

VOL.89

NOVEMBER 1984

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or
all of these the Vision of the Paramatman is Obtained.

ADVAITA ASHRAMA
MAYAVATI, HIMALAYAS



Editorial Office

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

Publication Office

5 Dehi Entally Road
Calcutta 700 014
Phone : 29-0898



[Rates inclusive of postage]

Annual Subscription

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| India, Nepal & Bangladesh | Rs. 15.00 |
| U.S.A. & Canada | \$ 10.00 |
| Other Countries | £ 4.00 |

Life Subscription (30 years)

| | | |
|---------|--------|------|
| Rs. 300 | \$ 200 | £ 60 |
|---------|--------|------|

Single Copy

| | | |
|----------|---------|-------|
| Rs. 1.50 | \$ 1.00 | 50 P. |
|----------|---------|-------|

*Information for contributors,
publishers, subscribers, and
advertisers overleaf.*

Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

NOVEMBER 1984

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Integral Vision of Vedic Secrs | 441 |
| About this Issue | 442 |
| Understanding Advaita—II —(Editorial) | 442 |
| Self-Effort and Grace —Dr. Margaret Bedrosian | 449 |
| Profiles in Greatness : Haridas, 'The Gladstone of India' —Swami Ekatmananda | 453 |
| Vedanta and the Modern World : Some Aspects of Vedanta and Science —Swami Mukhyananda | 463 |
| धर्म समन्वय A Forum for Inter-Religious Understanding : Religion : For Har- mony or Discord ? —Nabaniharan Mukhopadhyay | 472 |
| Reviews and Notices | 478 |
| News and Reports | 479 |
| Notes and Comments | 480 |



Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 89

NOVEMBER 1984

No. 11

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि
मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।
सतो बन्धुमसति निरविन्दन्
हृदि प्रतीष्या कवयो मनीषा ॥

In the beginning¹ there arose desire (*kāma*)² which was the first seed (*retas*) of mind.³ Sages seeking (*pratiśyā*) in their hearts through intuition (*manīṣā*)⁴ discovered the connection (*bandhu*) of the *sat* in the *asat*.⁵

Rg-Veda 10.129.4

* The *Nāsadiya-Sūktam*, Hymn of creation, is continued here.

1. In the previous stanza it was mentioned how, by the power of God's *tapas*, Being started manifesting itself out of the Unmanifested at the time of creation. This is referred to here.

2. The desire to create the universe arose in the Supreme Self. Creation in Indian thought means the re-production or projection of last kalpa's existence which had remained dormant during the great dissolution (*pralaya*).

3. Desire (*kāma*) is the seed of the mind. If all desires were destroyed, the mind would cease to exist. Sāyaṇa, however, separates 'desire' from 'seed of mind', and takes 'mind' in the plural. According to him the whole line means: 'When the seeds of Karma of all the living beings of the previous kalpa ripened in their minds, which were lying latent in the Unmanifested, the desire to create the universe arose in the Supreme Lord who is the giver of

the fruits of action'. So he takes *retas* as the seed of Karma. 'Seed of mind' belongs to living beings, whereas 'desire' belongs to God.

4. Seeking here means seeking through meditation. For *manīṣā*, see *Katha Upaniṣad* 6.9 and *Aitareya Upaniṣad* 5.2

5. Prof. Kunhan Raja, who sees the origins of Sāmkhya philosophy in this hymn, says: 'It is said that in the beginning there was darkness encompassed by darkness. That is the *tamo-guṇa* or the material aspect of the basic fundamental of the universe. Then there is the life, what is called the breathing without breath (*ānīdavātam*), the power within. That is *sattva-guṇa* or the Light or sentient aspect. Then the *tapas* is the *rajo-guṇa*, the activity. On account of these aspects, there was the Will (*Kāma*) which corresponds to the Buddhi. This primal feature is the seed for the activity of what is known as the *antahkaraṇa*, that is the *manas*'. [*Poet Philosophers of the Rg-Veda* p. 227]

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL discusses some of the original principles of Advaita philosophy propounded by Śaṅkarācārya.

SELF-EFFORT AND GRACE by Dr. Margaret Bedrosian is an insightful study which reveals some subtle aspects of grace not commonly recognized. Grace operates in a natural way in all human situations but, in order to open ourselves to it, we have to generate in ourselves the required degree of purity and awareness. The author is a lecturer in English and comparative literature at the University of California, Davis.

HARIDAS VIHARIDAS DESAI was one of the beloved disciples of Swami Vivekananda. An authentic and concise biography of this outstanding statesman and administrator, whom Swamiji considered the Gladstone of India, had long remained a desideratum. This has now been fulfilled by Swami Ekatmananda of Ramakrishna Mission

who has based his eminently readable account on original records and direct personal contacts.

VEDANTA AND SCIENCE is a familiar title these days, but Swami Mukhyananda's treatment of the subject is something different. Without compromising or being apologetic, he has provided a lucid account of Vedanta vis-a-vis modern science including some brilliant observations on Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The article is based on a lecture delivered by the author at Kingsway Hall, London, in 1960.

RELIGION: FOR HARMONY OR DISCORD? is a rejoinder to the criticism of some Hindu fundamentalists of the *dharmasamanvaya* ideal upheld by the Ramakrishna movement. Its author Sri Nabaniharan Mukhopadhyay is the President of the Akhilabharat Vivekananda Yuva Mahamandal.

UNDERSTANDING ADVAITA—II

(EDITORIAL)

The foundational principles

The appearance of Advaita in India was the result of a long process of evolution of the spirituality of the Indian race. If the chronology worked out by Western scholars is correct, there is a gap of about five hundred years between the age of the *R̥g-Veda* and the age of the Upaniṣads. This means that it took the people of the land several centuries to establish the doctrine of advaitic experience. A thousand years more had to elapse before

Advaita as a system of philosophy was developed by Śaṅkarācārya.¹

The Upaniṣads are a vast store-house of the recorded experiences of Vedic sages, and open several vistas to Reality. Advaita is only one of these visions and it had become hazy over the centuries. Śaṅkara not only recaptured the original non-dualistic vision but made it the chief

1. The difference between Advaita as an experience and Advaita as a system of philosophy is an important one, and was discussed in the October Editorial.

import of the Upaniṣads. More importantly, he built for it a permanent philosophical edifice strong enough to withstand cultural changes and dialectical onslaughts for ages. Additions and extensions to this edifice were made by post-Śaṅkara teachers partly to defend it against the polemics of rival schools and partly to adapt it to the changing needs of different epochs. Gradually Advaita became popular and overshadowed all the other systems and schools of philosophy in India.

We have already discussed some of the wrong notions regarding Advaita which this popularization has produced. In recapitulation it may be pointed out that many of the well-known concepts such as Brahman, *ajñāna*, *satcidānanda*, Self-realization, etc. are not exclusive features of Advaita but are shared by all schools of Vedānta. As Swami Vivekananda has repeatedly pointed out,² all schools of Vedānta accept certain fundamental tenets like the divinity of the soul, liberation through the direct experience of the union of the Ātman with Brahman, and the basic solidarity of the universe. This last doctrine means, among other things, the oneness of matter and energy, the immanence and transcendence of God who is both the material (*upādāna*) and the efficient (*nimitta*) cause of the universe, and the cyclic theory of creation.

What, then, are the unique principles of Advaita which distinguish it from other schools of Vedānta? What are the primary dialectical principles with which the philosophical edifice of Advaita has been built? We are here chiefly concerned with the original theories on which Śaṅkara based his dialectics.

Existence of the self

The starting point for Śaṅkara is the indubitable experience of 'I'-consciousness. However, it is important to note that Śaṅkara's reference to this experience usually contains a qualifying clause. According to him, the *existence* of one's self is self-evident (*svayam-siddhaḥ*), but the *real nature* of the self is not self-evident. These two clauses need careful treatment.

The argument offered by Advaitins to prove the existence of the self (Ātman) is similar to the famous argument of Descartes: *cogito, ergo sum*, 'I think, therefore I exist'. Advaitins would reverse this statement: *sum, ergo cogito*, 'I exist, therefore I think'. The most primary, basic and intimate of human experiences is the awareness of one's own existence. One can never doubt the existence of one's self, for it itself is the doubter of the doubt.

Another experience which is equally self-evident is the unchanging persistence of 'I'. The 'I' is the common denominator of all thoughts, experiences and expressions. It gives continuity to human existence. 'I was a boy, I am now a young man, I will soon be an old man'—to have this kind of experience or thought there must be an unchanging 'I'. Therefore Śaṅkara says:

It is not possible to deny such a self; for only an adventitious thing can be repudiated, but not one's own nature. The self constitutes the very nature of the person who would deny the self. Fire cannot cancel its own heat. Thus when a man says, 'It is I myself who know the present object now, it is I who knew the past and the remote past, and it is I who shall know the future and remote future', it is seen that though the object to be known has different modes varying with the past, present and future, the knower remains unchanged.³

2. cf *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1973) Vol. 3, lectures on 'Vedānta and Indian Life', 'Common Bases of Hinduism', 'The Vedānta'.

3. न च ईदृशस्य निराकरणं संभवति । आगन्तुकं हि वस्तु निराक्रियते न स्वरूपम् । य एव हि निराकर्ता तदेव तस्य स्वरूपम् । न हि अग्नेरौष्ण्यम् अग्निना

So then, two experiences of our 'I' are self-evident and need no other proof: its existence and its unchanging continuity. But what is the real nature of this 'I'? Is it also self-evident? Does everyone know his own real nature? No, states Śaṅkara categorically. The vast majority of people can know only that they exist, that they are so and so, that they want such and such, etc.—nothing more about themselves. If everyone knew his real nature as the pure Atman, there would have been no problems in the world. If the real nature of the self as the Atman were self-evident, says Śaṅkara, there would have been no

divergence of opinion among the different schools. Were the existence of the self in a future body a matter of perception, the materialists and Buddhists would not stand opposed to us, saying that there is no self. For nobody disputes regarding an object of perception such as a jar saying it does not exist.⁴

It should be remembered that Buddhist philosophers attribute the cause of all suffering to the wrong belief in the reality of the self, and through careful logical analysis try to prove the non-existence of Atman. In the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions the conception of self never

निराक्रियते । तथा 'अहमेवेदानीं जानामि वर्तमानं वस्तु, अहमेवातीतमतीततरं चाज्ञासिषमहमेवानागतमनागततरं च ज्ञास्यामि' इति अतीतानागतवर्तमानभावेन अन्यथा भवत्यपि ज्ञातव्ये न ज्ञातुरन्यथाभावोऽस्ति ।

Śaṅkara, *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* 2.3.7

4. तत् प्रत्यक्षविषयमेवेति चेत् । न । वादिविप्रतिपत्तिदर्शनात् । नहि देहान्तरसंबन्धिन आत्मनः प्रत्यक्षेणास्तित्वविज्ञाने लोकायतिका बौद्धाश्च नः प्रतिकूलाः स्युः, नास्त्यात्येति वदन्तः । न हि घटादौ प्रत्यक्षविषये कश्चिद् विप्रतिपद्यते नास्ति घट इति ।

Śaṅkara, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad-bhāṣya*, Introduction.

attained a high degree of development. There is a good deal of vagueness regarding the nature of the self in the writings of Western philosophers and psychologists. Even in Hinduism different systems of philosophy hold different views on the nature of the Atman, though they all accept the Atman as the self. All this shows that the real nature of the human soul cannot be known through ordinary means. How then, can we know it? Only through the revealed Scripture, specifically, the Upaniṣads: this is Śaṅkara's unambiguous answer.⁵

This does not, however, mean that Śaṅkara underrates the importance of direct realization of the true Atman. But for him this higher experience is the ultimate goal of human life, and therefore belongs to the realm of values (*puruṣārtha*).⁶ It is not the starting point. An aspirant bent on discovering the true nature of the Atman can start his journey with only two indubitable pieces of knowledge: his 'I'-consciousness and the intellectual or

5. This point was discussed in last month's Editorial. For further elaboration well-known Advaita treatises like *Vivaraṇaprameya-samgraha*, *Naiṣkarmya siddhi* and *Advaita Siddhi* may be referred to. To the question why the experience of ordinary 'I' or ego is not the same as the experience of Brahman, the answer given in the above treatises is: because Brahman is not the *content* of the concept of 'I', but the *witness* of it. The 'I' who is self-evident is an agent and hence implies dualism, whereas Brahman is free from subject-object relationship and is non-dual.

6. In this context it should be pointed out that the doctrine of direct experience (*sākṣātkara*) as the criterion and validity of religion was stressed in modern times by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. It is one of the main pillars of the Neo-Vedanta inaugurated by them. All traditional teachers of Vedanta regard the Hindu scriptures as the only source and test of the knowledge of Brahman, and of religion. See, their commentaries on *Brahma-sūtra* 1.1.3-4.

verbal knowledge of the Atman gained from the scriptures.

Though the real nature of Atman can be known only from scriptures, all the statements in the scriptures do not directly deal with it. The Mīmāṃsā-Vedānta tradition classifies Vedic statements into three groups: *vidhi* (injunctions), *arthavāda* (eulogy and explanations) and *jñāna-vākyas* or *vedānta-vākyas* (statements about the nature of Brahman). The Advaita school is chiefly concerned with the last group. This group again consists of three kinds of statement.

(1) *Brahmetara-nirākarāṇa vākya*. The famous negative phrases *neti, neti* ('not this, not this'), which differentiate Brahman from everything that is not Brahman, belong to this category.

(2) *Jīva-brahmaikya-upadesa vākya*. The four well-known *mahāvākyas* like *Tat tvam asi* ('That thou art') etc. which speak of the unity of the individual self and the Supreme Self belong to this group.

(3) *Brahmasvarūpa-nirūpaṇa vākya* includes those definitions which indicate the nature of Brahman. These are of two types: indirect and direct. 'Indirect definition' (*taṭastha lakṣaṇa*) points to some characteristics which are not intrinsic to Brahman but nevertheless serve as its distinguishing marks. The statement, 'Brahman is that from which all these beings originate, in which they live and into which they return',⁷ is an example of this. 'Direct definition' (*svarūpa lakṣaṇa*) points to the intrinsic characteristics of Brahman such as 'Truth, Knowledge, Infinity is Brahman'.⁸

7. यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते...etc.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad 3.1.1. Other examples are *Muṇḍaka* 1.1.7-9 and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 3.9.27.

8. सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म

Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.1.1

The real nature of the self.

We have seen that, according to Śaṅkara, though the existence of the self is self-evident to everyone, its real nature can be known only from the Scripture. What do the scriptures say about the real nature of the self? This is one of the vital questions which divide the different schools of Vedānta. The fact that Bādarāyaṇa has devoted not less than thirty-seven aphorisms to this discussion shows the importance attached to the nature of the soul in Hindu philosophy.⁹

Advaitins emphasize two chief characteristics of the self. One is consciousness (*cit* or *caitanya*) or intelligence (*prajñā*). Some schools of Indian philosophy, especially the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, hold that Atman is a substance (*dravya*), whereas knowledge or intelligence is a quality (*guṇa*) inhering in it. But according to Advaitins (and also Sāṅkhya-yoga teachers¹⁰) Atman is not merely conscious or intelligent but is consciousness itself, is nothing but pure intelligence.

