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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



Prabuddha Bharata

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No. 7

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

यश्चिदापो महिना पर्यपश्य-
दक्षं दधाना जनयंतीर्यज्ञम् ।
यो देवेष्वधि देव एक आसीत्
कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥

(1) Let us worship with oblation the divine *Ka* who by his might beheld the waters all around,¹ containing the creative power² and giving birth to sacrifice (*yajña*); who is the God of gods, the sole Existence.

Rg-Veda 10.121.8

मा नो हिंसीज्जनिता यः पृथिव्या
यो वा दिवं सत्यधर्मा जजान ।
यश्चापश्चन्द्रा बृहतीर्जजान
कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥

(2) Let us worship with oblation the divine *Ka* who never harms us, who is the creator of the earth and the sky, who is *satyadharmā*,³ and who generated the vast and delightful waters.⁴

Rg-Veda 10.121.9

प्रजापते न त्वदेतान्यन्यो
विश्वा जातानि परि ता बभूव ।
यत् कामास्ते जुहुमस्तन्नो अस्तु
बयं स्याम पतयो रयीणाम् ॥

(3) *Prajāpati!*⁵ You alone have given existence to all these beings and none besides You. May we attain the desired result of our sacrifice, and may we become the possessors of riches.

Rg-Veda 10.121.10

* The hymn to *Hiraṇyagarbha* is concluded here.

1. The reference here is to the beginning of creation.

2. *Sāyaṇa* interprets *dakṣa* as a synonym of *Prajāpati*.

3. *Satyadharmā* is interpreted by *Sāyaṇa* to

mean 'unerring support'. *Satya* means truthfulness in personal conduct, and *dharma* means universal moral order. In early Vedic literature both the meanings were conveyed by the word *ṛta*.

4. 'Waters' here stands for Universal Life.

5. In later Vedic literature *Prajāpati* is identified sometimes with *Virāj*, sometimes with *sūtrātman* or supreme Godhead.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL discusses how meditative awareness could be maintained in the midst of daily work.

SPINOZA AND THE BORDERLAND OF SCIENCE is a brief but inspiring account of the life and thought of the great 17th-century Jewish philosopher. The author of the article Dr. Bernhard Mollenhauer is a distinguished American scholar and thinker, now residing in San Diego, California, with a world-wide circle of friends. His mother, a violinist, knew Swami Vivekananda whose works were the first books on philosophy that Dr. Mollenhauer read as a boy.

ON THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF GRACE AND KARMA by Dr. Michael C. Brannigan, Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, New York, is a

sympathetic phenomenological study of two fundamental doctrines of Christianity and Hinduism.

In PATANJALI AND THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION Dr. Grihapati Mitra D. Sc., Professor of Chemistry at King's College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, places the thought of Patanjali in perspective in the light of modern science.

In the second instalment of his article BUSINESS MANAGEMENT IN INDIA: LIGHT FROM WITHIN Dr. S. K. Chakraborty M. Com., Ph.D., A.I.C.W.A., Professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, examines the traditional foundations of business management in Japan and points out their parallels in Indian Culture.

MEDITATION AND WORK—II

(EDITORIAL)

Meditation as a state and as a technique

The difference between Karma and Kar-mayoga was pointed out in last month's Editorial. It is important to know a similar distinction between meditation as a technique (*vyavasthā*) and meditation as a state of consciousness (*avasthā*). The first is a scheme or procedure, often a complex one, involving several steps like prayer, salutation, breath control, visualization, repetition of Mantra, self-surrender etc. The effort of following this procedure is what most people mean by 'meditating'. It is a kind of inner ritual, a mental drill, a struggle against psycho-physical automatisms, lower impulses and uncontrolled thinking.

Meditation as a state (*avasthā*) is a simple state of awareness (*cit*) or a mode

of being or existence (*sat*) in which one experiences deep interior calm. At times one may get into this state spontaneously, but usually it is the result of the practice of the meditative technique for a long period of time. Sometimes this mental drill does not produce any noticeable effect (except the establishment of some order in one's inner life) so much so that many people go on 'practising' meditation without entering the meditative state at all.

It is the meditative state that Patanjali means by the term *dhyāna*—and not any meditation technique. The few techniques that he mentions¹ are really methods for fixing the mind at one point, an exercise which is known as *dhāraṇā*. As a matter of fact,

1. Patañjali, *Yoga-Sūtra* 1.33-39.

all meditation techniques are to be regarded as techniques of *dhāraṇā*.

Most of our normal thinking and actions are compulsive movements controlled almost entirely by the unconscious. They are the result of physiological and psychological conditioning. Meditation is supposed to free us from this kind of existence as an automaton. But when done merely as the ritual following of a technique, meditation itself becomes a sort of conditioning. In fact, a large number of spiritual aspirants, after attaining some progress in spiritual life, get stuck in the technique and find themselves unable to move further. They are like the spider caught in the web produced by itself. A famous French painter used to ask his students, after teaching them the correct technique, to forget all about it. For pre-occupation with the technique would stifle creativity. In spiritual life what is really important is the soul's aspiration and its movement towards God. The purpose of *dhāraṇā*-techniques is only to serve as guideposts or landmarks. When this purpose is forgotten, the techniques become a fence or wall restricting the freedom and spontaneity of the Self and a barrier on the Godward path.

One reason why many people fail in harmonizing meditation and work is that they try to practise a meditation technique mentally while they are engaged in some external work. Meditation regarded as the practice of a technique is only another form of work. It is difficult to concentrate upon two activities, inner and outer, simultaneously without reducing the efficiency of either or both. Indeed, this was precisely the problem that troubled the Russian Pilgrim. While attending a church service he had listened to the reading from St. Paul and was stuck by the Apostle's exhortation, 'Pray without ceasing'. And he 'began to think how it was possible to pray without ceasing, since a man has to concern himself with other things also in order to make a

living'.² In the course of his search for an answer, the abbot of a monastery pointed out to him the following passage from a book: 'The words of the Apostle "Pray without ceasing" should be understood as referring to the *creative prayer of the understanding*. The understanding can always be reaching out towards God, and pray to Him unceasingly.'³ This was the right answer, but our Pilgrim was not ready to grasp it at that time. He had therefore to learn the 'Jesus prayer' from another monk and, through the repetition of it, experience the unceasing flow of consciousness in his awakened heart, which was exactly what the 'creative prayer of the understanding' really meant. This is what we have referred to as the meditative state. The right way to combine meditation and work is to maintain the meditative state of consciousness while engaged in external work.

The Meditative state

The meditative state is a state of deep interior calm in which the inner Self (*pratyagātman*) remains as a witness. It is a form of experience or perception in which one single *pratyaya* or thought is maintained for a considerable length of time. It is a state of clear awareness in which the object (usually the image of a deity), the self and the connection between them are distinctly perceived. It is also a mode of being, the manner in which the Self exists as the witness. It is a state in which the will is fully detached from external sensations and internal impulses, and the focusing of consciousness upon an object becomes easy and steady. In this state the difference between work and meditation becomes insignificant. It is a state of consciousness which is independent of external conditions. The attainment of this state is the first step to combining work and meditation.

2. *The Way of a Pilgrim*, trans. R.M. French (London, SPCK, 1973) p. 1.

3. *The Way of a Pilgrim*, p. 4.

When the meditative state is reached, any thing or any thought could be used as an object of meditation. In fact, at this stage, the object of meditation ceases to be important. The experience of the Self as the witness now becomes more important than the object. The meditative *process*, the focusing of consciousness, becomes more important than the image on which the focusing is done. You may begin meditation on Kṛṣṇa by practising concentration upon a picture, may be the picture on the wall calender. However, once you get established in the meditative state, it no longer matters whether the wall-calender picture is retained as the object or is replaced by some other image. The actual vision of the Deity would be not an animation of a picture but something infinitely more real and splendidous.

St. Catherine of Siena once 'saw' the crucifix becoming animated and alive. The Vaiṣṇava monk Jatadhari who visited Dakshineswar during Sri Ramakrishna's time too 'saw' the bronze image he was worshipping as the living Śrī Rāma, moving and playing with him, whereas none else (except Sri Ramakrishna) could see this vision. All these experiences happen in the awakened consciousness of the seer. 'God is Self-awareness'—*prajñānam brahma*—declares the Upaniṣad. There is only one thing unchanging in the universe, and it is the Ātman, the Self. Everything else is changeable and impermanent, and God should not be identified with them. This is one of the most emphasized and recurring themes in the Upaniṣads. The *Kena Upaniṣad*, for instance, states: 'That which is not seen with the eyes, but by which the activity of the eyes is perceived, know that alone to be Brahman—and not what people worship as an object.'⁴

4. यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षूषि पश्यति ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

Kena Upaniṣad 1.7.

The true path of God lies as a luminous tunnel in the inner Self. If we want to go deeper into it, we should be free to turn away from picture-objects to the Self. However, many seekers fear that if the object of meditation left the mental field, their meditation too would come to an end. Hence they feel lost if they fail to remember their Mantra or chosen image in the course of other activities. This fear and sense of loss arise from our ignorance of three things: the power of consciousness, the cosmic nature of all activity, the power of aspiration.

The power of consciousness

We generally look upon consciousness as something intangible, impersonal and powerless, a metaphysical concept with little practical utility. But according to Vedanta, matter, on which we rely so much, is itself ultimately derived from consciousness. The whole universe springs from Brahman and is under the control of Brahman. The Gita states that everything in this universe is a manifestation of the glory (*vibhūti*) of Brahman. And as Atman, which is our real nature, we are all parts of this infinite Reality. Yet we have little faith in the power of consciousness!

The *Kena Upaniṣad* says: 'Through the Atman one attains strength.'⁵ It was this vital truth that Swami Vivekananda made the bedrock of his philosophy of life. In the midst of all the changes, darkness, sufferings and ignorance, the true Self of man shines unaffected, immutable, immortal, self-luminous, blissful, established in the infinite glory of Brahman. It is the source of all purity, strength, love, knowledge and freedom. Yet we seek solutions to the problems of life in the outer world, not in or through the Atman. When difficulties come we do not turn inward to the source of all power

5. आत्मना विन्दते वीर्यम्

Kena Upaniṣad 2.4.

and knowledge, but depend on material things and worldly people. As Swami Vivekananda has repeatedly pointed out, all misery is caused by our dependence on matter.

On clinging to images and fixed patterns rather than to the inner Self during meditation, and our fear of losing our hold on those symbols rather than on the Self at other times, are a kind of refined materialism. It is a higher type of bondage which often becomes an obstacle in the advanced stages of meditation when we are drawn into the stream of higher spiritual consciousness. It is not possible to carry on both work and meditation unless we reach a point from where we can freely manoeuvre both. The inner Self is that point.

A sincere seeker must have great faith in the power of Self-awareness, as Swami Vivekananda was never tired of insisting upon. The aspirant must have the courage to give up objective symbols and fixed patterns, especially at the advanced stages, if that is necessary for spiritual progress. When he gives up his hold on these things, he may for a time find himself alone and supportless. This disconcerting sense of emptiness is known in Christian mysticism as 'the dark night of the soul'. The followers of Yoga and Vedanta do not usually feel it intensely because they always hold on to the inner Self even when they give up all mental supports. But then, the well-known passage in the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* 'Those who are engaged in meditation enter still greater darkness, as it were'⁶ may, perhaps, be interpreted as indicating the 'dark night' described by St. John of the Cross.

Power of divine creativity

Another obstacle, which becomes manifest in the advanced stages of meditation, is

caused by our ignorance of the cosmic nature of all activity. We know from modern science that every object and particle in the universe is in ceaseless motion and all physical, chemical and biological changes take place in accordance with universal laws. All psychological processes, like the rise and interaction of ideas and emotions, are also governed by the universal laws of the mental world. This fact points to the existence of a primordial creative impulse, an eternal divine momentum, sustaining the whole cosmos and of which all individual changes and activities are parts. God is the unmoved Prime Mover from whom has streamed forth this eternal cosmic momentum, and the Gita exhorts us to take refuge in Him.⁷

This means that even meditation is a part of divine activity. After a good meditation we feel elated and, when we make some progress in meditative life, we take the credit for it. But all inner transformations are brought about by divine power. If we have attained joy and progress in meditation, it is because we have opened our hearts more to the divine current. If we have not attained much progress, it is only because our ignorance and egoism have blocked the free movement of the universal spiritual current.

The important point to note here is that it is not the meditation-image that transforms our consciousness but the divine power of which it is a symbol. If the symbol is dropped or if we cannot remember it while we are engaged in some work, the divine power would not for that reason cease operating. Once we accept the spiritual ideal and attune our mind to it, the divine current goes on producing changes in us at subliminal levels. Even in sleep transformations continue to take place. The more

⁶. ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायां रताः ।

Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad, 9.

⁷. तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये

यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ।

Bhagavad-Gītā 15.4.

we open our hearts to the divine grace, the more quickly we progress. But instead of doing that, through our ignorant, instinctive, egoistic efforts and clinging to external and internal objects we are most of the time obstructing the inflow of grace and impeding its free operation in our minds. All spiritual seekers who have attained some progress in meditation should ponder deeply the following advice of the great spiritual master St. John of the Cross.

Souls in this state are not to be forced to meditate, nor to apply themselves to discursive reflections laboriously effected, neither are they to strive after sweetness and fervour, for if they did so, they would be thereby placing obstacles in the way of the principal agent, who is God himself. For He is now secretly and quietly infusing wisdom into the soul, together with the loving knowledge of Himself, independently of these meditation acts...

Thus the soul must be attached to nothing, *not even to the subject of its meditation*, not to sensible or spiritual sweetness, because God requires a spirit so free, so annihilated, that every act of the soul, even of thought, of liking and disliking, will impede and disturb it, and break that profound silence of sense and spirit necessary for hearing the deep and delicate voice of God, who speaks to the heart in solitude...The greater its progress in this, and the more rapidly it attains to this calm tranquillity, the more abundant will be the infusion of the Spirit of Divine Wisdom, the loving, calm, lonely, peaceful, sweet ravisher of the spirit...⁸

The power of aspiration

If our real nature is the witnessing Self, and if all physical and mental activities are going on spontaneously, how does the Self get involved in work? How do we manipulate and appropriate to ourselves the cosmic activity of the Divine? In other words, what is the connecting link between pure awareness and work? The Vedantic view is that the inner Self exerts its influence on

the body and mind through the will, known by such terms as *kratu*, *dhṛti* and *icchā*. Will may be compared to the magnetic field that exists around a magnet. Through its field a magnet can act upon a metal object without coming into contact with it. Similarly, through the will the Self influences the body and mind and external objects.

