must at the same time be forerunners of new patterns of thought and life. The future must emerge out of the educational process, and fostering of creativity must be its principal concern. Not that the past is to be discarded, but it should be subjected to discrimination and critical adoption and must be appropriated for production of novelties in the values of life.

Similar is the case with regard to morality. It is not to be conceived as conformity to inherited codes of conduct but as a critically fashioned scheme of values, to which the individual submits through his own initiative and intelligence. This is what is named 'reflective morality' as opposed to 'conventional morality'. Now the problem is : how does this morality stand in relation to education ? The problem would not exist if education were looked upon as merely intellectual, consisting of the acquisition of information. But all sound thinking on education takes it as a total and integral growth of personality, not overlooking the vital factor of moral culture. The necessity is further intensified by the consideration of the disastrous consequences of a narrowly intellectual and amoral schooling. A well-informed individual whose character and

sensitivity are left severely alone in the process of education may turn out to be a nuisance, if not a monster. Something is surely to be done for harmonizing the entire potentiality of the individual to high purpose, to the heightening of life as a whole. How is education to accomplish this?

This is the precise and pressing problem of this discussion. At the outset we have to notice a difficulty which complicates the institutionalization of moral training in education. Morality is an inward reality in the ethical man, and he is moral through a spring or impulse or necessity of his nature. The moral initiative cannot be imparted. Impediments to its exercise may be removed and situations calling for it and its expansion may be externally presented. But the core of moral life is a matter of inward volition. When law enforces good conduct, the later is called good only by courtesy, for it enforces the socially desired behaviour pattern through nonethical motives such as the temptation of reward or approval and the fear of punishment or deprivation of freedom. There can be no direct method of making men good. This is a severe limitation to the educational technique in the sphere. Only the hope that deep down in human nature there is the 'nisus' towards goodness and that it stands thwarted for want of fostering stimulus or owing to positive impediments can render the question of moral education meaningful. We have no decisive ground for entertaining the opposite assumption. Faith in human nature is our only basis for the educational endeavour.

An understanding of the essential elements of morality is necessary at this stage. All theories of morality are agreed on two factors in moral life. In the first place it is a resistance to impulse or desire as such. It involves a criticism and evaluation of desires, so that what is 'desirable' and not merely 'desired' may be pursued. This is the distinction between the pleasant and the good. Even when pleasure is taken as the goal of moral action as in some theories, it is not the pleasure of the moment that is sought, but the maximum pleasure in the whole span of life that is aimed at. The larger or total life counts more than the fragment of it dominating at the moment. In other words, the larger self of man or the longer vista of life is preferred in valuation to the narrow and passing points of it. This implies regulation, restraint and self-imposed choice of the good over the pleasant.

The second factor is that the moral individual is one who pursues what is good, not for himself only, but for all. He views the good as a social or universal value. Even as a particular desire is often disregarded for purposes of serving the maximum happiness for the individual as a whole, the good pursued by a moral individual forms the common good of society or humanity and not his own personal profit and gain, when the latter runs contrary to the common good. In both individual and social life, what may be named the 'larger self' or 'wider life' is preferred to what is narrow and partial. This principle of 'wholeness' is the characteristic of moral consciousness. This is a descriptive characterization. There may be philosophical difficulties in accounting for this tendency. But morality in its entire evolution, whatever may be the theories on hand, has consisted of the endeavour to realize the fuller goal for man and his society. When the Upaniṣad praised the qualities of restraint, charity and compassion (*dāna, dama, dayā*), it obviously gave expression to the basic notion of morality. The same can be said of the cardinal virtues formulated by Plato. They are temperance, courage, wisdom and justice. The ordering of individual life for making actual the corporate betterment of all life is there in all commandments of higher cultures.

With this preamble we can proceed to

enumerate the exact ways or modes in which education can have a significant role in the formation of character in the pupils.

1. The teacher or teachers can do a great deal by their example. How far they are devoted to their duty and how much of concern for others enters into their conduct determine their moral impact on pupils. They can be 'infectiously' conscientious. A noble teacher induces imitation and brings the pupil to the fold of worthy behaviour. A formally successful teacher can be no substitute for a capable, humane and self-forgetful enthusiast of a teacher. The latter can be a boon of a shaping force.

2. The school or university can be an institution wherein the students exercise a living participation sharing common responsibilities and working for cooperative achievement. Such participation ensures an ardent community life wherein the virtues of self-effacement and devotion to common causes can become a reality. The various activities of the educational community can provide scope for self-expression for every pupil in some sphere, and the pleasure of contributing to a team-achievement enhances the moral potential of each. Zeal which does not bring unshared private benefits is an asset to moral self-culture.

3. In the literary sphere, something equally valued is possible. Effective presentation of elevating literature of great authors can work on the emotions and imagination of the students. The love for the good and the noble can be cultivated through great literature in a marvellous manner. The students should be introduced to morally energizing poetry and fiction. What cold precept cannot do, can be accomplished through works of art, executed by genius in love with all life. Plato valued highly the place of the Muse in early education. But he also laid down rules for the right type of writing and art at this stage of education. Moral discipline through aesthetic delight can be a great instrument of the culture of the whole man, Hence great care must be taken in the choice of presentation.

4. This can be supplemented powerfully by the introduction to pupils of great historical personages of outstanding moral stature and achievements in their respective fields. Appreciation of greatness can bring about an unconscious adoption of the ideal of greatness itself. Austere self-denying heroes of the history of the world such as Socrates, Buddha, Jesus and a host of such illustrious immortals invariably serve to fix in the right ideal of life. A right sense of values thus inculcated can effectively counter the ruinous frivolities of undisciplined self-indulgence.

5 The processes so far mentioned more or less nourish ethically conducive sensitivities. They are not open methods of moralization. There can be more direct processes. There is a great deal of talk going on in our country at the present on including social service in the educational programme. This can be crystallized into a definite item. Instead of becoming a baneful and formal necessity it can be made a joyful exercise of creative altruism. Something analogous to Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programme can be fitted into the educational scheme giving an opportunity to students to serve the community with a difference. The social idealism of Swami Vivekananda would thus find an appropriate embodiment in educational practice. It would be learning by doing and that, doing what humanity demands and what adds to the moral worth of the educated. The educational community can achieve standards of excellence in social service backed by information and youthful zeal and constitute, as it were, an aristocracy.

6. Socrates opined that virtue is knowledge. The dictum has given rise to considerable controversy. The point is that though virtue is a matter of will, it gets impeded by wrong notions of the goals and

means therefor. Philosophy or intellectual discernment of what constitutes the end of life and the right approach to its realization can remove the impediments and leave the path of virtue sure and unobstructed. Hence the principal requisite of moral education is the practice of rational enquiry into the moral end and the moral means. Reason must determine the nature of the ultimate good and elucidate the worthy mode of life that could actualize the good. It is in this connection that the study of the great ethical classics, such as the *Republic* of Plato, the Sermon on the Mount, the first sermons of the Buddha and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* come in. They are presentations of moral philosophy in all its magnitude and brilliance. He who cares for ethical enlightenment ignores them at his peril.

All in all there are about three patterns of life for man. There is the life of slavery to the desire of the moment, the desire rooted in animal needs and careless of the jeopardy it may cause to other men or life at large. This is the sensual and egocentric life. The principle of 'wholeness' mentioned above as characteristic of morality stands totally negated by this mode of life. This is what the *Gītā* calls *āsurī saṁpat* and what Plato depicts as the life of a 'tyrant' trampling under his foot his own and the world's good. This is the life of the 'animal' man according to Tolstoy.

There is a second pattern of life, wherein the values of humanity, both in the individual and society, are sought after. This conception of life may be secular, may not care to recognize anything in man and nature as transcending the empirical and physical. This is an attempt to foster higher values independent of a spiritual principle. Whether such a view is tenable philosophically is a different question. But ethical philosophies falling into this type are many, and we may mention early Buddhism, Utilitarianism and Positivism as illustrations. Whether genuine morality is consistently deducible from a view so narrow and materialistic is a debatable issue. But there is no denying the fact that high ethical endeavour has sometimes founded itself on such a Naturalism.

There is a third point of view for which man is spiritual in his essence and the universe is a manifestation of the Divine Spirit at the heart of things; and life's ultimate good lies in the integration of the personal spirit with the cosmic spiritual power. Therein lies man's self-realization, in God-realization. The view traverses far beyond the mundane but it is contended that a thoroughgoing search for truth cannot terminate in anything short of this transcendent consummation. This mode of thinking is illustrated in the best tradition of Platonic philosophy, the Semitic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, in the higher Hinduism of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*, and the mystic philosophies of China. This line of thought and life is characterized as *daivī saṁpat* in the *Gītā*. This includes morality as one of the principal pathways to the Divine.

Familiarization with the root-ideas of these patterns is sure to remove the theoretical or intellectual impediments to good life. As man is spirit he has to live in accordance with that nature, subordinating and subduing the impulses and desires that tend to obscure it. As he seeks God, who is incarnate in all creation, he is to be devoted to all existence and life. The quintessence of this philosophical awareness may constitute the climax of moral education; and with that attained, all that education could do to conserve and promote morality in its best sense must be taken as accomplished.

Such in broad outline is what can be said

about moral education. It may be added in conclusion that the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna combine in themselves the sum total of the spiritual wisdom of mankind, and to learn of it somewhat is ethical rebirth for modern man.

FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA : SURESHCHANDRA DUTTA

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

One evening about 1894 the members of the Dutta family were anxiously waiting for Charuchandra, the youngest of the Dutta brothers and head clerk in the Assay Office, to return from his office, but he did not. He didn't return home the next day or ever afterwards. All attempts to trace him resulted in failure. Later it was discovered that he had renounced family life, leaving behind his wife and only son, and gone out in search of God. It upset his elder brother Sureshchandra, who was largely depending on Charuchandra for the maintenance of his own family. Certainly Sureshchandra was not aware then of the incident's far-reaching impact, particularly in kindling imperceptibly his own spark of detachment from worldly life, into a blazing fire.

Born in 1850 at 6 Balaram Majumdar Street, Shobhabazar, Calcutta, Sureshchandra Dutta was the second son of his parents.[1] His father Madhavchandra of the well-known Dutta family of Hatkhola, Calcutta, was a clerk in the Government Telegraph Office ; he was also a poet of some repute, and his Bengali poems were published in the contemporary journals *Prabhākar* and *Rasarāj*. From his father, Suresh picked up a love for literature and esthetics. His mother Trailokyamohini's intellect, piety and above all her strong determination also exerted a great influence in moulding the boy's character. Suresh's mother died when he was only five, and he was brought up by his grandmother, the widow of Harachandra Dutta. Notwithstanding the liberalism of the family, nothing hurt its members more when the eldest son, Jogeshchandra, got baptized. Jogeshchandra separated himself from the family.

Simplicity and religious piety found special manifestation in Suresh from his childhood. His broad vision and questing mind put him head and shoulders above many of his contemporaries. Even terribly strained circumstances could not rob him of his spirit of dignity and independence. He started his elementary education in an indigenous school but could not continue long, as the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 created a period of social unrest and uncertainty. Next he read in Banga Vidyalaya, Ahiritola, for two years. Circumstances then compelled him to pass one by one through the school run by Mr. Duff, the school of the Paikpara Raj family, the General Assembly's institntion and finally the Church Mission Society's school. He qualified at the Entrance Examination in 1870 and was placed in the second division. Frustrated and unhappy, Suresh enrolled himself in the Medical College but dropped out after about a year.

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1. The basic data are taken from the biography of Sureshchandra Dutta, published in *Pratibasi* (Bengali monthly edited by Satyacharan Mitra), vol. 2, nos. 10 and 11, B.S. 1319.

Suresh came to know Durgacharan Nag in the late 1870's. Durgacharan was then an apprentice under Dr. Behari Lal Bhaduri. Younger than Suresh by four years, Durgacharan was an orthodox Hindu. Suresh found in him a man of spotless character while Durgacharan too found in Suresh an upright man of pure character. Apparently of quite opposed temperament and outlook, they somehow felt attracted towards each other and became close friends. Often they indulged in heated discussions on religious topics.