The second characteristic of the self is its inseparable oneness with the Absolute Reality known as Brahman. This identity implies two things. One is that it denies the plurality of selves. Secondly, it means that consciousness is an undivided whole and the absolute Reality is nothing but consciousness. This takes us to the third important principle of Advaita.

Objectless Reality

Consciousness is associated only with the subject. Hence if the whole Reality

9. cf *Brahma-Sūtra* 2.3.16-53.

10. All Vedānta teachers (except Vallabha) also hold that bliss (*ānanda*) is another intrinsic characteristic of Atman; whereas the Sāṅkhya-yoga philosophers believe that bliss is a property of the mind.

is nothing but consciousness, it means that there is no such thing as an object. A similar view has been held by the school of Buddhism known as Yogācāra, according to which *vijñāna*, knowledge, alone is real and all objects are unreal. Śaṅkara has refuted this Buddhist view.¹¹ There are two points of difference between the Yogācāra and Advaita views on objectivity. In the first place, the Buddhist school denies the reality of external objects even at the empirical level, whereas Advaita denies it only at the transcendental level. Secondly, Yogācāra regards external objects as absolutely unreal, whereas Advaita regards them as only apparently unreal, for behind them there is the reality of consciousness.

It was to counter the Yogācāra view that Śaṅkara adopted the theory of the two levels of truth—the *pāramārthika* (absolute) and the *vyāvahārika* (empirical)—which had been propounded earlier by Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Mādhyamika school of Buddhism. At the absolute level, consciousness is non-dual and is free from subject-object dichotomy.

The argument that the Advaitin uses to prove this is based on the principle of self-luminosity (*svayamprakāśatva*) of consciousness accepted by all Vedantins (and Sāṅkhya philosophers). But there are basic differences in the way this doctrine is understood. According to the other schools, self-luminosity means that knowledge, when it manifests an object, does not itself require anything else to manifest it. The function of knowledge is to reveal an object. When knowledge reveals an object, it does not require to be revealed by another knowledge. Knowledge reveals itself as well as the object. Advaitins accept this meaning of *svayamprakāśatva* as only partially true. According to them,

11. cf Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahma-Sūtra* 2.2.28

consciousness is self-luminous in the sense that it can never at any time become the object of another knowledge. As Citukh-ācārya puts it, 'Self-luminosity is the capability of being called immediate in empirical usage, while remaining at the same time a non-object of knowledge.'¹²

Sāṅkhya philosophers had shown earlier that, since consciousness is associated only with the subject, anything that is an object must be unconscious, *jada*.¹³ Advaitins adopted this view. An object can be known only through the subject, that is, the self. So, these two are entirely different from each other. Śaṅkara makes this the very first point to begin his great exposition of *Brahma-sūtra*. He says,

Since it is evident that the object and the subject, which are the contents of the concepts 'you' and 'we' (respectively), and which are by nature as contradictory as light and darkness, cannot logically have any identity, it follows that their attributes can have still less identity.¹⁴

Impermanence and unreality

Till now our discussion has been centred on the subject. We now turn to the fourth cardinal tenet of Advaita which deals with the objective world. From time immemorial every saint and philosopher has pointed out the constantly changing and impermanent nature of the objective world, and it does not require much reasoning to be convinced of this fact. But Śaṅkara saw something more in

12. अवेद्यत्वे सत्यपरोक्षव्यवहारयोग्यता

Tattvapradīpika (Nirṇayasāgar Press Edn.) p. 9

13. cf *Sāṅkhya-Kārika*, 11,17

14. युष्मदस्मत् प्रत्ययगोचरयोः विषयविषयिणोः तमः प्रकाशवद्विरुद्धस्वभावयोः-इतरेतरभावानुपपत्तौ सिद्धायां तद्धर्माणामपि सुतराम् इतरेतरभावानुपपत्तिः ।

Śaṅkara, *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, opening line.

impermanence. He equated it with unreality: whatever is impermanent (*anitya*) is unreal (*asatya*). This *anitya-asatya* equation was a startlingly new concept introduced into Vedantic thought, and it altered the whole conception of reality. All Vedantic teachers accept the impermanence of the world as axiomatic but none of them, except Śaṅkara and his followers, equate it with unreality.

The dialectics behind this equation had already been developed before Śaṅkara. Nāgārjuna and his followers had used change and contradiction as a means of proving the unreality of the world. Later on the Mīmāṃsakas used non-contradiction as a test of truth. Since for Advaitins knowledge (consciousness) and Reality are one and the same, it was easy for them to use non-contradiction (*abādhitatva*) as the test of reality. Reality is that which is not sublated or negated at any time (past, present, future) and in any state (waking, dreaming, deep sleep). True knowledge, says Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, is the knowledge of an uncontradicted object.¹⁵ The Atman alone satisfies this condition, and so the Atman alone is real.

Superimposition and Maya

We now come to the last and most important principle of Advaita philosophy. But before taking it up it is necessary to recapitulate the main points so far discussed.

1. The existence of the self is self-evident but the real nature of the self can be known only from the Upaniṣads.

2. According to the Upaniṣads, the self in its real nature is pure consciousness and is identical with the absolute Reality.

3. Pure consciousness is ever the subject, and so the absolute Reality is never objective.

4. The objective world is impermanent, and whatever is impermanent is unreal.

These were the fundamental presuppositions which gave rise to Advaita as a system of philosophy. The ground was now ready for Śaṅkara to make the greatest leap, to take the most crucial and revolutionary step, ever attempted in the history of Indian thought after the Vedic period—his formulation of the concept of *adhyāsa* (or *adhyāropa*), superimposition.

What is superimposition? Śaṅkara himself asks this question, and answers: 'Superimposition is the apparent manifestation, in the form of memory, of something previously observed in some other thing.'¹⁶ Śaṅkara mentions three different interpretations of the definition prevalent during his time, and concludes that all are agreed on the fact that superimposition is 'the appearance of one thing as something else'—like the mother-of-pearl appearing as silver or like a rope appearing as a snake in the dark. Brahman alone is real but the world somehow appears in it. This is Advaitic superimposition.

Two important points are to be kept in mind in this context, otherwise this concept is likely to lead to gross misunderstanding.

The first point to note is that the superimposition of the world takes place in the self, not outside. The rope-snake example may give the impression that superimposition is an external phenomenon taking place somewhere out there in space. The real 'rope' is not outside but is the inner Self. It is in the Self that the world appears, and only through Self-knowledge can man dispel the illusion. No amount of study or external investigation can sublate the world unless one's own consciousness is transformed.

The second point is that this superim-

15. अबाधितार्थविषयकज्ञानं प्रमा ।

Vedānta-Paribhāṣa 1

16. स्मृतिरूपः परत्र पूर्वदृष्टावभासः ।

Śaṅkara, *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, Introduction.

position upon the Self is itself unreal. Nay, it is something impossible, says Śaṅkara. Why is it impossible? Because, as already mentioned, the subject and the object can never be the same, and so no identity of the attributes of the two is possible. Says Śaṅkara:

Therefore the superimposition of the object (indicated by 'you') and its attributes on the self-luminous subject (indicated by 'I') and its attributes should be impossible.¹⁷

But Śaṅkara adds:

Nevertheless, for want of discrimination between these attributes, as also between the substances, which are absolutely different from each other, human beings continue to identify the subject and the object and say 'I am this' or 'This is mine'; this mixing up of truth and error is caused by false knowledge.¹⁸

So then, the mixing up of the subject and the object is a logical impossibility. Nevertheless, we find this happening constantly in empirical life. What does this mean? It means that superimposition is simply a natural existential phenomenon, which is beyond logic, is irrational and instinctive. It is to account for this most common but mysterious phenomenon that Śaṅkara brought in the concept of Maya. For him Maya is the inscrutable divine power of God which keeps people deluded. This is clear from the well-known rhetorical passage in his commentary on the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*

Oh, how unfathomable, inscrutable and strange is this Maya owing to which every creature, though in reality identical with the supreme Entity and though instructed as such, does not grasp the fact, 'I am the supreme Self'; whereas even without being told, he accepts as his Self the non-selves, 'I am the son of so and so...'. Verily, deluded by the Maya of the Supreme Being, all people are wandering.¹⁹

As Col. Jacob has pointed out, it is this sense of mysterious power (and not as the material cause of the universe as it was made out later on) that Śaṅkara has used the term Maya in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*.²⁰ In the hands of post-Śaṅkara dialecticians the concept of Maya underwent several changes, and superimposition, which for Śaṅkara was an existential phenomenon to be confronted in the depths of one's soul, became a purely logical issue.

We have stated briefly some of the basic principles on which the philosophy of Advaita was originally established by Śaṅkarācārya. He is the perennial spring of this great system of thought, and all those who wish to know what Advaita truly means must go direct to that original source.

(Concluded)

19. अहो, अतिगम्भीरा दुरवगाह्या विचित्रा चैयं
माया...etc.

Śaṅkara, commentary on *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.3.12

20. See Col. G.A. Jacob, ed. *The Vedāntasāra* (Bombay: Nirṇaya Sāgar Press, 1925), Preface, p.v.

17. *ibid.*

18. *ibid.*

SELF-EFFORT AND GRACE

DR. MARGARET BEDROSIAN

Related concepts such as knowledge and devotion, will and understanding, compassion and discrimination define the poles of the spiritual life. Over a period of time, probing the subtle interrelationships that bind these spiritual virtues, connections that spring from the Unity at their source, can deepen our trust in God and in ourselves. One such pairing that commands our attention during every stage of the spiritual life is that odd couple of elusive grace and that grim taskmaster, self-effort.

At first these two may even seem like magnets that repel each other—and a casual reading of spiritual texts can lead to confusion about their relationship to each other. Are they mutually exclusive? If not, by what dynamic do they work together? As we will see, a deep identity welds grace to self-effort and once we fathom their bond, we gain insight into the practical workings of the Self in our own psyche.

We can begin by considering these terms in the broadest of contexts. Grace, for example, carries nuances of meaning that enter into our lives each day, whether directly divine or not. Thus, when we speak of a “gracious” woman, we compliment her ability to lighten social interaction, to inform ritual with a sense of ease and beauty. When we note other signs of grace, such as in a dancer or writer, we respond again to the harmony achieved between the “content” of the movement or idea and its expression through form. In any given case, grace in daily life—whether in a social, aesthetic, or physical context—*clarifies* the deeper, heartfelt significance of an action, a ritual, or an idea. It would thus be impossible for a superficial artist or a socially manipulative person to reveal true grace. Lacking that basic truthfulness,

such a person’s actions or words would appear mannered, even stylish, but never graceful.

In addition to clarifying life, grace brings poise and focus. Much like a pyramid supporting a pillar, a ballerina’s toe upholding her entire body, or the mind and body of a yogin intent on the pinpoint of Being, grace in our daily routines is kindled by this same tension. We know that any time we face a challenging day at work, it becomes especially important to take care of the smaller details that feed our performance: to rest well, to eat a nourishing breakfast, to bathe the body and dress it neatly, and most important, to collect the mind and focus it on the central significance of the tasks at hand, i.e. to re-orient ourselves spiritually. When we give each of these details its due, body and mind can work together as agents of unity. Moreover, because the mind has touched base with the Higher Self, actions will have focus and directness without being clogged by unnecessary details: they will manifest grace. No wonder such work appears effortless, for all of the egotism has been squeezed out of it; one with himself and his task, the devotee works with body and mind in harmony.

Whereas grace communicates ease and fluidity, the very thought of self-effort starts our lungs working. There is nothing tidy, fluid, direct, or economical about self-effort. Indeed, any writer who has ever faced a blank page without a scrap of inspiration or direction to spur his pen knows how sloppy and *ungraceful* the beginnings of creative work can be; snippets and scrawls, bits of torn paper and unconnected notes, anxiety and self-doubt, thirst and sleepiness sabotage each

sentence. And yet, if the work is sparked by that deeper compulsion to express a truth or vision that will not rest, out of this chaos of feeling and form the writer will assuredly give shape to his vision with power and grace.

What is true of our working lives becomes even more valid when we turn to the directly spiritual. As all the world teachers insist, to realize that the Atman within is one with Brahman without takes every ounce of self-effort we have, and yet ultimately, self-effort is not enough: there is no one thing the little self can do to cause the Higher Self to appear. Even articulating this situation in terms of cause and effect introduces a note of falsity, for we are speaking of a realm or state of Being beyond all relative conditioning. Nevertheless, the most basic requirement of the spiritual life is loving discipleship to the Truth, and such discipline is possible only with self-effort. What is going on? The words of those who have earned grace through their perfect sadhana must become our guide.

First, the Buddha in bidding farewell to his closest disciples before his death urged them to become islands unto themselves, to see Truth as their island and sole refuge, and most powerfully, he urged them to make the effort themselves.¹ With this advice, the Buddha left a stoic legacy, inspired by the same self-determination that culminated in twenty-one days spent under the Bodhi tree, patiently awaiting enlightenment. His admonition actually reminds us that the farther shore of the Truth we swim toward is really the furthest shore of our human personality. Elsewhere, in the Gnostic text, 'The Teachings of Silvanus,' we are again told to 'Knock on yourself as upon a door and walk upon

yourself as on a straight road. For if you walk on the road, it is impossible for you to go astray...Open the door for yourself that you may know what it is...Whatever you will open for yourself, you will open'.² Significantly, both the Buddha and Silvanus emphasize the same point: we open the door by our own effort; although the guru can initiate us and carry us far through the force of his loving example, ultimately there can be no external mediation between the two poles of our identity. In effect, both teachings suggest that the path of selfhood binds us to the Truth, which in turn implies that we can never lose our way as long as we reach out.

Establishing the need for self-effort, we can return to the role of divine grace, a theme that Sri Ramakrishna spoke of often:

You may try thousands of times, but nothing can be achieved without God's grace. One cannot see God without His grace. Is it an easy thing to receive the grace of God? One must altogether renounce egotism; one cannot see God as long as one feels, 'I am the doer.'³

And in yet another, well-known expression of this idea, he declares: 'The breeze of divine grace is blowing upon all. But one needs to set the sail to feel this breeze of grace'.⁴ Just what is this divine grace which the Master insisted was essential to self-realization? A homely personal analogy may clarify this question: Driving to a puga one morning, I noticed a single drop of water dangling from my car's rearview mirror. I would never have

2. Elaine Pagels. *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 127.

3. M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1942), p. 174.

4. Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Hollywood, California: Vedanta Press, 1969) p. 123.

1. Christmas Humphreys, ed., *The Wisdom of Buddhism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 94.

noticed it if the sun had not hit it, transforming it into a precious object of beauty. In a similar way, the cosmic mirror is also dripping with infinite forms waiting to catch the light of the Self—and only when the grace of that Self touches them can they reveal their inmost truth.

For a devotee, grace is the sign that one has accepted the Truth as one's guide, that one is able to receive the Truth without resistance from the ego, that one has taken refuge in the Truth completely. As Ramakrishna's pithy insight suggests, the devotee has much control over his psyche and his spiritual direction. 'Setting the sail to catch the breeze' implies that here, one is consciously aligning one's desires and actions with the Truth, behaviour that automatically eases self-effort. Grace is always available to us, as readily as air, as close as the Self, but only when the ego lets go of its urge to control can the native power of the Self assert itself. In other words, grace signals that the Higher and lower selves are in harmony. It is not some miraculous or supernatural phenomenon implying that boons are being given for nothing.