The will is an *ātma-dharma*, a function of the self.⁹ As such, it is different from desires, instincts, emotions, mental images, ideas etc which are functions of the mind. Many desires and impulses constantly rise in our minds; but the will gets connected only to a few of them. When the will catches a desire or impulse, it becomes a *samkalpa*, intentional motivation. Through it the self owns that particular desire. Those desires which are not thus appropriated by the self fade away without giving us any trouble.

When the will is directed towards God it becomes spiritual aspiration, yearning for God. This is the motive power in *sādhana*. The greater the aspiration (that is to say, the more intensively the will is focused Godward) the quicker the spiritual progress. Once we reach the meditative state we have only to aspire intensely for God, keep the will focused upon the Divine. Everything else that we need will be done by the Divine. This is one of the fundamental teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. No other great spiritual master has emphasized the importance of aspiration in spiritual life as Sri Ramakrishna did. He did not merely teach that one could realize God through any path, but he qualified this teaching with the clause: *provided one had intense yearning for God*. He once told a group of devotees:

Ah, that restlessness is the whole thing. Whatever path you follow—whether you are a Hindu, a Mussalman, a Christian, a Śākta, a Vaiṣṇava or a Brahmo—the vital point is restlessness (*vyākulata*). It doesn't matter if you

8. St. John of the Cross, *The Living Flame of Love*. Stanza 3, sections 31-32.

9. This is clear from the statement in *Aitareya Upaniṣad* 3.1.2.

take a wrong path—only you must be restless for Him. He Himself will put you on the right path.¹⁰

God being the Supreme Self, His presence is felt in the centre of one's inner Self. So aspiration for God is only an expansion of the aspiration for one's own true Self (*ātma-kāma*). Directing the will towards God really means directing it towards one's own Self, reversing the focus of the will upon its source which is the inner Self. This cannot, however, be done all on a sudden. The will has to be detached progressively from its former moorings and has to be directed towards the inner Self by stages. The disciplines of Karma Yoga and meditation are mainly intended to fulfil these two functions respectively.

Stages in the operation of the will

Behind every action there are three kinds of *saṁkalpa*. These are: *karmaphala saṁkalpa*, attachment of the will to the fruit of action; *karma saṁkalpa*, attachment of the will to action; and *karṭṛtva saṁkalpa*, attachment of the will to egoism. Progress in Karma Yoga consists in giving up these three *saṁkalpas* one after the other, which means detachment of the will in three stages.

Meditation too, according to Patanjali's scheme, passes through three similar stages. But unlike the case in Karma Yoga, the main effort in meditation is the focusing of the will. In the first stage the will is focused upon the object—external or internal; hence this stage is called *grāhya-samāpatti*. In the next stage the will is concentrated on the meditative process, that is, on the mind-stuff itself, without allowing it to assume the form of an object; this formless meditation is called *grahaṇa-samāpatti*. In the third stage, known as *grahitṛ-samā-*

patti, the will is focused on the inner Self itself.¹¹

Thus Karma Yoga and meditation represent, respectively, the negative and positive modes of operation of the will. Together they provide a single graduated scheme of spiritual progress. After attaining proficiency at the first stage the seeker should move on to the second stage, and thence to the third. By following this course he should acquire greater and greater manoeuvrability of the will, which is what the Gita means by its famous definition: 'Yoga is dexterity in action.'¹²

In the first stage of Karma Yoga the seeker tries to detach his will from the results of his action; and in the first stage of meditation he tries to fix the will on an object. The will is not really free at this stage. It is only at the second stage, when it is being detached from work (in Karma Yoga) and is being fixed on the meditative process itself (in meditation), that the will begins to be really free. At this stage it becomes possible for us to attend to the duties of life maintaining the meditative awareness constantly. As long as there is clinging to the fruit of action and to the object of meditation it is impossible to carry on both work and meditation simultaneously.

The acquisition of a pure, free and supple will supported by an awakened luminous Self remaining as the witness—this is what the Gita calls *Buddhi Yoga*. It becomes natural and spontaneous when *buddhi* or spiritual heart awakens. It may be acquired through one's own self-effort. But Śrī Kṛṣṇa promises us that God Himself gives this *Buddhi Yoga* to those who constantly think of Him and serve Him with love.¹³ *Buddhi Yoga*

11. cf *Yoga-Sūtra* 1.41.

12. योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्

Bhagavad-Gītā 2.50.

13. तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

Bhagavad-Gītā 10.10.

10. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Ramakrishna Math, 1974) p. 644.

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of thoughts. Every thought is a two-tier structure with a lower affective part and an upper abstract part. The affective part is an emotion or feeling like love, anger or fear. As mentioned earlier, it is produced by the sprouting of *karma bīja*. The abstract part is of the nature of a concept or idea, and consists of a word and its corresponding image. It is produced by *vāsanā*. It is only the emotions and impulses which create agitation of mind and other problems. But they can operate only if the will gets connected to them; if the will does not lend its support to them, they will fade away. We usually try to detach the will only when we sit down for meditation. The rest of the day the will is surrendered to various emotional drives which therefore continue to flourish. When, by the constant practice of meditative awareness, these impulses lose the support of the will, they will gradually become weaker and die off. Ideas and images (which constitute the abstract part of thoughts) may still continue to rise in the mind but, without the support of the affective part, they cannot give us any trouble. Like clouds moving across the sky or like travellers' moving silently along a solitary road, words and forms cross the mind disturbing nothing.

It should be noted in this context that ordinary meditation on mental images gives us only awareness of the mind. If we want to attain higher consciousness through meditation, these images should be regarded as inseparable from the Self and should be meditated upon at the centre of the inner Self. That is why aspirants are advised to meditate in the spiritual heart (often symbolized as a lotus) which is the seat of the inner Self.

Awareness of work

Work is not merely movement of the body. It is a part of universal motion through which the self expresses itself. Self-

expression through work is known as creativity. True work is always creative. But, with the exception of the work of some great artists and scientists, what most people do, or are forced to do by economic necessity, is seldom creative. Uncreative, alienated work causes stress and dissatisfaction and is a major social problem. It is no use blaming one's boss or society for this. The main cause of stress in work is the conflict of desires and the responsibility of decision making. Making decisions calls for continual exercise of the will. Being enslaved by emotions and instincts, the will is not free in most people, and the exercise of such a will is bound to produce conflict and strain. Apart from this, modern social life involves a good deal of repression and suppression of the basic urges of the individual. The net result of all these is the blocking of creativity and self-expression. The waking hours of an average member of modern society are mostly spent in a state of inhibition.

The constant practice of meditative awareness removes the inhibitions and frees the will. When the obstacles to creativity are removed, every work becomes a creative act. This means more channels for self-expression. The more the self expresses itself, the more it expands and the larger becomes its field of awareness. Every work will then become a spiritual process and the difference between work and meditation will disappear. This is what is implied in the popular Zen maxim: 'Before enlightenment chopping wood and drawing water/ after enlightenment chopping wood and drawing water.'

Awareness of the world

The reconciliation of work and meditation is only a part of the larger scheme of divinizing our whole life. The difference between the sacred and the secular must go. For such distinctions prevent us from opening

ourselves fully to universal life and attaining the fullness of Self-realization. The distinction between the sacred and the secular can be erased only maintaining the meditative state of awareness at all times.

But it is necessary to see the world as a part of divine Reality and establish a definite relationship with it. We may look upon all life as Divine Yoga, and meditation and work as parts of this Yoga. Or we may do all work and meditation as worship (*upāsana*) of the Divine. Outwardly, through our mental and physical activities we worship the Divine manifested as the universe—this is *virādupāsana*; while, in the depths of consciousness, the witnessing Self remains shining like the flame of a lamp at the altar of the Inner Controller of the universe—this is *antaryāmyupāsana*. Or again, we may regard our life as a *yajña*, sacrifice, a participation in the cosmic Sacrifice of the Divine. Or we may convert our life into an expression of the Divine Sport or *līlā*. Whatever the attitude we adopt, it is necessary to open individual life at all levels to universal life. Divine power will then quickly bring about the transformation of our consciousness and the divinization of our whole life. It may take a long time, or we may even fail, to realize this goal if we depend on our egoistic effort alone. As a matter of fact, through our blind, impulsive selfish actions we are interfering in the work of the Divine much of our time.

Awareness of the Self

‘The Self is revealed in every state of consciousness’¹⁴ declares the Upaniṣad. Every thought and every physical act produces a flash of Self-revelation in us. But engrossed as we are in incessant activity and day-dreaming, we seldom notice this.

14. प्रतिबोधविदितं मतम्

Kena Upaniṣad 2.4.

The constantly occurring interior revelation can be grasped only when we acquire the meditative state of consciousness.

The inner Self is the seat of God where He shines as the Supreme Self and Inner Controller (*antaryāmin*). Awareness of the inner Self matures, in the fullness of time, into awareness of the Supreme Self.¹⁵

Two ways

There are two ways of combining work and meditation. The first is the path of those who feel yearning for God to an extraordinary degree. They lead a secluded life for some years, practising prayer and meditation with great intensity, and after realizing the light of the inner Self, return to active life. Intensification of meditative life, however, produces severe reactions, and very few people have the inner resources and spiritual guidance to face them. But those who succeed in passing through the inner ordeal of fire quickly will find reconciliation of work and meditation quite easy. For those who do not feel intense yearning for God—they are far more numerous than the first group—the best way is to carry on with their duties of life by cultivating the five types of meditative awareness by stages in the order given above. This is a safer and more comfortable process, but a slower one.

It is also necessary to mention here that two types of people will never succeed in unifying work and meditation. The first type is represented by those restless people

15. Through the awareness of the inner Self (*pratyagātman*) alone can we come into *direct* (*aparokṣa*) contact with God. All visions and spiritual experiences that come before the awakening of the inner Self, are only experiences of Divine Shadows and Reflections, and give only an indirect (*parokṣa*) contact. This is the universal verdict of all great Vedantic teachers. A similar distinction is made by Christian mystics between seeing God as He really is (*lumen gloriae*) and intellectual visions (*lumen sapientiae*).

who must need busy themselves always with some work or other. They have no real faith in the transforming power of Karma Yoga, but resort to work just to escape sitting quietly which means facing oneself. Work done with such an attitude will only intensify one's egoism, evil propensities, bondage and suffering. Then there are those who turn to meditation not because they feel intense aspiration or have faith in meditation, but because they dislike or fear work—at least the type of work that fate has forced upon them. They succeed only in losing felicity in inner and outer worlds and in bringing discredit to contemplative life.

Conclusion

In conclusion we should remember that spiritual life is not a special kind of life but

the spiritualization of one's total life. For this two conditions are to be fulfilled: bridging the gulf between inner life and outer life; and the conversion of every activity into a means of transforming consciousness. It is by unifying work and meditation into a single discipline that we can fulfil these conditions. When we constantly maintain the witness state of the self, look upon all mental and physical processes as a part of divine creativity, and keep the will fixed on the Divine unwaveringly through intense aspiration, all the necessary changes and the transformation of consciousness will be effected spontaneously and rapidly by the power of divine Grace. The difference between work and meditation will vanish and our whole life will get divinized.

(Concluded)

SPINOZA AND THE BORDERLAND OF SCIENCE

DR. BERNHARD MOLLENHAUER

In the story of philosophy there is no more original and thoroughly emancipated character than the famous Jewish thinker Benedict Spinoza. That seventeenth-century Holland should have produced such a mind is not surprising, for even in that age of strife and religious fanaticism there was a liberal tradition in that tiny but great-souled country. Judged by modern ideals, what was called freedom in the seventeenth century left much to be desired. Nevertheless, Jewish refugees and oppressed liberals found in Holland a measure of freedom denied them at home.

Not long after the revolt of the Netherlands a colony of Jewish refugees from the Spanish peninsula settled in Amsterdam. Here Spinoza was born in 1632. He was educated in the synagogue school where his

teachers soon came to look upon him with much pride. His early education was hardly adapted to the needs of a future philosopher for it was confined to synagogue learning. The little Jewish community was very conservative and did not trouble itself about the new science that was awakening the mind of Europe.

While still a boy Spinoza became aware of the contrast between the narrow schooling and Talmudic lore of the synagogue and the liberal culture beyond the ghetto of Amsterdam. His interest in the new learning of Europe found no favour with the elders of the cautious Jewish community; so Spinoza sought elsewhere for his training in Latin, then the Language of science. A free thinking Dutchman, Van den Ende, initiated the rather frail young Jew into the

new world of science, mathematics and political thought. For a young man of twenty brought up in the half light of Jewish tradition this contact with a many-sided personality was like stepping into a lighted room.

Soon the elders of the synagogue began to suspect that Spinoza was learning a good deal besides Latin and grammar at Van den Ende's house. Spinoza's school days were hardly over when he was diplomatically asked to recant his unorthodox views on religion. His father was a man of standing in the congregation, and no one wanted a scandal. The elders found the young rebel mild enough but deaf to their entreaties and threats. At length things came to a head. In 1656, not long after his father's death, he was officially cursed and cast out from Israel. He changed his name from Baruch to Benedict which means blessed, though he could hardly have felt blessed just then. In modern times such intolerance seems strange to us. Perhaps our treatment of economic reformers may seem equally strange to our descendants three centuries hence.

To any other young man of twenty-three such fanaticism would have been destruction, for after all, he was still confirmed in Jewish ways and associations. Even his sister denounced him and tried to disinherit him. Had our outcast been a less balanced character, he would doubtless have become an embittered radical. But he possessed, among other traits of the wonderful Jewish character, the rare ability to preserve mental health under seemingly impossible conditions. He kept up his faith in the finer side of life. 'All the better', was his calm reflection. 'They do not drive me to anything I should not have done of my own accord, had I not dreaded the scandal.'¹

The simplicity of Spinoza's life is the grand

simplicity of a life completely governed by reason. In later life he repeatedly refused help from admirers, being content to earn his living as a lens maker and calling no man master. After his untimely death at the age of forty-four his friends published his masterpiece, *The Ethics*. The author of this great classic lived with remarkable plainness and exemplified the ideals he taught, earning the sobriquet blessed Spinoza.