Like many educated youths at that time, Suresh had a leaning towards Brahmoism and was perhaps a registered member. Apparently he was convinced of the value of worshipping the formless aspect of God. Nonetheless, the sincere practice of traditional disciplines by his friend Durgacharan, a staunch believer in the orthodox Hindu faith, made him ponder. This conflict persisted, and Suresh had to pay heavily to get rid of it.

Since worldly life could not be avoided altogether, Suresh tried to live above it. Though it is difficult to say just how much attention he gave to the various forces in his life, his sympathies may be guessed from the indifference with which he treated creature comforts and the increasing emphasis he placed on religious matters. In fact, his life proved to be an inspiring display of courage, diligence and devotion to all that is best in a householder's life. More than this, sincerity of purpose and yearning for a higher life provided the mortar for his ideological structure. God-fearing, humble and detached as he was, Suresh moved about without paying heed to other's comments or criticism.

Soon, however, it dawned on Suresh and his friend that mere talk was futile. Religion must be experienced in life. Then one day Suresh heard in the Brahmo Church of the New Dispensation which he frequented, of a unique saint living at Dakshineswar. Curiously enough it slipped from his memory, and only two months later did he tell his friend Durgacharan.

Dakshineswar was not far from Calcutta, then the capital of British India. There, in a beautiful, secluded garden lay the famous temple of Bhavatāriṇī, with its white spire rising high above the treetops. To its west stood twelve temples of Śiva in two blocks of six, and to the north stood the temple of Rādhākānta. Set in a grand courtyard and surrounded by charming flower-bedecked meadows and deep jungle, with the holy Ganga flowing past a flowering bank, it was a place of heavenly beauty, soft and serene. It lifted up man's soul and helped to rid him of temporal trifles, at least for the time being. Pilgrims visited the temple in the hope of obtaining some spark of holiness to light their lamp of spirituality. An even greater attraction was Sri Ramakrishna, the saint of Dakshineswar who lived in the room at the northwest corner of the courtyard. Word had spread in Calcutta that Sri Ramakrishna was something more than human, and already many distinguished persons worshipped him as divine. Boundless in his love, profound and liberal in his vision and yet simple as a child, Sri Ramakrishna was a unique personality, and very few indeed could fathom him. But his very form and every mood expressed tender compassion and sympathy, and this exerted an irresistible attraction on all who came within his orbit.

Following a dark period of about a century and a half which had been swept by the cross-currents of materialistic European culture and rigid but lifeless orthodox traditions, Sri Ramakrishna appeared as a dazzling beacon, belittling even the gleams of light coming from the activities of the Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and Theosophical Society. Testing the validity of all major faiths he became the embodiment of all the past religious thought of India. During the

years in which he practised various religious disciplines of the different Hindu sects as well as of other religions, life rolled on and brought him richer and richer realizations and ever more intense love of God. He shared the life of those around him, entered into their joys and sorrows, rejoiced with them, mourned with them, but through it all he led men finally to the shrine of divinity.

Besides its innate value, the very beauty of the spiritual message which he spoke with a slight stammer in his village patois charmed all. He used with telling effect homely parables and illustrations. Enraptured, his audience would hang upon his every word. Moreover, his divine presence radiated peace and tranquillity over one and all. His benign spirit soothed their lacerated hearts and gave strength to their drooping spirits.

As soon as Durgacharan heard of the saint of Dakshineswar from Suresh, he insisted on calling on him then and there. So both of them started out for Dakshineswar soon after their morning meal. It was some time in April 1882.

In the broiling sun they walked a long distance, only to discover that they had passed the village of Dakshineswar. They turned back and retraced quite a distance before arriving at the Dakshineswar Kālī temple at about two o'clock. Trying to locate the residence of the saint, they came upon a long-bearded man who was jokingly referred to as Jatila-Kuṭila—Pratap Chandra Hazra—sitting by the side of the eastern door of Sri Ramakrishna's room. Hazra tried to dissuade the visitors,[2] saying that Sri Ramakrishna was away and that they should come some other day.[3] A temporary disappointment swept over them, and they were about to turn back when they noticed through the open doors somebody motioning them to enter. Walking past the bearded man they entered the room to discover the most fascinating character they had ever come across. He was seated facing north on a small couch with his legs outstretched.[4] They could easily recognize him as the holy man they had come to meet.

As was his wont, Sri Ramakrishna greeted them as soon as his eyes fell on them. While Durgacharan prostrated himself before the saint and took the dust of his feet,[5] Suresh, like a typical Brahmo, made obeisance to him with joined palms. Directed by Sri Ramakrishna they took their seats close to him[6] on the mat spread on the floor.

Not satisfied with a merely external view, Sri Ramakrishna always looked into the very depths of a person. He saw through and through Suresh and Durgacharan and could easily measure their spiritual potentialities.

Following some introductory inquiries, Sri Ramakrishna began to talk on spiritual practice. In the course of his talk he said, 'Live in the world as the mudfish lives in the mud. One develops love of God by going away from the world into solitude

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2. According to Saratchandra Chakravarty who was close to Durgacharan Nag, Pratap Hazra kept silent and did not reply. (Saratchandra Chakravarty, *Nag Mahasaya* [Bengali] Udbodhan Office, vol. 7, no. 9, p. 270). And according to Akshaykumar Sen's *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Punthi* (ninth edition), p. 302, Sri Ramakrishna was having a talk with Pratap at that time.

3. *Saint Durgacharan Nag* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, third edition), p. 43. Though Pratap was living under the loving care of Sri Ramakrishna, he did not like anybody to come to the saint. Strangely enough, he didn't feel any remorse for his conduct.

4. Bijaynath Mazumdar's article on 'Pujaniya Durgacharan' (Bengali) published in *Tattvamanjari* (vol. 10, no. 1, p. 16), states that Sri Ramakrishna was holding a religious discourse before the devotees present in his room.

5. *Prabuddha Bharata,* May 1974, p. 203, footnote.

6. Gurudas Burman, *Sri Sri Ramakrishnacharit* (Bengali), vol. 1, p. 208.

now and then and meditating on God. After that one can live in the world unattached. The mud is there, and the fish has to live in it, but its body is not stained by the mud. Such a man can lead the life of a householder in a spirit of detachment.' He added, 'Live in the world unattached. Be in the world, but not of it. Just see that the dirt of the world does not touch you.'

A hapless victim of worldly bondages and concerns, Suresh's long quest for spiritual help and guidance had perhaps been as exasperating as the pain of spiritual illness itself. Occasional financial difficulties and such elusive factors as mental stress and worry had aggravated the malady. Yet he had never considered renouncing his family life. He had perseveringly braved all miseries and maladies. While his search for mental poise and tranquillity had led him to the Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj, it seems that he was drawn to Sri Ramakrishna more by the thirst for adventure. In fact, he was searching beyond for something unknown; he was in search of the supreme Reality. Almost unconsciously he had hoped for some guidance from Sri Ramakrishna. Now he held his breath in suspense as the words of the saint deeply stirred his heart. Like his companion Durgacharan, he had a strong inner feeling that the words of the saint were specifically meant for him. There was something inexplicable about Sri Ramakrishna and his demeanour. Suresh was deeply impressed; he felt irresistibly drawn towards the saint.

Durgacharan seems to have been even more deeply moved. He could not remove his transfixed eyes from the frail form of the saint. Thus Suresh and his companion spent quite some time there, letting the saint's radiant spirit play about them until they too were in some measure absorbed in it. From that moment Suresh marvelled at the astounding devotion Sri Ramakrishna *had inspired in him.*

Sri Ramakrishna asked them to go to the Pañcavaṭī and meditate for some time. On their return after about half an hour, Sri Ramakrishna took them round the temples, he in front and they behind, going first to the twelve Śiva temples and the temple of Rādhākānta, and then to the Kālī temple. In the presence of Mother Kālī's image, however, Suresh noticed a striking transformation in Sri Ramakrishna. The latter entered a deep ecstatic mood. 'As a restless child holds the hem of its mother's garment and runs round her, so the Master [Sri Ramakrishna] went round the image of Kālī and Śiva and bowed down to them.'[7] This opened up for Suresh a new insight into the depth and reality of the spiritual realm. In fact, he could hardly realize at that moment that all his habits of thought about religion had been blown apart, and he didn't even make prostration before any of the deities as did his friend Durgacharan.

At about 5 p.m.[8] they partook of the *prasād* (consecrated food) of Mother Kālī given them. When they took leave of Sri Ramakrishna the latter advised them to repeat the visit, saying that then only the acquaintance would deepen. The words 'pay another visit' told repeatedly by Sri Ramakrishna in his sweet voice cast a charm on Suresh.[9]

Sri Ramakrishna's guileless ways and childlike innocence were probably the secret of his enduring charm and appeal. Whatever, the visit was a wonderful experience for Suresh. Much of the temple milieu was fascinating; it afforded a peep into another world of another age, and yet very much

7. Swami Jagadiswarananda, 'Sureshchandra Dutta', *Prabuddha Bharata,* June 1948, p. 232.

8. *Vedanta Kesari,* June 1918, p. 45.

9. In the short biography of Sri Ramakrishna, *Sri Sri Ramakrishnalila* Sureshchandra writes, 'Again, when seeing off his visitor Sri Ramakrishna used to say endearingly, "Do come another day, do come another day." Who could *not but be enchanted?*'

of his own time. Now Suresh could sense an air of tranquillity that had settled about him. Still more, the visit showed him once for all the purpose of his life and brought a ray of sunshine into his dreary existence. Later, Suresh admitted that Sri Ramakrishna's great devotion and extraordinary ecstasy, which he had noticed during his first visit, left an indelible impression on him.[10]

The very next week Suresh and his friend called again on Sri Ramakrishna. The latter received them with elation, beaming all over. He went into ecstasy and said, 'You have done well to come here. I waited for you both.'[11] On his advice Durgacharan and Suresh spent some time meditating in the Pañcavaṭī this day too. When alone with Suresh, Sri Ramakrishna remarked, 'He [Durgacharan] is really a blazing fire.' It evoked in Suresh deep regard for his friend.

Suresh could but rarely find time to visit Dakshineswar. While his rational mind was being inundated by the unearned love of Sri Ramakrishna, he felt convinced that one must straighten one's life in order to really turn to God. So he now placed more emphasis on strengthening his moral life. Suresh and Durgacharan began to spend more time in religious discussion centred on Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. Observing Suresh's growing desire for spiritual experience, Durgacharan recommended that he take initiation from a competent Guru. Indoctrinated by Brahmo faith, Suresh couldn't swallow the idea. However, to receive authoritative guidance on the matter they approached Sri Ramakrishna, who explained to them the necessity of spiritual initiation. Suresh told him quite frankly, 'I have no faith in *mantras* or in the forms of God.' Sri Ramakrishna replied, 'Well, you need not have initiation just now. Later you'll be convinced of its need and will receive initiation in course of time.'[12]

Another day Suresh heard Sri Ramakrishna saying, 'As the moving hand of a clock coincides with the hour hand at twelve noon, my mind too tends to merge in God at all times. But as I am here with a mission of bringing good to mankind, I force my mind down to worldly things.'[13]

Suresh had a fairly good job. But when his friend Durgacharan gave up the practice of homoeopathy and devoted himself entirely to spiritual practices, Suresh likewise resigned from his employment.[14] This was perhaps the first time he relinquished employment.

Of the many instructions Sri Ramakrishna used to give to householders like Suresh, the following are a sampling of those which seem to have especially helped him to fashion his life.

A thick spring mattress, depressed low when someone sits upon it, recovers its original form as soon as he stands up. Similarly, spiritual instructions produce some temporary religious feeling in a householder, but they are erased from his mind as soon as he enters into his household.[15]

A person must perform household duties as long as he cherishes a desire for worldly enjoyments. He is like the bird which sat absentmindedly on the mast of a ship anchored in the Ganga. Slowly the ship sailed out into the ocean. When the bird came to its senses it could find no shore in any direction. It flew towards the north

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10. Swami Jagadiswarananda, 'Bhakta Sureshchandra Dutta', *Udbodhan*, vol. 50, no. 8, p. 422.