Armed with this notion of grace, the disciple can be more deliberate and less anxious in his self-effort. As we have seen, since we are never cut off from the Self, any movement toward the One is recorded in those labyrinths of the psyche where the Witness watches. Discipline for the sake of a worldly goal will never lead to grace, though it will often bring material success and activate good fortune for awhile. Unlike products of discipline for finite or ego-motivated desires, grace induces a state of internal poise, a steady orientation of the personality toward the Absolute. Looked at from this perspective, our lives reveal the touch of divine grace at every level: the family we are born into, the body we are given, our skills and

talents, any personal circumstances that lead us to the place of surrender—all of these may be seen as the materials of grace.

But none of these will trigger divine grace until we *recognize* and accept their roles in our growth. Recognition consists of many distinct phases. First, we must recognize our place in the "big scheme" as we understand it. Again, an accurate perception of this "place" depends on our ability to find the balance between the particulars of our life and the universals that hold them intact. For example, feeling confidence and sustenance in working out our dharma, the path of action that uniquely expresses God's will through us, provides a daily opportunity to recognize and re-acknowledge the threads of divinity that direct our lives and give them meaning. Secondly, we have to recognize time's maturing effect: during the period of spiritual discipline, *sadhana*, when divine grace seems far off and we must rely daily on sheer grit to carry us forward, remembering the paradox of time can transform the moment. Time is one of God's limbs, beating out the rhythms of individual and cosmic evolution; time is finite yet endless; its pliancy enables the devotee to always keep pace with the demands of the moment. Yet simultaneously, the knowledge that time streams forth from the Self assures us that we are never waylaid. To experience this knowledge is itself a sign of grace because it allows us to maintain the balance between the Timeless and the temporal; it lets us see that the Self we move toward is our nearest companion on the journey.

Finally, recognizing our desire for self-realization—raising what the Mahayana Buddhists call the *bodhicitta* and what Sri Ramakrishna referred to as the yearning for God—marks the dawn of spiritual triumph. After this desire is kindled, the

devotee's life is internally altered. As D. T. Suzuki describes it:

The Bodhicittopada is...a new spiritual excitement which shifts one's center of energy. It is the becoming conscious of a new religious aspiration which brings about a cataclysm in one's mental organization.⁵

The key words in Suzuki's explanation are "becoming conscious" since they restate the need for recognition. Here at the spiritual turning point of life, the devotee deliberately looks toward a new and absolute standard for his self-concept. The very act begins to unleash grace, for the little self making the effort becomes increasingly submerged in the divine.

Of course, even after the desire for enlightenment has risen, periods of stagnation and aimlessness test our merit, and grace may seem to evaporate in the noonday sun of sadhana. Yet paradoxically, when the Lucifer within rebels against the light, the shortest way to end this misery is to retreat to the Self, to stand poised, to take on the mantle of grace by invoking the name of God. It is for this reason that the prescribed teachings of the guru are valuable: they give us the balm with which our Higher Self can soothe our lower self.

Like other desirable states, grace cannot be sought as an end in itself: it signifies the spiritual fruition of one phase of our life as well as forming a bridge to the even greater effort needed for complete self-realization. Furthermore, grace comes most quickly when we have let go utterly. It is the sign that the ego has relinquished its stranglehold on life. Perhaps the most dramatic instance of such a letting go occurred in Ramakrishna's own life when he took up the knife intending suicide unless Kali would reveal Herself. His self-effort had reached a point of exhaustion,

the lower self had depleted all of its resources, and the sacrifice of life was total. It was only then that the Higher Self stepped in and ripped away the final veils of illusion, graciously revealing her divine form. Even in our own daily lives we experience this same psychological law whenever we work hard on some problem, pouring all of our energies into its solution till we can go no further on our own. Then after a night of rest or a longer vacation when we literally vacate our little self from the scene of creation and leave the space free for the workings of a more powerful inventive energy, we wake or return to see the problem solved for us. This basic model of creativity confirms the original point: the Witness is always observing our life and will always step in at the very place where we can go no further. Understanding our relative helplessness teaches us humility: most of the time, though we may feel confident that we hold the solution to our lives we really don't know what to ask of God, since our self-understanding is partial. Seeing through our needy yet prideful state, God graciously accepts whatever we offer:

Whatever man gives me

In true devotion:

Fruit or water,

A leaf, a flower;

I will accept it.

That gift is love,

His heart's dedication.⁶

This beloved passage from the Bhagavad Gita reminds us that in absolute terms no offering is adequate to the majesty of God. Moreover, we seek the highest of ideals without fully perceiving that ideal and the demands it will make on us. Yet armed with such humility and opening the

(Continued on page 462)

5. D. T. Suzuki, *On Indian Mahayana Buddhism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 210.

6. *The Song of God: Bhagavad-Gita*, trans. Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (New York: New American Library, 1944), pp. 83-4.



HARIDAS, 'THE GLADSTONE OF INDIA'*

SWAMI EKATMANANDA

To those who have read Swami Vivekananda's biography and also his letters, the name of Haridas Viharidas Desai may not be unknown. From Swamiji's 'Epistles', included in the *Complete Works*: Vol. 8, we learn that Swamiji wrote to Haridas Viharidas Desai thirteen letters, of which a few are very remarkable and proved prophetic. In the course of their close association for just three and a half years, Haridas Viharidas found in Swamiji a unique personality and teacher, and Swamiji in turn loved and respected Haridas as a son does his father, the difference in their age being twenty-two and a half years. In most of these letters Swamiji expresses with characteristic frankness the warm affection and high regard he had for his 'Dear Dewanji Saheb', as is evident from the following excerpts:

1. Mt. Girnar, March 1892: Very kind of you to send up a man enquiring about my health and comfort. But that is quite of a piece with your fatherly character. My heartfelt gratitude to you.

* The author is thankful to Sri J. M. Desai of Bombay, a grand-nephew of late Sri Haridas Viharidas Desai, for placing at his disposal relevant documents including several newspaper cuttings on the life of the great soul who is the subject of this article.

2. Bombay, August 22, 1892: ...The world really is enriched by men, high-souled, noble-minded, and kind, like you; the rest are 'only as axes which cut at the tree of youth of their mothers', as the Sanskrit poet puts it.

It is impossible that I should ever forget your fatherly kindness and care of me, and what else can a poor fakir like me do in return to a mighty minister but pray that the Giver of all gifts may give you all that is desirable on earth and in the end—which may He postpone to a day long, long ahead—may take you in His shelter of bliss and happiness and purity infinite.

3. Khetri, 28th April, 1893: ...what more shall I wish for you, my dear Diwanji Saheb, but that the Lord would be your all in all in your well-merited, well-applauded and universally respected latter end of a life which was ever holy, good, and devoted to the service of so many of the sons and daughters of the great Father of Mercies. Amen!

4. Khetri, May 1893: ...Believe me that I love you and respect you like a father and that my gratitude towards you and your family is surely unbounded...my dear Diwanji Saheb, I am the same frolicsome, mischievous but, I assure you, innocent boy; you found me at Junagad, and my love for your noble self is the same or increased a hundredfold, because I have had a mental comparison between yourself and the Diwans of nearly all the States in Dakshin, and the Lord be my witness how my tongue was fluent in your praise (although I know that my powers are quite inadequate to estimate your noble qualities) in every Southern court...

5. Bombay, 22nd May, 1893: ...I thoroughly believe that a good, unselfish and holy man like

you, whose whole life has been devoted to doing good to others, has already reached this basis (comprising goodness and love) of firmness which the Lord Himself has styled as 'rest upon Brahman' in the Gita.

6. Chicago, 29th January, 1894: ...You had been to see my poor mother and brothers. I am glad you did. But you have touched the only soft place in my heart...

You are one of the few noble natures who stand as rocks out of water in this sea of universal stagnation. Lord bless you for ever and ever.

7. Chicago, 20th June, 1894: Your very kind note came today. I am so sorry that I could have caused pain to such a noble heart as yours with my rash and strong words. I bow down to your mild corrections. 'Thy son am I, teach me thus bowing'—Gita.

Diwanji, excuse my long letter, my noble friend, one of the few who really feel for me, have real kindness for me...May you and yours be blessed ever and ever, my noble, noble friend...I offer my eternal gratitude to you. My debt to you is immense, not only because you are my friend, but also because you have all your life served the Lord and your motherland so well.

8. Chicago, September, 1894: ...Your kind note to G.W. Hale has been very gratifying, as I owed them that much...my best love, gratitude to you and all your brothers.

9. Chicago, November, 1894: ...you—one of the few that have real sympathy for everything good, for everything great, one at least whom I know to be a man of true ring, nobility of nature, and a thorough sincerity of head and heart...

You bless me that I may have faith in my Guru, in my God, and in myself.

Now what was there in Haridas Viharidas that elicited from Swamiji such warm appreciation, genuine love and high regard for that elderly soul? Even assuming that Swamiji was trying to be humble, were those expressions mere hyperbole? We hope that the following brief account of Haridas will convince the reader of the real greatness of that statesman and of the fact that he eminently merited Swamiji's warm but insightful sentiments.

Haridas Viharidas Desai, the eldest of five sons and one daughter of Viharidas

Ajabhai Desai, locally known as Bhausahab Desai of Nadiad, was born on the 29th of July, 1840, in Nadiad (near Baroda), Gujarat. His father Viharidas was born after the Britishers had confiscated the Talukdari villages of Haridas's grandfather Ajabhai, depriving the family of the revenue rights, collectorship, and civil and criminal jurisdiction over Nadiad Taluk. The Desais had enjoyed those rights for several generations. All the same, as a descendent of the zamindar family, Viharidas was well off and also commanded respect. He was helpless about the injustice that had befallen him. However, adjusting himself to the new regime and situation, he ably preserved the prestige of the community; nay, he even enhanced it. And the British rulers were so much impressed by him that they made him a member of the Mewari Talukdari Settlement Commission appointed by the Governor of Bombay.

Haridas was brought up in affluence but under strict discipline, starting his education in both Gujarati and Sanskrit at a private school run by one Pandya, a Brahmin priest. Later on, his father donated a building for a Gujarati school where Haridas got his early education. When he was eleven years old, he was sent to Ahmedabad for English education. The journey was on horseback and by cart. Subsequently called back to Nadiad, he was entrusted to private teachers for further studies in English.

In 1855 Haridas accompanied his two younger brothers to Ahmedabad to continue his studies. They were lodged in a house with good arrangements for board. In due course this house became a meeting place for fellow-students, of whom some in later life held high Government posts and some others became noted literary men. After completing his studies at the school, Haridas took up law but didn't take the

examination. At the age of twenty he married, but lost his wife, and returned to Nadiad in 1861. Being pious-minded, he was disinclined to marry again. But pressed by his elders, he ultimately remarried. At this time the Government opened an English School at Nadiad for which his father Viharidas donated a building.

At home Haridas helped his father in the management of the family estate, occasionally meeting the British Collector and other officers. This equipped him with proficiency in the art of conversing in English and made him familiar with civil administration. Taking active part in the local politics, he got appointment as the Municipal Commissioner and a member of the Local Fund. The Assistant Collector of Kaira district, A.P. Percival, impressed by the general knowledge, dignified demeanour, intelligence and insight, honesty, sense of duty and justice, philosophical outlook and, above all, the fund of commonsense shown by Haridas, became his good friend.

In the meantime Haridas developed a great liking for horse-riding and playing chess and draughts. He also used to read a lot at home. Father Viharidas did not want his sons to be spoiled by leading an easy-going life like those of the wealthy people. He therefore planned to start a cheroot factory in Nadiad, adequate tobacco being available locally. In connection with this, Haridas was deputed to Madras, Tiruchirapalli and some other southern cities. But, as the tobacco was found unsuitable for the purpose, the plan was abandoned. Keeping one of his sons to assist him in his work, Viharidas wanted his eldest son Haridas to take up a Government job as it was deemed prestigious, although the salary would be a mere Rs. 50/-. Haridas, however, disliked the idea and desired to enrich his knowledge,

both secular and spiritual. Yet the father's wish triumphed, and Haridas found himself in Bombay with his old school-mate Manasukhram Tripathi, now a thriving businessman. The journey to Bombay had to be made partly by the road up to Daman, and thence partly by boat to Vasai (Bassein), and the rest of it by railway. It is said that while travelling by boat from Daman to Vasai, the boat was caught in a sudden storm but Haridas remained unruffled, chanting the name of God.

At Bombay he came in contact with Gokulji Sampatram Zala and several other political personalities of Kathiawar. He learnt about the poor administration of Gondal State and that the Government was pressing the Thakor Saheb of Gondal to find an efficient manager for his State. Haridas was one of the candidates for the post interviewed by the Thakor Saheb. But after waiting for sometime, Haridas entered a share business along with his third brother Bechardas after obtaining the consent of his father. Unfortunately he failed in the enterprise, losing considerable money, and so quietly returned to Nadiad. Father Viharidas, in order to boost his son's self-confidence, persuaded him to accept some Government job.

In the meantime, at Nadiad, a dispute arose between Viharidas and the peasants, who were the neighbours of the Desais' family farm, over a manure dump. Fully confident of his sense of justice, the peasants wanted son Haridas to arbitrate in the matter. Father Viharidas agreed to the proposal having faith in his son's judgement. Haridas, after a thorough study of the case, gave his decision in favour of the peasants. Viharidas was happy over his son's cool-headedness and courage. The Joint Administrator of Bhavnagar, A. P. Percival, came to know of it all, and this episode was in his mind when he readily

responded to Haridas's letter some time later.

Pressed by his father to seek an honourable occupation, Haridas wrote to his friend A. P. Percival, who was then the Joint Commissioner of the Bhavnagar State. Percival immediately called Haridas to Bhavnagar and made him (in 1870) a Deputy Judge. This appointment was resented by the local administrative circle, but none raised his voice against it as it was ordered by an Englishman.

The following incident will show what a strict disciplinarian Haridas was. His youngest brother Gopaldas was staying with him at Bhavnagar and studying at the high school. Some pupils of the school had given a nickname to a teacher who was harsh towards them. The teacher, noting that Gopaldas was among those mischievous boys, went straight to the Officer's Club where Haridas was playing billiards, and complained. Haridas called his brother, who was then some 15 years old, and gave him such a violent cut with the billiard stick that it broke, and warned him that if he did not behave properly he would be packed off to Nadiad.

The first judgement given by Haridas in an important case so much impressed the officers of the administration that they began to respect him and regretted their earlier misapprehension.

Shortly thereafter, Haridas was entrusted with making an inquiry into the dealings of several contractors and junior officers with regard to some monopolies granted to the contractors prior to the setting up of the administration. Percival had confidence in his sense of duty, efficiency and honesty. As Haridas started his work in right earnest, the contractors and the junior officers involved in the case took fright. They approached the influential and superior administrator Gaurishankar Oza and complained about the detailed and

strict way the inquiry was being carried out. Oza forthrightly told them that Haridas was an upright judge and that they should face the consequence of his correct findings. After completing the inquiry to his satisfaction Haridas, in his report submitted to Percival, gave all the particulars of the age-old debts to be recovered from several persons, and opined that since some officers and prominent persons were involved in the affair, smooth recovery of the moneys could not be expected, without upsetting the administration in the process. And so he recommended that whatever the defaulting debtors willingly paid might be accepted. Percival greatly appreciated the advice which was soon implemented. Oza who had been somewhat doubtful about the ability of Haridas was touched by his capability, honesty and magnanimity. Incidentally, Oza later on became a *sannyasin* (mendicant monk) and, on the eve of taking his vow of renunciation, wrote to Haridas a fine letter praising his rare qualities of head and heart, and conveying his best wishes to him and his entire family.