The age of Spinoza had outgrown the sanctions of Medieval thought. Thinking minds had broken with old traditions and were captivated by the new science of Galileo. Though alchemists still groped for the philosopher's stone, all things occult were banished from the thoughts of the wise. The ruling ideas of the seventeenth century were that nature is a mechanism, that human reason, not magic, is most competent to understand and explain natural laws, and that nature's truth is essentially mathematical.

Spinoza, though a true mystic, a profoundly religious soul, was a typical thinker of this scientific age. The modern mind began with its declaration of intellectual independence, its faith in reason. After a time a reaction set in and then came the years of doubt, inner conflict, the effects of which are felt to this day. It was believed that reason could not vindicate our higher faiths. It was claimed that once you admit nature is a mechanism, it is only a step to the materialism that claims man is a machine whose mental life is but a passing glow in the darkness of blindly driven forces. Indeed, Hobbes had already reached a consistent materialism in the seventeenth century. Spinoza was keenly aware of the conflict between science and religion, faith and reason and had read Maimonides' learned attempt to unite Scripture and Aristotle's conceptions. He must have had his inner conflicts too but, while still a young man, he realized that to abandon faith in

1. Sir Frederick Pollock. *Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy* (New York; Macmillan. 2nd ed.) p. 19.

reason and natural laws was to muddle back into the Middle Ages. He went forward with the conviction that God's world was a rational and profoundly reasonable world that expressed divine thought through immutable laws. He believed that scientific thought, if rightly understood and followed far enough, would point unmistakably to a comprehensive world view, to a level of philosophical thought from where man could understand life in a spirit of calm detachment above the tumult of controversy. For to see nature scientifically is to rise above the illusions of sense and understand things in terms of order, law, cause and effect. Then nature no longer seems capricious and utterly alien to mind. Modern writers sometimes represent man's quest for knowledge and rational living as an idealistic battle against a brutal and indifferent universe, against a universal order that is not friendly to man's higher beliefs. But for Spinoza the nature of the universe and the nature of man go together. He believed in the dignity and worth of man as a moral being and admitted nothing into his philosophy that is not illustrated in human history and clearly seen by reason. He says :

As regards the human mind, I believe that it is also a part of nature; for I maintain that there exists in nature an infinite power of thinking, which in so far as it is infinite, contains subjectively the whole of nature, and its thoughts proceed in the same manner as nature—that is, in the sphere of ideas. Further, I take the human mind to be identical with this said power, not in so far as it is infinite and perceives the whole of nature, but in so far as it is finite, and perceives only the human body. In this manner, I maintain that the human mind is part of an infinite understanding.²

In spite of his famous geometrical method, Spinoza's central thought of world unity and human intelligence as a spark of cosmic

². Above quotation is from Spinoza's letter to Oldenburg (1665), number 32 in Van Vloten edition,

mind is comparatively easy to grasp. It is not the airy abstraction of some highbrow pedant whose mediations are steeped in Medieval Scholasticism. On the contrary, the harmonized life of reason and spiritual rest is the polestar of Spinoza's thought. Human welfare is seldom out of his thought.

The infinite variety we experience in this bustling world of change is the expression of divine law which rules human life as the higher truth rules the lower, as the storm rules the raindrop. Everything in nature is grounded in and comprehended by Divine Thought. God has written His all-pervading character in the changeless laws of matter as well as in the laws of mind. Nothing is the creature of chance or blind caprice. All things are rationally linked together and related to the Ultimate Cause. The idea of chance has been exploited to its utmost limit in scientific accounts of the origin of the universe. This is rather strange because chance, the idea of meaningless caprice, is not congenial to the scientific mind. For Spinoza our world is a world of immutable law which makes no exceptions and grants no favours, an orderly cosmos in which nothing lives by chance.

Everything is to be understood either as the result of its own nature or some higher nature. Now if this be so, Spinoza claims, there must be one supreme existence beyond the relativity of every finite point of view that explains and comprehends all the rest. The God idea of Spinoza is more easy for us to grasp because three centuries of science have trained us to see the togetherness of things, the relativity and interdependence of all forms of life and activity. He denied the permanent distinction between mind and matter without denying the reality of consciousness. Both are parallel attributes of God or Substance, a term which has the advantage of being free from misleading theological associations. The limitation of our understanding confines our knowledge of Substance to the two attributes of Thought

and Extension or spatiality. But God has countless attributes besides these. His nature is like an infinite sacred scripture that is endlessly translated into many languages, or a cosmic symphony that is endlessly transcribed for different instruments and players. There are possibly countless orders of life beyond our remotest fancy though we cannot guess what they might be. Spinoza honoured reason but did not think the limits of our wits as the limits of truth.

In contrast with Medieval thought, which it supplanted, modern science shifted the accent from spirit to matter, from idealism to materialism and empiricism. Nature was championed by science as the only object of exact knowledge, and everything not tangible was relegated to the realm of opinion. Agnostics rejected the claims of religion on the ground that the mechanism of nature was the only reality. From the new scientific point of view these sturdy empiricists were not so mistaken, for viewed solely through the eyes of mathematical science, nature sanctions no spiritual values. Questions of immortality and the foundations of faith belong to the borderland, the remoter frontiers of science. They lead us into the realm of philosophy and religion.

Spinoza was too well versed in scientific thought to ignore its limitations. At the same time he was also aware of the weakness of the appeal to gaps in scientific knowledge often made by religious leaders who sought to save their position by pointing out facts science could not immediately explain. For every advance in science was a lesson to its followers to regard such refractory problems as a means of correcting and clarifying their idea of nature's laws. Early in life Spinoza was convinced that the conflict between science and religion was at bottom due to some fault of untrained or unenlightened human consciousness which in its ignorance sets artificial walls within the mansion of wisdom. The mysteries which confront us on the borderland of science are closely allied

to the problem of human understanding. They demand a critical examination of every motive that lies behind our point of view, behind the processes of reason itself. Kant had no monopoly of criticism of the knowing process. Long before him Spinoza had ventured a critique of reason. Spinoza pointed out that learning is an active process that should merge ultimately in a peaceful reverence for the divine manifestation of the truth in natural law and infinite power.

The idea of Infinite Power or Activity is given a materialistic cast in the modern cosmologies of thinkers like Spencer and Huxley. But in recent years materialism has become old fashioned and mathematical physicists now look with favour on the idea of God as the Supreme Mathematician. A noted astronomer has said the universe is more like a thought than a machine. Each year the mysterious universe yields more of its secrets to the solvent of mathematical thought. No doubt, Spinoza, a lover of mathematics, would approve the thought of mathematical laws as the external expression of infinite mind that reaches the remotest solitudes of limitless space. However it is not likely that he would accept the idea of God as the Supreme Mathematician without reservations. Not because he did not believe in a super-personal God, but because the material realm whose mechanism mathematical truth so beautifully illustrates is only one attribute of God. The nature of God is not fully expressed in spatial existence that mathematics comprehends. That represents only a merest fraction of God's manifestation. What we see out there in space consists of modes of only one attribute of God, the attribute of Extension. Thought is another attribute of God whose modes constitute the inner realms of mind and spirit. We should not base our interpretation of God on only one aspect of His Existence.

In recent years the exponents of emergent evolution have put forward a novel and sig-

nificant conception of mind as an emergent quality. Nothing illustrates the modernity and freshness of Spinoza's thought more than the attention bestowed upon his philosophy by some of the most eminent and forward looking scientists of our day. Discussing the relation between the two Attributes of Mind and Matter in the process of evolution the distinguished scientist C. Lloyd Morgan says :

It need hardly be added that there is no causal relation of the one attribute to the other. To modernize Spinoza: The orderly plan of advance in the psychical attribute is strictly correlated with that in the physical attribute. We have one and the same thing (evolution), though expressed in different ways.³

Like Spinoza, Professor Morgan correlates the successive stages of matter and life with

3. Lloyd Morgan. *Emergent Evolution* (New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1923) p. 28.

mental or psychic attributes. Space does not permit us to discuss his conception of mind as an emergent quality.

In the light of astronomy and geology the span of human history passes before us as a flash in the eye of eternity. We no longer fancy that we are the only creatures placed on this earth to give meaning to life, that without us the universe would be mindless and purposeless! Science has prepared us a broader, more philosophical view. A scientist, when asked whether God troubled Himself about men at all, replied that it depended on how big a God one believed in. Spinoza's God is so absolutely infinite that without Him nothing can be conceived. 'Hence we clearly understand', says Spinoza, 'that our salvation, or blessedness, or liberty consists in a constant and eternal love towards God, or in the love of God toward men.'⁴

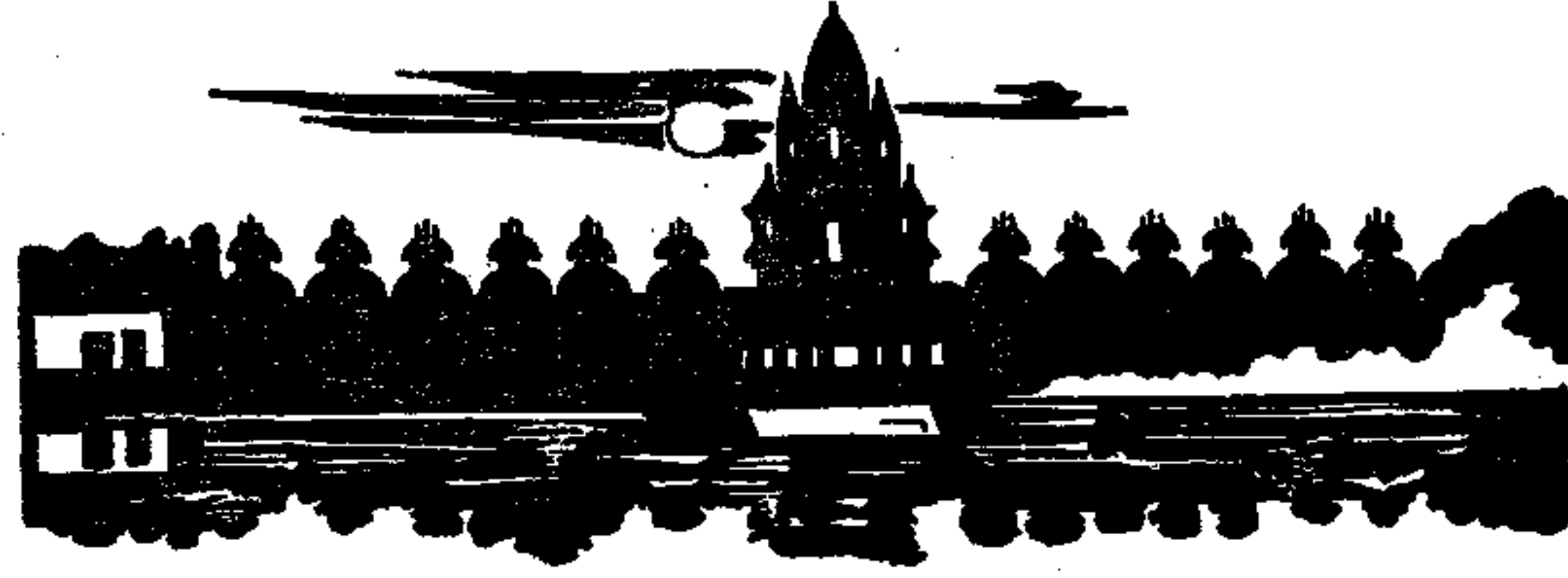
4. *Ethics*, Part 5, in Note to Proposition 36 (White's translation).

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this article addresses itself only to Patañjali's views on the *process* of evolution, the logistic arguments behind the *principle* of evolution will not be discussed.

Finally, I would like to point out that during the past thirty-five years several distinguished scientists have made great contributions to an understanding of the origin of life and the process of evolution.

Their clarity of vision, boldness of imagination, and logical approach are extraordinary. Darwin's original question has now reached a new, sophisticated mathematical height. Nevertheless, it is only proper to give recognition to a person who for the first time in recorded history tried to answer this fundamental question in a very logical manner.



ON THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF GRACE AND KARMA

DR. MICHAEL C. BRANNIGAN

[In the present article a distinguished professor of philosophy at a Roman Catholic College has initiated a stimulating discussion on an important aspect of the doctrine of karma. We welcome further discussion on the subject from scholars. A study of the Christian doctrine of grace vis-a-vis the Hindu doctrine of grace, developed by Rāmānuja, Madhva and others, might reveal more points of contact between the two religions. It may also be noted that the compatibility of grace and karma has been tackled by Hindu teachers themselves in a way similar to the way Christian teachers have dealt with the problem of grace and free-will or of necessity and freedom. —Ed. P.B.]

A comparison and contrast between the Christian concept of grace and the Hindu doctrine of karma has been initially established in the wider context of the discussion concerning reincarnation and Christianity. A number of scholars (MacGreggor, de Silva, for instance) seem to posit the rather provocative thesis that reincarnation is not incompatible with Christian teachings. On the other hand, strong opposition is voiced against any such assimilation. This protest has been currently expressed by Edmond Robillard, a Dominican priest, in *Reincarnation: Illusion or Reality*.¹ Not only does Robillard oppose any comparison between Christianity

and reincarnation, but he supports his position by referring to the Christian concept of grace as speaking 'decisively against the notion of reincarnation'.² According to Robillard, the divine gift of grace lies in stark contrast to the 'changeless law of karma', a law which he contends is both 'rigid', and 'inhuman'.³ Ultimately, for Robillard, there is no room for grace in karma. Grace, as free and spontaneous divine activity, is totally incompatible with the inexorability of karma, and with the karmic emphasis upon the human as source of liberation. It is this particular thesis which this paper will examine by reviewing, first, the idea of grace, and then the concept of karma, finally concluding with points of comparison as well as contrast.

The Christian concept of grace

Grace is a term easily prone to misunderstanding in theological-philosophical discussion. An authentic understanding necessitates some consideration of its etymological origins, symbols, and historic context. Perhaps the best Old Testament term for grace is the Hebrew word, 'ruach'.

1. Edmond Robillard, *Reincarnation: Illusion or Reality*. (New York: Alba Press, 1982).

2. *Reincarnation*, p. 56.

3. *Reincarnation*, p. 119.