11. *Saint Durgacharan Nag*, p. 48.

12. Swami Gambhirananda, *Sri Ramakrishna Bhaktamalika* (Bengali) (Calcutta: Udbodhan Office, fourth edition), vol. 2, pp. 354-55.

13. Sureshchandra Dutta, 'Sri Sri Ramakrishnalila', *Sri Sri Ramakrishnadever Upadesh* (Bengali) (Calcutta: Haramohan Publishing Agency, twentieth edition), p. 19.

14. Mahendranath Dutta, *Srimat Vivekananda Swamijir Jibaner Ghatanavali* (Bengali) (Calcutta: Mahendra Publishing Committee, third edition), vol. 1, p. 146.

15. *Sri Ramakrishnadever Upadesh*, p. 72, no. 214.

hoping to reach land; it went very far and grew tired but could find no shore. It returned to the ship and sat on the mast. After a while the bird flew away again, this time toward the south, but it could find no land in that direction either; it saw nothing but limitless ocean all around. Very tired, it returned to the ship and sat on the mast. After resting a long while, the bird went toward the east, and then toward the west. When it found no trace of land, it came back and settled down again on the mast. It didn't leave the mast; it made no further effort.[16]

Shall one renounce the world? Arduous spiritual practices even in the worldly set-up help one get rid of worldliness.[17]

O God, Yon have created everything and You are my sole refuge. All these houses, sons, wife, friends and everything else belong to You.' If one lives in the world with this conviction he will certainly realize God.[18]

Those who do worldly duties in a detached spirit and live in the world with the knowledge that the world is unreal will attain to God.[19]

It is true that no difficulty is as coldly real as the attempt to live the worldly life with a spirit of detachment. But Suresh succeeded considerably in his endeavour to practise spiritual disciplines in the midst of worldly life. Most of those close to him, even his employer, were loathe to see the hope and support of the family fraternizing with the crazy Durgacharan and sitting with devotion at the feet of the mad priest of Dakshineswar. As for himself, however, Suresh never felt the discomfort of having taken a difficult moral stance, though at times it caused difficulties.

Except for the publication of a booklet containing a few teachings of Sri Ramakrishna by Keshab Chandra Sen in January 1878, Suresh was the first to bring out Sri Ramakrishna's teachings in the form of a book. The first part of his *Paramahamsa Ramakrishner Ukti* ('Sayings of Paramahamsa Ramakrishna') came out on December 23, 1884.[20] The second part came out in 1886 soon after Sri Ramakrishna's demise. Subsequently a second edition was published containing a short but comprehensive biography of Sri Ramakrishna called 'Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lila' and his teachings distributed over eight parts.[21] The third edition containing 750 teachings of Sri Ramakrishna was published in March 1909 by Messrs. S. C. Mitra & Co., 38 Nandalal De Street, Kuthighata, Baranagore, Calcutta. In course of time another 200 teachings were added. The real merit of the book lies in the wealth of soul-stirring words of Sri Ramakrishna culled diligently by Suresh from a wide range of materials which included his own records, other persons' firsthand records and published notes, etc. He excluded as far as possible all inauthentic hearsay and threw an open challenge in the introduction of the book by inviting readers to prove any falsity, inaccuracy or exaggeration in the teachings, giving the assurance that all genuine corrections would be incorporated in the next edition.[22] This gives an indication of how painstakingly the author sought to make this unique publication cohesive, realistic and interesting.

Suresh was thus instrumental in spreading the Master's message among aspiring souls.[23] Certainly, Suresh, like Ramchandra

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16. *Ibid.*, pp. 213-14, no. 770.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 214, no. 771.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 184, no. 649.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 184, no. 648.

20. Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay and Sajanikanta Das, *Samasamayik Dristite Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa* (Calcutta: General Printers and Publishers), p. 119.
21. *Udbodhan*, vol. 2, no. 11, p. 125.
22. Introduction to *Sri Ramakrishnadever Upadesh.*
23. About this book Swami Vivekananda wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda in 1895, 'Suresh Dutta's object is noble; his book, too, is well written; it will bring some good, no doubt. However, how far have they been able to fathom Sri Ramakrishna?' *Swami Vivekanander Bani O Rachana* (Calcutta: Udbodhan Office, third edition), vol. 7, p. 251. It may be recalled that this publication induced Subodhchandra Ghosh

Dutta and Manomohan Mitra, was one of the pioneers who undertook even during Sri Ramakrishna's lifetime public lectures, musical processions and the publication of books and magazines 'to present the new ideas' as he understood them [24] It may not be out of place to mention some of his subsequent Bengali publications: *Narada-Sutra, Sri Sri Ramakrishna Samalochan, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna O Brahmo Samaj, Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lilamrita,* etc. which aptly illustrate his literary talent as well as his love for religious life.

Family circumstances led him to accept a job in the British military service at Quetta. Quetta occupied a strategic position on the frontier, as it controlled the route to Qandahar. He was offered a monthly salary of two hundred rupees. In the war situation the British Government spent money lavishly. This tempted some of the military personnel to dishonesty. Suresh's superior officer, who had been misappropriating money from the Government, demanded of Suresh his assistance in grabbing more on a share of two-thirds and one-third. Suresh's stiff resistance only angered the officer, so Suresh decided to give up his job to avoid further trouble. His boss, however, refused to release him in the emergency situation and went so far as to threaten him with court martial on a charge of disobedience, which could have meant the death penalty. And in fact, Suresh was kept under strict surveillance.[25] Rather than yield to such tactics, Suresh approached a kind-hearted British doctor and unburdened the agony of his heart. He persuaded the doctor to issue in his favour a medical certificate declaring him unfit for the job. Even then, he had to drag on for some time more till he was relieved by a replacement.

Free at long last of this obnoxious situation, Suresh left for Calcutta. Intolerable as it seemed, however, the uncomfortable situation he left was nothing compared to what accompanied his return journey. His small purse of twenty rupees could take him no further than Benaras. Left with no other choice, he set out on foot. Casual offerings of food by generous persons and reading of the *Gītā* sustained him through his journey. Finally, at Bhagalpur, a generous person helped him by giving a railway ticket to Howrah Station. Reaching home he discovered that the joint family (his and his youngest brother's families) was struggling with the paltry income of twenty-five rupees a month earned by his youngest brother.

Instead of succumbing to the adverse circumstances the undaunted Suresh worked as a porter and sometimes as a potato-seller earning about half a rupee a day. A few weeks thereafter he secured a job earning him sixty rupees a month. Contented, Suresh now turned his attention to building up his inner life.

On his return to Calcutta he had hurried to see Sri Ramakrishna, who was lying seriously ill at the Cossipore Gardenhouse. Sri Ramakrishna cordially received him. He visited Sri Ramakrishna again and again, but could not express his ever-swelling desire for spiritual initiation from the Master, for the latter's illness proved to be fatal. Suresh was baffled.

Almost drowned in despair at the news of Sri Ramakrishna's death, on August 16, 1886, Suresh bitterly lamented his having ignored Durgacharan's advice to take spiritual initiation. Deeply worried, he

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(later Swami Subodhananda) to join the fold of Sri Ramakrishna. The book was highly acclaimed by contemporary journals such as *Bangabasi, Dainik, Pataka,* etc. See Sankariprasad Basu, *Vivekananda O Samakalin Bharatvarsa* (Calcutta: Mondal Book House, 1976), vol. 2, pp. 269-70.

24. Swami Gambhirananda, *History of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1957), p. 41.

25. *Udbodhan,* vol. 14. no. 12. p. 773.

didn't sleep for weeks. He wept bitterly, and would pray alone at dead of night on the bank of the Ganga, his heart yearning for some ray of light. Fortunately, he was blessed with a wonderful vision. One night he lay prostrate on the bank of the Ganga, praying for many hours. In the early hours he saw Sri Ramakrishna rising from the Ganga and, to his great surprise, initiating him with a *mantra*. Overwhelmed with devotional fervour Suresh reached to touch Sri Ramakrishna's feet, but lo ! he had vanished. Inspired by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna he plunged deeply into spiritual practices.

Now 'the holy contact of the Master inspired him to such an extent for God vision that occasionally he provided his family with a few month's subsistence and retired from the world into solitude and devoted himself wholly to spiritual practices.'[26] This he did repeatedly, much to the annoyance of his family members. Mystified and anxious, they made bitter complaints regarding his negligence of worldly duties ; but he calmly tolerated everything, all the time implicitly obeying his conscience. While his family members became increasingly apprehensive of Suresh's motive, the latter steadily gained in faith and self-surrender to God.

Curiously enough, as Suresh grew increasingly dependent on God he gave up jobs of high and low salaries many a time but was always fortunate enough to secure again some job or other to enable the family to scrape through. Thus contented with bare necessities, he steadfastly steered himself in his life's journey, keeping himself always firm in his resolve of reaching the spiritual goal.

Non-attached to worldly cravings and attached to spiritual attainments, Suresh successfully chiselled out of himself a model householder as envisaged by Sri Ramakrishna. In his case it was not a sudden mental revolution that forever transformed the man ; it was rather a series of insights, followed each time by a decision or action dictated by the insight. It was more a determination to follow the voice of his conscience, as and when it spoke. In three decades his life underwent a radical change. Commenting on his golden character Swami Vivekananda feelingly told Saratchandra Chakravarty, one of his prominent disciples, 'Look here, whoever has been touched by Sri Ramakrishna has turned into gold.'[27]

In the family, he was forced as it were to almost a solitary pilgrimage from the day Sri Ramakrishna touched his heart until November 18, 1912, when he died. He became a living illustration of what a sincere and determined soul, having firm faith and unswerving devotion to Sri Ramakrishna, can achieve in the family life. More than this, his life was a benediction, a calling down of good upon a sick and miserable world.

If Sureshchandra Dutta left us with any message at all, it was probably: Just take refuge in God and stay calm and faithful. Be sincere to yourself and to your ideal and other things will take care of themselves.

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26. *Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1948, p. 234.

27. *Bhaktamalika*, vol. 2, p. 358.

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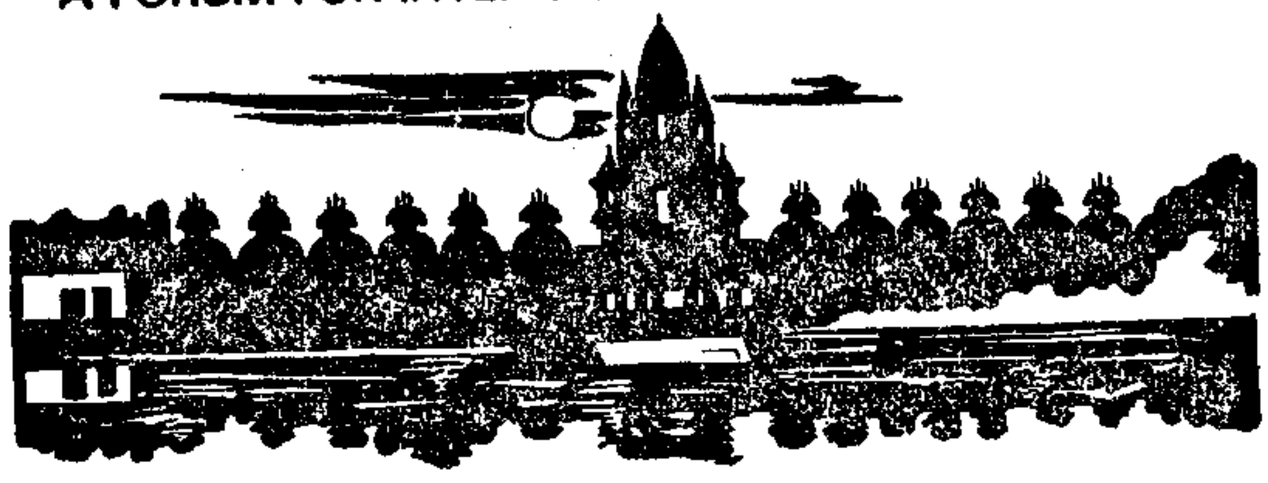

THE HINDU DOCTRINE OF AVATARA

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

A correspondent from the U.S.A. wrote to me that she had had a discussion with an American Professor on the *viśvarūpa-darśana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, during which the point arose as to whether Śrī Kṛṣṇa was God and man *at the same time* (nondualism) or though He was God He existed as man separately (dualism). In this connection it was pointed out that the idea of dualism is similar to Judeo-Christian philosophy according to which God is intrinsically different from man, and man can never be God, while nondualism points towards a merger of man into Brahman, the Absolute. The correspondent desired me to give my interpretation and opinion in the matter. My reply is reproduced below for the benefit of a wider circle of readers, with a few additions here and there.