Haridas served the Bhavnagar State for over five years (1870-1876), and was Assistant Judge when he left Bhavnagar to take up the administratorship of Wadhwan State.

The prince of Wadhwan, Dajirajji, was a minor when his father, Maharaja Raisinghji, died. The State Manager Naranji Durlabhji had a few days earlier resigned his post. The Governor of Bombay, on the advice of Col. Burton, the Political Agent, appointed Haridas the Administrator in 1876. At that time the economic condition of the State was far from satisfactory, but through intelligent and efficient handling of the situation, in spite of undertaking some essential projects like construction of roads and bridges, Haridas saved a sum of rupees five lakhs

which he faithfully handed over to the ruler. Travelling with Haridas all over India, Dajirajji gained administrative experience. Haridas reformed the judiciary and revenue departments, and this was specially mentioned by Col. Burton, the Political Agent, at Dajirajji's investiture Darbar. *The Times of India*, Bombay, dated July 15, 1882, reported:

...At the Darbar, Major Nutt read the following address from Col. Burton, the Political Agent: '...The administration has, as I think you will cheerfully own, been a success. The State *Kharbari* (Administrator) Mr. Haridas Viharidas has discharged his duties to the entire satisfaction of myself and my predecessor Mr. (later Sir) James B. Peile. He has fostered the revenues, behaved with judicious liberality as regards public works, has encouraged agricultural improvements, and has now handed you over the State in a prosperous condition and with a well-filled treasury. The administration of justice has been improved...'

The Thakore Saheb Dajirajji said:

...There rises in my heart a sense of deep obligation I am under to those whose care and abilities have so long watched over the welfare of myself and my state...I take this opportunity of expressing my own high opinion of the merits of Mr. Haridas Viharidas, who has for so many years managed Wadhwan during my minority.

An interesting thing happened a little while before the marriage of Prince Dajirajji. A big pandal erected and decorated for the joyous occasion under the personal supervision of Haridas, underwent alterations as ordered by Dajirajji on the advice of a confidant. Haridas on hearing and seeing the changes, got them reverted to the earlier design. This was only to establish a precedent and impress on the ruler that when a job was entrusted to a responsible officer, the latter should be consulted prior to ordering anything related to it. The Raja appreciated the standpoint of Haridas and learnt a lesson.

About a couple of years later, when Haridas took up as Diwan of Junagad, Maharaja Dajirajji wrote to him:

I am glad to hear about your appointment as Diwan of Junagad. I can say that the Nawab Saheb was right in offering you that post. We here are all happy indeed. Truth and honesty alone bring real success in life. You have both and so the success too. Whoever has them will be likewise. You have proved that saying which is, you may remember, on one of the shields of the Mandva Kachari room in Wadhwan.

After the marriage and investiture of the Maharaja at Wadhwan in 1882, the Government transferred Haridas to Wankaner as Administrator, where too the Rajasaheb was a minor. There also he put the administration in proper gear, constructed a library, public buildings and schools, and appointed capable officers to responsible posts. He served at Wankaner for not even one year but within that short period endeared himself to the ruler as well as the general public. When Haridas subsequently shifted to Idar State, a main road in Wankaner was named 'Haridas Road'.

The Maharaja of Idar, Kesari Singhji, who had completed his studies and ascended the throne, was looking for a good Diwan. He wrote to Haridas: 'Idar is a first class State and is near your native place. Instead, therefore, of taking someone else as Diwan for it, I choose you for the post, and will be happy if you would come over.' He also wrote to Col. Wodhouse, the Political Agent, in this connection. Soon Haridas got a letter from Col. C. Wodhouse saying,

...The Maharaja is a very well-meaning soul and has much commonsense. Considerably more mature than men of his age, and quite steady, I should think that he is an agreeable Ruler to serve under. Of the two, Wankaner and Idar, the latter is definitely a better field, and the position of Dewan is far superior to Administra-

torship. Moreover, Kesarisinghji is the seniormost of the Kathiawar Chiefs and I believe you will do very well at Idar. In fact, the responsibility being considerable and the work hard in this State, when the Maharaja first mentioned your name, I concurred readily with his suggestion. So, if you and the Maharaja mutually agree, I shall be very happy to welcome you on the way. Please reply soon.

Haridas took over as Diwan of Idar towards the end of 1882 on a monthly salary of Rs. 800/-. He remained there for about a year, and during this short duration reduced appreciably the State's debts, got two new villages established, reduced the exorbitant land revenues, brought fallow areas under cultivation, reorganized the police and the army, opened new schools, and greatly improved the hospital. The Maharaja was extremely pleased and decided to increase his remuneration and also give him one village in appreciation of the reforms. At such a fine time of immense popularity, the British Government wanted Haridas to join Junagad as Diwan. Learning about that proposal, Kesarisinghji wrote a beautiful letter to him dated 7th September 1883:

Dear Rao Saheb Haridas Viharidas,

While studying at the Rajkot College, I had heard about your many commendable qualities and subsequently had the joy of meeting you. Later when the Government decided to terminate the rule of the Administrator, I wanted an efficient and honest Diwan, and it occurred to me that you will be the fittest person. Col. Wodhouse supported me in my choice and I felt myself lucky. In the number of States in the Bombay Province, several of the Managers or Diwans are known to be greedy, self-centred at the cost of the State, conceited and hot-tempered, and wanting in general knowledge and common sense. The reputation of a State depends on the ethical and moral life of its Diwan. A good minister is loved and respected both by the Ruler and the ruled. And among such, you stand first in my esteem. It is only thirteen months since you came here as Diwan

and you have made many improvements remarkably. You are to leave soon and take charge at Junagad. I am proud that the Government has already recognized your rare qualities. I hope the new Diwan to come here, Nathabhai Dajibhai, will ably fill in the gap to occur on your departure. I also hope that all the other officers too will take you as their ideal and work with zeal. Mr. Haridas, I pray to God that you may earn more reputation in your new assignment and ever be a man of victory.

Now in Junagad there was the Moyo Tribe which held itself to be independent and therefore refused to pay the land revenue. Pressure was brought upon it but it remained recalcitrant. Diwan Salemahomed Jamadar and his *Naib* (deputy) Bapalal sent a special police force to subdue the Moyos, in which process nearly a hundred of the tribe died. Taking note of this unfortunate incident, the British Political Agent sent Nawab Bahadurkhanji, the Ruler of Junagad, a letter of reprimand, and the Diwan and his deputy were relieved of their posts. Hence the Nawab Saheb was in search of a good and wise Diwan for Junagad State. Manasukhram Tripathi, a friend of both Haridas and the Nawab Saheb, suggested the former's name for the purpose. The Nawab cheerfully welcomed the proposal and subsequently ordered the appointment. About the end of September, 1883, Haridas took charge as Diwan of Junagad. Soon realizing that Baudinbhai, a maternal uncle of the Nawab Saheb, had a great hold on him and influenced him, Haridas settled a working arrangement with Baudinbhai thus: 'While Baudinbhai should mind the personal income of the Nawab Saheb and the State Treasury, the responsibility of administration and judiciary dealing with the public would wholly rest on Haridas.' This understanding lasted as long as Haridas held office, to the credit of both. Haridas made an expedient compromise

with the Moyos, granting them their rightful claims and giving them a document enumerating several concessions and rights.

In the meantime, another Tribe in the State, the militant and rude Makarana, raised its head and aggressively started raiding and looting the villages. The officer in charge of 'Operation Makaranas', Police Superintendent Jamadar Suleman, was a favourite of Baudinbhai. Some thoughtless persons circulated rumours, and also sent messages to the Political Agent, that 'Operation Makaranas' proved a failure as the Police Superintendent, the Vazir Baudinbhai and the task force were all of the same community as were the Makaranas and that the Diwan was a weak person. Nevertheless, Haridas, who valued law and order most, took personal risk and arrested the criminals. The Nawab was much pleased and announced a reward of rupees one lakh to be presented to Haridas, but the latter protested saying that he only did his duty, and would humbly accept just the interest of the prize money, and even this must be deducted from his pay. But the political department remained prejudiced through earlier hearsay which had been followed by a damaging report. It proposed to post at Junagad a special representative of the Political Agent. Learning of this development, the Nawab Saheb wrote to the Political Agent assuring that Haridas had done a wonderful job and that for his admirable achievement he had not taken the reward but accepted only the interest on it and that the interest amount too was deducted from his pay. He added that Haridas had assented to the award merely to gratify the Ruler and so, greed must not be imputed to him. This fully satisfied the Political Agent, and the proposal to appoint a special representative was dropped. The matter was reported in the *Indian Spectator* as follows:

Rao Bahadur Haridas Viharidas Desai took over charge of the Junagarh administration at a very critical time, soon after the Moyo massacre. Even in such circumstances, he joined as Dewan without any condition whatever—which showed that he wanted himself as well as his employers to be free for future action. This is something like the principle of free trade in the administration of Native States, which deserves special mention. The new Dewan went to work with zeal and fidelity that won the approbation of the authorities, and on a suitable occasion Mr. Haridas was offered a lakh of rupees in recognition of his valuable services. Such rewards, we understand, are infrequently given by Native Princes to deserving officers in some cases. Mr. Haridas had earned his prize better than most men of his class, but with rare magnanimity he respectfully declined the offer saying that his pay was liberal enough. The Nawab Saheb and the Vazir Bahavdin, however, were bent upon keeping up the tradition of the State. In a recent *firmān* His Highness explained that this particular form of appreciation was necessary for the encouragement of the other employees of the State, and that Mr. Haridas must accept at least the interest on the bonus offered him during his life, if he had scruples about accepting a lakh of rupees in lump. This, too, the faithful Dewan appears to have hesitated to do, repeating the explanation that he was being liberally paid for his work. The State authorities at this stage threatened to take the matter out of his hand, when he agreed to a further compromise, namely, that the bonus should be invested in four per cent loan, and that the interest thereon should be paid to him as pension after his retirement, and that, in the meantime, he should regularly pay a sort of pension contribution to the State from his salary. Herein Mr. Haridas has set an excellent example to his brother officers. Considering the merits of the case, it is hard to decide which to admire more, the honesty of the Dewan or the liberality of his employer.¹

However, Haridas, much perturbed over the tarnishing of his fair name by unscrupulous persons through false reports and the baseless suspicions created in the Political Agent, tendered his resignation to

1. Report in *Indian Spectator*, July 21, 1889.

Nawab Bahadurkhanji. The Nawab, totally aware of the happenings and the great part played by Diwan Haridas in the Moyo and Makarana uprisings, replied: 'I will not leave you even if I lose my kingdom. I am a soldier and have a gun; I can easily earn my living. But I will not submit to such threats from the Political Agent.'

Finally Haridas relented and withdrew his resignation. With the aid of his friend Manasukhram S. Tripathi, he explained to the Political Secretary to the Governor of Bombay that the State of Junagad was surrounded by a number of tiny States and the perpetrators of crimes took advantage of the different jurisdictions, and he suggested the appointment of a British Police Officer with special power to deal with the troublesome characters in order to solve once for all the recurring problem. The suggestion was accepted by the Political Secretary Sir William Woodburn. One Major Humphry was accordingly put in charge of law and order and this brought about the desired effect. Peace was established and the people were happy. Major Humphry reported to the Government that the State of Junagad had attained absolute normalcy, thanks to the co-operation and efficiency of the police.

But, during the period of the turmoil and concerted police control, the vile Makaranas planned and tried to murder Diwan Haridas who had, however, anticipated this move and was on his guard. Conscientious and duty bound, Haridas did not attend his daughter's marriage at Nadiad. On the day before the marriage, he wanted to go to the famous temple at the Taleti (foot) of Mount Girnar. As the horse carriage in which he was travelling was about to cross the bridge beyond the Kalwa gate of the fort of Junagad, the Makaranas attacked him. But he managed to escape with just

a blow on his *pagri* (turban). A mischievous brute of the tribe sent a telegram to Nadiad to the effect that Haridas had been killed. The younger brother of Haridas received it just a few hours before the solemn marriage ceremony. Without believing its contents and suspecting foul play, he wired to Haridas at Junagad and learnt the truth. The marriage went off happily. Subsequently *The Sind Gazette* reported on 29.3.1887:

Yesterday afternoon, at about 4 o'clock a most notorious Makarana outlaw named Kadurbux Noor Mahomed, for whose capture the Junagad State had offered a reward of Rs. 3,000/-, dead or alive, was arrested near the Municipal *naka*, Bagdali Lines. Kadurbux is a man of powerful build and of a sinister cast of countenance. The Kurachee police are to be congratulated on effecting this important capture.'

Of the many atrocities perpetrated by the Makaranas on the villagers in Junagad State the most outrageous was the cutting off of the noses of several farmers and merchants. This horrible crime greatly grieved the tender-hearted Haridas, resulting in his earnest persuasion of Dr. Tribhuvandas to try if he could surgically graft noses. Incidentally, the doctor had helped Haridas in conducting the raffle for raising fund for the construction of steps up Mt. Girnar and also in the actual construction work. Dr. Tribhuvandas accordingly tried several times and finally succeeded in 1890. This type of surgery came to be known in later years as plastic surgery. The doctor, it would appear, was one of the pioneers in this field in India.

In 1888, a special Darbar was held for sanctioning the interest on rupees one lakh, together with a *khilat* (special gift) of Rs. 5,000/- to Diwan Haridas. The Nawab Saheb's citation, read by his personal secretary Amarji, stated:

Haridas has served this State with efficiency, honesty, foresightedness and vast experience.

We want to reward him one lakh of rupees in recognition of his services. But he declines to accept the amount, showing valid reasons and high sentiments which are really commendable. It is therefore, hereby decided that the amount be invested in 4 per cent per annum interest-giving Government Loan and the interest be given to him during the tenure of office in the State and later as pension for life after his retirement.

For carrying out his wish Nawab issued a Huzur Order (No. 26) thus:

Chief Diwanji Azam Haridas Viharidas joined the service of this State without any pre-condition when it was engaged in quelling the Moyos and in such other serious difficulties. Our desire to honour him with a Prize money of rupees one lakh met with a polite decline for reasons which bespeak his principles and do him credit. But in our tradition to record faithful service to the State and as a measure of encouragement as also to acknowledge a good example to others, we order that every year Rs. 4,000/- by way of interest at 4 per cent per annum on Rs. one lakh Government Loan be given till his life time, be he in service or in retirement, to Mosuf Chief Diwanji Azam Haridas Viharidas, and that the first such payment shall be from the 1st September, 1884.²

A year later, the ruler of Junagad Nawab Bahadurkhanji expired without a male offspring. Conforming to the convention that another ruler had to be installed before the body of the dead ruler was removed for burial, Diwan Haridas quickly summoned Rasulkhanji, the immediate younger brother of the dead Nawab and officially enthroned him, although the latter was indifferent to taking the high position and far from being keen on becoming the new Ruler. In fact, Rasulkhanji feared that for his sake the good and devout Diwan Haridas might have to encounter vehemence and incur the displeas-

ure of vested interests. Strangely enough, the name of Rasulkhanji was not found in the list of the royal family, and some shortsighted people including Vazir Baudinbhai wanted Adalkhanji, the other younger brother of late Bahadurkhanji, to ascend the throne. Accordingly, Adalkhanji claimed the seat of the Ruler, supported by the royal family and influential officers of the administration. Their argument was that Adalkhanji had received college education and had travelled all over India and so was well equipped to rule the State. But Diwan Haridas stood firm and defended his action, declaring that Rasulkhanji being the elder brother of the two surviving brothers, it was but meet that he ascended the throne. He further said that if they all failed to agree with him, he would resign, as he would on no account be a party to injustice.