This originally meant 'wind' or 'breath'⁴ and later on became the 'inner guidance' for the prophets. *Ruach* is an expression of the divine personality, calling for a response from the human, a response involving the whole person. *Ruach* is therefore viewed in the context of an encounter, a unique covenant between the divine and the human, as divine presence and human response to that presence. The Old Testament symbols of marriage, father, and mother, typify this. This covenantal context is illustrated further in the New Testament by Paul.⁵ Paul stresses God's free gift of grace and our free response to that gift. Furthermore, this free response transcends obedience to the Law as a necessary condition for salvation. In this reciprocal relationship between the divine and the human lies the total experientiality of grace. One must also note that, although reciprocity and covenantal dialogue between the divine and the human is asserted, the gratuitous, initial activity of the divine still remains a necessary condition. This is concretely expressed in the 'turning of God's face to us'.

What becomes clear in all this is the emphasis upon the totality of the experience of grace. Divine presence comes to fruition with my personal response. Grace is both the creative presence of the divine and the human response to that presence. In this light, expressions such as 'indwelling' and 'inhabitation' are insufficient, for they are in danger of conveying a static, passive connotation, a simplistic localization in time and space. The divine reaches us in the very core of our beings, effecting a natural attraction toward God, a 'lumen fidei'. Both Old and New Testaments convey the dynamic presence of the divine in existential encounter. Perhaps a more appropriate symbol can be utilized through the inter-

subjective philosophies of Buber and Marcel. Grace is both *given* (a Dutch word used by Fransen is *vorgegebene*, 'there before the essence of my freedom') and *response* (*angenommene*), an 'accepting in faith'.⁶

As stated earlier, the meaning of grace can be misconstrued, and part of the confusion can be traced to the Council of Trent. An historic switch occurred since the Council, which witnessed a reversal of the original meaning of grace. The Catholic Church, in defending itself against reformers, focused solely upon a different aspect of grace—grace as 'infused' (*gratia infusa*). Here, stress is upon the 'creation' of grace whereby the individual actually *possesses* a divine gift. In this post-Tridentine reversal, the testimony of the Old and New Testaments, the Church Fathers, Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Bonaventure, Alexander of Hales, and Ockham, all of whom attest to grace as creative divine presence in encounter with the human, gives way to a static concept in which the human response is no longer significant. Looking back, it seems evident that the Catholic polemic against the Lutherans, and the inevitable polarization in the churches, was partly responsible for producing an unbalanced perspective on the concept of grace. Part of the reality of grace became mistaken for the whole, and grace lost its rich meaning, despite the protestations of scholars such as Lessius, Petavius, and Scheeben. This reversal was later reinforced by the Scholastic notion (late Scholasticism) of the creation of grace. The human factor, the personal response, was no longer recognized. Salvation came about strictly from the activity of the divine.

Modern scholars (as for example, Pierre de la Taille, through his concept of 'Created Actuation through Uncreated Act') oppose the late Scholastic and post-Tridentine

4. cf. Genesis 2:7.

5. Rom. 3:21-25.

6. Piet Fransen, *The New Life of Grace* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971).

definition of grace, and revert to the dynamic concept of 'presence of God' and experientiality.⁷ The works of Metz, Schoonenberg, Schillebeeckx, and Rahner emphasize the need to return to a serious recognition of the specifically human element and to lessen the widening gap between the divine and the human. 'Infused' grace is only part of the totality of grace. The choice between immanence and transcendence is a false one. The modern theories of grace see no conflict between the omnipotence of the divine and the dignity of the human.

A re-emphasis upon the human element in grace is clearly evidenced in two recent notions: fundamental option and Rahner's offered-accepted grace. Fundamental option is the individual, inner orientation, an active trend which gives order and meaning to varied actions and decisions. It is the fundamental attitude which underlies specific choices, and, in turn, is influenced by these choices. It is comparable to Tillich's 'ultimate concern', which is creative, subtle, and dynamic. It posits the significance of the human response. This is further shown in Rahner's theory of offered-accepted grace. Rahner views grace as a dialogue between God and man. Offered grace affords an inner attraction, the 'lumen fidei'. Offered grace depicts the post-Tridentine idea of 'infused', as gift. In this sense, it bears ontological weight, essential to the human. Accepted grace *completes* the experience of grace. It portrays the human response, dynamic, and exhibited particularly in fundamental option. Modern notions of grace seek to restore the rich meaning found in the Scriptures. What is essential to grace is its necessary reciprocity, as total experience of divine activity and human response.

7. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 1. (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961).

Hindu concept of karma

Our study of karma utilizes two sources: the *Yogasūtras* of Patañjali and the Advaita Vedanta of Śaṅkara. These are the two most thorough accounts of karma in classical Indian literature and they show basic similarities as well as unique differences in emphases. In Patañjali's Yoga system, karma refers to human activity with no mention of divine initiative.⁸ Human action creates (*kr*) karmic residues (*karmāśaya*), and these residues have dispositional tendencies (*saṃskāra*) which contain traces, or *vāsanās*. These dispositional traces are partly responsible for possible liberation or continued bondage to the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth for the Hindu. The far-reaching effects of human activity are especially evidenced through these traces and karmic residues. For, according to Patañjali, karmic residues determine three factors: the kind of body the soul (*jīvātman*) is reborn into, the duration of the new body's life, and the affective tone of experiences while in the body.⁹ Patañjali also describes how karmic residues can either mature in the present life, or later in some future life. The intent of the Yoga system is to offer a means of liberation from this karmic mechanism through meditation and other types of human effort. What is clear in the Yoga system is the sole emphasis upon *human* responsibility for both bondage and liberation.

Śaṅkara's noted commentaries on the Advaita Vedanta school shed further light

8. James H. Woods, trans., *Yogasutras of Patanjali*. Harvard Oriental Classics, Series 17. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914, 1927).

9. cf. Karl Potter, 'The Karma Theory and Its Interpretation in Some Indian Philosophical Systems', *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Tradition*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

on karma as pertaining to the period after physical death and before rebirth in a new body. Whereas the *Yogasūtras*' primary concern is with this life and activity therein, Advaita Vedanta complements it with a discussion of the intermediate state. Upon physical death, three paths exist for the 'subtle body' to journey along: northern, southern, and *samyamana*. The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* speaks of the link from old body to new, created by means of *vāsanās*, or karmic traces, already referred to in the *Yogasūtras*. What is even more interesting is that during this passage, the subtle body (*jīva*) is guided by deities, since the self is incapable of journeying on its own. Specific references are made to these divine guides in the *Brahmasūtras* and in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.¹⁰ Thus, even with the strong influence of karmic residues and *vāsanās*, divine assistance is necessary during this intermediate state. A type of 'post-mortem grace' is at work, in which divinities work gratuitously aiding the subtle body on its way to rebirth.

The uniqueness of Advaita Vedanta is further demonstrated by a fascinating account in the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*. One is first reminded that the subtle body is, in a sense, born twice: first at conception, and second at birth. The account relates the story of Vāmadeva who was liberated while in his mother's womb! Scholars debate as to the precise cause for liberation. Yet it is evident that while *in utero*, he could not effect his own salvation through his own efforts. Was this an instance of divine aid? What seems to be inferred from this account is that with Vāmadeva's first birth, his conception, the maturation of his liberating karmic residues, along with *vāsanās*, had begun. Therefore, even if we postulate that divine intervention did

occur, human activity had already produced the particular state close to liberation.

Another point worth mentioning in conjunction with Advaita Vedanta concerns the loose relation which exists between past activity and present future experiences. The deterministic implications of the law of karma as maintained by Robillard are undermined when one perceives the distinction between karmic residues and *vāsanās*. The effects of karmic residues are the *vāsanās*, which are inclinations, or determinations to aim for certain objectives. *Vāsanās* resemble life-plans or life-styles upon which present and future experiences rely. One must be cautious of deducing that karmic activity is purely deterministic.

As mentioned earlier, the maturation of karmic residues can either take place in this life or in future lives. The question now posed is, how? How does the maturation of karmic residues come about? In other words, the act that I performed in life L at time t produces karmic residues which finally mature in life Q at time t + n. How do the Hindus explain this process? Two solutions have been offered. The view of Mīmāṃsakas is that the original act at L_t produces an *apūrva* which automatically works out in life Q_{t+n}. Śaṅkara finds difficulty with this view and accepts the proposed solution of Bādarāyaṇa, who claims that it is precisely God who 'arranges things so that the resulting experiences match the merit or demerit characterizing the agent's past acts.'¹¹ Śaṅkara accepts the view that divine activity is responsible for the maturation of karmic residues, ultimately resulting from human action. Again, as in post-mortem existence, divine activity is acknowledged.

Conclusion

In conclusion, what points of com-

10. *Brahma Sūtra* 4.3.4, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 4.15.5.

11. cf. Potter, *Karma Theory*, P. 258.

parison and contrast can be made between grace and karma? Are they totally incompatible concepts, as Robillard contends? Similarities can be seen between Rahner's accepted aspect of grace and karma in general. Both stress human effort. At the same time, however, Rahner's concept stands in terms of grace which has been *offered*; one accepts what has been gratuitously given. It is precisely this offered aspect which is absent, on the whole, from the concept of karma. Another similarity can be found between the notion of fundamental option and *vāsanā*. *Vāsanā* is the essential and personal orientation, and one can establish that the relation of the present and future experiences to one's *vāsanā* is of the sort which individual acts and decisions have to one's fundamental option. They both portray basic dispositions which influence and are influenced by concrete activity.

A kind of grace seems evident in the Advaita system. Divine guidance is necessary in a post-mortem state, and the maturation of karmic residues depends upon similar divine activity. Furthermore, the strange account of Vāmadeva's liberation may indicate a type of divine activity not limited to the intermediate state, but effectual from the moment of the first birth. We must keep in mind, however, that similarity does not convey identity. The question of compatibility is still appropriate. Grace occurs in *this* life, according to the Christian interpretation. The activity from divine sources in post-mortem grace may

resemble the offered aspect of grace, but the contexts are entirely different. The Christian idea of grace poses the *lumen fidei*, the inner attraction toward God. Is there a similar attraction in Hinduism? Generally speaking, the major texts dealing with karma indicate the absence of this. Karma, in general, does not concern itself with the gratuitousness of grace. Does this therefore mean that the two doctrines are incompatible? I feel that the response to this question cannot be the unqualified 'yes' which Robillard asserts. In the light of the *Yogasūtras*, there appears to be a definite incompatibility of grace with karma. The yoga system stresses the purely human efforts to achieve liberation, and does not recognize the essential activity of the divine as posited in the formula of grace. However, when one goes to the Advaita Vedanta system as interpreted by Śaṅkara, absolute incompatibility does not seem evident. Similarities with the idea of grace occur, albeit on a post-mortem level, and also with reference to karmic maturation. The experience of grace is therefore partially indicated in the Advaita system. But one may still maintain that a most essential ingredient of grace, divine activity, is not of primary concern in the Upaniṣads. Despite the absence of total incompatibility between grace and karma in the Advaita Vedanta perspective, it is clear that there are no grounds to assert a definitive compatibility between these two unique notions.

PATANJALI AND THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

DR. GRIHAPATI MITRA

The fundamental question 'Who am I?' when expressed within the framework of life science becomes, 'How has the life process begun?' or 'What is the origin of the human species?' This was what Charles Darwin asked himself and, in answer, proposed his theory of evolution in 1858. He had to face strong opposition from the fundamentalists of that time. Even six decades later, in 1925, John T. Scopes, a science teacher of Rheo High School in Dayton, Tennessee, was accused of illegally teaching the Darwinian theory of evolution and had to face a trial at the court of law. In the United States the judicial record of this famous case is referred to as the Scopes Trial.

Jacques Monod, Nobel biochemist of Pasteur Institute, has, while discussing the origin of life described in different meta-physical ontogenies, made the following statement.

The great religions are of similar form, resting on the story of the life of an inspired prophet who if not the founder of all things, represents the founder, speaks for him, and recounts the history of mankind as well as its destiny. Of all the great religions Judio-Christianity is probably the most 'primitive', since its strictly historic structure is directly plotted upon the sage of a Bedoyin tribe before being enriched by a divine prophet. Buddhism, on the contrary, more highly differentiated, has recourse in its original form of Karma alone, the transcending law governing individual destiny. Buddhism is more a story of souls than of men.¹

It is of interest to note that in the last four decades or so, the question 'What is life?' has surfaced once more as an

1. Jacques Monod: *Chance and Necessity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972). As the title suggests, this book describes thermodynamics, cybernetics, and probability. The logic of probability and its philosophical implication are dealt with at a relatively advanced level.

important problem. Fundamentalists, on the one hand, are opposing the teaching of Darwinian theory in high schools while, on the other hand, leading scientists including theoretical physicists, chemists and biologists, are trying to probe into the very heart of this question with the help of more sophisticated mathematical tools. It is no wonder that six Nobel laureates in science have written books, addressing themselves to this very question from different angles such as 'time reversal', 'irreversibility', 'chance and probability', and 'entropy'.²

Darwin's theory of evolution is commonly expressed as the 'struggle for existence' and the 'survival of the fittest' through 'natural selection'. Incidentally, the first two expressions came from Herbert Spencer, and not from Darwin, who gave more importance to Nature as the cause of evolution.

It is of interest to note that Darwin's theory had no real influence on the thought

2. The scientific aspect of the problem is discussed from an original point of view in Monod's book already referred to and in the following books:

Manfred Eigen and Ruthild Winkler: *Laws of the Game* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981).

The basic elements of all games are chance and rules. Nature (Prakṛti) is also playing games.

Ilya Prigogine: *From Being to Becoming* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co. 1980). A new approach to the asymmetry between past and future. Relatively advanced text.

Francis Crick: *Life Itself: Its Origin and Nature* (Simon and Schuster Bldg., New York: Touchton, 1982). The idea of directed panspermia is described. Easy to understand.

E. Schrodinger: *What is Life?* (Cambridge University Press, 1967). Possibly the first text written to discuss life within the framework of modern physical science,

processes of countries with an ancient civilization such as India and China. The uniqueness of the species and its immutability was held with almost a religious fervour by earlier European philosophers like Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas. Even relatively modern philosophers like Kant (1724-1804) and Hegel (1770-1831) subscribed to this idea. In the West the philosophy of evolution was described from a biological standpoint by Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829) before Darwin. However, it was left to Darwin to describe the process of evolution in great details and give it a scientific formulation in the strictest sense of the term. His ideas were accepted by most of the leading scientists of the day and became popular. So he had to face the opposition of traditionalists. The concept of evolution was present in the philosophy of India and China even long before the time of Aristotle.