The Judeo-Christian, Islamic, and other non-Hindu views of God, man, and the universe, and of their mutual relationships, are quite different from those of the Hindus, and the two cannot be really compared on the same footing. In the non-Hindu conception, *the creation* of the universe is a historical, chronological process by an extracosmic God (who is always considered masculine) in linear time, out of nothing, and man and the soul also are created entities. Whereas in the Hindu conception, the universe with its beings is *the manifestation* of the Divine Itself (or Himself/Herself) whose nature is Sat-Cit-Ānanda (Absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss), within the framework of time-space-causation (which also emerges from It), through the power of Māyā as a *līlā* or Play. It is a beginningless spiritual, psychological—as against historical, chronological—process going on as a cyclic or wavy—as against linear—movement of ever-recurring projection and withdrawal, or emergence from and mergence in Divine Reality. In the Hindu tradition God is, therefore, both transcendent to and immanent in the universe (whereas in the Judeo-Christian tradition He is purely extra-cosmic). The soul or Jīva is not a created entity, but is identical with or part and parcel of God, and may inhabit the human or any other type of body, and transmigrate too, until it realizes its true nature.[1]

The standpoint of dualism

In Hindu thought, from the point of view of dualism, God is also the material cause (*upādāna kāraṇa*) of the universe, and the

1. In Hindu thought man is primarily the uncreated Soul (Atman), and the body-mind complex with which it gets associated (including the subtle body which survives the gross body as the means of transmigration until liberation), which endows it with personality, *is part of the universe*. In non-Hindu thought man is primarily *the body*, into which a soul has been breathed, and each man is confined to one particular body.

Jīvas are part and parcel of, or integral to, 'Him' ('Her')—His own nature being Sat-Cit-Ānanda—like rays of the sun.[2] They are not created but are eternal, being inseparable parts of God. Man and all other beings are not the body, but Jīvas embodied. The whole universe and all the organisms in it (including the bodies of lower creatures, man, gods or angels, and demons) are projected by God (Īśvara) out of 'Himself' ('Herself') by His power of Māyā, and the Jīvas assume bodies and the Play of the universe (*līlā*) goes on. Jīvas being part and parcel of 'Him', the totality of all bodies is the body of God. This is His *viśvarūpa* (Universal Form). But God in His essential Being as the 'Sun', whose rays the Jīvas are, also incarnates taking up a specially projected spiritual body to play with the embodied devotee-Jīvas by His power of Māyā, without infringing His nature, like the Sun reflected in a lake. This is His Avatāra. He is both God in His essential nature as well as Man at the same time, with all the essential Divine attributes reflected in His Avatāra as Man (or in any other form which He may assume).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, therefore, being an Avatāra of Īśvara, is both Man and God at the same time. When He shows the *viśvarūpa,* He first assumes His essential mythological Divine Form as Viṣṇu with four hands, etc., and then shows His *viśvarūpa* to Arjuna after giving him supernatural eyes (vision). Thus, though Śrī Kṛṣṇa exists apparently as a Man, he is a God Himself, not a Jīva. His Man-form is a *līlā, 'līlā-mānuṣa-vigraha'* or *'māyā-mānuṣa-vigraha'*. He covers up His Divine nature and acts Man, but often reveals it to the deserving devotees for whose sake He has come as Avatāra.

In Hinduism all Incarnations (Avatāras) being God Himself, they are all one and equally valid as forms of God, though His human or other manifestations and activities may be different at different times and places, as in the case of a versatile actor who assumes different roles in different dramas or films. Thus Hindus accept any number of Incarnations of God, and look upon Christ also as an Incarnation of God, and hence as God Himself. They accept the possibility of the advent of Incarnation of God in future also without limit.

Hindu dualism (Dvaita) is not akin to the other non-Hindu types of dualism. In fact, it is Brahman—the Supreme Person or Being—alone who manifests as all the three, Īśvara-Jīva-Jagat (God-soul-universe), who are inseparable, for playing the universe-game; and He withdraws it and remains Alone in His own Being also. He again and again projects the universe with its beings and withdraws it. So, all beings are of God only. It is in a sense nondualism, for there is no other independent Reality apart from God. The realized (liberated from embodiment) Jīva finds its unity in God as His inseparable part and parcel.

The standpoint of nondualism

The nondualistic (Advaitic) position is slightly different, though it also accepts the above dualistic position from a relative point of view. Its absolutistic position (noumenal point of view as against the phenomenal) is that the Absolute Reality (Brahman) alone *is* (Sat), and It is trans-personal. Owing to Its imponderable power

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2. The views of the extreme dualists or pluralists in Hinduism are somewhat different with regard to the relative ultimate status of God-souls-universe which they consider to exist eternally separate, but under the control of God. However, the other general principles of Vedānta are held in common. All the three are uncreated and eternal. Though the soul is not held to be one with God in the state of Liberation, it is divine in nature. The body disintegrates back into the universe of which it is a part. The universe too is not created but projected again and again by God, as in the other systems of Vedānta, in a cyclic process. They also accept the Incarnation (Avatāra) of God as Man, etc.

of Māyā, the universe and various psychophysical beings arise. Māyā, non-separate from Brahman (like heat and fire), is the 'material cause' of the universe and its beings, and Brahman is reflected *in full* in the various types of bodies of the beings as the Jīva in each body. So each Jīva is not a part or ray, but the reflection of the whole Brahman, like the Sun reflected fully in various receptacles of water.[3] God or Īśvara is Brahman associated with Māyā in its kinetic state and the totality of all its products (that is, the universe and its beings), as viewed by us phenomenally. The rest is akin to the dualistic position described above.

The difference between the two, Dvaita and Advaita, is: In Advaita, from the absolute point of view, the whole universe-game is considered an 'appearance' on the substratum Brahman by Its power of Māyā, instead of as the *līlā* of God, projected outside, by His power of Māyā, which He wields. As pointed out, Advaita accepts the second view also relatively (phenomenally), since Brahman Itself is God (Īśvara) as viewed by us. For Advaita, God-souls-universe are all Brahman only, appearing to us as the triad by Its power of Māyā. So when the Jīva realizes its true nature, freed from embodiment, it finds that it was always Brahman Itself. The other Jīvas and the universe also are seen as Brahman only in the Jīvan-mukta state (liberated while living in the body); and sometimes the Jīvan-mukta may find the universe and its beings without their particularized names and forms as Pure Consciousness, which is the nature of Brahman. In this state Māyā is not cognized. It is like a man seeing the cinema show on the screen; he turns round and sees that it is all only light modified in different ways by the film falling on the screen. Again when he turns to the screen, he sees the show, but now knows what it is—that it is all play of light only. Thus Advaita accepts from the absolute point of view identity of the Jīvas and the universe with Brahman, as well as the game of the universe with relative relationships as described by dualism from the relative point of view, including the special manifestation of Īśvara as the Avatāra or Incarnation, playing the part of Man as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Christ, and so on. All this forms part of the universe-game, of appearance on Brahman by virtue of Its inscrutable power designated Māyā.

Thus Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* is Man and God at the same time from both the dualistic and nondualistic points of views, only His Divinity is hidden to the ordinary eye. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: 'Unaware of My higher transcendent nature, as the Great Lord of all beings, fools disregard Me, dwelling in the human form.'[4]

There are many other *ślokas* in the *Gītā* which make this clear.

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3. It may also be exemplified by the illustrations of the whole ocean being the substratum of every wave, or each seed containing the potency of the whole tree, or the entire infinite indivisible Space being the medium for the manifestation and existence of every entity in it.

4. अवजानन्ति मां मूढ़ा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥
Bhagavad-Gītā, 9.11

HUMANITY IN QUEST OF HAPPINESS

SACHCHIDANAND PANDEY

In the last chapter of the *Republic*, Plato concludes that the source of happiness is goodness and the happy man must be a good man. But what is goodness? Who is a good man? In order to answer this ancient query Plato puts before us a parable, in which Odysseus, the wise hero of war, disenchanted of all ambition on earth chooses in Hades 'the life of a private man who has no cares'. In this quiet, care-free life he finds the home of goodness and, consequently, of happiness. Ambition and wealth and power are eternal enemies of happiness, he warns us. Ambition can only make man miserable. Neither can wealth make man happy. Power cannot give man happiness, it rather destroys his happiness.

Happiness for philosophers and philosophic minds issues from an altogether different spring. That spring is the divine essence which, as an Oriental philosopher has put it, sleeps in the world of minerals, dreams in the world of vegetables, and wakes in the world of animals; or as a Western philosopher has put it, 'sleeps in the stone, dreams in the animals, and wakes in man.' Realization of this divinity in man can indeed render him really happy. But this realization is not possible for all. This is only the good man's lot. The lot of the good man is therefore God's blessing, since he alone among his fellow beings is entitled to enter the company of the gods, and to him alone among mortals is open the gate of happiness and joy. Happiness is not material, and cannot be obtained through material means. The appetite of the soul cannot be gratified by the things that gratify the urges of the body. Bread can satisfy the hunger of the belly but not the hunger of the spirit. Man does not live by bread alone, says Christ. Faith, Hope and Charity, adds St. Paul, form the food that fosters the spirit in man. Love and faith and wisdom, says Kṛṣṇa, form the very foundation on which the human personality stands. The edifice of human happiness is based on the sanctity of the human soul. If the world is too much with us, to use a phrase of Wordsworth, happiness will be too far from us. The world of matter is quite distinct from the world of mind. However miserable the good man be in the material world, in the world of spirit he reigns supreme. The sickness and sorrow of this life cannot rob him of the happiness he has attained in the spiritual world. Pollutions of mortality cannot tarnish the brightness of his being. Such is the idealist conception of happiness in all times. Observes Leckey:

> That 'the just man should take confidence in death,' that he who has earnestly, though no doubt imperfectly, tried to do his duty has nothing to fear beyond the grave, had been the consoling faith of all the best minds of antiquity. That the bold, unshackled and impartial search for truth is among the noblest and, therefore, among the most innocent employments of mankind, was the belief which inspired all the philosophies of the past.... It should never be forgotten that the rationalist has always found the highest expression of his belief in the language of the prophet who declared that the only service the Almighty required was a life of justice, of mercy, and of humility; of the wise man, who summed up the whole duty of man in the fear of God and the observance of His commandments; of the apostle, who described true religion as consisting of charity and of purity; and of the still greater Teacher, who proclaimed true worship to be altogether spiritual, and who described the final adjudication as the separation of mankind according to their acts and not according to their opinion.[1]

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1. W. E. H. Lecky, *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (London, 1946), p. 138.

One such rationalist was Socrates, who preferred to the life of luxury the life of prison bars, who found happiness in hemlock that introduced him into the company of God. Of all the deaths recorded in history, that of Socrates is the most enviable, observed J. B. S. Haldane. 'There is nothing in any tragedy, ancient or modern,' wrote the Rev. Benjamin Jowett, 'nothing in poetry or history, like the last hours of Socrates in Plato.' Never can man forget that, remarks that remarkable Irish historian whose magnificent passage on the spirit of rationalism I have just quoted:

> Never can men forget that noble Greek who, struck down by an unrighteous sentence, summoned around him his dearest disciples, and having reasoned with them on the immortality of the soul and the rewards of virtue and the goodness of the gods, took with a gentle smile the cup of death, and passed away thanking the god of healing who had cured him of the disease of life.[2]

For Socrates, death was not the end but the beginning of life. According to him the good man is constantly dying since in dying lies his goodness. In the contemplation of death lies wisdom. And goodness and wisdom constitute happiness. Hence, 'the wisest, the justest, and the best' of mankind welcomed the poison cup as a gift of the Gods.[3]

Another great spirit of this type who sacrificed his all for the well-being of all mankind was Jesus Christ. For the salvation of the world he suffered the agony of the Cross. And Napoleon rightly remarked that he became the Son of God only because he died on the Cross.[4] 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, was the prayer he made for those who killed him. The crucifixion of Christ speaks at once of the most barbarous and the most civilised instincts of mankind. No human language can describe, nor any human imagination can conceive the infinite torture to which the person of the prophet was put. At the same time, the magnificence of his mind, the largeness of his heart, and the excellence of his spirit exhibit a character unparalleled in the entire history of the human race.