In the meantime, before the approval of the coronation of Rasulkhanji could be obtained from the British Government, one Mohamadkhanji, claiming himself a step-brother of Bahadurkhanji, the late Ruler, made known his aspiration to succeed him. Observing this confusion, the British Government withheld the recognition of Rasulkhanji as the new Chief of the State, advised Haridas to run the administration on its behalf, and then commenced investigation into the claim. Haridas proved to the hilt the justification of his action. Finally, six months later, Rasulkhanji emerged triumphant and soon his investiture was held. Haridas continued as Diwan. Vazir Baudinbhai realized his folly and became happy, for Rasulkhanji too was his nephew.

² Incidentally, after the demise of Haridas in June 1895, Nawab Rasulkhanji, successor to Nawab Bahadurkhanji, got the Loan reverted to the State and ordered a permanent annual pension of Rs. 2,400/- to the heirs of the deceased. Ultimately, after the Indian Independence, this concession was terminated.

There arose a quarrel between Junagad and the adjacent state of Mangrol over a few villages and a boundary. The case was before Col. Hunter. Haridas argued for Junagad while Barrister Sitaram Pandit, father-in-law of Mrs. Vijayalakshmi

Pandit,³ spoke for Mangrol. Haridas won the case, to be sure.

In the share-crop system of revenue, the farmers could not remove their quota of produce from the fields until the revenue officer turned up and assessed the share of each. This custom proved harrasing to the poor peasants. Haridas diligently did away with the scope for corruption by separating the judiciary from the executive.

In 1888, Haridas's wife expressed her cherished desire to make a pilgrimage to the top of Mount Girnar⁴ along with him for the simple reason that God had saved Haridas from the attempt made on his life by Kadurbux, the Makarana leader. So the couple started on the journey and on the way, while passing through Palthar Chati where lived a venerable *sadhu*, they bowed to him reverently. The holy man affectionately beckoned to them, blessed the couple and told them to ask for a boon. Haridas said that he had no favour to seek and that he led a good life which was enough satisfaction to him. But his wife put forward that while they had three daughters and all were married, she longed for a male child. Thereupon the *sadhu* gave her two *rudrāksha* beads and instructed them that the two beads should be safely kept and not lost. He also prophesied that two sons would be born to her and they were to be named

3. Sister of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

4. Mt. Girnar is a place of pilgrimage, sacred to Jainas, Buddhists and Hindus because of its association with the traditions of all the three religions. The highest of the hills is known as Gorakhnath.

Sadhu and Sant. Before the husband and wife resumed their journey, the holy man also foretold that Haridas would live only till about his 55th year.

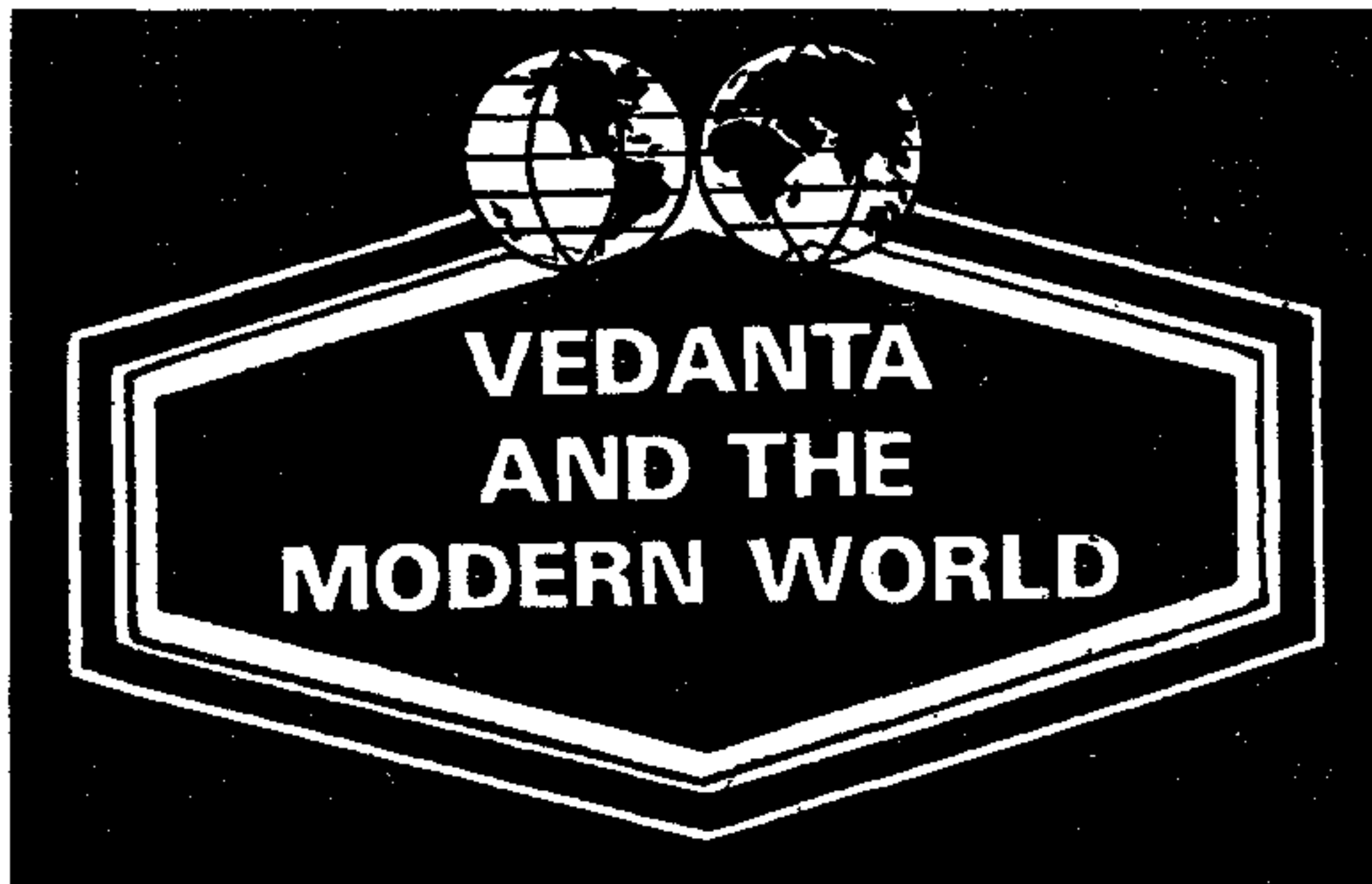
A year later, in 1889, a son was born to the Haridases and another in 1892. Though at birth the babes were named Sadhram and Santdas respectively, they were subsequently renamed in the family tradition as Prabhudas and Paramanandadas. The two infants were breastfed occasionally by their elder sisters.

In order to find money to build the 12,000 steps up Mount Girnar, Haridas conducted a lottery and got nearly three lakh rupees. After the construction of the steps, the balance amount was deposited with the *shroff* (banker), and a committee was entrusted with the task of maintaining the steps with the interest on the deposit. He also got built at his own cost a bridge connecting the approach road from Junagad to Mt. Girnar, the sacred Damodar Kund and a temple for St. Narsi Mehta. These facts, incidentally, are inscribed on the marble plaques fixed on either side at the foot of the flight of steps to the mountain and on the parapet of the bridge. It must also be said to the credit of Diwan Haridas that a railway line was laid between Jetalsar and Junagad, and several structures of public utility such as veterinary and general hospitals, dispensaries, and schools and colleges came into being. Moreover, he was instrumental in building the Uparkob Water Works and the starting of agricultural farms.

(To be concluded)

(Continued from page 452)

heart to God, the devotee secures for himself the highest boons, for he knows that wherever he doesn't see, God does. And not only does God see, but through His grace, will only give us as much of the Truth as we can integrate at any point of our journey. Thus the devotee reaches the hand of self-effort toward the Infinite, knowing his inherent strength is never enough to reach the goal, but trusting that the Divine hand will lead him—step by step—into beatitude.



SOME ASPECTS OF VEDANTA AND SCIENCE

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

'Vedanta and Science' is a subject of absorbing interest, because science has captured the imagination of people all over the world by its investigation, achievements and practical applications useful to our life in the world. Similarly, Vedanta also has captured the imagination of the people from the most ancient times because of its revolutionary spiritual discoveries and the great hope it has brought to mankind for supreme self-fulfilment, giving meaning to life, sentiments, ethics, religion and higher aspirations and values.

Both Science and Vedanta seek to investigate the nature of Reality. Science has prescribed its own field and Vedanta also has its own field of investigation. Science started with the investigation of external nature, the sensually observable phenomena, but limited itself to this and accepted only that which could be observed and confirmed by experiment.

Starting with hard matter in its analysis of the structure of the universe it has come to certain fundamental particles which are nothing but energy, and finds that the nature of these particles also cannot be defined in proper terms nor can it account for their origin and existence. Their nature escapes definition, so much so that some of the scientists have begun to say that nature as we know it disappears in the last analysis and nothing non-mental survives. In all our observations it is not the pure objective phenomena that

we observe, but the element of mind has contributed greatly to all our conceptions and as it is said 'we take out what we put in'. When we say 'this is such and such', it is only a mental projection, it is nothing but reading our own mind. The objective reality escapes us and, as Einstein has described it, 'we extract one incomprehensible from another incomprehensible'. That is how, though we started in Science with a hard material reality, we have entered the phase where matter completely disappears and science imitates philosophy in speculating about the nature of 'the mysterious universe'.

We have nowadays books with such titles as Physics and Philosophy and Tao of Physics in which physics associates itself with philosophy, and even mysticism. This could never be thought of some decades ago. Certain recent revolutionary conclusions of science regarding space, time, matter, cause and effect etc. cannot be described in appropriate terms without recourse to philosophical ideas, and such descriptions are often seen to be like echoes of Vedantic descriptions of Maya etc. In the earlier centuries science held a mechanistic conception of the universe, propounded by Newton, which supposed that everything in nature could be explained in terms of mechanical laws and forces, and that everything was determined. If we are given a prior set of causes we can predict the future exactly. But now going

deeper into the structure of matter, they say 'there is a crack in the wall of causality'. Thus gradually science has advanced from a mechanistic interpretation to an idealistic interpretation. They now say that the universe appears to be a great thought rather than a great machine. Matter-energy is now shoved to the background, and we are told we only know certain events happening and we can merely surmise the probabilities but cannot assert anything about them definitely. Thus we find that the so-called solid scientific facts have melted away and we have moved away from the mechanistic explanations. We are not sure if there is really causality at the bottom of events; all that we know is that things happen in a particular way, and we can but watch the circumstances under which probably these events happen mostly.¹

So, that is the conclusion to which advanced scientific theories like the quantum, relativity, etc. have come to. Now these conclusions have given rise to certain philosophical ideas also—that what we see are nothing but appearances. Things are not what they seem, but only present an appearance to us and have only a functional value. The Reality is something unknown and unknowable, because whatever reality there be, the instrument of our knowledge, the instrument through which we investigate ultimately into the nature of Reality, is our own mind. And when we put something through the mind, it gets coloured by it, and often what we want to seek we find or 'we take out what we put in' as it is said. We are limited by the very nature

of our mind, and we will not be able to know the Reality as such.

These are the latest conclusions of science, and it seems to have come to a blind alley. Now Vedanta came to this conclusion thousands of years ago, but in a deeper, more comprehensive, philosophical sense, and it also discovered a way of knowing Reality as It is. It demonstrated that this whole universe, including our personality that investigates—which itself is a part of the universe—is nothing but an appearance on the substratum of the infinite spiritual Reality, Brahman, which is of the nature of pure consciousness (cit) and is at the core of all beings as their Self. The whole universe is the projection of pure Consciousness engendered by its imponderable Maya-power.

So, that is how we find science corroborating the conclusions of Vedanta in its own limited way. Science and Vedanta are both very intimately related in this respect; both try to investigate into the nature of Reality and both accept certain methods of investigation. Science says: we gather facts, classify them, and on the basis of these data we build up a hypothesis which must be tested by experiments. When the hypothesis is confirmed by experiment, then only we accept it as true. Science proceeds from the things seen to things unseen, and it also holds 'something cannot come out of nothing'. The cause must be there for the effect.

Vedanta adopted long ago these fundamental principles in a more thorough and comprehensive manner without putting any limits to its scope of investigation. Vedanta proceeds from things seen to things unseen. It also comes to the ultimate conclusions, not all of a sudden through theological speculation, but through step-by-step analysis. It analyses both the external and the internal universe, the

1. The events in nature and the happenings outside have no meaning or importance in themselves, but only in the way they are related to and affect life and mind. Even their very existence is vouched for by the mind which cognizes them.

total observable universe including the mind, and it comes to the conclusion that there is an infinite Reality behind this universe which is not material but spiritual, beyond even the mind. It can be realized by all in the core of their own being as the Self or Atman. From that Reality all this universe and its beings have been projected. The Vedantic method is a double process of induction and deduction. Through inductive analysis it comes to the conclusion that there is an ultimate source of all, an infinite Reality (Brahman) which is spiritual. Brahman is absolute Reality-Knowledge-Infinity (*satyam-jñānamantam brahma*). Vedanta derives all things again from that Reality deductively. Vedanta solved the problem of going beyond appearances and knowing the Reality as it is by turning the mind inward and uniting it with the Self within, its source, through a process of identification which transcends dualistic or dichotomistic observation.

Now when science limited itself to the external observable universe, it committed one big and fundamental mistake. It divided the universe into two, by leaving out the person who observes it from its purview, and thereby observing 'semi-verse' and not a 'uni-verse'—one part observing another part. It did not take the investigator himself into consideration who also is a part of phenomena as much as that as he observes. There are two things in every investigation or observation: the object and the subject. The subject also is of as much importance as the object, if not more. So far, science had neglected this aspect, the investigator himself. Questions like: who is the real investigator, what is his nature, how does he know, and what are his capacities to know Truth or Reality, were out of its purview. Ultimately, scientists had to fall back upon mind, and to turn their eyes inward and see who and

what the investigator himself is. But as yet they are caught up at the mental level and have still a long way to come to the Self.

Again, Vedanta found out scores of centuries ago, that if we want to investigate Reality Itself, and not merely the external phenomenon, we must take the whole of experience into consideration. Unless we get all the facts that are there, we cannot arrive at the full Truth. Science also says we must base our conclusions on facts. But partial data will give only partial truth. Merely because a view explains certain things and serves our ordinary physical purposes of life, it does not follow that it is quite sufficient to arrive at the absolute Truth. On the mechanistic theory of the universe, the Newtonian laws explain gravitation, the movements of planets, and such other things, and they held good till the twentieth century. We have now more facts coming to light and the earlier explanation is found not quite sufficient. We require an altogether different and more comprehensive explanation of phenomena. So we have the relativity, quantum and other theories, which too cannot be considered final, for they leave many things unexplained. Thus the more the facts we have in our view, the truer will be the conclusion that we can draw from them, and at each stage we can explain things satisfactorily to a particular extent only. We can explain and get the best conclusion, the highest Truth, only when we have all the facts.