When Swami Vivekananda visited the United States he was many times asked about his views on the origin of life and on the process of evolution. We should remember here that Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin and William James had at that time great influence on the thinking of the Western people, and the famous Scopes Trial took place thirty-two years after Swamiji's address at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. The following lines are from Swamiji's 'The East and The West'.

The theory of evolution which is the foundation of almost all Indian schools of thought, has now made its way into the physical science of Europe. It has been held by the religions of all other countries except India that the universe in its entirety is composed of parts distinctly separate from each other. God, nature, man—each stands by itself, isolated from one another. God created them separate from the beginning.³

3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1973) vol. 5. p. 519.

Since the Vedantic philosophy which, according to the present author, includes Buddhism, does not insist on the uniqueness of man as a discrete identity separated from the rest of the world, the impact of Darwin's theory of evolution has never been felt in India as a cultural shock. The popular hymn on the ten incarnations of Visnu composed by the famous 12th-century poet Jayadeva describes the transformation process in a beautiful way.

The phrases 'survival of the fittest' or 'struggle for life' do not correctly explain the evolution process according to Patanjali and, as we will see in this article, the present scientific theories are closer to Patanjali's views. Let us start with Swami Vivekananda's 'Questions and Answers'.

- Q. What influence had your Hindu philosophy on the Stoic philosophy of the Greeks?
- A. It is very probable that it had some influence on it through the Alexandrians. There is some suspicion of Pythagoras' being influenced by the Samkhya thought. Anyway, we think the Samkhya philosophy is the first attempt to harmonize the philosophy of the Vedas through reason.
- Q. What is the antagonism of this thought with western science?
- A. No antagonism at all. We are in harmony with it. Our theory of evolution and of Akasha and Prana is exactly what your modern philosophies have. Your belief in evolution is among our Yogis and in the Samkhya philosophy. For instance, Patanjali speaks of one species being changed into another by the infilling of nature.⁴

We note that here Swamiji used 'infilling of nature' rather than 'struggle for life' and 'survival of the fittest' as the explanation for the process of evolution. The two aphorisms quoted by Swamiji are from the fourth chapter, 'Kaivalyapada', of Patanjali's *Yogasūtra*. Their original forms are: *Jātyantaraparīṇāmah prakṛtyā-pūrāt* and *nimittamaprayojakam prakṛtīnām*

4. *The Complete Works*, p. 298.

varaṇabhedastu tataḥ kṣetrikavat. The first aphorism is translated by Swamiji as 'The change into another species is by the filling in of nature.' The result of an action cannot exactly determine the process of action. This is because the result is the outcome of the process. During the process of evolution, the species could follow any of a set of directions. Once the process has taken place it is easy to account for the change.

Professor Eugene Wigner has made a very far-reaching comment on the applicability of the laws of physics as we presently know them. According to him the regularities of events are explained by physical laws but the coincidental initial or boundary conditions affecting them are not within the present domain of physics. Thus, once an event has occurred, the initial and boundary conditions are structured and therefore the event can be repeated by experiments. This is precisely the problem with the experimental verification with evolution. As a result of the progress of time we know that, structurally, the future is different from the past. But we do not have a time machine to repeat the incident. To continue our discussion, according to Patanjali, at the very juncture when the change is taking place, there is a push from the past and a pull from the future. Modern science is trying to understand the exact mechanism operating at this juncture. Words such as 'time reversal', 'equilibrium or non-equilibrium', and 'chance and probability' are used to give a mathematical structure to this phenomenon at the very moment of the change.

A very interesting scientific question rises here: does this change follow the rules of thermodynamical equilibrium? What it means is, if we change a certain future variable to an infinite extent, would the situation energetically prefer 'past'? If it does, we will state that the flow of

time is in equilibrium. According to Albert Einstein the past and the future are in equilibrium at this juncture. Quite a good number of top-notch scientists, especially those who are interested in the biological evolution process, today tend to believe that the process is irreversible, i.e., the biological mutation is an irreversible process with time and energetically the mutation is favourable. Prigogine, for example, believes that time reversal represents a negative jump in disorder (or entropy). Projection of the past into the future means the 'dissipation of the pattern established at the moment of time reversal'. In our next paragraph we shall explain how this idea fits in with Patanjali's view. But before starting that discussion I cannot resist quoting a portion of Albert Einstein's letter written on the death of his friend Michele Besso to Besso's widow: 'Michele has preceded me a little in leaving this strange world. This is not important. For us who are convinced physicists, the distinction between past, present, and future is only an illusion, however persistent.' How quickly the line of demarcation between a physical scientist and a philosopher, if there is any, becomes diffused while pondering over the meaning of life projected on the flow of time!

After describing the principle of evolution in the first aphorism Patanjali explains the logic of the process with a very common example in the second aphorism. A farmer wants to irrigate his fields. He opens the watergate of his reservoir. This opening of the gate by the farmer is similar to the attempt made by nature to remove the obstacle during the mutation process. The result of this action is not exactly predetermined or uniquely specified. Water could flow to any of the many fields situated under the reservoir. We note that the process is energetically favourable. Furthermore, the genetic drift is described

as the result 'of the random behaviour of species whose potentials for selection are more or less equal'. In Patañjali's example, the water could flow to any of the fields. Let us say, by chance the water goes to the corn field and not to the wheat field. The farmer will get only corn and no wheat. The wheat seed could not fight with the corn seed for survival. The wheat seed did not germinate at all and was therefore not in existence. The corn field was chosen, and after it was chosen we may say that it had the most suitable selective value. In Patañjali's example water did not go to all fields and thus the equiprobability rule is violated. In biology and chemistry the term 'Darwinian dynamic' has been coined to explain this phenomenon.

Sri Hariharānanda Āraṇya has exemplified the idea contained in the second aphorism as follows: Let us consider a block of marble. Many figures are hidden in this block. But only one figure will come out of this block of stone when it is chiselled. All the other figures which had initially equal probability of being formed do not become manifested. In this example, creativity is 'nimitta', the pieces of stone chipped out are 'obstacles' and the figure that was formed is the result of 'infilling of nature'.⁵

Let us now restate Patañjali's views on evolution in terms of the present scientific theories:

(1) The structural difference between the past and the future is referred as time asymmetry. Energetically, the forward direction is preferred by biological evolution.

(2) To go back to the past means to go back to a more ordered state. As far as the forward motion is concerned, nature

can follow any of the more than one available paths. The path that nature would select cannot be identified with certainty. All that can be said is, there is a need for change and therefore the obstacle would be removed.

(3) The path selected is stabilized and the ones not selected never came into being. The genetic drift is the result of a random behaviour and is caused by the infilling of nature.

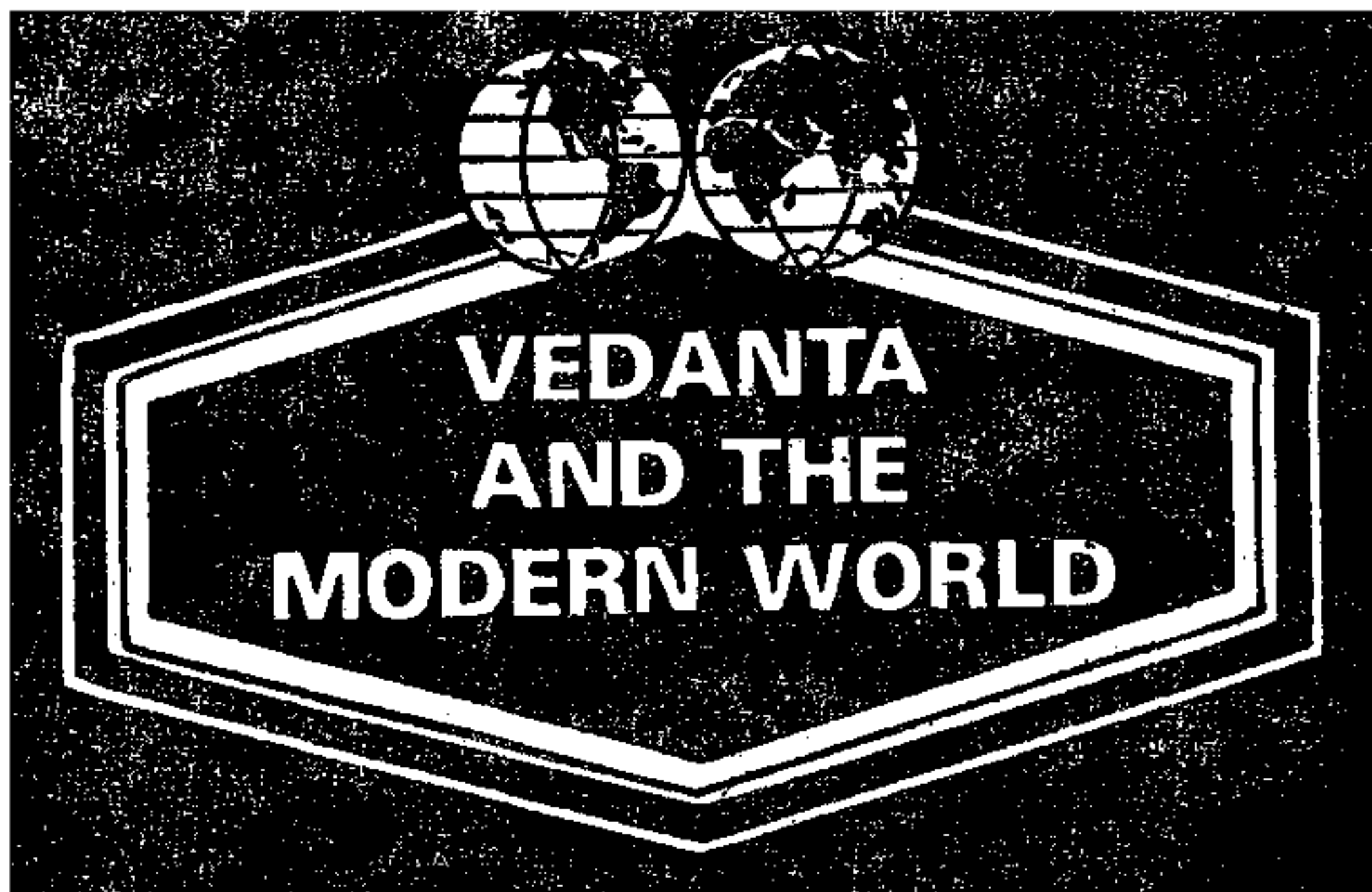
We stated earlier that Swamiji did not prefer the phrases, 'survival of the fittest' and 'struggle for life', and used 'filling in of nature' instead. It is likely that he wanted to see more harmony in nature for his own philosophy of life. Present scientific theories are, however, in conformity with his views. 'Fittest' means optimal selective value and struggle never took place simply because the two opposite parties never faced each other, at least, in our physical world. Darwin himself used the term 'the principle of preservation' instead of the term 'survival of the fittest', and sometimes described the species that survived as 'naturally selected species'.

Though there are similarities between Patañjali and modern scientists on the process of evolution yet, being a philosopher, Patañjali could not resist pondering deeply over the *principle* behind the process. One must remember that 'why' becomes 'how' when explained through science. Henri Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, and Sri Aurobindo among others have made great contributions to the *principle* behind evolution.⁶ The influence of Sāṃkhya and Buddhism is seen almost everywhere. Since

5. cf. Hariharananda Aranya: *Pātañjala Yogadarsan*, ed. Dharmamegha Aranya and Y. Ghose (Calcutta University Press, 1967).

6. For an insightful study of the views of these thinkers see, Beatrice Bruteau: *Evolution toward Divinity* (Wheaton, Illinois: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1974.)

(Continued on page 295)



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT IN INDIA: LIGHT FROM WITHIN—II

DR. S. K. CHAKRABORTY

III *Light from the East—Japan*

We may begin this section with the point mentioned last in section II. At the close of the Meiji era, from the second decade of this century onwards, when Japan set herself on the road to modern industrialization, it was the planned pursuit and propagation of the family ideology, with all its attendant values of loyalty and obedience to the formal leader, of sacrifice and dedication for the sake of the family, which became the single most important strategy for ensuring a stable social response to the changing techno-economic environment. Let us hear Yoshino on this point:

Thus, the stressing of familial paternalism as the central aspect of the Japanese managerial ideology of this period was not fortuitous. That familial paternalism was used as a deliberate means to solve economic, political, technological and social problems specific to the era of intense industrialization and urbanization cannot be overemphasized. The ideology of industrial paternalism was articulated only after a desperate search by management for viable ideological appeals to meet these problems. Paternalism proved eminently suited to the prevailing climate of the era.²⁴

It is rather easy to loosen and crush the cohesive bonds of a society, which have deep historical roots, in a temporary spell of false intellectual sophistry, and be left with a chaotic vacuum. This is what we in India seem to be bent on doing today. And this is precisely what Japan refused to do. Thus, Yoshino observes further:

'Industrial paternalism undoubtedly facilitated the very difficult process of transition from a rural life to industrial employment. This ideology appealed even to urban-bred workers whose number was gradually increasing. The reason for its appeal was that by this time, compulsory six-year schooling had become widespread, and...*ideological indoctrination stressing the virtues of the family tradition, loyalty to the nation, and diligence was the core of this educational programme.*'²⁵

We guess, the ire of many Indian scholars against the joint family and its head is mostly due to individual anger at unfortunate experiences. But objective scholarship would expect that such personalized judgements about core social institutions do not cloud and obliterate from view the much wider and sustained social relevance and contribution of such social artifacts. From the point of view of

²⁴. M.Y. Yoshino, *Japan's Managerial System* (MIT, 1968). p. 79.

²⁵. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

industrial history, India too is today in almost an identical transitional phase as Japan was in the post-Meiji era. So, her self-confidence in her own social traditions should be a chastening reminder to Indian management.