Martyrs and mystics and missionaries of all ages and of all parts of the world have borne aloft the ideals for which these beloved ones of humanity laid down their lives. The seers of India, the sages of China, and the saints of Christendom, have all lived and worked and died for the good of mankind. The *summum bonum* of their life was the happiness of humanity. And as happiness lies in liberation, they strove to release humanity from the bondage of corruption, ignorance, and superstition. From the fetters of darkness, delusion, and disease they tried to set man free. Thus the Hindu sage prays, 'May all be happy; may all be healthy; may all be wealthy; may all be free from sorrow.' The identification of one's self with the self of all has been one of the most dominating obsessions of the sages of all lands at all times. That is why 'self-knowledge' was the search of Socrates; 'know thyself' (*gnothi seauton*) was the command of the oracle at Delphi; and 'thou art that' (*tat tvam asi*) was the realization of the Ṛṣis. The great sage Yājñavalkya, while explaining to his wife Maitreyī the secret of the immortality of man, arrives at the self-same conclusion. In a most fascinating manner he argues his point. 'O Maitreyī,' he tells her,

> Verily a husband is not dear that you may love the husband; but that you may love the self through the husband, therefore, a husband is dear. A wife is not dear that one may love the wife; but that one may love the self through the wife, therefore, a wife is dear. A friend is not dear that one may love the friend; but that one

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2. *Ibid.*
3. *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. Jowett (London: Oxford University, 1953), vol. 1, Phaedo p. 477.
4. Emil Ludwig, *Napolean* (New York: Pocket Books, 1965), p. 589.

may love the self through the friend, therefore, a friend is dear. All is dear because of the self.[5]

The British philosopher Hume in his essay *Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature* puts forth a similar argument, and his conclusion is a classic of its kind: 'I feel a pleasure in doing good to my friend, because I love him; but do not love him for the sake of that pleasure.' This is how he expounds the philosophy of self-love on empirical principles.

It is generally believed that the conception of the world as a family, of the universal brotherhood of man, first sprang from the soil of India and then passed into the Western world.[6] It is held by some historians that Plato's Politeia, Cicero's Republica, and More's Utopia are mere echoes of the dreams the saints and seers of India had dreamed centuries before.[7] It is further assumed that the speculations of Epictetus and the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius must have been inspired by the metaphysicians of the East. And there is reason to believe this. 'The greatest good of all', 'the happiness of the whole', in a word, 'the Good' of Plato's Ideal State which echoes through Cicero's and More's commonwealths, is to some extent a reflection of the ideal of universal happiness conceived by Vedic saints. Epictetus' conception of universal brotherhood and Marcus Aurelius' conception of universal harmony remind us of the universality of Oriental thought. This is not to deny, however, the originality of the Western mind. Every age and every country has produced men of mark. Even in ages and countries that furnished the darkest chapters in human history there were lights that guided humanity out of chaos.

The wise men of all countries at all epochs have sought for the salvation of the human soul. It is for the salvation of the human soul that royal philosophers like Marcus Aurelius of Rome, humanist philosophers like Bertrand Russell of Britain, and idealist philosophers like Radhakrishnan of India conceived of a world order, of a world Government, of a world State.

Now, the question arises: Is such an order or government or state possible which can ensure universal happiness? No period of human history has yet claimed to have achieved it. Gibbon in his monumental history of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* maintains that there was 'a period during which the condition of the human race was most happy.' But he does not record any in which happiness was attained by the entire humanity. A study of history reveals that the concept of universal happiness is absolutely illusory. The pedestal of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful on which the entire idealist philosophy is based, is dismantled by the study of history. The study of history and the advance of science have shaken our past beliefs. In a world dominated by the doctrines of Darwin and Marx and Freud there is hardly any place for the Torah of Moses or the Good of Plato or the Gospel of Christ. 'The survival of the fittest' and 'might is right' are the guiding principles of modern civilization. There always have been in history two sets of morality, observes Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*. One is the morality of

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5. *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.4.6. and 4.5.6.

6. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (London: Oxford University, 1939), pp. 116, 152.

7. Edward J. Urwick, *The Message of Plato.* Prof. Muirhead in his *Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy* says: 'Beginning in Asia, this mystical faith swept over Greece and southern Italy in the form of Orphism and Pythagoreanism. It found an intelligent sympathiser in Socrates, and under his inspiration reached its highest expression in the *Dialogues of Plato.*' Quoted with approval in Dr. Radhakrishnan, *Idealist View of Life* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932), p. 130.

masters, the other is the morality of slaves; one of the strong and healthy, the other of the weak and sickly. The master, noble, powerful, virile was for Nietzsche the ideal of virtue. The slave, humble, weak, and frail was an incarnation of vice. Thus happiness according to him lies in the rule of might which is reality, while the rule of right is an illusion and a source of misery. The rule of right is the rule of God, and 'God died long ago.' Nietzsche denounced Christianity because at the root of it is humility. He denounced Christ as 'a curse' for humanity. He denounced, in short, all that was 'not worthy of belief, be it called God, truth, justice, charity, morality'.

It was the Chinese sage Confucius who first taught, and the Roman conquerors who first practised, the tenet, 'If you want peace, prepare for war.' A man is happy so long as he is strong. Happiness lies in possession of power. But power can give happiness only when kept within bounds. Boundless power can only lead to boundless misery. 'Of all the vices that degrade and demoralize man,' wrote the Cambridge historian Acton, 'power is the most constant and the most active.' 'Power tends to corrupt,' he said, 'and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' History makes man wise, says Bacon. However, it is a constant misfortune for mankind that they learn least from history. 'That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history', observes Aldous Huxley, 'is the most important of all the lessons that history has to teach.'[8] History tells us that the possession of power guarantees the preservation of peace only when it is kept within limits. This power Marx found in money, Freud in sex, Bergson in life-force, and Darwin in nature. Obviously, for Marx happiness lay in the acquisition of wealth; for Freud, in the gratification of sex. Bergson found it in the realization of *élan vital*, and Darwin found it in the preservation of the species.

Yet, in spite of this principle, of power, in spite of the dominance of Darwin and Bergson, Freud and Marx, in spite of the disillusionment and despair following therefrom, the mind of man is in search of a millenium that rests in the City of God. That millenium is possible on this planet, says the moralist, if only we observe in all relations of life the duties allotted by God. The City of God upon earth dreamed of by the Christian saint and the Rāma-rājya dreamed of by the Hindu saint can be realized only through the performance of duties lying with us. Heaven we have possessed, says Sri Aurobindo, but not the earth. Universal happiness is possible only when we possess the earth. It is possible, says Teilhard de Chardin, only through 'the mastery of the world'. It is possible, only when we are at one with the world and the world is at one with us; when we trust the world of sight and face the sight of the world; when we crave not for the powers of the earth, nor the pleasures of heaven, nor the peace that follows from spiritual liberation, but crave only for the extinction of the misery that is burning our fellow beings.[9]

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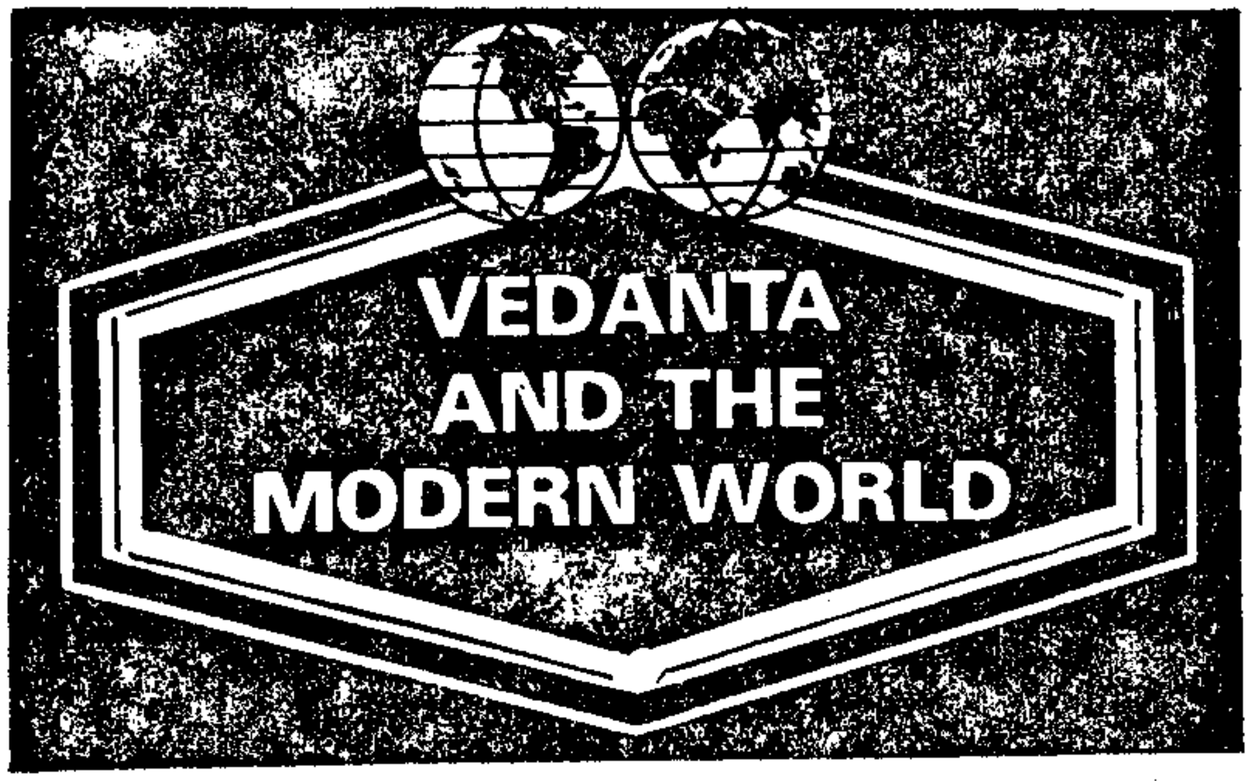
8. Aldous Huxley, *Collected Essays* (London: 1960), p. 308.

9. *Na tvaham kāmaye rājyam na svargam na punarbhavam, Kāmaye duhkha-taptānām prāṇināmārtināsanam.*



IS VEDANTA A PHILOSOPHY OF ESCAPE ?—XII

DR. VINITA WANCHOO

(Continued from the previous issue)

ABSENCE OF ETHICS AND ITS CAUSES *(continued)**

Absence of ethics and pantheistic mysticism

Vedāntic mysticism does not negate all elements of human nature but allows intelligence, feeling and will to be permeated by the intuition of unity. Removal of intellectual confusion, delusions, hallucinations, and attainment of correct and well-reasoned intellectual conviction (*śravaṇa* and *manana*), purified emotion and a fully developed morality, are the prerequisites of mystical experience for Vedānta.[1] Such experience is no miracle or accidental attainment, but a slow growth under severe discipline. The empirical test of that experience is not lacking. 'When a man comes out of *samādhi* he remains enlightened, a sage, a prophet, a saint. His whole character is changed, his life changed, illumined.'[2] Historically and sociologically, the conception of unity and wholeness in Vedānta's pantheistic mysticism has led men beyond moral platitudes to supreme effort. Separateness, which is the basis of selfishness, is annulled in the experience of unity, the counterpart of which is love. The mystical experience has its end in the unity which lies behind the world; therefore, the field of morality extends beyond the human sphere to cover the whole universe. The Vedāntic view is that such mystical consciousness becomes explicit in enlightenment in the form of *brahmabhāva, sarvātmabhāva,* etc. 'The part of the theory that love and compassion are part of mystical consciousness must be accepted, since it is so stated by those who have the consciousness. Love can flow from it to the world, hence mysticism can be a motive for ethical and social action.'[3]

The criticism is that the pantheistic pervasiveness of God and mystical identity between the soul and God have led to relaxation of moral obligations. But the Vedāntin's insistence on the realization of Divinity immanent in his own consciousness ministers to moral strength, gives the incentive to consecrate his life and aotivities to God, gives endurance for action and courage to rise above visible good and evil and egoism. The pantheistic vision of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and Arjuna's final decision are proof of this. Advaita rejects as

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* In the previous instalment this topic was introduced.—*Ed.*

1. R. D. Ranade and S. K. Velvalkar, *History of Indian Philosophy,* vol. 7: *Indian Mysticism,* Preface, p. 2.

2. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* p. 392.