Therefore, Vedanta says, we should investigate into not only external nature but also the investigator himself. We must take into consideration all the facts, all human experience, both external and internal, and in all the states of mind and consciousness. We must find out the real knower behind all experience, then only can we arrive at the true Reality. Thus we

find Vedanta concentrates not only on the nature of the external universe, but on man himself: *What is the real nature of man who is the centre of all experiences, and what is the nature of his experiences?* It points out further that the universe we observe is only one part of our experience. It relates only to our waking consciousness. When we are awake, we have the experience of this external universe with this our familiar personality; but when we go to sleep, when we dream, we go into another universe altogether, of a different and private nature, and our personalities too change. The dream-universe, though it has some similarities to the waking one, is governed by a different order of time, space and causation. And again we find, when we go into deep sleep, both the waking and dream universes melt away along with our mind and personality, and only pure awareness is left. Thus everyone of us has three states of consciousness and experience, of which we are the witnesses. This fact is universal. We have to analyse this total experience also, and not confine ourselves merely to the general experience of the waking-state consciousness, and find out the real person, the real self, who witnesses and experiences all the three states of consciousness.

Cosmologically, the Vedantic analysis of the universe starts with the process of knowledge and the capacity of the mind to analyse, to know. We have five ways of experiencing things through our five sensory organs—ears, eyes, nose, tongue and skin. Since each sense gives only one type of experience, it stands to reason there must be corresponding to them five types of elementary stimuli having the qualities of sound, light, odour, taste and touch. These are called *tanmātrās*. It is these five *tanmātrās* that build up the five senses individually for their manifestation in association with the Self, the principle of

pure Consciousness, just as electricity gives rise to the manufacture of bulbs etc. for its manifestation in association with human intelligence. The five *tanmātrās* jointly produce the mind, which is the instrument of apprehending all the five sensations, in association with the senses, and forming thoughts on their basis. Thus analysing further, adapting the Samkhyan cosmology, Vedanta ultimately arrives at one primordial very subtle substance, called *prakṛti* (the Matrix) from which in association with pure Consciousness the whole universe evolves with all the psycho-physical beings, with their organs of life, perception, thinking and acting. Prima facie, for all practical purposes, *prakṛti* and all its products or evolutes are insentient (*jada*) in themselves but become infused with the consciousness of the Self, in different degrees according to their subtlety and transparency, just as the dark bulb becomes lighted up by electricity and gives light. The primordial substance, *prakṛti*, is the source of the mind, senses, life, energy, and matter.

Prakṛti has three *guṇas* (qualitative elementary forces) known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These three *guṇas*, at the time of evolution, manifest as *mahat-prāṇa-ākāśa* (cosmic proto-psyche-energy-matter), a *triangular triad* in which each of them mutually influences the other. From *sattva*, the placid equilibrium aspect, are evolved the psychic instruments of mind, ego, etc. and the five senses; from *rajas*, the attraction-repulsion aspect, are evolved energy, the life-force, and the organs of life and activity; and from *tamas*, the dull inertia aspect, are evolved the five subtle *tanmātrā* elements, technically known as *ākāśa*, *vāyu*, *agni*, *āpa* and *prithvī*. By a permutation and combination of all the three *guṇas*, the gross universe and the different types of living beings with all the psycho-physical organs and a body to

encase them, are evolved sans consciousness. The reflection of the Self in the subtle part of the mind called *buddhi* acts as the conscious soul (*jīva*), the master of the body, the knower and experiencer, and endows it with personality to feel, think, and act. *The jīva is the real empirical person and not the body, senses, or the mind, which are only instruments (karaṇa).* Thus, both the subjective and the objective aspect, excluding the *jīva*, are constituted of the same insentient *guṇas*. There is correspondence between the two and hence experience and knowledge are possible. The real man is the soul (*jīva*) whose true nature is the Self (*ātman*). *It is the jīva which experiences and investigates in association with the body, senses and the mind, which are only its instruments.*

Now science has not analysed the universe in this manner relating it to the investigator, so it does not go into the problem of how we have experience and who really gets the experience. Science takes a conventional view of man and simply analyses matter as a set of data, which is only a small part of the universe, and its internal structure from an external point of view. Hence it is not able to explain the origin of the universe and its beings as a total entity, or of experience and knowledge, or to integrate all that exists—space, matter, energy, life, mind, and soul, in an all-encompassing UNITY. Vedanta seeks to arrive at this UNITY by knowing which everything of the experiential universe, external and internal, becomes known. By its analysis, it comes to the conclusion that the original substance (*prakṛti*), in its ultimate state, is subtle and imponderable *as an object*, being the source of energy, matter, life, and *mind itself*, and it can be meaningfully posited only as an emanation in pure Consciousness (Brahman)—the Ground, the Centre, and the Source of all experience. From this

point of view, *prakṛti* is called *Māyā*, the power of Brahman. The ultimate Consciousness or pure Consciousness, from which the universe arises, by virtue of its *Māyā*-power, is intuitively experienced by all in the core of their own being as the Self (*ātman*), the pure Subject, the Witness of all phenomena including the soul or *jīva*.

Vedanta accepts the evolution (*pariṇāma*) based on a theory known as *Sat-kārya-vāda* according to which the effect is cause in another form, and nothing comes out of nothing. We must trace the effects through the causes. So, step by step, Vedanta works out the evolution of the whole phenomena. Science also accepts evolutionary theory, though in a limited way. This is another common factor between Science and Vedanta. But Vedanta goes further, or rather deeper, and says, since the effect is the cause in another form, it is already involved in the cause. *Evolution is the process of manifesting the already existing involved entity, like tree in the seed.* So, the whole universe is already involved in *prakṛti* which manifests it in a cyclic manner, like waves in the sea, without beginning and end evolving and involving it. However, evolution is not a mere repetition, for different permutations and combinations of the potencies within *prakṛti* are possible. The deeds and their potencies (*karma* and *saṃskāra*) of living beings bring about changes in the manifested universe. It is the Consciousness Principle (*puruṣa/ brahman/ātman*) which gives *prakṛti* the impetus to evolve and involve the universe and to make it variegated, just as intelligence in Man acts on matter, and evolves different permutations and combinations which is the field of science, limited to the external world of the waking-state consciousness.

Since experiment and verification is the basis of asserting the truth of a statement,

Vedanta has evolved several methods for realizing the Self within. Science has devised instruments to analyse subtle entities in its own field, and Vedanta too has perfected its instrument, and this instrument is the mind itself. Disciplining and training the mind to get absorbed in the object of investigation by divesting it of its extrovert tendencies and vitalistic desires, Vedanta makes it fit to understand non-objectively through identification the Truth behind the universe, the pure Consciousness, the Self, out of which everything arises, including the mind.

That the universe arises in pure Consciousness can be shown by the analysis and analogy of the dream state. The dream universe arises in the mind with all the objects and other beings. They are felt tangibly by our dream personality, and they satisfy the order of reality of space-time-causation existing within dream; and so long as the dream lasts, we do not feel or know that they are untrue, that they are mental. But when we wake up, only then we say the dream things and events are untrue; the experience of them was nothing but a play of the mind itself caused by the impressions of the waking state. The impressions that are dormant rise to the surface in the mind as the experiential dream-universe. Similarly, what we call now this universe of hard and tangible things and all the events within it are also as real *now*, or as fictitious from another state, as those in the dream, *because these satisfy the particular order of reality in which they exist and hold good for this state only*. So in the waking-state consciousness with our waking-state personality we see things obeying the space-time-causation order relative to that state of consciousness or existence, *and all our empirical activities, including those of Science, are carried on meaningfully*. But that by itself does not

prove that there is an external universe independent of the mind which itself merges in deep sleep into simple awareness. This universe is also as much an emanation from the mind as the dream-universe is of our mind and consciousness—only it is not the emanation of the individualized limited mind within the universe, just as the dream-world does not rise from the mind of beings within the dream. It is the emanation of the cosmic mind which rises from cosmic pure Consciousness.

In the cosmic mind, in the dream of the cosmic mind, this universe arises from the totality of impressions (*samskāras*) of all the beings of the previous cycle. And we, everyone of us as individuals, are also a part and parcel of that universe, and a bit of the cosmic mind is manifesting through everyone of us, just as the dreamer's mind is manifested through the individuals within the dream. Therefore, to that extent, we too are the creators of, or contributors to this objective universe of the waking state, that is, to the extent we are participants in the cosmic mind. That is how everyone of us contributes to the common universe, and everyone of us has also his own conceptual universe. The universe of one individual is not exactly the same as the universe of another individual. According to his own mental state, mental experience, and all that, each thinks of the universe in his own way. He forms a different outlook and his interests and reactions are different, and everything with him is different because he contributes from his mind to it. We can never separate the universe apart from the mind of the experiencer. Therefore, the universe as a whole is an emanation in cosmic mind. Vedanta further holds that the cosmic mind itself merges into and emerges from the unmanifested *prakṛti* (*avyakta* or *māyā*) at immensely long intervals, just as our mind merges into and

emerges from the deep-sleep state, since there is a parallelism between the microcosm and macrocosm at all stages. The Self is the pure Witness Consciousness (*śakṣī-caitanya*) behind the individual deep-sleep state, and Brahman is the pure witness Consciousness behind the *avyakta* on the cosmic plane.

Since we all participate in the cosmic mind, we have a similarity of experience with regard to this universe. That explains the similarity we feel as also the peculiarity of the universe of each one of us. The common universe behind every one of us is the cosmic mind in the form of waves of the totality of all ideas (*vṛttis*), just as our dream-universe is nothing but the ideas latent within us. They are formed of the impressions within the mind, and when we go into deep sleep or wake up we find the dream universe simply disappears. Similarly, when the cosmic mind 'goes to sleep', that is merges in the *avyakta*, this universe also, together with all the beings in it, merges back into it. Therefore, this universe has an existence only as long as the cosmic mind is in waves, is awake (active), and when it 'sleeps' (withdraws or becomes quiescent), the universe also merges into *avyakta* or *māyā*, the power of infinite pure Consciousness (Brahman). From that pure Consciousness, when there arises an urge in it for creation or rather for cosmic projection (*sr̥ṣṭi*), the cosmic mind is manifested, together with the totality of impressions of the previous cycle, and in that mind of all this play (*līlā*) of the universe takes place. That is why we find, when we analyse scientifically also, when we go deeper and deeper into things, things simply vanish and only mind is left. That is because this universe is nothing but cosmic mind, it is a play (*līlā*) of the cosmic mind.

Empirically, Vedanta posits space as very fine all-pervading proto-matter which

it calls *ākāśa*. Now that material cannot be made up of particles. For if it is particulate, then what is in between the particles? You will be led to posit another space or vacuity which is untenable. How are these particles joined? And how are they distinguished? Therefore *ākāśa* cannot be composed of particles, and at the same time we find all entities exist in *ākāśa* and appear to be made up of particles. How do they exist, and whence have they come? Vedanta says they are only an appearance, a modification of *ākāśa* (space), like icebergs formed from the water of the sea and floating about in it. The nature of *ākāśa* is imponderable. Where can this space exist then? Space, therefore, is an emanation, an appearance, in pure Consciousness. That is how space, though it makes space for things to exist which are its own apparent modifications, itself exists in pure Consciousness. Hence it can be infinitely expansive *within* Consciousness. Ultimately, since all entities are derived from *ākāśa*, they all exist in pure Consciousness only and are manifestations of its *māyā-power*.

With the innate urge for cosmic manifestation, like the innate shining property of light, *māyā-power* of Brahman is spontaneously transformed phenomenally into *prakṛti* with its three *guṇas*. From its *sattva* aspect arise *mahat* (cosmic mind) and the principle of causation; from its *rajas* aspect arise *prāṇa* (life-force and energy) and the principle of time; and from the *tamas* aspect arise *ākāśa* (proto-matter) and the principle of space. The cosmic mind acting upon *ākāśa* through cosmic *prāṇa* lashes *ākāśa* constantly into waves of different forms of objects and beings which we call the universe. *Ākāśa*, because of its property of *tamas* (inertia), strives constantly to go back to its quiescent subtle condition, ceaselessly breaking down all forms. And this factor gives rise to the

principle of gravitation, decay and death. This process is regulated and a rhythm is introduced by the *sattva* (equilibrium) aspect of *prakṛti*. Brahman/Atman is the principle of consciousness behind all at all stages of evolution.

Vedanta posits pure Consciousness as the ultimate Reality, and that pure Consciousness is called Atman or Brahman (*prajñānam brahma*). We call it Atman when we relate it to Existence behind each one of us, and we call it Brahman when we view It as the Substratum of the whole universe. From that Brahman/Atman comes into existence this space (*ākāśa*) of imponderable nature in which all things exist (*tasmāt ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhutaḥ*). Space is not really infinite, it is a limited entity arising in Consciousness. And how it can be a limited entity though it seems to stretch boundlessly, we can now understand. For instance, just think of this glass or a huge mountain, it is all the same for the mind (which is an instrument of Consciousness); irrespective of its size and the space a thing occupies mind can take that form. Some scientists talk of 'the expanding universe'. This can be understood only from the Vedantic point of view. The definition of the nature of the space has eluded science.

The primordial matrix of the universe which the Sāṃkhya calls 'prakṛti' with the three *guṇas*, and holds that it exists independently and eternally, Vedanta transforms into *Māyā*, the universe-projecting power of the supreme Reality, Brahman. Hence, *māyā* is not a negative entity. Nor is it an illusion. It is a positive inseparable innate power of Brahman like the shining power of light or the burning power of fire. It has its two aspects of first veiling (*āvaraṇaśakti*) the Reality or Self and then projecting (*vikṣepaśakti*) its opposite, the non-Reality or non-Self, or appearance of name and form, in the form of the universe,

on the ground of the Reality. If there is 'illusion', it consists in the *jīva* getting lost in the universe and missing the Reality due to the veiling power of *Māyā*, not that the universe itself is an illusion. The 'illusion' is in us which we have to overcome by realizing the Reality, the Self, as our true nature. Vedanta calls this, technically, metaphysical non-knowledge or Ignorance (*avidyā* or *ajñāna*) of the Reality, which is removed by knowledge or Gnosis (*vidyā* or *jñāna*) of the Reality. This description of *Māyā* is based on microcosmic experience. Since there is uniformity of nature, uniformity between the macrocosmic and the microcosmic, it holds good to the macrocosmic as well. When we go to sleep, our real nature as waking personalities is covered up; then only the dream-universe is projected. That is Ignorance, the veiling power of *Māyā*, acting on the individual plane. Similarly on the cosmic plane, on the one hand *Māyā* covers up the real nature of Brahman, pure Consciousness, and on the other evolves the universe out of itself on the ground of Brahman. Since we find the three *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in the whole diversified universe and in all entities and beings, therefore *Māyā*, there cause, is said to be constituted of these three *guṇas*. Thus the Vedantic *Māyā* is nothing but transformed *prakṛti* of the Sāṃkhya. Sāṃkhya posited two independent principles. A conscious principle (*puruṣa*) and a principle of primordial matrix (*prakṛti*) and by their juxtaposition *prakṛti* evolves the universe. But Vedanta reduces the two into one supreme principle which manifests everything. The *Prakṛti* of the Sāṃkhya was demonstrated to be the *māyā*-power of Brahman, though the word *prakṛti* is continued in use on the material level.