Similarly, we hear from Noda that although after the democratization process initiated by the Occupation forces had rendered the seniority principle somewhat obsolete, yet, 'with Japan's rapid economic growth and as company expansion stabilized, the seniority systems gradually revived.' And again, those companies which under American influence had turned cool towards traditional administrative practices like the *ringi* and abolished it, had no choice during the latter half of the sixties but to revive it. The task for India is to clearly grasp what types of seniors exist in Japanese organizations who have made it possible to reinstate the seniority principle with full force.²⁶

We may now listen to Nakamura's analysis of Japanese society:

'The habits of attaching importance to human relations is manifested outwardly in their practice of the rules of propriety...Japanese greetings are... highly elaborate. Politeness is observed not only among strangers but even among family members.'²⁷

'To lay stress upon human relationships is to place heavy regard upon the relations of many individuals rather than upon the individual as an independent identity.'²⁸

Our observation of Indian society shows that such elaborateness and refinement are noticeable characteristics here too. Thus, a senior or stranger is addressed as

²⁶. K. Noda, 'Big Business Organization' in *Modern Japanese Organization and Decision Making*, E. Vogel, ed. (Berkeley: University of California, 1975). p. 135, 138.

²⁷. H. Nakamura. *The Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*, (Tokyo: Japanese Government, 1960). p. 305.

²⁸. Ibid. p. 306.

āp, a peer as *tum*, and a junior as *tū*. Aunt or uncle is not the only word to label relationships with members of a family other than parents. Every variety of familial relationship—both on the matrilineal and patrilineal sides—has its own distinct name. One is not supposed to smoke or talk loudly or sit in the presence of one's teacher or superior or father or uncle. A teacher or superior is not supposed to be called by his first name. (It is unfortunate that Hajimura fails to mention any of these features of social relations in his section on India, where his treatment is based only on reading some books on Indian metaphysics and is assessed mostly in negative terms). It is only in recent years that we find that these norms of human relations are being abandoned under the influence of imitative Western educational and training systems. The point of importance is that, if Japanese society could integrate functionally its indigenous styles and norms of human relationships into the management of organizations, why should we in India regard our own norms in this respect as antithetical to effective management?

Nakamura remarks further:

'In such a society individuals are closely bound to each other and they form an exclusive human nexus. Here an individual who asserts himself will hurt the feelings of others and thereby do harm to himself. The Japanese learned to adjust themselves to this type of familistic society, and created forms of expression suitable to life in such a society. And here grew the worship of tutelary gods and local deities. Even today there is a strong tendency in Japanese social structure to settle closely around such tutelary gods and local deities. This tendency is deeply rooted in the people and it has led to their stressing of human relations.'²⁹

Once again we notice very close resemblance of the above description with the picture of authentic Indian social structure

²⁹. Ibid. Pp. 310-11.

built around cultivated rice fields. (Of course in this instance too Hajimura shows his lack of familiarity with India.)

Another very significant observation by Nakamura is:

'The attitude of total submission to a specific authority is not a phenomenon found only among the Japanese of the past, but it can still be clearly observed among the present-day Japanese. Even in those self-styled 'progressives' who are very severe towards conventional ideas, this trend is tenaciously adhered to.'³⁰

It is the refusal to accept any kind of authority (except that of money) which seems to be a modern fashion in India, discarding her earlier respect for authority which was very much the same in spirit as in Japan. And finally one more thought from Nakamura:

'While religions of the world very often tend to regard this world as the land of impurity, and the other world as the blessed land of purity where one seeks the Heaven of eternal happiness, primitive *Shintoism* recognises the intrinsic value here in this world. Each one of the Japanese people is considered to be the descendant of Gods and Goddesses.'³¹

This last excerpt is also largely true of the Indian thought pattern. The *gotras* (lineage) of Indians are after the names of great ancient sages. Indian folklore speaks of 330 million Gods for 330 million Indians. And the *Vedas* and the *Gita* have all sung in favour of the here and now. Many great realized souls, after attaining identity with the Ultimate Reality, have indeed lived in society sustaining the balance in perspective necessary for human existence at the secular level.

Thus, although Nakamura himself fails to discover such basic similarities between Japanese and Indian social structures, we notice that they are close enough to each

other in many important ways. So our hypothesis is: if by conserving such essential traditional features Japanese society has been able to develop economically and manage effectively, there is no reason for considering such forces in Indian society as the arch enemies of similar goals for itself.

Let us now turn to another Japanese author—Nakane Chie—who also, while writing mainly about Japanese society, draws interesting parallels of contrasts between it and Indian society. Of particular relevance to us here is the following analysis about the joint family:

'In the ideal traditional household in Japan, for example, opinions of the members of the household should always be held unanimously regardless of the issue, and this normally meant that all members accepted the opinion of the household head, without even discussing the issue. An expression of a contradictory opinion to that of the head was considered a sign of misbehaviour, disturbing the harmony of the group order. Contrasted to such a unilateral process of decision-making in the Japanese household, the Indian counterpart allows much room for discussion between its members...*Hindu family structure is similar hierarchically to the Japanese family, but the individual's rights are well-preserved in it.*'³²

We believe that Chie's portrayal of the Indian joint family and the role of its leader is at least as true to reality as that offered by authors like the Kapps or Chattopadhyayas. Relatively then, according to standards employed by the latter, the Japanese joint family should be an even more pernicious social institution stifling economic development and organizational management than the Indian joint family. And yet the former had provided immense leverage for Japanese management in the post-Meiji era—notwithstanding some reaction against it just after the Second World War. Chie

30. Ibid. p. 374.

31. Ibid. p. 540.

32. C. Nakane, *Japanese Society*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970) p. 13.

also concludes that the ideology of an enterprise as a family group has been cautiously encouraged by managers, and that 'this encouragement has always succeeded and reaped rewards'.³³

Nakane Chie later highlights the strong emotional content of human relationships in Japanese organizations. The case of one Japanese mountaineering team which failed to scale a Himalayan peak for lack of emotional integration—its members having been drawn from diverse institutions, and all of them being of the same age group—and the case of another successful team, which was composed of climbers from different age groups, and whose leader was over fifty years, are narrated by the author.³⁴ Thus, such an apparently feudalistic or backward human relations strategy—manifested in consciously introducing vertical elements in the social structure of a group—was employed with a view to achieving results.

Our assessment, experience and observation of the Indian social scene is that it resembles very much that of Japan in that Indians also feel the strong emotional need for vertical leaders and not just peer chairpersons. All great Indian institutions like the Indian Statistical Institute or the Vishwabharati were built that way. The reality, however unfashionable it might be, is very much like that in Japan—grey hair does after all matter a lot (of course, along with other essential personal qualities). While Japan is practical enough to accept and make use of this reality in management, India is possibly intellectual enough to heap scorn at it. Do results matter, or shall a borrowed Western intellectual halo perpetually continue to charm us?

There is, however, one crucial difference between Japan and India. Chie observes :

'...Japanese who graduate (or even receive a Ph.D.) from Universities abroad rather than from Universities in Japan fail to secure appointment to good posts in leading Japanese institutions. Such *foreign products are somewhat alien and are pushed aside*, in that they do not fit the hierarchy of the Japanese system... Every institution tackles this problem (i.e. experience in international business dealings) in the same way—by sending promising young employees, who have been through Japanese education through University level, for additional training to educational institutions in the West; this is *in preference to employing those who have already by their own initiative, had previous training or experience abroad.*'³⁵

We had a poignant experience of this aspect in 1979 in a very reputable agro-industrial research laboratory in India. During the years 1975-79 this institution was recruiting quite a few young Ph. D.'s from the USA and the UK in various departments. They had researched, and even worked at times after their doctoral work, in very advanced and specialized disciplines of study in those countries. They had absolutely no acquaintance with the life-line of the research laboratory which they joined as specialists. And this particular crop was not cultivable in Western countries. The Director thought that the senior colleagues, who had built up the reputation of the institution over two or three decades with active recognition from the consumer industrial houses, were becoming backdated. So fresh, new blood needed to be inducted. But during our consultancy assignment we made the shocking discovery that the laboratory was being rent asunder by the new entrants ridiculing and running down the senior heads of departments, with the Director tacitly abetting in the game (himself a Ph. D. from the USA with no prior experience in the particular agricultural crop which that laboratory was handling). In our report we suggested (without reading Nakane

33. Ibid. p. 19.

34. Ibid. Pp. 72-75.

35. Ibid. p. 114.

Chie at that time) that in future new blood must be inducted in a different way. Good post-graduate degree holders from reputable Indian Universities should be recruited first and made to work in the laboratory under the seniors for at least five years. Then only should they be sent for further specialization or doctoral work in Indian institutions, or abroad if necessary. After such work on leave from the laboratory they should come back and rejoin the institution and serve it for a certain minimum number of years. This was the only way for such young scientists to develop an understanding and sympathy for the base line of their laboratory, and also to adapt their research orientation to the specific problems of the particular crop which they could recognize for themselves during the initial breaking in years. So far as we could gather after our assignment was over, this recommendation of ours was not accepted on the specious plea that such a process of manpower planning would be a time-consuming affair. Thus, the fancy for foreign Ph.D.s along with zero-rating accorded to the paramount task of maintaining the morale and human cohesion of the system got the better of our apparently practical counsel, meant to conserve respect for the seniors and elders who had rendered yeoman's service to the organization, together with an appreciation of the environment and culture of Indian organizations and the fields of specialization.

We might mention yet another pertinent differentiating variable between Japan and India which is relevant to our theme here. Challenging W. Labarre's explanation of the Japanese compulsiveness in terms of the Freudian psychoanalytic framework of repressive toilet training in childhood, Haring points to the history of Japan for an answer. According to him, pre-war militaristic Japan emerged naturally and without break from the background of three

centuries of preparation—including Tokugawa dictatorship. Thus was the whole nation reared on fear-inspired discipline under police states.³⁶ It was this heritage of discipline, among many other features, which was an important support to Japan's management of rapid industrialization. In India, however, lack of emphasis on discipline as a value in the civil disobedience movement (by drawing out students from schools, colleges and universities) during the pre-independence decades, and erosion of traditional values without any effective substitutes developing in post-independence decades, have completely wrecked discipline in society. And this debacle was hastened by the deliberate fouling of traditional norms of social behaviour in homes and educational institutions by the false lure of Western values. Hence an unfashionable but unavoidable question is: how will discipline be restored in Indian society so that management in organizations could be the beneficiary of its resurrection, as in the case of Japan?

IV. *Light from within—India*

We have argued elsewhere that in the sphere of man-management (i.e. the 'software' component of organizations) decision-making effectiveness is primarily a function of the level of mental *purity* of the decision maker.³⁷ The story of King Vikramaditya's (57 B.C.) judgement-seat may be mentioned here to amplify the point. (Incidentally, we also intend to indicate by this that stories from Indian folklore, mythology, puranas and so on are gems of insight for understanding a society's psychical tradition

36. D. G. Haring, 'Japanese National Character', in *Japanese Character and Culture*, ed. B.S. Silberman, (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1962) Pp. 392-5.

37. S. K. Chakraborty, 'Business Management and Indian Mysticism,' *Prabuddha Bharata*, September, 1982. p. 395.

which, in turn, is indispensable for sound man-management).

'It so happened that after several centuries of the passing away of Vikramaditya, his palace, his court-hall, his fortress and all that at Ujjain the capital city had turned into ruins and were overlaid with many layers of earth and grass. Young shepherd boys of nearby villages made the expanse their playground. One of them once discovered a raised mound in it and he ran to stand on it. Then he took his seat there and told his friends that let them bring all their disputes and quarrels to him and he would be the judge. And to the surprise of his playmates, he was delivering a judgement in each case which was satisfactory to both parties. The news spread, and this boy was now asked to deliver judgements on all kinds of disputes amongst people from far and near. The King of an adjacent territory came to know of this. He guessed that this must be the legendary judgement seat of Vikramaditya. So the lost seat was dug up and transferred to the King's palace. After proper rites and due ceremony when the King was just about to step on to the seat, one of the twentyfive stone angels supporting the throne asked him a question about his worthiness to sit on it, while he had nursed greedy ambitions about someone else's territory. The King had to accept this charge after due reflection in his mind. He was advised by the stone angel to fast and pray for three days before he could try again to sit on the throne. But every time the King would try to do so, the next stone angel would put to him similar questions, and the King would have to admit the faults in his character. When for the twentyfifth time the King attempted, after due fasting and prayers, to climb on to the throne, the only angel remaining asked him: 'Art thou then perfectly pure in heart, O King? Is thy will like unto that of a little child? If so, thou art indeed worthy to sit on this seat'. The King had again to admit to himself that he was not worthy. And at that moment the angel bore the seat on its wings and flew away. But the lesson was not lost on the King. He could at last realize why that shepherd boy could always sit on the seat and pronounce right judgements, while he was denied the right even to sit on the throne.'³⁸

38. Sister Nivedita, *Cradle Tales of Hinduism* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972) Pp. 258-67. Adapted

Our system of upbringing and education today is such that the concept of mental purity does not readily make sense to most of us. Yet, mental impurities are running riot in all of us. In section I we had mentioned one of the dark spots in the field of decision-making in India to be the cyclonic sweep of regionalism, linguism, and similar scourges at every level in the society and in every type of organizational form if creates—whether it is the selection of a national team in games or cultural activities, whether it is the location of power stations or electronics units, whether it is the selection of personnel in academic institutions or promotions of managers in industrial houses. The ancient Indian response to such problems was truly moral and psychological, and not just intellectual and amoral, and certainly not political or merely ritualistic. Let us quote some of Manu's laws in this matter:

1. Contentment, forgiveness, self-control (uprightness), abstention from unrighteously appropriating anything, obedience to the rules of purification (i.e. cleanliness), coercion of the organs (self-control), wisdom, knowledge (of the supreme soul), truthfulness, and abstention from anger, form the ten-fold law.³⁹

2. Among all modes of purification, *purity in the acquisition of wealth* is declared to be the best, for he is pure who gains wealth with clean hands, not he who purifies himself with earth and water.⁴⁰

3. Through a want of *modesty* many kings have perished, together with their belongings; through modesty even hermits in the forest have gained kingdoms.⁴¹

4. Through a want of *humility* Vena perished.⁴²

5. But by humility Prithu and Manu gained sovereignty...⁴³

39. G. Buhler, *The Laws of Manu*, Sacred Books of The East, Ed. Max Muller, Vol. XXV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886) VI—92!