3. W. T. Stace, *Mysticism and philosophy,* p. 330; cf. S. K. Belvalkar, *Vedanta Philosophy,* vol. 1, p. 65.

fallacious the argument that, Brahman being all, there is no scope for moral distinctions and endeavour. This notion results from a confusion between the real (eternal) and the existent (temporal); as fire is one only but we shun that which has consumed dead bodies and not any other,[4] so all is Brahman but certain things are to be avoided and others to be desired. Until the experience of identity, each is a moral agent and has his own work which he cannot delegate to another. Responsibility for discrimination between good and evil and the consequent pursuit of the former and avoidance of the latter *does* rest on man.[5] It is man who makes the world good or evil by his proper or improper use of it.

The absence of a complete theory of ethics along modern lines or the very compressed form ethical ideas take in Vedānta cannot justify the judgement of 'unethical'. It is true that, in spite of interest in ethical conduct, Vedānta did not work out a regular ethical code, since its concentration was more on the inner aspects of conduct, on attitudes of mind rather than on speculating on conduct or working out complete theories. Neither was the relation between moral laws and their grounds worked out systematically, because Vedānta concentrated on the practical forms and methods of self-realization. However, the mere presence of a complete ethical philosophy is no guarantee that it will actually influence ethical conduct (for example, Greek or Western philosophy, in spite of its systematized worldview in ethics, politics, psychology and metaphysics, has not always been an exact representation of actual life and practice). Contrariwise, absence of such a theory is not evidence of unethical practices. As pointed out before, Vedānta does not suffer in comparison with any system of philosophy in having an intuitive feeling for the necessity of the highest form of ethical culture, and the philosophical justification of such conduct is also inherent in the philosophy of Ātman.

All the ingredients of an advanced type of ethical philosophy are present in Vedānta.[6] This idea of the end of endeavour is much thought about. There is an evaluation of different aims and goals, and the limited ends are rejected in favour of the unlimited bliss of Ātman. The goal of Ānanda is a combination of the perfectionist theory, involving severe moral discipline, and the eudaemonistic theory. 'Self-realization' implies a fusion of ethical and mystical elements, and the *svarājya* ideal is true freedom of determination by the ideal self. Vedāntic ethics points to an autonomous principle, since the moral imperative is derived from within and is not the command of any external authority. 'Man' or Ātman is the standard in terms of fullest self-responsibility. This meets the objection that there is no principle in Vedānta by reference to which the value of conduct may be determined. On the level of the individual the standard is the realization of the true self and on the social level the central principle of ethics corresponding to the Vedānta mataphysics is *abheda*. As remarked before, the realization of the universal principle common to all leads to the gradual inclusion of one's self into the

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4. Śāmkara Bhāṣya on *Brahma-Sūtra*, 2.3.48.

5. Cf. *Vivaraṇa Prameya Samgraha*, IX, XXX, d. In the world there is no human goal devoid of evil, whether here or hereafter; therefore, let even that be desired that is in conflict with an unseen result. If this be said, true it is that everything good is conjoined with evil, yet that which is less evil is a human goal, while what is more evil is not a human goal. Thus is there distinction.

6. P. T. Raju in *The Concept of Man*, p. 329, controverts this statement: the attempt to derive moral law from the nature of the absolutely transcendent God (by finite intellect) leaves doubt unresolved. Neither does the immanence-experience give details of conduct apart from empirical study of human nature.

self of others. The acquiring of the attitude of *samadarśana*[7] leads to justice in dealing with all, that is, treating the self in oneself and others with equal impartiality. One of the most striking doctrines of Vedānta is its particular form of the golden rule.[8] This principle is regarded as perhaps the highest formulation of practical ethics that any religion has attained. It is interesting to see how naturally and simply it follows from one of the fundamental tenets of the *Gītā* philosophy.[9] A profound sense of solidarity with the universe underlies morality, in which individual evolution and social well-being are connected together through the cultivation of perfect serenity (*śama*), identity of pleasure and pain (*sāmya*) and equality of all fellow men with oneself (*ātmaupamya*).[10]

That the ethical standard is based on the fullest understanding of psychological factors is shown by the analysis of desire or springs of action in Vedānta. Both physical and psychological energy is amoral, and only when it enters consciousness in the shape of desire does it become moral. Vedāntic morality has a double aspect because it relates to desire as well as to the transcending of desire.

As to the Vedāntic conception of desirelessness, it is not psychologically impossible. It is the extinction of evil passions, without which the practice of supreme ethics and the attainment of *mokṣa* are not possible. Vedānta holds that without destruction of craving, hatred, etc. any desire however good is bound to be linked with the egoistic self-will and not with the divine will. So freedom from desire should not be taken literally, since even Vedānta makes a distinction between true and false desires, and the spiritually alert desire nothing except what they ought to after the senses have been tranquillized.[11]

A threefold distinction of acts can be made in terms of their value. The wholly good act (*niṣkāma*) which, when combined with knowledge, does not bind; the desireful but good act (*sakāma*) which leads to happiness here or hereafter (*abhyudaya*); the selfish bad act which leads to suffering. So renunciation of the fruits of action in *niṣkāma karma* is to be understood as giving up all diverse motives (desire for *abhyudaya*) in favour of the one motive of self-conquest (*ātmasiddhi*). In the Upaniṣads the idea is advanced to the point that with the ceasing of desire, karma will also cease. But the *Gītā* carries this idea forward to enjoin life in the world and performance of duties with perfect detachment. So understood, the ideal of desirelessness is not to be confused with the attempt to destroy personality by suppression of all desires and volitions.

Absence of ethics and loss of individuality in Vedānta

The critics hold pantheistic doctrines and mystical methods to be specially liable to the defect of loss of individuality in an abstract and impersonal reality. 'If they [mystics] go far enough in their work of recollection and meditation, they end by losing their intuition of a personal God and having a direct experience of a reality that is impersonal.'[12] Vedānta in its monistic phase is said to be specially guilty of destruction of individuality. *Mokṣa* is the complete negation of all elements of human

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7. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 5.18.
8. See *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 6.32; 5.25.
9. Franklin Edgerton, *The Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 25; cf. S. K. Belvalkar, *Vedanta Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 64.
10. R. K. Mukerjee, *Indian Scheme of Life*, pp. iv-v.
11. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 8.3.1; 8.2.56; cf. Śāmkara-Bhāṣya on *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 3.1.
12. Aldous Huxley, quoted in W. R. Inge, *Mysticism in Religion*, p. 163; cf. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 21.

nature, even of self-consciousness, in the Nirguṇa Brahman.

Those who apply the test of personality as essential to make a philosophy 'appeal to the heart' find the Vedāntic Absolute to be empty, void. But such tests are of very limited value in judging the worth of a philosophy. It may be pointed out that the conception of personality is a very modern one, and ancient philosophy, Western as well as Vedāntic, does not have the same valuation of it as modern thought,[13] in which 'each self is a unique existence which is perfectly impervious to other selves in a fashion of which the impenetrability of matter is a faint analogue.'[14] As against this emphasis on the separate and ultimate individual egos, Vedānta allows only one perfect self or principle of being (Puruṣottam, Ātman-Brahman) as real and all imperfect individual egos as non-ultimate. Secondly, unlike modern Western philosophy which equates personality with the human person chiefly in its corporeal mode, Vedānta understands it as only one state of real being among an indefinite multitude of other states.

Vedāntins dispute among themselves the ultimate or non-ultimate nature of *ahamartha,* but all agree that 'two words bind and release, "myness" and "freedom from myness".'[15] If this be regarded as the abolishing of personality, Vedānta will ask what our real individuality consists of. As we do not regret the development of personality from childhood to adulthood, from viciousness to virtue, so the pantheistic mysticism of Vedānta looks forward to a state in which self develops from imperfection into a full and rich perfection. Nor will it subscribe to the prizing of the separate ego, which exists only in the sphere of imperfection and change. In the mystical experience (Advaita, Brahmabhāva, Sarvabhāva) all is one. Mystic loss of selfhood in Brahman is felt, in Vedānta, to be attainment of perfection. Entering the Ātman, its possibilities are realized and though it ceases to exist as an individual, it is not destroyed but transformed. Absence of anxiety over personal consciousness leads the Advaitin to have little interest in continuation after death. But his desire for real being is strong, and his faith that he is made for it appears continually in the idea of *amṛtatva,* which is a qualitative dimension very different from the absorption of the physical type, with which the critics equate it. Were this not the case, the striving after *mokṣa,* the whole progress of the mystical path would be meaningless.[16] Advaita asks the theists what the individual stands to lose in pure identity. It is merely puerile fear which longs to perpetuate finiteness and fragmentariness, rather than accept divine selfhood. Advaita does not admit unconsciousness of Brahman or *mokṣa* simply because there is absence of imperfect human consciousness there, nor is it devoid of feeling because we do not find human feelings there.[17] It is searching for the ground of personality, as well as truth and the good, free from all contingencies, and the final appeal to the Nirguṇa overcomes the intense worship of individualized will and purpose.[18]

The emphasis on the individual in modern thought is connected with the

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13. Cf. Inge, *Mysticism in Religion,* p. 162. Remember that ancient philosophy and Christian theology had no word for personality or need of it. Persons of the Trinity are quite different from personality. When modern theologians make personality the centre of their system they are at best translating Christian philosophy into an alien dialect, using a new category.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Paingala Upaniṣad,* 4.20.

16. Cf. Samuel Johnson, *Oriental Religions,* pp. 359-60.

17. Cf. Mahendranath Sircar, *Hindu Mysticism According to the Upaniṣads,* pp. 68ff.

18. Cf. Johnson, *Oriental Religions,* p. 321.

development of democracy, while non-individualism in the orient is due to the failure to develop democracy there.[19] The insistence on the value of personality in the empirical world is necessary to guard against political and social injustice and tyranny, but to extend this conception into the 'Eternal Now' is a logical and practical fallacy unless we conceive of God as a tyrant against whom the individual's rights have to be asserted.[20] Vedānta might plausibly argue that the Western idea of persistence of individuality is merely a sign of the greater aggressiveness and self-assertiveness of Western man; the attempt to condemn Vedānta, specially Advaita, by carrying the Western conception of the infinite worth of the individidual from politics to the religious sphere is without merit.[21]

There is also a logical contradiction in charging pantheistic mysticism with the double defect of loss of individuality, on the one hand, and, on the other, with spiritual pride allegedly resulting from the unity of the human with the divine spirit, which latter defect is, psychologically speaking, the extremest form of individualism. But leaving the question of the critic's illogicality aside, the latter point needs further examination. In Vedānta, knowing is by being; man is one with what he worships, either literally or in some figurative sense. The Vedantic 'that thou art' is not a mere matter of protestation, but the very solution of the world-riddle. On two counts the term 'deification' is offensive to the critic. First, he creates an absolutely transcendental, unapproachable God (as in Western theism) and is afterwards afraid to approach Him, thus the Vedāntic *mahāvākyas* sound like sheer blasphemy to him,[22] because such self-assertion on the part of the individual is derogatory to the divine majesty. Second, the Western critic emphasizes the distinctness of individuality and is suspicious of anything, even the Infinite and Eternal Being, which appears to interfere with the rights of personality.[23] But there is another way of understanding 'deification' in pantheism and mysticism which is purely and simply a consciousness by man of being transformed by contact with the spirit of God[24] Vedānta is most clearly conscious of the self as a 'vessel of the spirit'.[25] Far from being self-glorification, this is the very attitude which overcomes individualism and creates humility in man as he realizes himself to be the instrument of the Divine. The extreme humility of the Vedāntic theists before the glory and majesty of God and the religious piety of Advaitins show that to maintain the eternal identity of the human and the divine is different from arrogating divinity to humanity. Vedānta is not guilty of the enormity of claiming that man in his present condition is Brahman.[26] What the critic calls the 'pride of the brāhmaṇic superman' is just the inspired statement of the man who realizes himself as Ātman.[27]

In the light of the above stand of Vedānta, the critic's insistence on the retention of the individuality-principle as a necessary condition of moral conduct would appear to be the very opposite of truth. According to Vedanta, the uncultured mind or 'the

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19. Cf. S. Radhakrishnan, *East and West in Religion*, p. 27.