Thus Vedanta establishing the one supreme Reality, realizable as the Self by all,

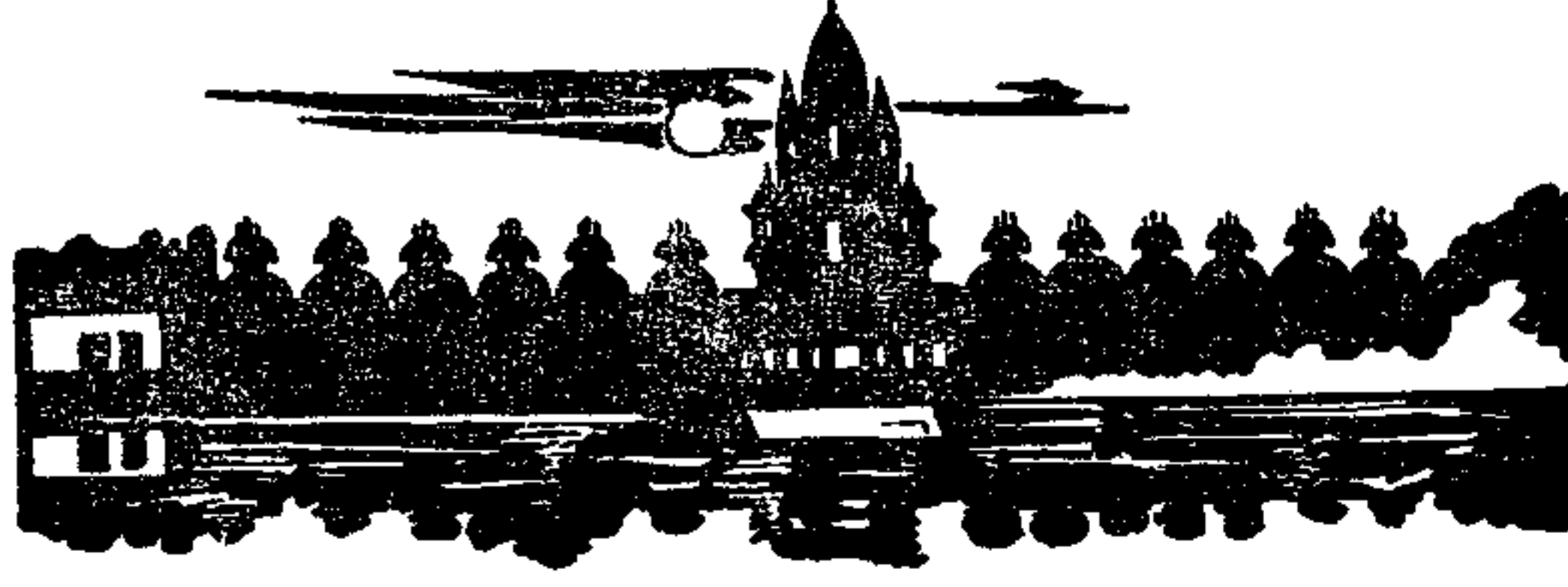
of which everything else is a manifestation, arrives at macrocosmic cosmological and spiritual truths on the basis of microcosmic evidence. Especially by the analysis of the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep, which are within the purview of each and all of us, it propounds a scientific cosmology and science of Reality, instead of mere theological speculation.

So, that is how Vedanta demonstrates that there is only absolute spiritual Reality (Brahman) and that Reality is appearing as the many. Just as Science questions: 'What is that ultimate constituent of nature from which we can understand all material phenomena', similarly Vedanta started with a more comprehensive question: 'What is that, revered Sir, by knowing which everything of this experiential universe, both internal and external (including matter, energy, life, senses, mind, and Soul) becomes known?' (*kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvam idam vijñātam bhavati?*—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 1.1.3)

The answer is: by realizing Brahman as one's Self one knows everything. The ultimate conclusion of Vedanta is given in the four great dicta or equations (*mahāvākya*) of the Upaniṣads: (1) 'Brahman is pure Consciousness (*prajñānam Brahma*); (2) This pure Consciousness is within all, intuited as the Self (Atman), and as such 'The Atman is Brahman' (*ayam ātmā brahma*); (3) 'That (Brahman) Thou Art' (*tat-tvam-asi*); (4) and when this is realized through spiritual disciplines, the *sādhaka* (spiritual aspirant) declares: 'I am Brahman' (*aham-brahma-asmi*). When the truth is realized one discovered that out of this pure Consciousness within all, the whole universe evolves and, as such, the universe too is Brahman (*brahma eva idam viśvam*), only it is hidden under the veil of *māyā*. The universe does not consist

of blind and inanimate matter; all that we see as inanimate matter is manifestation of Consciousness only, but being veiled by *tamas* it is not expressed, just as the mirror reflects our image, but the wall does not. As it evolves into life, mind etc. Consciousness expresses itself more and more. As Jalal-ud-din Rumi echoes: 'I died as mineral and became a plant; I died as plant and rose to animal; I died as animal and I was man...I shall die as man, to soar with angels blest...' In Vedantic terminology, the inner Self (*ātman*) expresses more and more as the soul changes the locus of personality passing through the five different sheaths (*kośas*) encasing the Self, from the external to the internal one in order of greater subtlety and transparency. The sheaths are physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and aesthetic in nature. And when the Soul goes beyond all the sheaths, the Atman stands revealed in all Its full glory and the Soul remains identified with the Atman.

The great conclusions of Vedanta have attracted the imagination of many of the scientists and they have appreciated them very highly, for Vedanta is in its own way highly scientific in its approach. Its cosmological and spiritual conclusions are based on investigation and demonstrable principles which lifts Vedanta from a mere theology to a spiritual Science. Modern materialistic science is gradually coming to Vedanta and there will be a time when both will meet and shake hands and each will supplement the other in understanding the nature and manifestation of the ultimate Reality more completely on all levels. As the *Gītā* (ch.13) declares: 'The knowledge of the whole field of experience, both internal and external, and that of the knower of the field is true complete knowledge.' (*kṣetra-ksetrajñayor-jñānam yat tat jñānam*).



RELIGION: FOR HARMONY OR DISCORD?

NABANIHARAN MUKHOPADHYAY

[All over the world there are signs of religious awakening, but nowhere else has this created so many problems as in India which has for centuries remained a land of religious pluralism and cultural diversity. Religious fervour often makes people hate not only the followers of other religions but even their own co-religionists who refuse to toe their line of thinking. Unfortunately this phenomenon has made its appearance, although sporadically, in modern Hinduism. There may be several reasons for this. But the spirit of harmony and acceptance has always been the basis of the Hindu outlook, and to deny this is to deny Hinduism its much needed Universal appeal. From the sociological point of view one of the most significant purposes of the continuing mission of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda is to awaken the spirit of harmony and acceptance in the hearts of men. In the present article a prominent youth leader discusses the importance and implications of this mission—
Editor, P.B.]

Religion in the modern world

Religion is both the experience of 'the eternal relationship between the eternal soul and the eternal God', and the expression of this experience through beliefs, customs and social institutions. Either way, it is a powerful inner drive which deeply affects a person's total life. It is therefore only natural that religion often rouses strong emotions and reactions in people. The primary purpose of religion, however, is to unite not only man with God but also man with man. If the primary purpose is forgotten, religion changes into an engine of destruction. Religious fervour is understandable, but it should not be made an excuse for behaving impudently or imprudently in the name of religion. Before expressing themselves through speech and

writing, religious leaders should consider whether what they do will divide or unite people, whether it will create harmony or discord.

However much one may be proud of one's religion one should not forget that one is living in a complex social milieu in which no kind of exclusiveness is possible. Science and technology, culture and commerce, and the compulsions of the democratic polity are drawing people closer together into a complex, diverse, pluralistic web of relationships. In this situation nothing is more needed than harmony and peace. Religions can and should play a constructive role in bringing this about. Regarding this Swami Nikhilananda states:

Humanity is stricken today with a serious malady. This malady is essentially spiritual; political

friction, economic unrest, and moral confusion are only its outer symptoms. Man is not at peace with his neighbours, with nature, with himself, or with his Creator. Greed, lust for power, and anger are abroad. Ill-will and suspicion are poisoning the very source of interracial and international relationships. The challenge of aggressive evil which is undermining human society can be met only by aggressive good. A drastic change in our thinking is imperative. Human nature shall have to be transformed. But this transformation can come neither through psychotherapy nor through science and technology, not through military, political or economic pacts. It is religion that can contribute in a large measure to bringing about the change. The great faiths of the world owe it to humanity to rise to the occasion.

As there are many dangers ready to engulf humanity, so also there are infinite possibilities to create a glorious world. Distance has been annihilated and men are now in a better position than ever before to compare notes with one another regarding their achievements and failures. Everyone has access to right knowledge and everyone can learn to make free use of it. In this fateful hour it is the duty of the religions to act as pointers to the goal of peace and freedom. Let them give tired humanity a song to sing.¹

The doctrine of dharma-samanvaya

One of the most unique features of Hinduism is its spirit of harmony and the capacity to link together and unify diverse belief patterns. No other religion shows this characteristic as much as Hinduism does. Owing to this characteristic, Hinduism has a greater role to play in the modern world than any other religion. No less a person than the renowned historian Arnold Toynbee has pointed this out:

Today we are still living in this transitional chapter of the world history, but it is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction

1. Swami Nikhilananda, *Hinduism* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1968) Pp. 188-89

of the human race. In the present age, the world has been united on the material plane by Western technology. But this Western skill has not only 'annihilated distance'; it has armed peoples of the world with weapons of devastating power at a time when they have been brought to point-blank range of each other without yet having learnt to know and love each other. At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way.²

Explaining further the Indian way, Toynbee continues:

In the Hindu view, each of the higher religions is a true vision and a right way...

To know this is good, but it is not enough. Religion is not just a matter for study; it is something that has to be experienced and to be lived, and this is the field in which Sri Ramakrishna manifested his uniqueness.³

Swami Vivekananda said:

He (Sri Ramakrishna) criticized no one. For years I lived with that man, but never did I hear those lips utter one word of condemnation for any sect. He had the same sympathy for all sects; he had found the harmony between them. A man may be intellectual, or devotional, or mystic, or active; the various religions represent the one or the other of these types. Yet it is possible to combine all the four in one man, and this is what future humanity is going to do. This was his idea. He condemned no one, but saw the good in all.⁴

The second idea that I learnt from my Master, and which is perhaps the most vital, is the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion...And this religion is expressing itself in various countries, in various ways. Therefore.

2. Swami Ghanananda, *Sri Ramakrishna and His Unique Message* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1982) P. VIII

3. Ibid. P. VII

4. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1978) Vol. 4. p. 178. Henceforth cited as '*Complete Works*'.

we must respect all religions and we must try to respect them all as far as we can.⁵

This is the meaning of synthesis or harmony of religions, lived and preached by Sri Ramakrishna. This principle is known usually as *Sarva-dharma-samanvaya* (and not '*Sarva-dharma-samabhāva*' as described by some). *Sama* means 'equal'. *Samanvaya* means harmony, which implies diversity and difference. So the *dharma-samanvaya* ideal points to concord or agreement amongst different religions like the combination of musical notes to form a melody.

Samanvaya does not mean mere combination. In philosophy the Sanskrit word usually means *avirodha*, non-contradictoriness. The first step to harmony is to see that the different religions are not mutually contradictory but are complementary. Harmony or *samanvaya* is not the same as eclecticism or *samuccaya*, the mere agglomeration of the many. Eclecticism has often been tried in the field of religion, but in vain. It ultimately leads to mutual exclusion with one religion tending to absorb all the others. It does not allow all religions to thrive equally, sustaining spiritual life of various types of individuals. Harmony or *samanvaya* rightly understood is certainly a more superior standpoint than the eclectic view though the latter is superior to the partisan view. The partisan takes the conclusions, beliefs, and everything else of his own religion as the exclusive truth, the only *siddhānta*, about religion and not only regards other religions as wrong or false, but despises, reviles, and hates them, as also their followers. He may be very sincere in his attachment to his religion, but lacks broadness of mind, depth of vision, and empathy. One of the fundamental aspects of the mission of Sri Ramakrishna was to awaken in the

hearts of men religious empathy and harmony. As pointed out by Swami Vivekananda:

To learn this central secret that the truth may be one and yet many at the same time, [which is the import of *sarva-dharma-samanvaya* or harmony of religions] that we may have different visions of the same truth from different standpoints, is exactly what must be done. Then instead of antagonism to any one, we shall have infinite sympathy with all. Knowing that as long as there are different natures born in this world, the same religious truth will require different adaptations, we shall understand that we are bound to have forbearance with each other.⁶

Fundamentals common to all religions

All religions emphasize that the ultimate Truth is one. Every religion leads to the same Truth, though its expressions may be a little different. In some form or other every religion has a place for knowledge, devotion and work as modes of grasping the truth. In all religions there have been people who realized the Ultimate Truth and through that attained liberation. God-consciousness is the same, whatever be the method of attaining it prescribed by any religion. Again, a messiah or Avatar is recognized in almost all religions. No messiah came to destroy, every one of them came to fulfil.

All religions enjoin as a means for God-realization the control of human passions and worldly enjoyments and the religions in some way make a distinction between the material and the spiritual planes. Anybody treading the spiritual path finds in him, besides his body and his mind, a third something, often called the soul or spirit. That the spiritual realization occurs not outside oneself but within, has been unanimously proved by all who realized the Truth.

5. Ibid. 4:180

6. Ibid. 4:181

On the philosophic side, every religion deals with the nature of God, the world, and man and the interrelationship among these categories. Every religion has a well-developed system of applied psychology. Every religion concerns itself with the ultimate purpose of human existence. Every religion speaks of the attainment of a supersensuous world of blessedness and peace by the virtuous. The Law of Karma, in the form of cause and effect, is accepted by all religions as the basis of the moral obligation enforced by them. 'All religions teach us to do good for our brothers.'⁷

Harmony of religions taught in Hindu scriptures

It is said in the Upanisads that whatever may be the colour of the cows, the milk that we get is in all cases equally white. Difference of opinion and confusion arise from partial knowledge, as Sri Ramakrishna has taught by the parable of the chameleon which appears to be of different colours to different people, or as shown by the well-known Vedantic story of six blind men giving different descriptions of the elephant. 'It is good to be born in a church but not to die there', said Swami Vivekananda. A hedge is good for a sapling, but it has to be removed when it grows into a tree.

If we choose to pin our faith on the words of the sages of the ancient Vedas, we can find the principles of harmony and universality of truth stressed in them also. The Supreme Lord, who is often called Indra, is also *Puruhūta*,⁸ 'invoked by many', 'he is common to all'.⁹ He is sometimes called Varuna, but 'he is of our own land, and also of foreign lands'.¹⁰ A sage of the *Rg-Veda* prays for forgiveness of sins committed against a brother, comrade, or friend or against a stranger.¹¹ What a

wonderful example of universal friendship is the prayer which says, 'May we look upon all beings with a friendly eye, may we look upon one another with the eye of a friend.'¹²

Not uniformity but unity in diversity; not disharmony but harmony and concord—this is not an absolutely modern concept but has been the eternal theme of the Indian mind, brilliantly glittering all through the centuries. The *Atharva Veda* says, 'the world, which holds people speaking varied languages and following various religions in different places, is one.'¹³ Through beautiful imagery the sages repeatedly stressed the idea of harmony again and again: 'The bird is one; viewing variously, intelligent learned men describe it in various ways.'¹⁴ Commenting on this the great Sāyana says, 'The Supreme Self is one, but it is contemplated in various ways'.