40. Ibid. V—106.

41. Ibid. VII—40.

42. Ibid. VII—41.

43. Ibid. VII—42.

6. Let him carefully shun the ten vices, springing from *love of pleasure*, and the eight proceeding from *wrath*, which all end in misery.⁴⁴

7. That *greediness* which all wise men declare to be the root even of both these sets (6 above) let him carefully conquer; both sets of vices are produced by that.⁴⁵

No matter what impressive new vocabulary modern behavioural sciences might use to explain human relations in organizations, in our opinion, it merely serves to cover the essential and causal problems which have been mentioned so boldly and categorically in the above excerpts. And of course, the contrary positive traits of the mind have also been clearly postulated. Everyday our own experience tells us that it is the overwhelming presence of these impurities which are at the root of all frustrations, heart breaks and suppressed tears in organizations. Just to mention a small incident. A few months ago we met a former student of ours, now a very senior executive, in an airport lounge. As our conversation picked up, at one stage we remarked, in the light of an event he narrated, that such a tragic sequel was essentially due to the lack of humility on the part of one of the managers. To this he replied that humility was not the right word, for to him it meant something like servility! So there we are. Those who have seriously tried to inculcate such values as modesty, or reduction of anger, would know the immense depth of the task. They would agree that in these inner experiments the first consciousness that awakens is that right at the juncture when a particular incident occurs we might fall into the habitual traps of aggression, or boasting, or anger, or greed, but sometime afterwards—may be even just thirty minutes after the happening—we might realize our own mistake or relapse. And

this chain of junctural relapse, accompanied by post-junctural acknowledgement of the error, supported by renewed effort is what goes on in the struggle for mental purity.

Why should mental purity be sought? Because in matters subjective, which man-management has always been and shall always be, our reasoning faculty does not go far enough. We need the leavening of insight. And valid insight arrives with highest probability at the portals of pure minds only. Think of an Einstein, or a Tagore, or a Gandhi and you will know what is meant here. The story of Vikramaditya's judgement seat narrated earlier contains the same message.

Of course we realize that an analysis of this nature might attract the charge that these thoughts belong to religion or spirituality, and are therefore out of place in a paper on management. Perhaps such critics, if we may suggest humbly, could do well with a little bit of introspection. Are we not here centrally concerned with man-management? If yes, then what is the concept of man we shall use to generate our hypotheses and test our processes and methods? Is he merely a man with material needs and sense-related aspirations only? Does he live by bread alone? Of course modern management literature admits of psychological needs like job satisfaction, self-esteem, recognition and so on. Yet in organizations we find that very little progress has been made so far in making these elements ubiquitous. And our prognosis is that very little can be done in this respect even in the distant future following Western approaches. Even in the West a considerable number of people are disenchanted with the results of their effort in this direction.

So, many American scholars have turned to Japan to unravel her mystique of man-management, to know how she has been able to beat the West in its own game.

44. Ibid. VII—45.

45. Ibid. VII—49.

And one of the common findings of many such researchers is that Japanese organizations accept the employee as a *total man*, including his spiritual and moral sides. He is not a mere seller of his time and labour for a contracted sum of money. Thus Pascale and Athos quote the seven 'spiritual' values of the famous Matsushita company as follows:⁴⁶

1. National service through industry.
2. Fairness
3. Harmony and cooperation
4. Struggle for betterment
5. Courtesy and humility
6. Adjustment and assimilation
7. Gratitude.

Is there any paucity of support for such basic human relations norms throughout the wide variety of Indian traditional literature? But alas! Are they allowed entry at all into the circle of educational institutions and business organizations in India? Such expressions are usually dismissed as supercilious moralizing by students and managers, and probably by teachers too.

Reference is also made to Zen (derived from Indian *dhyana*, Chinese *chan*) in the context of Japanese management. For instance, to Pascale and Athos, Zen means adopting periodically the discipline of the 'no-ego' state. This then allows one to penetrate into the essential core of a problem without imposing oneself on it.⁴⁷ Low accepts Zen for management in a more comprehensive manner than Pascale and Athos. Low declares: 'Because managers have failed to put their psychological, indeed their *spiritual*, house in order, the dilemmas mount.'⁴⁸ Later he emphasizes

the mind control aspect of Zen, and its positive effect on the mobilization of one's energies for a given task.⁴⁹ Benoit talks of the 'let-go' and 'no-mind' and 'no-body' slogans of Zen.⁵⁰ Suzuki talks of Zen's Unconscious—the source of creativity.⁵¹ Those who have read Indian works on this subject would readily recall that the first classic in the world expounding in detail the process of controlling the mutations of mind was Patanjali's *Yogasutras* (about 400-300 years B.C.)⁵². (Of course, some Indian managers are willing to accept these ideas from tertiary sources—China, Japan and the USA—not directly from the original source—their own motherland. Who says the world is not round?)

If our understanding of the authentic interpretations of Indian originals⁵³ is correct even to a limited degree, then we might say that even though expressions like no-ego, no-body, no-mind, let-go, and spiritual house occur in the works quoted above, they mostly seem to convey a much more utilitarian conception of such processes (especially by Pascale and Athos, Low and even Benoit to some extent), in comparison with the central spiritual concern of Indian ideas which transcend ethical, moral and certainly utilitarian aims. This central spiritual concern of India is by no means negative in character. Yoga and Vedanta teach man that he is essentially pure, free, luminous and blissful; it is his birthright to recapture this hidden treasure within,

⁴⁶. R.T. Pascale and A.G. Athos, *The Art of Japanese Management* (London: Penguin, 1982) p. 51.

⁴⁷. Ibid. p. 92.

⁴⁸. A. Low, *Zen and Creative Management* (New York: Playboy Paperback, 1982) p. 194.

⁴⁹. Ibid. p. 211.

⁵⁰. H. Benoit, *The Supreme Doctrine* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955) p. 58.

⁵¹. D.T. Suzuki, E. Fromm and R.D. Martino, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960) p. 12.

⁵². S. K. Chakraborty, 'Patanjali's *Yogasutras* and Behavioural Sciences', in *Value Orientation*, Calcutta, vols. I & II, 1982.

⁵³. For example, Swami Vivekananda, *Rajayoga* (Calcutta, Advaita Ashrama, 1976).

and to attain the goal of permanent knowledge-bliss-existence. How could this be a negative goal for man? In fact, this is the most positive of all—as demonstrated in the lives of countless realized souls all over the world. And even a common man—including a Westerner who is honest enough to admit his narcissistic infatuation with the so-called modern civilization of insatiable consumption hunger—might admit this to be the really one positive goal, although he may not muster the courage to begin marching towards it. Secular success comes as a side-effect, as a corollary—but more beautifully, serenely and beneficially—by taking to and imbibing spirituality in this sense.

There is no denying that emptying the mind can fill it with new energy and strength. But the Indian approach to this task is at once more practical and humble, yet intensely spiritual. Thus, instead of trying to empty the mind, the beginner on the path of yoga is always advised not to force anything out of his mind, but to patiently turn it towards something more lofty, luminous, pure, radiant and peaceful. This something might be anthropomorphic or non-anthropomorphic, depending on the inner nature of the student. The riot of impure thoughts has to be quelled not by violent means but by making the mind reach out towards pure and serene and soulfilling thoughts and images. Well has it been said that if you walk eastwards, the west will automatically become more distant from you. Only after long practice like this does one's mind really begin to be empty. And then when this state is reached securely, Indian psychology states, the creative source of knowledge which begins to fill the void is not the unconscious, but the Superconscious—the direct emanation of the Supreme Soul of which all individual souls are a part. Further, when you begin to receive such light, you can, if you so desire, continue

with all your secular enterprises—now with a surer and more authentic touch of wisdom in an increasing number of instances as you progress more and more. That is why India has the concept as well as examples of the *Rajarshi* to offer—the king and sage blended into one. Moreover the no-ego state in Indian parlance is not a mere technical feat of a strongly disciplined will. It is more significantly a total transformation of the inner being whereby the limited lower ego of mind ruled by the senses finds its refuge and rest in the omnipresent higher consciousness of the transcendent Self. Such a man behaves with unflinching and true modesty and humility and becomes a most dependable agent of harmony and peace in human affairs.

Besides, the concept of purity of mind in Indian scriptures, and the methods of attaining it are in sharp contrast to the concepts of Freudian psychoanalysis. In the latter the unconscious is cut open with clinical precision on the assumption that knowledge is strength, and that therefore through the individual's awareness of his deeply repressed sources of anger, frustration, envy and so on he can better cope with these problems. But the Indian way of Yoga or Vedanta would not suggest plunging headlong into a direct confrontation with the unconscious. Rather it warns against the serious dangers of such confrontation in a purely clinical manner. Its method is an attempt to arouse and meditate upon the opposite, positive and elevating thoughts and images through symbols which carry an emotional appeal conforming to the individual's mental profile. The ability to empty one's mind through such a prior process is more uplifting and enduring than temporary feats of no-ego achieved by sheer will-power.

The idea of mental purity, in our view, is also linked intimately with the doctrine

of Karma, the law of cause and effect and inexorable retribution. A man's act is preceded by speech and his speech is preceded by thought. The root is thought. Hence the maintenance of a perennial flow of good higher thoughts within us is given such importance. However, the Doctrine of Karma touches this chain principally at the end-point: the act. Let us hear Manu again on this point:

1. Unrighteousness, practised in this world does not at once produce its fruit, like a cow; but advancing slowly, it cuts off the roots of him who committed it.⁵⁴

2. If the punishment falls not on the offender himself, it falls on his sons, if not on sons, at least on his grandsons; but an inequity once

^{54.} *The Laws of Manu*, op. cit., IV—172.

committed never fails to produce fruit to him who wrought it.⁵⁵

Warning sternly thus about the inescapable consequences of wrong actions, the doctrine of Karma expects man to be careful and circumspect about his action and conduct. However, such circumspection and discretion can flow consistently only if a man's thoughts are well regulated and pure. We believe that here we have a clear demonstration of the systems approach to human conduct through Indian scriptures. It is our firm conviction that this model promises to be one of the most authentic answers to the problems of man-management in Indian organizations.

(To be concluded.)

^{55.} *Ibid.*, IV—173.

REPORT ON A HISTORIC EVENT

(A Review-Article)

[RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CONVENTION 1980: REPORT. Published by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission Convention, Belur Math, Howrah, West Bengal 711 202. 1980, Pp. 373. Rs. 100.]

The first impression that even a glance at the 373 pages and 181 photographs of this massive volume leaves on the mind of the reader is about the global dimension of the Ramakrishna Movement. The magnificent array of photographs, reports, speeches and statistics makes the reader aware that here is the most significant religious movement of India slowly spreading its wings, creating its ever-deepening spiritual impact on the whole world. The present book is a record of the proceedings of the second Convention of the monastic members and lay devotees of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission organized by the authorities of Belur Math. The first convention was held in 1926 under the guidance of Swami Saradananda, a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The

main purpose of the second Convention, like that of the first one, was to bring together the diverse and ever-growing strands of the Ramakrishna Movement into a common socio-cultural fabric and deliberate upon its achievements, needs, dangers and future perspectives. The Convention turned out to be a mammoth affair, and the second impression that the present book leaves on the mind of the reader is the tremendous executive capacity of the Committee which had been entrusted with the task of organizing the Convention.

The immensity of the Convention can be understood from the fact that 12,000 delegates and representatives took part in it out of whom 264 were foreign delegates who had come from 15 foreign countries. The report tells us that 113 private centres

(not affiliated to the Mission) from all over India sent a total number of 641 delegates. Everyday about 7,000 people had to be fed and the total number of delegates who took food on all the days of the Convention was 1,10,652. The total number of volunteers (mostly young men from Calcutta and Howrah) serving in the Convention round the clock for nearly 8 days was 1,975. The huge *pandal* erected as an auditorium for the mammoth course of delegates and other guests was certainly the biggest and most beautiful of its kind seen in recent times in that part of the country. An overwhelming sense of holiness, global unity and universal respect for the Ramakrishna movement comes to each reader of the Report from the photographs of the vast congregation of monks, nuns, devotees, delegates, and guests all of whom Swami Vireswaranandaji, President of the Math and Mission addressed as 'Children of Sri Ramakrishna'.

The inaugural speech of Revered President Maharaj focusses on the primary purpose of the Convention and the central theme of all its deliberations. It is, in short, a call for a reassessment and reaffirmation of and rededication of the twin great ideals of *ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca* ('For one's own liberation and the good of the world.') propounded by Swami Vivekananda. Revered Maharaj's speech is a bold reassertion of the prime concern of Swami Vivekananda: the uplift of women and the masses. The reconstruction of the country depends on the *prāyaścitta*, says Revered Maharaj, to be performed by the higher castes of India for the down-trodden masses. Another significant aspect of the inaugural speech is the exhortation to lay devotees to take up with an equal sense of responsibility and dedication the task of national reconstruction laid upon monks by the first leader, Swami Vivekananda, Swami

Hiranmayanandaji, President of the Convention, in his welcome address points out the importance of organization and the three main teachings of Sri Ramakrishna: renunciation of *kāminī-kāñcana*, harmony of religion and spiritual unity. Another welcome address by Swami Vandananandaji, Secretary of the Math and the Mission outlines the chief purpose of the Convention. With the vote of thanks proposed by Swami Lokeswaranandaji, Secretary of the Convention, the report of the Inaugural Session comes to an end.

The major part of the book is devoted to reports of the deliberations of the nine major sessions, besides the valedictory session, in which the nine major aspects of the Ramakrishna Movement are discussed. These are: The Ramakrishna Movement, the Ramakrishna Order, Practical Vedanta, the Message of Sri Ramakrishna, our work in India, inter-religious understanding, our work outside India, problems facing us, role of lay devotees. Each session, except the fifth and seventh, has a keynote address followed by short speeches by prominent and distinguished thinkers, intellectuals, writers and social workers who had come from different parts of India and the world as delegates. And each session concludes with the presidential speech of a representative monk of the Order and a vote of thanks by a senior monk.

All the keynote speeches contain something profound, new and very relevant to the present-day society in India and the World. Special mention should be made of the first keynote address by Swami Budhanandaji in which he points the great Mother Power of the Holy Mother Sarada Devi as the sustaining force behind the Ramakrishna Movement. The other keynote and presidential speeches also deserve the careful attention of the readers. The short speeches by the lay delegates give an idea

of the penetrating power and adaptability of the Movement and the possible directions in which it may expand in future.