20. W. T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 320.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 322.

22. F. M. Müller, *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. 122.

23. W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 356.

24. Cf. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 418.

25. Radhakrishnan, *East and West in Religion*, p. 26.

26. Cf. Abraham Kaplan, *The New World of Philosophy*, p. 43.

27. Paul Deussen in *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p. 167, quotes *Kaivalya Upaniṣad*, 19: 'In me the universe had its origin. In me alone the whole subsists. In me it is lost—this Brahman, the timeless, it is I myself.'

ordinary man makes distinction of his own and others' ego but the noble (knower) to whom the principle of individuality is not significant sees others' suffering as his own.'[28] Even after dissolution of personality the purely ethical part remains indestructible, and Vedānta inculcates love of neighbour with complete renunciation of self-love; love generally not confined to mankind, but including all living creatures; benevolence; the requital of all wickedness, however base, with goodness and love.[29] Vedāntic denial of individuality is practically coincident with non-egoism and unselfishness, to which no exception can be taken by the most critical.[30] It must be kept in mind that Vaiṣṇava Vedānta does not deny the reality of the individual either at the empirical or the transcendental level; therefore, in it there is, needless to say, full scope for individual responsibility in regard to moral conduct.

(To be continued)

28. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, p. 481.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 501.
30. Cf. Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 221; also S. Radhakrishnan and P. T. Raju, *The Concept of Man*, pp. 331, 336, 361.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY: BY Y. MASIH. Published by Firma KLM, 257-B, B. B. Ganguly Street, Calcutta-700 012. 1978. Pp. vi+178. Rs. 28.00.

Recognizing that 'there is nothing like one true faith and one true Christianity', the distinguished Professor of Philosophy here undertakes to share with his readers his Christian faith as a Philosopher in the context of the modern crisis of values. In the absence of an abstract common factor underlying the religious issues of our times, Dr. Masih discerns a fabric of religion whose warp and woof consist of spiritual experience; for the human being is essentially *homo religiosus* and the spiritual hunger of the human creature is an element of existence which is shared by all men and women.

It is entirely fitting that the first chapter of the present study deals with the religious *a priori*. Rightly, this religious *a priori* is viewed as a holistic response to ultimate reality which the author summarizes in the following five propositions: (1) The total personality of the individual is involved in all its depth and width. (2) The response is to the reality as a whole, the whole of our lived and experienced world of facts and values. (3) The aim is the attainment of a high quality of life known as a *holy* life. (4) The holiness is attained through an object of devotion inducing total commitment and self-involvement. (5) The object of devotion may be abstract or concrete, social or individual.

The religious *a priori* is not only dealt with in general terms but, most helpfully for those who are interested in understanding the Christian faith, also elaborated in terms of Biblical Christianity. Indeed, the express purpose of the book is to assist those who desire to know and understand the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and it is to this end that Professor Masih gives himself through the major portion of the book. This may be evidenced by the chapters dealing with 'The Christian Concept of God', 'The Concept of Man in Christianity', 'The Christian Concept of Suffering', including 'The Mystery of the Cross', 'The Christian Experience and Spiritual Fellowship'.

It is in the fifth chapter, however, that the author really comes to grips with the problems which agitate, not only him, but many Christians around the world: What are the effects of the acids of modernity on the Christian tradition? Can Christian faith tolerate the 'light of modernism'? Once again the author reaffirms his commitment to the religious *a priori* and devotes the opening pages of the chapter to an exposition of the *a priori* in the philosophical and theological positions taken by major twentieth-century Christian theologians—all of them Western. The

remainder of the chapter is given to a discussion of the central doctrines and ideas espoused by three central figures in the development of twentieth-century Western Protestant Christian theology: Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, each of whom has made his own unique contribution to the secular understanding of the Christian faith, without severing the historical thread to the past. For example the author points out that 'Tillich's theory of symbolism and Bultmann's teaching of de-mythologizing are the modern versions of *analogia entis.*'

The concluding chapter is 'A Justification of Christian Theism'. This is not, as one might suppose, a defence of Christian theism in the face of Advaita Vedanta or some other non-theistic philosophical system. Rather, the author is concerned with modern science and the challenge it poses to the Christian position. Here, too, the religious *a priori* as discerned in Christian tradition is used as the basis for Dr. Masih's contention that 'religious values remain at the basis even of science.' It is the theistic doctrine of God as creator and the universe as His creation which gives ultimate importance to the physical world that, together with the religious sanctity of truth, is the foundation on which the growth and development of modern science is based. This basic relevance of the Christian theistic position is its primary justification. It is also important to note that the author is not concerned with metaphysics alone, for he also goes out of his way to contend that only human beings imbued with religious values will be able to put to creative and peaceful use the fruits of modern science. Indeed, without religious values, it is argued, science itself will disappear along with human beings in an orgy of self-extinction.

The author is acutely sensitive to the possible criticism that 'Western thinkers can present their faith and philosophy much better and with far greater expertise than what has been attempted here.' However, Dr. Masih's plea is that an Indian has to understand and express his Christian faith in his own way. Certainly this is abundantly clear, and for the personal integrity which leads him to this, Dr. Masih can only receive our respect and admiration. However, and this is for the present reviewer the greatest disappointment in the book, the Professor gives no indication at all that there are a number of others who have struggled and continue to struggle with the same questions in the context of the Indian heritage. If Dr. Masih is not aware of the work of such men as Dr. P. D. Devanandan, Dr. M. M. Thomas, Fr. Raymond Panikkar, Swami Parama Arubi Anandam, to name only a few of many Indian Christians who are engaged in the same quest as he is, we suspect that he would be greatly encouraged and benefited by a study of their writings.

All in all, however, Dr. Masih has presented us with a Christian faith which is this-worldly, de-mythologized and attuned to the existential needs of men and women in the twentieth century. He has so interpreted the Christian Gospel that modern men and women may be energized by its values to give their all in 'establishing a world of individual freedom in a casteless and classless society, permeated by Christian love which can never be crushed or rejected even in the face of ingratitude and violent provocation.' For this contribution to the religious life of India and the world we can only acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Dr. Masih.

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FRENCH

ACTUALITE DES UPANISHADS: BY SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA. Published by G. P. Maisonneuve at Larose, 15 rue Victor-Cousin, Paris. 1979 (second edition, revised and enlarged). Pp. 222. Price not mentioned.

As the prefatory note of Dr. Olivier Lacombe observes, the author of this delightful book on the Upaniṣhads is rooted in their ancient traditions but fully open to the impact of modern science—physical and mental. Swamiji takes up several themes from the major Upaniṣads to bring to the fore the main thrust of the texts, and that is to emphasize the primacy of experience over mental knowledge. Being is the bedrock that makes all becoming possible. The sages of the Upaniṣads, he points out, approach this fundamental reality from the standpoint of the individual and from that of the universe and arrive at the point where both culminate in a sheer identity: Brahman-Atman.

After tracing the historical development of the Upaniṣadic thought from its origins in the Veda, he analyses the special features of the movement that finds expression in these terse texts. They represent the thought of a people, not of individuals; there are no Avatars or Prophets here declaring this or that message. The truths declared are more impersonal than personal. The

enquiry concerns the whole of life, not just a religious concern. What is sought is That by knowing which all is known. And this knowledge is of the type in which the knower *becomes* what is known.

The topics discussed include: Gods and the Reality (Kena); joy in renunciation (*Īsa*); transcendence through love, heart—the source of faith and reason, silence of the self (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*); man and time, light of the soul (*Śvetāsvatara*); life after death (*Katha*); revelation of the soul (*Maitrī*); the fivefold constitution of man (*Taittirīya*); three states of being (*Māṇḍukya*); five keys to felicity (*Chāndogya*). Throughout, the writer refers to parallel thought and experience in the lives of mystics and saints such as Meister Eckhart and Ramana Maharshi, the latter, for instance, confirming that 'the heart is the seat of intuition (metaphysical), it being well understood that it is not the physical heart but the heart of consciousness which envelops all.' The Swami touches upon the perplexities of the modern mind about Grace and Effort, Immanence and Transcendence, etc. and resolves them in the dimension of Consciousness where mental rigidities lose themselves in the face of overwhelming experience.

A convincing presentation of the science of spirituality in the Upaniṣads to the modern mind.

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THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN ENERGY RESOURCES: BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA. Published by The Indian Institute of Public Administration, Indraprastha Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi-110 002. 1979. Pp. 32. Rs. 2.50.

For an ordinary mind it is difficult to comprehend the source and enormity of human energy. What we usually consume is not sufficient to explain the immense energy possessed by us. The source of the infinite potency possessed by man must be traced to some infinite being. The Upaniṣads call this source the Brahman, and the Vedāntic conclusion is that we all derive our energy from that being; nay, we are one with That.

Swami Ranganathananda, the internationally known monk of the Ramakrishna Order, has the unique gift of interpreting the tenets of Indian tradition in a scientific and modern background. This is evident from several of his writings like *Vedanta and Science* and *Eternal Values for a Changing Society*. The title under review is a publication based on his speech delivered in February 1979 at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (Bombay branch). Swamiji explains the *adhyātma-vidyā* or the method by which our consciousness-levels could be raised and a new spiritual dimension added to the physical and the intellectual in human personality. This 'science of man in depth' has to be studied and practised if we want to evolve a healthy society. The inner man has to be fully nurtured. The spiritually weak and ill-nourished easily become tempted, corrupted and 'fall down at the touch of even a mild breeze of temptation'. The *adhyātma-vidyā*, according to Swamiji, holds the key to all healthy national development in our country. The energy resources which this science and technique will make available for us will help to digest and assimilate all other energy resources like knowledge, power, wealth, etc. Unaware of this science, people move as if without direction.

The author draws heavily on the Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* for his position. He mentions that this 'science of man in depth' has been alluded to by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (10.32) when he tells us that He is the *adhyātma-vidyā* among the sciences. It is the queen of sciences because through it we learn 'to be', whereas in other sciences we only learn 'to do'. This science is taught to Śvetaketu by his teacher-father Aruṇi Uddālaka (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.8.7) through the famous sentence 'That thou art' (*tattvamasi*). When he returns home after graduating from the *gurukula* the son cannot answer his father's query whether he knows about that by knowing which everything else becomes known. The father tells him that he is not different from That. The science of this century has discovered that the distinction between two particles of the same kind is not absolute. And this has confirmed the truth discovered centuries ago by the Upaniṣads.

The Vedānta maintains that enormous energy is dormant in every one of us, living or non-living. The muscular and the mental energies have been developed by modern science and Western culture. But the results are shocking. Sex and crime explosions, psychic breakdowns, etc. have become the order of the day. Indian society also has started experiencing the initial shocks of modern cultural explosions. The muscular and intellectual giants have made themselves moral pygmies. Śamkara, while commenting on the *Katha Upaniṣad*, gives us an insight into the infinite spiritual energy resources in man and tells us that the energy resources within every

human being are organized in an ascending scale of subtlety, immensity, and inwardness—*sūkṣmā, mahāntasca, pratyagātma-bhūtāsca.* The subtler the force, the more immense it is.