Do we not get the same idea in the *Gītā*, where Kṛṣṇa says, 'In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires?'¹⁵

8. *Rg-Veda* VII, 32,26

9. साधारणस्त्वम् । *Rg-Veda* IV 32,13

10. यः संदेश्यो वरुणो यो विदेश्यः ।

Atharva Veda, IV, 168.

11. *Rg-Veda*, V, 85, 7.

12. मित्रस्याहं चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षे ।

मित्रस्य चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे ॥

Sukla Yajurveda, 36,18.

13. जनं विभ्रती बहुधा विवाचसम् ।

नाना धर्माणं पृथिवी यथौकसम् ॥

Atharva Veda, XII, 1, 45.

14. सुपर्णं विप्राः कवयो वचोभिरेकं सन्तं

बहुधा कल्पयन्ति ।

Rg-Veda, X, 114, 5.

15. ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

Gītā, IV, 11

When Pushpadanta in *Sivamahimnah Stotram* says, 'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee',¹⁶ he verily echoes the voice of *Mundakopaniṣad*: 'As rivers throw off their names and forms and mingle into the sea...'¹⁷

We must remember that in those ancient days the other great religions of world were not there. So we cannot expect their names to occur in these utterances, but the basic note of harmony is clear.

Sri Ramakrishna and religious harmony

But then, how did disharmony and conflict arise? Speaking about the religious situation before the advent of Sri Ramakrishna, an eminent professor of philosophy Dr. Satish Chandra Chatterjee states:

Different religious sects and communities cherished different ideas of God, accepted different religious creeds and dogmas, and adopted different methods and practices in their religious life. Each religious sect or community thought that it was only its own religion that was true and could lead to salvation, while all other religions were false and would bring eternal damnation. Such was the dogmatism and fanaticism that characterized different religious sects and vitiated the religious atmosphere of the time.¹⁸

16. रुचीणां वैचित्र्याद् ऋजुकुटिलनानापथजुषाम् ।
नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव ॥

Sivamahimnah Stotram, 7

17. यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रेऽस्तं गच्छन्ति
नामरूपे विहाय ।

Mundakopaniṣad 3,2,8.

18. Satish Chandra Chatterjee, *Classical Indian Philosophies: Their Synthesis in the Philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1963), p. 141

It was in this tense atmosphere of religious clashes and conflicts that Sri Ramakrishna preached his gospel of the harmony of all religions.¹⁹

Another professor of philosophy testifies to the spirit of acceptance in the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna:

The sensitive being of Ramakrishna could not tolerate these differences in the fundamental convictions of human life; and, before he could give out any solution, he practised these faiths and judged them by their fruits.²⁰

About such divine integrators E.W. Hopkins says in his *Origin and Evolution of Religions*: 'What he hands on to posterity is the old religion *plus himself*; which may be the most important factor of all.'

Thus, says professor Chatterjee, 'it was this old gospel of the Hindu faith that Sri Ramakrishna preached with a new force and freshness when he said "So many religions are so many paths".'²¹

In his book *Sri Ramakrishna and His Unique Message* Swami Ghanananda has shown that the Great Master extended the principle of harmony to all walks of life and to all fields of human endeavour. Speaking about the harmony of religions the Swami says:

It was a great glory of Sri Ramakrishna that...his realizations of the truths of Islam, Christianity and other religions besides Hinduism, which confer on him a unique place among the mystics of the world, enable him to preach a universal synthesis of the spiritual thought and culture, ideals and aspirations of humanity. His firm grip of the fruit, experience and philosophy, enabled him to squeeze out the juice, a great teaching—the Harmony of Religions.²²

19. Ibid. p. 142

20. Mahendranath Sircar, *Eastern Lights* (Calcutta: Arya Publishing House, 1935), p. 22

21. *Classical Indian Philosophies*, p. 227

22. *Sri Ramakrishna and His Unique Message*, p. 105

No one else emphasized the doctrine of unity and harmony with greater force as Swami Vivekananda did. Listen to his eloquent assertion of it:

Therefore these words come to us today very fresh, as great, stimulating, life-giving words, much fresher than they were when they were written: 'That which exists is One; sages call it by various names.' We have to learn yet that all religions, under whatever name they may be called, either Hindu, Buddhist, Mohammedan, or Christian, have the same God, and he who derides any one of these derides his own God.²³

Three hundred years before Christ, instructions were given them (Buddhist preachers) not to revile other religions; 'The basis of all religions is the same, wherever they are; try to help them all you can, teach them all you can, but do not try to injure them.'²⁴

Is God's book finished? Or is it still a continuous revelation going on? It is a marvellous book—these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded...We stand in the present, but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present, and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the future.²⁵

This is the approach of a dynamic modern mind which is rational, pragmatic, and scientific, yet does not indulge in brash modernism to scoff at the old, merely because it is old, and has the determination to march on with irrepressible optimism and faith in man's possibilities.

The spiritual urge that motivated Sri Ramakrishna to practise different religions was as great as the message of harmony that he preached. Swami Prabhavananda states:

23. *Complete Works*, 1(1977): 350

24. *Ibid.*, 1:391

25. *Ibid.*, 2:374

Once Sri Ramakrishna was asked why he had followed so many paths; was not one path enough by which to reach the supreme goal? His answer was: 'The Mother is infinite, infinite are her moods and aspects. I longed to realize her in all of them. And she revealed to me the truth of all religions.' Thus, though he did not practise varied spiritual disciplines with the specific purpose of bringing harmony among many faiths, his life demonstrated that harmony.²⁶

Universality and harmony are not something newly to be created; they already exist—points out Swami Vivekananda:

Universal religion...is already existing. If the priests and other people that have taken upon themselves the task of preaching different religions simply cease preaching for a few moments, we shall see it is there. They are disturbing it all the time, because it is to their interest...What would be the fate of a priest who wants to give you new and advanced ideas and lead you forward?...Of course, there are exceptional souls, not cowed down by public opinion. They see the truth and truth alone they value.²⁷

Sri Ramakrishna was such an exceptional soul, who offered to give away everything to his beloved Mother (Kālī) except truth, which unveiled its myriad facets to his penetrating search and which, in its harmonized diversity, he has bequeathed to man.

Introducing Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world, the famous American literator Christopher Isherwood wrote:

I am not writing this book primarily for confirmed believers or non-believers. The sort of readers I am writing for is the one who is not afraid to recognize the marvellous, no matter where he finds it, the sort of reader who is always on the lookout for a phenomenon.²⁸

26. Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1977) p. 341

27. *Complete Works* 2:367

28. See, his *Ramakrishna and His Disciples* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1980) p. 2

To recognize the full significance and future possibilities of a 'new phenomenon' one needs depth of vision and broadness of outlook. It is those who lack these qualities that try to belittle or criticize the life and message of the prophet of the modern world. In 1896 Max Muller wrote an article under the title, 'A Real Mahatman', on the life of Sri Ramakrishna in *The Nineteenth Century*,²⁹ in which he tried to remove unfounded doubts and misconceptions regarding the Great Master from the minds of Western people. There has never been a dearth of people, who are always out to debunk great men. In 1904

(after Swami Vivekananda's passing away) Girish Chandra Ghosh (who needs no new introduction, I believe), while addressing the audience at Belur Math on the occasion of Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary, remarked:

The critic is a queer creation! Perhaps they are indispensable for any great work. Critics banished Sita to the forest; Jatila-Kutila were there in the love-drama of Vrindavana; there is no dearth of critics in the great play of Vivekananda. The critic has now left Paramahansa and caught hold of Vivekananda. Let the critic live with his criticism; his life is not to be noticed or envied.³⁰

(To be concluded)

29. For excerpts from this see, *World Thinkers on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda*, (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1983) Pp. 1-4

30. Girish Chandra Ghosh, *Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sri Ma O Vivekananda* (Bengali) (Calcutta: Saptarshi, 1390 B.S.), p. 44

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

BHAGAVAN RAMANA AND MOTHER
BY A. R. NATARAJAN. Published by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 40/41, 2nd Cross, Lower Palace Orchards, Bangalore 560 003. 1982. Pp. 59. Rs. 25.

This illustrated book brings to the reader a vivid account of the sweet and sublime relation that existed between Ramana Maharshi and his mother who lived with him during the last few years of her life. It narrates the story of his early life and how she rejoined him in Thiruvannamalai. Among the several anecdotes included in this book, Ramana Maharshi's prayer to Sri Arunachala to cure his mother's illness is a very touching one. That the sage who was established in Atman had this soft feeling for his mother proves that Self-realization is not entirely world-negating and dry. The book narrates how Maharshi's mother, an extremely orthodox Brahmin lady, became under the influence of her illumined son, more liberal and extended her love and affection to human beings at large. We have also a description of the last moments of her life. To use Maharshi's own words, 'The vāsanās of the previous births and latent tendencies which are the seeds for future births came out. She was observing the scenes of the experience of vāsanās one after another. As a

result of a series of such experiences she was working them out.' The Maharshi sat by her side throughout and, by an exercise of his spiritual Will, liberated her soul. This reminds us of Śrī Śankara's dashing to his mother's side in her last moments. Later a temple was built over the place where she was buried and the Maharshi lovingly supervised the temple construction. The printing and get-up of this handy volume are excellent. But a book of this size should be cheaper.

SWAMI AMRITANANDA

Secretary, Vivekananda College, Madras

HISTORY OF PRE-KALIYUGA INDIA:
BY RAVINDRA KUMAR SIDDHANTASASTRI. Published by Inter-India Publications, 105 Ananda Nagar, Delhi 110 035. 1978. Pp. 268. Rs. 75.

This is an exhaustive and critical account of the historical personages of India from B.C. 7976 to the dawn of the present Kaliyuga or the Mahabharata war, 3136 B.C. (p. 44). The author, a professor of Sanskrit with wide experience in guiding post-graduate students at the University of Calcutta has devoted his life to the reconstruction of a correct history of India from indigenous literary sources. The present book in nine chapters deals with the very ancient period,

act just like all the other mens I know. Trifling, forgetful and lowdown.'

Celie here is rejecting the traditional, patriarchal God of history which so much of the world still worships and to which so much of America still gives lip service. This is a *supernatural, personal God* who gives good things to humanity and allows, if not dishes out, abundant evil in this world.

When asked what God looks like, Celie decides to 'stick up for God' and says, 'He big and old and tall and graybearded and white. (The characters in the novel are black I should add.) He wear white robes and go barefooted.' Shug teasingly asks, 'Blue eyes?' and Celie answers seriously, 'Sort of bluish gray. Cool. Big though. White lashes.'

All this makes Shug laugh. For Shug, God is something else and Shug says, 'Tell the truth, have you ever found God in church? I never did. I just found a bunch of folks hoping for him to show. Any God I ever felt in church I brought in with me. And I think all the other folks did to. They come to church to *share* God, not *find* God.'

This poorly educated yet worldly wise woman goes on to give a sophisticated interpretation of God, one that is dynamic and dialectical in the tension between the God within us and the God which is shared between us.

Shug goes on to say, 'Here's the thing... The thing I believe. *God is inside you* and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. And sometimes it just manifests itself even if you not looking, or don't know what you looking for.'

'It?' asks Celie.

'Yeah, It. God ain't a he or a she, but a It.'

God is an interior thing within us and

God is within others also, and God meets God when we truly meet and communicate. God, in this view, is a datum of existence, both private in the depths and interpersonal in the daily life around us. This God is in the depths and is immanent around us.

Shug continues with her wisdom and adds a third perspective beyond that of Celie's supernatural old man, and Shug's own god within. She says, 'My first step from the old white man was trees. Then air. Then birds. Then other people. But one day when I was sitting quiet and feeling like a motherless child, which I was, it come to me: that feeling of being part of everything, not separate at all. I knew if I cut a tree, my arm would bleed. And I laughed and I cried and I run all around the house. I knew just what it was. In fact, when it happen, you can't miss it.'

Thus, there is a transcendent and mystical dimension of God which Shug brings forth. This is a *pantheistic view, god in everything*—transcendent because it includes everything, and immanent because God is Nature.

Thus, in a matter of pages we have the supernatural God of Celie contrasted with a complex interior, yet inter-personal God plus a pantheistic God of Nature.

Finally, in the line from which the title of the book comes, Shug tells Celie in effect, 'I think it angers God (she uses somewhat stronger language) it angers God into a rage if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it.'

Thus there is also this *aesthetic dimension of God, sheer beauty*—the colour purple in a field somewhere and we dishonour existence, dishonour God, if we do not take due notice.

And finally, returning to Celie's first description of God, Shug tells her that it is a bad habit to keep thinking about God as an old man. She says, 'Whenever you

NOTES AND COMMENTS

High School Education—Decline in Quality

Like several other things in India, the progress of high school education is marked by a grave contradiction. In spite of the increase in the number of schools, teachers and pupils, the quality of education is definitely declining. A most dismal proof of this fact came recently when the newspapers reported in July 1984 the mass failure of students in the high school and intermediate examinations of Uttar Pradesh. The failure of 3,26,825 regular candidates, that is 68.3 per cent of the total number of students who appeared in the high school examination, has sent shock waves all over the State. Does the pass percentage of 31.7, which is the lowest in the history of the U.P. Board of High School and Intermediate Examinations, justify the enormous investment of money and manpower on public education? The percentage of successful candidates fell from 49 in 1982 to 42.73 last year and plummeted to 31.7 this year.

The Director of Education and Chairman of the Examination Committee, U.P., attributed the higher percentage of failure this year to 'strict invigilation' and 'prolonged strike by teachers'. The president of the U.P. Parents' Association also put the blame on the teachers, who were said to be more interested in 'trade union' and political activities than in teaching. The teachers in their turn levelled counter-charges against the Government for its failure to redress their economic grievances and for introducing a new curriculum in 1982 without the support of an adequate infrastructure. The number of subjects in the high school was raised from five to seven, with science, mathematics and social science having been made compulsory, but as many as 3,000 schools do not have science or maths teachers. Moreover, two languages were made compulsory: Hindi and English, Sanskrit or Urdu. It was also alleged that the computerization of valuation, entrusted to incompetent agencies, led to inaccuracies and delay in the processing of the papers of 1,23,000 students.

Though the state of education in the other States may not be as bad as it is in U.P., everywhere there has been a steady decline in recent years. Both the government and the teachers have to share the blame for this. In a thought provoking article, based on extensive research, published in *Daedalus*, the famous journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Gerald Grant pictures public education as consisting of three concentric circles. The inner circle is constituted by teachers who, if they were free, could make a big difference in the quality of education. But they are bounded by the second circle consisting of students the nature of which is determined by parental influence, motivation, ethnic and cultural background. The outermost ring is made up of the policies, planning and financial outlay of the Government. Gerald Grant continues:

If we visualize these three layers as the skin, flesh and seeds of a fruit, the American high school of 1900 was like an avocado. Its centre of adult power and initiative was unified and virtually impregnable. Its meaty middle layer of students was fairly homogeneous, and its skin of external policy was thin and clearly defined...The high school of 1981 is like a watermelon, with a thick rind of federal and state policy, a greatly expanded and diverse student body and no clearly definable centre.

The picture may be true of high school education in India too, with the difference that the fruit is partially rotten.