The two major sessions of the Convention which were held in the Netaji Indoor Stadium, Calcutta, one of the biggest indoor stadiums of India, are reported with photographs. The report of the Sixth session on Inter-religious Understanding, held in this huge stadium is an important document as it gives the views of the representatives of the major religions on this vital issue. It is a refreshing experience to listen to the speakers in this session stressing universal elements of their respective religions. The eighth session devoted to the work of the Ramakrishna Order outside India is another part that readers will find very stimulating, especially the presidential address of Swami Swahanandaji, spiritual head of Vedanta Society of Southern California.

From the benedictory speech of Revered Swami Vireswaranandaji and the valedictory addresses in the concluding session by Swami Vandananandaji, Swami Atmasthanandaji, Swami Hiranmayanandaji and Swami Lokeswaranandaji, one can get an idea of the immensity of the contingent problems handled by this Convention. The talks of Swamis Atmasthanandaji and Lokeswaranandaji in this session tell in vivid detail the colossal preparations which made the Convention a success, and also the cooperation extended by the West Bengal Government, the unstinted help rendered by Sri Patita Paban Pathak and the staff of Bally Municipality, and the dedicated service of a large number of people including some prominent businessmen and the people of Belur locality. Swami Hiranmayanandaji's vote of thanks very aptly sums up this historic Convention as the manifestation of the *Viśvarūpa* of Sri Ramakrishna.

Besides the photographs and write-ups

of the Convention, the Report gives beautiful photographic representation to all the major centres of the Mission all over the world. The vastness and diversity of the cultural, social, religious and educational activities the Mission is doing all over the world today will be apparent to anyone even if he just glances at the photographs and their captions. In fact this Report is a compendious representation of the global activities of the Ramakrishna Movement with its catholic, universal, humanitarian and primarily spiritual outlook on life and Reality. The Report proper ends with a brief account of the Exhibition organized as an adjunct to the Convention.

In conclusion, it may be said that the Report is a historic document of the vast and increasingly expanding activities of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission over the last 60 years. If the Report of the First Convention of 1926 indicated the early dawn of the Ramakrishna Movement, the Report of the Second Convention of 1980 shows the rising sun moving slowly towards the zenith. The Ramakrishna Movement, as everybody can feel, is still a very young movement but it has a future of a millennium, as its creator Swami Vivekananda dreamt of. The simple upward curve from the first report to the second report is an unmistakable sign of this promise.

The Convention Committee deserves praise for their excellent editing and printing of the Report. The cover design is modest but impressive. However, many readers of the Report sincerely feel that in order to make this historic document available to common public, the Report should be priced considerably lower, even if this means subsidizing it.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SPIRITUAL TITBITS: BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bull Temple Road, Bangalore 560 019. 1983. Pp. 45. Rs. 2.25.

The present booklet is a reprint of the last chapter of a very much larger work, *Meditation and Spiritual Life*, of the author who did pioneering work in spreading the message of Vedanta in pre-War Europe. It consists of notes of class-talks given by Swami Yatiswaranandaji at St. Moritz, Switzerland, to a small group of earnest seekers of Truth. Terse and pregnant with deep meaning, these notes are in the form of maxims, nearly two hundred of them, which cover a wide spectrum of the practical side of spiritual life. These aphoristic statements are evidently not meant to be lapped up at one setting. Rather, they are meant to be meditated upon, piece by piece, though not necessarily at the time of routine daily devotions. You may glance through any one of them at any time of the day, even while travelling by bus or train (the book is small enough to slip into your pocket or hand bag), and let the idea soak into your mind. There in the depths of your consciousness the idea will work and, even without your notice, transform your attitudes and orientations to life. This is what this modest little book is meant for—the meditative transformation of life.

S.B.

THE NEW WINE OF JESUS: CHRIST TAUGHT VEDANTA: BY BHAWANI SANKAR CHOWDHURY. Published by One World Publishers, 54/4B Hazra Road, Calcutta 700 019. 1982. Pp. 157. Rs. 40.

Our intellectual ethos is today dominated by the striving after the identification of our common religious heritage and its recurring motifs. Comparative religious studies are an extension of a global cultural phenomenon reaching out after a great synthesis of the East and the West. (Ramakrishna Vedanta has blazed in this area a new trail as is evident, for instance, in the Vedantic interpretations of 'Sermon on the Mount' and St. John of the Cross, by, respectively, Swamis Prabhavananda and Siddheswarananda. Above all, we have the far-ranging, seminal study, *The Hindu View of Christ*, 1949, by Swami Akhilananda).

Dr. Chowdhury's book is a welcome addition in this area. Though he describes it as 'a

commentary on the Bible not on the Vedanta,' the implicit assumption is that several Christian ideas cannot *in their essence* be understood without comparable insights from Indian philosophical and mystical premises. This does not mean that Christian motifs are derivative. For, as the author says, it is immaterial how 'Jesus himself was taught,' what is far more relevant is 'how the external being, the war God of the Israelites, Yahweh, was silently transformed into the all-informing Brahman of the East by the genius of Jesus of Nazareth.'

Working out the implications of these ideas is not easy. At every step the author has to maintain utmost sense of discrimination allied with the ability to contain an irritable reaching out after alleged 'facts' in an overeagerness to score a point.

From this perspective, Dr. Chowdhury's book is, by and large, a very competent study. It evaluates almost the entire gamut of the Christian myth and religion as illumined by basic Hindu ideas. He analyses in depth, from a convincing comparative perspective, the ideas of asceticism, Genesis, the Kingdom of God, the motif of Temptation etc.

One cannot, naturally, agree in toto with some of the author's conclusions (his ideas on *asvamedha* for instance). To ignore completely the ancient Hebrew traditions and Christian hermeneutics is not wise. Nevertheless, the range and depth, the overall sincerity and diligence of the approach make the book interesting reading for students of comparative religion.

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COSMIC EVOLUTION AND THE EVOLUTION OF LIFE BY PROF. SUBIR BIJOY SENGUPTA. Published by Gopal Sen, Suman Books, Susmita, Motinagar, Shillong, Meghalaya 1982. Pp. 248. Rs. 32.

The evolution of the cosmos is one of the greatest mysteries for the human intellect. Whether this universe was created *ex nihilo* or out of something, is a dilemma which has defied logical proof. While idealists struggle to establish the primacy of mind, realists try to prove the prior existence of matter. Paleontological investigations only exhibit the limitations of the human mind and give nothing more than

an evidence for the existence of matter at an early stage and the manifestation of life at a later period in the history of the cosmos. The cyclical views of history take the manifestation of matter and life as taking place one after the other repeatedly.

Professor S. B. Sengupta presents a hypothesis on the metaphysics of life in the book under review. He has shown, in clear and simple language, that the evolution of life is a logical consequence of the forces that work on matter. Leaning heavily on the thinking of Henry Bergson, the author enunciates the hypothesis that 'the first principle that lies at the root of this universe is pure consciousness. This consciousness, in the course of its evolution, creates the cycles of our life and is the principle that produces our mind and, through its activities, the so-called products of Nature—matter, space, etc.—in an order of succession.'

The dawn of knowledge, after millions of years of the birth of the cosmos, is a qualitative change in the process of the evolution of life itself. At the human level knowledge has shown immense growth and claims to encompass a large portion of the unknown. Those who profess the identity of thought and reality are sure of the possibility of omniscience at one stage or the other, at least in principle. The consciousness of the infinite, absolute reality, opens the doorway to morality and religion for mankind. What is morality at the social level is religion at the supra-social stage. Negation of the individuality and the identification of the individual with the infinite are two points in the same process of the enlargement of our personality. The destiny of our life is to realize our infinite nature, to be one with the Ultimate Reality. The author brings out these concepts in a readable and scholarly fashion and his sincere efforts in this direction deserve appreciation.

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YOGA OF RIGHT LIVING FOR SELF-
REALIZATION: BY SRI S. NATESA IYER.
Published by Sri N. Gangadharan, Inder Nagar,
Ootacamund 643 005. 1983. Pp. 50. Price not
mentioned.

Apastamba Dharma Sūtra has a section entitled 'Adhyātma Patala' on which Śrī Śamkara, it is said, has commented in detail. Sri Natesa Iyer, an able exponent of Advaita Vedanta has offered an illuminating exposition of this commentary in the present work. It is a free rendering of the text and its commentary. The author was not a mere theoretical Advaitin, but a practising one. It was Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi who opened the doors of spiritual realization to him.

The preface to the text opens with a salutation to Dakshinamurti, the seer of all Vedic mantras. In tune with this seer, the first section deals with character and discipline.

Apastamba's thirteen sutras deal with self knowledge. It shows how to put an end to all suffering through right living, governed by the spirit of renunciation. The Karma Kāṇḍa and the Jñāna Kāṇḍa of the Veda are not mutually exclusive or contradictory. The differences are only apparent. Following Śamkara, the author explains this clearly. Right living is yoga having self-knowledge as its goal. The self is the non-dual Brahman. The Advaitic position is stated succinctly.

In an appendix there is 'something for you' and it refers to the *turiya*, the state beyond waking, dream and sleep. Next, the author exhorts us to 'know thy Self' and ends with 'a forgotten tablet'. We quote the illuminating words of the author: 'The saving knowledge calls for a correction in the evaluation of experiencing itself, which involves no effort, no action, but only an understanding, a reappraisal of the whole situation. The result is Peace Eternal and Bliss Absolute.'

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH

MADRAS

Report for 1983

The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Mylapore, Madras-4, manages three institutions on its campus: the Vivekananda College, the Vivekananda-College Evening College and a hostel for the students.

The Vivekananda College, started in 1946, is a premier institution of the Mission in the field of higher education, offering courses ranging from the under-graduate to the Ph. D. level, with six of the P.G. departments recognized for research and over 20 candidates working for their Ph. D. degree. From its inception the college has been maintaining a high academic standard in accordance with the educational ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission. As one of the colleges selected by the university for autonomy, the college has become partially autonomous at the post-graduate departments of Chemistry and Economics. The College had nearly 1,500 students on its rolls. The Evening College had about 800 students. During the year, 326 students were awarded scholarships which amounted to Rs. 2,31,1800. There were 71,134 books and 194 periodicals in the College library.

In the college curriculum secular education is blended with religious instruction offered under the careful guidance of the Rector. Congregational prayers on Monday mornings followed by lectures on religious and moral subjects by distinguished invitees and the birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda form part of the academic programme. The annual Swami Vivekananda birthday celebration includes oratorical contests, essay-writing and quiz contests and a seminar. The Vivekananda Study Circle organized by the students and the Staff are two other bodies functioning in this sphere. True to the Mission's ideal of providing all-round education, the institution has a Hobby Workshop, an Electronics Club, a Photographic Club, an Astronomy Club, a Numismatic Club, a Speakers' Club, a Fine Arts Club, the NCC and the NSS.

Vidyapith Hostel

The hostel with nearly 250 residents is under the direct care of a Swami of the Order and helps the students to lead a simple, unostentatious and disciplined life in the city. The Vidyapith hostel provides an ideal place of a home away from home for students from all over the state and a few from outside. A disciplined routine, morning and evening prayers, Friday special bhajans, games and sports, Tamil and English Literary Associations, a Social Service League, a good library and reading room, a students' store—all managed by the boys—form the regular curriculum of the hostel. Its own Vivekananda Study Circle meets regularly on all the weekdays throughout the year, discussing the character-building and man-making ideas of the great saint. Inter-class competitions in games and literary events, the wallpaper *Malarkothu* and the cyclostyled magazine *Venture*, in Tamil and English respectively, a literary Tamil festival *Mutham-izhvizha* form the special features of the hostel activities. Besides the birthdays of Revered Shashi Maharaj, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna, other festivals like Vinayaka Chaturthi, Sri Krishna Janmashtami and Saraswati Puja are celebrated with devotion and solemnity with students and guest speakers taking part. Life in the hostel begins at the commencement of the session with a traditional welcome ceremony, the *āvahanti homa*, and closes with the Hostel Day.

Immediate need

Having somehow managed to provide accommodation for the ever-increasing number of students for nearly forty years, the College now faces the serious problem of immediately replacing certain old shed-like classrooms with new pukka buildings. The management has accordingly prepared a construction scheme estimated to cost Rs. 15 lakhs which cannot be met without the sustained support of philanthropists. We appeal to all generous-hearted people, well-wishers and devotees of Sri Ramakrishna to contribute liberally for the completion of the project. All such donations will be eligible for tax exemption as per 80 G.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Elder the Pumpkin-cutter

Sri Ramakrishna used to refer humorously to elderly people who had no work by the term 'elder the pumpkin-cutter' (*kumdo kātā bado thākur*). Ladies were not supposed to cut pumpkins, and so when that need arose, they would call the grandpa or the elderly uncle who would go in, finish the job and come away—which was about the only work he did at home. Now, our statisticians say that the number of such elders—to be precise, those who are above sixty—is on the increase, and this is going to be a major socio-economic problem in the near future.

Better health care and improved standards of living have resulted in more people surviving into old age. The problems posed by this demographic change are two. One is the increased financial burden on the middle-aged. In Austria for every two employed there is one pensioner. In China 7 workers supported 1 old person in 1975 ; in 2025 the same number will have to support 2. The second problem is the integration of old people into the rapidly changing social structure. To discuss these problems a World Assembly on Aging was convened in March 1982 at Vienna in which 336 delegates from 43 countries representing 159 non-governmental organizations took part.

The consensus of opinion of the Assembly was that the family still remained the best guarantee of the material and spiritual welfare of its old members. Fortunately, this is in a large measure true of the situation in India at present. But industrialization, urbanization, modernization and occupational mobility have already begun to alter the situation. Studies in some of the major cities reveal that 50 per cent of the elderly are without income. Childless widows suffer more than others. In the lower strata of society old people have often to face much hardship. It is not uncommon to find old women engaged in hard manual work at construction sites all over India.

It is necessary to find productive but light work for old people which will give them economic independence, dignity and a sense of participation in life. Secondly, the facilities of continuing education should be freely accessible to all old people so as to enable them to acquire new skills, find meaning in life and brace themselves up for their unknown future. Younger people also have to be taught the importance of taking care of the old with love and respect, and how to attend to their needs. Voluntary social and religious organizations can play a significant role by opening homes for the aged and by creating a new collective awareness to counteract the destructive changes going on in modern society.

Finally, it is good to keep in mind the warning sounded by William Kerrigan, the American Secretary-General of the World Assembly: 'The elderly of the future are already among us. Unless we do something about the problems of aging today, they will appear with a vengeance tomorrow.' By providing for the old today, the young will be really providing for themselves tomorrow.