Fulfilment of life cannot be achieved except by developing the spiritual dimensions of man, observes Swamiji. For this we must manifest the dormant energies of our inherent spiritual nature. Unless we develop this science of all-round human growth, we cannot attain peace and happiness. Presenting the calculus of happiness or bliss, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.8) tells us that the bliss of Brahman is many times greater than one unit (a unit being the pleasure derived from being a good, well-educated youth, full of hope, tough in mind, strong in body and all the wealth of this earth at his command).

Public administrators and statesmen of the present-day society must, Swamiji emphasizes, be like the Rājarṣi of the *Gītā.* They should be both a Rājā (having authority) and a Ṛṣi (grown spiritually). One should be, so to say, the philosopher-king of Plato's *Republic.* And for this one has to convert *mada* (inebriation) into its reverse, which is *dama* (self-discipline). This can be achieved by the *Gītā*-philosophy of Yoga, the technique of comprehensive spirituality, defined as *samatvam* (equanimity) and as *karmasu kausalam* (efficiency in action). It is a double efficiency, productive of social efficiency (the Rājā component) and personal spiritual efficiency (the Ṛṣi component) harmonizing the outer and the inner aspects of human life.

The book although not very large in size, is rich in content and shall provide ample satisfaction and direction to the reader. It is an excellent medicine to ailing humanity all over the world.

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THE MASTER AND THE DISCIPLE: BY D. S. SARMA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-600-004. First revised edition (date not mentioned). Pp. vi+116. Rs. 5.50.

The Master and the Disciple is an integrated story of the great master Sri Ramakrishna and his worthy disciple Swami Vivekananda. The book is in two parts. The first, comprising of 47 pages, deals with Sri Ramakrishna, and the second one having 69 pages deals with Swami Vivekananda. All the major incidents in the lives of both these great men—the finest flowers of the age-old Indian culture—have been narrated in the book, and it deserves praise for its compactness. As the Principal of Vivekananda College, the author was in touch with the growing young generation, which was keen to imbibe the spirit and culture of this great land and needed some nourishing literature. The story was written to meet this end. The reading of this book by students in their formative years will give them lifelong moral and spiritual sustenance. The book has been revised by Dr. M. Nagabhushana Sarma, Reader, Department of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad. The glossary of philosophical words at the end of the book is useful to the beginner and the chapterwise revision questions will fix the subject matter in the minds of young readers. The book may be introduced in high schools and institutions of higher education. More such books are welcome.

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HINDU FAMILY AND MARRIAGE: BY DR. T. S. DEVADOSS. Published by The Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras. 1979. Pp. 150. Rs. 12.00.

Human society depends, to a great extent, on the institutions of family and marriage. All other socio-religious factors are either secondary to or are derived from them. Although these two institutions are found universally, the notions regarding them differ considerably from culture to culture. The concept of a joint, patriarchal family-system familiar to us till very recently in our society could never be possible in another climate not conducive to collective living. And even here in India the traditional structure of the Hindu family has changed to some extent due to the impact of the industrial and technological revolutions coming from the West. The institution of marriage, too, is ever-changing according to time and place. The ideal of marriage in a society believing in previous and future births is quite different from the one that believes in the finality of death.

Dr. T. S. Devadoss, Reader in Philosophy at Madras University, takes up the difficult but valuable task of surveying the entire span of the two institutions from the Vedic era up to the Gandhian age. He also supplements onr understanding of these areas by citing modern theories from Western scholars. Classifying the work under review into three compact chapters he

analyses the notions of social philosophy, the family, and marriage. He examines, in the first chapter, the fourfold *varṇāsrama-dharma,* the *puruṣārthas* and the two *mārgas* which act as the foundation of Hindu society. In the second chapter various aspects of the Hindu family are analysed. The place of woman and child in the family, the *samskāras* that make the child a full-fledged member of his society, and the loving ties between the members of the family are discussed. The third chapter concerning marriage examines various kinds as well as the problems of the institution by referring to the traditional and the modern provisions. Along with the *Manusmṛti* and other ancient codes the problem is treated in the light of the *Hindu Marriage Act of* 1955. Some other codes are interestingly viewed in the context of the *Suppression of Immoral Traffic of Women and Girls Act of* 1956 and the *Dowry Prohibition Act of* 1961.

The treatment is largely ideological. The author claims the work to be an attempt, probably the first of its kind, to analyse the fundamentals of Hindu social philosophy from a rich variety of sources and seeks to focus attention on the socio-spiritual and legal significance of such fundamental institutions. It presents a considerably fair account of the relevant concepts.

The author could have improved the presentation by giving a concluding chapter synthesizing his various observations. Some punctuational, printing and linguistic errors could have been avoided by more careful proof-reading.

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HUNTING THE 'I': BY LUCY CORNELSON. Published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai (S. India). 1979. Pp. 117. Rs. 4.00.

This is a great little gift from Sri Ramanasramam, presented in the centenary year of Ramana Maharshi. The book opens onto the setting of the holy mountain Arunachala, two hundred kilometres southeast of Madras. It is verily the 'Hill of Fire' or the 'Hill of Dawn'—the dawn of human wisdom. The Purāṇas claim that it is the most ancient mountain on the earth and geological researches confirm this. It was no wonder that the Maharshi was irresistibly drawn towards this hill of ancient wisdom. His presence intensified the spiritual atmosphere which had pervaded it from the dawn of human consciousness. After a short biographical note, the author dives deep into the philosophy of the Maharshi and restates it, supported by excerpts from the Maharshi's talks. 'Hunting the "I"', the main chapter in the book, gives a good exercise in tracking our thoughts, feelings and ultimately the so-called 'mind' (pp. 28-55). But according to the Maharshi, there is no entity corresponding to the name 'mind'. It is because of the emergence of thoughts that we surmise something from which they start, and we term that hypothetical thing 'mind'. When we probe to see what it is, nothing is found (pp. 46-47). Further, the author points out the obstacles and pitfalls in meditation.

In the next chapter, the author elucidates the basic nature of Māyā and introduces the philosophy of Advaita-Vedānta. Like his predecessors—Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda—Ramana Maharshi is considered a true exponent of this philosophy. The author further delves into the 'Birth of Man' and narrates in a nutshell the evolution of man and identifies his place in nature. The last chapter deals with the 'Returning to the Source' which is the same as awakening of the self. The book ends with a bouquet of Maharshi's sayings which is most refreshing. The book serves admirably well as an introduction to the philosophy of Sri Ramana Maharshi and the practice of Advaita Vedānta.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SARADAPITHA

REPORT FOR APRIL 1976 TO MARCH 1977

Founded in 1941 by the side of Belur Math, the Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha conducted the following activities during the year.

The *Vidyamandira,* a residential Degree College, offered 3-year Honours Degree courses in nine subjects, including both arts and sciences, and its four hostels accommodated the 389 students on the roll. The *Shikshanamandira* is a Government-sponsored residential Teachers' Training College which had a roll strength of 103. A Government-sponsored polytechnic, the *Shilpamandira* offered four-year diploma courses in Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (roll strength: 372). The *Shilpayatana,* a Higher Secondary vocational institution for classes XI and XII, had a roll strength of 126. In the *Shilpavidyalaya,* the oldest branch of the Saradapitha, poor students were given free training in three trades: electrical fitting and wiring, auto-mechanics and carpentry (roll strength: 85).

The *Janasikshamandira* is dedicated to giving nonformal education to the masses and children of the slums and to serve poor people in the villages. It ran during the year three night schools in urban and rural areas. A mobile audiovisual unit exhibited educational films in rural areas (144 shows arranged). The Free Public Library had nearly 19,000 books which were used heavily through its four units: Central Lending Section, Mobile Van Unit, Book-kit System and the Bicycle Squad (books issued : 22,821). Nearly 160 poor children of the locality were served a nutritious tiffin every day except Sundays; various study circles, games, sports and craft-teaching were also provided for the local youth and children. Under the Feeding Programme, bulgar wheat and peanut oil were distributed among 0 to 6 year-olds and to expectant and nursing mothers through 50 centres in Howrah and Hooghly Districts (daily beneficiaries: 12,000).

The *Tattwamandira* provided regular scriptural classes for monastic members and weekly religious classes for the general public. The *Production and Publication Department* produced photographs, anodized frames, etc. required by devotees of the Ramakrishna Movement. (It also has to its credit a few English and Bengali publications.)

Appeal : The generous public is requested to contribute liberally for the following needs: (1) Poor Students' Fund : Rs. 1 lakh; (2) development of Ramakrishna Darshan, an exhibition depicting the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and the activities of the Ramakrishna Order: Rs. 1 lakh; (3) Nonformal Education Fund : Rs. 2 lakhs. Donations may be sent to: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah 711 202 (W.B.).

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS

REPORT FOR APRIL 1978 TO MARCH 1980

Regular weekly services were conducted Sunday mornings at 10.30, and classes on the scriptures and *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* were held at 8.00 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Various religious anniversaries were also celebrated during the year. Many copies of Swami Satprakashananda's books were contributed to public and college libraries around the country. A small bookshop made available Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature as well as photographs, incense, etc. The Library was well utilized by members and friends of the Society (number of books: 1,843).

It is with deep sorrow that we record the passing away of the Revered Swami Satprakashananda, Founder and Head of the Society since 1938, at the age of 91 on November 15, 1979, as a result of cardiac insufficiency. Memorial services were held on November 27 and December 2. Also a religious conference was held on December 1 in honour of the Swami, during which ministers in the St. Louis area of seven faiths and the world-famous scholar Dr. Huston Smith each gave talks. Eight Swamis heading centres in the United States came to St. Louis for the memorial services. The Revered Swami was known for his profound scholarship and depth of spiritual understanding, and his loss has been felt keenly by the Vedanta Movement in the West. May his soul rest in peace!

LAST PAGE : COMMENTS

The Japanese Work Ethic

More than eighty years ago a newspaper correspondent interviewing Swami Vivekananda in Madras asked him, 'What is the key to Japan's sudden greatness?' Swamiji answered, 'The faith of the Japanese in themselves, and their love for their country.' These are the qualities which dominate the Japanese work ethic even today. If Japan is still continuing its upward march and has become one of the richest nations in the world with the highest per capita income in the East, it is because its economy is backed by a sound national work ethic. Stated briefly, this work ethic means: hard work, collective prosperity and preservation of the cultural ethos.

A syndicated column article published in the *Hindu* of 23rd October 1980 carries the report that the Japanese Government is trying to persuade the people to work less hard ! The main reason for this is, apart from the concern for the personal health and welfare of workers, the need to control the enormous increase of industrial production which has caused trade friction with the country's partners. The new Government has adopted the modest target of eliminating 20 working hours a year which still leaves most of the labour force toiling slightly more than 40 hours a week.

Government campaigns to persuade workers to take more holidays have also not been a success. A recent survey shows only 32% of the firms with more than 1,000 employees have adopted a five-day week. While workers in other countries are agitating for more leisure and less work, Japan's workaholics continue to ignore holidays. In most companies the workers spend half their holidays on the job, and in the electronics industry workers use less than 30% of their allotted leisure time.

The desire to earn more money alone cannot provide such a strong motivation for dedicated work. The secret lies in the people's work ethic. They have gained the rare wisdom to understand that individual prosperity is inseparable from collective prosperity. 'Most Japanese workers feel their own fate is tied to the company,' says Professor Koshiro of the department of labour economics at Yokohama University. 'They think putting in long hours will help the company succeed, which will help pave the path of their own success.' Japanese executives and workers stick to one firm for life, and are highly conscious of team spirit. The general feeling is that avoiding more work is a shameful thing for it will impose hardship on fellow workers. This spirit and wisdom come from the nation's cultural ethos which the Japanese have preserved with commendable tenacity in spite of close contact with the West and almost complete modernization of industry and economic life.

The problems facing India are enormous and complex. But there is nothing that the people cannot overcome through hard work and cooperation. For this the nation needs an authentic work ethic. The ethos of the Indian people is different from that of the Japanese, but it too can provide the people with a viable work ethic, for the indestructible culture of India contains in it seeds left behind by two thousand years of unrivalled prosperity and splendour.